



Tampa Bricks & Mortar

Architectural Review &
Historic Preservation

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December 2018 Public Hearings:

Architectural Review

Commission— Dec 3rd
Dec 5th

6:00 PM

Historic Preservation

Commission—
No meeting this month

Barrio Latino

Commission— Dec 18th
9:00 AM

- ◆ The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) recommends historic districts and individual landmarks for designation.
- ◆ The Architectural Review Commission (ARC) oversees the individual landmarks and three historic districts:
 - ◆ Hyde Park,
 - ◆ Tampa Heights,
 - ◆ Seminole Heights.
- ◆ The Barrio Latino Commission (BLC) oversees the Ybor City Historic District.

Michigan Avenue Grammar School

The first community school for white children in Tampa was held in the 1848 Hillsborough County Courthouse. There were 14 students and a teacher named W.P. Wilson of Boston, who had come to Florida for his health and been persuaded by the town leaders to start a school. Tuition fees were paid by the parents. The first public schools in Hillsborough County opened in 1854, but the school term lasted only a few weeks, owing to the inability of the county government to pay the teachers a sufficient income. In 1870, the County Board of Public Instruction obtained the money to employ a principal and staff and opened a public school in the abandoned city hall. With the school term lasting only six weeks, this arrangement held until 1876, when Tampa's first public school building was constructed on Franklin Street. The Hyde Park Grammar School, the first public school in the suburbs, was built in 1889.

In the first decade of the 20th century, Tampa Heights, the upscale residential neighborhood north of downtown Tampa, was a choice location for new city schools. The 1906 Michigan Avenue Grammar School was among the first major school buildings constructed in Tampa. The brick building, with its wooden floors and hand glazed windows, was built by



Michigan Avenue Grammar School, c.1913

volunteers from the surrounding neighborhood. The school opened in April 1906 with over 50 students, many of whom were Hispanic. By 1908, the school was receiving the highest funding (\$1,960) of any elementary school in the district. In 1915, the school board named several elementary and junior high schools in Tampa after famous men, and the Michigan Avenue school took on the name of Robert E. Lee. This November, the Hillsborough County School Board decided to rename the school again, this time as Tampa Heights Elementary School.

Guidelines on Sustainability

The Secretary of the Interior's publication *Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* offers specific guidance on how to make historic buildings more sustainable in a manner that will preserve their historic character and that will meet The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Before implementing any energy conservation measures to enhance the sustainability

of a historic property, the existing energy-efficient characteristics of the building should be assessed. Buildings are more than their individual components. The design, materials, construction, size, shape, site orientation, surrounding landscape and climate all play a role in how buildings perform. Historic building construction and materials often maximized natural sources of heating, lighting and ventilation to

respond to local conditions. The key to a successful rehabilitation is to identify and understand any original and existing energy-efficient aspects of the building, as well as to identify and understand its character-defining features to ensure they are preserved. Traditional as well as new technological methods may be used to upgrade a historic building to help it operate even more efficiently.

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In October 1912, the first informal meeting of the Seminole Heights Civic Association was held at the home of George F. Altman to discuss two major concerns. One problem that the residents of the newly-developed Seminole Heights regularly encountered was the free-roaming cattle from the surrounding dairies. The other problem was that the street cars only ran up to Seminole Heights every half-hour. At the October meeting, former Tampa Mayor Frank Wing suggested the formation of a civic club to address the area's development needs.

Early accomplishments by the Seminole Heights Civic Association included the establishment of a sanitary service, the purchase of a fire engine, and the installation of electric streetlights at street intersections and gas lights at the intersections of streets and alleys.

In 1921, the Civic Association organized a petition for the area's citizens to request that the state legislature allow Seminole Heights to establish itself as a "no-fence" district. Such a law prohibiting the free roaming of cattle had long been established in Tampa, but open-range cattle ranching did not come to an end statewide until 1949, when Florida became the last state in the union to pass a mandatory fence law. Seminole Heights was annexed into the City of Tampa in 1923.



Central Avenue street car line crossing at Comanche Avenue, c.1922



Sketch of Cantonment Brooke, c.1824

In January 1824, Colonels Brooke and Gadsden of the U.S. Army arrived at Tampa Bay to establish a new fort. In reports to their superiors, the officers were enthusiastic about the site they had selected for the fort. Gadsden reported that the "location is judicious...There is a small body of good hammock land already cleared and well adapted for gardens." Brooke explained that the choice of the site had been influenced by the quantity of cleared land. They chose not to report the eviction of Robert Hackley, who otherwise would have been Tampa Bay's first permanent American settler.

Brooke had sailed from Pensacola reasonably well stocked with building supplies, including several thousand bricks, and three months of provisions. Construction went quickly. In an April 25, 1824, letter Brooke reported that a "very fine commissary and quartermaster's storehouse, and an excellent bakehouse" had been completed. He described the structures as "the best log buildings I have ever seen...260-ft in length and 12-ft from floors to loft." He expected the hospital and officers' quarters to be finished about the first of June if additional supplies arrived in time.

Some delay in construction had already been caused by the near loss of the brig *Mary* loaded with building materials. The *Mary* was

thirty-five days in passage from Pensacola to Tampa Bay, and she was feared lost at sea or captured by pirates. Other delays in completing the fort may have been caused by various problems with the troops. Of the approx. 200 men present in April 1824, 23 were under arrest or confinement, 11 were sick, and seven had deserted. In April, Private John McKenney died of consumption—the first fatality of the Army at Tampa Bay. Despite the obstacles, Fort Brooke was a reality by June 1824.

-The above was taken from Donald L. Chamberlin's "Fort Brooke: Frontier Outpost, 1824-1842," Tampa Bay History 07/01 (1985), courtesy of the University of South Florida Scholar Commons.