

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received **MAY 12 1986**

date entered **6-13-86**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Potter House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 557 Second Street South

___ not for publication

city, town Saint Petersburg

___ vicinity of

state Florida

code 12

county Pinellas

code 103

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name George K. Randert

street & number P. O. Box 960

city, town St. Petersburg

___ vicinity of

state Florida

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Pinellas County Courthouse

street & number 315 Court St.

city, town Clearwater

state Florida

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title St. Petersburg Architectural and
Historic Resources Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes ___ no

date 1982

___ federal ___ state ___ county local

depository for survey records Bureau of Historic Preservation, Florida Master Site File

city, town Tallahassee

state Florida

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Potter House is a frame two and one-half story raised house of rectangular plan with an attached one-story rear kitchen building. The house occupies a corner lot at the intersection of Second St. and Sixth Ave. So. The main facade, which faces Second St., has a large one-story entrance porch. The first floor of the house has an entrance stairhall that leads to double parlours, a dining room and a bathroom. The second floor has four bedrooms and one bath. Closed stairs lead to the floored attic. The two-story rear porch has service stairs and leads to the kitchen. The well-maintained house has had minor alterations, to convert it into apartments, however, they are all reversible. The surrounding neighborhood of early 20th Century frame houses is being razed by the city, and this house is also threatened with demolition.

The Potter House is a two and one-half story frame house of irregular plan. It is raised two feet on a rusticated block foundation. The first floor is sheathed in weatherboard and the second floor in wooden shingles. The front porch has rusticated block walls, with wooden flooring and tuscan columns. All of the windows in the house are original one-over-one double-hung sash. The exceptions to this are several first floor windows with diamond pattern lights in the upper sash and the attic windows, which are single casements. The rear service porch is frame and partially enclosed. Adjacent to it is a breezeway, now enclosed, that leads to a one-story frame summer kitchen.

The roof is high-pitched with two intersecting gables and two brick chimneys exist. The kitchen house has a high-pitched roof with one chimney.

The interior of the Potter House is virtually unaltered except for several sheetrock partitions placed across hallways to form apartments. The first floor bathroom was converted to a kitchen and a small second floor bedroom was converted to a kitchen. A bathroom was added to the attic. No interior walls or their doors have been altered or moved. The kitchen house has been converted to a rental unit and its interior has been altered.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1905 **Builder/Architect** N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Potter House was built by a prominent early civic and business leader, Cramer B. Potter. His role in creating the Bayboro Harbor (city port) and the acquisition of Mullet Key (Fort DeSoto Park) have had a long-lasting impact on the development of the city. The house is important as a good example of frame vernacular style architecture. Its lack of alterations and state of preservation makes the house significant as an example of the early 20th Century architecture of St. Petersburg.

Cramer B. Potter bought a lot on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Second Street South in 1905 from Sarah Williams Armistead.¹ His house was built in the same year, according to tax records.² Cramer B. Potter moved to Saint Petersburg in 1903.³ This was evidently his first permanent residence in the city. He organized the Tampa Bay Grain Company, a feed and fertilizer business, in 1904.⁴ Shortly after moving into his house, he became involved in the Bayboro Harbor development project,⁵ which was located only two blocks away. In 1912 his parents, Daniel and Rosetta Potter, and Kittie P. Holmes, his widowed sister, moved to Saint Petersburg.⁶ They lived at 615 Second Street South until 1915, when he deeded his house to them.⁷ Cramer and Ethel Potter then moved to a new house at 457 Ninth Street South⁸ (demolished), which was closer to his grain business.

Cramer Potter was born in 1870 in North Carolina. He graduated in 1890 from Sweetwater College, and then studied law at Vanderbilt University. He left law school to study the violin at the Cincinnati Conservatory. In 1898, he volunteered for service in the Spanish American War. He was stationed in Tampa for the duration of the war. After the war, he remained in Tampa and joined the army reserve. In 1903, he moved to Saint Petersburg and started a feed and fertilizer store that became the biggest of its kind in the town.⁹ His civic activities were numerous. He was a leader in the National Guard and a champion of port development. From 1912 to 1914, he was a city councilman.¹⁰

During this period, 1910-1914, he was chairman of the city Port Authority. Years of political lobbying for federal funding for the Bayboro Harbor had been unsuccessful, so Mr. Potter went to Washington to lobby in the spring of 1912. He secured a \$38,000.00 appropriation from Congress under the Rivers and Harbors Bill. With this money and a \$41,850.00 city bond issue, work began on the port in 1914.¹¹

Mr. Potter did not see the port dredged, because in the spring of 1914 he lead the local National Guard unit to Texas where he fought in the Mexican Border War against General Pancho Villa.¹² His military career continued in World War I, during which he attained the rank of Major and became a provisions officer.¹³ In 1919, when he returned home, he founded the local American Legion Post.¹⁴ He remained active in the Legion and in the Army Reserve until his death.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Text

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one.

Quadrangle name St. Petersburg

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	<u>17</u>	<u>338800</u>	<u>3071980</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

D			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

E			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

F			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

G			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

H			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification South 50 feet of lots 15 and 16. Block 80 revised plat of St. Petersburg. Lot has 50 foot frontage on Second St. S. and 100 feet of frontage on Sixth Ave. S.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
N/A			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Howard Hansen and Diana Primelles

Bureau of Historic Preservation

organization DAHRM, The Capitol

date 4-18-86

street & number

telephone 904-487-2333

city or town Tallahassee

state Florida

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title State Historic Preservation Officer

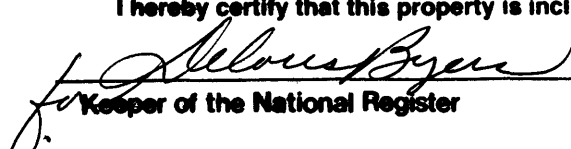
date 5/2/86

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 6-13-86



Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
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The Florida land boom of the 1920's saw Mr. Potter sell the Tampa Bay Grain Company, and open the Potter Real Estate Company. He built a four-story office building on the site of the feed store which has since been demolished, and speculated heavily in real estate. By 1927, he was financially ruined, like most people in the city, when the boom collapsed.¹⁵ Mr. Potter became director of City Public Works in 1927, and held the position until 1933. His last employment (1933-1939) was as a deputy tax collector for the I. R. S. He died at Bay Pines Veterans Hospital on December 23, 1940 at the age of 70.¹⁶

The Potter House at 557 Second Street South remained the home of Cramer's father, Daniel, until his death at the age of 86, on May 17, 1932.¹⁷ Kittie Potter Holmes, Cramer's sister, lived in the house alone until her death on March 12, 1937.¹⁸ Her son, Floyd P. Holmes, inherited the house,¹⁹ and lived there from 1938 to 1941.²⁰

The Potter House became a guest house for winter tourists under the subsequent owners. It was purchased by George K. Rahdert in 1981, who stabilized the deteriorating property and plans to restore the house.

The Potter House is a virtually unaltered example of frame vernacular architecture with Queen Anne Style influence. The semi-detached kitchen house is a rare survival in Saint Petersburg. Very few frame vernacular houses have survived in the city from the era of 1905. Only 26 houses that date before 1910 are recorded in the city survey. The good state of preservation of the original fabric and the absence of non-reversible alterations also make this house significant.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Hillsborough County, Registrar of Deeds. Deed Book Vol. 63, pg. 653.

² Pinellas County, Tax Assessor's Office Records, for 557 Second Street South.

³ Saint Petersburg Times, December 24, 1940, sec. 1, pg. 1, article, "Cramer Potter, Local Civic Leader Dead."

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Fuller, Walter, Saint Petersburg and Its People, Saint Petersburg, 1972, pg. 265 B.

⁶ Polk, R. L., Saint Petersburg City Directory, 1912-1915.

⁷ Pinellas County, Deed Book 10, pg.177.

⁸ Op. Cit. No. 6.

⁹ Op. Cit. No. 3.

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Continuation sheet 2

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FOOTNOTES

(Continued)

¹⁰Op. Cit. No. 5.

¹¹Op. Cit. No. 3 and Grismer, Karl, History of Saint Petersburg, 1949, pg. 124-125.

¹²Op. Cit. No. 5.

¹³Op. Cit. No. 3.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵This is based on an analysis of Cramer's property transactions, as recorded in Pinellas County Deed Books.

¹⁶Op. Cit. No. 3. Potter was the key figure in obtaining Mullet Key from the federal government in 1935.

¹⁷Pinellas County Probate Office, Death Certificate of D. E. Potter; also Saint Petersburg Times, May 18, 1932, sec. 1, pg. 2.

¹⁸Pinellas County Probate Office, Death Certificate of Katherine Potter Holmes; also Saint Petersburg Times, March 14, 1937, sec. 1, pg. 9.

¹⁹Pinellas County Probate Office, will of Kittie P. Holmes, 1937.

²⁰Polk, R. L., City Directory of Saint Petersburg, 1937-1942.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Fuller, Walter, Saint Petersburg and Its People, Saint Petersburg, 1972.

Grismer, Karl, History of Saint Petersburg, P. K. Smith Co., 1949.

Hillsborough County, Registrar of Deeds, Deed Books.

Pinellas County, Probate Office, Records of Wills and Administrations.

Pinellas County, Registrar of Deeds, Property and Deed records.

Pinellas County, Tax Assessor's Office, Records of 557 Second Street South

Saint Petersburg City Directory, Polk, R. L. & Co., 1905-1943.

Saint Petersburg Times, May 18, 1932, March 14, 1937, and December 24, 1940.