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

1022

RECEIVED 2280
AUG - 6 2001
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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 Estes, R. W. Celery Company Precooler Historic District

other names/site number Nelson & Company Precooler Historic District/SE1770

2. Location

street & number 159 North Central Avenue N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town Oviedo N/A ☐ vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Seminole code 117 zip code 32762

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.)

Janet Snyder Matthews 7/31/2001
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources
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: Entered in the National Register

Date of Action: 9/20/01

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	
3	0	buildings
0	0	sites
2	5	structures
0	0	objects
5	5	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)

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE:Processing

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/Offices
OTHER/Artist & Potter Studio

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Industrial Vernacular

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Concrete blocks
roof Metal crimp panels
other Metal & Glass
Concrete

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)

Agriculture
Architecture
Commerce

Period of Significance

1950-1951

Significant Dates

1950

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown
Unknown

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 6.28 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	479570	3171440
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 Sidney Johnston, Consultant; Gary V. Goodwin, Historic Preservation Planner

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date July, 2001

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (850) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

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 Nelson & Company

street & number Post Office Box 620789 telephone (407) 365-6631

city or town Oviedo state Florida zip code 32762-0789

Summary

The R.W. Estes Celery Company Precooler Historic District occupies 6.28 acres at 159 North Central Avenue in Oviedo (Seminole County), Florida. Located immediately north of downtown Oviedo, the district contains five contributing resources and five noncontributing resources. Three buildings and two structures comprise the historic resources, which are derived from industrial vernacular influences. The buildings rise one story and are fabricated with concrete block structural systems. The buildings have gable roofs with crimp metal panel surfacing and metal pivot windows with multiple lights. A long, narrow covered concrete loading dock and railroad tracks also contribute to the district's industrial character. These resources retain their original circulation pattern, architectural features, and relationship between buildings, walkways, and railroad tracks. The noncontributing resources consist of a small well-shed, two railroad freight cars, a steam locomotive, and a covered vehicle/equipment shed. The noncontributing resources do not disrupt the district's historic ambiance. Indeed, the railroad locomotive and rolling stock help interpret the historic relationships between the buildings, the conveyance and loading of the produce into rail cars, and the ultimate shipment of celery from the facility. The district contributes to the sense of time, place, and historical development through its location and the design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association of its buildings. Displaying a superior level of craftsmanship, the facility retains its historic architectural integrity and character to a high degree, and is a significant reminder of the rich agricultural heritage of the City of Oviedo.

Setting

Oviedo is located in Seminole County, Florida. The city lies about eleven miles northeast of Winter Park, and Sanford, the seat of government of Seminole County, lies fifteen miles to the northwest. Lake Jessup, one of the chain of lakes forming the upper St. Johns River, lies about two miles north. The population of Seminole County is nearly 350,000, and the City of Oviedo, one of the smallest of the county's municipalities, contains 22,000 residents. The primary corridors consist of State Roads 419, 426, and 434, which converge in Oviedo's downtown. The Green Belt, a toll by-pass through eastern Orange and Seminole Counties, borders the west side of the city. Railroad tracks historically ran through Oviedo, but most of those have been dismantled.

The historic district occupies a site approximately one-quarter mile north of downtown Oviedo at 159 North Central Street. The district is bracketed on the east by the state road and on the west by the former Atlantic Coast Line Railroad tracks, which have been converted into a rails-to-trails corridor. This agricultural site has been an Oviedo landmark since 1950. Raymond Estes maintained celery fields to the east of the precooler facility. Occupying several acres, that field was among other small celery fields that sprinkled the landscape near downtown Oviedo in the early-1950s. The district boundary has an irregular shape, governed in part by the railroad tracks. Most of the property to the west and north remains undeveloped. Several small commercial buildings of relatively recent origin lie to the east and south.

Contributing Resources

Wash House

Built in 1950 as part of the original facility, the wash house (photographs 2, 3, and 12) displays a long, side facing gable roof surfaced with metal crimp panels. The building consists of concrete block stem walls, a poured concrete floor, and metal posts and trusses that support the gable roof. Built to accommodate wagons and trucks delivering shipments of celery from the fields, the building is perpendicular to the crate room building, which lies to the west and is attached to the latter by a cross-gable. The wash house building retains its architectural integrity.

Crate Room Building

Also built in 1950 as part of the original facility, the crate room building (photographs 3, 4, and 6) displays a rectangular shape with a shallow-pitched gable roof surfaced with crimp metal panels. The walls are assembled with concrete blocks, and fenestration includes metal pivot windows with three and four lights. Paneled wood doors for pedestrians and solid pine delivery doors hung on iron hinges protect entrances along the southeast, northeast, and northwest elevations. The building is supported by a poured concrete foundation. Crates were originally fabricated in this building and celery packed prior to being transported to the precooler building. To the east projects the wash house building, where celery was originally unloaded at the facility for washing. To the northwest of the crate room building projects a narrow gable-roof walkway (photograph 8), part of the original design of the facility that leads to the precooler building.

Precooler Building

The narrow gable-roof walkway projecting from the wash house connects to the southeast elevation of the precooler building (photographs 5, 9, 10). Built in 1950, the building has an irregular shape with a complex roof system of shallow-pitched parallel gables, a shed extension, and a smaller gable extension. Concrete block walls support the roof. The southeast elevation has several delivery doors, consisting of both original pine planking on iron hinges and corrugated metal rolling types. Six-light casement windows and replacement metal sash windows also open along the elevation. At the southeast corner are two pine plank doors and a pair of replacement metal sash windows. The northeast elevation displays four casement windows with six lights, a pair of pine plank delivery doors, and a loading dock with a shed roof supported by metal poles.

Alterations

The northernmost gable of the precooler building (on the right hand side of photograph 10) was constructed about 1965 to provide cold storage for celery. At that time, the company quit using rail cars to haul celery to market, and turned to trucks. Historically, the company had stored most of its processed celery in refrigerated freight cars parked along the spur tracks. But, in the mid-1960s, after ending its reliance on rail service, the company was compelled to build a cold storage facility.

Covered Concrete Loading Dock

West of the crate room building stands a covered concrete loading dock, which was built as part of the original facility (photographs 1, 2, and 6). Displaying a long, narrow rectangular form, the structure measures approximately eight feet wide and one hundred feet in length. A simple unenclosed structure, it consists of a raised foundation of concrete block walls, a poured concrete floor, and a flat roof supported by metal poles and surfaced with corrugated panels. The structure was part of a conveyance system that delivered precooled celery from the precooler building into freight cars standing on both sides of the covered loading dock. Railroad tracks extend along both sides of the structure. The easternmost set of tracks remains visible, while the western set has been covered over to permit vehicle access along that side of the structure.

Railroad Tracks

A railroad siding extends along the east side of the covered concrete loading dock for about eighty feet. Originally, another set of railroad tracks ran along the western side of the loading dock, but those have been removed. In addition, the mainline tracks that ran farther west of the precooler facility have been dismantled and a rails-to-trails system has been developed. Because both the mainline and westernmost siding along the loading dock have been removed, the remaining tracks represent one of the last tangible reminders of an important transportation system that historically served the City of Oviedo. The extant railroad tracks visually contribute to the circulation pattern and physical relationship between the buildings and structures, and the loading system of celery at the facility.

Non-Contributing Resources

A steam locomotive (photograph 7) and two freight cars (photographs 1, 2, & 6) stand on the tracks between the wash house and the covered loading dock. The American Locomotive Company constructed the steam locomotive, a 0-4-0-type switch engine, in 1927. The Parham Engineering Company of Brooksville, Florida, which later became part of Portland Cement Company, purchased the oil-burning locomotive. The locomotive

was used for mining operations and switching at Brooksville until 1971. Last operated in 1986, it was acquired by Nelson & Company in 1996 as part of an interpretive exhibit at the precooler facility.

The Fruit Growers Express Company (FGEX) built the two boxcars that are also part of the interpretive exhibit, as refrigerator cars in the 1950s. Among the last cars built by FGEX equipped with ice bunkers and cooling fans, they were built expressly for shipping citrus and produce from Florida to northern markets. Both cars are forty-four feet long, ten feet wide, and fifteen feet high. Each carried 10,600 pounds of ice. Car number 59922 was rebuilt in 1954 from an earlier class of rail car, and could transport 90,000 pounds of fruit or produce. Car number 41106 was constructed in 1953, and could hold 107,000 pounds of produce or fruit. Both structures are fabricated with steel enclosed roofs, sides, and sliding doors.

Built about 1975, a covered vehicle/equipment shed stands at the north end of the district (photograph 11). An unenclosed one-story structure, it displays a shallow-pitched gable roof supported by a steel structural framework. One bay of the structure is enclosed with concrete block walls, pierced by delivery and vehicle doors. Constructed in the mid-1970s, a very small well shed stands at the south end of the district (photograph 1). Rising about six feet in height, the structure has a gable roof and concrete block walls.

Contributing Resources	**Date**
Crate Room Building	1950
Precooler Building	1950
Wash House Building	1950
Covered Concrete Loading Dock	1950
Railroad tracks	1950

Non-Contributing Resources

Covered Vehicle/Equipment Shed	ca.1975
Steam Locomotive	1927 (relocated 1996)
Refrigerator Car 59922	rebuilt 1954 (relocated 1996)
Refrigerator Car 41106	1953 (relocated 1996)
Well shed	mid-1970s

Summary

The R. W. Estes Celery Company Precooler Historic District fulfills Criteria A and C at the local level in the areas of agriculture, architecture, and commerce for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Under Criterion A, the district is tied closely to the history of Oviedo, and contributes to the history of Seminole County's celery industry. Part of the organized processing and marketing of Florida celery, the district possesses significance as the only remaining example of a historic celery precooler in Seminole County. Additionally, it was the last facility of its type built in the county, and incorporated contemporary state-of-the-art design and equipment features. At one time, Seminole County was the leading producer of celery in the United States, and the neighboring City of Sanford was known as "Celery City." The R. W. Estes Celery Company, a partnership of four investors that included Estes, John E. Courier, Milton Gore, and Donald Ulrey, developed the facility. The company completed the facility in 1950. At the height of production, the company harvested celery on 250 acres and processed thousands of crates annually. The district also possesses significance under Criterion C. Derived from industrial vernacular influences, the contributing buildings were designed to serve the expressed function of processing celery for market. The district possesses a small concentration, linkage, and continuity of buildings united historically and by physical development.

Historical Context

Seminole County, organized in 1913, contains a number of communities with a nineteenth century heritage. One of the oldest of those is Oviedo, which was founded in the 1870s southeast of Sanford near Lake Jesup, a tributary of the St. Johns River. Although permanent settlement began in the 1850s, the formal naming and organization of the village occurred in 1879, when postmaster Andrew Aulin selected Oviedo from the name of the capital city of the Spanish province of Asturias. In 1886, Aulin platted a plan of development for Oviedo. Agriculture, especially citrus, became a mainstay of the economy. The lure of riches from agricultural harvests encouraged two railroads to extend tracks into the village. New homesteads and farms appeared, but freezes in December 1894, and February 1895, destroyed thousands of citrus trees statewide. Still, farmers replanted citrus groves and truck farms. Celery was introduced after the devastating freezes, and the first rail cars filled with the vegetable were shipped from neighboring Sanford in 1898. In 1900, only twenty-five acres of the produce were cultivated statewide; five years later, nearly 350 acres were planted. In 1908 alone, over one thousand rail cars packed with celery were shipped from Sanford to northern markets. Oviedo remained a rural agricultural village with the population increasing from 293 in 1900 to 488 a decade later.

Growth sparked the creation of Seminole County in 1913, and Sanford was designated the seat of county government. In Oviedo, business leaders organized a board of trade in 1911. The following year, the Bank of Oviedo was established. Most businesses, churches, and civic organizations developed in the small commercial center, which was largely destroyed by fire in 1914. In 1913, the Black Hammock Drainage District was

formed to transform wetlands into agricultural fields. In 1915 alone, Oviedo's farmers shipped over sixty thousand boxes of citrus by rail. Growers with large citrus groves included J. H. Lee, H. B. McCall, S. Nelson, and B. F. Wheeler. Farmers J. F. Dorny, N. F. Legette, and S. C. Partin planted potatoes and tomatoes. Citrus and vegetable packinghouses appeared along railroad sidings, and small neighborhoods radiated around the downtown. Following a particularly heavy freeze in February 1917, some Oviedo farmers began cultivating celery to help offset losses from their frozen fruit. The quick cash crop enabled some to expand their grove holdings, and other farmers increasingly turned to the "green gold" for a primary source of income. In 1918, sixteen hundred acres of celery were planted statewide. Within the span of a decade many new farms had appeared, and Seminole County achieved a reputation as the nation's celery capital. In the mid-1920s, the county contained thirty-seven hundred acres planted in celery, more than half of the celery cultivated in the state.

During the Florida land boom of the 1920s, Seminole County experienced substantial growth. In 1920, the census bureau counted 685 residents in Oviedo, and the county's population reached 14,738 in 1925. That year, Oviedo's residents incorporated the Town of Oviedo, and several new subdivisions opened previously undeveloped property. A new brick school was completed in 1922, and by 1930, the town had become the second largest community in Seminole County. Between 1922 and 1927, nearly ten miles of roads had been paved in the vicinity of Oviedo. The number of farms countywide increased from 573 to 810 between 1920 and 1925, with grove and farmlands reaching 13,020 acres in 1927. Oviedo's dependency on agriculture insulated some residents from the worst effects of the collapsing land boom, and, in 1930, Oviedo's population reached 1,042. In 1929, the sale of celery alone brought nearly three million dollars in revenue to Seminole County farmers. That year, celery production peaked statewide with 553 growers reporting fifty-four hundred acres under cultivation. Seminole County farmers alone shipped sixty-three hundred rail cars of the produce.

Seminole County's development lurched to a stop as the air seeped out of the land boom, and then, in October 1929, the stock market began a downward spiral, leading into the Great Depression. The financial panic delivered its full impact in the early-1930s. By 1933, numerous Florida banks had failed. Deposits and investments fell and annual incomes declined. Hundreds of properties went into foreclosure and several banks failed in Seminole County. Moderate growth persisted, however, largely because of the agriculture base. Seminole County residents enjoyed a relatively diversified economy and the population continued to climb, reaching 18,735 in 1930. Bumper vegetable and citrus harvests helped buoy the economy. Farmers and associations annually shipped about 228,000 boxes of oranges at the beginning of the decade, and nearly 4,100 acres of citrus trees were cultivated throughout the county. Celery sales also boomed, and, in 1937 alone, approximately 3,325,000 crates of celery were shipped out of Florida, most from Seminole County farms. In 1940, the census enumerated 1,356 people in Oviedo.

During the 1940s, the county's population continued to rise, reaching 24,560 in 1945. NAS Sanford opened during World War II to train Navy pilots. Many servicemen stationed in Florida during the war returned with their families at its close to take up residence. The state also began to attract a growing number of retirees from the North and Midwest. Relatively inexpensive housing and low property taxes appealed to retired Americans who relied on a fixed income. In 1946, the Citizens Bank of Oviedo opened, and a new fertilizer plant was completed the next year. The invention of the celery field "mule train" by John Duda spurred growers to expand their celery fields. Mechanical harvesters loaded the mule trains with stripped, and top and root cut stalks, significantly shortening harvest periods and decreasing the damage to the produce. By 1947, three new celery precooler plants had been constructed in Oviedo, indicative of post-war celery boom in Seminole County. Precooler facilities typically processed twenty-five rail cars of celery each day, with a refrigerated car of that period capable of holding 432 crates. An acre of land yielded between 150 and 900 crates, depending on weather and soil conditions. At mid-decade, another celery precooler plant was constructed in Oviedo, and a new city hall was built. Commercial growers began to expand their holdings, and celery production peaked in the 1950s. Within a decade, farmlands in Oviedo began to yield to suburban development, and agribusiness firms established large farms farther south near the Everglades. In the mid-1960s, only two commercial celery businesses remained in Oviedo. By 1975, practically all the state's celery was grown either at Zellwood, or in the Everglades muck, centering around Belle Glade.

Over the following decades, the state's growth accelerated. Although much of Seminole County shared in the growth, Oviedo retained its rural ambiance, hardly touched by development pressures and population growth. In 1970, the town's population stood at 1,926, but the neighboring cities of Altamonte Springs and Sanford experienced explosive growth. In the mid-1980s, freezes devastated central Florida's citrus groves. A few determined companies and individuals replanted, but most growers either sold out or pushed farther south in search of warmer, more predictable weather patterns. In the aftermath of the freezes, some Seminole County groves yielded to commercial and residential developments. Finally, in the last quarter of the twentieth century, Oviedo began to experience significant growth, and in 1990 the census bureau counted 15,722 residents.

Historical Significance

The historic district possesses local significance as the last remaining example of a celery precooler facility in Seminole County, which once led the nation in the cultivation, harvesting, and shipment of celery. The R.W. Estes Celery Company of Oviedo established the facility. A native of Hiram, Georgia, Raymond Estes was born in 1907, and arrived in Oviedo in 1928. The move was prompted, in part, by reports of a booming celery industry in Seminole County. Estes acquired and cleared three-and-one-half acres, planted celery, and soon became a prosperous farmer. He was one of several growers who shipped a combined 227,500 crates of celery out of Oviedo in 1930. That year, Oviedo's celery farmers earned a profit of $384,000 from their produce. During the Great Depression and the 1940s, Estes acquired more acreage and planted celery in nearby

hammock lands. He used a precooler facility operated by Chase & Company of Sanford to prepare and ship his product to market. Chase & Company had been established in Sanford in 1884, and by the 1920s ranked among the largest agricultural growing, packing, and shipping companies in the state. Other growers used the Lake Charm Fruit Company's packing facility to prepare and ship their produce. Estes emerged as a prominent farmer, and residents elected him to the town council between 1944 and 1949. In 1946, he served on the council's building committee, which developed plans for the new town hall completed in 1951. Estes also served on the board of directors of the Oviedo Citizens Bank and Sanford's Atlantic National Bank.

At the close of World War II, Estes expanded his business by establishing the R.W. Estes Celery Company. About 1947, he re-organized the company into a corporation and cooperative venture. The invention of the celery field mule train by the Dudas encouraged him to expand his business, now entering its third decade of operations. In 1950, he acquired property near downtown Oviedo, where he developed a precooler and packing facility. This facility was the last precooler built in Seminole County, and its design and equipment included state-of-the-art features and decades of experience in assembling precoolers. Paul Campbell, a builder who had previously constructed Estes' home in Oviedo, is believed to have supervised its construction. The precooler facility was designed as a three-part operation. In the wash house, celery was stored, washed, and trimmed, and then packed in shipment crates, which were also assembled in the wash house. Then, the crates were transported to the precooler building, where the "field heat" was extracted from the produce by submerging it for thirty-five minutes in a cold water bath (35° F). An ammonia compressor system was utilized to cool the water bath. Finally, the cooled celery was transported out of the precooler building to a covered conveyance, or walkway, bracketed by railroad tracks. From there, the crates were loaded into refrigerated railroad cars. Bob Cornell, an employee of Chase & Company in Sanford, designed and installed the refrigeration system and cold water bath in the facility. Much of the equipment installed in the precooler was purchased from Harry P. Leu, Inc. of Orlando.

Estes invited several former Chase & Company employees and farmers to form the cooperative venture with him. He met them at the Sanford Company, which precooled his celery harvests during the 1940s. Each brought a specialized skill acquired from years of experience in similar businesses. Born in 1912 in Fort Wayne, Indiana, Donald Ulrey had first worked for Chase & Company about 1932, and for the next several years worked on farms in Indiana during the summer and fall, and Chase & Company vegetable fields during the winter and spring. In 1937, he moved to Sanford to work full-time for Chase & Company, but in 1945 moved to Oviedo to begin work with R.W. Estes. A native of Oviedo, Milton Gore operated a filling station in Oviedo with his father, and tended a small celery farm. About 1946, Estes invited him to join the cooperative. Adept at grasping mechanical concepts and repairing equipment, Gore quickly learned the operation of the precooler facility and became its supervisor. He also served as vice-president of the corporation.

Estes supervised the marketing and sales of celery until 1950, when he brought John Courier into the company. Born in Sanford, Courier had graduated from the University of Florida's business school in 1937, and about 1940 began work for Chase & Company in Sanford. Courier became Chase's primary celery salesman, maintaining contacts with markets throughout the country to help assure top dollar for the company's produce. Courier had left Chase & Company in 1948, and moved to Oviedo to work for farmer Charles T. Niblack. But, in 1950, he accepted an offer from Estes. Located in an office in a commercial building in downtown Oviedo, Courier negotiated celery contracts with various markets along the eastern seaboard.

The cooperative venture enjoyed several profitable years, during which the partners harvested celery from approximately 250 acres of farmland. Generally, fifty laborers worked the fields harvesting the crops, and fifty additional employees worked at the precooler facility. The company precooled and shipped only celery grown in its fields, and developed the labels, "Ted's Best" and "E-Con," for its product. Estes' death in 1956, portended difficult years for the remaining partners. Although they purchased the facility in 1957 from Estes' estate and organized the Oviedo Precooling Company, several poor harvests compelled the partners to close the business. In 1960, Nelson & Company, an agricultural business established in Oviedo in 1886, acquired the property. Nelson & Company had cultivated celery since 1917, and used the Lake Charm Fruit Company's precooler until a fire destroyed the facility about 1959. By then, only two commercial celery farms remained in Oviedo. High prices for farmland encouraged many farmers to sell out, and competition from large agribusinesses near Zellwood and Lake Okeechobee drove others out of business. Nelson & Company shipped celery from the precooler by rail until the mid-1960s, when increased railroad freight rates compelled the company to use trucks. Additional loading docks and a cold storage building were required, because the company had previously used refrigerated rail cars parked along its spur to store celery awaiting shipment. The company grew celery in the Black Hammock and Mitchell Hammock areas and precooled its produce until 1989, when devastating freezes killed the company's citrus and celery crops. In 1990, the company began rehabilitation of the precooler facility into commercial space with an interpretative area. A steam locomotive built in 1927 and two refrigerated rail cars built in the mid-1950s were acquired in 1996. Currently, the precooler facility contains an artist' studio, pottery studio, import business, and offices for a swimming pool company, nursery and garden company, lawn care business, and concrete finishing company.

Architectural Context

Industrial Vernacular

The term "industrial vernacular" applies to buildings that display no formal style of architecture and characterizes buildings constructed for explicit industrial applications. No single building type exists in a greater profusion of scales, styles, shapes, materials, and other variables than industrial structures. The most prevalent type of industrial building is the nonspecific factory, repair facility, or warehouse. Steel framing and

reinforced concrete were typically utilized, depending on resources and desired strength. Factory owners designed industrial buildings until the mid-nineteenth century, when architects and specialty firms began designing pre-manufactured buildings for industrial applications. Generally, by the late-nineteenth century, steel framing was used in industrial buildings because I-beams could support far more weight than traditional wood beams. The steel skeletal framework was often revealed as a feature in the facade. The most important specialist in vernacular factory design was Albert Kahn of Detroit, whose 1905 Packard Number 10 building helped initiate a new era of industrial designs.

The design of industrial vernacular buildings, generally simple in plan and modest in detailing, was often inspired from the pragmatic, functional needs of a client. In Florida, industrial buildings served many purposes. The citrus, fertilizer, and railroad industries regularly produced, processed, repaired, or stored products within industrial buildings. Metal buildings displaying arched roof forms became popular in the 1920s, and led to the development semicylindrical Quonset type for industrial and military applications. Many of the same components refined for use in industrial buildings--steel curtain walls with concrete panels, wire-glass windows, and simple, functional designs--were well-suited to large repair and assembly buildings developed for the military. During the Great Depression, the Public Works Administration (PWA) helped finance the development of large hangers built of steel skeletal frames and reinforced concrete walls.

Typically rising between one and three stories, industrial buildings display a flat, gable, or curvilinear roof with brick, stucco, wood drop siding, or metal panel exterior wall fabrics, depending on the application. Some roof types and wall fabrics are used in combination. Ventilators or ridge monitors pierce the roof, and fenestration often consists of either ribbons of double-hung sashes or fixed windows with pivot inserts filled with industrial wire glazing. Distinctive broad eaves protect loading docks. Most buildings exhibit a simple design devoid of ornamentation.

Architectural Significance

The R. W. Estes Celery Company Precooler Historic District contains an unusual collection of buildings assembled for the expressed purpose of preparing celery for shipment to market. The layout of the buildings facilitated the washing, cooling, and shipping of the produce. The celery traveled in crates from the crate house by a conveyance system to the precooler. At the precooler, the vegetables were submerged in cold-water bath cooled to approximately 35 degrees Fahrenheit for approximately thirty minutes. This process removed the field heat from the celery and helped ensure its firmness in transit to market. Then, the celery crates were transported along the covered concrete loading dock to refrigerated rail cars. The last remaining precooler facility in Seminole County, the buildings are derived from industrial vernacular influences. Assembled with concrete block walls and gable roofs, the buildings are fashioned in a design that facilitated the washing, cooling, and shipment of celery. Although the facility has been rehabilitated for new commercial functions, the

original circulation pattern and architectural features, and relationships between buildings, walkways, and railroad tracks remains clearly evident. The facility retains its historic architectural integrity and character to a high degree, and is a significant reminder of the agricultural heritage of the City of Oviedo.

Major Bibliographical References

Adicks, Richard, and Donna Neely. *Oviedo: A Biography of a Town.* 2nd Edition. Oviedo: Richard Adicks and Donna Neely, 1992.

Courier, Dorothy. Informant. 2000.

Evans, Arthur. Informant. 2000.

North Florida Chapter, NRHS, Inc. to Nelson & Company, 6 October 1996. Nelson & Company files. Oviedo, Florida.

Rose, G. Norman. *Celery Production in Florida--A Historic Data Series.* Economics Report 69. Gainesville: Food and Resource Economics Department, 1975.

Sanford Herald, 12 November 1956.

Seminole County Courthouse. Sanford, Florida.
Deed Record Book 166, p. 345, 443.
Deed Record Book 171, p. 444.
Estes, R.W. Probate 3171.
Official Record Book 131, p. 268.

Ulrey, Donald. Informant. 2000.

Wheeler, B. F. Jr. Informant. 2000.

Verbal Boundary Description

The property boundary is defined as sec 10 twp 21s rge 31e beg ne cor sw 1/4 of sw 1/4 run s 465 ft w 387.7 ft sely para to ACL spur track 284.2 ft nwly alg rr to n line of sw 1/4 of sw 1/4 to beg (less rd). See attached scaled map of historic district.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encloses property historically associated with the precooler facility of the R. W. Estes Celery Company. The boundary is defined, in part, by adjacent railroad and street systems, and, in part, by metes and bounds.

List of Photographs

1. Well Shed, Freight Cars & Covered Concrete Loading Dock
2. Oviedo (Seminole County), Florida
3. Sidney Johnston/Jodi Rubin
4. 2000
5. Historian, DeLand, FL
6. View facing west
7. Photograph number 1 of 12

Numbers 2-5 are the same for the remaining photographs.

1. Freight Cars, Covered Concrete Loading Dock & Wash House Building
6. View facing northwest
7. Photograph number 2 of 12

1. Wash House Building
6. View facing northwest
7. Photograph number 3 of 12

1. Wash House Building
6. Detail view showing southeast elevation, facing northwest
7. Photograph number 4 of 12

1. Precooler Building
6. Detail view showing southeast elevation, facing northeast
7. Photograph number 5 of 12

1. Steam Locomotive, Covered Concrete Loading Dock & Wash House Building
6. View facing southeast
7. Photograph number 6 of 12

1. Steam Locomotive
6. View facing southwest
7. Photograph number 7 of 12

1. Covered Walkway between Wash House Building & Precooler Building
6. View facing southeast
7. Photograph number 8 of 12

1. Precooler Building
6. Detail view showing southeast corner, facing west
7. Photograph number 9 of 12

1. Precooler Building
6. View showing east elevation, facing west
7. Photograph number 10 of 12

1. Covered vehicle/equipment shed building
6. View facing northwest
7. Photograph number 11 of 12

1. Wash House Building
6. View showing northeast elevation, facing southwest
7. Photograph number 12 of 12