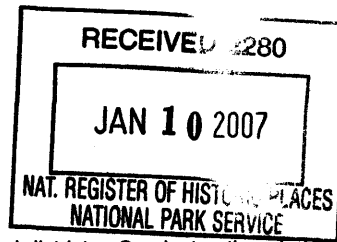


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 HASTINGS COMMUNITY CENTER

other names/site number FMSF #SJ2705

2. Location

street & number 401 North Main Street

N/A  not for publication

city or town Hastings

N/A  vicinity

state Florida

code FL

county St. Johns

code 109

zip code 32145

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Barbara E. Mattick / DSHPO 1-5-2007  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register  See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

2-21-07

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

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

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

"N/A"

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: town hall

SOCIAL: community center, lodge

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT: not in use

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE: Masonry Vernacular

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls STUCCO

\_\_\_\_\_

roof METAL

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

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

**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)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1937-1942

**Significant Dates**

1937

**Significant Person**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Hollingsworth, Francis A.

Casto, Mark J.

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of Repository

# \_\_\_\_\_

Hastings Community Center  
Name of Property

St. Johns Co., FL  
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property approx. one acre

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

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

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Johnston, Sidney/Robert O. Jones, Historic Preservationist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date January 2007

street & number 500 South Brounough Street telephone 850-245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state FL zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Town of Hastings

street & number 6195 South Main Street, Suite A telephone 904-692-1420

city or town Hastings state FL zip code 32145

**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 Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 1

Hastings Community Center  
Hastings, St. Johns Co., FL

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### SUMMARY

Hastings Community Center is located at 401 North Main Street, Hastings, St. Johns County, Florida. One of the largest historic resources in Hastings's small downtown, the building is an example of Masonry Vernacular construction. Built from plans drafted by St. Augustine architect Francis A. Hollingsworth, the building contains approximately 14,000 square feet of interior floor space. An unseen system of continuous footers and piers support the building. It is built with a brick-and-concrete structural system finished with smooth stucco, an irregular shape, and an asymmetrical façade with a distinctive offset entrance tower. There is a system of one- and two-story flat roofs with straight parapets. Corrugated metal sheets protect part of the roof, although some of the roof system has collapsed and other sections provide little protection from the elements. Projecting and receding blocks and surfaces contribute to the building's character. The projecting tower provides contrast to the horizontal massing along Main Street. Scalloped coping along the parapets, fluted panels on the tower, and pilasters flanking the windows provide additional relief from the smooth stuccoed walls. Fenestration is irregular and asymmetrical, with the original steel casement windows removed for repair. Small metal canopies with standing seams protect a few door and window openings. Poured concrete steps are located at each entrance.

The building contributes to **Florida's New Deal Resources Multiple Property Submission (MPS)** under the New Deal historic context "The New Deal in Florida, 1933 – 1943," and the F.1 Property Type "Buildings." The Community Center is currently undergoing rehabilitation after standing vacant for many years. The resource is devoid of most of its windows, and is suffering from roof failure. Nevertheless, it contributes to the sense of time, place, and historical development of the Town of Hastings through its location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. It provides an important architectural, political, and social link to the heritage of Hastings. The building retains its early twentieth century character to a sufficient degree for listing in the National Register.

### SETTING

Hastings is approximately eighteen miles southwest of St. Augustine, the seat of government of St. Johns County. Founded in the 1890s, the incorporated town has a population of 521 (2000). The primary corridors include State Road 207, which runs in a northeast/southwest alignment from St. Augustine to Palatka, and extends immediately south of Hastings's downtown. The other primary thoroughfare through the town is Main Street, which runs on a north-south axis. South of the town the street is designated as County Road 13, which is historically known as Dixie Highway. Farther east at Kersey's Corner the original brick paved Dixie Highway (NR 2005) remains intact and extends south to Espanola in Flagler County. Along North Main Street, Hastings's downtown is distributed along several blocks that lie north of State Road 207. Dismantled decades ago, the Florida East Coast Railway tracks run across the north end of Hastings's downtown, just beyond the historic community center. Although numerous properties in St. Johns County are listed in the National Register, all but five are located in St. Augustine. The Hastings High School (NR 2006) is several blocks to the south of the Hastings Community Center.

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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 2

Hastings Community Center  
Hastings, St. Johns Co., FL

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The building faces east onto Main Street in Hastings's downtown, and is setback several feet from the sidewalk. Several commercial buildings of modern construction and others from the historic period are on adjoining properties, a pattern interrupted by lots vacated by demolition. A small parking lot occupies the site north of the building and grass landscaping with a mature oak tree stands to the south. Landscaping is sparse, consisting of a few oak trees, palm trees, and shrubs.

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

**Exterior**

The irregular plan of the building is comprised of three blocks: the primary, central, two-story block marked at its north end with the entrance tower; a two-story extension on the north elevation which is set back from the tower and central block; and a one-story extension across the south of the building only slightly set back from the central block.

The front, or east facade (Photo #1) extends 145 feet along Main Street, and displays the asymmetrical and irregular characteristics of the building. The projecting and receding sections of the façade contribute character to the building. Pilasters designed to support the roof system flank the window openings. Rising approximately thirty feet, the tower has features that emphasize its verticality (Photo #2), including tall stepped pilasters, tall door openings (Photo #3), and tapered coping setback from the walls and embellished with scalloping. Consoles and fluted panels adorn two entrances into the tower, out from which poured concrete steps extend to the east and north (Photo #4). The wall to the south of the tower contains six symmetrically arranged windows; three on each story (Photo #5). A doorway is at the south end of the main block (Photo #6). At the south end of the front façade, an elongated vehicle bay and a single window open along the one-story block. The wall north of the tower contains eight symmetrically arranged windows, four on each story (Photo #7). A doorway is at the north corner of the block, sheltered by a metal canopy.

The north elevation (Photo #7) has asymmetrical fenestration with eleven windows; six are on the first story, and five on the second story. The elevation has no ornamental relief.

The west elevation (Photo# 8 & 9) has a two-story extension at the center of the building that steps down to a one-story extension. North of the central extension, the two-story north block contains nine windows of irregular sizes; four on the first story, and five on the second story (Photo #8). There are three doors; two in the first story and one in the second story accessed by a wooden staircase. At the northwest corner, a scupper pierces the parapet and channels water into a downspout. The central extension is to the central block and internally contains a stage and back stage area, and accordingly, the extension walls are punctuated by single stage doors at the north and south ends (Photo #9). Four windows are in the west elevation of the one-story extension. South of the extension the elevation changes from the two-story central block and one-story extension to the one-story southern block (Photo #10). On its west elevation, the one-story extension has a stuccoed chimney and a single window opening

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Hastings Community Center  
Hastings, St. Johns Co., FL

shielded by a large metal canopy.

The south elevation has a wall with five windows and two doors in an irregular pattern (Photo #11). A straight parapet at the eastern end of the elevation steps down once. Clearstory windows in the second story of the central block are visible above the south elevation. Five fixed metal frame sashes remain in the clearstory.

**Interior**  
**First Floor**

Containing approximately 14,000 square feet of floor space, the interior contains ten primary spaces, which historically included an auditorium, meeting halls, and offices. The interior circulation pattern and room division remains intact, even with the removal and collapse of parts of the roof. The ceilings and walls are finished with beaded boards and smooth plaster, some of which has deteriorated and fallen. Many of the original two-paneled pine doors with brass hardware remain in place. The floors are finished with tongue-in-groove pine. Some materials and finishes have deteriorated due to deferred maintenance and roof failure.

The entrance tower encloses an "L" shaped vestibule (Photo #12) which contains an entrance into the central block/auditorium (Photo #13), and in the north block, a straight staircase to the second floor and a door into the first floor meeting hall. Contained within the central two-story block, the auditorium (Photo #14) opens to the full-height of the roof with metal trusses visible. The walls are finished with beaded boards and smooth plaster, and the flooring consists of tongue-in-groove pine. The walls and floor are damaged in parts. At the west end of the auditorium is a stage and backstage rooms (Photo #15). A door in the west wall is north of the stage (Photo #16). Stairs to the door have been removed. The stage is finished with beaded boards and plaster, and recessed foot lights are across the front of the stage. A balcony is within the north wall (Photo #17 & 18). Along the south elevation, steel beams encased in wood columns with moldings support the clearstory wall (Photo #19). Six windows are in the eastern auditorium wall.

South of the auditorium is the one-story block that originally housed the fire department and town hall offices (Photo #20). As part of the initial rehabilitation project, the roof and wall divisions were removed following their documentation with measured line drawings. Only concrete block walls devoid of their plaster finishes and a poured concrete floor remain.

The north block is occupied by a meeting room, kitchen, offices, storage closets and rest rooms. Access into the first-floor meeting room (Photo # 21) is provided through the tower vestibule or by double doors from the auditorium. The meeting room spans most of the width of the building with the kitchen (Photo #22) at the west wall. At the northeast corner is a large office spanning half the width of the building (Photo #23). Within the space is a steel post encased with a wood column accented with moldings. An L-shaped hall provides access from the meeting room and northeast office to restrooms (Photo #24), closets, and a smaller office at the northwest corner of the building (Photo #25).

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**Hastings Community Center  
Hastings, St. Johns Co., FL**

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### **Second Floor**

The interior straight staircase and exterior west-elevation wooden stairs provide access to the second floor of the north block. The second floor contains a large meeting room, kitchen, two small meeting rooms (Photos #26 & 28), and rest rooms. The collapsed roof has been removed. The kitchen and small meeting rooms retain their original doors and moldings.

### **ALTERATIONS**

Most of the windows have currently been removed for repairs. Several have been boarded over for protection. The original windows along the clearstory of the auditorium have been replaced with metal awning windows. The original rear exterior stairs have been rebuilt with a wooden staircase. The elongated garage door in the southern block has been removed. Alterations to the interior are the removal of a small office at the southwest corner of the auditorium, removal of steps to the stage door, and the removal of office-and-closet spaces at the west end of the one-story extension.



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**National Register of Historic Places  
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**Hastings Community Center  
Hastings, St. Johns Co., FL**

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**SUMMARY**

The Hastings Community Center is nominated to the National Register for local significance under criteria A and C in the areas of Politics/Government, Social History, and Architecture. The building was developed during the New Deal with funding provided by the municipal government and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Construction began in 1935 and was completed in 1937. During the New Deal, the building contained the town's municipal offices, library, and fire department. A large auditorium and several meeting halls supported various civic and social functions, including the American Legion, Masonic Lodge, Order of the Eastern Star, and the high school basketball team. Under criterion C, the building is of Masonry Vernacular construction with Art Deco elements. St. Augustine architect Francis A. Hollingsworth drafted the plans for the building and Mark J. Casto served as construction engineer. The building represents one of the few Depression-era buildings in the town and the only remaining resource developed with New Deal money.

The building contributes to **Florida's New Deal Resources Multiple Property Submission (MPS)** under the New Deal historic context "The New Deal in Florida, 1933 – 1943," and the F.1 Property Type "Buildings." In 2004, the Bureau of Historic Preservation, Florida Department of State awarded the Town of Hastings a grant of \$50,000 toward the preservation of the Hastings Community Center.

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

In February 1934, Hastings's municipal government initiated what proved to be the town's largest and most visible project associated with the New Deal. At a special meeting convened in the offices of the Whitehouse Barrel Company, the town's officials and several residents gathered to discuss improving the town and providing a few temporary jobs, in part, through the use of federal funds. During the meeting, resident Charlie Barrett read a resolution that proposed to convert an aging school house into a community center. After some discussion, the town's officials—H. L. Anderson, B. B. Dancy, Lewis Levine, D. F. Minton, W. H. Walker, and Mayor J. Lance Freeman—voted unanimously for the project, and then instructed town clerk D. S. Hanna to complete a Civil Works Administration (CWA) application for the development of the Hastings Community Center. But, unable to fund its share of the project on its own, the town solicited and received support from the County of St. Johns for the "construction of a community building and the general development of a recreational center." Four months later, the town jettisoned its school house conversion plan, and developed plans to acquire the Byrd Building and the Killingsworth Block in the downtown. The government used condemnation proceedings and a foreclosure tax sale to acquire the properties, demolished the aging structures, and salvaged materials that might be useful in developing the new community center.<sup>1</sup>

Set within the backdrop of St. Johns County politics, the project was not without controversy or delays. To help insure and expedite its success, Hastings's officials made a formal request to the County of St. Johns for its

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes, 28 February, 18 April, 15 June 1934, Town of Hastings.

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**Hastings Community Center  
Hastings, St. Johns Co., FL**

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support. In January 1935, the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners took formal action to assist the small municipality with its proposed community center project. The minutes from the board's special meeting held on 20 January 1935, reveal some of the politics of the period. In part, the minutes read "Whereas, through manipulation and connivance by and between those in charge of CWA work in St. Johns County, a portion only of the project for said Community Center was approved viz: wrecking of the said two story frame building, the salvaging of useful materials contained in said building, and the grading of the said three acres of land, was approved and completed in order that more funds might be used in St. Augustine, the county seat of said county, thus destroying a once useful building and leaving this community with a vacant lot and a lot of useless materials that is rapidly deteriorating." The minutes detail the development of a new Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) application by the Town of Hastings, the urgent need of a community center in the town, and the board's support of the application. Several prominent farmers and merchants from Hastings, including L. O. Larson, Lewis Levine, and G. W. Lee, requested that the board members rank the Hastings project first among the New Deal projects in St. Johns County. On 4 February 1935, the board inventoried its federal assistance proposals, listing the Hastings Community Center as number one with an estimated cost of \$15,000. The board also supported a marketing bureau, or farmer's market, in Hastings, that was estimated to cost \$200,000. In May 1935, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was charged with the responsibility for most FERA projects as the latter agency was phased out of existence by the federal government. Later that month, Hastings's municipal officials in association with the chamber of commerce appointed a committee to travel to Tallahassee to expedite the town's WPA application. In July 1935, the town executed its WPA application, which requested \$23,305 from the federal government with the town contributing \$7,244. In an application filed several months later, a second project, which requested an additional \$18,058 for a shuffleboard court, swimming pool, and tennis court at the proposed community center, was later denied. In September 1935, the Florida WPA office in Jacksonville submitted 300 applications collected from nearly every county in the state to Washington, D.C., for approval. The WPA approved the Hastings Community Center project in October 1935, with the federal government adjusting downward its contribution to \$21,854 and increasing the town's amount to \$9,463. The same month the WPA returned the application for a farmer's market at Hastings, citing site location problems and the need for an additional survey. In November 1935, St. Johns County's board re-allocated a \$1,000 from the deferred project to the community center, citing the Hastings center as "conducive to the best of agricultural progress in this county." Still hard-pressed for financial resources, the municipal government borrowed money to pay for its share of the project.<sup>2</sup>

WPA construction engineer Mark J. Casto broke ground on the project in early November 1935, using plans drafted by St. Augustine architect Francis A. Hollingsworth. Enthusiasm about the community center soon spread throughout the town. On 30 November 1935, over a year before the building would be completed, the Hastings Chapter # 48 of the Order of the Eastern Star executed a ten-year lease for \$500 with the municipal government for use of the lodge, or meeting room on the building's second floor. Mary Sayre, Fannie

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<sup>2</sup> Minutes, 30 January, 4 February, 26 November 1935, St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners; Minutes, 20 May 1935, Town of Hastings; *St. Augustine Evening Record*, 8 September, 9, 18, 20, 25 October 1935.

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Hastings Community Center  
Hastings, St. Johns Co., FL

Robshaw, and other members of the secret society anxiously awaited the completion of the building. Construction delays stemmed primarily from temporary cutbacks in WPA employees until new federal funds were authorized for the resumption of work. In October 1936, Casto requested forty additional WPA employees to help complete the Hastings project, as well as a community center he was supervising in nearby Bunnell. In March 1937, as the Hastings Community Center neared completion, the WPA advised the town council that it would soon cease to furnish labor for the project. In response, the council noted that progress on the building "was advancing as well as can be expected and thought the building would be completed within the above stated time." The council instructed clerk D. S. Hanna to write a letter of appreciation to M. J. Casto for good work done on the Community Center Building." Casto completed the community center in March 1937, and the town government occupied the building about a month later. The town clerk and fire department maintained offices on the south end of the building. Meeting rooms, a library, and kitchens were on the north end, separated by a large central auditorium which also served as a gymnasium.<sup>3</sup>

Despite Casto's "good work," the building suffered various roof deficiencies from the start. The town's minutes are replete with requests to repair or replace the roof, payments to contractors, and complaints from tenants, including the Order of the Eastern Star. As early as September 1940, B. L. Lovett, a member of the town's building committee, reported a leak in the roof, and in March 1941, the Richardson Roofing Company of St. Augustine made some repairs. By June 1941, the town's government had received additional reports of the lodge hall roof leaking badly. By November 1941, water damage had caused ceiling plaster to deteriorate and fall. Minor roof repairs failed to remedy the condition. In June 1942, a representative of the Eastern Star reported that because of persistent leaking "the lodge hall in the Community Center...is in a dangerous and deplorable condition." By January 1946, the Masonic Lodge # 183 F. & A. M. of Hastings, requested an additional ten years use of the second-floor hall for \$500, and they agreed to repair roof leaks, a request that the town gladly accepted. After making only spot roofing repairs for several years, the town purchased a seven-year roof contract with a Texas company in November 1946, to replace the entire fabric. Still, the leaks persisted, and after failing to negotiate a settlement with the Texas company the municipal government turned to the Arnett Building & Sheet Metal Company of St. Augustine in February 1950, which guaranteed the installation of a new roof for twenty-years. The new fabric resolved the leaks, but by then many of the ceilings and floors had been water damaged and required repairs.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to holding the town's public meetings, day-to-day civic business, and monthly meetings of secret societies, the building supported various social activities, some of regional note. Initially, the municipal government organized a building committee to supervise activities in the community center. By 1941, the non-paying responsibility had overcome committee members, and the town's officials created the permanent position of community center building supervisor and custodian. The town appointed Gerald Allen to the post, a position that he held into the 1950s. A native of Florida, and born about 1895, Allen operated a barber shop

<sup>3</sup> Miscellaneous Book V, p. 231-233, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse, St. Augustine, FL; Minutes, 1 March 1937, Town of Hastings; *Flagler Tribune*, 15 October 1936.

<sup>4</sup> Minutes, 28 January, 18, 25 November 1946, 17 January, 7 December 1949, 22 February 1950, Town of Hastings.

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Hastings Community Center  
Hastings, St. Johns Co., FL

in Hastings, but made time to organize and tend to affairs at the community center. Allen made periodic reports to the town council of receipts, expenses, and concerns about the facility's use and condition. Increased use of the facility prompted Allen and the town council to prioritize user preferences. In December 1941, the town granted the basketball team at Hastings High School top preference for use of the auditorium/gymnasium.<sup>5</sup>

Organizations that regularly and occasionally used the auditorium or meeting rooms included the American Legion, American Red Cross, Florida State Guards of St. Augustine, Hastings Civic League, Hastings Junior Chamber of Commerce, Hastings Potato Civic League, and the St. Johns County Agricultural Extension Agent. Held in the Community Center, the Potato Festival and Ball, and Jacksonville Production Credit Association (JPCA) meeting ranked among the most popular and well attended annual activities in Hastings. Organized during the New Deal, the JPCA served farmers in Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns Counties. The association provided its members short-term credit for general agricultural purposes. Because of its central location in northeast Florida's farming district and the availability of the large new building, the association held its annual meetings in the Hastings Community Center during the late-1930s and early-1940s. Approximately 200 farmers attended the 1938 meeting to discuss agricultural issues and listen to presentations by Ernest Graham of the Columbia Production Credit Association, and the association's secretary-treasurer A. G. Shands. A popular annual event for the people of Clay, Flagler, Putnam, and St. Johns Counties, the Potato Festival and Ball also attracted hundreds of fun-seekers. Held in 1937, the first event coincided with the completion of the community center. In 1938, the festival and ball included the Raymond Gage Orchestra from Jacksonville, which provided music for the dance. Floor shows, a bridge tournament, games, and food complemented the ball. Mrs. H. C. Miller, Mrs. J. R. Norfleet, and Charles Warner of Bunnell worked with several women from Hastings to organize and publicize the event. Despite a thin potato harvest in 1939, the festival and ball expanded its attractions to include a contest of one-act plays and a beauty contest between public school students from the surrounding counties and communities. In contrast to these popular annual events, the building also supported short-term users, including a state agency and theater owner. In November 1941, the town provided a room to engineers with the Florida State Road Department, who were then improving or building a state road in the region. In June 1942, the municipal government granted Mr. Rutherford of Seville, Florida, his request to use the auditorium as a movie theater with Rutherford agreeing to provide the town with fifteen percent of the tickets sales, or a minimum of \$3.00 per night. In general, the town generally required a user-fee in the form of a percentage of door receipts collected by a commercial enterprise or a social organization collecting entrance fees for an event. One of the longest-sustaining uses of the building began in October 1942, when the American Red Cross occupied the northeast corner room to prepare bandages for the war effort. The American Red Cross remained in the building into the 1980s. In the 1980s, renewed roof leaks and eventual partial roof failure and extensive water damage compelled the municipal government and non-profit organizations to locate to other quarters. In 2005, the Town of Hastings, received a \$50,000 matching planning grant from the Florida Department of State towards rehabilitation of the Hastings Community Center.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Minutes, 8, 22 December 1941, 23 February 1942, 18 August 1948, 20 June 1949, Town of Hastings.

<sup>6</sup> Minutes, 8 June, 26 October, 10 November 1942, 11 October 1943, Town of Hastings; *Flagler Tribune*, 10 February, 28 April 1938, 27 April 1939, 15 January 1942.

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**Architect**

Born in 1885 in Harrisonburg, Virginia, Francis A. Hollingsworth studied at Washington and Lee University between 1902 and 1904. He arrived in Florida about 1910 and enrolled in the National Guard in Jacksonville, in 1911. Hollingsworth worked in the construction trade in Jacksonville during the 1910s. He initiated his architecture practice in 1920 and was the 156<sup>th</sup> architect to register with the Florida State Board of Architecture, while he still resided in Jacksonville. Hollingsworth arrived in St. Augustine about 1921 and maintained an office in St. Augustine's City Building. Eventually a member of the Florida Association of Architects and the American Institute of Architects, Hollingsworth designed many of St. Augustine's notable buildings constructed in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Those included the First National Bank Building, Florida East Coast Railway Office Building, Ketterlinus High School, Murray High School, New Augustine School, St. Augustine High School, St. Augustine Record Building (NR 2006), and St. Augustine Beach's Pier and Recreational Center. Sensitive to St. Augustine's colonial heritage, Hollingsworth often designed projects to reflect the architecture of the Mediterranean basin. He also worked with older, existing buildings, drafting the plans for the State Arsenal Building restoration in 1921. Three years later, he advocated restoring the city's colonial architecture along St. George Street. Outside of St. Augustine, he designed buildings in Hastings, Palatka, and Palm Valley. The Hastings Community Center was among the few projects on which Hollingsworth employed modernistic influences.

**Builder**

Relatively little has been documented about Mark J. Casto, the builder of the Hastings Community Center. Born about 1897 in New Jersey, Casto worked as a mechanical draftsman in Stuart, Florida, in 1920. By 1930, Casto and his wife, Katherine, had moved to St. Augustine, where the family resided on Lemon Street. During the New Deal, Casto worked as construction superintendent for projects in the WPA district that included Flagler and St. Johns Counties. In 1930, a census enumerator listed Casto as an engineer working in the field of architecture. Between 1935 and 1937, in addition to other projects, Casto supervised the construction of the Bunnell and Hastings community centers.

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Hastings Community Center is a Masonry Vernacular building that has Art Deco elements, primarily a main entrance tower that lends vertical emphasis to the horizontal massing of the building. The smooth stucco exterior walls, straight parapets are ornamented with Art Deco Style scalloped accents, and fluted panels on the tower. The Community Center is one of Hastings's architectural landmarks. It is a well-proportioned and well-detailed example of vernacular architecture, and the building retains sufficient historic architectural integrity and character for listing in the National Register.

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### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundary encloses a parcel described as lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 of block A of Killingsworth Subdivision of Hastings, otherwise known as 401 North Main Street. Containing less than one acre, the parcel is also identified as parcel # 044550 0000 by the St. Johns County property appraiser. See attached scaled site plan.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary encloses the property historically associated with the Hastings Community Center.

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Hastings, St. Johns Co., FL**

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**PHOTOGRAPHIC LIST**

1. 401 North Main Street, Hastings
2. St. Johns County, Florida
3. Sidney Johnston
4. 2006
5. Historian, DeLand, Florida
6. View showing front (east) facade, facing west
7. Photo #1 of 27

Numbers 1-5 are the same for the remaining photographs.

6. View showing tower, facing west
7. Photo #2 of 27

6. View showing tower vestibule, facing west
7. Photo #3 of 27

6. View showing tower, facing south
7. Photo #4 of 27

6. View showing east façade and south elevation, facing northwest
7. Photo #5 of 27

6. View showing tower, facing north
7. Photo #6 of 27

6. View showing front (east) façade and north elevation, facing southwest
7. Photo #7 of 27

6. View showing rear (west) elevation, facing southeast
7. Photo #8 of 27

6. View showing rear (west) elevation, facing southeast
7. Photo #9 of 27

6. View showing south elevation, facing northeast
7. Photo #10 of 27



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6. View showing south elevation, facing east  
7. Photo #11 of 27

6. View showing tower vestibule, facing west  
7. Photo #12 of 27

6. View showing tower vestibule, facing west  
7. Photo #13 of 27

6. View showing auditorium/gymnasium, facing west  
7. Photo #14 of 27

6. View showing stage in auditorium/gymnasium, facing southwest  
7. Photo #15 of 27

6. View showing stage, facing northwest  
7. Photo #16 of 27

6. View showing balcony overlooking auditorium/gymnasium, facing northeast  
7. Photo #17 of 27

6. View showing balcony overlooking auditorium/gymnasium, facing northwest  
7. Photo #18 of 27

6. View showing auditorium, facing southwest  
7. Photo #19 of 27

6. View showing office/garage space, facing west  
7. Photo #20 of 27

6. View showing meeting room, facing west  
7. Photo #21 of 27

6. View showing kitchen, facing east  
7. Photo #22 of 27

6. View showing northeast office, facing west  
7. Photo #23 of 27

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6. View showing restroom, facing south

7. Photo #24 of 27

6. View showing northwest office, facing east

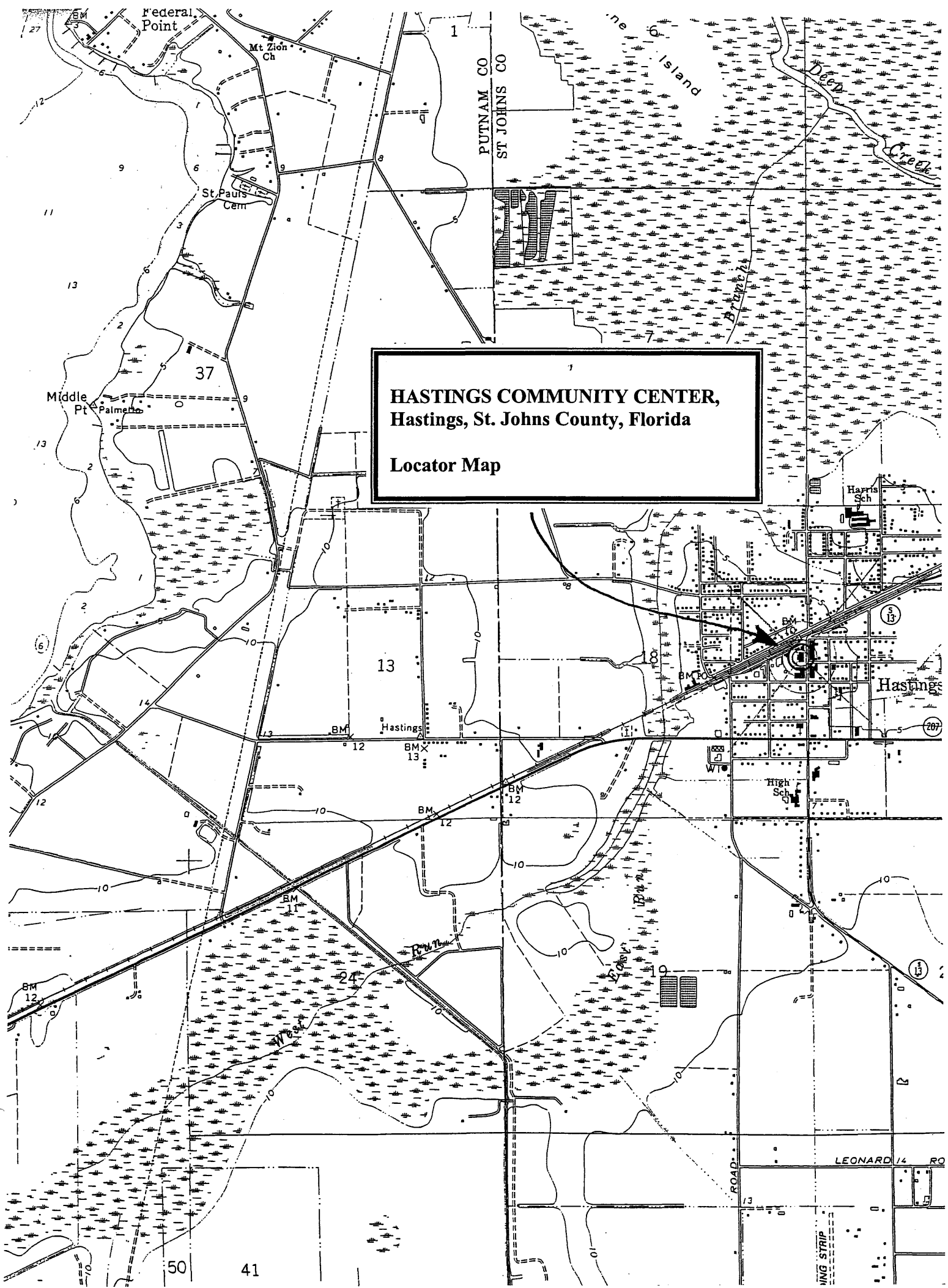
7. Photo #25 of 27

6. View showing second floor kitchen, facing east

7. Photo #26 of 27

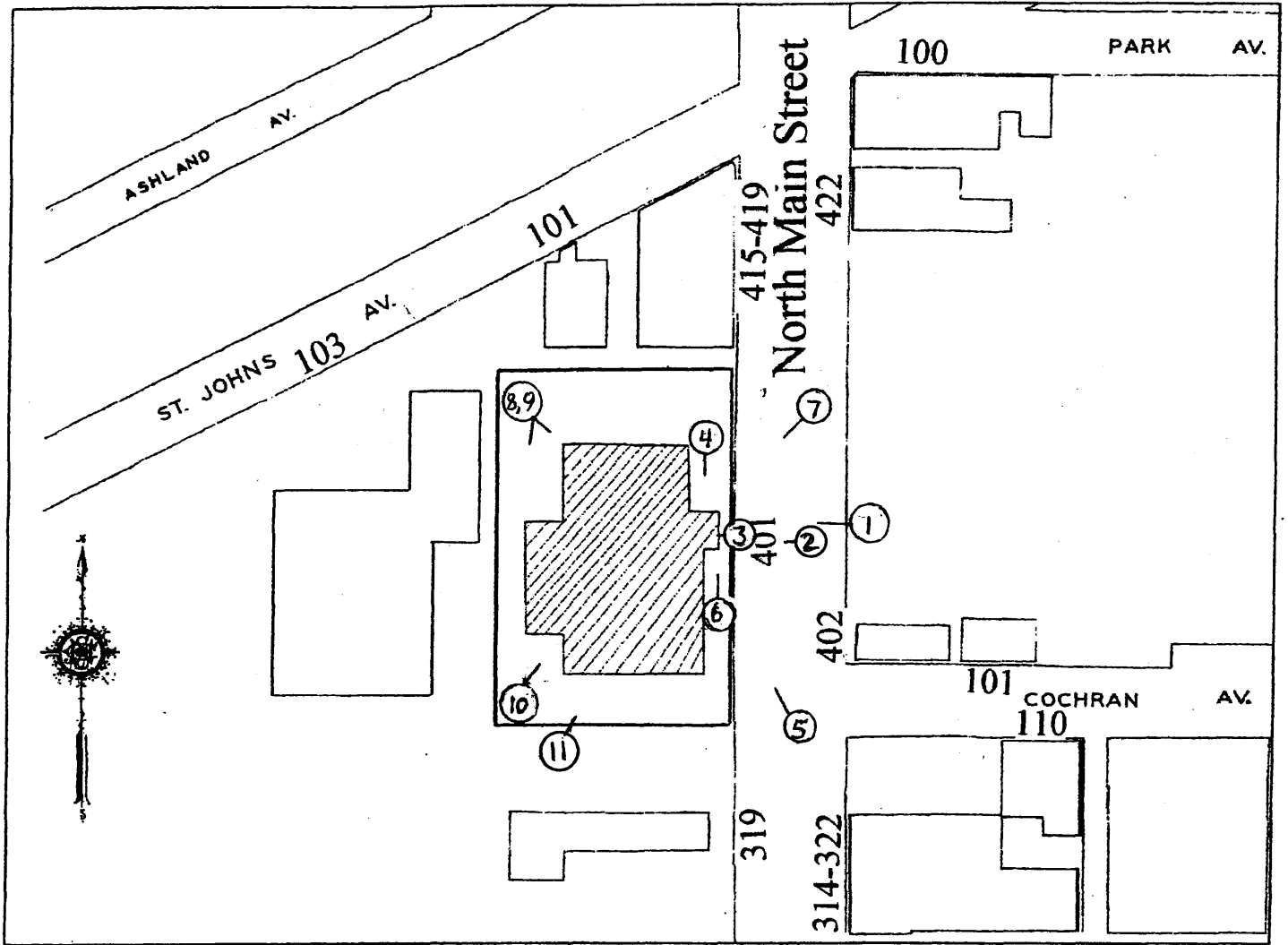
6. View showing second floor kitchen and adjoining meeting room, facing northeast

7. Photo #27 of 27



**HASTINGS COMMUNITY CENTER,  
Hastings, St. Johns County, Florida**

**Locator Map**



Hastings Community Center  
 Site Plan ST JOHNS CO., FL  
 Contributing Resource  
 Photograph Arrow ♂

0 75' 150'



Hastings Community Center  
First Floor Plan ST. JOHNS CO., FL

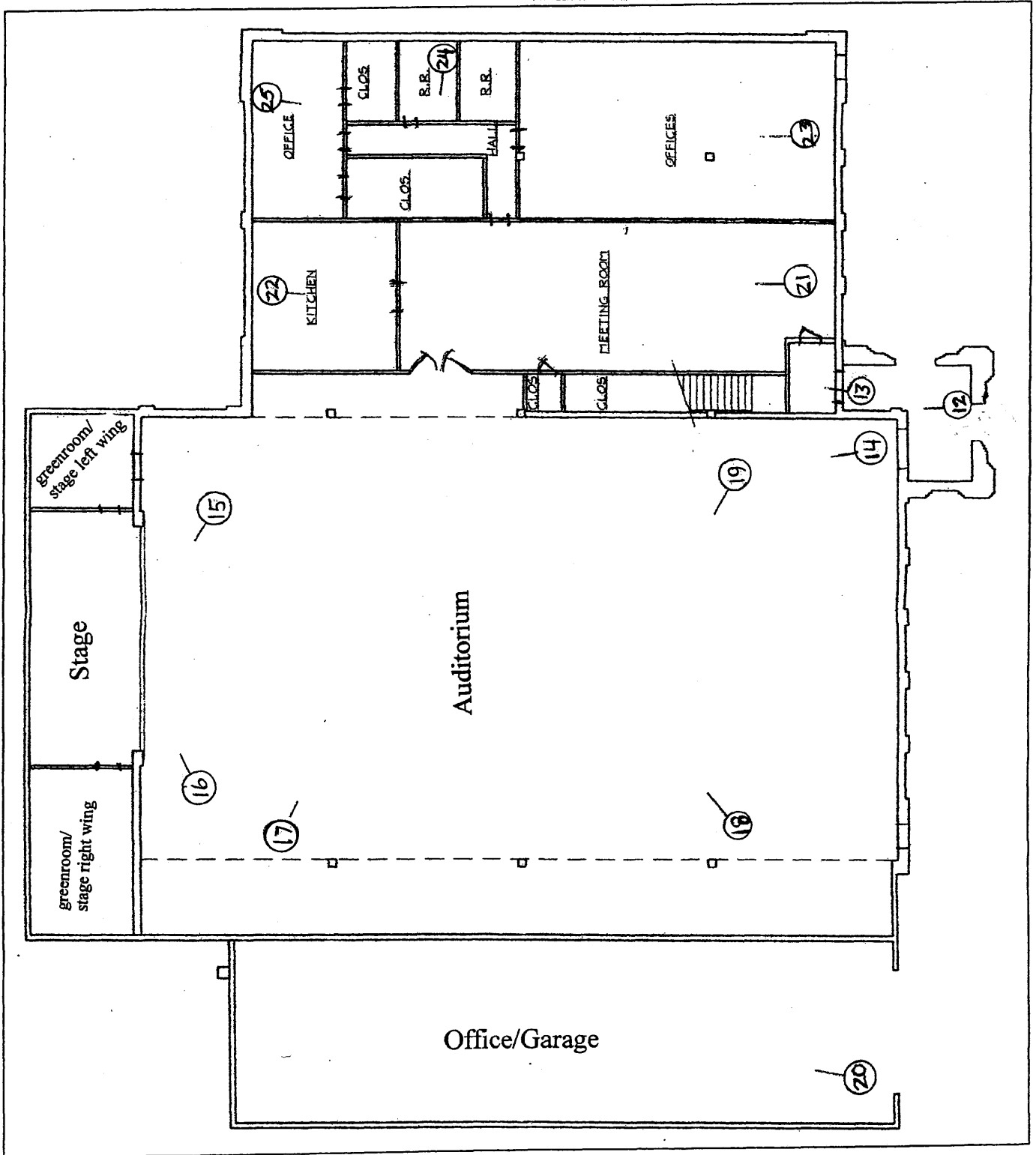
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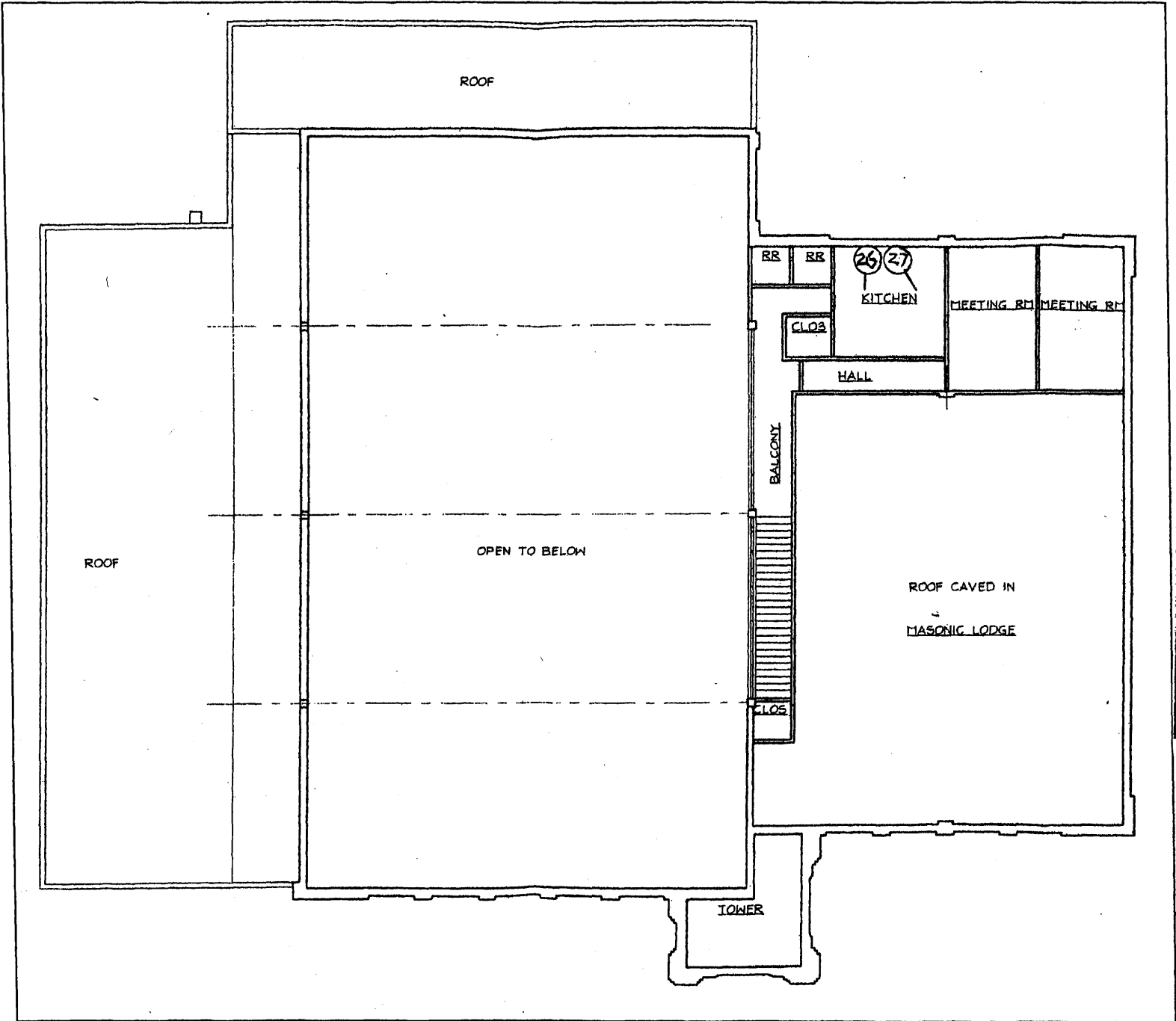
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15'

30'





Hastings Community Center  
 Second Floor Plan     ST. JOHNS CO, FL  
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 Photograph Arrow  
 0     15'     30'

