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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See 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 Downtown Wauchula Historic District

other names/site number HR999

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded W. Palmetto St, N. 4 Ave, W. Orange St., N. FL Ave N/A not for publication

city or town Wauchula N/A vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Hardee code _____ zip code 33873

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.)

Alissa Lotane 5/4/18
Signature of certifying official/Title DSHPO Date

Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State
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) _____

Jan Salter Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 6-18-2018

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)

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, total.

Name of related multiple property listings

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling, Multiple Dwelling, COMMERCE: Business, Specialty Store, GOVERNMENT: Courthouse, City Hall, see continuation sheet

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling, Multiple Dwelling, COMMERCE: Business, Specialty Store, GOVERNMENT: Courthouse, City Hall, see continuation sheet

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

- FRAME VERNACULAR, MASONRY VERNACULAR, see continuation sheet

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation Concrete, walls Brick, roof Tar and Gravel, 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

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

COMMERCE

EDUCATION

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1902-1967

Significant Dates

1902

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Elliot, Malachi Leo, architect

Smith, Paul H., Builder

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

Historic Property Associates, Inc.

#

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property roughly 78 acres

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

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

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

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 Paul L. Weaver/President

organization Historic Property Associates, Inc. date June 2017

street & number PO Box 1002 telephone (904) 824-5178

city or town St. Augustine state FL zip code 32085

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 Multiple

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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

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

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section number 7 Page 1

DOWNTOWN WAUCHULA HISTORIC DISTRICT
WAUCHULA, HARDEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

Additional Functions or Uses

<u>Historic</u>	<u>Current</u>
Social/Meeting Hall	Social/Meeting Hall
Social/Club House	Social/Club House
Education/School	Education/School
Religion/Religious Facility	Religion/Religious Facility
Landscape/Park	Landscape/Park
Transportation/Rail Related	Government/Government Office

Additional Architectural Styles

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Neoclassical//Gothic Revival/ Spanish Eclectic
LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY MOVEMENTS/Commercial
Style/Bungalow
MODERN MOVEMENT/Mid-Century Modern

SUMMARY

The Wauchula Historic District encompasses all or part of fourteen (14) city blocks. The boundaries of the district are irregular and conform to the concentration of contributing properties along East and West Main Street, the principal historic corridor of Wauchula, and adjacent streets. East of US 17, historic Fifth Avenue, the boundaries enclose contributing buildings fronting the Main Street corridor. These buildings include several prominent commercial buildings and the Wauchula City Hall. West of US 17 the boundaries broaden and extend to the 500 block of West Main Streets. West Palmetto Street and West Orange Street form boundaries on the north and south respectively. Both are one block from Main Street. There are 66 contributing resources within the district. These include 64 contributing buildings, the historic courthouse square, and the courthouse fountain, a contributing object. The district also contains a total of 17 noncontributing resources, including 15 buildings, the newly constructed Main Street Park, a site, and the park gazebo, a structure. Noncontributing properties include those constructed during the period of significance (1902-1967) that have lost their character defining features due to alterations or those that were constructed after 1967. The district contains a contiguous group of resources that relate to the development of downtown Wauchula as a commercial, governmental, transportation and civic center for the city following its incorporation in 1902. The contributing resources serve a number of uses such as commercial businesses, social and religious activities, transportation, and government operations. There are also a small number of single family and multi-family dwellings. Historic resources

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DESCRIPTION**

include three churches, the Wauchula City Hall, Wauchula Woman's Club, Wauchula Depot, and Hardee County Courthouse. These latter buildings are the most architecturally significant buildings in the city. Architectural styles include Frame and Masonry Vernacular, Bungalow, Spanish Eclectic, Mission, Gothic Revival, Modernist, Neoclassical Revival, and other styles. The integrity of the historic building stock is generally good, but the condition has suffered due in part to hurricanes, particularly Hurricane Charley, that ravaged South Florida in recent years.

PRESENT AND ORIGINAL APPEARANCE

SETTING

The Wauchula District is located in Wauchula, Hardee County, Florida. Wauchula is a small town in a sparsely populated rural area of southwest Florida, approximately forty miles east of the Bradenton-Manatee metropolitan area. Main Street, State Road 64, and Fifth Avenue, also known as US 17, form the principal crossroads of the city and district (Photo 1). The downtown core of Wauchula initially developed north and south along tracks owned by the Atlantic Coast Line Rail Road (subsequently CSX Corporation) that run parallel with Fifth Avenue. Fifth Avenue once was the center of commerce and transportation but a fire in 1908 destroyed all buildings, most of which were of wood frame construction. The commercial district was rebuilt along East and West Main Street. The railroad tracks were removed c. 1985, and the only remnant of the railroad is the now city-owned Wauchula Depot, constructed in 1915 after the fire at the intersection of Fifth Avenue and East Main Street (Photo 1). Major public spaces are found in the historic square surrounding the Hardee County Courthouse in the 400 block of West Main Street and in Main Street Heritage Park, a new public park opened in 2000 in the 200 block of West Main Street (Photos 2-3).

The east-west axis of the Wauchula District is Main Street. Main Street serves as the location for most of the city's landmark buildings. These buildings include commercial, transportation, religious, civic, educational, and governmental buildings and several of the town's finest private residences, many now converted to commercial uses. In addition to historic buildings, the district is visually linked by streetscape features such as street lamps and sidewalks and landscape features such as large live oaks and magnolia trees from the 200 block of East Main Street to the 500 block of West Main Street.

The core of the district is a commercial-governmental center. The central core contains all of Wauchula's historical commercial and governmental buildings and several churches. Commercial use applies to the vast majority of these buildings with density of development greatest in the 100 and 200 blocks of West Main Street. Seventh Avenue is the most intensely developed north-south street in the district and includes the expansive United Methodist Church, Faith Presbyterian Church, and the city's historic newspaper offices.

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**DOWNTOWN WAUCHULA HISTORIC DISTRICT
WAUCHULA, HARDEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION**

The bookends of the central core are the Wauchula City Hall (225 East Main Street) on the east and the Hardee County Courthouse (417 West Main Street) on the west (Photos 3-5). East of City Hall is a transitional area comprised primarily of residential buildings outside the proposed district (Photo 6). West of city hall are concentrations of one and two story commercial buildings which extend to the 300 block of West Main Street near the courthouse (Photos 7-13).

A transitional area begins in the 300 block of West Main Street where historic commercial buildings, lost to demolition and Hurricane Charley, were once located (Photo 14). Here are the Wauchula Lodge No. 1700, 318 West Main Street, a major civic building constructed c. 1955, and the Hardee County Courthouse in the 400 block (Photos 3, 15). In the 400 block begins an area of upscale residences which extends to the 500 block of West Main Street (Photos 16-19). Most of these residences have been converted to commercial uses.

The Wauchula Historic District is visually distinct from adjacent areas. South of the East Main Street corridor are vacant lands which once housed historic buildings (Photo 20). To the north of West Main Street, the 100-500 blocks of West Palmetto Street form the northern boundary of the proposed district. Here there are vacant blocks and lots and no concentration of historic buildings. The United Methodist Church complex at 207 N. 7th Avenue, on the north side of West Palmetto, is an exception and is included in the district (Photos 21-26).

The east side of the 100 block of North Florida Avenue and the east side of the 100 and 200 block of South Florida Avenue are also included in the proposed district and form part of the west boundary (Photo 27). The west side or 200 block of South Florida Avenue contains the historic Hardee County School complex and is part of the district (Photo 28).

South of the West Main Street corridor is West Orange Street. The south side of West Orange Street is visually distinct from the area to the north. There are vacant blocks and lots, parking lots, a lack of linkage of landscape and streetscape features and a lack of a concentration of historic buildings (Photos 29-34).

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Wauchula Historic District contains a total of 83 total resources, of which 66, or roughly 79.5% are contributing. A total of 64 of these contributing resources are buildings. The district contains a contiguous group of resources that relate to the development of downtown Wauchula as a commercial, governmental, transportation and civic center for the city following its incorporation in 1902. The contributing resources serve a number of uses such as commercial businesses, social and religious activities, transportation, and government operations. There are also a small number of single family and multi-family dwellings. Historic resources include three churches, the Wauchula City Hall, Wauchula Woman's Club, Wauchula Depot, and Hardee County Courthouse. These latter buildings are the most architecturally significant buildings in the city. Architectural styles include Frame and Masonry Vernacular, Bungalow, Spanish Eclectic, Mission, Gothic

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DESCRIPTION

Revival, Modernist, Neoclassical Revival, and other styles. The integrity of the historic building stock is generally good, but the condition has suffered due in part to hurricanes, particularly Hurricane Charley, that ravaged South Florida in recent years.

Ford Motor Company Building, 226 West Main Street

The Ford Motor Company Building at 226 West Main Street is a good example of the one-part commercial block building type. It has a rectangular plan and a regular boxy massing. It has a flat roof with parapet and a red brick exterior finish. It has a centrally placed entrance with flanking glass display or show windows. The upper portion of the façade features brick detailing, including pilasters, recessed panels, sailor courses, a frieze, and coping along the parapet. The interior was designed for retail space (Photo 35).

The Kilgore Building, the Bailey Building, and the Bostick Building, 202-222 West Main Street

The Kilgore Building, the Bailey Building, and the Bostick Building, are good examples of two-part, masonry commercial building type. They were constructed in 1922 as three separate buildings sharing a common facade. The buildings feature buff brick exterior finishes, a shaped parapet with recessed tile and brick panels, a string course with corbelling under the cornice, and suspended wood canopies (Photo 36). The first floors were used for retail and the second floor originally housed a hotel.

Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Depot, 135 East Main Street

The Atlantic Coast Line (ACL) Railroad Depot at the intersection of Main Street and North Fifth Avenue is the major transportation building in the district and an outstanding example of Masonry Vernacular construction. By 1914 the original wooden depot had become an eyesore in the context of new brick churches and commercial blocks. The ACL responded by constructing the beautiful depot now located at 135 East Main Street. The depot was constructed of brick in a Flemish bond pattern with a belt course at floor level, and a hip roof broken by hip dormers and brick chimneys (Photo 1).

William B. Beeson Residence, 414 West Main Street

The William B. Beeson Residence at 414 West Main Street, was constructed c. 1913 for Hardee County Commissioner William Beeson. The Beeson residence is one of the outstanding homes in the district and is notable for the influence of the Bungalow architectural style on wood frame vernacular architecture. Originally a Frame Vernacular residence, the building was altered in the 1920s with Bungalow features, particularly its porch detailing. The building features a large hip roof with flared eaves, large gable dormers, a wrap-around porch, paired posts on a brick parapet wall, and original windows, doors, and door surrounds (Photo 37).

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DOWNTOWN WAUCHULA HISTORIC DISTRICT
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DESCRIPTION

529 West Main Street

The house at 529 West Main Street is another outstanding example of residential architecture in the district. This prominent residence features brick piers, weatherboard siding, an irregular plan and massing, a gable on hip roof with a cross gable on hip and a wrap-around veranda. It has been adapted for use as a commercial funeral home (Photo 38).

Faith Presbyterian Church, 114 North Seventh Avenue

The Faith Presbyterian Church, located at 114 North Seventh Avenue, is an unusual example of the Bungalow architectural style adapted to a religious building type. Constructed c. 1916, the church contains elements of the Bungalow style such as a front facing gable roof, faux knee braces and exposed rafters. Other architectural detailing includes stained glass windows, windows with a star motif, and decorative brick work (Photo 39).

Wauchula City Hall, 225 East Main Street

The Wauchula City Hall at 225 East Main Street is the most architecturally important building in the district and, with the Hardee County Courthouse, one of two major governmental buildings. It is an outstanding example of the Spanish Eclectic style. With its cartouches, barrel tile roof, arched window headers, enriched entrance surrounds, and sculptured medallions, the city hall embodies many elements of the style (Photo 4).

Wauchula Woman's Club, 131 North Seventh Avenue

The Wauchula Woman's Club is one of several important civic buildings in the district. Constructed in 1924 at 131 North Seventh Avenue, this building is another good example of the Spanish Eclectic style. It features arched openings over doors and windows, stucco wall surfaces, eaves with a slight overhang, two chimneys with niches and tile roofs and an elaborately detailed stone entry with arch headed French doors (Photo 40).

Hardee County Courthouse, 417 West Main Street

The Hardee County Courthouse 417 West Main Street is the most important governmental building and the best example of the Neoclassical Revival style in the district (Photo 3). The use of the style was common for building types such as courthouses and financial institutions. The courthouse embodies the style through its regular massing and fenestration, flat roof with parapet, full-height, Doric columns, and classically detailed cornice. Many original windows have been removed and an annex was built on the south elevation of the building in 1974. However, these alterations are long standing and the overall integrity of the building is good.

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DOWNTOWN WAUCHULA HISTORIC DISTRICT
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DESCRIPTION

Hardee County Courthouse Square and Fountain

The Hardee County Courthouse square is a one-acre public park, located on the south side of the 400 block of West Main Street in the heart of the government center of downtown Wauchula (Photo 3). Since 1907 the site of the courthouse has been used at least in part as a public park. William B. Beeson, Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners for the newly formed Hardee County, designed the landscaping surrounding the Courthouse. The fountain is the focal point of the square. It consists of a brick foundation and base in a hexagonal form. The fountain is constructed of caen stone and tile. An obelisk rises from the fountain. The obelisk includes lion heads dealing and is topped by an ornamental bronze eagle (Photos 41-42).

Hardee County Trust Company Bank Building 122 West Main Street

The Hardee County Trust Company Bank Building is the outstanding financial institution in the district. It is also an example of the Neoclassical Revival Style, a style commonly associated with banks and financial building types. Built in 1922, it features Doric columns and pilasters and an arched multiple light window (Photo 43).

Hardee County High School, 200 South Florida Avenue

The Hardee County High School at 200 South Florida Avenue constructed in 1949, is an important educational building and the only example of this property type in the district. It is a late example of the Neoclassical Revival Style. Its monumental columns, centrally placed entrance, symmetrical façade and regular fenestrations are hallmarks of the style (Photo 28).

United Methodist Church at 207 North 7th Street

The United Methodist Church at 207 North 7th Street is an outstanding religious structure. It is the only pure example of the Gothic Revival in Wauchula (Photo 21). The Gothic Revival was an architectural style frequently associated with American churches during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The church, with its lancet arched openings and windows, heavy brick construction with faux buttresses, corner tower with crenellated parapet, and steeply pitched, parapeted gable roof, is a good example of the style.

Brown Arcade, 520 West Main Street

The Brown Arcade at 520 West Main Street is an apartment building and the only historic example of this property type in the proposed district. Designed by a professional architect, it is also the only example of the Mission style in the district. The Brown Arcade with its curvilinear parapet, stucco finish, niches and buttresses embodies many Mission style features (Photo 44).

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DOWNTOWN WAUCHULA HISTORIC DISTRICT
WAUCHULA, HARDEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

Wauchula Masonic Lodge, 116-118 West Main Street and Herald Advocate, 115 South 7th Avenue

During the 1950s, only three modern style buildings were added to the proposed district. These include the Wauchula Masonic Lodge Number 17 Free and Accepted Masons, 116-118 West Main Street, constructed c. 1955, and the Herald Advocate Office, 115 South 7th Avenue, constructed c. 1958 (Photos 45-46). Downtown buildings reflecting these styles are limited both in number and size. The Wauchula Lodge with its cubist form, clean lines, unadorned facades, use of steel doors and windows and stylized Masonic symbol is a good example of the style. The Herald Office also features simple forms, steel doors and windows and an unadorned main façade. However, its horizontal orientation has more of a Wrightian feel as embodied in the Prairie and Ranch styles often associated with Frank Lloyd Wright.

NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

The district contains 17 non-contributing resources, of which 15 are buildings. Non-contributing properties include substantially altered buildings constructed during the district's historic period of development and buildings that post-date the period of significance. An example of an altered historic building is the Wauchula State Bank Building at 100-112 West Main Street (Photo 47). Originally a picturesque red brick masonry vernacular style commercial building, the bank has been altered by the covering of its original brick finish with stucco and the removal of all historic detailing on its main elevation. The building at 303 West Main Street is another example of a historic building altered to non-contributing status. Originally a Bungalow style residence, this building has had massive additions on all elevations and has been converted to a Hardee County office building (Photo 48).

Non-contributing buildings that post-date the period of significance include the Madison Spa and Salon at 113 North 7th Avenue. While non-historic, the Modernist style of the building is compatible with the scale, mass, materials and setback of historic buildings in the Wauchula Historic District (Photo 49).

INTEGRITY

The buildings and resources within the district are all still in their original location, hence the district retains sufficient integrity of location. Although there has been some modern development that postdates the period of significance, the area surrounding Wauchula is still relatively rural and undeveloped in character and the town itself is still small and still functions as the governmental center of the county. Hence it retains sufficient integrity of setting and association. The resources within the district, including the landscaping and roadways, all retain sufficient integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling.

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WAUCHULA, HARDEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

INVENTORY WAUCHULA HISTORIC DISTRICT - CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

EAST MAIN STREET

Address	Date	Style	FMSF	NAME
103-107	1915	Masonry Vernacular	HR113	
111	1915	Masonry Vernacular	HR112	Stansfield Building
135	1918	Masonry Vernacular	HR100	Wauchula Depot
209	1919	Masonry Vernacular	HR104	Thomas Building
213-217	1926	Masonry Vernacular	HR107	A.G. Smith Building
219	1926	Masonry Vernacular	HR108	
225	1926	Mediterranean Revival	HR389	Wauchula City Hall

WEST MAIN STREET

101-109	1915	Masonry Vernacular	HR113	
113-117	1915	Masonry Vernacular	HR388	
121-125	1910	Masonry Vernacular	HR386	
116-120	1955	Mid-Century Modern	HR979	Masonic Lodge
122	1922	Classical Revival	HR364	Hardee County Trust Bldg.
130	c. 1936	Masonry Vernacular	HR365	
131	1914	Masonry Vernacular	HR387	
202	1922	Masonry Vernacular	HR360	Kilgore Building
210-216	1922	Masonry Vernacular	HR361	Bailey Building
221	1922	Masonry Vernacular	HR385	
222	1922	Masonry Vernacular	HR362	Bostwick Building
225	1914	Masonry Vernacular	HR384	
226	1915	Masonry Vernacular	HR363	Ford Motor Company Building
313	c. 1910	Masonry Vernacular	HR380	
313	c. 1928	Masonry Vernacular	HR381	
318	c. 1955	Masonry Vernacular	HR979	Masonic Lodge
414	c. 1913	Bungalow	HR358	William Beeson Residence
417	1926	Classical Revival	HR411	Hardee County Ct. House
424	c. 1930	Tudor Revival	HR357	
502	c. 1902	Frame Vernacular	HR356	
513	c. 1915	Frame Vernacular	HR379	
520	c. 1926	Mission	HR355	Brown Arcade Building
521	c. 1955	Frame Vernacular	HR983	
528	c. 1949	Moderne	HR984	
529	c. 1915	Frame Vernacular	HR379	

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**DOWNTOWN WAUCHULA HISTORIC DISTRICT
WAUCHULA, HARDEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION**

NORTH SIXTH AVENUE

130 1954 Masonry Vernacular HR1023

NORTH SEVENTH AVENUE

114	c. 1916	Craftsman	HR376	Faith Presbyterian Church
123	1930	Masonry Vernacular	HR989	
124	1960	Mid-Century Modern	HR990	Wauchula Woman's Club First United Methodist Church Church Annex Church Annex
133 (131)	1924	Spanish Eclectic	HR377	
207	c. 1917	Gothic Revival	HR349	
207	1952	Mid-century Modern	HR977	
207	1955	Mid-century Modern	HR978	

SOUTH SEVENTH AVENUE

115	1958	Mid-Century Modern	HR991	Wauchula Herald Advocate Office
123	1912	Frame Vernacular	HR563	Florida Advocate Office

NORTH EIGHTH AVENUE

112	c. 1913	Bungalow	HR276
120	c. 1913	Bungalow	HR275
131	c. 1946	Frame Vernacular	HR274

SOUTH EIGHTH AVENUE

122	1924	Masonry Vernacular	HR521
131	1919	Craftsman	HR520

NORTH TENTH AVENUE

111	c. 1900	Frame Vernacular	HR341
116	c. 1930	Masonry Vernacular	HR342
119	1900	Frame Vernacular	HR286
120	1960	Masonry Vernacular	HR1024

SOUTH TENTH AVENUE

132	c. 1915	Frame Vernacular	HR487
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COURT STREET

306	c. 1947	Masonry Vernacular	HR405
308	c. 1945	Masonry Vernacular	HR406

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310 c. 1947 Masonry Vernacular HR407

SOUTH FLORIDA AVENUE

200 c. 1948 Masonry Vernacular HR601
200 c. 1949 Classical Revival HR600

GEORGE BURNS AVENUE

127 c. 1914 Masonry Vernacular HR105

WEST ORANGE STREET

404 1928 Neoclassical Revival HR412

WEST PALMETTO STREET

315 c. 1913 Frame Vernacular HR353
405 c. 1900 Frame Vernacular HR347
411 c. 1947 Frame Vernacular HR348
507 c. 1920 Frame Vernacular HR346
517 c. 1960 Masonry Vernacular

CONTRIBUTING OBJECTS

400 Block West Main Street 1927 Hardee County Courthouse Fountain

CONTRIBUTING SITES

400 Block West Main Street 1927 Hardee County Courthouse Plaza

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DESCRIPTION**

NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

EAST MAIN STREET

100-112	1915	Masonry Vernacular.	HR111	altered
117	1990	Masonry Vernacular		post-period of significance

WEST MAIN STREET

230	1985	Masonry Vernacular		post-period of significance
303	c. 1946	Masonry Vernacular.	HR382	altered
401	1980	Masonry Vernacular		post-period of significance
402	2006	Frame Vernacular		post-period of significance

NORTH SEVENTH AVENUE

113	1970	Masonry Vernacular		post-period of significance
117	2011	Masonry Vernacular		post-period of significance

SOUTH SEVENTH AVENUE

126-128	2003	Masonry Vernacular		post-period of significance
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SOUTH EIGHTH AVENUE

122A	1997	Masonry Vernacular		post-period of significance
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SOUTH NINTH AVENUE

101	1977	Mid-Century Modern		post-period of significance
107	1946	Masonry Vernacular		altered
123	1968	Masonry Vernacular		post-period of significance/altered

SOUTH TENTH AVENUE

120	2010	Masonry Vernacular		post-period of significance
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WEST PALMETTO STREET

117	1987	Masonry Vernacular		post-period of significance
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NON-CONTRIBUTING SITES

Main Street Heritage Park	2000			post-period of significance
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Main Street Heritage Park Gazebo 2000

post-period of significance

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DOWNTOWN WAUCHULA HISTORIC DISTRICT
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SUMMARY

The Wauchula Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of Commerce, Community/Planning and Development, Education, and Politics/Government; and Criterion C for Architecture. The period of significance correlates to the period of concentrated development of the district, which extended from the incorporation of Wauchula in 1902 until 1967. The district reflects the physical development of the town from the arrival of the railroad in 1886 as it became the commercial center for Hardee County. In 1921, with the formation of the county, it became a center of government as well. Development was concentrated in the period from 1902-1926, but significant buildings were added post-World War II, including the Hardee County High School, the most important educational building in the county, two important masonic lodges in the mid-1950s, and the *Wauchula Herald Advocate* newspaper office in 1958. The district is locally significant under Criterion C for its embodiment of an important period of architecture, architectural styles, and building types. Within the downtown area are the city's principal historic governmental buildings--the Wauchula City Hall and the Hardee County Courthouse--several important churches, and the Wauchula Depot. The city hall, designed by M. Leo Elliot of Tampa, and the monumental, classically inspired courthouse are the most architecturally significant buildings in the district. Surrounding the downtown commercial district are residential areas and a historic school complex. Frame vernacular is the most common residential method of construction, but scattered examples of formal architectural styles, such as the Bungalow, are found prior to 1930. The integrity of the historic building stock is good, but the condition has suffered due in part to hurricanes, such as Hurricane Charley, that ravaged South Florida in recent years.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Disston Purchase and Railroad Development, 1881-1886

The historical development of Wauchula paralleled that much of the lower Florida peninsula during the late 19th century. The key historical event in the development of the region was the Disston Purchase of 1881. Prior to the Disston Purchase, with the exception of scattered homesteads and other federal land grants, most of southwest Florida was still owned either by the State of Florida or the United States government. The Governor and State Cabinet of Florida controlled state lands as Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund. Following the Civil War, the Internal Improvement Fund became mired in debt. Under state law, no state lands could be sold or granted until the debt was cleared. Florida, like many frontier states, used land grants as an incentive for railroad construction and other types of development.¹

In June 1881, the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund sold Hamilton Disston, a wealthy entrepreneur from Philadelphia, four million acres in the Florida peninsula. As part of the sales agreement, Disston, through

¹ Charlton Tebeau, *A History of Florida*, (Coral Gables, 1971), 189-191.

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the Florida Land and Improvement Company, promised to drain and improve the land. The proceeds of the sale were sufficient to clear the state's debt. The Trustees then proceeded to grant lands to several major railroad developers and sell private lands to individuals. Railroad companies soon began extensive construction programs for new lines throughout the state. Disston and the railroad companies in turn sold smaller parcels of land to developers and private investors.² Improvements in transportation systems played a major role in establishing inland cities in Florida including Wauchula.

The Disston Purchase had an immediate impact on the development of Wauchula. In 1883 the Florida Land and Improvement Company acquired large tracts of land in Township 34 South, Range 25 East, including land within present day Wauchula.³

A lack of adequate transportation was the greatest impediment to development of southwest Florida. The sandy military and Indian trails and the shallow, narrow Peace River limited access to the area. The greatest impact of the Disston Purchase was on railroad development. Following the sale to Disston, the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund proceeded to grant lands to several major railroad developers. Within five years these developers had constructed rail lines through much of the Florida peninsula, reaching previously isolated areas, including the future site of the Town of Wauchula.

The Florida Southern Railway was the first to reach Wauchula in 1886. Incorporated in 1879 as the Gainesville, Ocala, and Charlotte Harbor Railroad, the Florida Southern worked closely with railroad developer Henry Plant. Through negotiation with Plant, the Florida Southern switched its main line from Lake City to Palatka and allowed Plant's South Florida Railroad to construct main lines to Orlando and Tampa. In 1885, Plant extended the South Florida to Bartow, north of Wauchula in Polk County. From Bartow, the Florida Southern began work on a 73-mile line to Charlotte Harbor. In March, 1886 the railroad completed the line, including a stop at Wauchula. Wauchula thus became linked by rail with the rest of Florida and the eastern markets of the United States.⁴

² Ibid, 189-191, 252.

³Tract Book Vol. 22:66-8 found in ACI, "Cultural Resource Study of Wauchula, Florida" 1998 (Florida Master Site File Survey Report No. 530), p. 40.

⁴ George W. Pettengill Jr., *The Story of Florida Railroads, 1834-1903* (Boston, Massachusetts, 1952), 68-73; *Arcadian*, October 8, 1926 and April 9, 1964.

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The Early Settlement, 1886-1901

The arrival of the railroad immediately intensified development of the fledgling community of Wauchula. The town received postal service on April 29, 1886. The town was initially named English, after early settler and storeowner Eli English. However, the railroad renamed the community "Wauchula," meaning "call of the sand hill crane," in May 1888.⁵ The railroad also brought telegraph service to the city and initiated the original survey and plat of the town of Wauchula in May 1886 by W.P. Couper.⁶

Railroad and land development created a demand for governmental services. Many of the residents of Wauchula and those of the surrounding area and nearby communities were also interested in the creation of a smaller, more manageable county than existing Manatee County.⁷ Manatee County at that time was a sprawling area, extending south from Hillsborough County to Charlotte Harbor and east from the Gulf of Mexico to Lake Okeechobee. Its tremendous size, the difficulty of travel, and the settlement of previously unpopulated or under-populated areas following the arrival of the railroad made the subdivision of Manatee County into smaller, more manageable units essential.

On May 12, 1887, the Florida State Legislature passed a bill, later signed into law by the governor, creating DeSoto County from the eastern portion of Manatee County. The county seat initially was the former Manatee county seat of Pine Level, a few miles west of Arcadia. The county was named for Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto and included the geographic area now encompassed by Charlotte, Glades, Hardee, Highlands, and DeSoto counties. With the arrival of the railroad, Pine Level became an isolated, backwater. The logical place for the new county was somewhere to the east, along the more accessible Florida Southern Railway line. Towns along the line, including Wauchula, began competing for the county seat in the months following incorporation of DeSoto County. Arcadia made the most generous offer, but political bickering among the competing communities delayed selection of a county seat until November, 1888. Arcadia was selected at that time following three countywide referendums.⁸

By 1888, Wauchula had developed into a fledgling community centered around a station on the Florida Southern Railway line. It had general stores, a drug store, a post office, a hotel, a local doctor, and Baptist and Methodist churches. Much of the economy was based on citriculture, with grove land surrounding the town. Exploitation of local lumber resources was another important economic activity. A sawmill at Wauchula

⁵Alford G. Bradbury and E. Story Hallock, *A Chronology of Florida Post Offices*, (Florida Federation of Stamp Clubs, 1962) 26, 87; Jean Plowden, *History of Hardee County*. (The Florida Advocate, Wauchula. 1929), 65.

⁶ Hardee County Plat Book I found in ACI, "Cultural Resource Study of Wauchula, Florida" 1998 (Florida Master Site File Survey Report No. 530), p. 40; Plowden 1929:21.

⁷ *Arcadian*, October 8, 1926 and April 9, 1964.

⁸ *Arcadian*, April 9, 1964.

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produced timber products such as crossties and pilings primarily for the railroad. A water powered gristmill, reportedly the only one in South Florida, was in the vicinity of the town.⁹

Beyond the railroad, climate was another factor in the development of Wauchula. Several freezes in 1886 and the winter of 1894-1895 devastated the citrus industry of North Florida, which was concentrated along the St. Johns River. Wauchula quickly became a growing and shipping center. The railroad, the State of Florida and real estate interests promoted Wauchula and other areas of the southern peninsula of Florida as being ideal for citrus cultivation. By the 1890s, much of Wauchula and the surrounding area was planted in citrus groves.¹⁰

The Wauchula citrus industry had its roots in the pre-railroad era. Following the Civil War, one of the pioneer settlers, Albert Carlton, homesteaded 120 acres near the future site of the town. Carlton established an 80-acre seedling orange grove and raised cattle on the remaining 40 acres. In 1903 a seedless orange was discovered on the Carlton Grove. Known as the "Carlton Seedless" the orange was marketed under the name "Fancy Golden Bright" and became a source for local seedling groves. Because of its hardiness and quality of fruit, Carlton grove also served as an important source of root stock. By 1905 DeSoto County, including Wauchula, was one of the leading citrus producing areas in the state.¹¹

The discovery of pebble phosphate in the Peace River in the 1880s contributed to the booming economy of Wauchula and surrounding DeSoto County. In 1881, J. Francis Lebaron, Chief Engineer with the United States Army Corps of Engineers, made the discovery while surveying for a possible cross-Florida barge canal. Captain T.S. Moorehead, who served with Lebaron, purchased phosphate land near Arcadia along the river in 1888. He shortly thereafter organized the Arcadia Phosphate Company, the first phosphate mining operation in Florida. The Arcadia Phosphate Company began dredging and shipping phosphate that same year.¹²

In 1889, the Desoto Phosphate Mining Company built the Scott Phosphate Works near Wauchula on the Peace River near the east side of the present SR 64 bridge. Early phosphate mining was concentrated along the Peace River at Arcadia, but later moved upriver to Wauchula. It created a boom which brought population growth and economic development to Wauchula and its environs. The phosphate boom along the Peace River ended around 1908 after a better quality, land based phosphate was found in nearby Polk County.¹³

⁹ ACI, "Cultural Resource Study of Wauchula, Florida" 1998(Florida Master Site File Survey Report No. 530), pp. 40-41.

¹⁰*Florida Times-Union*, October 18, 1896

¹¹Plowden, *History of Hardee County* p.,37; See Albert Carlton National Register Nomination, Wauchula, Hardee County, 1991, #91000893.

¹² *Arcadian*, October 8, 1896 and April 9, 1964.

¹³ Canter Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, (Orlando, 1991) 314; Margaret Stringer, *Watch Wauchula Win: Facts Figures and Fun - 1886-1930*. (Bartow, 1979), 38-39 found in ACI, "Cultural Resource Study of Wauchula, Florida" 1998 (Florida Master Site File Survey Report No. 530), p. 41.

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During the 1890s, the Florida Southern Railway revolutionized transportation of cattle, citrus, and local produce. Cattle in particular no longer had to be driven long distances to ports such as Tampa. Packing plants for citrus and vegetables were constructed near the Wauchula depot. In 1897, A.G. Smith, agent for the Florida Southern Railway, constructed one of the first packing houses and became one of the largest citrus shippers in DeSoto County.¹⁴

The Town of Wauchula, 1902-1918

Following the turn of the twentieth century, Wauchula continued to grow and mature as a town. It was formally incorporated on September 29, 1902. The population grew from 499 residents in 1900 to 800 in 1905 to 1,800 in 1915.¹⁵ Population growth corresponded with economic growth. The local citrus industry continued to grow through expanding and maturing grove land and packing and shipping facilities concentrated near the railroad.

Along with citrus cultivation, truck farming was a second important component of the local agricultural economy. Local farms produced snap beans, peas, green peppers, cabbage, lettuce, watermelon, cucumbers, and eggplant. By 1904, production reached 75,000 crates of vegetables compared with 72,000 crates of oranges. The importance of truck farming resulted in better organization and standardization of packing procedures. In 1903 a local organization known as the Fruit and Vegetable Growers Union was formed. This was followed in 1915 by the incorporation of the Wauchula Truck Growers Association. This new organization required standard-sized crates and uniform packing standards.¹⁶

Incorporation as a town in 1902 gave Wauchula taxing and bonding authority. Both public and private infrastructure improvement quickly followed. Over the next twenty years automobile transportation, telephone service, electricity, and modern utilities came to Wauchula. In 1905, the Wauchula Telephone Company, a private utility, established service with an office on East Main Street.¹⁷ In 1912, the City of Wauchula installed the first street lights with electricity provided by the Wauchula Manufacturing and Timber Company Mill. The following year the city purchased the existing privately owned electrical infrastructure consisting of poles, lines, meters and other hardware. That same year the city installed additional street lights along Main Street from First Avenue to Florida Avenue.¹⁸

In 1912, the City approved the sale of municipal bonds for a waterworks plant, sewers system, and sidewalks. By February, 1915, these improvements were complete. That same year the city approved additional bonds for

¹⁴ Stringer, *Watch Wauchula Win*, 13; Plowden, *History of Hardee County*, p. 66, found in ACI, "Cultural Resource Study of Wauchula, Florida" 1998 (Florida Master Site File Survey Report No. 530), p. 46.

¹⁵Stringer, *Watch Wauchula Win*, pp. 23, 153.

¹⁶Ibid., 114-15.

¹⁷Ibid., 40, 55

¹⁸Ibid., 141-2.

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brick paving and concrete curbing of Fifth and Sixth Avenues and Main Street from the city limits on the east to Florida Avenue on the west. This project was completed in April, 1916. In 1919 through the sale of additional bonds, the city purchased the Wauchula Light and Power Company, a private utility.¹⁹

Infrastructure improvements served as catalyst for real estate development and building construction. Many of the important commercial buildings in downtown Wauchula were built following a major fire in 1908 and concentrated in the vicinity of the depot and rail line. On the west side of the depot on East Main Street was the large Peace River Hotel. The hotel, now demolished, was constructed in 1908 and was one of the earliest of these buildings. On the opposite side of the street from the hotel was the Bank of Wauchula constructed in 1914 at 100-112 E. Main Street but now heavily remodeled. Due west of the bank was the extant Stansfield Building at 111 E. Main Street. Another extant commercial building from the period was the J.C Stenstrom Building at 101-105 W. Main Street.

Churches were quickly organized following the arrival of the railroad, three of which remain in the proposed historic district. The Methodist and Baptist formed the first congregations, but the historic Baptist Church has been demolished. The Methodist Church organized in 1888. The historic Gothic Revival style Trinity United Methodist Church on North Seventh Avenue was dedicated on Mother's Day 1917. The Presbyterians first organized in 1910. In 1916 they constructed a church at 114 North Seventh Avenue. The building, which remains today, was unusual for church architecture with features drawn from the Bungalow architectural style. Another congregation, the First Christian Church, built a sanctuary on South Eighth Avenue in 1915.²⁰

As Wauchula matured as a community, local residents formed social and civic organizations. Masons were among the first; Wauchula's first lodge was the Masonic Order No. 99 with the charter issued on January 18, 1888.²¹ Today, two masonic buildings remain on Main Street. In addition to fraternal organizations, woman's organizations were particularly important. One of these was the Wauchula Woman's Club. Formed as the Village Improvement Association in 1906, the Woman's Club supported projects to clean up the city, establish parks and improve homes. In 1911, the club became the Civic League of Wauchula and joined the National Federation of Women's Clubs. In 1923, the Civic League incorporated as the Wauchula Woman's Club. In 1924, the club built their current headquarters at 133 N. 7th Avenue. The local woman's club has remained an important factor in local community development since its founding.²² Another important woman's organization, the Wauchula Garden Club, was an offshoot of Woman's Club. The Garden Club was dedicated to city beautification. Their clubhouse built in 1946 stands at 131 N. 8th Avenue.²³

¹⁹Plowden, *History of Hardee County* 70; Stringer, *Watch Wauchula Win*, 104-106.

²⁰Stringer, *Watch Wauchula Win*, 104-106.

²¹Ibid., 156-61.

²²Ibid., 78-80.

²³Florida Master Site, Form HR274

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One highlight of the pre-World War I history of Wauchula was the construction of the Wauchula Atlantic Coast Line (ACL) Railroad Depot at the intersection of Main Street and N. 5th Avenue. By 1914 the original wooden depot had become an eyesore in the context of new brick churches and commercial blocks. Representatives of the Wauchula Board of Trade lobbied the State Railroad Commission for a new depot. The ACL responded with the beautiful depot now located at 135 E. Main Street. The depot was constructed of brick in a Flemish bond pattern.²⁴

Improved roads were an important part of the economic development of Wauchula and DeSoto County during the World War I and post-war era. The creation of the Florida State Road Department in 1915 served as a catalyst for county road programs. State funding and professional standards for road construction resulted in vast improvements in the local transportation infrastructure. Polk County, to the north of DeSoto, had one of the finest road building programs in the state and contributed to the regional transportation system. Among the most important road projects during the period was the “Scenic Highway,” which ran down the Central Ridge of Florida through Polk and parts of Highlands, Hardee and DeSoto counties. The Scenic Highway system greatly facilitated communication with neighboring counties and had a positive impact on development in the region.²⁵

World War I Aftermath and Florida Boom, 1919-1928

Florida’s economy blossomed after World War I. Southeast Florida, particularly Miami and Palm Beach, experienced the most intense development, but few communities in the state were unaffected by the Great Florida Land Boom. In the fall of 1924 the Florida Legislature passed a constitutional amendment prohibiting state inheritance or income taxes. The resulting capital influx accelerated an already well-developed surge of land sales and building construction. By December of that year twenty thousand people were thought to be entering the state each day. In early 1925 some twenty-five passenger trains a day were arriving in Jacksonville.²⁶

Real estate values rose dramatically throughout the state during the Land Boom. In virtually every community new subdivisions were platted and recorded, lots were sold and resold and new buildings were constructed. The experience of Wauchula paralleled that of much of the state. Real estate development and commercial activity intensified and citrus growing, packing and shipping thrived. Important commercial buildings were constructed downtown.

²⁴ ACI, “Cultural Resource Study of Wauchula, Florida” 1998(Florida Master Site File Survey Report No. 530), p. 3, 68; Florida Master Site File, HR100..

²⁵ Baynard Kendrick, *Florida Trails to Turnpikes* (Gainesville, 1964), 57; Harry Cutler, *History of Florida, Past and Present, Historical and Biographical*, 3 vols. (Chicago, 1923), 1:454-56

²⁶ Tebeau, *A History of Florida*, 378-392, passim.

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The Kilgore Building, the Bailey Building, and the Bostick Building at 202-222 West Main Street are good examples of Land Boom period commercial architecture in downtown Wauchula. Constructed in 1922, the business block consists of three separate buildings united by a buff brick façade. The structures were built by L.W. Bostick, an important local contractor. In 1922, Bostick also constructed the Hardee County Trust Company Bank Building at 122 West Main Street. Designed in the Neoclassical Style, the building is more detailed and high styled than most in the district.

In 1921, political pressure from outlying communities caused the Florida State Legislature to subdivide the original DeSoto County. County subdivision was one of the dominant political themes in Florida during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The push for a new county in northern DeSoto County began as early as 1906. In April, 1906 a delegation from Wauchula went to Punta Gorda where they received support from local residents. Arguments for county division included the long distances from county services and the inequity of tax benefits for outlying areas. Candidates for the legislature from DeSoto County ran on pro or contra county division positions. In 1908, a mass meeting was held at Wauchula for the purpose of dividing DeSoto County into new counties corresponding with the Wauchula, Arcadia, and Punta Gorda sections. In the election for senate and house representatives, the divisionists lost with heavy opposition from Arcadia and the communities near it. In 1911, the county commission called for a referendum on whether the county seat should remain at Arcadia. Arcadia prevailed and as a result a new courthouse costing \$120,000 was built there. Finally, in 1920 county divisionists won both the senate and house races for DeSoto County. Communities such as Avon Park, Sebring and Moore Haven supported the division so the original plan of three counties was increased to five. As a result, the Florida House of Representatives voted 71-0 in favor of division. Charlotte, Glades, Hardee, and Highlands counties were carved out of this large geographic area, and DeSoto County was reduced to its present size. Wauchula became the county seat of newly formed Hardee County.²⁷ Hardee and DeSoto were divided into counties of equal size, each being five townships in length from north to south and three and one-half from north to south, containing 630 square miles. Their populations were also roughly equivalent. Hardee County was named for Cary Hardee, the governor of Florida at the time, and had a population of 8,755 at the time of division.²⁸

Building construction in Wauchula during the 1920s was not limited to commercial buildings. The two most important governmental buildings in the city, the Hardee County Courthouse and the Wachula City Hall, were constructed during the period. Construction of the courthouse began shortly after the creation of Hardee County in 1921. Two years later county officials acquired blocks 23 and 28 of Carlton & McEwen Subdivision as the site of the courthouse. Carlton & McEwan was one of Wauchula's earliest subdivisions and encompassed most of downtown. In 1907 the Town of Wauchula acquired Block 28 with a covenant that it be used as a public park

²⁷Lane, *A Pictorial History of Arcadia and DeSoto County*, 60-61; Morris, *Florida Handbook*, 348; *Arcadian*, April 9, 1964;

Plowden, *History of Hardee County*, 29-34.

²⁸ Plowden, *History of Hardee County*, 29-34

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in perpetuity.²⁹ In 1923 the city deeded the property to the county. That same year, the county acquired Block 23 from private owners. Construction of the courthouse began in April, 1926. The courthouse was located on the south side of the property in Block 28. The architectural firm was H.G. Little and William Bradford with offices in Bartow and Lakeland in nearby Polk County. The builder was Robertson Construction Company also of Bartow. The courthouse was built in a little over a year and placed in service in June, 1927. The front portion of the property, including part of Block 28 and all of Block 23, became a courthouse square with a fountain and obelisk. The traditional use of Block 28 as a park was thus maintained.³⁰

The Mediterranean Revival Style Wauchula City Hall was the second important government building constructed in Wauchula during the 1920s. The Town of Wauchula acquired the site of the city hall at the northwest corner of East Main Street and Fourth Avenue between 1922 and 1925. It commissioned prominent Tampa architect M. Leo Elliot as architect. The general contractor was Paul H. Smith of Haines City. When completed the building complex contained the town fire department and one of the largest auditoriums in South Florida.³¹

In 1926, the Florida Land Boom collapsed and effected communities throughout the state including Wauchula. Local subdivision development and building construction, with the exception of the county courthouse and the city hall project, came to a virtual standstill. City government, largely reliant on real estate taxes, experienced difficulty meeting its expenses as properties dropped in value, went into foreclosure or were lost because of non-payment of taxes. The economic woes of Wauchula were further exacerbated during the late 1920s when a series of natural disasters devastated the citrus industry. In 1928, a powerful hurricane cut across the Florida peninsula destroying much of the local citrus crop. In 1929, the Mediterranean Fruit Fly invaded Florida and paralyzed the citrus industry in much of the state. Quarantines and inspections further slowed an already sluggish industry. The Town of Wauchula participated in efforts to control the Fruit Fly through a local eradication campaign.³²

Great Depression/New Deal/World War II and Aftermath, 1929-1967

The Great Depression further exacerbated economic woes in Wauchula. The Great Depression, which fell on Florida with the collapse of the Boom, descended on the nation as a whole in 1929 with the Wall Street Crash. Between 1929 and 1933, 148 state and national banks in Florida collapsed. By 1933 approximately one of four Floridians were receiving some type of public relief.³³

²⁹ Stringer, *Watch Wauchula Win*, p. 136.

³⁰ ACI, "Cultural Resource Study of Wauchula, Florida" 1998 (Florida Master Site File Survey Report No. 530), p. 66-67.

³¹ Stringer, *Watch Wauchula Win*, p. 148-50; Plowden. *History of Hardee County*, p. 72.

³² *Arcadian*, April 9, 1964; Lane, *A Pictorial History of Arcadia and DeSoto County*, 66; Stringer, *Watch Wauchula Win*, p. 141.

³³ Tebeau, *A History of Florida*, p. 416-419.

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The economic situation in Hardee County was a microcosm of the State of Florida. Property values fell and even the bank owned by the family of Florida governor Doyle Carlton failed. Citrus growers, truck farmers and local businessmen suffered losses and many were forced into bankruptcy. A fever tick epidemic devastated the cattle industry. The value of cattle fell and many cattlemen, including those in Hardee County, lost or were forced to destroy their herds. The local and state economy did not fully recover until World War II when government spending, construction of military bases and cattle, citrus and truck crop production became profitable again.³⁴

One of the few highlights of the Great Depression was the election in 1929 of Wauchula native son, Doyle E. Carlton, as Governor of Florida. The Carlton family was among the early pioneers of Hardee County. They developed extensive citrus and real estate holdings. Albert and Charles Carlton opened Wauchula's first bank in 1904, the Carlton and Carlton Bank. In 1915, they obtained a federal charter and changed the name to the Carlton National Bank. The Carlton National Bank was one of many caught up in the economic downturn caused by the collapse of the Florida Land Boom and the onset of the Great Depression. In 1929, the bank closed permanently due to financial problems.³⁵

As the Depression Decade wore on, relief measures grew, mostly inspired by the New Deal Administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) and other new deal public works programs provided jobs for professionals and labors alike, often employing them to construct roads and buildings. One of the few remnants of the New Deal in Wauchula is a painting of the strawberry auction done about 1935 by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA).³⁶

Wauchula, with the rest of the nation, emerged from the Great Depression on the back of a growing defense industry. Florida was one of the few states to show a population increase during World War II. Its strategic importance made Florida a prime location for military bases during the war. The flat terrain in the Highland Ridge, particularly the Grand Prairie, southeast of Wauchula, was ideal for airfield construction and aviation training. Carlstrom and Dorr fields were established as training facilities for American and British flyers and brought many good jobs to the region. By the time United States entered World War II in 1941 the demand for local cattle, citrus fruit and vegetables was growing and making these products increasingly profitable. During the 1940s, Wauchula's population increased from 2,574 to 2,873.³⁷

The post-World War II development of Wauchula was embodied by the construction of important civic, commercial, and educational buildings. One of the most important developments in Wauchula after the war was the construction of the Hardee County High School in 1948, which replaced an earlier school that burned in

³⁴ACI, "Cultural Resource Study of Wauchula, Florida" 1998(Florida Master Site File Survey Report No. 530), pp. 51-52.

³⁵Stringer, *Watch Wauchula Win*, pp. 50-51.

³⁶See Florida State Memory Project, Photographic Collection, Wauchula image no. PR00427.

³⁷Morris, 262.

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1945.³⁸ The 1945 fire created a crisis as to where to house local students. Following the fire, the school board authorized the school superintendent to contact the trustees of the Zolfo Springs school district and secure permission from them for the use of the Zolfo Springs school building to house the county high school for the 1945-46 school term. The Hardee High School at 200 South Florida Avenue opened in the fall of 1949. Architect C.L. Fiendland designed the school with auditorium, laboratories, and other standard secondary school features. In 1951, a middle school addition and a gymnasium were added to the complex. The first graduating class was in 1950. A new high school, located at 830 Altman Road, opened in 1981. The former site on Florida Avenue then became the home of Hardee County Junior High.³⁹

Construction of civic buildings was a major contribution to downtown Wauchula in the post-World War II period. On June 25, 1946, Wauchula Lodge No. 1700, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks received its charter and met at the new lodge's rooms in the Beeson Building at Seventh Avenue and Main Street. In the mid-1950s, the Elks constructed a building at 318 West Main Street in downtown Wauchula. The lodge was a 14,750 square foot-building with several large meeting rooms, a parking lot are on about one acre of land with 250 feet frontage on Main Street. The Wauchula Masonic LODGE #17 F & A M, 116-118 West Main Street was a second civic building constructed c. 1955.⁴⁰

The construction of the new *Herald Advocate* newspaper building was another important development in post-World War II Wauchula. The *Herald Advocate* was a successor to the *Florida Advocate*. George Goolsby and his wife Laura created the *Florida Advocate* in 1901 as the town's first newspaper. The Goolsbys moved the paper to a wooden building at 121 S. Seventh Avenue around 1912. In 1955, W.J. Kelly purchased the paper and merged it with a second local paper the *Hardee County Herald*. In 1958, the paper constructed a modern masonry building to house the *Herald Advocate* just north of its old headquarters. Both buildings remain on South Seventh Avenue.⁴¹

Throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s, downtown Wauchula continued as the center of community life. During the 1950s, Wauchula's population increased from 2,873 in 1950 to 3,411 in 1960. Starting in 1960, however, Wauchula, along with small towns across the United States, experienced an increasing exodus from the city. In Florida, small town residents departed to the cities along the coasts, which underwent

³⁸ Ibid., p. 75.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 75; ACI, "Cultural Resource Study of Wauchula, Florida" 1998(Florida Master Site File Survey Report No. 530), pp. 52-53..

⁴⁰Stringer, *Watch Wauchula Win*, pp. 70-74. ACI, "Cultural Resource Study of Wauchula, Florida" 1998(Florida Master Site File Survey Report No. 530), p. 45.

⁴¹ Stringer, *Watch Wauchula Win*, 45-46, 124; ACI, "Cultural Resource Study of Wauchula, Florida" 1998(Florida Master Site File Survey Report No. 530), pp. 45-46..

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expansive development during the 1960s and 1970s. Although the downtown still functioned as the center of activity in Wauchula, the population base of the city decreased during the 1960s, from 3,411 to 3,007.⁴²

Beginning around 1960, there were a number of physical changes to downtown Wauchula. In 1966, a fire destroyed the historic Peace River Hotel, one of the largest and oldest commercial buildings in the downtown area. Following the fire, the hotel was replaced by a modern shopping plaza. Also during the 1960s changes to US 17 had a major impact. The Florida Department of Transportation created paired one way streets through downtown. This change increased traffic speeds and resulted in the widening of 5th Avenue. High volume traffic was channeled onto US 17 north and south of Main Street and new commercial buildings were constructed along this corridor as a result. The historic commercial core, which previously depended on foot traffic, became less pedestrian friendly while the newly created commercial areas were oriented towards customers arriving by automobile. A major vacant area was created in the 1980s, when the Anderson Building at the southwest corner of Main and Seventh Avenue was lost to fire. Demolition also took its toll during the period when the large masonry First Baptist Church and the Simmons Hotel were razed. Most significantly, rail service ended and the rail lines, which had created the town, were removed around 1985. Despite these changes the population of Wauchula remained relatively stable from 1970 to 1980.⁴³

During the 1990s, Wauchula experienced a slight gain in population. The local economy remained agriculturally based. Citrus, cattle and truck crops remained the main products. Since 1995 Wauchula has been a Florida Main Street program. This program has resulted in the rehabilitation of a number of buildings and the creation a number of new businesses.⁴⁴

On August 13, 2004, Hurricane Charley struck Wauchula with sustained winds of 140 mph and gusts of over 160 mph. The town was without running water or potable water for a week. Power was lost to some residents for up to three weeks and schools were canceled for two weeks. After an estimated 85 percent of the buildings in Wauchula were either damaged or destroyed, the town and surrounding Hardee County were declared a federal disaster area. Several historic buildings along Main Street were severely damaged and subsequently demolished as a consequence of Charley.⁴⁵

The physical development of Florida cities, which stalled following the collapse of the Florida Land Boom, the onset of the Great Depression and World War II, resumed with renewed vigor in the late 1940s as the state entered another period of growth. Many veterans who had served at numerous military bases in Florida during the war returned at its close to seek permanent residence. Wauchula was, however, relatively untouched by the

⁴² Morris, p.577.

⁴³ Stringer, *Watch Wauchula Win*, p. 59..

⁴⁴mainstreetwauchula.com ; ACI, "Cultural Resource Study of Wauchula, Florida" 1998(Florida Master Site File Survey Report No. 530), p. 53.

⁴⁵ [Trip Journal Florida](#)". *MyTripJournal*. Retrieved May 28, 2013.

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expansive growth many Florida communities experienced, particularly those along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. The post-World War era brought mixed blessings to the town. While population and economic growth was limited, Wauchula was spared the exploding number of parking lots, shopping malls surrounded by asphalt, suburban sprawl, erosion of the central commercial district, and strip development along major thoroughfares and highways. Wauchula's historic government and civic center, and business district remain largely intact. The significance of these areas will hopefully be recognized through listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Community Planning and Development/Criterion A

The Wauchula Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Community/Planning and Development. The district is associated with important events that resulted in the founding and subsequent development of the town. In particular, the arrival of the railroad in 1886 was the key event in the development of Wauchula. A lack of adequate transportation was the greatest impediment to development of southwest Florida, where Wauchula is located. Foot trails, cattle roads and the shallow, narrow Peace River limited access to the area. The Florida Southern Railway was the first to reach Wauchula in 1886. Wauchula thus became linked by rail with the rest of Florida and the eastern markets of the United States.⁴⁶ The rail link fostered population growth and economic development through the mid-20th century.

Wauchula developed as a typical Florida railroad town of the late nineteenth century. Non-existent before the arrival of the Florida Southern Railroad, the rail system provided a framework for development of the town. The rail line formed a north-south axis through Wauchula which was crossed east-west by Main Street. Community development grew along these two axis with commercial buildings, banks, packing houses, warehouses and hotels being the principal building types. The hub of the axis was the depot just west of the rail line on East Main Street. By 1914 the original wooden depot was old and in poor condition. The Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, successor to the Florida Southern, constructed a new brick depot at 135 E. Main Street in 1914. The depot remained the transportation hub of Wauchula through the 1960s.⁴⁷

The railroad facilitated a brief phosphate boom in the late nineteenth century. Following the phosphate boom settlers in the Wauchula area focused on raising cattle, planting orange groves, and managing truck farms. These agricultural activities have remained the mainstays of the local economy since the late nineteenth century. Wauchula served as a market place and transportation center for these products. It was incorporated as a

⁴⁶ George W. Pettengill Jr., *The Story of Florida Railroads, 1834-1903* (Boston, Massachusetts, 1952), 68-73; *Arcadian*, October 8, 1926 and April 9, 1964.

⁴⁷ ACI, "Cultural Resource Study of Wauchula, Florida" 1998 (Florida Master Site File Survey Report No. 530), p. 3, 68; Florida Master Site File, HR100

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municipality in 1902. This year is also the date of construction of 502 West Main Street, the oldest extant building in the proposed district and forms a benchmark date for the period of significance.

There are additional buildings associated with the community development of Wauchula. The Wauchula Woman's Club, originally the Village Improvement Association, was an early force in community beautification, cultural affairs, and civic pride. The Woman's Club headquarters remains at 133 N. 7th Avenue. The Wauchula Garden Club, an offshoot of the Woman's Club, also contributed to community beautification projects. Their clubhouse is located at 131 N. 8th Avenue.

The proposed Wauchula Historic District contains a concentration of buildings that embody the historic development of the town from its incorporation in 1902 to 1967. For over a century Wauchula has served the commercial and transportation hub for the Hardee County agricultural region. Since 1921 it has been the governing seat of Hardee County, sparsely populated but economically significant to the state. The town's origin is linked to the famous Disston Purchase and to the subsequent development of rail transportation. Its historical experience has included boom and bust cycles in land speculation and in the cattle, citrus and phosphate industries. Comprised mainly of governmental, residential and commercial buildings, the Wauchula Historic District has maintained its historic use and the physical characteristics and appearance it has embodied the early twentieth century. Wauchula's central business and governmental center remains largely intact.

Politics/Government/Criterion A

The Wauchula Historic District is significant for its association with events important to the political history and the formation and development of both Wauchula and Hardee County.

The district is significantly associated with the political history of southwest Florida from the Disston Purchase in 1881 and the arrival of the railroad in 1886 through the creation of Hardee County in 1921.

The formation of Hardee County immediately resulted in a drive to construct a county courthouse at Wauchula.⁴⁸ Construction started in April 1926 on the Hardee County Courthouse and was completed the following year.⁴⁹ Hardee County was one of the last counties formed in Florida. The creation of the county and construction of the courthouse embody an important period in the political history of Florida. Furthermore, the City of Wauchula also contributed to the importance of Wauchula as a center of local government. The city hall at 225 East Main Street, constructed in 1926, is a second landmark governmental building in the proposed district.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Stringer, *Watch Wauchula Win*, pp. 36.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 137, 145-6.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 148-50.

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Education/Criterion A

The Wauchula Historic District is also significant in the area of Education for its association with the Hardee County High School, a locally significant educational building in the county. The extant Hardee High School at 200 South Florida Avenue opened in 1949. The historic school complex includes a classroom addition and a gymnasium constructed c. 1951. Throughout its existence the high school has not only served educational purposes but has been a community resource for cultural activities and sporting events. When a new high school was opened in 1981, the building on Florida Avenue became the Hardee County Junior High.⁵¹

Commerce/Criterion A

The Wauchula Historic District is also significant in the area of Commerce. Downtown Wauchula developed as a market place and financial center for Hardee County whose economy was based on the phosphate, citrus, cattle and truck crop industries. Wauchula was a railroad town and its founding and early development were keyed to this mode of transportation. Many of the important commercial buildings in downtown Wauchula were built during the early twentieth century and concentrated in the vicinity of the depot and rail line. On the west side of the depot was the large Peace River Hotel. The hotel, now demolished, was constructed in 1908 and was one of the earliest of these buildings. On the opposite side of the street was the Bank of Wauchula constructed in 1915 at 100-112 E. Main Street but now heavily remodeled. Due west was the extant Stansfield Building at 111 E. Main Street. Another extant commercial building from the period was the J.C. Stenstrom Building at 101-105 W. Main Street.

Florida's economy blossomed after World War I. Southeast Florida, particularly Miami and Palm Beach experienced the most intense development, but few communities in the state were unaffected by the Great Florida Land Boom. Real estate values rose dramatically throughout the state during the Boom. In virtually every community new subdivisions were platted and recorded, lots were sold and re-sold and new buildings were constructed. The experience of Wauchula paralleled that of much of the state. Real estate development and commercial activity intensified and citrus growing, packing and shipping thrived. Important commercial buildings were constructed downtown.

Among the commercial buildings and business blocks constructed in downtown Wauchula during the Boom. were the Kilgore Building, the Bailey Building and the Bostick Building at 202-222 W. Main Street. These buildings are good example of commercial architecture used for retail space and lodging. Constructed in 1922, the business block consists of three separate structures united by a buff brick façade. It was built by L.W.

⁵¹ Stringer., *Watch Wauchula Win* p. 75; ACI, "Cultural Resource Study of Wauchula, Florida" 1998(Florida Master Site File Survey Report No. 530), pp. 52-53..

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Bostick, an important local contractor. L.W. Bostick also constructed the Hardee County Trust Company Bank Building at 122 W. Main Street, another important commercial structure.

In Wauchula, the collapse of the Boom in 1926 followed by the Great Depression stopped commercial building construction in the district. During the Depression Decade of the 1930s and the World War II period commercial construction was dormant. Following the war, commercial construction was concentrated in areas outside the historic downtown which were more accessible by automobile transportation. Thus, the commercial significance of the Wauchula District embodies the period roughly from 1902 through 1926.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Masonry Vernacular/Commercial

Masonry Vernacular/Commercial architecture is concentrated in downtown Wauchula along Main Street from E. 4th Avenue to W. 9th Street. The focal point of the area is first two blocks of West Main Street, where the oldest and best examples of commercial architecture are found. Buildings range from one to two stories in height and embody the one and two-part commercial blocks common in historic commercial districts between 1850 and 1950. The one-part block is a one-story, free-standing building that was adapted from the lower part of the more numerous two-part commercial block. The one-part block is a simple rectangular building, often exhibiting an ornate facade. It is most often utilized for retail or office space.

The two-part block was the most common commercial design used in small cities and towns in the United States between 1850 and 1950. Generally limited to between two and four story buildings, the two-part block is characterized by a horizontal division into two distinct zones, separated by the use of the interior space of the building. The lower zone is usually reserved for retail space and often contains large plate glass display windows, while the upper part contains space for offices or apartments. The exterior design of the building is usually homogeneous, but in some cases different building materials and exterior fabrics are employed to divide visually the two zones.

Due to a catastrophic fire in 1908, virtually all wood-frame commercial buildings in Wauchula were destroyed. The extant historic buildings are all masonry. Red brick was the most common finish material with scattered example of buff brick, concrete block and stucco finishes.

Frame Vernacular

Most historic residential buildings in the proposed district are classified as Frame Vernacular. Frame Vernacular, the prevalent type of historic residential building in Florida, refers to the common wood frame technique employed by lay or self-taught builders. From the 1880s until about 1910, frame vernacular

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architecture in Florida was characterized by the balloon-frame method of construction. Balloon-frame construction, which began in Chicago and reached Florida with the arrival of the railroad in much of the state in the 1880s, featured closely spaced two inch deep boards of varying widths joined by nails. This method of framing eliminated the hewn joints and massive timbers employed in braced frame construction. Corner posts and principal horizontal members consisted of two or more two inch boards nailed together. Studs in multi-story buildings rose continuously from the floors to the roof. Floors hung on the studs. Balloon framing allowed cheaper and more rapid construction permitted taller buildings. Brick piers provided the principal foundation type. Roofs were generally gable, hip or pyramidal. Metal roof surfacing, including ornamental metal, became common in Florida during the period. Roof forms were more complex, featuring dormers, cross gables, and other secondary roof structures. The complexity of roof forms during the late nineteenth century can be attributed in part to the influence of the Queen Anne style, which also led to irregular massing. Windows remained double-hung sash, but contained larger panes than in the pre-Civil War era, often in a 2/2 light pattern. Porches and verandas were also common features. Few, if any, examples of balloon frame construction remain in the proposed Wauchula Historic District.

A major change in frame construction occurred about 1910 with the introduction of platform framing. Most of the frame buildings in the proposed Wauchula District are this type of construction. With the new method, each new floor was constructed independently. Shorter studs were erected upon wooden platforms to support the overlying platform or roof. This framing system was both simpler and more rigid than the balloon framing system it replaced.

By 1920, the Bungalow had become a major influence on vernacular design. As a result, the form, plan, and features of frame buildings tended to be more regular. After the 1920 frame vernacular buildings often diminished to one story. In addition to height and methods of construction frame vernacular building of the 1920s and 1930s shared additional characteristics. Framing rested on pier foundations, commonly brick or concrete block. Exterior sheathing was usually horizontal wood siding, either weatherboard or drop type. Roof types were gable or hip, covered with V-crimp or embossed sheet metal or composition or asbestos cement shingles. Brick chimneys constituted a common feature. Windows were double-hung sash. The size of panes increased in size, generally to 1/1 lights. Bungalow windows, with a single lower light and 3,4 or more lights in the upper sash, were typical. Porches usually full-widths entrance types, remained common. Bungalow features are often found on vernacular buildings in the district that are not fully executed examples of the style.

Bungalow

Other than Frame Vernacular the Bungalow was the most popular residential building design in Florida during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Its name was derived from the Bengalese *bangla*, a low house with porches, used as a wayside shelter by travelers in India during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Although the name and some of the general characteristics of the Bungalow have their origins in India, the

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Japanese had the most profound influence on the style. Japanese construction techniques exhibited at the California Mid-Winter Exposition of 1894 emphasized the interplay of angles and planes and extensive display of structural members that became integral components of American Bungalow design. The earliest American buildings which were consciously bungalows appeared in California and New England in the 1890s. They generally were large residences designed by architects. However, by the turn of the century publications like *Bungalow Magazine* and *The Craftsman* flooded the building market with plans for inexpensive bungalows. Featured in these magazines were articles about the economical use of space, interior decoration, and landscaping. It was this scaled down version of the Bungalow which became so pervasive in Florida during the early twentieth century. The Bungalow is typically a one or one and one-half story building with a low-pitched gable (occasionally hipped) roof with wide unenclosed eave overhangs. The roof rafters are usually exposed and false brackets or beams are commonly added under the gables. The porch is often the most dominant architectural feature of the Bungalow. They are generally either full or partial width, with the roof supported by tapered square columns that frequently extend to ground level or sit on massive brick piers.

From 1915 until 1930 the Bungalow was the predominant style of residences in Wauchula. Its scale, massing, plan and orientation were distinct from earlier Frame Vernacular residences. Local examples of Bungalows are one to one-and-one-half stories in height with a rectangular plan. Gable main roofs have shallow pitches, are frontally oriented and are frequently paired with a gable porch roof to provide a gable over gable profile. Gables are decorated with wood shingles, board and batten, half-timbering over stucco, or large lattice vents. The reduced height and roof pitch gave the Bungalow a horizontal emphasis which was further emphasized by architectural details. Brick porch piers provide a base for heavy tapered and square columns.

Spanish Eclectic Style

The Spanish Eclectic style is found almost solely in those states that have a Spanish colonial heritage. It is often lumped in with the more generic Mediterranean Revival Style. It was a descendent of the Spanish Mission style which was popular during the first two decades of the twentieth century in the Southwest and Florida. The style was the product of a detailed study of Latin American architecture made by Bertram Grovesnor Goodhue. In 1915, at the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego, Goodhue designed an exhibit that featured the rich architectural variety found in South America. Encouraged by the publicity afforded the exposition, other architects began to look directly to Spain where they found still more interesting building traditions. In Florida, the Spanish Eclectic style was among the most common building styles during the 1920s. It was adapted for a variety of building types, including the Wauchula City Hall and the Wauchula Woman's Club.

Neoclassical Revival Style

The Hardee County Courthouse is a good example of the Neoclassical Revival style in the Wauchula District. The Neoclassical style evolved from a renewed interest in the architectural forms of the ancient Greeks and

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Romans. The revival of interest in classical models in the United States dates from the World's Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago in 1893. Many of the best known architects of the day designed buildings based on classical precedents for the Exposition. Examples were varied and ranged from monumental copies of Greek temples to smaller models, which drew heavily from designs of Adam, Georgian, and early Classical Revival residences built in the United States in the eighteenth century.

Like its predecessor, the Greek Revival style, the first of the Victorian romantic styles that in the pre-Civil War period emerged as the most purely classical of American building types, the Neoclassical expressed the nation's ideal of itself as the restorer of ancient Greek democratic government. The resurgence of popularity for the classical style associated with the republics of Greece and Rome accompanied the rise in nationalistic fervor at the turn of the century, when the United States emerged as a world power.

In Florida, the Neoclassical style became a favored design for buildings such as banks and courthouses. Its application to residences is less common. Some characteristics of the style include a symmetrical facade dominated by a full height classical portico or porch supported by Ionic, Tuscan, or Corinthian colonnades. The gable or hip roofs are finished with boxed eaves frequently accented with dentils or modillions and a wide frieze. Facade doorways usually feature decorative pediments, sidelights or transoms. Fenestration consists of double-hung sash windows, usually with six or nine panes per window.

Gothic Revival

The Gothic Revival was most popular in the United States between 1840 and 1870, although it remained a popular building style for religious and educational buildings well into the 20th century. Development of an interest of using Medieval Christian architectural design features was an element of the European Romantic Movement in art, architecture, music and literature. The Romantic Movement was a turn away from the formalism, reasonability, and empiricism that characterized the Enlightenment of the late eighteenth century, moving more towards the myth and romance of Medieval Europe. Arriving from England and used in America as early as 1799 by pioneer architect, Benjamin Henry Latrobe in his design of Sedgeley in Baltimore, the Gothic Revival style became more common in the United States between 1840 and 1870. The popularity of the style in the United States was greatly accelerated by the architectural works of Alexander Jackson Davis, whose plans for Gothic Revival houses and cottages were widely distributed in the publications of Andrew Jackson Downing, a pioneer landscape architect of the time. The Gothic Revival style proved to be an enduring stylistic influence that continued in various modifications until well into the twentieth century, particularly for the design of religious and educational buildings. Variations of the style that have developed after the Civil War have been termed High Victorian or Ruskinian, Collegiate, Carpenter, and even Skyscraper Gothic.

The Gothic Revival in Florida dates to the 1850s. Episcopal churches, many of which were drawn from the pattern books of Richard Upjohn, offer many of the earliest and best examples of the Carpenter Gothic.

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University buildings and public schools portray the Collegiate Gothic style. Churches are frequently associated with the Gothic Revival such as the United Methodist Church in Wauchula. Mission Style

The Spanish Mission style is found almost solely in those states that have a Spanish colonial heritage. It originated in California during the 1890s and was given impetus when the Southern Pacific railways adopted it as the style for station houses and resort hotels throughout the west. Early high style domestic examples were faithful copies of their colonial ancestors, but during the first two decades of the 20th century other influences (most notably those of the Prairie and Bungalow styles) were added to produce new prototypes.

In Florida, the Spanish Mission style was among the most popular styles during the decade before the collapse of the Florida land boom in 1926. It was adapted for a variety of building types ranging from grandiose tourist hotels to two room residences. Identifying features of the style include flat roofs, always with a curvilinear parapet or dormer either on the main or porch roof; ceramic tile roof surfacing; stuccoed facades; flat roof entrance porches, commonly with arched openings supported by square columns; casement and double-hung sash windows; and ceramic tile decorations. Given its roots in the ecclesiastical architecture of Mexico and the Old Southwest, it was frequently associated with churches. The Brown Arcade, 520 West Main Street, an apartment building, is the lone example in the Wauchula District.

Mid-Century Modern

During the post-World War II period, the design of several new buildings in downtown Wauchula reflected many of the trends, materials, and technologies of the Modernist Movement popular throughout the United States. Moreover, many extant commercial buildings, particularly first floor facades and storefronts, were remodeled in the style. These modifications included expansive glass show windows framed in steel and aluminum and application of modern materials such as structural glass to kick panels and window surrounds. The Modernist Movement was promoted by nationally significant architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright, LeCorbusier, Paul Randolph, Eero Saarinen, and Mies van der Rohe. The most common design influence was the "Miesian Box", which refers to the influential work of Mies van der Rohe who perfected the use of large glass curtain walls and right-angled geometry in the design of Modern buildings.

Malachi Leo Elliot, Architect

Malachi Leo Elliot designed the Wauchula City Hall, the town's most architecturally important building. Leo Elliot was one of the most important historic architects of southwest Florida. Elliott was born in Woodstock New York and attended Cooper Union College. He trained with the architectural firm of Welch, Smith and Provost in New York City and helped design buildings for the Jamestown Exposition of 1907 in Norfolk Virginia. Elliot came to Tampa in 1907 and soon won design competitions for buildings including the Centro Asturiano de Tampa. He is recognized for his design of significant government and civic buildings. When he

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relocated to Tampa he formed a partnership with Bayar C. Bonfoey. Bonfoey and Elliot designed the Tampa YMCA in 1909, Centro Asturiano in 1914, and Tampa City Hall in 1915. Elliott designed the Italian Club in 1917 and Ybor City's Cuban Club in 1918. In 1920, he founded M. Leo Elliott Inc, with offices in Tampa, Sarasota and St. Pete. By 1925 the firm was working throughout Florida. Many of Elliott's notable Tampa design projects remain in downtown Tampa, on Davis Island and in Temple Terrace. In addition to the Wauchula City Hall, Elliot designed the nearby DeSoto County Courthouse, an excellent example of the Classical Revival style.⁵²

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Wauchula Historic District embodies an important period of architecture, architectural styles, materials, and buildings types. Downtown Wauchula contains a good concentrations of historic commercial architecture. The Hardee County Courthouse, the Wauchula City Hall, the Wauchula Woman's Club and the Wauchula Depot are outstanding examples of historic building types. Wood-frame residences are other common building types. Scattered examples of the Gothic Revival, Neoclassical, Spanish Eclectic, Bungalow and Mid-Century Modern are also found. The district contains a high concentration of contributing buildings and retains a high degree of architectural integrity, linkage and continuity. The concentration and integrity of the district reflect these trends in architecture as they were applied in Wauchula from the incorporation of the town in 1902 through the mid-1960s.

⁵² M. Leo Elliot, Obituary August 20, 1967 Chicago Tribune

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 1

DOWNTOWN WAUCHULA HISTORIC DISTRICT
WAUCHULA HARDEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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United States Department of the Interior
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section number 9 Page 2

DOWNTOWN WAUCHULA HISTORIC DISTRICT
WAUCHULA .HARDEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
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Section number 9 Page 3

DOWNTOWN WAUCHULA HISTORIC DISTRICT
WAUCHULA .HARDEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
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Wauchula Site File Forms

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page 1

DOWNTOWN WAUCHULA HISTORIC DISTRICT
WAUCHULA, HARDEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM References

- 5) 17R 419709 3047477
- 6) 17R 419763 3047485
- 7) 17R 419789 3047382
- 8) 17R 419889 3047405
- 9) 17R 419870 3047495
- 10) 17R 419960 3047512
- 11) 17R 419970 3047462
- 12) 17R 420067 3047481
- 13) 17R 420083 3047392
- 14) 17R 419863 3047342
- 15) 17R 419891 3047197
- 16) 17R 419282 3047082
- 17) 17R 419280 3046923
- 18) 17R 419086 3046922
- 19) 17R 419092 3047123
- 20) 17R 419264 3047125

Verbal Boundary Description

The Wauchula Historic District encompasses approximately 78 acres. The general boundaries of the district are W. Palmetto Street on the north, W. Orange Street on the south 3rd Avenue on the east, Florida Avenue and the 500 block of West Main Street on the west. The specific boundaries of the district can be found as the dashed line on the map that accompanies this National Register Nomination Proposal.

Boundary Justification

District boundaries were delineated to encompass the greatest extent of resources identified as contributing to the development of downtown Wauchula as a community during the period of significance (1902-1967).

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National Park Service**

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Photos _____ Page 1

WAUCHULA HISTORIC DISTRICT
WAUCHULA, HARDEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Wauchula Historic District
2. Wauchula (Hardee County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 2017
5. Historic Property Associates
6. View of streetscape facing north at intersection of E. Main Street and US 17.
7. Photo No. 1 of 49

Items 1-5 are the same for the rest of the photographs.

6. View Main Street Heritage Park, facing south
7. Photo No. 2 of 49

6. View of Hardee County Courthouse square, facing south
7. Photo No. 3 of 49

6. View of Wauchula City Hall, facing north
7. Photo No. 4 of 49

6. View of Wauchula Fire House, North 4th Avenue, facing north
7. Photo No. 5 of 49

6. View of 300-400 block East Main Street, facing east
7. Photo No. 6 of 49

6. View of 200 block East Main Street, facing west
7. Photo No. 7 of 49

6. View of 100 block East Main Street, facing west
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6. View of 100 block East Main Street, facing west
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WAUCHULA, HARDEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
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6. View of 200 block West Main Street, facing east
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6. View of 200 block West Main Street, facing east
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6. View of 200-300 block West Main Street, facing east
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6. View of 300 block West Main Street, facing west
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6. View of 400 block West Main Street, facing west
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6. View of 4th Avenue, facing south
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6. View of 200 block West Palmetto Street, non-contributing buildings, facing west
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WAUCHULA HISTORIC DISTRICT
WAUCHULA, HARDEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

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6. View of 400 block West Palmetto Street, facing west
7. Photo No. 25 of 49

6. View of 200 block North Florida Avenue, facing north
7. Photo No. 26 of 49

6. View of 500 block West Main Street/Florida Avenue, facing east
7. Photo No. 27 of 49

6. View of 200 Florida Avenue, facing west
7. Photo No. 28 of 49

6. View of 500 block West Orange Street, facing east
7. Photo No. 29 of 49

6. View of 400 block West Orange Street, facing east
7. Photo No. 30 of 49

6. View of 300-400 block West Orange Street, facing east
7. Photo No. 31 of 49

6. View of 300 block West Orange Street, facing east
7. Photo No. 32 of 49

6. View of 200 block West Orange Street, facing east
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6. View of 200 block West Orange Street, facing east
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6. View of 226 West Main Street, facing north
7. Photo No. 35 of 49

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WAUCHULA HISTORIC DISTRICT
WAUCHULA, HARDEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
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6. View of Faith Presbyterian Church, 114 North 7th Avenue, facing east
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6. View of Wauchula Women's Club, 131 North 7th Avenue, facing west
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6. View of County Courthouse Square and Fountain, facing south
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6. View of County Courthouse Fountain, facing north
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6. View of Hardee County Trust Building, 122 West Main Street, facing north
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6. View of Brown Arcade, 520 W. Main St., facing north
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6. View of Mid-Century Modern Style Building, 116-118 W. Main St., facing north
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6. View of Herald Advocate Office, 115 South 7th Avenue, facing east
7. Photo No. 46 of 49

6. View of Non-contributing Building, 100-112 E. Main St., facing south
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6. View of Non-contributing Building, 303 W. Main St., facing west
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WAUCHULA HISTORIC DISTRICT
WAUCHULA, HARDEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

6. View of Non-contributing Building, 113 N. 7th Avenue., facing west
7. Photo No. 49 of 49

Downtown Wauchula Historic District

Wauchula, Hardee Co., FL

- 1) 17R 419263 3047376
- 2) 17R 419652 3047462
- 3) 17R 419628 3047591
- 4) 17R 419688 3047601
- 5) 17R 419709 3047477
- 6) 17R 419763 3047485
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- 18) 17R 419086 3046922
- 19) 17R 419092 3047123
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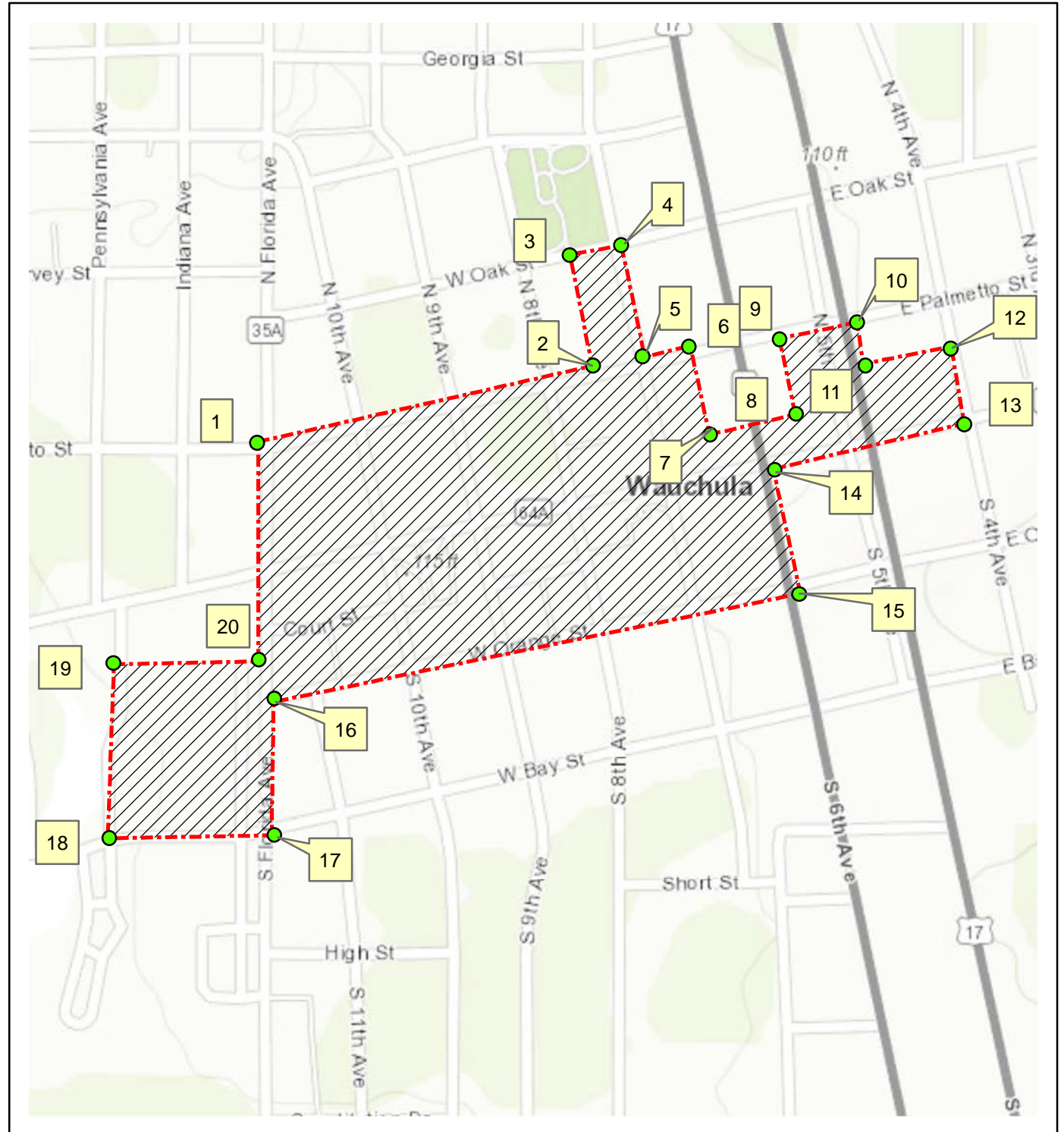
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Basemap Source: Source: Esri,
DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar
Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS,
USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping,
Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo,
and the GIS User Community



Downtown Wauchula Historic District

Wauchula, Hardee Co., FL

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- 20) 17R 419264 3047125

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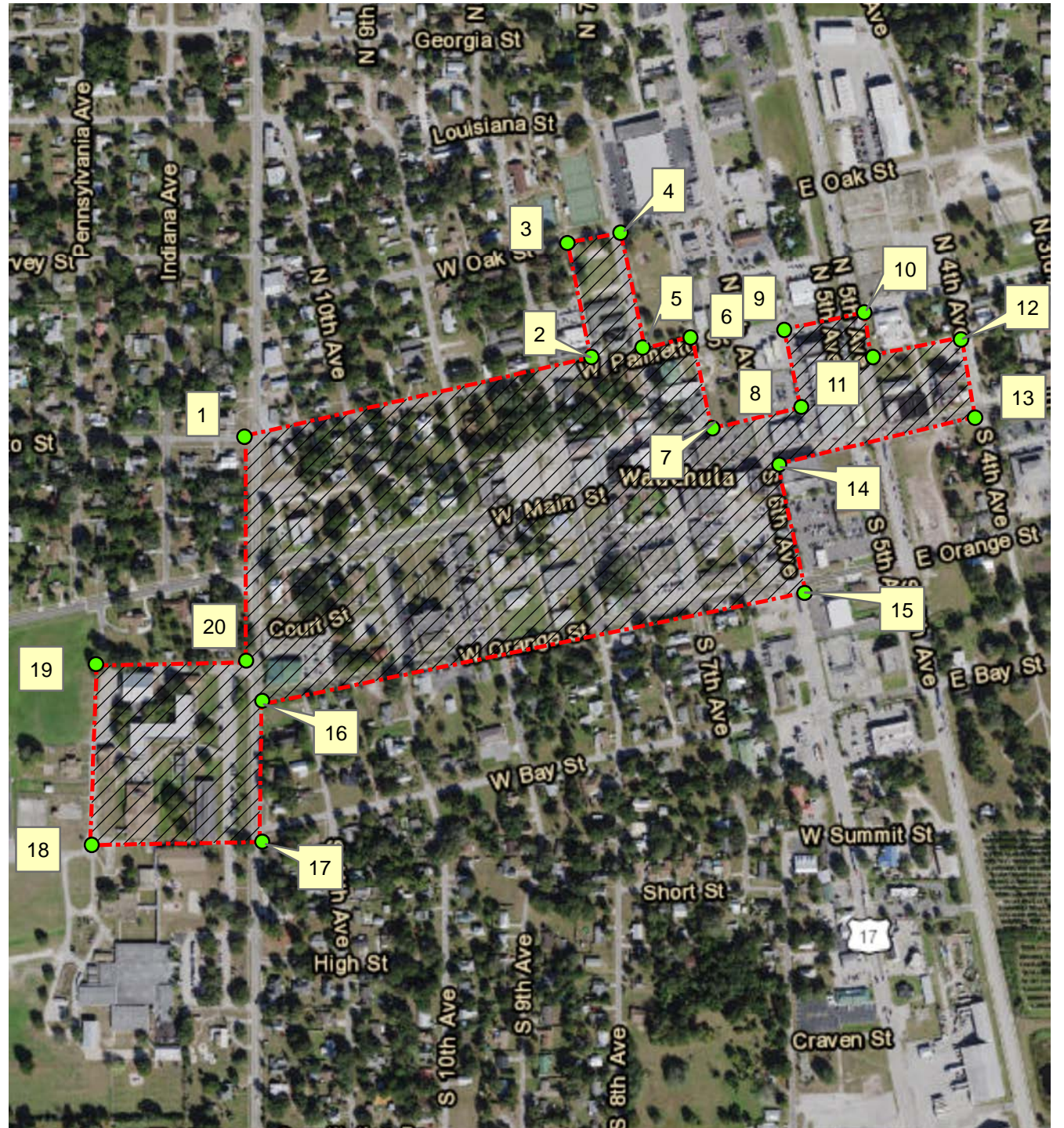
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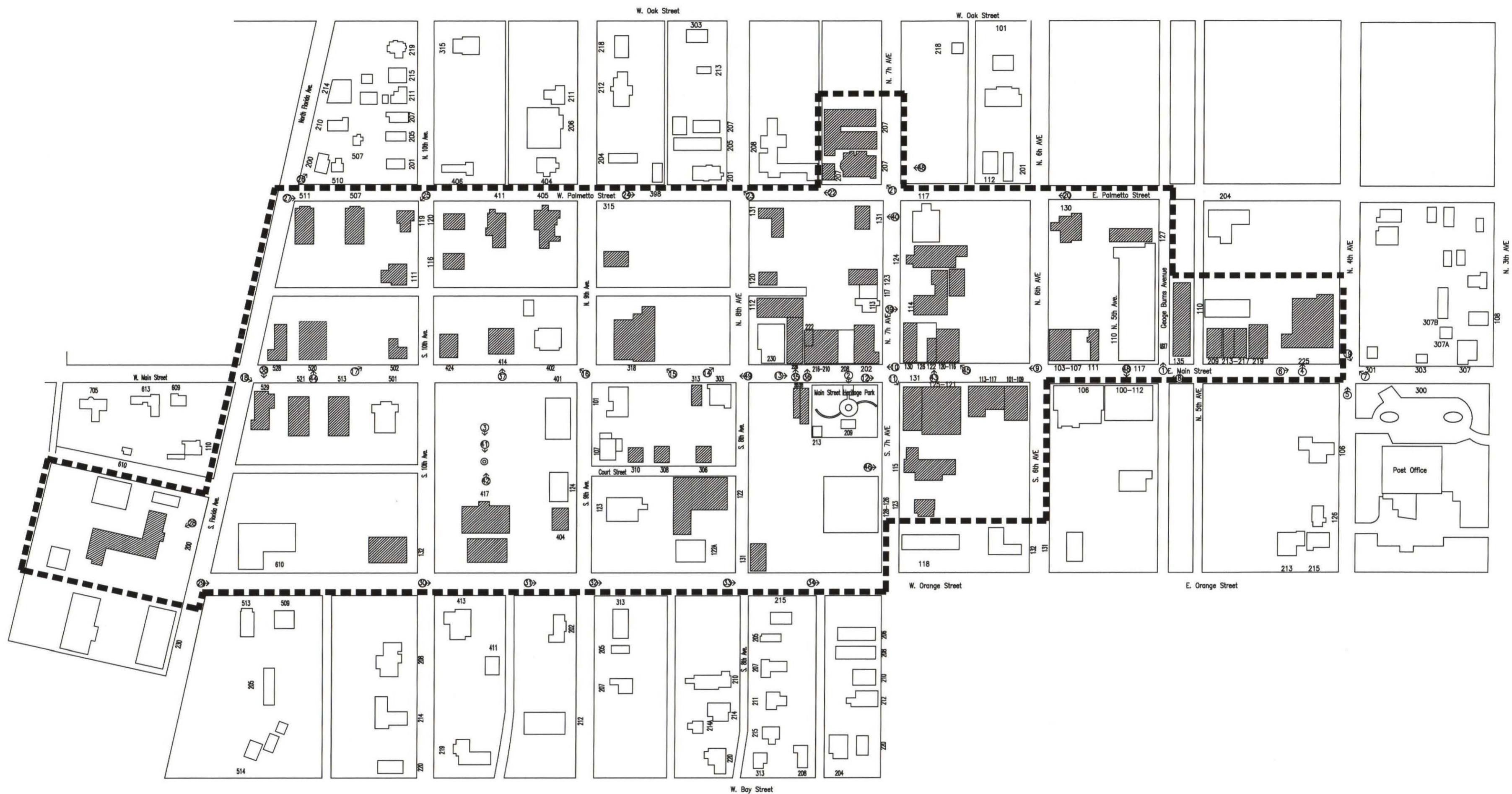
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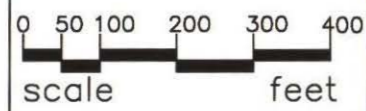
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Basemap Source: Source: Esri,
DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar
Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS,
USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping,
Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo,
and the GIS User Community





WAUCHULA HISTORIC DISTRICT
 WAUCHULA (HARDEE COUNTY), FLORIDA



Paul L. Weaver, Architectural Historian
 Historic Property Associates, Inc.
 Post Office Box 1002
 St. Augustine, Florida 32085-1002
 Telephone: (904) 824-5178

DRAWN BY: W. W. CARL SHIVER
 DRAWING DATE: March 2018

THE WAUCHULA HISTORIC DISTRICT WAS DRAWN USING A VARIETY OF VISUAL RESOURCES INCLUDING A POWER POINT MAP, GOOGLE AERIAL AND GOOGLE EARTH MAPS TO SAVE BUILDING FOOTPRINTS TO PRODUCE PASTER IMAGES WHICH WERE TRACED AND PLACED IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK AND STREET LOCATIONS. THESE WERE DRAWN TO APPROXIMATE SCALE BUT VARIATIONS WERE ALLOWED FOR CLARITY. THE MAP WAS PREPARED USING THE AUTOCAD COMPUTER DRAWING PROGRAM.

MAP REVIEWED BY: CARL SHIVER
 FLORIDA BUREAU OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 R.A. GRAY BUILDING
 800 SOUTH BRONOUGH STREET
 TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0250
 PHONE NUMBER (850) 245-6333
 TOLL FREE NUMBER 1-800-7278
 FAX NUMBER (850) 245-6437

DRAWING NUMBER N/A SHEET NO. 1 OF 1

ORIGINAL SURVEY MAP PROVIDED BY:
 Paul L. Weaver, Architectural Historian
 Historic Property Associates, Inc.
 Post Office Box 1002, St. Augustine, Florida, 32085-1002
 Telephone: (904) 824-5178

PHOTO NUMBERS
 HISTORIC BOUNDARY

SITE PLAN



MAIN

17



MAIN STREET
HERITAGE
PARK

DEDICATED TO THE
PEOPLE OF HARDEE COUNTY
MARCH 11, 2000
A PROJECT OF
MAIN STREET WAUCHULA, INC
AND THE
CITY OF WAUCHULA



HARDEE COUNTY







GREEN ST



GREEN ST











FOR
LEFT
TURN
100 Ft
(813) 781-1396



metro

Thai Sub Shop

Just for Her
Boutique

















100 S 4TH AVE 100
300 E MAIN ST 200

STOP







FIRST
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

W 27th St

WALK

STOP



212



Patterson-Kelly-Grady
FUNERAL HOME
EST. 1911
SUNBELT FUNERAL HOME

W. 10th St.





GREEN ST
1200 W



END
SCHOOL
ZONE







FLORIDA HWY
100



SPEED
LIMIT
25





PUBLIC DEFENDER
DEFENSO PUBLICO





100 S 8TH AVE 200 AVE





Green awning with scalloped edge

Large window display area

226

OPEN

OPEN

HANNAH'S
HOPE CHEST
THRIFT STORE

Black sedan car

Decorative horizontal band

Two windows on upper floor



Hotel

WINGS BURGERS SOUPS

OPEN

SALADS DESSERTS

BEER

WINE





ROBERTS







WOMAN'S CLUB

131







WAUCHULA MASONIC
 LODGE #17 
 FREE & ACCEPTED MASONS OF FLORIDA
 MEETING 2nd & 4th
 MONDAYS 7:30 PM
O.E.S.
 CHAPTER 42 
 MEETING 1st & 3rd
 MONDAY 7:30 PM

118



2000
MORTGAGE
BONDS





START
2000
FOR A FREE QUOTE

116





Herald Advocate
PAPER - PUBLISHED



**Wauchula
State Bank**



**WAUCHULA
STATE
BANK**





THE
MADISON
SALON & SPA



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 5/9/2018 Date of Pending List: 5/30/2018 Date of 16th Day: 6/14/2018 Date of 45th Day: 6/25/2018 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 6/18/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

RICK SCOTT
Governor

KEN DETZNER
Secretary of State

May 4, 2018

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief,
National Register of Historic Places
Mail Stop 7228
1849 C St, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for **Downtown Wauchula Historic District (FMSF#: 8HR00999), in Hardee 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) 245-6364 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Ruben A. Acosta
Supervisor, Survey & Registration
Bureau of Historic Preservation

RAA/raa

Enclosures