

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



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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 HOPPER ACADEMY

other names/site number N/A; SE00458

2. Location

street & number 1101 Pine Avenue N/A  not for publication

city or town Sanford N/A  vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Seminole code 117 zip code 32771

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.)

Glissa Lotane, DSHPO 3/13/15  
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) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

James Salton

5-6-2015

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	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

Name of related multiple property listings

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

FRAME VERNACULAR

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick Piers

walls Wood

roof Metal

other \_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

ETHNIC HERITAGE BLACK

Period of Significance

1906-1960

Significant Dates

1906

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Arch: Unknown

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

#

HOPPER ACADEMY

Name of Property

Seminole Co., FL

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

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

3															
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
4															

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title W. Carl Shiver, Historic Preservationist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date November 2014

street & number 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 Community Association of Seminole County, Inc.

street & number 1590 Rochelle Lane. telephone

city or town Oviedo state Florida zip code 32765-7598

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq).

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

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Section number 7 Page 1

HOPPER ACADEMY  
SANFORD, SEMINOLE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
DESCRIPTION

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**SUMMARY**

The Hopper Academy is a two-story Frame Vernacular building constructed in 1906, and expanded to its present size in 1916. It is located in Sanford, Seminole County, within the locally designated Georgetown Historic District neighborhood at 1101 Pine Street. It is set on a 1.5-acre site (lot size 264' X 248') (Photos 1-2) bounded by Pine Avenue on the west, East 11th Street on the north, Hickory Avenue on the east, and the property lines of the residential neighborhood on the south. The Georgetown neighborhood is found east of the city's National Register-listed Downtown Commercial Historic District (NR 1976) and Residential Historic District (NR 1989). The building has a T-shaped footprint and rests on a brick pier foundation with a wood lattice infill. The total square footage of the building is 8,734 square feet, with approximately 4,300 square feet on each floor. It has a hipped main roof surfaced with 5-V crimp metal panels. The exterior walls are covered with horizontal clapboard siding, and the building features a one-story centrally located entrance porch on the west facade. The main fenestration is 2/1 or 6/6-light double-hung wood sash windows. A wood handicap ramp extends across the main facade. The first floor has a central hall that separates five classrooms and three stairways that lead to the second floor. The second floor has a large auditorium, two small classrooms, and an office. Restrooms are found on both floors.

**SETTING**

Sanford is a port city in the central region of the State of Florida. It is the county seat of Seminole County. As of the 2010 census, the city had a population of 53,570. Sanford sits on the southern shore of Lake Monroe the headwaters of the St. Johns River. The city lies approximately 20 miles northeast of Orlando. Sanford is home to Seminole State College of Florida and the Central Florida Zoo and Botanical Gardens. Sanford features three National Register-listed resources: the Downtown Commercial Historic District (NR 1976), the Residential Historic District (NR 1989), and the St. James A.M.E. Church (NR1992). Hopper Academy is located in the Georgetown neighborhood, established in the 1870s as a suburb for African American citizens.

**DESCRIPTION**

**Exterior**

Main (West) Facade

The main (west) facade of the building (Photo 3) is dominated by a centrally located projecting three-story tower with a pyramid-shaped roof and louvered vents near the roof line. The tower's second story contains a grouping of three 6/6-light double-hung wood sash windows. Six hopper style windows flank either side of the one-story main entry porch of the west facade which has a flat roof supported by square wooden columns located at the outer corners and wood pilasters on the facade wall. Four "stacked bond" brick steps flanked by



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wooden railings ascend to the deck of the porch that leads to the wood panel and glass double doors. Six hopper style windows flank either side of the porch. A wooden handicap ramp parallels the wall of the main facade (Photo 4). Six 6/6-light double-hung wood frame windows flank the tower on the second floor of the main facade. The north elevation features a combination of 1/1-light and 1/2-light double-hung wood sash windows.

East Elevation

The rear (east) elevation (Photo 5) exhibits six 1/2-light windows that flank a one-story gable roof secondary porch. The roof is surfaced with 5-V crimp metal sheeting and is supported by wooden posts, and the wooden porch deck is bordered by a board balustrade. Four brick steps flanked by wooden railings lead to the entrance which consists of double wood and glass panel doors. The second story has seven 1/2-light double-hung wood sash windows, one of which is centered above the peak of the gable-roofed porch.

North and South Elevations

Both the north (Photo 6) and south (Photo 7) elevations feature sixteen 1/2-light double-hung wood sash windows. The rear ell of the building also has brick exterior chimneys, and interior chimneys are found in the north and south sides of the main block of the former school building.

**Interior**

The interior of Hopper Academy originally had six classrooms on the ground floor symmetrically arranged around a central hallway (Photo 8). This spatial configuration remains largely intact with two of the classrooms on the southeast corner combined into one. In addition, each side of the first floor has a storage room and a small bathroom under the straight run of stairs that lead up to the second floor auditorium. On the east side of the building is a switchback staircase with the original wooden treads and handrails and pair of double doors that lead out to the secondary porch.

Alterations

Major renovations were done in 1999 to remove asbestos siding, repair the foundation, and replace the electrical and plumbing systems. A first sprinkler system was added in 2007 and the roof was replaced in 2010. Water infiltration through the roof and siding has led to some deterioration. The building remains structurally sound but requires repair to the siding to stop continued water infiltration, and also additional repairs to the foundation to support the full use of the building.

The City of Sanford through the Community Improvement Association of Seminole County, Inc., has been successful in the adaptive re-use of Hopper Academy, located in Sanford's historic Georgetown Neighborhood.

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The Hopper Academy will now become a community center for Georgetown and surrounding neighborhoods in Sanford, with emphasis on arts, culture, heritage and information technology, with various classes and training offered to residents of all ages, from youths to seniors. The Hopper Academy will include a Martin Luther King Jr. Library, and serve as a rental facility for events that can accommodate up to 250 guests.

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HOPPER ACADEMY  
SANFORD, SEMINOLE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
SIGNIFICANCE

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**SUMMARY**

Hopper Academy is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of Education and Ethnic Heritage/ Black. The school is associated with the education of African American children in Seminole County during the period when the races were segregated. The building is also significant under Criterion C as a large and distinctive example of a wood frame vernacular building constructed at the turn of the twentieth century for use as a school drawing from traditional folk building traditions that had spread throughout the rural areas of America. The building remains a symbol of the dedication of the African American community in Sanford and Seminole County to provide their children with an education that would help them to succeed economically and socially in the midst of a repressive environment. Hopper Academy was designated as a local landmark in 1991.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT**

Henry Bradley Plant organized the railroad lines in Florida into a system of transportation previously unequaled in the state. Plant organized the Plant Investment Company (PICO) shortly after the close of the Civil War and the company grew until it embraced railroads, hotels, and steamship lines throughout the state.<sup>1</sup> The PICO company built several buildings in the Town of Sanford, which was named after General Henry Sanford, who had been ambassador to Belgium during President Lincoln's administration. On May 11, 1870, he purchased the Levy Grant of 25,000 acres at Lake Monroe, which forms the headwaters of the St. Johns River from General J.J. Finnegan.<sup>2</sup> Sanford hired African American laborers to construct a wharf on the shore of Lake Monroe and the roads leading to it. Sanford intended to establish a slaughterhouse and meatpacking business at the wharf. A conflict arose when white men attacked several of the laborers, intending to drive them out of town.<sup>3</sup>

Georgetown

The first African Americans arrived in the Sanford area prior to the Seminole Wars of the 1830s. Sanford was founded after the Civil War and incorporated in 1877. Georgetown, Bookertown, Goldsboro, and the Midway/Canaan communities were settled shortly after the Civil War. These communities provided a much needed labor pool for the growing vegetable and citrus industries in Sanford's post war development. The industries gave rise to the ice, packing, shipping and railroad industries needed to support them. In addition to working as laborers in these industries, many African American entrepreneurs opened businesses, along

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Robertson. "The Life of Henry Bradley Plant." n.d. Florida Collection, Mills Memorial Library, Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> "Recollections of Henry Shelton Sanford from 1878 to 1991," Collected by S.O. Chase and Joshua C. Chase, Manuscript, n.d., Mills Memorial Library, Rollins College, Winter Park.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



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Sanford and Celery avenues in Georgetown, Thirteenth Street in Goldsboro, and Sipes Avenue in Midway to support the growing black population and to offset the effect of Segregation on their daily lives.<sup>4</sup>

This gave rise to two very divided but bustling communities, one black and one white, side by side, one paying very little attention to the other except for areas in which there was fear or dependency. In spite of the white community's economic advantage, its dependency on African American labor was substantial both at work and at home.<sup>5</sup> During the years when African Americans were denied equal access to public facilities, businesses sprang up in the black community to meet its needs and often to service the white community as well. Great food and entertainment drew white patrons to restaurants and clubs in the black business district providing economic opportunities for African American entrepreneurs.<sup>6</sup>

When the town of Sanford was founded by General Henry Sanford in 1870, he attempted to use black laborers in his citrus groves, but was discouraged by the violent reaction of some white settlers. In response to the violence he created Georgetown, a neighborhood with its own commercial district, which encouraged the rise of a black middle class in the city. From this neighborhood came the black laborers who tilled the soil, worked the groves, fired the boilers that turned the wheels of trains on newly opened railroads and staffed the steamboats that connected Sanford with northern destinations.<sup>7</sup> A totally separate business district developed to meet the needs of the African American community. In addition to business owners, teachers and other professionals built homes on Sanford, Cypress, and Locust avenues. There were plenty of jobs and the community pulled together in order to shield itself from the harsh reality of Jim Crow laws that forced a segregated existence.<sup>8</sup>

The establishment of this black neighborhood reflects a period of development beginning in 1880 when Sanford became a bustling community with a population of about 1,000, which was served by three steamboat lines from Jacksonville. The South Florida Railroad was chartered in 1879, with Sanford as its home base. By 1882, the rail line had been completed to Orlando. Sanford became the terminus for settlers and for fruit and vegetable shipments out of Central Florida brought to the port to ship north on the steamboats.

The community's first school at the northeast corner of 7th Street and Cypress Avenue in Georgetown was built in 1885 with \$100 from the Seminole County School Board. Alice Earbar was principal and teacher.<sup>9</sup> Segregated schools and meager budgets for teacher salaries and classroom materials were major obstacles in

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<sup>4</sup> Valada Parker Flewlynn and the Sanford Historical Society. Images of America, African Americans of Sanford. (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> "Sanford's Hopper Academy Educated Seminole Blacks," Orlando Sentinel, July 28, 1991.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> "Hopper Academy—Past and Future," Sanford Herald, August 14, 2011.

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Georgetown, writes Bentley, who experienced the challenges first as a student and then as a teacher and school administrator. Parents bought the books and supplies for their children. Teachers paid for other materials or raised the money from the community. Some parents paid 25 cents a week to send preschoolers and kindergarten students to classes at two Georgetown homes.<sup>10</sup>

The November 2, 1885, minutes of the Georgetown School trustees note plans to enlarge the school, setting aside \$85 for materials for the addition, a one-story, 14-by-20-foot room. Construction was delayed by failure of a saw mill to deliver the materials, but the expanded school was completed in January 1887. That was about the same time that the School Board closed two other nearby schools near the old site of Fort Reid, and sent those students to Georgetown. Another addition was completed in 1889. The school's enrollment jumped from 14 in 1886, when William C. McLester was principal, to 165 in 1889.

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE—CRITERION A, EDUCATION**

The first school for African American children in the Sanford area was established in Georgetown by 1886, when the area was still part of Orange County. Known as African American School. No. 11, it provided instruction for students until grade 10.<sup>11</sup> By 1906, a large two-story school was constructed and named the Hopper Academy, under the direction of its first principal, Professor Joseph Nathaniel Crooms.<sup>12</sup> The building was enlarged in 1916 with a two-story east wing to accommodate students from the surrounding African American community. The size of the school was remarkable for the time. Most schools constructed in Florida for African American children at the turn of the 20th century were small, one-story buildings with perhaps two small classrooms lit only by natural exterior light. In contrast, Hopper Academy featured 8,734 square feet, with approximately 4,300 square feet on each floor. Beginning in 1926, a new school opened to accommodate secondary school students in nearby Goldsboro, while Hopper Academy focused on primary education. Hopper Academy would serve as a black primary school for grades 1 – 6 until 1961. Professor Joseph Nathaniel Crooms, who was principal of Hopper Academy from 1906 to 1926, was instrumental in the opening the secondary school, Crooms Academy, on land he and his wife donated.<sup>13</sup> Prior to 1926, no senior black high school existed in Seminole County.<sup>14</sup> Professor Crooms and his wife would administer Crooms Academy, until he retired as principal in 1953.

For school children that were segregated from the white population by “Jim Crow” laws, Hopper Academy provided a sense of place until the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. Hopper Academy represents

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> “Saving Hopper Academy Also Preserves Education”, Orlando Sentinel, July 21, 1991.

<sup>12</sup> Goldsboro Historical Museum of Sanford, Florida, <http://www.goldsboromuseum.com/The-Education-In-Goldsboro.html>

<sup>13</sup> Sanford Historical Trail, <http://www.geocities.ws/krdvry/hikeplans/sanford/plansanford.html>.

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African Americans' post-slavery educational mentality of "literacy as a contradiction to oppression."<sup>15</sup> During the segregation era, black schools depended heavily on community support. Short on government funding, most supplies were provided by parents, teachers, and community members. Despite facing adversity, Hopper Academy strengthened the Georgetown community by affording the students "comprehensive education and personal development." The goal of colored schools was to improve the lives of current and future generations by investing in each other to support community growth through generations.<sup>16</sup>

Largely in part due to the success of Hopper Academy, its educators and the black community as a whole, Georgetown produced several renowned citizens, including Claude A. Barnett (1889-1967) who founded the Associated Negro Press in Chicago in 1919.<sup>17</sup> When John Hurston, the father of Zora Neale Hurston migrated to Florida in 1892 or 1893, he first settled in Sanford and became the pastor at Zion Hope Baptist Church. He later served as mayor of nearby Eatonville for three terms and as pastor of the Macedonian Baptist Church. Famed anthropologist and author Zora Neale Hurston lived in Sanford on two occasions: in 1912, when she lived for a short period of time with her brother Dick and in 1933, when she moved to a boarding house in July to write her first novel Jonah's Gourd Vine and Mules and Men.<sup>18</sup>

Some of Hopper Academy's students could have found enlightenment by studying the street names in the community, which honor famous black men, including poet Paul Lawrence Dunbar, early civil rights activist W.E.B. Dubois, African Methodist Episcopal Church founder Richard Allen and journalist, orator and anti-slavery activist Frederick Douglass. The street names also include an avenue named for Castle T. Brewer, a Sanford Baptist church leader.<sup>19</sup>

Works Progress Administration writer Margaret Barnes traveled to Sanford in 1936 to document the culture of the community. She described Georgetown favorably, "...the homes are attractive...they have their own stores, lodges, and undertaking establishments, and ten churches...Sanford can boast some unusual negroes, preachers, teachers, nurses, etc. who have contributed to the advancement of the county and have stood for the best always."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Excerpts from Rollins College undergraduate research study (April 2008) on Hopper Academy, by E. Garreth Bender, Katherine Hillman, and Julia Pringle.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> African American Registry, [http://www.aaregistry.org/historic\\_events/view/associated-negro-press-founded](http://www.aaregistry.org/historic_events/view/associated-negro-press-founded).

<sup>18</sup> Zora Neale Hurston Archive, <http://chdr.cah.ucf.edu/hurstonarchive/>

<sup>19</sup> "Booker Town Brims Over with History," Orlando Sentinel, February 22, 2004.

<sup>20</sup> "Master Plan: Improvements on the Way for Sanford Neighborhoods," Sanford Herald, October 28, 2009.

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Education of African American Children in Florida Before Desegregation

Before 1964, Florida county school boards operated separate and unequal school systems based upon race. School officials did not act in isolation: executive, legislative, and judicial pronouncements at the federal and state levels compelled the state to codify Jim Crow practices. Furthermore, school boards maintained segregated facilities until regional and national influences assisted local leaders in their battle to dismantle dual schools. The movement toward equal opportunities exemplified a larger struggle between integrationists and segregationists. Both groups knew that education shaped society, but each hoped to create an essentially different community.

By 1911, a new constitution and state laws had segregated the peninsula's common schools. The Hillsborough Board of Public Instruction permitted John Donaldson, the earliest black settler on the southern Pinellas peninsula, to enroll his children at Disston School in the 1870s. But after the Compromise of 1877, Democratic politicians abrogated the constitutional rights guaranteed to blacks during Reconstruction. Article XII, Section 12 of the 1885 Florida constitution legitimized school segregation by stating that "white and colored children shall not be taught in the same school, but impartial provision shall be made for both." Local school officials followed the state constitution by opening the St. Petersburg Negro School in 1893. Two years later, legislators in Tallahassee enacted a statute prohibiting any school from boarding or teaching whites in the same facility as blacks.<sup>21</sup>

The state superintendent of public instruction and court decisions further strengthened the policy of racial segregation. In his 1894-1896 biennial report, Superintendent William N. Sheats asserted that "the Christian people of this State are conscientious and sincere in their belief that the races ought not to be educated together." Paternalistically, he believed that white taxpayers and philanthropists would continue to offer financial support to black schools only if the races remained in separate classrooms. In the landmark *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision of 1896, the United States Supreme Court adjudged that "separate but equal" facilities did not infringe upon the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. Ten years later Florida Supreme Court's opinion in *Patterson v. Taylor* reaffirmed state-sanctioned segregation. In 1912 the newly-created Pinellas Board of Public Instruction operated twenty-two schools, four of which served black children.<sup>22</sup>

County schools failed to offer black students the same opportunities accorded to their white counterparts. Although Dixie M. Hollins, the county's first superintendent of public instruction, hired many talented black

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<sup>21</sup> Douglas L. Fleming, "Toward Integration: The Course of Race Relations in St. Petersburg, 1868 to 1963" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Florida, 1973), 4-5.

<sup>22</sup> Biennial Report (Tallahassee: Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1897), 51-52, 188; Fleming, "Toward Integration," 8-13.

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teachers from the Tuskegee and Hampton institutes, these teachers faced formidable curricular and financial barriers. While the district funded nine-month terms and offered instruction through the high school level to white pupils, blacks attended school only six months annually and could not progress beyond the eighth grade. Coursework for blacks centered on manual training and domestic science rather than academic disciplines. School officials expected black education to meet the white community's needs by emphasizing industrial skills such as broom making, sewing, mending, and laundering. Until 1927, black children sang and performed to raise additional dollars to keep schools open for the entire six-month term.<sup>23</sup>

While the district used buses to transport white children to segregated schools during the 1930s and 1940s, it did not offer transportation for blacks. The school board assigned buses to white children who lived beyond walking distance from their neighborhood schools, but expected African Americans to provide their own transportation. The fact that buses loaded with white pupils passed nearby Gibbs en route to other schools angered Principal George W. Perkins. When Perkins sought buses for blacks living more than two miles from Gibbs, the school board denied his request. Perkins and the Gibbs faculty then purchased buses without school board funding. Because the district never compensated the Gibbs staff for the buses, drivers had to collect exorbitant fares from the children.<sup>24</sup> Thus in terms of curriculum, funding, facilities, and transportation, the Pinellas Board of Public Instruction maintained two inherently unequal school systems.

The Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown v. the Board of Education* threatened the institutionalized segregation found in Florida schools. Asserting that public education had become one of the government's chief responsibilities during the twentieth century, the Court unanimously contended that dual school systems based upon race violated the Fourteenth Amendment. Because this class action decision involved numerous areas with differing local conditions, the Court withheld a final verdict until states could file additional briefs.<sup>25</sup>

Officials at the state level refused to comply with the ambiguous ruling and sought legal means to circumvent *Brown*. In the 1956 "School Assignment Law," the decision was taken to maintain the state's public schools by allowing local districts to perpetuate segregation by classifying students on criteria other than race, such as aptitude and scholastic proficiency. It was argued that the Supreme Court construed the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to require equal, not identical, facilities. When the legislature failed to enact a

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<sup>23</sup> Patricia Perez Costrini, ed., A Tradition of Excellence, Pinellas County Schools: 1912-1987 (Clearwater: Pinellas County School Board, 1987), 11-15

<sup>24</sup> St. Petersburg Weekly Challenger, September 27, 1975.

<sup>25</sup> Richard Kluger, Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality (New York: Vintage, 1975), 707.

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

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HOPPER ACADEMY  
SANFORD, SEMINOLE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
SIGNIFICANCE

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constitutional school-closing measure, Florida's school superintendent placed the responsibility for desegregation on individual county boards of instruction.<sup>26</sup>

**Joseph Nathaniel Crooms**

The first principal of Hopper Academy was Joseph Nathaniel Crooms, a prominent African American educator in Florida. The school was built under Croom's administration, and became the first school in the state to receive free transportation for students to and from school. He was educated at the Johnson Academy in Orlando, Florida Normal College in Tallahassee (Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University), where he received an A.B in 1906, the Hampton Institute in Virginia, and the Florida Institute at Live Oak. He also received an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Edward Waters College in Jacksonville in 1950. Throughout his career, he was active in many organizations, including serving as President, Vice President, and Executive Committee of the Florida State Teachers association, President of the Seminole County Teacher's Association, and President of the Orange Belt District Teachers Association. He also instructed summer classes at Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona and Florida A&M University in Tallahassee.<sup>27</sup> Per oral history, Hopper Academy operated as a primary and secondary school that at one time had five teachers and 240 pupils from the first to the eighth grades. The school year originally had a maximum of six months, but Crooms lobbied to have the year extended to eight months.<sup>28</sup> Crooms, while principal at Hopper, also taught piano - using a ruler to rap students' knuckles whenever they hit a sour note. The students played for churches and trained choirs. He also was a Sunday school superintendent and secretary of the Florida State Baptist Convention. He held professional offices in local and state educational associations. Crooms was a well-respected Florida educator who supported many innovative ideas, such as extending the school year. He taught school until 1953 when he retired. Crooms died on March 18, 1957.<sup>29</sup> His wife died in 1983.<sup>30</sup>

His wife, Wealthy Mable Crooms, served as assistant principal when Professor Crooms opened a new school on the 7 ½ acres of land they donated in 1926 for Crooms Academy. The roughly 40-by-60 foot school was constructed on West 13th Street in the Goldsboro neighborhood of Sanford. As the first in school in Sanford for black students who went beyond the 10th grade, he served as principal of his namesake school for over twenty-five years. The Seminole County School Board eventually purchased the Crooms Academy property. Under

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<sup>26</sup> "The Supreme Court and School Desegregation: Twenty Years Later," *Political Science Quarterly*, 89 (Winter 1974-75): 755.

<sup>27</sup> Excerpt from Rollins College undergraduate research study (April 2008) on Hopper Academy, by E. Garreth Bender, Katherine Hillman, and Julia Pringle.

<sup>28</sup> *Crooms Academy Panthers Yearbook*, 1949.

<sup>29</sup> "Funeral Services for Prof. Crooms Set Thursday," *Sanford Herald*, March 18, 1957.

<sup>30</sup> "Professor's Legacy Lives on in Seminole School History," *Orlando Sentinel*, August 4, 1991.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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HOPPER ACADEMY  
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SIGNIFICANCE

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Crooms' administration, the school added vocational, industrial art and home economics training. It became Crooms Academy High School in 1961. Fire destroyed the original building in 1973.

The Crooms family history is notable in this context. Joseph's wife, Wealthy Mabel Richardson, was the daughter of Israel Sheridan and Wealthy Richardson of Winter Park, both born near Monticello, Florida. Joseph's parents were enslaved on the Goodwood Plantation in Tallahassee. His father, Moses Crooms Sr., and mother, Daphne F. Crooms, came to Sanford in the 1880s from Monticello and were among the former slaves who migrated to Central Florida following the Civil War.<sup>31</sup> Moses Crooms became a well-known carpenter in the area, as noted in the 1910 Federal Census<sup>32</sup>. He bought land on present-day Washington Street, where he built a house in 1905. The 1915 Orlando City Directory notes their address at 600 Veach Avenue.<sup>33</sup> Moses and Daphne had several children. Professor Joseph Nathaniel Crooms was a prominent educator in the State and became principal of Hopper Academy in 1906. His brothers include: Reverend Moses Crooms Jr. who owned a delivery and moving service and served as pastor of Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church in 1941; Reverend Alfred C. Crooms, who owned a print shop and book store, and was Mt. Zion's pastor from 1945-1946; and Columbus Hall Crooms who served as mayor of Eatonville from 1938-1963. From early census records, less information is available regarding his two sisters, Mamie E. Crooms and Edith V. Crooms (a teacher in 1938), and his two other brothers, William Henry Crooms and Walter Palmer Crooms.

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE—CRITERION C, ARCHITECTURE**

Hopper Academy is an excellent example of the adaptation of Frame Vernacular construction for use as a school facility. Initially constructed in 1906, it made use of readily available building materials to save costs in erecting a large, two-story facility. Constructed in the first decade of the 20th century, it was built during a period of relative prosperity for both the city of Sanford and Seminole County and was meant to accommodate 240 students attending both primary and junior high school, so it is architecturally significant for its physical size. As a county school for African American children, it is surprising that a building of this size was constructed at all, considering the usual unwillingness of most county school boards to provide "colored" schools with anything but a one- or two-room building with few amenities.

Hopper Academy has 51 multi-light double-hung wood sash windows. The first floor has a central hall, five classrooms and three stairways that lead to the second floor. The second floor has a large auditorium, two small classrooms, and an office. Separate restrooms for both male and female students and staff are found on both floors, although these were probably installed after the 1916 expansion. Relatively few high-style buildings

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<sup>31</sup> "Professor's Legacy Lives On in Seminole School History," Orlando Sentinel, August 4, 1991.

<sup>32</sup> Ancestry.com. *1910 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Year: 1910; Census Place: North Orlando, Orange, Florida; Roll: T624\_166; Page: 10A; Enumeration District: 0109; FHL microfilm: 1374179

<sup>33</sup> Ancestry.com. *U.S. City Directories, 1821-1989* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.



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HOPPER ACADEMY  
SANFORD, SEMINOLE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
SIGNIFICANCE

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were constructed in such rural settings and certainly not intended for black students. The design of Hopper Academy drew primarily from traditional folk building traditions for which both the materials and builders were readily available. The three-story projecting tower was added to the west elevation during improvements made to the building around 1916. After Hopper Academy closed in the early 1960s, it served as a library, a church, an after-school center and a venue for community meetings. In the early 1990s, the Seminole School District and Sanford donated the nearly 9,000-square-foot building to the Community Improvement Association, which was established to renovate and manage the Hopper Academy property.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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

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**United States Department of the Interior  
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Section number 10 Page 1

HOPPER ACADEMY  
SANFORD, SEMINOLE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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### **Verbal Boundary Description**

All of Block 13TRC, Town of Sanford, PB 1, PG 56  
Parcel Number 25-19-30-5AG  
Township 19 South, Section 31 East, Range 30  
USGS Map Sanford Florida 1965 PR 1988

### **Boundary Justification**

The above property description encompasses all of the historic resources associated with Hopper Academy.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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HOPPER ACADEMY  
SANFORD, SEMINOLE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

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**LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS**

1. Hopper Academy
2. 1101 Pine Avenue, Sanford (Seminole County), Florida
3. Art Woodruf
4. November 2014
5. City Planning Department, Sanford
6. Main (West) Facade, Looking Southeast
7. Photo 1 of 19

**Numbers 1-5 are the same for the following photographs unless otherwise indicated.**

6. Main (West) Facade and South Elevation, Looking Northeast
7. Photo 2 of 19

6. Main (West) Facade, Looking East
7. Photo 3 of 19

6. Main (West) Facade and South Elevation, Looking Northeast
7. Photo 4 of 19

6. Rear (East) Elevation, Looking West
7. Photo 5 of 19

6. North Elevation, Looking South
7. Photo 6 of 19

6. South Elevation, Looking North
7. Photo 7 of 19

6. Interior, First Floor Vestibule, Looking West
7. Photo 8 of 19

6. Interior, First Floor, S.W. Classroom, Looking Southeast
7. Photo 9 of 19

6. Interior, First Floor, N.W. Classroom, Looking Northeast
7. Photo 10 of 19

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

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SANFORD, SEMINOLE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

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6. Interior, First Floor, S.E. Classroom, Looking East

7. Photo 11 of 19

6. Interior, First Floor, S.E. Classroom, Looking Southeast

7. Photo 12 of 19

6. Interior, First Floor, Rear Stairwell, Looking Northwest

7. Photo 13 of 19

6. Interior, First Floor, North Stairwell, Looking North

7. Photo 14 of 19

6. Interior, Second Floor Auditorium, Looking Northeast

7. Photo 15 of 19

6. Interior, Second Floor Auditorium, Looking Northwest

7. Photo 16 of 19

6. Interior, Second Floor Auditorium, Looking West toward Stair Rail

7. Photo 17 of 19

6. Interior, Second Floor, North Stairwell, Looking South

7. Photo 18 of 19

6. Interior, Second Floor, Rear Stairwell, Looking Northwest

7. Photo 19 of 19





HOPPER ACADEMY  
1101 PINE AVENUE, SANFORD (SEMINOLE COUNTY), FLORIDA

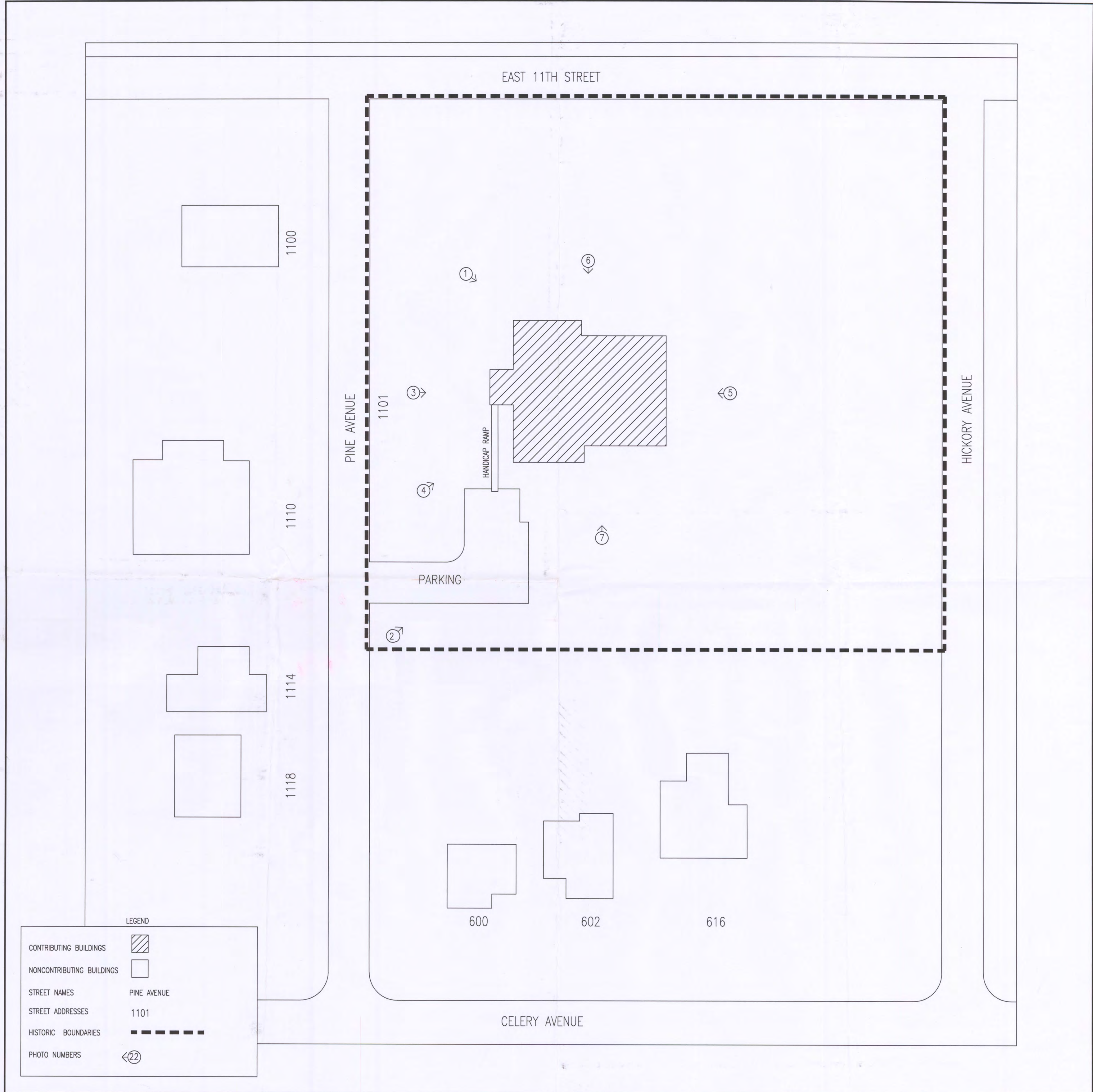
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UTM References

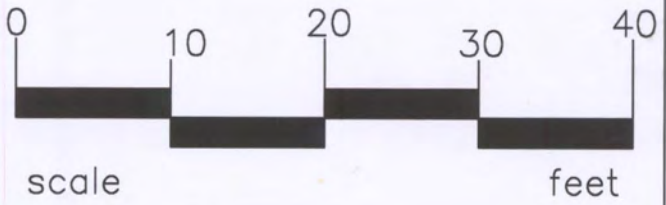
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17	474393	3186104







HOPPER ACADEMY  
 1101 PINE STREET, SANFORD (SEMINOLE COUNTY), FLORIDA



ORIGINAL HARD COPY MAP PROVIDED BY:  
 CHRISTINE DALTON, ACP  
 HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER/COMMUNITY PLANNER  
 CITY OF SANFORD 300 N. PARK AVENUE  
 SANFORD, FLORIDA 32771

NATIONAL REGISTER PROPOSAL PREPARED BY:  
 CHRISTINE DALTON, ACP  
 HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER/COMMUNITY PLANNER  
 CITY OF SANFORD 300 N. PARK AVENUE  
 SANFORD, FLORIDA 32771

PHONE: (407) 888-5145  
 EMAIL: christine.dalton@sanford.gov

DRAWN BY: W. CARL SHIVER  
 DRAWING DATE: DECEMBER 2014

DRAWING NUMBER SHEET NO. 1 OF 2  
 N/A

THE HOPPER ACADEMY SITE AND FLOOR PLANS WERE DRAWN IN AUTOCAD USING A VARIETY OF VISUAL RESOURCES INCLUDING PHOTOS AND BUILDING FOOTPRINTS DOWNLOADED FROM THE SEMINOLE COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER, GIS AND SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAPS, GOOGLE STREET VIEW, AND PHOTOS TAKEN ON SITE. THE MAP WAS DRAWN TO APPROXIMATE SCALE BUT VARIATIONS WERE ALLOWED FOR THE PURPOSE OF CLARITY.

MAP REVIEWED BY: CARL SHIVER  
 FLORIDA BUREAU OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 R.A. GRAY BUILDING  
 500 SOUTH BRONOUGH STREET  
 TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0250  
 PHONE NUMBER (850) 245-6333  
 TOLL FREE NUMBER 1-800-7278  
 FAX NUMBER (850) 245-6439



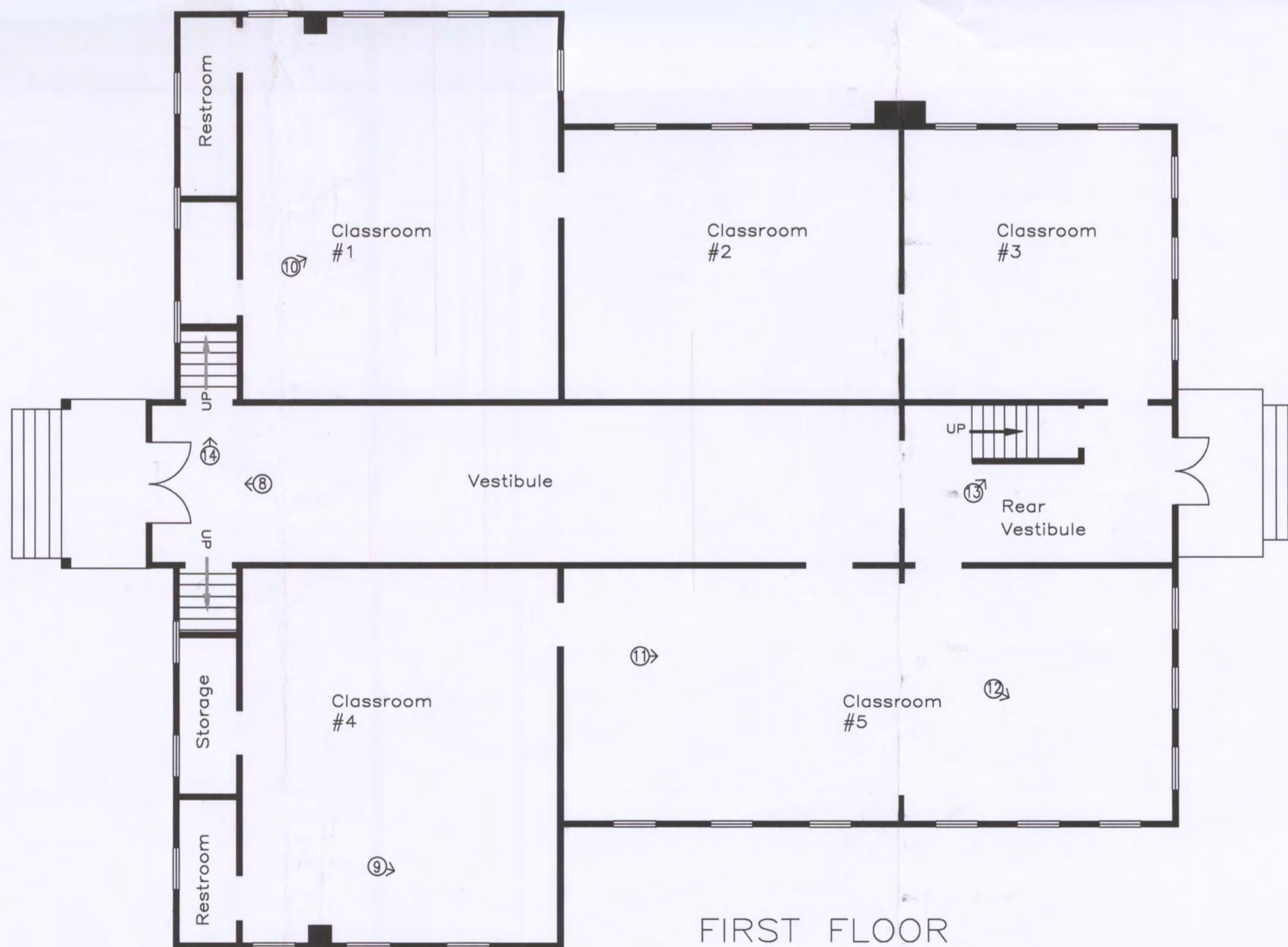
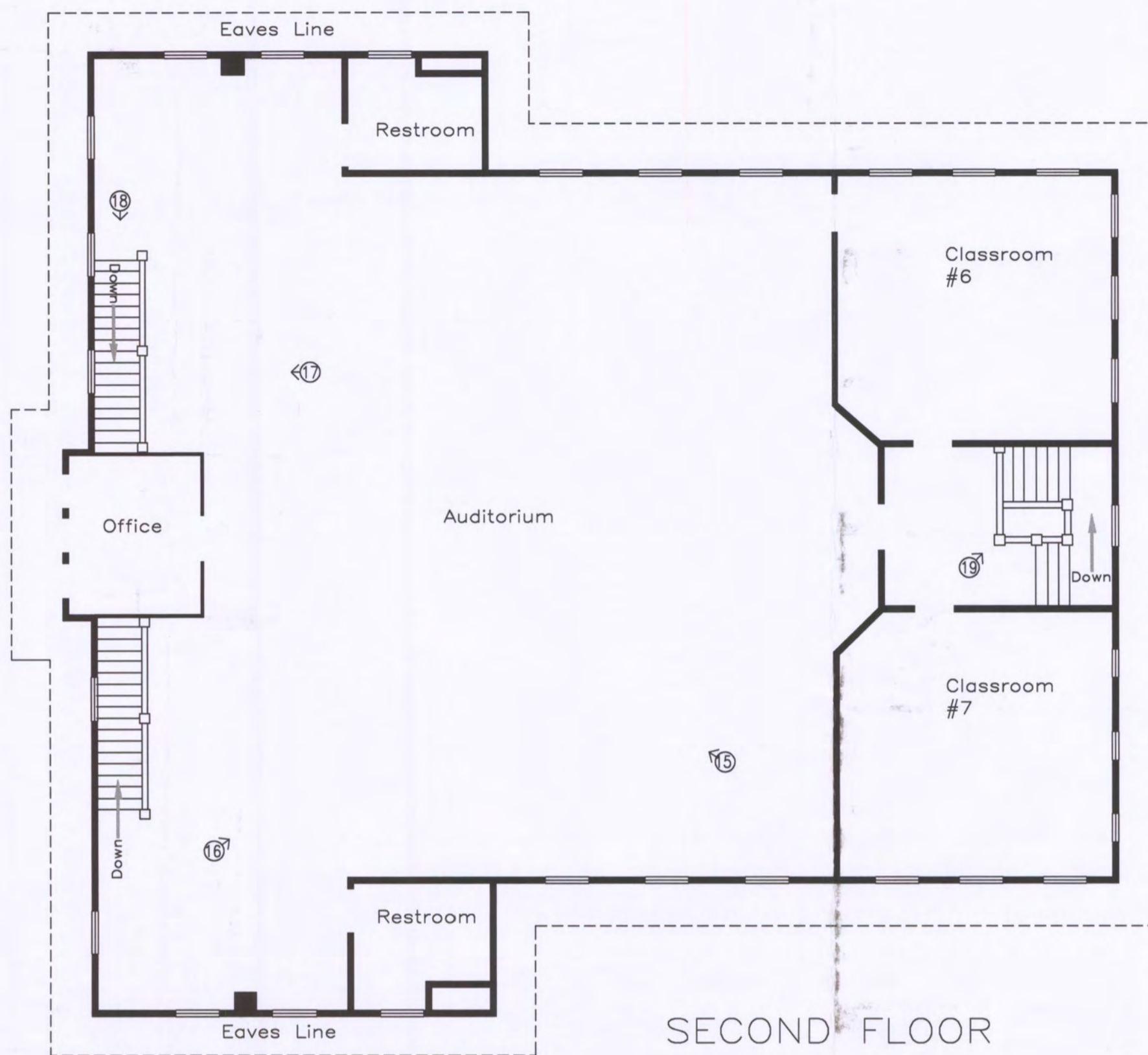
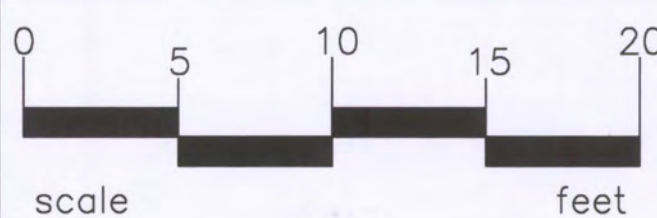


PHOTO NUMBERS 22

HOPPER ACADEMY  
1101 PINE STREET, SANFORD (SEMINOLE COUNTY), FLORIDA



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CHRISTINE DALTON, ACP  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER/COMMUNITY PLANNER  
CITY OF SANFORD 300 N. PARK AVENUE  
SANFORD, FLORIDA 32771

NATIONAL REGISTER PROPOSAL PREPARED BY:  
CHRISTINE DALTON, ACP  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER/COMMUNITY PLANNER  
CITY OF SANFORD 300 N. PARK AVENUE  
SANFORD, FLORIDA 32771  
PHONE: (407) 688-5145  
EMAIL: christine.dalton@sanford.gov

DRAWN BY: W. CARL SHIVER  
DRAWING DATE: DECEMBER 2014

DRAWING NUMBER SHEET NO. 2 OF 2  
N/A

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MAP REVIEWED BY: CARL SHIVER  
FLORIDA BUREAU OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
R.A. GRAY BUILDING  
500 SOUTH BRONOUGH STREET  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0250  
PHONE NUMBER (850) 245-6333  
TOLL FREE NUMBER 1-800-7278  
FAX NUMBER (850) 245-6439













## GEORGETOWN:

The community of Georgetown, a suburb east of Sanford, was built by Rufus Cowles and established first in the early 1800s by George W. Cowles. It was named after the town of Georgetown, West Virginia. The Cowles, West Florida was at the time of the West Indies.

In 1828 the first Georgetown school was founded at the site of the school. The school was founded by Mr. Cowles and was the first school in the area. It was named after the town of Georgetown, West Virginia.

Some of the first Sanford businesses owned by black citizens were in Georgetown, which would later become the business district of Sanford. In 1881 there were several black registered voters. Between 1881 and 1882 Georgetown supported five

(Continued on other side)

















EXIT































EXIT







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Hopper Academy

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: FLORIDA, Seminole

DATE RECEIVED: 3/27/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/20/15  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/05/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/12/15  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000209

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 5-6-2015 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Excellent, intact, large frame multi-room school  
Built by & for African Americans.*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A & C

REVIEWER J. Hubert DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.





## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

**RICK SCOTT**  
Governor

**KEN DETZNER**  
Secretary of State

March 13, 2015

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief,  
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs  
Department of the Interior  
1201 Eye Street, N.W., 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **Hopper Academy (FMSF #8SE458), in Seminole County**, to the National Register of Historic Places. The related materials (digital images, maps, and site plan) are included.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (850) 245-6333 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Desiree Estabrook".

Desiree Estabrook  
Historic Preservation Supervisor, Survey & Registration  
Bureau of Historic Preservation



Division of Historical Resources  
R.A. Gray Building • 500 South Bronough Street • Tallahassee, Florida 32399  
850.245.6300 • 850.245.6436 (Fax) [flheritage.com](http://flheritage.com)  
*Promoting Florida's History and Culture* [VivaFlorida.org](http://VivaFlorida.org)

