

City of Jacksonville Landmark Designation Report

964 St. Clair Street

LM-25-04
May 28, 2025



Property Owner:
Duval County School Board
1701 Prudential Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32207

REPORT OF THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT
APPLICATION FOR DESIGNATION
AS A CITY OF JACKSONVILLE LANDMARK

LM-25-04

Historic Name: Annie R. Morgan Elementary School

Other Names: Woodstock Park School, Public School #21

Address: 964 St. Clair Street, RE# 057905-0000

Location: South side of Commonwealth Avenue, between Detroit Street and St. Clair Street

Owner: Duval County School Board
1701 Prudential Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32207

Applicant: This application is being sponsored pursuant to section 307.104, Ordinance Code, at the request of Council Member Tyrona Clark-Murray

Year Built: 1916 (Property Appraiser, HPS Archives)

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

LM-25-04 seeks to designate the subject property located at 964 St. Clair Street (RE# 057905-0000) as a local landmark. The property's primary structure is a one-story masonry Colonial Revival building with multiple additions. Constructed in 1916, the original portion of the building is characterized by its hipped with intersecting gable roof, its brick exterior, and its Colonial Revival architectural elements including its symmetrical form, its recessed, rounded arch entryway with brick pilasters and quoins, a triglyph frieze, and a triangular pediment, its paired 9/6 sash windows with wide sills and its groups of 6/6 windows with fixed six-light windows above them. The building has had many documented additions since its construction, but these have not significantly detracted from the character of the structure, and most of the alterations are compatible with the architectural style and design of the original building.



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- (A) Consistent with the JACKSONVILLE ORDINANCE CODE, SECTION 307.104(d), the Planning Department determined that the application for designation of the subject property was complete.
- (B) As required, the Planning Department had signs posted in front of the property being considered for designation, as well as sent notices by U.S. Mail to each owner of real property within three hundred and fifty (350) feet of the proposed landmark. Notice of the public hearing on the designation of the subject property was published in the *Financial News and Daily Report*. Proof of publication is attached to this report.
- (C) Once designated, any activity affecting the exterior of the building and site of the subject property will require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). All proposed work will be reviewed for consistency with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*. The review of most routine work scopes including repairs, maintenance, alterations of previously altered features, small additions and size-limited new construction that would not impact significant historic elements or would not be readily street visible can be processed by the Historic Preservation Section (HPS) of the Jacksonville Planning Department, but

certain activities like alterations, additions, new construction, relocation and demolition that would be visible from the public right-of way, as well as any work the HPS determines to be potentially in conflict with the *Secretary of the Interior Standards*, will require review by the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission.

The purpose of the historic designation of this site is to provide protection, not to discourage or prohibit the future development of the site. The review of work through the COA process is to preserve the historic character, architectural features, and materials of this significant structure, as well as, to ensure any future development of the site is compatible with and sensitive to this primary historic resource.

(D) In preparing the application, the Planning Department has found the application to meet **four of the seven** criteria. The **four** criteria include the following.

A. Its value as a significant reminder of the cultural, historical, architectural, or archaeological heritage of the city, state or nation.

It is the determination of the Jacksonville Planning Department that the subject property meets this landmark criterion.

Annie R. Morgan Elementary School (Woodstock Park, School #21) is significant in part because of its relationship to the immediate neighborhood of Woodstock. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the population of Jacksonville increased from 57,699 in 1910 to 91,588 by 1920. In response, scores of new neighborhoods were being platted and marketed to the many new residents flowing into Jacksonville attracted by numerous employment opportunities such as the large new rail repair facility that opened just west of McDuff Avenue south of West Beaver Street. Some of the new subdivisions that developed outside of the core city following the Great Fire of 1901 included Brentwood, Phoenix Park, Panama Park, Barnett's, College Park, Grand Park, Riverside Annex, Murray Hill, St. Johns Place, and Ortega.

In 1912, the Southern Development Company of Jacksonville filed the first plat for the Woodstock Subdivision followed by a second plat in 1917 called Woodstock Park. Eventually including the general area from West Beaver Street north to Commonwealth Avenue and west from Huron Street to Detroit Street, a replat of Woodstock was filed in 1924 by the Southern Development Company which dedicated spaces for a church, school, as well as small pocket parks. Many of the streets in the new Woodstock and Woodstock Park Subdivisions reflected a Great Lakes theme with such names as Superior Street, Huron Street, and Mackinac Street, St. Clair Street, Ontario Street as well as possibly to the states of New York and Massachusetts with such names as Woodstock, Saranac Street, Champlain Street, Broadway Avenue, Columbus Avenue, Lowell Avenue, and Commonwealth Avenue. The name of these streets may have reflected the background of the officers in the Southern Development Company such as President, C. Lyman Spencer (1868 – 1942), a civil engineer originally from Cleveland, Ohio. C. Lyman Spencer was also credited in his obituary of being a leading proponent in the successful effort to convince the Seaboard Air Line Railroad (SAL) to relocate their repair shop from Fernandina Beach to Jacksonville, thus moving a major employer just south of the new Woodstock Subdivision.

By the time the neighborhood was incorporated into the city limits in 1925, Woodstock had experienced phenomenal growth. According to a 1925 edition of the Jacksonville Journal, new home construction in Woodstock was valued at over \$150,000 during the previous two years. During that same two-year period, 1923 & 1924, the population in the community had increased by over two hundred percent from 600 to 1,920 by 1925. Attendance at the Woodstock Elementary School had grown from 200 in 1923 to 365 by 1925. Opening in 1916 as part of a \$500,000 new school construction bond issue, the Woodstock Elementary School was renamed in 1945 to honor Annie R. Morgan who was principal for over thirty-three years. To accommodate the growing number of students, the school was expanded twice in the 1920's.

The 1925 article went on to describe Woodstock as having many amenities such as city water and sewer, as well as sidewalks and paved streets. The neighborhood was conveniently connected to Downtown Jacksonville by U.S. Highway 90 (West Beaver Street) which was the major thoroughfare into Jacksonville from the west. In 1927, the Southern Development Company deeded over sixteen acres to the City of Jacksonville, which was developed into Woodstock Park, located between West Beaver Street and Broadway Avenue. In addition to recreational facilities such as ball fields and basketball courts, this large wooded park later accommodated a fire station (#17) and community center.

B. Its location is the site of a significant local, state or national event.

It is the determination of the Jacksonville Planning Department that the subject property does not meet this landmark criterion.

C. It is identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the city, state or nation.

It is the determination of the Jacksonville Planning Department that the subject property does not meet this landmark criterion.

D. It is identified as the work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the city, state or nation.

It is the determination of the Jacksonville Planning Department that the subject property meets this landmark criterion.

The original structure and subsequent additions at 964 St. Clair Street are associated with several prominent Jacksonville architects and builders including Rutledge Holmes, Mellen C. Greeley, the O.P Woodcock Company, Jefferson Powell, and Henry John Klutho.

The Annie R. Morgan Elementary School is one of a few intact buildings documented to have been designed by Rutledge Holmes (1866-1929). Although little is known of his architectural training and earlier professional works in Charleston, South Carolina, Rutledge Holmes is one of the group of architects, such as Henry John Klutho, Wilbur Bacon Camp,, J.H.W. Hawkins, and Wilbur B. Talley, attracted to Jacksonville following the Great Fire of 1901. After working on his own for several

years, Holmes associated with Jacksonville architect, Arthur B. Gilkes from 1906 until 1908. Rutledge Holmes remained in Jacksonville until 1924 after which he moved to Quincy, Florida where his career came to a tragic end with his suicide in 1929.

One of the early noted commissions of Holmes after arriving in Jacksonville was the design of the Duval County Courthouse in 1902. This two and one half story Neoclassical Style building, at the northwest corner of North Market Street and East Forsyth Street, was demolished in 1960. Following the construction of the new Duval County Courthouse, Holmes was contracted in 1903 to redesign the fire damaged ruins of the old Duval County Courthouse on the northeast corner of North Market Street and East Forsyth Street for use as the Duval County Armory. Later renamed the Lanier Building, the old armory was significantly altered in 1948-1949 and demolished in 2002. Holmes was also responsible for the Neoclassical design of the Annie Lytle Public School (Public School #4) completed in 1917 and located across from Riverside Park.

In 1905, Confederate Colonel Raymond Cay hired Rutledge Holmes to design his new residence and carriage house along Riverside Avenue. Occupied for over thirty years by Attorney Francis P. Fleming, son of the former Governor of Florida, the house served as the first home for the Jacksonville Art Museum during the 1960s before being demolished. One intact building documented as being designed by Rutledge Homes is located in Downtown Jacksonville, and reflects elements of the commercial high-rise architecture of Chicago and the Mid-west. The six-story Southern Drug Company building at 20 Adams Street West was designed by Holmes, and constructed in 1911 for owners, Cecil H. Wilcox, Archer S. Hubbard, and William A. McDuff. Later occupied by the Sterchi Brothers (furniture store) the storefronts were altered in 1933 and again in 1946 to their current appearance.

Holmes' original design for the Annie R. Morgan Elementary School (Public School #21), constructed in 1916, is consistent with the Neoclassical Style that was implemented in other governmental buildings such as the new Duval County Courthouse and the Annie Lytle Public School.

To keep up with the growing population, the Annie R. Morgan Elementary School received a significant addition of six classrooms and a boiler room among other alterations in 1926. The architect was documented to be Mellen C. Greeley (1880-1981) and the builder was the O.P. Woodcock Company. Born and raised in the Riverside area and the son of Jacksonville Mayor, J.C. Greeley, Mellen C. Greeley learned the trade of architecture as an apprentice draftsman for J.H.W. Hawkins from 1901 to 1908. He was also in partnership with architect, Roy A. Benjamin for five years immediately following World War I. During his long career, Greeley designed numerous significant buildings in Jacksonville including Old Stanton High School, the Woman's Club of Jacksonville, the Fenimore and Hartmore Apartments (in association with Benjamin), Dr. Charles E. Terry Residence (2959 St. Johns Avenue), George Couper Gibbs Residence (2717 Riverside Avenue), the John L. Roe Residence (399 Beach Avenue in Atlantic Beach), the residence at 1816 Avondale Avenue, the residence at 1876 River Road, and served as associate architect for the Church of the Good Shepherd and the Ribault Club on Fort George Island. Even before his death at 101, Mellen C. Greeley was recognized as the "Dean of Jacksonville Architects". In addition to being one of the leaders in the establishment of the Florida Board of Architects in 1915, Greeley also served as the organization's secretary from 1923 to 1955.

The Woodcock Construction Company of Jacksonville was tasked with the construction of the 1926 addition. The principals of the company included two noted Jacksonville builders and developers, Justis S. Halsema and Owen Preston Woodcock. Halsema arrived in Jacksonville around the turn of the century from St. Mary's, Ohio. Apparently in partnership with O.P. Woodcock for only a short time, Halsema is credited with the construction of numerous residences and commercial buildings in Jacksonville, particularly in the Springfield and East Springfield neighborhoods where he also operated a large planning mill. Based on building permit records, *The Historic Properties Survey of Springfield* (1985) identified Justis S. Halsema as one of the most active builders and developers that worked in the Springfield Historic District. Buildings constructed by Halsema include the Halsema Building (1911) at 141-157 Eighth Street East in Springfield, and the Home Telephone Company Building (1914) at 2036 Forbes Street in Riverside. Justis S. Halsema, who died in 1953, also constructed the new St. Joseph Academy in Springfield in 1905 at the southwest corner of Seventh Street East and Hubbard street. This large masonry building later became the Massey Business College before being destroyed by fire.

One of Jacksonville's most prolific builders during the first half of the twentieth century, Owen Preston Woodcock constructed all of the buildings and residences that were part of the original San Jose Estates Development, including the San Jose Country Club, the San Jose School (Bolles School), and the San Jose Estates Administration building (San Jose Episcopal Church). In the construction business since 1897, the O.P. Woodcock Company built numerous landmark structures in Jacksonville including the Professional Building, 126 Adams Street West (1914); 1907 addition to the Seminole Club, 400 Hogan Street North; Buckman and Ulmer Building, 29-33 Monroe Street West (1925); the Masonic Temple, 410 Broad Street (1912-16); the commercial building at 643 Edison Avenue (1924); John Gorrie Junior High School, 2525 College Street (1923-24); the Lane Drug Company Building, 2665 Park Street (1942); Willow Branch Library, 2875 Park Street (1929-30); the commercial building at 3556-3560 St. Johns Avenue (1927); Kirby-Smith Junior High School, 2034 Hubbard Street (1923-24); 1926 addition to the Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant, Wambolt Street at the St. Johns River (1924); Elizabeth Swain Memorial Methodist Church, 1620 Naldo Avenue (1925); 1917-1918 addition to Lackawanna School #10, 3108 Lenox Avenue; and the concrete section of the original Gator Bowl. After his death in April of 1953, the O.P. Woodcock Company continued to be operated by a relative, Ira Kroger.

In 1928, another significant addition was made to the Annie R. Morgan Elementary School, designed by Jefferson Powell (~1890-1965). Born in Georgia, Powell arrived in Jacksonville around 1907 and was an apprentice to several prominent Jacksonville architects until he was presented his own license in 1919 and joined the firm of Benjamin & Greeley. Powell opened his own practice in 1924 and designed multiple well-known buildings including the Ritz Theatre Building at 825 Davis Street (1929), the Witschen Residence at 1822 Edgewood Avenue (1927), and the Fire Department Drill Tower at 625 Stockton Street (1936-37) to name a few.

One of the last documented alterations to the original structure was a four classroom addition in the early 1950s designed by prominent Jacksonville architect Henry John Klutho (1873-1964). Potential opportunities created by the rebuilding of Downtown Jacksonville following the Great Fire of 1901 attracted many out-of-state architects and builders, including a young New York architect

by the name of Henry John Klutho. Trained in the Midwest, Klutho became noted for being one of the first architects in the south to incorporate the modernistic design concepts of the Prairie School in many of his early commissions in Jacksonville. This masterful blending of his own personal style with the architectural principles of Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan reached its zenith with the design and construction of the St. James Building completed in 1912. Henry J. Klutho was Jacksonville's most significant architect during the period between the Great Fire of 1901 and World War 1.

Born on March 19, 1873 in Breese, Illinois, Henry John Klutho attended commercial college as well as the Schenk's Drawing Academy in St. Louis, Missouri, where he started his practice working for several local architectural firms. After moving to New York City in 1894, Klutho was employed by several architects in that city including Francis H. Kimball, W. Wheeler, as well as the firm of Clinton and Russell. After a tour of Europe in 1898, Klutho returned to New York City where he opened his own architectural practice. Reading about the Great Fire of May 3, 1901 and realizing professional opportunities that such a situation provided, he relocated his architectural practice to Jacksonville, arriving in June of 1901. After a short association with Atlanta architect, J.W. Golucke, Klutho went on to establish a very successful architectural practice and is credited with the design of many of Jacksonville's most prominent early twentieth century landmarks.

His early designs in Jacksonville tended to be more traditional reflecting the popular revival styles of the period. These buildings included the Dyal-Upchurch Building (4 East Bay Street, 1901-02, Second Renaissance Revival), the Saint Clair Abrams Mausoleum (Evergreen Cemetery, 1901, Neoclassical Revival), the Thomas V. Porter Residence (510 North Julia Street, 1902, Colonial Revival Style), the First Baptist Church Sanctuary (133 West Church Street, 1903, Romanesque Revival), the Jacksonville Free Public Library (101 East Adams Street, 1903-05, Neoclassical Revival) and the new Jacksonville City Hall (1903, Beaux-Arts Style, now demolished).

However by 1907, Klutho's designs began to reflect the more modernistic styles developed by Louis Sullivan in his Chicago School of high rise architecture and the Prairie School designs of Frank Lloyd Wright. Some of his early designs in Jacksonville reflecting these new architectural influences included the YMCA Building (407 North Laura Street, 1907); the Bisbee Building (1908-09, 47 West Forsyth Street); the Seminole Hotel (1909, demolished), the Florida Life Building (1911-12, 117 North Laura Street), the Morocco Temple (1910-11, 219 North Newnan Street), the Claude Nolan Cadillac Building and Garages (937 North Main Street, 1911-12); the Burbridge Hotel (Floridan) (1910, demolished); and of course, his recognized masterpiece, the St. James Building (1911-12, 117 West Duval Street).

Klutho also popularized the use of the Prairie School Style for residential designs starting with his own residence (1909) now located at 30 West 9th Street and apartment building (1914) at 1830 North Main Street in the Springfield neighborhood. Other noted residential designs in the Prairie School Style by Klutho included the George A. Clark Residence (2059 Riverside, 1911, demolished); the Alexander St. Clair-Abrams Residence (1649 Osceola Street, 1913-14); the Stockton Broome Residence (1845 Elizabeth Place, 1914); and the Florence Court Apartments (1751 North Main Street, 1911). Klutho also used the Prairie School Style in the design of several schools such as Panama Park School (Lola Culver, 580 Lawton Avenue, 1916), and East Jacksonville Elementary School #33 (1016 East Ashley Street, 1917, demolished).

During his later years he returned to more traditional styles, and in the 1920s, after some bad investments in Jacksonville's movie industry, formed the short-lived partnership with Fred S. Cates and Albert N. Cole. During the 1920's and 30's, Klutho's designs tended to reflect more the popular revival styles. Noted design during this period included the Merrill-Stevens Shipyard Administration Building (2403 Atlantic Boulevard, 1917); Fletcher Park War Housing (off Atlantic Boulevard, 1918); Henry Kite Elementary School # 37 (9430 Lem Turner Road, 1927-28); additions and alterations to West Riverside Elementary School (2801 Herschel Street, 1916 & 1922); Napier Apartments (1530-36 Riverside Avenue, 1924); Drs. Love & McGinnis Residence (2063 Oak Street, 1926); the residence at 2755 Riverside Avenue (1925); the David Saffey Residence (3643 Hedrick Street, 1927); Florida Baptist Convention Building (1924-25 218 West Church Street); the commercial buildings at 3556 – 3560 St. Johns Avenue (1927); the Hogans Creek Improvement Project (1929); U.S. Parcel Post Building (1931-32, 1136 West Bay Street); and the Kahler Apartments (3225 St. Johns Avenue, 1936).

Klutho's influence on Jacksonville's architecture during the early twentieth century was profound. Many architects, such as Leeroy Sheftall and Earl Mark, who later gained prominence in the city got their start in Klutho's office. Committed to enhancing professional standards for architects, Klutho published a schedule of minimum charges and guidelines for completions that followed the national American Institute of Architects (AIA). In addition, he became the first Florida member of the AIA, as well as was instrumental in establishing the Florida Institute of Architects. Klutho also had significant commissions outside of the Jacksonville area including the Governor's Mansion (1905, demolished) and addition to the State Capital (1921, demolished) in Tallahassee. The extent and breadth of his works makes him one of Florida's most significant architects of the historic period.

E. Its value as a building is recognized for the quality of its architecture, and it retains sufficient elements showing its architectural significance.

It is the determination of the Jacksonville Planning Department that the subject property meets this landmark criterion.

The primary structure at 964 St. Clair Street is a one-story masonry building that was constructed in the Colonial Revival Style. The original structure features an hipped roof with intersecting gables while the rear additions have gable roof forms and the front additions have hipped roofs. The original section of the school is discernable when viewing the property from St. Clair Street. The recessed, rounded arch entryway is flanked by brick pilasters and quoins that support a triglyph frieze and triangular pediment. Two wings extend from the entrance to the left and right and are symmetrical in design, as is typical for Colonial Revival architecture. These wings have paired 9/6 sash windows with wide sills and groups of six 6/6 windows with fixed six-light windows above them. These windows have pronounced entablatures with brackets on either side of the groupings and dentils on the frieze. The running bond of varying red brick and white mortar on the original structure and early additions contrast with the brick of the front additions which have tighter joints and very little color variation. Generally, most of the additions are compatible with the original structure, mimicking the materials, window designs, and form, or otherwise remaining compatible with the Colonial Revival Style.

Colonial Revival architecture is present in many of Jacksonville's historically designated areas including Springfield and Riverside-Avondale. The style, which became popular around the turn of the century, is present in various forms from architectural elements on Frame Vernacular buildings such as cornices and porticos to two-and-a-half story masonry structures that exhibit all of the characteristics of this style. Colonial Revival traces its roots to the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, where many of the exhibit buildings sought to revive and interpret historical "colonial" types. These structures were rich in borrowed details, based largely on the classical tradition that produced the styles now known as "Georgian," "Federal," and "Jeffersonian." The major elements of these style were symmetrical facades, prominent porticos, molded details in bas-relief, double-hung rectangular windows with small panes, and pedimented doorways and windows.

Annie R. Morgan is also significant as one of a dozen new schools constructed in Duval County as a result of a one million dollar school construction bond issue approved in 1915. Some of the new schools funded as part of this construction bond included Annie Lytle, Central Riverside, Fishweir School, Murray Hill School (Ruth N. Upson School), South Jacksonville Grammar School, Brentwood School, Panama Park School (Lola M. Culver School), Woodstock Park School (Annie R. Morgan School), Grand Crossing School, as well as major additions to such schools as West Riverside School and Lackawanna School. In addition to Annie R. Morgan School, Rutledge Holmes has been credited, at least in part, with the design of the new Grand Crossing School (Grand Park School) and Annie Lytle School.

These new school facilities reflected contemporary architectural styles, school design concepts, and construction techniques. With the memory of the 1901 fire still fresh, attention was particularly directed towards making these buildings as fire-proof as possible resulting in the use of masonry loading walls, concrete structural systems, suspended metal lath and plaster ceilings. Further, the designs of many of these schools such as Annie R. Morgan were composed of a rectangular central hall with classroom wings projecting from the sides and or back.

In addition to being designed by some of Jacksonville's noted early architects, supervision for the design of most, if not all of these schools, was under the nationally recognized school architect, William B. Ittner from St. Louis, Missouri. In addition to these schools as well as Old Stanton High School (1917), W. B. Ittner later supervised the construction of John Gorrie Junior High School (1923-24), Robert E. Lee Senior High School (1926-27), Kirby-Smith Junior High School (1923-24), and Andrew Jackson Senior High School (1926-1927).

F. It has distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials.

It is the determination of the Jacksonville Planning Department that the subject property does not meet this landmark criterion.

G. Its suitability for preservation or restoration.

It is the determination of the Jacksonville Planning Department that the subject property meets this landmark criterion.

In utilizing this criterion, it has been the practice of the Planning Department to evaluate proposed landmarks based on evidence of significant exterior alterations that have negatively impacted character-defining features, as well as alterations that are or would be difficult, costly, or impossible to reverse. Further, the degree and nature of any exterior deterioration, as well as the evidence of long term and potentially on-going neglect are also a factor in evaluating potential landmarks for their suitability for preservation or restoration.

964 St. Clair Street has not been altered in a manner that has destroyed its architectural or historic significance. The building currently operates as a school and does not show signs of significant exterior deterioration or long-term neglect. Many of the alterations that have taken place during the building's operation as a school have gained significance in their own right for their association with the growth of Woodstock Park, the influence of prominent Jacksonville architects, and their designs which are generally compatible with the original structure. 964 St. Clair Street may be reasonably rehabilitated and preserved for continued and compatible use.

RECOMMENDATION

Since the property owner is against the designation, at least **four of the seven** criteria must be met, pursuant to Section 307.107(j) of the Ordinance Code. In reviewing the application, the Planning Department has found the application to meet **four of the seven** criteria.

Based on the findings of this report and consideration of the Ordinance Code, the Jacksonville Planning Department recommends that the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission **APPROVE** the designation of 964 St. Clair Street, **(LM-25-04)** as a City of Jacksonville Landmark.