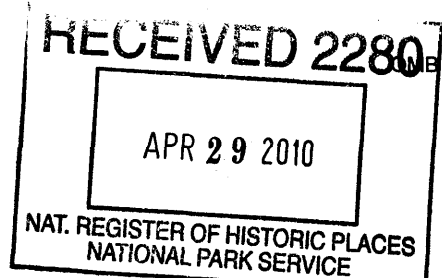


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



344

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

1. Name of Property

historic name UPPER NORTH FRANKLIN STREET COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Bounded by E Oak Av, N Florida Av, Kay St, & N Tampa St N/A  not for publication

city or town Tampa N/A  vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Hillsborough code 057 zip code 33605

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.)

Barbara C. Mattick / DSHPO 4/22/2010  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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) \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall 6-9-10  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
14	5	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
14	5	total

**Name of related multiple property listings**

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

1

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/Library  
 COMMERCE/TRADE/Auto Dealership  
 COMMERCE/TRADE/Auto Dealership  
 COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store  
 COMMERCE/TRADE/Auto Supply Shop

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/City Government Offices  
 SOCIAL/Civic/Salvation Army  
 COMMERCE/TRADE/Night Club  
 COMMERCE/TRADE/Vacant/Not in Use  
 VACANT

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE/Masonry Vernacular  
 LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Classical Revival;  
 Mediterranean Revival  
 MODERN MOVEMENT/Commercial Style; Moderne

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete  
 walls Brick  
 Stucco  
 roof Tar and Gravel  
 other Glazed Tile

**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)

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

c. 1915-1946

**Significant Dates**

1915

**Significant Person**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Arch: James, Fred &amp; Kennard, Francis J.

Blder: Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References****Bibliography**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of Repository

# \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 12 apprxx.

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

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

3 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |  
Zone Easting Northing  
4 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 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 Stephanie Ferrell FAIA/Carl Shiver, Historic Preservationist  
organization Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation date April 2010  
street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 South Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6333  
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.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

UPPER NORTH FRANKLIN STREET COMMERCIAL DISTRICT  
TAMPA, HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA  
DESCRIPTION

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**SUMMARY PARAGRAPH**

The Upper North Franklin Street Commercial District encompasses an approximately 12-acre area located immediately south of the Tampa Heights Historic District which was listed in the National Register in 1995. The district contains 20 buildings, 15 of which contribute to the historic character of the district and 5 of which are noncontributing. The majority of the contributing resources are commercial buildings constructed between c. 1915 and 1946. The boundaries extend southward from the intersection of North Franklin Street and Oak Avenue four blocks to the intersection of Kay Street. The majority of the contributing properties lie along the east side of North Franklin Street in the blocks bounded by North Franklin Street and North Florida Avenue. All of the buildings are of masonry construction and exhibit characteristics of several styles, including Masonry Vernacular, Mediterranean Revival, and Moderne. Although the architects and builders of most of the buildings are not known, the Old Tampa Free Public Library (National Register 1991), constructed in 1915, was designed by Tampa architect Fred James, and the former Rialto Theater, constructed in 1924, was designed by Tampa architect Francis J. Kennard. Both men were prominent architects in Tampa during the early decades of the 20th century and have several National Register listed properties to their credit. Although some of the historic buildings in the district area have suffered serious alterations and demolition has claimed a number of buildings, particularly along the west side of North Franklin Street, the historic district retains much of the ambience that made it an important commercial area before the Post-World War II period. Noncontributing buildings comprise those constructed between c. 1915 and 1946 that have been altered to the extent that their historic appearance is no longer clearly evident and those that were constructed after 1946. Only one noncontributing building in the district is less than fifty years old.

**SETTING**

The Tampa Bay metropolitan area, which includes the cities of Tampa, St. Petersburg, Clearwater, and their extensive suburban areas, has a population of over 3,000,000 permanent residents. Located in the western part of central Florida, Tampa is situated at the mouth of the Hillsborough River on Tampa Bay—an inlet to the Gulf of Mexico. The city is the seat of Hillsborough County, a leading phosphate shipping port, and a major center of finance and large bank holding companies and investment firms. With its nearby beaches and other attractions, sporting facilities, and semi-tropical climate, many tourists each year add substantially to the economic vitality of the area. Tampa today is a city of more than 382,000 persons, making it the 54th largest city in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The Upper North Franklin Street Commercial District is located approximately four blocks north of the North Franklin Street Historic District, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2002. The area between the two districts is occupied by a large two-story municipal building at 1313 North Tampa Street constructed in 1978, a vast vehicle parking area and—more importantly—an east-west section of Interstate 275, which exists to serve traffic to and from the downtown area.

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<sup>1</sup> Tampa, Florida, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tampa,\\_Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tampa,_Florida).

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 2

UPPER NORTH FRANKLIN STREET COMMERCIAL DISTRICT  
TAMPA, HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA  
DESCRIPTION

Originally, the area of the Upper North Franklin Street Commercial District was a mainly residential neighborhood associated with the Tampa Heights neighborhood. Electric trolleys connected the Tampa heights with the principal shopping areas of 7th Avenue in Ybor City and that portion of Franklin Street that ran through the downtown Tampa business district. The dividing line between the central business district and the residential area of North Franklin Street was Fortune Street, now the northern boundary of the North Franklin Street Historic District. The municipal government offices, department stores, banks, theaters, professional offices, major hotels, drugstores, and other draws for general shopping were mainly concentrated south of Cass Street. North of Cass Street, the commercial character of Franklin Street changed, being home to paint and building supply stores, home appliance outlets, drug stores, restaurants, hotels, and rooming houses. The dominating resource in the North Franklin Street Historic District was the Arlington Hotel, constructed in 1910, which today serves as a major commercial office building. North Franklin Street north of Fortune Street became increasingly commercial beginning c. 1913, but some single family dwellings were still found along North Franklin Street north of Kay Street as late as the mid-1920s, and the parallel portions of North Florida Avenue and North Tampa Street remained largely residential until the 1950s. Most of the buildings constructed along North Florida Avenue and North Tampa Street between 1915 and 1945 were demolished during the 1960s around the time Interstate Highway 275 linking Tampa with St. Petersburg was constructed through the area. I-275 divided North Franklin Street into its upper and lower sections, resulting in the creation of the Upper North Franklin Street Commercial District (Photos 1-2) as an area preserving historic commercial buildings originally associated with the expansion of downtown Tampa during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

**DESCRIPTION**

THE BUILDINGS

**Old Tampa Free Public Library**, 102 East 7th Avenue, Florida Master Site File 8HI00126

The **Old Tampa Free Public Library** (Photo 3) at 102 East 7th Avenue, constructed c. 1915, is a one-story Neoclassical Revival style building. The masonry building is faced with yellow and brown brick resting upon a rusticated granite basement. It features a terracotta tile and built-up roof. Its main classical elements are contained in the grand central entrance consisting of Tuscan columns that support a cast stone entablature and a cornice and stepped parapet framed by massive brick pilasters at the outer edges of the frontispiece. The building, designed by Tampa architect Fred James (1870-1932), was built through a \$50,000 Carnegie grant and was completed on June 30, 1915. The opening, however, was delayed until 1917 due to a lack of books. A photograph of the newly-opened library was taken by Burgert Brothers Photographers in 1919 (See **Attachment 1**). A new Tampa Public Library was dedicated April 21, 1968.<sup>2</sup> The former library served for a time as the home of the Exceptional Children Education Center, and then was left vacant for a number of years.

<sup>2</sup> American Towns—Tampa, <http://www.americantowns.com/fl/tampa/organization/john-f-germany-public-library-main-branch>.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 3

UPPER NORTH FRANKLIN STREET COMMERCIAL DISTRICT  
TAMPA, HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA  
DESCRIPTION

The building, owned by the City of Tampa, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1991. Rehabilitated in 1999, it now serves as the office of the Division of Code Enforcement for the City of Tampa.

**Azalea Lounge**, 1502 North Florida Avenue, Florida Master Site File 8HI11483

The **Azalea Lounge** (now the Chelsea Nightclub) at 1502 North Florida Avenue (Photo 4) was constructed in 1925 as a Shell Service Station, but the restrictions placed on the sale of gasoline and automobile tires by the U.S. government in January 1942 to preserve vital resources needed for use by the military in World War II forced the station out of business. It was one of three service stations in the neighborhood. The other two were subsequently demolished. The small building was purchased in 1942 and converted into the Azalea Lounge and Liquor Store. The gas pumps and canopy at the front of the building were removed and the north and south canopies were enclosed to provide a bar and dining area.<sup>3</sup> The one-story yellow and red brick building still retains its original hip roof, and the piers of the north and south service bays of the former service station are still visible. Today, after more than 60 years, the building is still the location of a nightclub, which features a bar, pool tables, a jukebox, and karaoke entertainment.

**Florida Radiator Service Building**, 1506 North Florida Avenue, Florida Master Site File 8HI11484  
(Noncontributing)

According to the Hillsborough County Property Appraiser, the **Florida Radiator Service Building** at 1506 North Florida Avenue (Photos 5-6) was constructed in 1945. It is a simple concrete block building that has a rectangular footprint, and a flat, built-up roof. Its concrete block walls are devoid of stucco, paint, or signage. The 1931 Sanborn Maps show the lot as having a two-story, wood frame, single family dwelling.<sup>4</sup> The 1951 revised edition, however, shows the present building.<sup>5</sup> Most of the windows and doors have been enclosed with concrete blocks. The building currently is being used as warehouse storage by the owner of the building at 1613 North Franklin Street. Despite being more than fifty years old, the building has minimal value as a contributing resource in the historic district.

**Holtsinger Motor Company Building**, 1512-1514 North Florida Avenue, Florida Master Site File 8HI05594

The three-story **Holtsinger Motor Company Building** at 1512-1514 North Florida Avenue (Photo 7), constructed c. 1926, originally housed the Smith Chevrolet Company. It appears in a Burgert Brothers photograph taken in 1927 (See **Attachment 2**). By 1936, it had become the Holtsinger Motor Company owned by Clarence Hotsinger (1898-1988). The Masonry Vernacular building features stucco-covered exterior walls.

<sup>3</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Tampa, Florida (Vol. 1, New York, Sanborn Map Company, 1951), p. 34.

<sup>4</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Tampa, Florida (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1931), p. 34.

<sup>5</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Tampa, Florida (Vol. 1, New York, Sanborn Map Company, 1951), p. 34.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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UPPER NORTH FRANKLIN STREET COMMERCIAL DISTRICT  
TAMPA, HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA  
DESCRIPTION

The Commercial style building today houses the Tampa Family Health Center operated by the Salvation Army. The building no longer features its large showroom display windows, but the pilasters framing them are still evident. A projecting molded cornice defines the shaped parapet that tops the east facade and north elevation of the building. The signboard of the building set into the center of the parapet on the east facade has raised lettering that reads "Holtsinger 1926;" however, the lettering originally read "R.K. Lau 1926" and was undoubtedly replaced when Holtsinger took over the Chevrolet dealership in the 1930s.

**Franklin Printing Company Building**, 1532-1534 North Franklin Street, Florida Master Site File 8HI11487

The **Franklin Printing Company Building** at 1532-1534 North Franklin Street (Photo 8) appears on the 1915 edition of the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps,<sup>6</sup> which show that the building at that time contained five storefronts, two of which were occupied by the Franklin Printing Company. Other businesses in the building were a bicycle shop and a mattress factory. A Burgert Brothers photo of the building taken in 1924 (See **Attachment 3**) shows a brick Masonry Vernacular building with a plain facade exhibiting traditional storefronts, a sheet metal canopy supported by wooden brackets, and a corbelled brick parapet. The only major exterior alterations to the building were made during the late 1920s or early 1930s, when the building was given its existing decorative parapet and the wood and metal canopy suspended by metal brackets. A Chinese restaurant and a retail restaurant supply shop now occupy the building.

**Dunlap Tire and Rubber Company Building**, 1542-1544 North Franklin Street, Florida Master Site File 8HI11488

The **Dunlap Tire and Rubber Company Building** (Photo 9) was constructed c. 1926, as indicated by a Burgert Brothers photo (See **Attachment 4**) showing the still unoccupied building abutting its neighbor at 1532-1534 Franklin Street. The photo reveals a brick Masonry Vernacular building with three storefronts, a suspended wood and metal canopy, above which are clerestory windows, and a corbelled cornice surmounted by frieze panels and a plain parapet. One of the first tenants of the building was the Dunlap Tire and Rubber Company, which sold new automobile tires and retreaded worn ones.<sup>7</sup> Other occupants of the building included a paint supply store and a wholesale refrigeration supplies store.<sup>8</sup> The appearance of the facade remains much the same today, except that the storefronts and the clerestory windows are no longer visible because they have been covered with plywood panels. An oriental gifts and furniture business now occupies the building.

<sup>6</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Tampa, Florida (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1915), p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> Tampa City Directory, 1928.

<sup>8</sup> Sanborn Maps, 1931-1951, Page 33.



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UPPER NORTH FRANKLIN STREET COMMERCIAL DISTRICT  
TAMPA, HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA  
DESCRIPTION

**Coarsey & Bower Auto Dealers Building**, 1601 North Franklin Street, Florida Master Site File 8HI11489

The **Coarsey & Bower Auto Dealers Building** (Photo 10) was built in 1920 for the Paige Automobile Dealership, which was listed in Tampa City Directory in 1921. The dealership sold cars manufactured by the Paige-Detroit Motor Car Company, which was among the seemingly myriad brands of automobiles marketed in the first two decades of the twentieth century. In 1922, the building housed the showroom for Coarsey & Bower Auto Dealers, a company that sold Oakland Automobiles, an early General Motors product.<sup>9</sup> This one-story masonry building located at the northeast corner of Franklin and Estelle streets is a vernacular interpretation of the Italian Renaissance Revival style. The masonry construction is similar to most of the commercial buildings dating from the 1920s along Franklin Street in Tampa but is somewhat more elaborate in its detailing. Five brick pilasters capped by cast concrete capitals divide the west facade into four storefront bays. Similar pilasters divide the southern facade into two bays. The building is the best preserved of the commercial buildings found in the historic district, retaining all of its original storefronts and fenestration, which can be seen in a Burgert Brothers photo taken in 1921 (See **Attachment 5**). A suspended wraparound canopy shelters the main facade and the two bays on the south elevation of the building. A stylized entablature is supported by storefront pilasters on both the west and south sides of the building. A metal cornice crowns the entablature, above which is a parapet wall with inset brick panels having ceramic tiles at the corners. Atop the parapet is a smooth coping of grey concrete. Inset panels similar to those on the main facade are found between the pilasters beneath the entablature on the south elevation. In addition to the storefront display windows, the fenestration consists of a series of fixed multi-pane clerestory windows found immediately above the canopy and twelve sets of hopper windows found immediately beneath the entablature.

**Vintage Auto Building**, 1609 North Franklin Street, Florida Master Site File 8HI03656

The **Vintage Auto Building** (Photo 11) is a one-story commercial building located on the east side of North Franklin Street between Estelle and Henderson streets. The brick building was constructed c.1920 for the Traffic Truck Sales Company. A 1921 Burgert Brothers photograph (See **Attachment 6**) shows that the building at 1601 North Franklin Street had not yet been constructed. At the time, the building exhibited a typical storefront sheltered by a suspended canopy, three bays of clerestory windows, a tall frieze with an inset panel surrounded by brick, and a brick-coped parapet higher in the middle than at the sides. By 1931, the facade had been changed to its present appearance to more closely complement the facades of its neighboring buildings. The building is Masonry Vernacular in style, and the street facade is faced with a smooth yellow brick. The facade exhibits three bays: a central entry bay flanked by two larger bays that were originally storefront windows. The parapet is stepped with an angled central element, all with a cast stone coping. Three rows of corbelled brickwork edge the inner lip of the parapet coping. A single concrete lintel spans across all three bays. The building was renovated in 2009 using the federal tax incentives for rehabilitating historic

<sup>9</sup> Floyd Clymer, Treasury of Early American Automobiles, 1877-1925 (New York: Bonanza Books, 1950), p.166.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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UPPER NORTH FRANKLIN STREET COMMERCIAL DISTRICT  
TAMPA, HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA  
DESCRIPTION

commercial buildings using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The National Park Service determined that the plan for the building's rehabilitation and the completed work met the Standards.

**Webster-Daniels Auto Parts Building**, 1613 North Franklin Street, Florida Master Site File 8HI03657

The **Webster-Daniels Auto Parts Building** (Photo 12) was constructed in 1921 as the Traffic Truck Sales Building,<sup>10</sup> but by 1931 had become the home of Webster-Daniels Auto Parts and the McFadden Tire Company, a dealer in Brunswick Tires (See Attachment 7). The building can be classified as Masonry Vernacular with some Mediterranean Revival details. Brick pilasters divide the street facade into three major bays. A modern entry door with burglar bars is found in the center bay. Six eyebolt anchors are set into the front of the building, but it is unclear if they were ever used to support a canopy. Three horizontally oriented inset stucco panels adorn the surface of the otherwise undecorated upper facade. Multi-colored ceramic tiles are set into the panels. The storefront and main entranceway have been filled in with concrete block. The building is significant as a contributing building in the historic district in the areas of Commerce and Architecture. It is one of the buildings constructed for the purpose of housing auto and truck dealerships and later auto parts and tire stores.

**Rialto Theater**, 1621 North Franklin Street, Florida Master Site File 8HI00778

The former **Rialto Theater** (Photo 13), constructed in 1924, was designed by Francis J. Kennard, one of Tampa's most prominent architects in the 1920s. The former movie theater has the usual rectangular ground plan of a standard Masonry Vernacular commercial building and is constructed of the same yellow brick that is the distinguishing feature of other commercial buildings along North Franklin Street. Stuccoed concrete blocks fills the three bays that originally housed the loggia and ticket kiosk on the street level of the building. The facade is divided into three sections by pilasters containing bands of blue and white ceramic tile. By 1929, the theater ceased having live performances,<sup>11</sup> showing only motion pictures. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) did stage some plays here in the 1930s, then the theater reopened as a privately owned movie house in 1939 under the name of the Cinema Theater, although the signage remained unchanged. A Burgert Brother photograph taken in 1943 ( See Attachment 8) shows a playbill outside the theater advertising the full-length documentary film We Are the Marines, released in 1942.<sup>12</sup> The theater continued in operation until 1959, when the Holtsinger Motor Company bought the building to use as storage space. In the 1970s, the building became an armature repair and service shop, which closed in 2005. In 2007, three investors proposed turning the former theater into a swank members club for business and social networking. The proposed club, Print, would have a ground floor, mezzanine and rooftop level available for members. It would rent space to the public for wedding

<sup>10</sup> Tampa City Directory, 1922; The trucks were manufactured by the Traffic Trucks Corporation in St. Louis from 1921-1928.

<sup>11</sup> Actress Frances Langford (1913-2005) was one of the performers appearing at the Rialto Theater before going to Hollywood to star in movies.

<sup>12</sup> "We Are the Marines," <http://www.answers.com/topic/we-are-the-marines>.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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UPPER NORTH FRANKLIN STREET COMMERCIAL DISTRICT  
TAMPA, HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA  
DESCRIPTION

receptions, nonprofit fundraisers, corporate programs and presentations, and film festivals. No action has taken place to date.

**Holtsinger Motor Company Service Garage, 1631 North Franklin Street, 8HI11491 (Noncontributing)**

The **Holtsinger Motor Company Service Garage** (Photo 14) does not appear on the 1931 edition of the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, but the garage building appears in the 1939 edition of the Tampa City Directory, with its address at 203 Henderson Avenue.<sup>13</sup> It does not appear in the Sanborn Maps until the 1951 edition (See **Attachment 9**). Notes in the footprint of the building describe it as a steel-framed concrete block building with a concrete floor and 12 skylights. The North Franklin Street elevation exhibits aluminum and glass double entrance doors set in a deep recess and a vehicle bay that has been enclosed with concrete block. Six large aluminum vents occupy the ridge of the sheet metal roof. A second enclosed vehicle bay is found in the center of the north elevation, and a ghost of the sign "Holtsinger Motor Co." can still be seen at the bottom of the sheet metal roof gable. Major changes appear to have been made to the Franklin Street elevation, particularly the enclosure of the entrance bays. The stucco on the exterior walls also does not appear to be an original feature.

**Frederick P. Farris Company Building, 1701 North Franklin Street, Florida Master Site File 8HI5593**

The **Fredrick P. Farris Company Building** (Photos 15-16) was constructed in 1924. The building appears in Burgert Brothers Photograph the same year (See **Attachment 10**). The 1928 Tampa City Directory lists Frederick Farris Autos at 1701 North Franklin Street, and the building also appears on the 1931 edition of the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.<sup>14</sup> By 1935, however, the location had become the home of the Humphrey Motor Company, under the management of Clarence Eugene Humphrey (1891-1970), a dealer in Dodge, Plymouth, and DeSoto automobiles. The two-story brick building is Masonry Vernacular with some Mediterranean Revival details. Like some of its neighboring buildings, it is constructed of yellow brick. Although the display and clerestory windows on the first floor have been filled in, the original bays are still clearly evident. The decorative tile in the spandrels and frieze have also been preserved, and the shaped parapet with its central pediment remains unchanged. The Humphrey Motor Company moved to a new home at 1512-1514 North Florida Avenue in 1939, and the building at 1701 North Franklin Street became the headquarters for several local labor unions. Today it is the home of the Havana Club, a local nightclub.

<sup>13</sup> Polk's Tampa City Directory (Jacksonville, FL: R.L. Polk & Co., Publishing), p. 769.

<sup>14</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Tampa, Florida (New York: Sanborn Map Company), p. 45.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 8

UPPER NORTH FRANKLIN STREET COMMERCIAL DISTRICT  
TAMPA, HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA  
DESCRIPTION

**Tampa Auto Trimming Company**, (Photo 17) 1715 North Franklin Street, Florida Master Site File 8HI11492  
(Noncontributing)

The 1931 edition of the Sanborn Maps shows this lot as vacant. The building first appears in the 1949 edition of Tampa City Directory as the **Tampa Auto Trimming Company**, which outfitted automobiles with specialty items such as chrome metal trim and new paint jobs. This metal frame building has sheet metal walls and roof. It is shown on the 1951 revision of the Sanborn Maps as a metal frame building. The building's present exterior walls may even date from a later period and does not visually contribute to the character of the historic district.

**Oliva Tobacco Company and J.A. Suarez & Company Tobacco Importers Building**, 1717-1719 North Franklin Street, 8HI11541

This building was originally occupied by the **Olivia Tobacco Company and J.A. Suarez & Company Tobacco Importers** (Photo 18). Constructed c. 1922, the 1931 Sanborn Maps indicate that the building at 1717 North Franklin Street was a one-story masonry building containing two retail store units, one of which was vacant and the other containing an upholstery shop. Although the storefronts of this one-story brick building have been enclosed, the major bays of the original units are still visible, being separated by the wall pilasters that terminate above the plain cornice of the straight parapet. The frieze panels above the storefronts also remain intact. The building has a flat built-up roof and abuts the buildings at 1721 and 1715 North Franklin Street.

**Penn Motor Company Building**, 1721 North Franklin Street, Florida Master Site File 8HI11542  
(Noncontributing)

This **Penn Motor Company Building** (Photo 19) was constructed c. 1917 as the home of the Penn Motor Company which sold Cord and Auburn automobiles.<sup>15</sup> By 1939, it was being used as a storage building for Holtsinger Motors,<sup>16</sup> and in 1949 it became the body shop for Humphrey Motors.<sup>17</sup> The 1931 Sanborn Maps show that both the building at 1721 North Franklin Street and the one 1610 North Florida Avenue housed the operations of the Penn Motor Company. The sales department show room and offices were found on Franklin Street and the service garage was located on Florida Avenue. Today it is the location of Robertson Billiard Supplies. Despite the sign on the canopy over the main entrance, Robertson Billiard Supplies has only been at this location since the early 1960s, when the Franklin Street Facade was modernized. What remains of the 1917 building is unclear, since no photos of the building from that era have been found. The one-story concrete block building has a rectangular ground plan. Its exterior walls are covered with smooth stucco, and it has a

<sup>15</sup> Polk's Tampa City Directory. Jacksonville, FL: R.L. Polk & Co., Publishing, 1928.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 1939.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 1949.

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gable on hip roof. The Franklin Street facade has five irregularly spaced fixed glass windows, and the main entrance features aluminum and glass double doors. There are three sets of paired fixed glass windows on the north elevation and a side door near the northeast corner of the building. A narrow alley fitted with a wrought iron gate separates the Franklin Street portion of the property from the rear building at 1610 North Florida Avenue. That building, which was also radically changed, lies outside the district boundaries.

**Neil's Auto Supply Building**, 1805 North Franklin Street, Florida Master Site File 8HI11543

The **Neil's Auto Supply Building** (Photo 20) is a small, one-story Masonry Vernacular building constructed in 1945. It has several details derived from the Art Deco style, including the cantilevered concrete eyebrow that shelters the main storefront entrance and vehicle bay. The exterior walls are surfaced with smooth stucco, and the building is covered with a flat tar and gravel surfaced roof that is bordered by a low plain parapet. A typical retail storefront is located on the north half of the main facade. Plate glass display windows flank a recessed entranceway that consists of glass and aluminum double doors surmounted by a single light transom. The walls of the storefront bay feature quoined concrete panels, red glazed tile borders the display windows and a band of black glazed tile is found beneath the windows bordering the building wall and the sidewalk. The modern vehicle bay door is flanked by two shallow rectangular niches. These may have been purely decorative or held light fixtures or some sort of signage. The building was until recently the home of Lotus Television of Tampa, a bilingual broadcast station targeting the Hispanic market, delivering a mix of original productions filmed in Tampa. It is now vacant.

**Hillcliff Hotel**, 1806 North Franklin Street, 8HI00171

The **Hillcliff Hotel** (Photo 21) appears on the 1915 edition of the Sanborn Maps.<sup>18</sup> The 1922 edition of the Tampa City Directory gives the location as the home of the Hillcliff Hotel, which occupied the upper two floors of the building. The first floor featured two storefronts that had a number of tenants over the years. A Florida Master Site File Form for the building filled out in November 1982 lists the building as vacant. The rehabilitation of this building was undertaken in 2009 by the Giant Oil Corporation, a wholesaler of petroleum products, for use as its headquarters. They used the ten percent tax credits available for buildings built on or before 1936 that are not individually listed in the National Register and do not contribute to a National Register listed historic district. The two-story Masonry Vernacular red brick building has a rectangular ground plan and a three-bay facade at the street level consisting of two storefronts and a central doorway that provides access to stairs leading to the second floor. The second story features a full-width shed-roofed veranda with a deck that rests on metal pipe columns. The building has a flat, built-up roof with a stepped parapet on the main facade. The building has semi-arched windows on all elevations.

<sup>18</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Tampa, Florida (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1915), p. 57.

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**Tampa Plating Works Building**, 1813 North Franklin Street, Florida Master Site File 8HI11548

The **Tampa Plating Works Building** (Photo 22) was constructed around 1939. The Masonry Vernacular building has a somewhat Art Deco appearance because of the cantilevered concrete slab eyebrow found over the entranceway. The building was originally used to house movie film and is today the home of Tampa Plating Works.

**Par Steel Shelving Company Building**, 1605 North Tampa Street (Noncontributing, 1981)

The **Par Steel Shelving Company Building** (Photo 23) first appears in the Tampa City Directory in 1981. The one-story brick and concrete block building has a flat built-up roof and a single-bay storefront sheltered by a cantilevered concrete eyebrow. The building is now used as an annex for the Oceanic Supermarket at 1609 North Tampa Street.

**American Leather Goods Building**, 1609 North Tampa Street, Florida Master Site File 8HI11544

The **American Leather Goods Company Building** (Photos 24-25) was constructed in 1946 and appears in a Burgert Brothers photograph taken in November of that year (See **Attachment 11**). The 1931 Sanborn Maps show this property as being occupied by a one-story wood frame residence. Kay Street at the time came to a dead end at the east side of North Tampa Street. The Wholesale Leather Company building appears on the 1951 edition of the Sanborn Maps. The Art Deco style building still retains many of the features of its street facade, including its storefront and window bays, eyebrow canopy, and its shaped parapet and grooved central pylon. At an undetermined date, a two-story stuccoed concrete block addition was constructed on its south elevation. The building is presently occupied by the Oceanic Supermarket, which sells oriental groceries, seafood, and gifts.

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BUILDING LIST

**List of Contributing Buildings**

\* denotes a resource that is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places  
+denotes numbers for site files yet to be completed

<u>Address</u>	<u>Present Use</u>	<u>Style</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>FMSF #</u>
<u>East 7th Street</u>				
*102	Government	Neoclassical Revival	c. 1915	8HI00126
<u>North Florida Avenue</u>				
1502	Commercial	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1925	8HI11483+
1514	Residential	Commercial Style	c. 1926	8HI05594
<u>North Franklin Street</u>				
1532-1540	Commercial	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1915	8HI11487+
1542-1544	Commercial	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1926	8HI11488+
1601	Commercial	Commercial Style	c. 1920	8HI00777
1609	Commercial	Mediterranean Revival	c. 1920	8HI03656
1613	Commercial	Mediterranean Revival	c. 1921	8HI03657
1621	Former Theater	Mediterranean Revival	c. 1925	8HI00778
1701	Entertainment	Mediterranean Revival	c. 1924	8HI05593
1717-1719	Commercial	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1922	8HI11541+
1805	Commercial	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1945	8HI11543+
1806	Commercial	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1915	8HI00171
1813	Commercial	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1939	8HI11548+
<u>North Tampa Street</u>				
1609	Commercial	Art Moderne	c. 1946	8HI11545+

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BUILDING LIST

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**Noncontributing Buildings**

<u>Address</u>	<u>Present Use</u>	<u>Style</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>FMSF #</u>
<u>North Florida Street</u>				
1506	Commercial	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1945	8HI11484+
<u>North Franklin Street</u>				
1631	Repair Shop	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1936	8HI11491+
1715	Commercial	Metal Vernacular	c. 1949	8HI11492+
1721	Commercial	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1917	8HI11542+
<u>North Tampa Street</u>				
1605	Commercial	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1981	N/A



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**SUMMARY PARAGRAPH**

The Upper North Franklin Street Commercial District is significant at the local level under Criteria A and C in the areas of Commerce and Architecture. In the area of Commerce, the majority of the buildings in the district were mainly occupied by businesses dealing with the sale of new and used automobiles, auto parts, tires, and providing automotive service and repairs. Under Criterion C, the commercial buildings reflect styles and types that were popular in Tampa during the period from c. 1910 to c. 1945. These include distinctive examples of Neoclassical Revival, Mediterranean Revival, Moderne, and Masonry Vernacular buildings. Although many buildings in the area were demolished during the late 1950s and early 1960s and most of the remaining historic buildings have either suffered alterations or are vacant, most have retained distinctive features of their architectural styles.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Explored by the Spanish as early as the 16th century, the Tampa area was first settled in 1824 with the establishment of Fort Brooke by the U.S. Army at the mouth of the Hillsborough River in what is now downtown Tampa. The trading post and small civilian community that sprang up next to the fort was officially named Tampa in 1834. There is some dispute as to the origin and meaning of the name "Tampa." It is believed to mean "sticks of fire" in the language of the Calusa, a Native American tribe that originally populated the area. Although its population consisted mainly of military personnel during the Second (1835-1842) and Third (1855-1858) Seminole Wars, by 1858 Tampa had approximately 1000 inhabitants, and the town was dotted with houses, churches, and businesses. By the end of the Civil War in 1865, however, Fort Brooke had been deactivated, and the population of the settlement began to decline, dwindling to 720 by 1880.<sup>19</sup> In 1883, the old Fort Brooke military reservation was decommissioned and opened to civilian development, causing a brief flurry of real estate speculation.<sup>20</sup> The same year saw the completion of the South Florida Railroad linking Tampa with Jacksonville and the discovery of phosphate in Hillsborough County and the surrounding region. The discovery of the essential ingredient of commercial fertilizer would prompt the construction of major port facilities at nearby Port Tampa to ship phosphate to world markets and spark a new wave of settlement in the burgeoning community.<sup>21</sup>

Of greater importance was the decision by Vicente Martinez Ybor in 1886 to relocate his cigar making operations from the island city of Key West, Florida, to Tampa. He founded the independently incorporated

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<sup>19</sup> Durwood Long, "The Historical Beginnings of Ybor City and Modern Tampa," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, (XLV July, 1966), p. 32; Historic Tampa/Hillsborough County Preservation Board, "Seminole Heights Expansion-Hampton Terrace Survey and Registration Report," 1977, p. 9.

<sup>20</sup> Karl H. Grismer, *A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida*, St. Petersburg, FL: St. Petersburg Publishing Company, Inc., 1950), p. 169.

<sup>21</sup> Hampton Dunn, *Yesterday's Tampa* (Miami: E.A. Seemann Publishing, Inc., 1977), p. 18.

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community of “Ybor City” less than a mile northeast of downtown Tampa, and other cigar manufacturers from Key West quickly followed him. Within a year, Ybor City had become a thriving community within the shadow of downtown Tampa and soon was known as the “Cigar Capital of the World.” In 1887, Tampa amended its charter to annex Ybor City, raising the total population of the city to approximately 5,000.<sup>22</sup> The development of Tampa spread west of the Hillsborough River in 1886, when O.H. Platt purchased 20 acres of land from the Robert Jackson homestead and subdivided the land into residential lots, naming the area Hyde Park.<sup>23</sup> In 1888, Henry Bradley Plant extended his railroad across the Hillsborough River and pushed south to the tip of the Hillsborough Peninsula and established the town of Port Tampa.<sup>24</sup> Along with his rail efforts, Plant enhanced the downtown area when his luxurious multimillion-dollar Moorish style Tampa Bay Hotel opened its doors to patrons in 1891. With the establishment of West Tampa as a second cigar-producing center west of the Hillsborough River in 1894, Tampa’s population increased dramatically over the next several decades.<sup>25</sup>

In response to these developments, suburban residential neighborhoods in Ybor City, Tampa Heights, Hyde Park, and West Tampa slowly began to drain residents from the original city limits of Tampa, where houses were demolished to make way for commercial buildings in the constantly expanding business district.<sup>26</sup> In Tampa Heights and Hyde Park, large citrus groves were bought up by real estate speculators and subdivided, opening hundreds of acres for residential development.<sup>27</sup> Before the arrival of the South Florida Railroad, the commercial section of Tampa had been concentrated in an approximately eight city block area near the Hillsborough River along Whiting, Washington, Jackson, and Lafayette streets.<sup>28</sup> With the construction in 1888 of the first bridge over the Hillsborough River linking the original town with Hyde Park, the commercial center of Tampa began to shift to Franklin Street.<sup>29</sup>

The growth of downtown Tampa dramatically reflected the transformation of the city from a village marketplace to a vibrant mercantile center. The establishment of suburban neighborhoods marked not only the city’s outward expansion because of the rapid increase in population, but also the need to use the land in the original 1886 plat of Tampa for the construction of ever larger and more modern commercial and governmental buildings. In 1890, a new city hall was erected at a cost of \$10,000. In addition to housing the city’s administrative offices, it was also the headquarters for the police and fire departments.<sup>30</sup> A new Moorish style

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<sup>22</sup> Durwood Long, pp 38-39.

<sup>23</sup> Grismer, p. 187.

<sup>24</sup> Dudley S. Johnson, “Henry Bradley Plant and Florida,” *Florida Historical Quarterly*, (XLV, October, 1966), p. 124.

<sup>25</sup> *Tampa Morning Tribune*. April 27, 1894.

<sup>26</sup> Seminole Heights Survey and Expansion Report, p. 12.

<sup>27</sup> Grismer, p. 379.

<sup>28</sup> Hampton Dunn, *Yesterday’s Tampa*, p. 26.

<sup>29</sup> Grismer, p. 187.

<sup>30</sup> Gary R. Mormino and Tony P. Pizzo, *Tampa the Treasure City* (Tulsa, OK: Continental Heritage Press, Inc.), p. 145.

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courthouse was constructed the same year, but within little more than a decade Tampa's phenomenal growth would render both facilities inadequate. The Beaux-Arts city hall (NR 1974), constructed in 1915, is still used for city offices.<sup>31</sup> Prior to 1912, Tampa was served by three railroads and had two railway depots. The year 1912 saw the demolition of these stations to make way for the construction of the Beaux-Arts style Union Station (NR 1974), which consolidated all rail traffic into Tampa.<sup>32</sup>

A major obstacle to progress in Tampa at the turn of the 20th century was local transportation and the infrastructure to support it. Efforts made near the end of the 19th century to provide the downtown area with paved streets and sidewalks failed completely. Wooden sidewalks were installed and the streets were paved with cypress paving blocks covered with seashells. Rain caused the cypress blocks to swell and become dislodged. The shells disintegrated into powdery dust, and the sidewalks rotted and fell apart. Although downtown property owners wanted Tampa to grow so that their properties would become more valuable, they were against paying for civic improvements through taxation. In rainy weather the streets became rutted mires, and in dry weather the wind would whip the sand into blinding dust storms. By the end of 1900, the city council passed ordinances compelling downtown property owners to pay for paving the streets with brick and for constructing concrete sidewalks.<sup>33</sup>

A public transportation system was needed to allow people living in the new residential suburbs to work and shop in downtown Tampa. The citizens initially had to rely on private carriages, public horse-drawn coaches, and wagons to move back and forth from home to town. Other residents had no option but to walk. It was clear that the town could not continue to expand outward without a reliable street railway. The first street railway was constructed through the financing of Vincente M. Ybor and Edward Manrara, the founders of Ybor City. They needed a railway to connect their community with Tampa proper. They bought a controlling interest in the Tampa Street Railway Company, which had been incorporated in February 1885. The street railway, which used a wood-burning narrow gauge locomotive to pull open passenger cars was, completed in April 1886.<sup>34</sup>

The first electric streetlights came to Tampa in 1887. A small Westinghouse generator was brought in and two arc lights were put up on Franklin Street. The current was turned on for the first time on April 25, 1887. Unfortunately, the arc lights were not an unqualified success. The light they provided was brilliant but often sputtered and the distance between the carbon electrodes had to be reset frequently and the electrodes quickly burned away. Still, the city council ordered the installation of twelve more lights and ordered more powerful generators to operate them. The newly formed Tampa Electric Company began to install street lights with incandescent bulbs in 1899 and converted the locomotive street railway system to electric trolleys. When the

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<sup>31</sup> Many functions of the city government are located in the nearby city hall annex.

<sup>32</sup> Gary Mormino and Tony Pizzo, 146-147.

<sup>33</sup> Grismer, pp. 213-214.

<sup>34</sup> Grismer, pp. 190-191.

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company assumed control, the city's trolley system consisted of 21 miles of track.<sup>35</sup> In 1913, Tampa got a unified street car system. The Tampa and Sulphur Traction Company and the Tampa Electric Company merged, creating a line with 67 cars and 47 miles of track.<sup>36</sup>

The Introduction of Automobiles

The first self-driven motor vehicle made its appearance in Tampa in 1901. It looked like an ordinary carriage but had no horses pulling it. It moved at all of ten miles an hour, a terrific speed for the time. The contraption was a steam Locomobile—a buggy with an engine mounted in the back. The owner was Edward Manrara, one of Tampa's leading citizens. Although this first vehicle was a novelty, the automobile had come to stay. By 1902, Victor James, working in Fred Ferman's bicycle shop, had built a gasoline-powered car. Later in the year, the first Oldsmobiles and Cadillacs were seen in downtown Tampa.<sup>37</sup> This early appearance of autos in Tampa was remarkable because roads suitable for auto travel were almost nonexistent in most of Florida. The only roads the motorists had were little more than wagon trails where the primitive automobiles sometimes sank hub deep in sand or mud. Still, by 1906 there were more than 100 autos in operation in Tampa, and the owners organized Tampa's first automobile club.<sup>38</sup>

In 1913, the Hillsborough County government began the construction of hard-surfaced roads, most of which were paved with brick and were wide enough to let two vehicles pass each other. More than 75 miles of road had been constructed by the end of 1914. While the county was getting highways, Tampa acquired 85 miles of paved streets, the cost being assessed against the property owners benefiting from the improvements<sup>39</sup> Although buggies and wagons could still be seen on the downtown streets, it was clear that automobiles were beginning to dominate the scene. A Burgert Brothers photo of Franklin Street in 1922 (**Attachment 12**) shows automobiles parked on both sides of the street with an electric streetcar running down the middle of the street. Only wealthy Americans could afford an automobile at the beginning of the 20th century. Each car was hand-made and required skilled workmen to construct it. Some cars were produced by energetic hobbyists, but these one-of-a-kind vehicles were often unreliable, tending to break down without notice.

Even Henry Ford's early four-seat Model T cost \$850 in 1909 (equivalent to \$20,091 today) and competing cars sold for \$2,000-3,000 (equivalent to \$47,274-\$70,911 today). By the 1920s, due to the increase in the efficiency of the assembly line technique, the price of the Model T had fallen to \$290 (equivalent to \$3,191 today)—a price within reach of persons of modest income—because of increasing efficiencies of the assembly

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 215.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 240

<sup>37</sup> The 1902 Oldsmobile was a two passenger runabout that sold for \$650; the Cadillac which was similar in design sold for \$750.

<sup>38</sup> Grismer., 228.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 242-243

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line technique and volume.<sup>40</sup> Other automobiles began to make their appearance in Tampa during the first two decades of the 20th century, among them the Overland, Chevrolet, Oldsmobile, Buick, and REO, all of which competed for middle class customers. Automobile dealerships began to appear at various locations in or near downtown Tampa. The earliest dealerships did not have attractive buildings with car showrooms. The vehicles offered for sale were usually parked in a lot next to a service garage. The dealers did not initially try to compete directly with one another, and they did not always integrate repair services, auto parts, and tires with the sales of new and used cars. The approach to selling new cars would change in 1920, when some of the major vendors decided to congregate their operations to the new suburban location on North Franklin Street.

There had been little commercial construction along Franklin Street north of the downtown area prior to 1915. The area was still largely residential, extending north to Tampa Heights, a neighborhood founded at the end of the nineteenth century as the location of large homes for wealthy and prominent Tampa residents. By the beginning of the twentieth century, however, the city's leading citizens began to move to Hyde Park on the west side of the Hillsborough River, and Tampa Heights became an increasingly middle class area. Electric trolleys connected the large residential area with the principal shopping area of downtown Tampa. The about five blocks between what is now Kennedy Boulevard and Cass Street was the location of major department stores, banks, theaters, professional offices, major hotels, drugstores, and other draws for the general shopping public. Beginning about 1910, Franklin Street north of Cass Street, originally a near downtown residential area, became increasingly commercial in character.

The area north of Fortune Street—the northern boundary of the North Franklin Street Historic District—would remain largely residential until the real estate boom of the 1920s, which saw the creation of numerous new residential subdivisions north and west of downtown Tampa in the peninsula area. The commercial development of upper North Franklin Street began in earnest around 1915, slowly replacing residences that had been in existence prior to the construction of the Tampa Public Library in that year.<sup>41</sup> North Florida Avenue and North Tampa Street, however, would remain stubbornly residential, with only a few commercial buildings being erected throughout the historic period of 1915-1946 for the Upper North Franklin Street Commercial District. The first auto dealer to locate in the district was Coarsey & Bower (Photo 10) in 1920. The dealership sold cars manufactured by the Paige-Detroit Motor Car Company,<sup>42</sup> which was among the many brands of automobiles marketed in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Other dealerships soon followed, and vendors of motorcycles, auto parts, and tires began to build and occupy buildings in the area. The new dealers constructed impressive new buildings with auto showrooms, service garages, and used car lots to attract customers. Vendors of cars that proved unpopular soon went out of business, but subsequently their locations were often occupied by dealerships selling more appealing automobile brands.

<sup>40</sup> Ford Model T, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ford\\_Model\\_T](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ford_Model_T).

<sup>41</sup> Sanborn Insurance Maps of Tampa, Florida. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1915, pp. 18, 22, 57.

<sup>42</sup> The company built cars from 1909 to 1927, [http://www.wcroberts.org/Paige\\_History/1905\\_Introduction.html](http://www.wcroberts.org/Paige_History/1905_Introduction.html).

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By the mid-1920s, the area of North Franklin Street between Fortune Street on the south and Oak Avenue on the north had become principally commercial. New and used auto dealerships and repair shops began to replace businesses that had located there earlier, while others held their ground. Commercial enterprises included laundry services, upholsterers, wholesale outlets for a variety of products, a couple of rooming houses, and residential rooms for rent on the upper floors of the commercial buildings. The area did not feature many specialty shops selling clothes or any of the items found in the large chain department stores found in the center of downtown Tampa, although there was a Sears and Roebuck store located at 1702 North Franklin Street in 1928.<sup>43</sup> The only offerings for entertainment were a couple of small restaurants and the Rialto Theater, which had been built in 1926.

Signs of an economic slowdown in Tampa were evident as early as 1926, with the collapse of financial backing for the Davis Islands real estate venture, which involved the construction of a residential and commercial neighborhood near downtown Tampa on a series of man-made islands in Tampa Bay. The project was undertaken by Tampa native D.P. Davis, who had been involved in the development of Miami Beach a few years earlier. By the winter of 1926-1927, the saturation point for real estate development in both Tampa and Florida as a whole had finally been reached.<sup>44</sup> Tampa, however, was less seriously affected than many other Florida cities by the collapse of the real estate market that had begun in Miami Beach in 1925 at the very height of the boom.<sup>45</sup> Tampa was not wholly dependent on winter visitors or real estate promotion schemes, due in part to its diversified manufacturing and the stability of its cigar industry. By early 1928, the collapse was largely forgotten, although Tampa was not as prosperous as it had been before.

While the end of the boom did not deliver a death blow to Tampa's economy, the July 17, 1929, failure of one of the city's largest banks, the Citizens Bank and Trust Company, was the precursor of the financial crisis that was to come. A run on other Tampa banks followed immediately, shutting the Bank of Ybor, Franklin Bank, Lafayette Bank and the American State Bank of Tampa. The closure of these banks staggered Tampa's economy and was followed by the stock market crash in October 1929. Complete financial disaster was averted when three of Tampa's major banks quickly acted together. On orders from the Federal Reserve Bank in Atlanta, Georgia, arrangements were made to borrow \$4,000,000 from a large Jacksonville bank. The money was brought, in cash, to Tampa by airplane, and the run on local banks was brought to an end.<sup>46</sup> Still, the Great Depression, in Tampa, had begun. Thousands of winter visitors remained in their northern homes. Hundreds of firms laid off employees, and building activity in Tampa virtually ceased.

<sup>43</sup> Tampa City Directory, 1928.

<sup>44</sup> Grismer, p. 259.

<sup>45</sup> Charlton W. Tebeau, *A History of Florida* (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1971), pp. 385-386.

<sup>46</sup> Drew Park History, [http://www.tampagov.net/dept\\_economic\\_and\\_urban\\_development/programs\\_and\\_services/Community\\_redevelopment\\_areas/Drew\\_Park/History.asp](http://www.tampagov.net/dept_economic_and_urban_development/programs_and_services/Community_redevelopment_areas/Drew_Park/History.asp)

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Modern Tampa dates from World War II, which jump-started the city's economy that had been ailing throughout the 1930s. Tens of thousands of soldiers and civilian workers supported the war effort at Tampa's revitalized shipyards and at MacDill and Drew Army Air Force bases. By war's end, 25,000 soldiers had been trained locally to man the nation's B-17 and B-29 bomber fleets. The personnel at Tampa's shipyards reached 16,000, and payrolls exceeded \$750,000 a week.<sup>47</sup> Despite the positive effects of World War II on the economy of Tampa, the war very nearly ruined the retail auto sales basis of upper north Franklin Street. The federal Office of Emergency Management halted the sale of all new civilian passenger cars on January 1, 1942, effective for the duration of the war. Only automobiles manufactured in 1941 or earlier would be available for sale to the public. Compounding the problem was the institution of strict rationing requirements for the sale of gasoline and automobile tires. Many auto salesmen in Tampa and elsewhere immediately lost employment. The auto dealers in Tampa had been expecting a curtailment of business but no one expected such a drastic cut. The dealers would now have to depend on the sale of used cars and the repair and rebuilding of older auto models to stay in business.<sup>48</sup> Tire and gasoline theft immediately became a problem. The local rationing board set the monthly quota for the civilian purchase of tires for cars at 387. The price for retreading tires was set at \$7.00 to prevent gouging.<sup>49</sup>

This boom driven by the war, however, would come to an abrupt end shortly after the cessation of the conflict in 1945. It became clear that after the war's end Tampa's economic base was no longer going to rely on cigar manufacturing, since the demand for quality cigars had been declining steadily since the 1920s and the industry was largely bankrupt by 1938 as the demand for high-quality hand-made cigars dropped severely.<sup>50</sup> Shipbuilding would also be relegated to only a minor role in providing jobs locally. City leaders saw the promotion of business services and tourism as crucial to this goal.<sup>51</sup> What could not be envisioned, however, was that the activities undertaken to implement the rejuvenation plan would actually hasten the rapid decline of downtown Tampa—and particularly the Franklin Street corridor—as the major retail area of the city.

The dealers of the major auto brands on North Franklin Street and North Florida Avenue somehow managed to survive the economic difficulties of the war and resumed business in 1946, with customers eager to purchase new automobiles. In the rush to build post-war 1940s cars, few exterior changes were made to the 1942 models. Automobile design finally emerged from the shadow of World War II in 1949, the year that the United States saw the introduction of high-compression V8 engines and modern bodies from General Motors' Oldsmobile and Cadillac brands.

<sup>47</sup> Tampa the Treasure City, p. 176.

<sup>48</sup> Tampa Morning Tribune, January 3, 1942.

<sup>49</sup> Tampa Morning Tribune, January 7, 1942.

<sup>50</sup> Cigar City, [http://www.cigarcitymagazine.com/features/archive/v1i2/cigar\\_production.html](http://www.cigarcitymagazine.com/features/archive/v1i2/cigar_production.html)

<sup>51</sup> Robert Kerstein, "From Annexation to Urban Renewal: Urban Development in Tampa During the 1950s and 1960s," Tampa Bay History (Spring/Summer 1997), Volume 19, No. 1, p. 69.

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With war-time rationing at an end, Americans were eager to become full-time consumers again, prompting some citizens to purchase automobiles by redeeming the bonds issued by the U.S. government during World War II, when full employment collided with rationing, and war bonds were seen as a way to remove money from circulation as well as reduce inflation.<sup>52</sup> Living in the United States with a median income during World War II meant earning about \$2,000 a year. Despite the war's hardships, 134 million Americans were asked to purchase war bonds to help fund the war. Stamps also could be purchased, starting at 10 cents each, to save toward the \$25 cost of a bond. At the end of World War II, January 3, 1946, the last proceeds from the Victory War Bond campaign, totaling \$185.7 billion, were deposited into the U.S. Treasury. Those incredible results, due to the mass selling efforts helping to finance the war, have never since been matched. More than 85 million Americans — half the population—who had purchased bonds had access to savings they could use to purchase items that had been unavailable during the war, and some of them willingly redeemed their bonds before their ten-year maturation date to purchase new automobiles.<sup>53</sup>

The auto dealers on North Franklin Street and North Florida Avenue continued to operate in the same location until the late 1950s and early 1960s, but the neighborhood started to deteriorate rapidly, and their buildings looked old-fashioned and disheveled. The retail automobile business moved to major highway corridors in the rapidly expanding Tampa suburbs, and the repair shops and auto supply dealers soon followed or merely closed their doors permanently.<sup>54</sup>

Urban renewal projects involving the demolition of substandard housing units and commercial buildings that no longer met building code requirements resulted in the displacement of lower and moderate income citizens—primarily African Americans and Latinos who had traditionally lived in the vicinity of downtown Tampa—without producing any concurrent positive economic results.<sup>55</sup> Riverfront slums were bulldozed in 1963 and Ybor City's turn came in 1965. Ybor City was split apart by an urban renewal project. Seventy acres of the old city were leveled, including several hundred houses, one mutual aid society building, and a fire station. The construction of Interstate Highway 4 took up part of the leveled ground, but the rest was never redeveloped because federal funds and private investments did not materialize. West Tampa across the Hillsborough River, which had been annexed into Tampa in 1925, was gutted economically in the 1960s, when the cigar factories closed and split in two by the construction of Interstate I-275, which linked Tampa with St. Petersburg. It fell into further decline as its residents moved to new locations in Tampa's growing suburbs or out of the city altogether.

<sup>52</sup> U.S. War Bonds, <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1682.html>.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Tampa City Directory*, 1946-1970.

<sup>55</sup> Robert Kerstein, p. 69.



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An annexation bill passed by the Florida Legislature in 1953 resulted in a significant increase in Tampa's land area and population, more than doubling from 124,645 in 1953 to 274,000 in 1960.<sup>56</sup> The annexation adversely affected the economic viability of the downtown area, which began to decline. Retailers began to establish themselves in the burgeoning suburbs, which continued to exert their independence in spite of becoming part of the incorporated city. Major retailers such as Maas Brothers, S.H. Kress & Company, and F.W. Woolworth continued to maintain stores on Franklin Street into the 1970s and 1980s, but shifting market strategies would eventually make these business operations obsolete. Furthermore, the city government undertook "slum clearance" activities to condemn and remove deteriorated residential and commercial buildings along the banks of the Hillsborough River and in a large section of Ybor City north of the Seventh Avenue commercial center.

The reconstruction of the affected areas was to be provided wholly by the private sector, without any direct incentives for investment provided by the city or any other source of funding. This approach was shortsighted and disastrous for the commercial viability of Franklin Street.<sup>57</sup> Ironically, reports favoring the construction of the new highway systems spoke of them as potentially contributing to the rejuvenation of downtown, whereas they clearly had the opposite effect, opening up more possibilities for the development of suburban shopping malls and satellite communities that offered a broad spectrum of goods and services for their suburban residents.

The southern section of Franklin Street had featured the largest and most important banks and department stores and still today claims notable architectural landmarks, such as the Tampa Theater (N.R. 1978), the S.H. Kress and Company building (N.R. 1983), and the Floridan Hotel (N.R. 1996). However, many of the historic buildings in downtown now lie vacant, and some notable buildings have been demolished. The northern end of Franklin Street was home to more modest commercial enterprises, including automobile dealerships, auto parts stores, auto repair shops, and small family owned businesses. As Tampa's downtown began to decline in the 1950s, the small buildings along north Franklin Street began to be seriously affected by the concurrent decline of major downtown businesses. Suburban flight and downtown clearance policies for substandard buildings destroyed the commercial and residential threads of what was once a rich urban fabric. The exodus of major retailers to the suburbs diminished the commuter shopper population to the point that even the smaller niche specialty retailers along North Franklin Street could no longer survive. The recent trend of redeveloping that part of lower Franklin Street in the vicinity of the city governmental center along Kennedy Boulevard and on nearby Harbour Island<sup>58</sup> further isolated North Franklin Street.

<sup>56</sup> Robert Kerstein, "From Annexation to Urban Renewal," p. 72.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>58</sup> A 177-acre island in Hillsborough Bay found at the foot of Franklin Street that was originally a phosphate loading rail terminal that was redeveloped in the early 1990s to combine a hotel convention center, retail shopping facilities, up-scale single family dwellings, town homes, condominiums, and a private marina.

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During the late 1980s and early 1990s, a number of buildings in the North Franklin Street area were destroyed or seriously damaged by fire, sometimes as the result of arson,<sup>59</sup> often resulting in the demolition of the building. Other buildings suffered deterioration by neglect and were torn down to reduce the tax liability of an unprofitable property. Surprisingly, the remaining historic buildings began to take on greater value as some of the last vestiges of what was once a vibrant commercial and service section. North Franklin Street began to attract persons interested in redeveloping the area by taking advantage federal tax incentives for rehabilitating historic commercial buildings and the city of Tampa began to offer advantages to investors willing to redevelop blighted portions of the downtown commercial area.

The listing of the North Franklin Street Historic District in the National Register Historic District in 2002 renewed interest in redevelopment farther north along North Franklin Street. The commercial area located immediately north of the Tampa Central Business District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2002. The success of the ongoing economic revitalization of the North Franklin Street area was prompted by the renovation of the Old Arlington Hotel building using the Federal tax incentives. The district comprises eight buildings,<sup>60</sup> the last remnants of the historic buildings found in the city blocks between Cass and Fortune streets surveyed by the Historic Tampa/Hillsborough County Preservation Board in 1979. The key property was the old Arlington Hotel, constructed c. 1910, which in the 1990s was occupied by the Badcock Furniture Store.

The impressive facade of the hotel, with its full-width second story veranda and dramatic parapet had long since vanished. The renovation of the hotel, however, was the key to the successful listing of the small district in the National Register. Fortunately, the original storefronts sections of the ground floor of the building were still intact, and much of the interior of the building, especially on the second floor, remain largely unchanged from the era of the hotel's construction. Despite the loss of the Albany Hotel to fire in 2000, all but one of the remaining contributing resources have been renovated, and vacant lots have been filled with new construction that is compatible in appearance and scale with the remaining historic resources.

The success of the redevelopment of the North Franklin Street Historic District resulted in interest in seeking National Register listing for the Tampa Heights commercial area and prompted the proposed renovation of several buildings in the area, including the building at 1806 North Franklin Street, which was renovated in 2009 to regain its c. 1926 appearance using the ten percent tax credits. The building at 1609 North Franklin Street has been renovated using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation in anticipation of the listing of the Upper North Franklin Commercial District in the National Register. There are also anticipated plans for the renovation of the old Rialto Theater building, constructed c. 1924, also using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

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<sup>59</sup> Two of these were the Hayden Estate Building, constructed in 1903 and the Albany Hotel, constructed 1927.

<sup>60</sup> There are now only seven, the Albany Hotel, which stood vacant, was destroyed by fire.

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Developed in the 1920s, the Upper North Franklin Street area (the 1500 through 1800 blocks of N. Franklin) was once connected to the current North Franklin Street Historic District (the 1000 through 1200 blocks), but it became separated from that area by the construction of I-275 in the 1960s and by a state office building in the 1970s, which resulted in the closing of the intervening (1300 through 1400 block) portion of Franklin Street. In 2006, the City of Tampa, in cooperation with the State of Florida, reopened this portion of Franklin Street in a conscious effort to help stimulate the preservation and redevelopment of Franklin Street areas—both north and south of the Interstate. Several of the buildings in the North Franklin Street Historic District and in the proposed Upper North Franklin district have also been designated by the City of Tampa as historic landmarks, making additional local financial incentives available for their redevelopment, most at the property owners' request.

**ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT**

The Upper North Franklin Street Commercial District derives its architectural significance from its commercial buildings which reflect styles and types that were popular in Tampa from c. 1915 to c. 1946. This includes distinctive examples of Neoclassical Revival, Mediterranean Revival, Moderne, Commercial style, and Masonry Vernacular. The Mediterranean Revival and Neoclassical styles were predominant in the 1920s, while the Art Moderne style is typical of those buildings constructed in the 1930s and 1940s. The Masonry Vernacular buildings date throughout the whole period of significance. The district attains uniformity through the use of similar materials, facade types, and building height and width, reflecting the needs of the various businesses. This mixture of uniform materials and only slightly differing sizes create an atmosphere of cohesive variety. Although many of the contributing buildings have undergone some alterations, including replacement windows and storefronts, they retain their architectural integrity, which is reflected in the sense of place.

Neoclassical Revival

Neoclassical Revival is a style that was popular in the United States c. 1895-1935. It was spawned by the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago. The Exposition's "White City," as it came to be called, was a formal grouping of classical buildings created by some of the nation's most prominent architects and was viewed by millions of Americans. It re-instilled in the nation a belief in the classical ideal, which resulted in the unprecedented production of buildings with classical details. The style was particularly popular for public and institutional buildings such as courthouses, colleges, and libraries, as well as commercial structures, especially banks. The Old Tampa Free Public Library is one of the best examples of Neoclassical architecture in Tampa.

Commercial Masonry Vernacular

Masonry Vernacular commercial buildings in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were generally those erected by builders or contractors without any formal training in design; the individual would have been guided by a

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series of conventions built up in his locality, or by following general designs that had become common for the design of small commercial buildings throughout the country. The function of the building would have been the dominant factor; aesthetic considerations, though present to some small degree, were usually quite minimal. After the 1880s, when fires devastated commercial centers populated with wood frame buildings, commercial buildings were almost without exception constructed of masonry materials, which were considered more resistant to fire. By the beginning of the 20th century, the appearance of one- and two-story commercial buildings began to follow a formula for commercial “storefront” design. The buildings were constructed of brick or stucco covered concrete block. The walls rose to a parapet—usually corbelled or coped—that were somewhat higher than the main roof which was flat and covered with tar and gravel. The street level might have one or more commercial units that were often identical in appearance. Each unit would be bordered by masonry or metal piers that framed large display windows that flanked a central, often recessed, entranceway. Transom windows that provided additional natural light to the interior of the building were placed above the display windows and entrance. Molded panels called kick plates were often placed beneath the display windows. Most buildings featured a canopy or awning to shelter patrons from the sun and rain. Above the canopy, the building might have clerestory windows, and the upper facade might have recessed panels reserved for signage. The buildings at 1532-1534 and 1542-1544 North Franklin Street are examples of Commercial Masonry Vernacular buildings in the historic district.

Commercial Style

The Commercial style, which was popular from c. 1895-1930, developed in the late nineteenth century in response to the new technologies—in particular the electric elevator—that permitted greater height and larger expanses of open floor space. The style is sometimes termed the “Chicago Style” because of experimentation with the new forms of construction undertaken in the wake of the great fire that devastated much the city in 1871. Metal skeleton framing, first in cast and wrought iron, later in steel, was foremost among the new technological developments. Typically multi-story in height, the Commercial Style's character derives from its fenestration. Whereas load-bearing masonry walls admitted relatively few windows, the new structural skeleton permitted maximum light and ventilation. The fenestration pattern is usually regular with large divided rectangular windows. Like a classical column, commercial style buildings usually contain three parts. The first floor functions as the base, the middle stories act as the shaft, and the last story represents the capital, usually having ornamental details and capped with a cornice. The three-story Holtsinger Motor Company Building (Photo 7) at 1512-1514 North Florida Avenue is the building in the historic district that most closely fulfills this category.

Mediterranean Revival

The Mediterranean Revival style was an eclectic design style movement that was first introduced in the United States around the turn of the nineteenth century, and came into prominence in Florida during the 1920s.

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Architects August Geiger and Addison Mizner did much to popularize this style in Florida, which first made its appearance with the development of Miami Beach during the short-lived Florida real estate boom (1920-1927). The style also had a major impact in Tampa, which saw rapid growth during the boom era. Whole residential subdivisions were planned around the style, and the facades of buildings already constructed were given a “modern” veneer of Mediterranean Revival characteristics. Mediterranean Revival is generally characterized by stuccoed wall surfaces, flat or low-pitched terra-cotta and tile roofs, arches, scrolled or tile-capped parapet walls and articulated door surrounds. Further detailing is occasionally executed in a keystone. Facades were also decorated with glazed terra-cotta tile, especially bordering windows and applied to pilasters. The most notable examples of the style in the historic district are the former Rialto Theater (Photo 11) and the Frederick P. Farris Company Building (Photos 15-16) at 1701 North Franklin Street.

Art Moderne

A variation of the Art Moderne style is characterized by smooth, rounded wall surfaces, often stucco; flat roof with a small ledge at roofline; horizontal grooves or lines in walls (sometimes fluted or pressed metal); asymmetrical facade; casement/corner windows or other horizontally arranged windows; metal balustrades; and glass-block windows, often curved. Unlike the vertically oriented Art Deco, the emphasis of Art Moderne is on the horizontal. The largest collection of Art Deco and Art Moderne buildings in the United States is located in the South Beach area of Miami Beach. Most of the finest examples of buildings falling into the Art Deco and Art Moderne categories are concentrated along three parallel streets in Miami Beach—Ocean Drive, Collins Avenue, and Washington Avenue—from about 6th to 23rd streets. Significant examples are also found in other Florida cities that grew rapidly during the 1920s and 1930s. The examples in the Upper North Franklin Street Commercial District mainly exhibit such features as the eyebrow canopy, horizontal windows, and fluted panels.

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

One of the most important contributing resources in the district, the Classical Revival style Old Tampa Free Public Library at Building at 102 East 7th Street is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In January of 2002, Janus Research of Tampa, Florida, prepared the “Tampa Interstate Study (TIS) Background Description,” part of which reevaluated Tampa Heights Historic District to determine if any buildings in the existing Tampa Heights Historic District or other buildings historically associated with the Tampa Heights neighborhood would be impacted by potential changes to the Tampa Interstate Corridor along I-275. As part of this study, Janus Research prepared Florida Master Site Forms on six properties in the 1500 to 1700 blocks of North Franklin Street that might be considered eligible for either individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places or be considered contributing to a National Register historic district. The buildings documented were:

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1514 N. Florida Ave.	Residential	Commercial Style	c. 1926	8HI05594
1601 N. Franklin St.	Commercial	Commercial Style	c. 1920	8HI00777
1609 N. Franklin St.	Commercial	Mediterranean Revival	c. 1920	8HI03656
1613 N. Franklin St.	Commercial	Mediterranean Revival	c. 1920	8HI03657
1621 N. Franklin St.	Former Theater	Mediterranean Revival	c. 1925	8HI00778
1701 N. Franklin St.	Entertainment	Mediterranean Revival	c. 1945	8HI05593

According to the report, the building at 1601-1607 North Franklin Street appeared to meet the criteria for individual listing the National Register in the area of Architecture. The Master Site File Form described the building as local vernacular interpretation of the Italian Renaissance style. The remaining buildings were designated as potentially contributing to a National Register District. It is surprising that the report did not designate the building at 1701 North Franklin Street as potentially eligible for individual listing in the National Register. The building still retains many of its important architectural features. The report classifies the building as Masonry Vernacular, but it clearly exhibits definite features of the Mediterranean Revival style.

**COMMERCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Upper North Franklin Street Commercial District represents what in the 1920s was a new marketing strategy for selling automobiles in Tampa and other parts of the nation. The plan was to put auto dealerships and the related businesses all in a central location, giving customers the opportunity to view the various models and styles. The buildings housing the dealerships were made more attractive, becoming “palaces of commerce” to inspire confidence among potential customers in the reliability of the vendors. The dealerships had their own repair and maintenance shops and joined with vendors of auto parts, tires and other accessories to insure that their customers would continue to return to the area for all of their auto related needs. This strategy is still evident today in most cities, and where one usually sees automobile dealerships, repair shops, tire vendors, and customizing shops concentrated on major suburban thoroughfares. The Florida Land Boom of the 1920, which brought thousands of new residents to Tampa, made prominent auto dealers confident that they could compete for customers in close proximity to one another and meet both the various stylistic tastes and financial means for people seeking both new and used automobiles. The attractiveness of the dealership buildings functioned like an “art gallery” to exhibit the autos that became works of art rather than merely machines for transportation.

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BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

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Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Upper North Franklin Street Commercial District are those shown on the map that accompanies this nomination proposal.

Boundary Justification

The district boundaries encompass concentration of historic resources associated with the area of North Franklin Street, North Florida Avenue, and North Tampa Street that served auto dealerships and related automobile products and service from c. 1915-1946, plus one National Register listed property that drew people to the area, and several other commercial properties that served customers in areas unrelated to the automobile sales and service businesses.

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1. North Franklin Street
2. Upper North Franklin Street Commercial District, Tampa (Hillsborough County), Florida
3. Stephanie Ferrell, FAIA
4. 2009
5. Original Digital Image, Stephanie Ferrell
6. North Franklin Street, Looking South from Estelle Avenue
7. Photo 1 of 25

**Items 2-5 are the same for the remaining photographs.**

1. Upper North Franklin Street
6. North Franklin Street, Looking North from 1621 North Franklin Street
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1. Old Tampa Free Public Library, 102 East 7th Avenue
6. South Facade and East Elevation, Looking Northwest
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1. Azalea Lounge, 1502 North Florida Avenue
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1. Dunlap Tire and Rubber Company, 1542-1544 North Franklin Street
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1. Coarsey and Bower Auto Dealers Building, 1601 North Franklin Street
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1. Rialto Theater, 1621 North Franklin Street
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1. Holtsinger Motor Company Service Garage, 1631 North Franklin Street
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1. Oliva Tobacco Company and J.A. Suarez & Company Tobacco Importers Building, 1717-1719 North Franklin Street
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1. Neil's Auto Supply Building, 1805 North Franklin Street
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ATTACHMENT 1, Tampa Public Library, Burgert Brothers Photographers,  
April 18, 1919, Negative No. 4381.



ATTACHMENT 2, Burgert Brothers Photographers, Smith Chevrolet Company at  
1514-1520 North Florida Avenue, February 9, 1927, Negative No. 22678.

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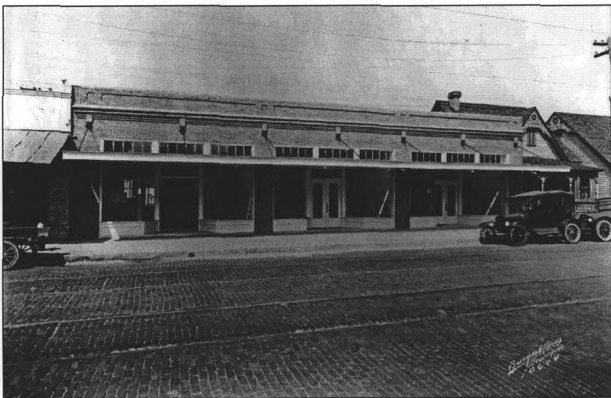
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ATTACHMENT 3, Burgert Brothers Photographers, Franklin Printing Company,  
February 25, 1924, Negative No. 10460.



ATTACHMENT 4, Burgert Brothers Photographers, Vacant Building at 1542-1544 North  
Franklin Avenue, March 26, 1926, Negative No. 10674.

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**ATTACHMENT 5**, Burgert Brothers Photographers, Vacant Building at 1601 North Franklin Street, 1921, Negative No. 6847.



**ATTACHMENT 6**, Burgert Brothers Photographers, Building at 1609 North Franklin Street, May 17, 1921, Negative No. 6219.



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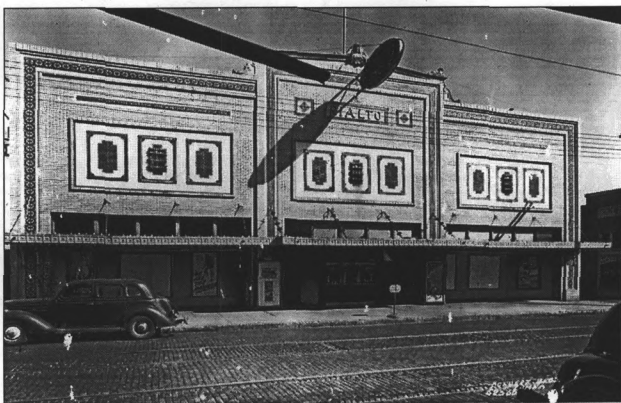
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ATTACHMENT 7, Burgert Brothers Photographers, Webster-Daniels Co. at 1613 North Franklin Street, 1931, Negative No. 34151.



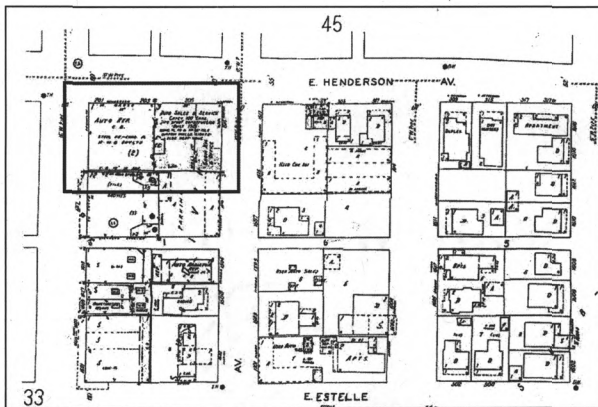
ATTACHMENT 8, Burgert Brothers Photographers, Rialto Theater, October 29, 1943, Negative No. 52335.

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ATTACHMENT 9, Holsinger Motor Company Service Garage, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Tampa, Florida, 1931-1951, Page 34.



ATTACHMENT 10, Burgert Brothers Photographers, Frederick P. Farris Building, June 8, 1924, Negative No. 11400.

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ATTACHMENT 11, Burgert Brothers Photographers, American Leather Company at 1609 Tampa Street, November 12, 1946, Negative No. 60750.



ATTACHMENT 12, Burgert Brothers Photographers, 400-600 Block Franklin Street, May 15, 1922, Negative No. V338(R429).