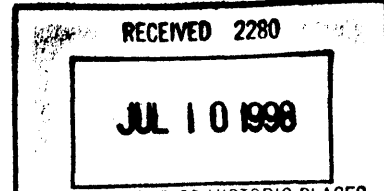


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



965

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions on the back of this form. Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking  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 DOWNTOWN PLANT CITY HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

other names/site number N/A; 8HI5923

2. Location

street & number Bounded by N. Drane, Thomas, W. Tever, Franklin & Carey Streets N/A  not for publication

city or town Plant City N/A  vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Hillsborough code 057 zip code 33566

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.)

George W. Perry 6/30/98  
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) \_\_\_\_\_

for Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Mary M. Hoyer

8/12/98

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	
185	56	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
186	56	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)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

EDUCATION/School

AGRICULTURE/Agricultural Field

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

DOMMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

EDUCATION/School

AGRICULTURE/Agricultural Field

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN

MOVEMENTS/Bungalow

NO STYLE/Wood Frame Vernacular

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Wood

\_\_\_\_\_

roof Asphalt Shingle

other Wood: Porch

\_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Description

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

Name of Property

County and State

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.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- Criteria A, B, C, D, E, F, G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
EDUCATION
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1887-1948

Significant Dates

c. 1887

c. 1926

c. 1931

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):

- Criteria for previous documentation on file (NPS) with checkboxes.

Primary location of additional data:

- Criteria for primary location of additional data with checkboxes.

Name of Repository

#

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** Approximately 110

**UTM References**

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	3	8	8	2	0	0	3	1	0	0	3	4	0
	Zone		Easting					Northing							
2	1	7	3	8	9	5	4	0	3	1	0	0	3	4	0

3	1	7	3	8	9	5	4	0	3	0	9	9	1	6	0
	Zone		Easting					Northing							
4	1	7	3	8	8	2	0	0	3	0	9	8	9	2	0

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 Lisa L. Parks, Consultant/Carl Shiver, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date June 1998

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 \_\_\_\_\_

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 amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

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

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HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA  
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

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**SUMMARY**

The Downtown Plant City Historic Residential District is an approximately 108 acre, mainly residential area located immediately west and north of the downtown Plant City commercial area. The district contains a large concentration of single family dwellings dating from the period circa 1887 to circa 1948. The district also contains one contributing church, a former school—now used as a school administration building—and an agricultural field associated with vocational education. The houses in the district represent a variety of residential architectural styles, including bungalows, wood frame and masonry vernacular buildings, Folk Victorian, and Colonial Revival. Bungalows and wood frame vernacular structures comprise 78 percent of the single family dwellings in the district. Of the 243 buildings in the district, 185 (77 percent) contribute to its historic character, while 56 buildings (23 percent) are noncontributing. Noncontributing buildings include those that were constructed after 1948 and those constructed before 1948 that have been so severely altered as to lose their historic architectural integrity.

**SETTING**

Plant City is a community with a population of approximately 25,000 residents located in the northeastern corner of Hillsborough County, about 24 miles east of Tampa and 10 miles west of Lakeland. It is situated just south of Interstate Highway 4, which connects Plant City with the major metropolitan areas of Tampa/St. Petersburg and Orlando. Much of the economic life of Plant City centers around agriculture, particularly the growing of strawberries, citrus and vegetables. Other notable economic activities are mobile home construction, meat processing, and the mining of phosphate. Because of its proximity to Tampa and Lakeland, Plant City serves as a bedroom community for persons working in those cities. Plant City is an inland community, lying more than 40 miles from the Gulf of Mexico. It lies within easy driving distance to the Gulf beaches and major tourist attractions in Tampa and Orlando, such as Busch Gardens and Disney world.

Most of the recent construction for retail and professional businesses has taken place in shopping malls and office centers located about two miles south of the historical downtown area. The newer residential areas also lie in the suburban areas of Plant City. The core community, therefore, retains many of its historic characteristics both in its commercial center and its nearby residential areas, and has two existing historic districts: The Downtown Plant City Commercial District (NR. 6/8/93) and the North Plant City Residential District (5/27/93). Both districts lie east of the Downtown Residential District, but the North Plant City Residential District abuts its

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northeastern boundary just west of Wheeler Street, while the Downtown Commercial District is separated from the Downtown Residential District by several blocks of noncontributing buildings. The downtown area is composed mainly of brick commercial buildings constructed during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There are a few "modern" buildings, such as the city hall, but much of the commercial architecture reflects the period before World War I, when Plant City was a booming railroad and agricultural center. Most of the vintage commercial buildings are one or two stories in height. Most of the historic residential architecture is found north and west of the downtown retail business center.

Both of the historic residential areas have some similar types and styles of architecture. The North Plant City Residential District, however, was established somewhat earlier and is marked a greater number of high style buildings than are found in the Downtown Residential District. The residences in the North Plant City Residential District also tend to be larger and sited closer together than those found in the western residential area.

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The Downtown Residential District is irregularly shaped. Its general boundaries at its greatest extensions are North Drane Street and the railroad tracks of the SCL Railway on the south, Tever Street on the north, Wheeler and Thomas Streets on the east, and Carey Street on the west. The specific boundaries reflect the organic development of the residential subdivisions west of the commercial downtown area.

The district developed erratically in response to economic changes in Plant City over several periods from 1887-1900, 1901-1928, and 1929-1946. Only one building in the district dates prior to 1900: 207 N. Franklin Street, which was constructed 1887. Few residences were constructed between 1937 and 1946. The area incorporated into the district is laid out on a familiar grid system, although that portion of the district bounded by Herring Street on the north, Wheeler Street on the east, Drane Street on the south, and Franklin Street on the west is not oriented to the cardinal points of the compass. There are no bodies of water or other natural features that cause any major disruption to the grid pattern. As the City developed, some major streets were designated to handle the increased traffic. Reynolds and Mahoney Streets (U.S. Highway 92) have become major one-way east-west streets through the city.

The district is composed of numerous subdivision plats, the earliest of which dates from 1889. Connecting the southern and northern portions of the district are two historic green spaces,

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a city park and an agricultural field once used by the Agricultural Department of Plant City High School. The agricultural field and its associated historic buildings (Photos 35-39) occupy most of the block roughly bounded by North Thomas Street, West Sunset Road, North Franklin Street and Chipman Street. The field was part of a demonstration farm, used in the 1920s and 1930s for planting crops and raising animals. Historic buildings associated with the agricultural field include the original classroom building at 703 N. Thomas Street, constructed in 1926 (Photo 35), and two secondary buildings (Photos 36, 38), constructed circa 1931. The city park, known as Courier Field (Photo 40), is located immediately east of the old demonstration farm property. The park occupies an entire city block and was once used by Plant City High School as an athletic field. Today it is a city-owned public recreational facility used for such activities as baseball and volleyball.

Throughout the district there are tree-lined streets (photos 1-9), with predominantly one and two-story residences, with front and side yard setbacks and sidewalks. The character of the landscaping is similar throughout the district. Building styles vary in different parts of the district, depending on how early the area was platted and the economic status of the residents for whom the subdivisions created. Certain elements, however, remain more or less consistent throughout the district. Wood is the predominant building material. Many of the houses are similar in scale, massing, and fenestration. Most neighborhoods have 50 feet wide by 100 feet deep lots. While some single family dwellings have been converted to multi-family dwellings, their exterior features generally have been preserved. There are few historic apartment buildings in the district. The only notable non-residential structures in the district are churches. Few residences have garages, garage apartments, or other secondary buildings, and these were not documented in the survey of the district because they were often inaccessible, so no assessment of them could be made.

The condition of historic buildings in the district is generally good. The majority retain their original exterior siding, windows, and porch configurations. The most common alterations made to historic residences have been the replacement of the original wood siding with aluminum or vinyl siding. Window replacement is often partial and mixed, with some houses having historic window types—usually wood sashes—intermingled with metal awning windows or metal sashes. Even in cases where the historic windows have been replaced with non-compatible types, the original window framing is still present. Some of the residences—particularly bungalows and wood frame vernacular houses—have had their front porches partially or fully enclosed. Even where this is a factor, the supporting porch members are still visible, retaining the original bay divisions of the main facade of the residence. The majority of the contributing buildings in the

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district have had at least some minor changes, but the district overall retains its historic character. In many cases the alterations can be reversed.

**ARCHITECTURAL STYLES AND TYPES**

**Bungalows**

Bungalow in all their many variations grew out of the Craftsman movement. Gustave Stickley published plans for many types of houses in his Craftsman Magazine. Strictly speaking, there is no single "Craftsman" style, but the houses that generally have come to be called "bungalows" share some attitudes toward construction and use of materials. Construction materials for the bungalow tend to be of the "natural" and "honest" variety. Fieldstone, shingles, narrow wood siding, and stucco were very popular. Part of the bungalow ideal was the integration of interior space with the surrounding landscape, so in addition to broad porches, you often see attached arbors and pergolas. Fieldstone foundations, squat porch columns, and broad eaves also enhanced the illusion that the house sprang from the soil.

In the hands of ordinary builders, what had been dramatic features in the hands of master architects became mere formulas that were integrated into already common vernacular house types, and little attention was paid to varying materials, visual textures, and spatial proportions. Nevertheless, the "American Bungalow" enjoyed a popularity with the American public that lasted nearly forty years and still finds echoes in residential construction today. Bungalows are the most prevalent of the contributing buildings in the historic district. Most of them were constructed in the 1910s and 1920s.

The bungalows in the district often have full-width verandas with tapered wood columns set atop brick piers. The piers are sometimes battered. The roofs are low-pitched, with wide, open eaves, typically with front-facing gables. Roof styles also include stepped gables as well as intersecting gables, dormers, and at times include an extension into a porte-cochere. A less common roof design is the side-facing gable with a cross gable over the entry area. Architectural details and ornamentation are often found in the structural elements themselves, such as roof braces, exposed decorative rafter ends, and the use of brick as porch supports. Typical of the bungalow are the large double hung sash windows, sometimes paired, and often having multiple vertical lights in the upper sash over a single pane in the lower sash. Less common within the district is the use of multi-light casements. Original siding was often novelty or drop siding, and chimneys are of brick with simple detailing, such as slight corbelling. Buildings are typically one



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or one and one-half stories in height.

A prime example of a simple bungalow is the one at 905 W. Reynolds Street which was constructed in 1925 (Photo 21). This one-story bungalow combines a very low-pitched front-facing gable with a wide veranda and porte-cochere. The veranda is supported by tapered square wood columns set atop brick piers. The detailing includes brick cheeks at the entry, exposed rafter ends and wood brackets. The exterior of the house is sheathed in novelty siding. The windows are large 1/1 light, double hung sashes.

The bungalow at 206 N. Howard Street (Photo 22) was built in 1922 for the owner of the Plant City Parker Cigar Factory. This residence is notable for its size and arrangement of forms. The large, two-story house has with an unusual grouping of second story gabled dormers. Wood roof brackets and exposed rafter ends serve as ornamentation, and it has a weatherboard exterior. The front-facing gable has an entry porch supported by square columns set atop brick piers. Typical of many bungalows, the windows are paired, 1/1 light, double-hung sashes.

The home originally belonging P.A. Merrin at 507 W. Reynolds Street (Photo 12) was built in 1921 and displays craftsman influences. Distinctive features include the battered foundation, large battered piers with tile insets, and the curve-shaped stucco railing between porch supports. The roof is composed of intersecting gables and multiple roof planes. Typical of bungalows, there are exposed rafter ends and roof brackets. The windows are the traditional double hung sash, but the upper panes are of 3 and 2 lights. The building is clad in novelty siding with stuccoed piers and railing.

A bungalow built by C.A. Nulter in 1922 at 1101 W. Mahoney Street (Photo 23) is a one-story, wood frame residence with a low pitched roof with intersecting gables. A corner veranda, serving as the entry, is supported by square columns set atop stuccoed piers. The building features roof braces and stucco with decorative tile insets. The entry has a multi-light door and the windows are paired.

Built by B.H. Beaty in 1926, the bungalow at 401 W. Saunders Street (Photo 24) offers another interpretation of the simple "boom" period bungalow. The residence has a characteristic front-facing, low-pitched gable roof with cross gables, and an off-center entry. The roof line is highlighted by prominent exposed rafter ends. The full-width veranda has tapered, square wood columns set atop brick piers. The building is clad in weatherboard. The windows are typical of bungalows, with double hung sashes, with four vertical lights over a single pane.

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One of the larger bungalows in the district is the one at 1007 W. Baker Street (Photo 25). Built in 1922 for Plant City attorney J.C. Poppell, the building has a large front veranda which is supported by brick piers with square columns and a distinctive brick railing. There is also a porte-cochere. The second story is recessed, with a low sloping gable roof with oversized triangular braces. The windows are grouped in sets of three and two, and are double hung sashes with 1/1 lights. The exterior of the building is covered with weatherboard.

**American Foursquare**

The American Foursquare house combined the utility and comfort of the bungalow in a much larger package. Not only did its box-like shape and hipped roof provide ample space for a large family, but it also epitomizes the Craftsman ideal, and plans for Foursquares appeared regularly in Stickley's magazine. The ruling principle of the Craftsman house was simplicity, to which the Foursquare measured up admirably, being simple, honest, substantial, practical and economical.

Though only four examples of American Foursquare houses were recorded in the historic district, they clearly embody the major features of the style. The best example is the residence at 603 W. Reynolds Street (Photo 34) which P.A. Merrin had built in 1922 for his daughter, Mrs. J.A. (Bessie) Burney. The two-story frame residence has the boxy appearance and hipped roof characteristic of the house type. A gabled vent dormer is located near the front edge of the roof. An off-center porch with a projecting gable that protects the steps that lead to the main entrance. The porch is supported by short, square wooden columns set atop tall brick piers. The entry door is flanked by sidelights. The porch extends into a porte-cochere that features the same brick piers and columns as the porch. Windows are double hung sash with 3 over 1 lights. The building is clad with drop siding.

**Wood Frame Vernacular Houses**

Wood frame vernacular houses in the district were constructed throughout the period of significance, but most of them were constructed before 1930. The houses tend to be simple in plan with few, if any, decorative details. Most of these residences in the district are one-story buildings with gable or hip roofs and an attached porch. The original wood siding is either weatherboard or drop siding. Double hung sash windows are common, and the building usually rests on a brick pier foundation. Like many of the older houses in the district, frame vernacular

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residences have brick chimneys.

The residence at 1109 Grandfield Avenue (Photo 26), which was built in 1920 by F.W. Nulter for local developer S.D. Adelson, is a simple single story building with a hip roof and a hip dormer centered over the main facade. A full-width veranda with Doric columns protects an off-center entry. The building has drop siding and windows are 1/1 light double hung sash. The house rests on an open brick pier foundation.

The Kie Robinson Residence at 101 N. Howard Street (Photo 27) was built around 1910. It has a steeply-pitched, side gable roof with a front-facing cross gable centered over a shed roofed, full-width veranda. The veranda has tapered square wood columns and a simple wood balustrade. The central entry door is flanked by small windows and surmounted by a transom. The residence features drop siding and is supported by brick piers.

Built circa 1917 for Edwin Alvin and Sally Barker, owners in the Haymond and Barker Grocery Store, the residence at 506 N. Franklin Street (Photo 28) is a well preserved example of a simple frame vernacular residence. The house has a hip roof with a shed dormer centered over the slope of the main facade. The attached full-width veranda has a shed roof with side cheeks and is supported by simple wood posts. The central entry door is flanked by paired, 1/1 light double hung sash windows. The building is clad in drop siding and has both interior and exterior brick chimneys.

**Folk Victorian Houses**

There are more than a dozen houses in the historic district that bear some features of the elaborate Queen Anne style, which was popular in Florida during the late 19th and early twentieth centuries, but these residences lack the towers, turrets, balconies, and extensive millwork that are typical of full-blown examples of the style. Such buildings are usually classified as "Folk Victorian," their visual connection to Queen Anne being limited to such characteristics as irregular ground plan, bay windows, multiple roof types, and a sprinkling of "gingerbread" decoration found on the porch or in the major gables.

The house at 207 N. Franklin Street (Photo 44), erected circa 1887, may once have been a true example of the Queen Anne style, but numerous alterations over the years have removed or masked most of its original features. By 1910, the popularity of Queen Anne had declined sharply, being replaced by a preference for Colonial Revival forms in larger houses and for the

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“modern” bungalow in residences of more modest size. Still, the tradition of Queen Anne planning and the use of decorative millwork in the porch and gable areas of houses persisted in many small towns in America up until about the World War I period.

The John T. Lowe Residence, at 606 N. Drane Street (Photo 31), built in 1907, exhibits the irregular planning and multiple roof forms that were typical of the Queen Anne style but lacks the decorative millwork that was the hallmark of the style. The only remaining hint of such decoration is found in the drop pendants found in the cutaway corners of the gable roofed extension at the front of the house. In place of turned wooden posts, the wrap-around veranda is supported by brick piers set atop brick pedestals. The building, clad in drop siding, does utilize a diamond window as a traditional Queen Anne element, with the remaining windows being simple 1/1 light, double hung sashes.

The Queen Anne influence on the circa 1900 Folk Victorian residence at 806 N. Drane Street (Photo 32) is found in the overall configuration of the building and the narrow, square wood columns with their “sunburst” spindle brackets. A similar decorative motif is found in the gable facing Drane Street. The building is clad in drop siding, has an exterior brick chimney and features 2/2 light double hung sash windows.

**Colonial Revival Houses**

With the Centennial Exhibition of 1876 in Philadelphia, America began a romance with its architectural roots that continues to this day. People were seeking a purely “American” architecture to nourish their patriotic pride. It was natural that they should look back to the house types constructed during the colonial era and the first years of the republic. There are two basic types of Colonial Revival buildings, those that are historically accurate reproductions and those—which became more common—were free interpretations of the Queen Anne house (absent its florid decoration) with a few grafted on Georgian details, such as classical columns and Palladian windows. A number of residences in the district feature at least some Colonial Revival Style elements or accents.

Perhaps the most distinctive example of Colonial Revival styling within the district is the sole example of the Dutch Colonial Revival at 808 W. Reynolds Street (Photo 33). Built circa 1920, this wood frame, two-story residence has the distinctive gambrel roof typical of this variation of Colonial Revival architecture. The building is sheathed in novelty siding and has a shed-roofed veranda supported by tapered, square wooden columns linked by a simple balustrade

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on the main facade. The windows are paired, 1/1 light double hung sashes.

One large house in the district that clearly combines Colonial Revival details in a Queen Anne frame work is the two-story residence at 702 W. Reynolds Street (Photo 48) which was constructed in 1913. Its asymmetrical bays, vertical emphasis, and varied roof forms place the residence in the lineage of the Queen Anne tradition. The full-width veranda with its classical columns and turned balustrade, the dentils under the wide soffit of the main roof, and the main entrance with its side lights and transom are, however, drawn from the Colonial Revival vocabulary.

A fine example of a more "classical" variation of the Colonial Revival style found in the district is the one and a half story residence at 607 W. Baker Street (Photo 51), which was constructed circa 1914. The house has a steeply-pitched side gable roof, with a large cross gable dormer centered over the center bay of the full width veranda. The cross gable is flanked by two smaller gable dormers. The three-bay veranda is supported narrow Tuscan columns that frame the main facade. The main entrance consists of a centrally located wood paneled door flanked by sidelights and surmounted by a shallow pediment. The entranceway is flanked by paired, 6/6 light double hung sash windows.

**Other Residential Styles**

There are no significant numbers of other Post-Victorian house types found in the historic district. There is only one example of Tudor Revival, a house at 905 W. Mahoney Street (Photo 49) constructed c. 1937. The one and a half story residence is constructed of brick, has a steeply-pitched gable roof, with an intersecting front-facing gable near the main entrance, which is enclosed in its own small gabled pavilion. The gabled roof dormers are constructed of wood. All of the principal windows in the house are multi-light metal casements with jack arches surmounting the window heads. A small metal hood shelters the main entrance door.

There are only three examples of Mediterranean Revival houses in the district (see building list) none of which merit consideration for individual description. There are also several residences constructed between 1946 and 1948, like the one at 812 W. Mahoney Street (Photo 52) that could be classified as minimal traditional. Such houses are usually of masonry construction, often combining materials such as concrete block, stucco, and fieldstone. They often have narrow eaves, are commonly one-story in height and tend to spread out on a long axis across the lot, commonly the case in so-called "Ranch" houses. The fenestration can vary in size

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and configuration, but often consists of metal frame casements or awning windows. There may be a large field stone chimney, or the chimney may be completely absent because of the introduction of central heating. Such houses normally rest on a low concrete slab foundation, and roof pitches tend to be shallow.

**Non-Residential Architecture**

The only notable example of non-residential architecture in the historic district include a church and the three building that comprise the former Plant City High School Agricultural Department. The Iglesia De Dios Pentecostal (Photo 46), a small brick Romanesque Revival style building at 400 Baker Street that was constructed circa 1931. The church is constructed of dark red brick and has a gable roof covered with asbestos shingles. There is a parapeted end wall flanked by buttresses on the main (south) facade. The building features round arched windows with stained glass and an apsidal extension at its rear.

There is a much older church in the vicinity, the Gothic Revival St. Peter's Episcopal Church at 302 N. Carey Street (Photo 45) which was constructed in 1908. Unfortunately, the building can not be considered as a contributing resource in the district. The church was moved from its original downtown location in 1953 and was enlarged and extensively altered during various "renovations" extending from the 1960s to the 1980s.

The main building of the former Agricultural School at 703 Thomas Street (Photo 35) is a one-story, Colonial Revival style school house constructed circa 1926. It has a gable roof that rests on a continuous concrete block foundation. The T-shaped structure has a 5-bay extension that projects forward (east) from the rear of the building. The central entrance bay is covered by a gable roof and is flanked by short wings that have flat, deck roofs. The rear section of the building is side-gabled and has a small cupola vent rising from the center of the roof ridge. The main entranceway is sheltered by an arched hood supported from the wall by brackets. The main fenestration is 6/6 light double hung sash windows. The original drop siding on the exterior of the building has been covered with aluminum siding that resembles weatherboard. The building today is used as offices by the Hillsborough County Board of Education.

There are two outbuildings associated with the site. One (photo 36) is a long and narrow wood frame building that was used for classes. It is one story in height and has a gable roof covered with corrugated metal sheeting. The building is sheathed in drop siding and the windows are 2/2 light double hung sashes. The paired wood and glass entrance doors found at the center

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of the main facade are protected by a shed-roof hood supported by wall brackets. The other (photo 38) is a one-story wood frame building with a hip roof. The exterior material is also drop siding. The main entrance is a wood paneled door located at one side of the main facade. All of the windows have been covered with plywood sheeting. Both outbuildings are presently vacant.

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BUILDING LIST

**CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS**

<u>Address</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Style</u>	<u>Original Use</u>	<u>Current Use</u>
<u>W. Baker Street</u>				
400	c. 1931	Romanesque Revival	Church	Church
408	c. 1914	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
501	c. 1947	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
505	c. 1947	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
506	c. 1921	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
601	c. 1914	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
602	c. 1910	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
606	c. 1901	Folk Victorian	Residential	Residential
607	c. 1914	Colonial Revival	Residential	Residential
702	c. 1914	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
706	c. 1922	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
707	c. 1919	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
803	c. 1929	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
804	c. 1921	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
805	c. 1940	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
807	c. 1929	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
808	c. 1907	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
809	c. 1918	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
901	c. 1934	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
902	c. 1914	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
906	c. 1923	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
908	c. 1919	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
1001	c. 1921	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
1003	c. 1922	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
1005	c. 1948	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
1007	c. 1922	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
1018	c. 1907	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
1102	c. 1910	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
1202	c. 1908	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential



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W. Chipman Street

409	c. 1925	Mediterranean Rev.	Residential	Residential
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N. Clark Street

807	c. 1915	Folk Victorian	Residential	Residential
901	c. 1914	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
907	c. 1926	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
1101	c. 1910	Folk Victorian	Residential	Residential
1003	c. 1925	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
1004	c. 1925	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
1101	c. 1910	Folk Victorian	Residential	Residential

N. Daniels Street

303	c. 1945	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
505	c. 1925	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
506	c. 1929	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
507	c. 1929	Bungalow	Residential	Residential

N. Davis Street

103	c. 1925	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
104	c. 1926	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
106	c. 1948	Masonry Vernacular	Residential	Residential
107	c. 1919	Bungalow	Residential	Residential

West Devane Street

403	c. 1918	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
407	c. 1915	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
408	c. 1918	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential

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N. Drane Street

508	c. 1900	Folk Victorian	Residential	Residential
602	c. 1917	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
606	c. 1907	Folk Victorian	Residential	Residential
806	c. 1900	Folk Victorian	Residential	Residential
818	c. 1910	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
1104	c. 1941	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential

N. Franklin Street

101	c. 1919	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
102	c. 1914	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
104	c. 1914	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
207	c. 1887	Folk Victorian	Residential	Residential
301	c. 1926	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
308	c. 1930	Masonry Vernacular	Residential	Residential
400	c. 1930	Frame Vernacular	Service Station	Vacant
506	c. 1917	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
510	c. 1926	Bungalow	Residential	Residential

W. Granfield Street

1103	c. 1948	Minimal Tradition	Residential	Residential
1105	c. 1919	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
1106	c. 1948	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
1107	c. 1920	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
1108	c. 1925	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
1109	c. 1920	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
1111	c. 1920	Bungalow	Residential	Residential

W. Herring Street

408	c. 1922	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
508	c. 1925	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
603	c. 1929	Mediterranean Rev.	Residential	Residential

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W. Herring Street (cont.)

701	c. 1926	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
703	c. 1936	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential

N. Howard Street

101	c. 1910	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
105	c. 1919	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
104	c. 1919	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
203	c. 1925	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
206	c. 1922	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
301	c. 1921	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
305	c. 1921	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
407	c. 1922	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
503	c. 1930	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
505	c. 1910	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
507	c. 1919	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
509	c. 1919	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential

W. Mahoney Street

404	c. 1909	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
504	c. 1922	American Foursquare	Residential	Residential
507	c. 1914	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
508	c. 1922	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
601	c. 1923	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
602	c. 1914	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
608	c. 1927	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
807	c. 1940	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
808	c. 1925	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
812	c. 1948	Minimal Traditional	Residential	Residential
901	c. 1927	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
902	c. 1925	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
905	c. 1937	Tudor Revival	Residential	Residential
1002	c. 1925	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential

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W. Mahoney Street (cont.)

1006	c. 1925	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
1007	c. 1921	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
1008	c. 1925	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
1101	c. 1922	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
1105	c. 1947	Fame Vernacular	Residential	Residential

W. McLendon Street

405	c. 1939	Masonry Vernacular	Residential	Residential
407	c. 1939	Masonry Vernacular	Residential	Residential
502	c. 1914	Folk Victorian	Residential	Residential
602	c. 1914	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
604	c. 1910	Folk Victorian	Residential	Residential
702	c. 1948	Minimal Traditional	Residential	Residential
802	c. 1910	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
805	c. 1924	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
808	c. 1919	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
902	c. 1925	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
905	c. 1919	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
906	c. 1925	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
907	c. 1919	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
908	c. 1919	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential

N. Pearl Street

102	c. 1925	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
106	c. 1925	Bungalow	Residential	Residential

W. Reynolds Street

404	c. 1924	Romanesque Rev.	Church	Church
501	c. 1901	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
506	c. 1914	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
507	c. 1921	Bungalow	Residential	Residential

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W. Reynolds Street (cont.)

508	c. 1922	American Foursquare	Residential	Residential
601	c. 1901	Folk Victorian	Residential	Residential
603	c. 1922	American Foursquare	Residential	Residential
606	c. 1913	American Foursquare	Residential	Residential
701	c. 1907	Colonial Revival	Residential	Residential
702	c. 1913	Colonial Revival	Residential	Residential
707	c. 1914	Colonial Revival	Residential	Residential
708	c. 1922	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
801	c. 1911	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
803	c. 1906	Folk Victorian	Residential	Residential
808	c. 1920	Colonial Revival	Residential	Residential
810	c. 1915	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
812	c. 1914	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
902	c. 1919	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
903	c. 1919	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
904	c. 1919	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
905	c. 1921	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
906	c. 1919	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
907	c. 1925	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
908	c. 1920	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
1002	c. 1925	Colonial Revival	Residential	Residential
1004	c. 1907	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
1102	c. 1917	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
1104	c. 1921	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
1106	c. 1921	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
1110	c. 1924	Masonry Vernacular	Residential	Residential

W. Saunders Street

305	c. 1926	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
306	c. 1919	Colonial Revival	Residential	Residential
307	c. 1926	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
401	c. 1926	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
404	c. 1919	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential

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W. Tever Street

305	c. 1919	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
401	c. 1919	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
403	c. 1919	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
404	c. 1910	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential

N. Thomas Street

207	c. 1909	Folk Victorian	Residential	Residential
405	c. 1940	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
407	c. 1914	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
501	c. 1914	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
503	c. 1925	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
505	c. 1924	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
507	c. 1924	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
509	c. 1930	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
601	c. 1925	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
703	c. 1926	Colonial Revival	School	Offices
703 A	c. 1931	Frame Vernacular	School	School
703 B	c. 1931	Frame Vernacular	Outbuilding	Outbuilding

N. Walker Street

101	c. 1909	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
103	c. 1909	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
104	c. 1908	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
406	c. 1939	Masonry Vernacular	Residential	Residential
406½	c. 1939	Masonry Vernacular	Residential	Residential
502	c. 1945	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
504	c. 1925	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
506	c. 1925	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
507	c. 1910	Frame Vernacular	Residential	Residential
508	c. 1925	Bungalow	Residential	Residential
509	c. 1948	Minimal Traditional	Residential	Residential
605	c. 1925	Colonial Revival	Residential	Residential

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BUILDING LIST

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**CONTRIBUTING SITES**

Agricultural Field, 700 Block, N. Thomas Street

**NONCONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS**

W. Baker Street

507  
905  
906  
907  
1000  
1005  
1009

N. Carey Street

202-204

W. Chipman Street

408

N. Daniels Street

509

N. Davis Street

107½

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W. Devane Street

401  
402  
404

N. Franklin Street

406  
504  
512

W. Herring Street

503  
506  
604  
605  
608

N. Howard Street

504

W. Mahoney Street

406  
407  
506  
803  
908  
1001  
1003  
1004



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W. McLendon Street

302  
501  
503  
503 1/2  
508  
603  
608  
704  
806

N. Pearl Street

105  
114

W. Reynolds Street

811  
909

W. Saunders Street

501  
502

Sunset Road

402

N. Thomas Street

301  
501  
607

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N. Thomas Street (cont.)

802

N. Walker Street

401

406

505

510

607

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**SUMMARY**

The Downtown Residential District is locally significant under Criteria A and C in the areas of Community Planning and Development, Architecture, and Education. The district encompasses the largest historic residential area of the city and developed between 1887 and 1948. The contributing resources date from the period of 1887 to 1948. The district contains a variety of residential architectural styles mainly representative of the Post-Victorian, the majority of the house being erected between 1901 and 1937. The development of the neighborhood reflects the organic growth of Plant City, spurred by the economic opportunities made possible by the improvement of transportation resources provided by the railroad. The district is also significant in the area of vocational education because of the establishment of the Hillsborough County Agricultural School, founded to assist high school students and area farmers in learning the latest techniques in raising crops and managing livestock. The original school buildings and agricultural field are still extant.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The 1880s were a turning point for the settlement of Hillsborough County, which had been only sparsely settled before the coming of the railroad. Although the Tampa Bay region had been known to the Spanish as early as the sixteenth century, it was not settled by persons of European descent until 1824, when the U.S. Army established Fort Brooke near the mouth of the Hillsborough River. A trading post and small community that grew up in the vicinity of the fort became "Tampa."<sup>1</sup> Hillsborough County was carved out of Mosquito County in 1834. Of the earliest pioneers, there are no above-ground remains, and their existence is known only through official records. The population for all of Hillsborough County in 1840 was only 452. Approximately 360 of these persons resided in the fledgling settlement of Tampa. Hillsborough County at the time included the present counties of Pinellas and Sarasota. In 1854, a delegation of settlers from the southern part of the county met with the county commissioners in Tampa and asked that a new county be formed from the southern part of the existing one, to be called Manatee. This new county was officially formed on January 9, 1858.

The population of Hillsborough County had grown to 3,000 by 1860, and the majority of the residents lived in the rural part of the county, raising cattle for export to Cuba and Key West,

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<sup>1</sup> Durward Long, "Making of Modern Tampa: A City of the New South, Florida Historical Quarterly. XLIX (April, 1971), 334.

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or engaging in the cultivation of such Southern staples as cotton, sugar cane, and rice. Any new settlement of the area between 1861 and 1865 was halted by the Civil War. The random, slow-paced trend of small-scale settlement continued during the first decade after the Civil War, with many of those who migrated to the county homesteading 40-acre plots. As from the beginning, accessibility was the major obstacle to development. There was no adequate means of moving people and goods. The shallow waters of Tampa Bay hindered shipping, and no move had been made to improve port facilities at Tampa. So poor were transportation facilities that by 1880 the population of the county was in a state of decline. The population of Tampa, the only settlement of any consequence, was 720.<sup>2</sup>

Of enormous importance to the development of Tampa, and of other parts of Hillsborough County as well, was the completion in early 1884 of that portion of the South Florida Railroad linking Tampa with Jacksonville and points north. The project was the brainchild of Henry Bradley Plant. He had begun his investment in railroads in the 1870s, with the purchase of several short lines which he consolidated. By 1881, Plant had opened a line into Florida linking Jacksonville with Savannah. His main goal was to construct a railroad network along Florida's west coast eventually connecting Jacksonville with the island city of Key West. The existence of rail transportation made possible the establishment of the citrus industry and extensive truck farming in the fertile farmland of eastern Hillsborough County. The discovery in the county of large deposits of phosphate, used in the making of commercial fertilizer, promoted the development of widespread mining operations that were wholly dependent on the railroad and the deep-water port facilities constructed by Henry Plant at Port Tampa at the south end of the Hillsborough Peninsula. Towns like Seffner, Dover, and Plant City sprang up almost overnight, eclipsing communities that were bypassed by the railroad. Between 1880 and 1900, the population of the county increased nearly sevenfold from 5,814 to 35,012.<sup>3</sup>

**HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE**

**The Founding of Plant City**

In 1883, in anticipation of the arrival of the railroad, Henry L. Mitchell of Tampa purchased 40 acres of land in what is now the heart of Plant City from Thomas Wheeler. Mitchell soon acquired additional tracts of property and, allied with other business associates, formed the

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<sup>2</sup> Long, 334.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, population.

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“Tampa Syndicate” to develop real estate in the vicinity of the point where the South Florida Railroad and Tropical Florida Railroad lines were to intersect. Shortly thereafter, Mitchell bought an additional 15 acres directly joined to the 40 acres he had already purchased. In November of the same year, Mitchell had his land surveyed and platted as a town by Lewis E. Warren, giving it the name “Plant City” in honor of the railroad magnate that had made its existence possible. Several north/south street names were given names recognizing the members of the Tampa Syndicate. East/west street names included Mahoney, Reynolds, and Drane recognizing men who were in some way connected with the railroad lines connecting Plant City with the outside world.

By the end of 1883, the South Florida Railroad was making four trips daily between Tampa and the small settlement established by Mitchell and his associates. On January 23, 1884, the first through passenger train from Sanford to Tampa passed through Plant City.<sup>4</sup> On January 10, 1885, the residents of the small community voted to incorporate, officially naming it the “Town of Plant City.” The initially incorporated area was one mile square, with the west boundary being what is today Carey Street and the northern being at what is now Calhoun Street. Among the men who voted for incorporation were those for whom streets would be named, including Baker, Calhoun, Wheeler, McLendon and Franklin, most of which are found in the district.

The coming of the railroad had the desired impact. By the fall of 1885, Plant City was actively involved in the shipping business. The railroad connected the Port of Tampa with Jacksonville via the St. Johns River route. Goods were brought from as far away as DeSoto County for shipping through Plant City’s rail station. Among the products initially shipped by rail were lumber, naval stores, cotton, oranges, vegetables, and cattle. The population of Plant City in the year 1885 was no more than a few hundred, but it had grown to approximately 2,000 by the time of the 1905 census. In December of 1886, the city government granted a second railroad company, the Florida Railway and Navigation Company, the right to lay a track within the downtown, but it would be 1889 before work on the line was completed.<sup>5</sup> By 1887, Plant City had 13 stores, four hotels, three steam sawmills, a grist mill, a money-order post office, and express and telegraph offices. The town already had three churches, the Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian.

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 66-67.

<sup>5</sup>Bruton and Bailey, Plant City: Its Origin and History, 83-88; Robinson, History of Hillsborough County, Florida, 67-68.

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The combination of strategic location, fertile soils, and the railroad helped Plant City become an important agricultural center. Citrus production had been a growing economic base in Hillsborough County as early as 1880, reporting the highest count in southwestern Florida with 18,683 trees. Plant City developed as an orange packing center, shipping 100,000 boxes of oranges in 1892; but in 1894 and 1895, severe freezes killed or damaged most of the state's orange groves. These disasters significantly injured the growing local Plant City economy. Citrus growers in the area had lost their crops, and the shipping business was adversely affected. There was a general decline in business.<sup>6</sup> A means for rejuvenating the local economy after the freeze was sought, and the planting of strawberries was pursued. Seen initially as a temporary measure, the raising of the fruit proved profitable, and the number of acres devoted to its production grew rapidly. Strawberries, still one of the community's major industries, earned Plant City the title of "Winter Strawberry Capital of the World."

The Warnell Lumber and Veneering Company gave Plant City one of its first non-agricultural industries after locating there in 1898. The company took advantage of the vast timber resources in central Florida, acquiring 25,000 acres of forest land in Hillsborough, Polk, and DeSoto Counties. By 1901, the company employed approximately 300 workers to manufacture baskets and crates for shipping strawberries, citrus, and vegetables grown in Hillsborough County. The company remained in operation until 1920. Another important business concern that provided stimulus to the Plant City economy in its early years was the Roux Lumber Company. Starting as a small business in 1903, the company grew within a few years to occupy a five acre site just south of the commercial core of the city. Equipped with a modern planing mill and novelty works, the mill supplied rough and dressed lumber to all parts of Florida.

The City grew as a municipality, letting \$10,000 in improvement bonds in 1902 to provide for street paving and the installation of a water works. During this same period, a state bank was established, and the Plant City Ice and Power Company was organized to provide electric power for lighting and for the running of machinery and to produce ice to keep strawberries and other produce fresh as they waited shipment by rail. That same year brought the first local telephone service through the founding of the Peninsular Telephone Company. On July 4th and October 16th 1907, large fires devastated the business district, destroying many of the wood frame commercial buildings. The conflagration prompted the city fathers to require that new

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<sup>6</sup>James W. Covington, The Story of Southwestern Florida (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1957), 342-345.

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commercial buildings erected in the downtown area be constructed of brick and other types of “fire proof” materials. The fires did no harm to the surrounding residential areas.<sup>7</sup> A new charter passed in 1911 reincorporated the Town of Plant City as the City of Plant City.

**The Florida Boom, 1921-1926**

The Florida real estate boom that caused frenzied land speculation in coastal cities such as Miami Beach, Palm Beach, and Sarasota between 1921 and 1926 did not have the same impact on inland communities, but some of its energy spread to cities like Plant City, where the development of new residential subdivisions was undertaken by eager speculators hoping to capitalize on the rapid flow of new settlers moving to the state. The speculation in residential real estate was also tied to optimism about the future commercial development of land, particularly that used for the cultivation of citrus, strawberries and other agricultural enterprises. Although new home construction in Plant City did not compare with that taking place in nearby Tampa, the boom period of the 1920s represented a period of previously unparalleled growth for the community.

By 1920, Plant City was recognized as the largest inland shipping point in Florida, with 50 to 60 trains per day passing through it. Plant City was second only to Jacksonville as the largest railroad distribution point and junction in the state. This was exemplified by the 44 passenger trains passing through daily during the winter tourist season. By 1928, Plant City was at the hub of six railroads, including the main lines of the Atlantic Coast Line and the Seaboard Air Line and their subsidiaries. This transportation advantage made Plant City a strategic location for shipping the area’s agricultural products. It was in 1920 that Plant City officially became the “World’s Winter Strawberry Capital.” Even rural school schedules were set to permit students to help with planting and harvesting, and the term “strawberry schools” was coined. The population of the city increased from 3,729 in 1920 to over 6,600 in 1925.<sup>8</sup>

**Hillsborough County Agricultural School**

Plant City was continuing to develop its identity as an agricultural production and shipping center. Adding to its prominence in this field was the Hillsborough County Agricultural School,

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<sup>7</sup>Plant City Council Minutes, 4 July 1907; “October Fire Believed To Have Begun In Herring Dry Goods Store,” Tampa Morning Tribune, 16 October 1907.

<sup>8</sup>Robinson, History of Hillsborough County, Florida, 82-85; Bruton and Bailey, Plant City: Its Origin and History, 136-140.

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often referred to as the Agricultural Department of Plant City High School. On February 7, 1921, the City Council voted to buy approximately nine acres of land near Plant City High School west of Wheeler Street to “use as a demonstration farm in the agricultural department of the school.” The purchase price was \$3,500. This site and its remaining buildings are located within the historic district.<sup>9</sup>

The demonstration farm was established soon after the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act, which supported agricultural education in high schools across the country. Starting in 1921 with eighteen students, the agricultural school roster had increased by 1928 to approximately 100 students taking day classes, and several hundred participating in night sessions. The course of education was aimed at providing vocational education to students not regularly enrolled in the main school. Any boy 14 years of age or older was eligible to attend. The evening courses were designed primarily for adult farmers who sought instruction in modern farming methods.

A school building was erected in 1926 by the county government, which also provided equipment necessary to operate the farm. Associated buildings included a dairy barn, milk house, poultry houses, and a plant nursery. The federal government, through the Smith-Hughes Act, provided \$3,000 annually to be used for instructors’ salaries. The county paid for transporting students who lived outside the local area. During the 1920s, fifty percent of the students who had participated in the program went on to pursue agriculture as their livelihoods, while twenty percent continued their studies at the University of Florida.<sup>10</sup> Although the agricultural program is no longer in existence at the site, the school building, two auxiliary structures, and the agricultural field are still in existence and remain under the ownership of the Hillsborough County School Board.<sup>11</sup>

Courier Park, across the street from the old Agricultural School, had been used as the site for physical education classes for Plant City High School since the mid 1920s. In earlier years, the field had been the site for lectures, programs and traveling shows held under the Chautauqua forum. A. P. Cook, the editor of the local newspaper, The Courier, was responsible in 1944 for leading the effort to raise \$3,000 to purchase the site for the Hillsborough County School Board. The field was named “Courier Field” in honor of the editor’s efforts to officially secure the site for

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<sup>9</sup>Plant City Courier, 8 February 1921.

<sup>10</sup>Robinson, History of Hillsborough County, Florida, 84-85.

<sup>11</sup>Plant City Enterprise, 11 September 1931.



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public use.<sup>12</sup>

**The Great Depression Era**

Following the "Florida Boom" came the inevitable "bust", as large numbers of speculators were unable to honor their contracts or meet financial obligations. Before Florida could recover from its real estate collapse, the Great Depression followed with the stock market crash of 1929. Plant City merchants found it necessary to extend their customers additional time to pay off debts, since many local residents soon were out of work and unable to provide their families with basic needs. The Hillsboro Bank was the only Plant City bank to weather the financial storms. Despite the hardships caused by the Great Depression, there was a level of progress which proceeded in Florida. Techniques for the processing of citrus products were developed; forest industries were revived by a scientific forestry program, and the eradication of the Texas fever tick which had devastated the cattle industry was carried forward.<sup>13</sup>

Plant City survived the depression with the help of credit extended by the Hillsboro Bank to the farmers. The city's identity as a community with an agricultural base continued, with increased emphasis on citrus and egg production. The "work programs" fostered by the federal government during the 1930s aided the area, including the promotion of cooperative marketing of farm products. By 1938, Plant City had been designated a "state market" which was completed and opened on March 9, 1939. It had three 600 foot sheds, an administration building, a service station, two warehouses, and a storage shed. The principal building, the auction shed, was the largest in the state and one of the largest in the country.<sup>14</sup>

Like the rest of the country, the economy of Plant City began to recover swiftly after America entered World War II. Many citizens were inducted into the armed services, and others went to work in the war industries that sprang up in nearby Tampa. Agricultural workers were given exemptions to the draft and continued in their role of producing foodstuffs and raw material essential for conduct of the war effort.

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<sup>12</sup>Plant City Courier, 24 March 1926; 11 January 1946; Bruton and Bailey, Plant City: Its Origin and History, 249.

<sup>13</sup>Dodd, Florida, The Land of Romance, 70; Bruton and Bailey, Plant City: Its Origin and History, 128-131.

<sup>14</sup>Bruton and Bailey, Plant City: Its Origin and History, 213-217.

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**Post World War II Era**

The post-war era saw the general decline of Plant City as a general transportation center. Passenger rail traffic began to fall off sharply with the construction of the interstate highway and other major road systems in the state. Civilian airport facilities also grew rapidly, and rail as a means of moving people from one place to another had become largely obsolete by the 1960s.

The result of all of these changes was that Plant City grew very little in population between the 1930s and 1960s. Residential construction continued barely at a rate to replace houses lost to attrition. New growth began to increase during the 1970s with the opening of Disney World and other nearby tourist attractions. By the 1980s, Plant City was becoming a bedroom community for Tampa, and the yearly strawberry festival also began to attract increased tourism to Plant City itself. The establishment of two National Register districts in the 1990s, and the implementation of the city's Main Street program, has done much to revitalize the local economy and promote interest in preserving and renovating Plant City's historic architectural resources.

The story of Plant City from its founding in the 1880s through the 1940s has as a continuous thread, the dependence on and expansion of its agricultural base. While the coming of Henry B. Plant's railroad created a town site, it was agriculture which profited most by its presence, allowing Plant City to become a major shipping center for agricultural products. It was advantageous to grow crops in surrounding areas because a ready market was made available by the presence of a transportation system. The railroad freed this inland town and allowed it to prosper and capitalize on its fertile lands.

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The architectural history of the Downtown Plant City Historic Residential District is told through the styles of its buildings, reflecting changes in aesthetic taste and economic conditions that were taking place in many American communities from the late 1880s to the late 1940s. Social and aesthetic attitudes are embodied in a declining preference for ornament and a growing propensity for efficiency and comfort in the design of houses. The types of residences erected in the historic district during the period of significance are those constructed for an urban population no longer directly dependent on a rural agricultural economy, but involved in a variety of economic pursuits that make living in close proximity to one another more attractive. The district has a distinct sense of time and place, and is clearly distinguishable from Plant City's other two

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districts in size of area, number of structures, and visual character.

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**Boundary Description**

The official boundaries of the Downtown Plant City Historic Residential District are those shown on the accompanying district map.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries of the Downtown Plant City Historic Residential District include, as far as possible, all the surviving architectural resources associated with the development of the residential neighborhood between 1887 and 1948.

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2. Plant City, Hillsborough County, Florida
3. Lisa Parks
4. 1996-1997
5. City of Plant City, Office of Historic Site Administrator
6. 700 Block of N. Drane Street, Looking West
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