

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 96000230

Date Listed: 3/12/96

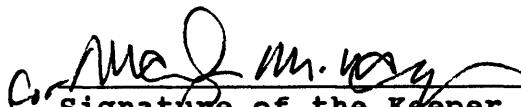
Centennial Building
Property Name

Gulf
County

FLORIDA
State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper

9/23/96

Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section No. 8

This nomination is amended to show that the period of significance is 1938-1946 and 1938 is a significant date.

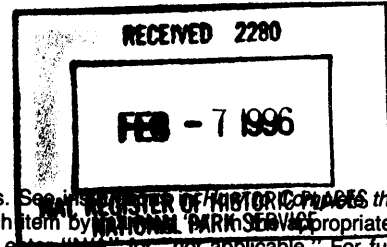
This change has been discussed with the Florida SHPO.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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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 the REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by entering the information requested. If an 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 Centennial Building

other names/site number Civic Center

2. Location

street & number 300 Allen Memorial Way n/a not for publication

city or town Port St. Joe n/a vicinity

state Florida code FL county Gulf code 045 zip code 32456

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.)

Suzanne P. Walker / Deputy SHPO 1/25/96
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources
State of 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.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Ma J. M. [Signature]

3/12/96

Centennial Building
Name of Property

Gulf County, Florida
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply) **Category of Property** (Check only one box)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	2	structures
0	1	objects
1	3	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(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)

SOCIAL/Meeting Hall
RECREATION/CULTURE/Auditorium

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/Meeting Hall
RECREATION/CULTURE/Auditorium

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT/ Art Deco

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Stucco

roof Asphalt

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)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1938

Significant Dates

1938-1946

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Arch.: Crockett, Hughell

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 67) 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:

Centennial Building
Name of Property

Gulf County, Florida
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 1 | 7 | | 6 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 0 | | 3 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 0 |
Zone Easting Northing
2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
Zone Easting Northing
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 Sherry Piland/Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date January 1996

street & number R.A. Gray Bldg., 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (904) 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 _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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 to amend existing 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.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****CENTENNIAL BUILDING
PORT ST. JOE, GULF CO., FL.**Section number 7 Page 1

The Centennial Building, at 300 Allen Memorial Way in Port St. Joe, Florida, was constructed in 1938 with Works Progress Administration (WPA) funds. The simple, rectangular building has Art Deco stylistic elements. The masonry structure is covered with stucco and rests on a concrete foundation. Decorative air vents to the crawl space are visible along the foundation. The flat roof is surfaced with built-up roofing material.

SETTING

Port St. Joe is a gulf coast community in Florida's western panhandle, adjacent to sheltered St. Joseph Bay. It is approximately 20 miles northwest of Apalachicola.

The Centennial Building is located south of the downtown business area of Port St. Joe, in a residential area of the city. It is sited on a long, narrow green space bordered by Allen Memorial Way on the north, Gautier Memorial Way on the south, and Long Avenue on the east. Across an unnamed park road, on the west is the Constitution Convention State Museum, which opened in 1955. A short distance to the west of the museum is the Constitution Monument, erected in 1922. A landscaped lawn extends westward from the monument to Highway 98, a major traffic artery through Port St. Joe.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The symmetrical, two-story, main (west) facade consists of a slightly projecting center section of three bays, flanked by two-bay sections (Photo 1). This center section is defined by fluted piers, resembling pilasters, that extend to the parapet. The first floor of each bay of the center section contains a set of double, wood entrance doors, each with a diamond-shaped light in its upper panel. A flat canopy projects over each set of doors. A flight of concrete steps leads to the doors. Above each door, on the second floor, is a single rectangular, 1/1 light window. The parapet is decorated with incised horizontal panels, separated by incised circular forms. The end bays are defined by fluted pilasters that rest on the plinth and terminate with a geometric capital just below the parapet. Slightly recessed behind the pilasters are stuccoed panels containing rectangular windows on each floor.

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**CENTENNIAL BUILDING
PORT ST. JOE, GULF CO., FL.**

Section number 7 Page 2

A view of the north elevation of the building reveals its basic internal form of a two-story lobby section and a two-story stage section flanking the central, single-story auditorium section (Photo 2). The design of this elevation is similar to that of the main facade. Fluted pilasters frame slightly recessed stucco panels that contain rectangular windows. These pilasters support the roof trusses and form a strong vertical rhythm across the building. Double wood doors are located at each end of the center section. Scuppers extend through the parapet wall and are connected to downspouts centered on the pilasters. The south elevation is basically identical to the north elevation (Photo 3).

The rear (east) elevation continues the motif of bays defined by fluted pilasters (Photo 4). This elevation contains only two windows, located in the second and fourth bays, just below the parapet.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The interior is comprised of three sections: a two-story lobby area at the west end, the stage area at the east end, and the central auditorium space. The lobby is accessed from the three sets of double entry doors. Access to the auditorium from the lobby is through three pairs of paneled doors similar to the entrance doors, but without lights (photo 5). The lobby ceiling, a board-formed concrete slab supported by two concrete beams, is divided into three panels. Centered in each panel is a paddle fan/light combination. A ticket window is located at the north end of the lobby (Photo 6). At the south end of the lobby is a stairway leading to the second floor or mezzanine area (Photo 7). The second floor was designed to provide a meeting room and a large hall to be used as a museum or display space. Restrooms at each end of the lobby are accessed from the auditorium only. The concrete slab floor of the lobby is carpeted. The interior window surrounds continue the decorative motif of the exterior pilasters, with fluting and geometric designs (Photo 8).

The auditorium is a large open space designed to seat approximately 1,000 (Photo 9). The natural finished oak, tongue and groove flooring runs north and south over wood floor joists (photo 10). The primary decorative feature of the building is

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**CENTENNIAL BUILDING
PORT ST. JOE, GULF CO., FL.**

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the 19', 8" high auditorium ceiling. The beamed ceiling is divided into eighteen, 5 X 5 foot recessed panels. The beams, approximately one foot deep and 1.5 feet wide, are painted in yellow and blue with circular and diamond motifs (Photo 11). Incorporated into the ceiling panels are six decorative wood ventilation grills and twelve combination paddle fans with lights. A painted blue band, approximately one and a half feet in width runs around the base of the cornice.

The steel bowstring roof trusses are concealed by the decorative tongue and groove ceiling. The trusses, running north and south, are supported by the exterior concrete pilasters. Wood purlins on top of the trusses support the wood roof deck and membrane roofing.

The stage area is located at the east end of the auditorium (Photo 9). The wood floor of the stage is approximately 42" above the auditorium floor. Access to the stage is by stairs at each side. A door next to each set of stairs provides access to the rear stage area. A wardroom or dressing room, each with a restroom, flanks the stage. Dressing rooms on the second level of the stage area are accessed by modified spiral stairs. The third level, loft area is accessible only by ladder. One of the dressing rooms has been converted into a kitchen. The dressing rooms have wood ceilings and floors.

ALTERATIONS

The only major alteration to the Centennial Building has been the replacement, in 1983, of the original multi-paned, wood windows with the current wood, single-pane, plexiglass windows. A grid placed on the interior of the windows gives them the appearance of the original windows.

NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

At the rear of the building are two large barbecue pits, which were probably constructed shortly after the construction of the building (Photo 4). They are protected by open sheds with tin, gable roofs. These sheds were added in the 1940s and have been altered several times.

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Placed on a short track on the north side of the building is a 1917 steam engine (Photo 2). The engine, placed on this site around 1960, was used by the St. Joseph Lumber and Export Company as a logging engine from 1938 through the 1940s.

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**CENTENNIAL BUILDING
PORT ST. JOE, GULF CO., FL.**

Section number 8 Page 1

The Centennial Building in Port St. Joe, Florida, is proposed for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and C, in the areas of Social History and Architecture. Built in 1938 as a Public Works Administration (PWA) project, it reflects the role of the federal government in local construction projects during the years of the Great Depression. It is also a significant local example of the Art Deco architectural style.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Port St. Joe's early history dates to ca. 1700 when a small outpost, St. Joseph, was established by the Spanish near a freshwater creek leading into St. Joseph's Bay. A small fishing village was located at the site in 1812. In 1836, promoters of the town built Florida's first steam railway, connecting St. Joseph with the Apalachicola River. Then, entrepreneurs could participate in the lucrative enterprise of shipping cotton from plantations in Georgia and Alabama, and set themselves into direct competition with Apalachicola. This prosperous venture led to a population by 1838 that was variously estimated at between 5,000-10,000.

Promoters of St. Joseph also succeeded in having the town selected as the site for the state's first Constitutional Convention, a crucial step in the process of gaining statehood. The Convention began December 3, 1838, and on January 11, 1839, the first Florida Constitution was signed.

After this auspicious event, a series of disasters and economic setbacks put an end to the prosperous community and rendered it a virtual ghost town. In 1840-41, a devastating epidemic of yellow fever killed approximately 2,500 of the residents. Then a hurricane hit the area in September 1844. After this blow, the town of St. Joseph became and remained largely uninhabited until the early twentieth century.

In 1904, Terrell H. Stone moved to the area and settled approximately two miles north of the old St. Joseph's town site, where he started a turpentine operation. The area he settled eventually became known as Port St. Joe. The possibilities of taking advantage of the bountiful supply of long leaf yellow pine soon intrigued other investors. In 1907, a group of businessmen

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PORT ST. JOE, GULF CO., FL.**Section number 8 Page 2

constructed the Apalachicola Northern Railroad, running tracks from River Junction to Apalachicola. In 1909, they extended the line to Port St. Joe and began construction of wharf facilities and a 2,500 foot railroad pier jutting into St. Joseph Bay. The railroad spurred other activity. By 1911, thirteen saw mills were operating along the rail line, with a daily output of 540,000 board feet. The booming community soon had an ice factory, electric plant, water system, and the railroad shops and general officers were relocated from Apalachicola. The city was incorporated in 1913, the year that it became the home of the Calhoun Timber Company, one of the largest saw mills in Florida. By 1917, the Port St. Joe had a population of 325. In 1919-20, the Southern Menhaden Fish Company was established, providing some diversity to the local economy. By the 1920s, the population had grown to between 400 and 500. In the late 1920s, a means to use low-grade slash pine as a source of pulp wood for paper-making was discovered. This seemed to forecast greater growth for the Port St. Joe area. The population had reached 850 by 1930. Growth was again stalled when the economic impact of the Great Depression began to be felt. The intervention of federal relief programs helped to lessen the economic disruption and brought several important projects to the area, including the construction of the Gulf Coast Scenic Highway between 1932 and 1935. The most important element in insuring the future growth of the community, however, was the interest taken by Alfred I. du Pont.

Alfred du Pont was a wealthy manufacturer and inventor, whose interests extended beyond his home state of Maryland. In 1926, he became the principal owner of a group of Florida banks and one of the largest individual investors in Florida real estate. His brother-in-law, Edward Ball, came to Florida to manage the du Pont interests.

In 1933, du Pont, at the urging of Edward Ball, purchased several struggling St. Joe companies: the Apalachicola Northern Railroad, the St. Joseph Land Development Company, the St. Joseph Dock and Terminal Company, and the Port St. Joe Company. Du Pont also purchased thousands of acres of forests in the area. When du Pont died in 1935 he left an estate conservatively estimated at \$54 million, under the control of Ball.

Du Pont had wanted to transform Port St. Joe into a modern community, and Ball continued to invest the du Pont funds in the

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Port St. Joe area. The St. Joe Paper Company was founded in 1936, and the mill went into operation in April, 1938. The influx of supervisory and technical personnel brought a demand for housing in the area.

Two of the federal programs set up to provide assistance during the Great Depression were the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The function of the PWA was to construct public buildings and structures. The role of the WPA was to employ the country's unemployed millions. States were required to financially contribute to PWA projects. During the initial four years of the program, Florida was able to complete 26 institutional buildings. This funding was insured by a 1935 legislative act which made \$1 million dollars available for "skilled labor and materials for public works." Local communities bore the major share (usually 66%) of the cost of a PWA project. The PWA lent the balance on public works projects indebtedness at four percent. The PWA undertook a wide range of projects in Florida, including road paving, wharf construction, and the construction of schools, libraries, and other institutional buildings.

The Centennial Building was typical of the kinds of PWA-funded projects awarded to cities, counties, and states. A total of 1,628 such projects across the country were to be completed by March of 1939. The Centennial Building was one of 707 auditorium/gymnasium PWA projects across the country.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

In 1921, to publicly recognize the historical importance of Florida's first constitutional convention, the Florida Legislature voted \$10,000 to erect a monument on the site of the tavern where convention met. This large stone monument was erected in 1922 and dedicated in January 11, 1923.

In 1937, a bill was introduced in the Florida legislature by State Senator Josiah Sharit (formerly the mayor of Port St. Joe), to authorize a celebration commemorating the 1838 signing of Florida's first constitution. The bill passed and \$5,000 was appropriated for the event.

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Senators Claude Pepper and Charles Andrews, and Congressman Millard Caldwell had worked diligently in securing approval of a WPA project to build a civic center in Port St. Joe. In June 1938, WPA Project No. 20759 was approved and the city of Port St. Joe received a matching grant of over \$35,000 to construct the Centennial Building.

The building was completed in time for the centennial celebration of the signing of Florida's first constitution, which ran from December 7th to December 10th, 1938. The building was dedicated on December 7, 1938. In addition to Florida Governor Fred P. Cone, four former governors attended the celebration (David Sholtz, Doyle E. Carlton, John P. Martin and Cary A. Hardee).

Each day of the centennial celebration had a theme: All-Florida Day, Governor's Day, Education Day, and Constitution Day. Included among the events were two parades, a free circus, horse racing, band concerts, tours through the St. Joe Paper Mill, fireworks, and nightly dances in the new Centennial Building. A series of pageants during the celebration depicted various episodes in the history of Florida. The pageants were written and staged by members of the Florida Division of the Daughters of the American Revolution, with assistance from other patriotic organizations. Thousands of Floridians, winter visitors, and visitors from neighboring states attended the celebration.

In the ensuing years, the Centennial Building has been the site of other political events and civic functions. Fund raising events, such as the Fireman's Ball and the March of Dimes President's Ball, have been held in the building. It has also been used for community Fourth of July and New Years balls, high school proms, basketball games, as an official polling place, and as a National Guard Armory.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The Art Deco style, popular from 1910 to 1940, is characterized by highly stylized natural and geometric forms and ornaments, and is usually strongly symmetrical.

Art Deco, inspired by the 1925 Paris Exposition des Artes Decoratif, was a means of expressing architectural modernity in

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**CENTENNIAL BUILDING
PORT ST. JOE, GULF CO., FL.**

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the late 1920s. In its avoidance of historical references, the Art Deco style was influenced by European modernism. Art Deco architecture is generally defined as having two rather distinct phases. The initial phase of the late 1920s and 1930s used rectilinear, geometric surface ornamentation, often applied to express the verticality of the structure. The later phase, in the 1930s and 1940s, is more streamlined and has become known as Art Moderne. Characteristics of the Art Deco style included: smooth wall surfaces, usually of stucco; towers or other vertical projections extending above the roof line; symmetrical facades; and a unique form of ornamentation consisting of zigzags, chevrons, sunbursts, spirals, and/or stylized motifs of plants and animals, conventionalized leaf and plant forms combined with abstract arabesques, elongated ovals, and octagonal panels.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Centennial Building is a significant local example of the Art Deco style. A 1939 survey of architectural projects undertaken by the PWA concluded that a trend toward "modern" designs could be noted. Simplicity of design was best suited to the limited skills usually available for WPA work. Therefore, the tendency was to eliminate ornate architectural features, intricate structural design, and elaborate trim. Types of designs were suggested which would not require highly skilled and specialized workers. In the Centennial Building, the emphasis on simplicity resulted in a restrained Art Deco treatment. The simplicity, however, enhances its expression of modernity. No biographical information has been located on the architect of the building, Hughell Crockett.

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CENTENNIAL BUILDING
PORT ST. JOE, GULF CO., FL.

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Centennial: Florida's First Constitution, Official Program. Port
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Final Report on the WPA Program 1935-1943. Washington, D.C.:
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"St. Joe Civic Center Project Approved by the President." St.
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**CENTENNIAL BUILDING
PORT ST. JOE, GULF CO., FL.**

Section number 10 Page 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Parcel # 06060-000R, as described in Gulf County Deed Book 7, pp. 490 and 492.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Centennial Building.

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CENTENNIAL BUILDING
PORT ST. JOE, GULF CO., FL.

Section number Photo Page 1

-
1. Centennial Building, 300 Allen Memorial Way
 2. Port St. Joe, Gulf County, Florida
 3. Philip Jones
 4. April 1995
 5. Preble-Rish, Inc., 326 Reid Avenue, Port St. Joe, Fl.
 6. Main (west) facade, view looking east
 7. Photo 1 of 11

Items 1-5 are the same for the remaining photographs

6. North elevation, view looking south
7. Photo 2 of 11

6. South elevation, view looking north
7. Photo 3 of 11

6. East elevation, showing barbecue pits on right; view looking northwest
7. Photo 4 of 11

6. Interior detail, lobby, showing doors leading to auditorium and stairs leading to second floor level; view looking southeast
7. Photo 5 of 11

6. Interior detail, lobby, showing exterior doors and ticket window; view looking northwest
7. Photo 6 of 11

6. Interior detail, lobby, showing exterior doors and stairs to second floor level; view looking southwest
7. Photo 7 of 11

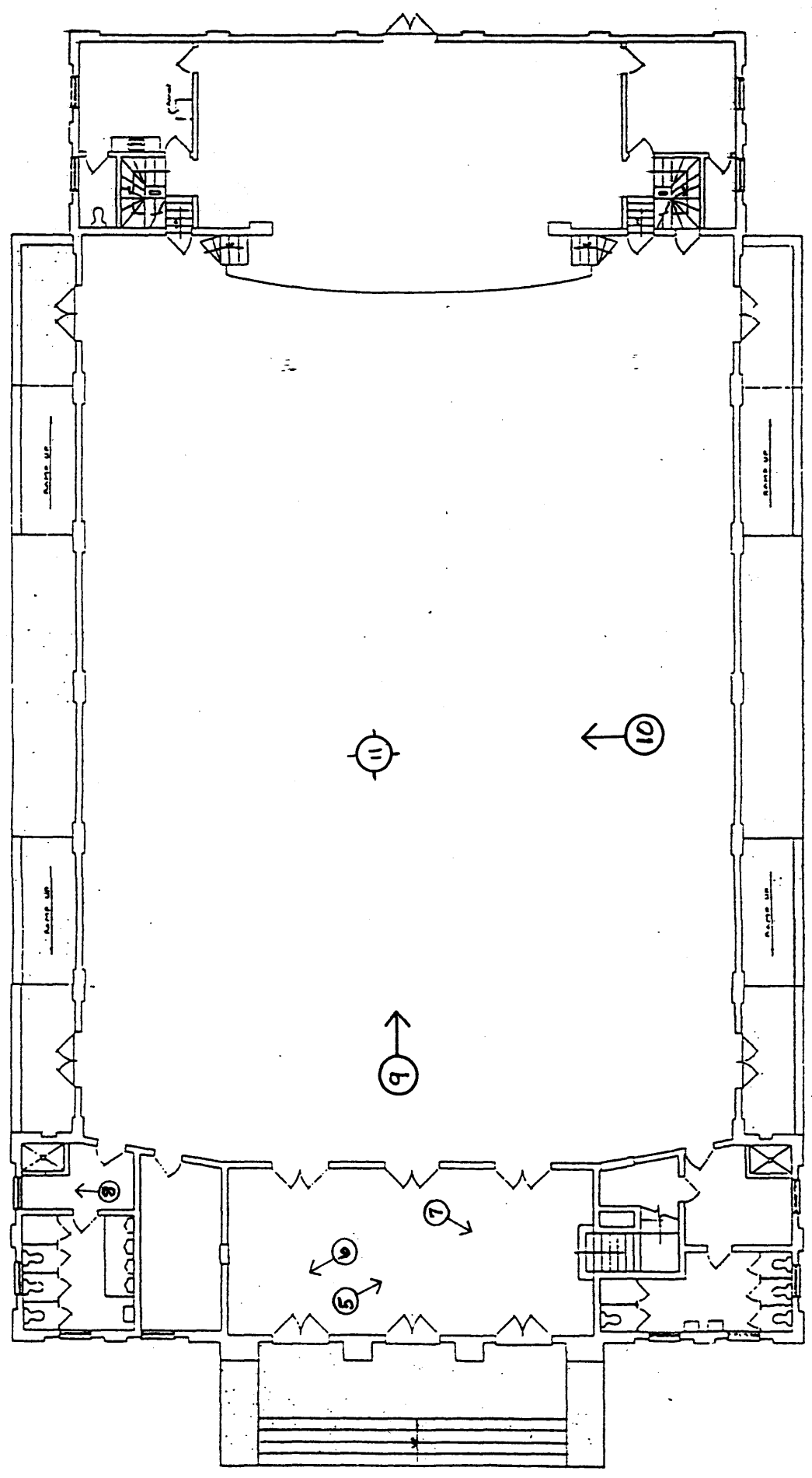
6. Interior window detail, restroom; view looking north
7. Photo 8 of 11

6. Interior, auditorium, view looking east toward stage
7. Photo 9 of 11

6. Interior, auditorium, view looking north
7. Photo 10 of 11

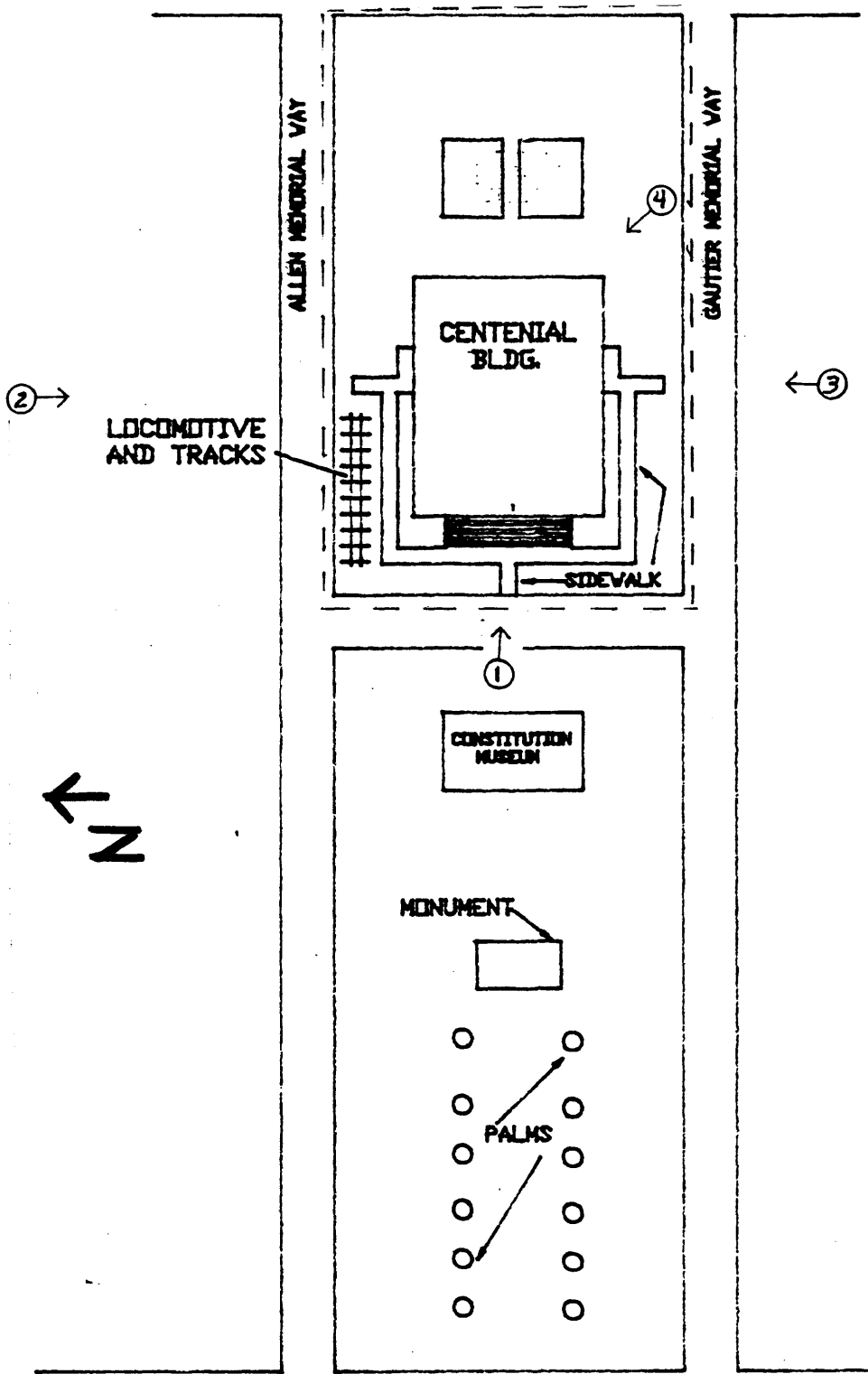
6. Interior detail, auditorium ceiling, view looking up
7. Photo 11 of 11

CENTENNIAL BUILDING
Port St. Joe, Gulf Co., Fl.
Auditorium
Photo Direction ○→



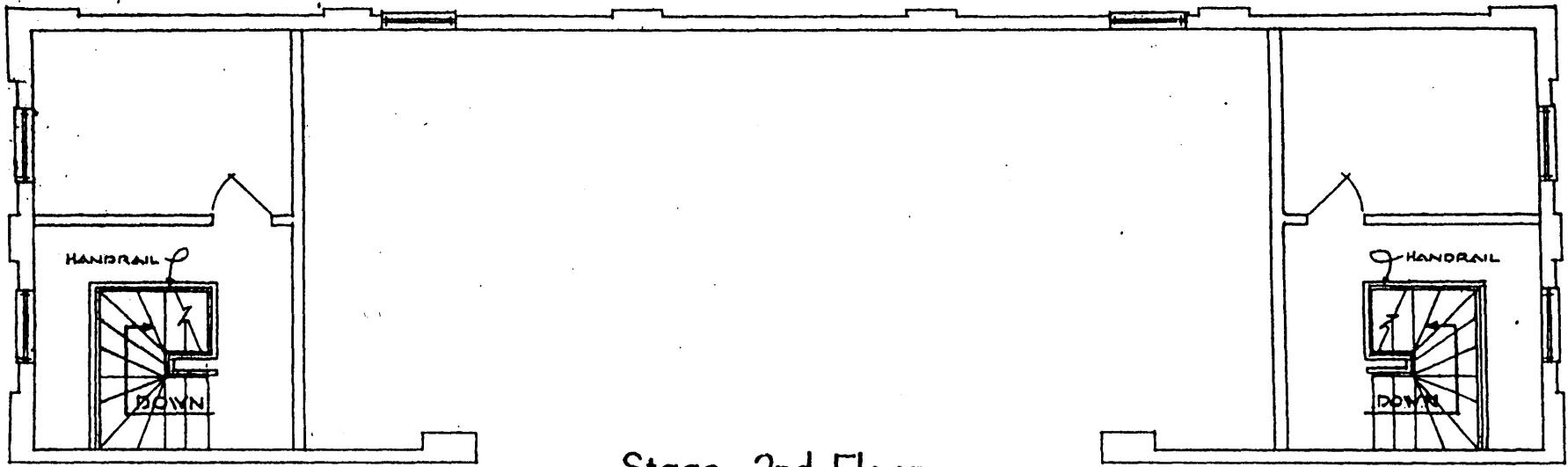
N↑

Scale: 1/8"=1'



CENTENNIAL BUILDING
 Port St. Joe, Gulf Co., Fl.
 SITE PLAN
 APPROX. SCALE: 0.5" = 30'
 Photo Direction
 Boundary — —

CENTENNIAL BUILDING
Port St. Joe. Gulf Co., Fl.
Scale: 1/8"=1'



Stage. 2nd Floor



Lobby. 2nd Floor

