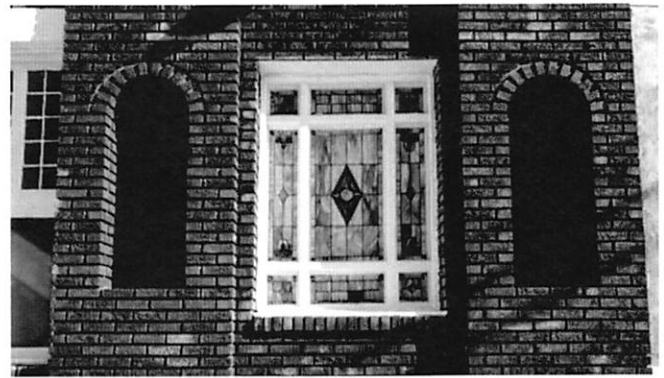


# City of Jacksonville Landmark Designation Report

## 525 West Beaver Street

LM-22-05  
April 27, 2022



**Application Prepared By:**  
Brian W. LaBrie  
Ray, Ellis & LaBrie Consulting  
1516 Peachtree Street NW  
Atlanta, GA 30309

**Property Owner:**  
525 Beaver, LLC  
Jacksonville, FL

**APPLICATION FOR DESIGNATION  
AS A CITY OF JACKSONVILLE LANDMARK**

**LM-22-05**

**525 West Beaver Street**

**GENERAL LOCATION:** North side of West Beaver Street between Clay Street and North Broad Street in the LaVilla neighborhood immediately west of Downtown Jacksonville

Prepared in accordance with the JACKSONVILLE ORDINANCE CODE, SECTION 307.104, the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department hereby forwards to the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission, its "Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations" on the Landmark Designation, **LM-22-05**. The application for designating 525 West Beaver Street as a landmark is sponsored by Eric J. Adler, 1710 North Main Street, Jacksonville, Florida, 32206 on behalf of the property owner, 525 Beaver Street LLC, 1710 North Main Street, Jacksonville, Florida, 32206.

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:**

The Planning and Development Department determined that the application for designation of the property at 525 West Beaver Street as a Landmark was complete. As required, the Planning and Development Department had a sign posted in front of the property proposed for landmark designation, as well as notices sent by U.S. Mail to each owner of real property within three hundred and fifty (350) feet of the proposed landmark. Notice of public hearing on the designation of the property at 525 West Beaver Street as a Landmark was published in the *Financial News and Daily Report*. Proof of publication is attached to this report.

Once designated, any activity affecting the exterior of the building and site of the proposed landmark at 525 West Beaver Street 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 Planning and Development 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 to 525 West Beaver Street, 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.

In preparing this application, the Planning and Development Department has found the application to meet four of the seven criteria. The criteria include the following:

***A. It's value as a significant reminder of the cultural, historical, architectural, or archaeological heritage of the city, state, or nation.***

African Americans in Southern cities, such as Jacksonville, were forced by segregation to not only reside in designated neighborhoods but also to develop the necessary commercial, cultural, and social infrastructure not available to them outside of these restricted areas. For over a century, the northern part of LaVilla was the commercial and social center of Jacksonville's African American community. Numerous commercial enterprises such as stores, restaurants, hotels, theaters, and funeral homes, serving the African American community lined North Broad Street, West Ashley Street, West Beaver Street and North Davis Street. Significant African American institutions in the area include Old Stanton High School (521 West Ashley Street); the Masonic Temple (Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge at 410 North Broad Street); and the Clara White Mission (611 – 615 West Ashley Street).

Having to create an economy within the segregated neighborhoods such as LaVilla, many black owned businesses flourished along with a growing professional class. Black professionals included tailors, dressmakers, printers, doctors, teachers, lawyers, dentists, cigar manufacturers, bicycle and automobile technicians, jewelers, contractors, draftsmen, and funeral directors. One of the remaining examples of the heyday of LaVilla as the business center of Jacksonville's African American community during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the Lawton Pratt Funeral home. Established in 1910 under prominent funeral director, Lawton Pratt, and moving to an attractive new building in 1914 at 525 West Beaver Street, the mortuary has served Jacksonville's African American population for over a hundred years making it one of the oldest funeral homes in Florida. Because of his outstanding reputation, the professional services of Lawton Pratt was sought by many of the established families in Jacksonville's black community.

With the end of segregation in the 1960s, many African American residents and businesses left LaVilla to seek opportunities now available in other parts of the city. As a result, the economic and social vitality of LaVilla declined resulting in marginal businesses or empty commercial buildings and a predominance of low-income rental units. Continued lack of investment fostered significant deterioration of LaVilla's building fabric resulting in numerous demolitions. In more recent years, major redevelopment plans in LaVilla have taken an urban renewal approach resulting in the removal of the remaining building stock except for several landmark structures, along with a small cluster of older commercial buildings concentrated along North Broad Street, West Ashley Street and West Beaver Street. Today LaVilla is composed of large vacant parcels and a scattering of new construction, primarily apartments, offices, and a middle school for the arts. Although under different owners over the years, the Lawton Pratt Funeral Home has been able to survive the decline of LaVilla and remained opened until recently.

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

It is the determination of the Planning and Development Department that the subject property at 525 West Beaver Street 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.***

The first recorded black funeral home in Florida was opened in 1895 by Jacksonville resident Wyatt J. Geter. His funeral home continued under his nephew, Japhus Baker, the first licensed black embalmer in Florida. Another pioneer funeral director in the state was Lawton L. Pratt. Recognized as the second licensed black funeral director in Florida, Pratt graduated from the Cincinnati School of Embalming in 1910. After establishing his business in Jacksonville, Pratt contracted in 1915 with well-known builder, Joseph H. Blodgett, to design and construct a new funeral home at 525 West Beaver Street. Pratt hosted the first organizational meeting of the Florida Negro Funeral Directors & Embalmers Association at his LaVilla business. He is also credited with taking the first steps to promote the mortician profession among women. After his death in 1943, Oscar and Evelyn Hillman continued the business under the name, Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home.

***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.***

Jacksonville's segregation-era African American architects and designers played a pivotal role in the development and sustenance of their community. They designed and often constructed the homes, churches, and businesses that formed the city's segregated neighborhoods. The architects' legacy is not just in their buildings, but also in their mentorship and leadership. Most actively supported the interests and uplifting of their community, which was besieged by inequality. Finally, the architects also represent the foundational professional class that emerged in black communities in the segregated South. Some of the pioneer black architects and designers working in Jacksonville included Richard Lewis Brown, Sanford A. Brookins, John H. Rosemond, James Hutchins, and Joseph H. Blodgett.

Although having very little formal education or training, Joseph Haygood Blodgett (1858 – 1934) became one of the most respected and successful African American business and community leaders in Jacksonville during the first quarter of the twentieth century. Born in Augusta, Georgia on February 8, 1858, Blodgett left the farm as a young man and moved to Summerville, South Carolina where he first entered the business of hauling phosphate and later cutting cross ties for the South Carolina Railroad Company. After losing his investments in farming, Blodgett relocated to bustling Jacksonville, Florida in the 1890's, reportedly with only one dollar and ten cents in his pockets.

From this humble start in Florida, Blodgett, who initially worked for the railroad, went on to open his own drayage business that was later expanded to include a wood yard, restaurant, and farm. By 1898, he had reportedly entered the construction and real estate business and had constructed numerous houses and businesses, many located on parcels under his ownership. Blodgett lost most of his buildings in the Great Fire of May 3, 1901, which destroyed most of Downtown Jacksonville including parts of the outlying neighborhood of LaVilla. Utilizing a five thousand dollar loan from

the State Bank of Florida, Blodgett was able to revive his construction and real estate business, and by 1919 had constructed 258 houses, of which he owned 100.

By 1919, Blodgett had built his own elegant residence, "Blodgett Villa" along West 8<sup>th</sup> Street in the upper and middle-class African American neighborhood known as Sugar Hill. While residing at "Blodgett Villa", he and his wife, Sallie O Barnes Barnett of Barnwell, South Carolina, entertained many notable visitors including Booker T. Washington. Blodgett went on to build many houses in Sugar Hill and the Durkeeville area that were characterized by his trademark of building two-story residences with a small upper porch over a larger lower porch. Reportedly Blodgett built similar homes in other cities including Durham, North Carolina; Savannah, Georgia; Springfield, Massachusetts, and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. One of the more noted buildings reportedly designed and constructed by Blodgett in 1915 was the Lawton Pratt (Hillman & Pratt) Funeral Home at 525 West Beaver Street in the LaVilla section of Downtown Jacksonville.

In his obituary, the *Florida Times Union* proclaimed Joseph H. Blodgett as a leader among the African American community, as well as one of the wealthiest black people in Duval County. This declaration was based not only on his business success, but also on his demonstrated community leadership and civic involvement. For example, immediately after the 1901 fire, Blodgett was initially tapped by black community leaders to head a Colored Relief Association to coordinate the relief efforts among the African American community. A strong and active supporter of both his church, Ebenezer United Methodist Church, and Edward Waters College, Blodgett also supported the local chapter of the National Negro Business League that hosted a visit by Booker T. Washington in 1912. In 1917, Blodgett joined A.L. Lewis with the Afro-American Life Insurance Company in a large parade and demonstration held at Oakland Park to rally black support for the war efforts. Because of declining health due to high-blood pressure, Blodgett had retired from his businesses by the early 1920's and had relocated to one of his houses on Hart Street in Durkeeville where he died on June 5, 1934.

***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 Planning and Development Department that the subject property at 525 West Beaver Street does not meet this landmark criterion.

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

It is the determination of the Planning and Development Department that the subject property at 525 West Beaver Street does not meet this landmark criterion.

***G. Its suitability for preservation or restoration.***

In utilizing this criterion, it has been the practice of the Planning and Development Department to evaluate proposed landmarks based on evidence of significant exterior alterations that have negatively affected character-defining features, as well as alterations difficult, costly, or impossible to reverse. Further, the degree and nature of any exterior deterioration, as well as

evidence of long term and potentially on-going neglect are also a factor in evaluating potential landmarks for their suitability for preservation or restoration.

Quoting from the landmark application for 525 West Beaver Street, LM-22-05:

*“Overall, the Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home is in good condition and retains integrity of location as it is still located in its original location and retains integrity of setting as it is still located in the historic African American neighborhood of LaVilla in Jacksonville, Florida, just northwest of the white central business district. The property retains its integrity as a two-part commercial block building with intact chapel and offices on the first floor, with residential and office space on the second floor. Further, the exterior retains significant architectural elements including the corbelled brickwork, round-arched niches and vents, Gothic-arched chapel windows, and unique textured brick and stuccoed facades. These architectural elements retain integrity of materials and their inherent workmanship of a master builder and architect of segregated Jacksonville. Given this, the property retains integrity of association as a commercial, mixed-use two-part commercial block building designed by Joseph Haygood Blodgett”*

It is the determination of the Planning and Development Department that the subject property at 525 West Beaver Street meets the criterion for suitability for preservation or restoration.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the findings of this report, the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department recommends that the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission **APPROVE** the designation of 525 West Beaver Street (**LM-22-05**) as a City of Jacksonville Landmark.

## II. Designation Application

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Ray, Ellis & LaBrie Consulting  
1516 Peachtree Street NW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30309



March 30, 2022

City of Jacksonville | Planning and Development Department  
Community Planning Division | Historic Preservation Section  
214 North Hogan Street, Suite 300  
Jacksonville, Florida 32202  
Attention: Lisa Sheppard, Planner III

RE: Landmark Designation Application for the  
Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home  
525 West Beaver Street  
Jacksonville, Florida

Ms. Sheppard:

The owner of the Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home is 525 Beaver, LLC that is controlled by Eric J. Adler of Silver Street Capital. They have hired Ray, Ellis & LaBrie Consulting (REL) to assist with their Landmark Designation Application, National Register of Historic Places listing, and Federal Historic Tax Credit Applications.

Enclosed with this letter you will find the Landmark Designation Application with the owner's signature, Appendix A that is the continuation sheet for Sections 3 and 4 of this application as well as additional historic context appropriate to the application, Appendix B that has the project location map and photographic keys for the property, Appendix C that has 28 photographs of the property taken by REL on March 1, 2022, Appendix D that has historic and recent-past images of the property, and Appendix E that has the legal description and property owners within 350' feet of the property. All these are provided for your use in compiling the Planning and Development Department's Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations.

Should you have any questions, or need additional information please let us know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian W. LaBrie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brian W. LaBrie, Principal Architectural Historian  
Ray, Ellis & LaBrie Consulting

cc: Eric J. Adler, Silver Street Capital  
Project File





REQUEST FOR LOCAL DESIGNATION OF LANDMARK OR LANDMARK SITE  
City of Jacksonville Historic Preservation

1. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Historic Name: Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home

Other Names: Hillman-Pratt & Walton Funeral Home

FMSF Number: DU5548  
(if known)

Designation: (check all applicable)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residential | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Institutional          | <input type="checkbox"/> Public                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial             | <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeologic          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cemetery               | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____          |

2. LOCATION

Street name & number: 525 West Beaver Street

City or town: Jacksonville Zip Code: 32202

State: Florida County: Duval

Real estate number(s): 074645 0000

3. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Date of construction and additions:

See Appendix A

Significant historical associations:

See Appendix A

Original use:

See Appendix A

Present use:

See Appendix A

Physical description (basic design, construction and conditions):

See Appendix A

**4. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The following is a list of the cultural, historical, architectural, or archaeological significance with reference to all applicable local designation criteria outlined in section 307.104(f), of the Jacksonville Ordinance Code.

Mark "x" in any applicable boxes for the criteria to qualify for a landmark, using the space to the right to specify how it is applicable. If more space is needed please use a continuation sheet and write the name of the potential landmark on each sheet.

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

See Appendix A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

See Appendix A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

See Appendix A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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.

See Appendix A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

See Appendix A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

See Appendix A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Its suitability for preservation or restoration

See Appendix A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5. REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS**

- A minimum of five (5) labeled (with location and description) photographs of the site
- Area map showing property location
- Any available historic and or existing drawings such as elevations, floor plans, diagrams, etc.
- Legal Description

**6. SPONSORSHIP STATEMENT**

I am aware of the proposal for designation of the subject property or properties listed above as a City of Jacksonville landmark or landmark site and am aware of the procedures for review of the proposal by the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission and the Jacksonville City Council. I understand that I will be notified of the date and place of any public meetings at which the proposal will be considered by the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission and the City Council. I am also aware that if designated, any construction activities affecting the subject properties including alterations, new construction, demolition and relocation, will require a consistency review through an application for a Certification of Appropriateness. If the proposed designation is denied, I am aware that I must wait one year to re-apply.

Signature of property owner: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 3/30/2022  
Printed name: Eric J. Adler Phone number: (904)6003195

Email: eric@slvrst.com

Address: 1710 Main Street N City: Jacksonville Zip: 32206

Signature of applicant (if different from property owner): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(representatives need to provide a signed and notarized letter from the property owner(s) identifying them as their official agent.)

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: (=)

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**Sponsorship other than the owner**

Consistent with Jacksonville Ordinance Code 307.104(a), the proposal for designation as a City of Jacksonville landmark or landmark site is being sponsored by: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: ( ) Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home**  
**Appendix A: Landmark Request Form Continuation Sheet**

### **SECTION 3: HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

#### **Date of construction and additions:**

The Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home was constructed circa 1915 by Joseph Haygood Blodgett. The drive along the east side elevation was not covered initially but was designed to be covered and was covered by the 1930s (see Figures 1 and 4, note joist pockets below the two doors shown). In the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, the exposed brick on the east side elevation was painted at the 1st floor level and parged with stucco above. At this time as well it appears that doors in the 2nd floor of the east side elevation were replaced with windows (compare Figure 1 and Figure 17).

In 2019 an unfinished renovation turned what had been a single residential apartment upstairs into four apartments, the casket factory was turned into an open-plan office, and on the first floor, the offices and restorative rooms were subdivided into two apartments. At this time the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor porch halfway along the east side elevation was enclosed and new windows were installed in the front half of the building except for the stained glass windows and windows surrounding the entrance door of the historic chapel, which are original. Original windows on the second floor of the front elevation were casement windows with the remaining windows of the front half of the building being sash windows with a 9-over-1 pattern (Figure 1). The rear half of the building has metal multi-light windows that typically had awnings integrated into them.

#### **Significant historical associations:**

The Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home is locally significant as an African American owned and operated mortuary from its construction in 1915 through 2019 when the building was sold for redevelopment both in the area of Commerce and African American Ethnic Heritage. African American funeral homes like Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home have a rich heritage and are recognized as much as cultural institutions as they are businesses. They were among the first family businesses established by African Americans after the abolition of slavery, in a trade that was and remained well into the twentieth century largely segregated along racial, ethnic, and religious lines. African American funeral homes and their directors have historically played prominent roles in communities, maintaining distinct cultural practices including burials, wakes, and home visits.<sup>1</sup>

The Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home is locally significant in the area of architecture as an example of the commercial work of Joseph Haygood Blodgett (born in 1858 in Augusta, Georgia and died in 1934 in Durkeeville, Florida). Blodgett was a self-trained architect and builder as African Americans were unable to get licensed even as contractors in the City of Jacksonville until 1955 over 20 years after his death.<sup>2</sup> Blodgett entered the construction and real estate industry in Jacksonville in the late 1890s and built numerous houses and businesses, many located on parcels under his ownership. After losing most of his buildings in the Great Fire of May 3, 1901, which destroyed most of Downtown Jacksonville including parts of the outlying neighborhood of LaVilla, Blodgett utilized a five-thousand-dollar loan from the State Bank of Florida to revive his business. By 1919 had constructed 258 houses, of which he owned 100. The Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home is perhaps the only commercial building designed and built by Blodgett still extant in Jacksonville, Florida and its environs.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Weinstein, Lynn. Inside Adams Blog. *Honoring African Americans: Celebrating Life in Death – African American Funeral Homes*. [https://blogs.loc.gov/inside\\_adams/2021/02/african-american-funeral-homes/](https://blogs.loc.gov/inside_adams/2021/02/african-american-funeral-homes/).

<sup>2</sup> Baker, Chris. "African American Architects in Segregated Jacksonville, 1865-1965" *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, April 22, 2019. On file at the Division of Historical Resources, Tallahassee, Florida, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Wilson, Dreck Spurlock, ed. *African American Architects: A Biographical Dictionary 1865 – 1945*. London: Routledge, 2004, pp. 42-43.

**Original Use:**

From its construction in 1915 until 2019 the property was in use as a funeral home with residential apartment above the chapel of the funeral home. It was known as the Lawton L. Pratt Funeral Home from 1915 to 1943; as Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home from 1943 to 2002; and as Hillman-Pratt & Walton Funeral Home from 2002 to 2019.

**Present Use:**

From 2019 to 2021 the property was vacant as the building underwent a renovation that was left unfinished. Later in 2021 the property was sold to the current owner who used it temporarily as office space and now intends to renovate the building for mixed-use residential with commercial component.


**Physical Description:**

The Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home is a two-story, masonry two-part commercial block building located at 525 West Beaver Street (changed from 527 in the 1970s). It is composed of an exposed brick two-story front portion that housed the chapel, offices, and a residential apartment on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor; a one-story covered drive on the east side; and a stuccoed two-story rear portion which historically contained a garage and embalming rooms on the first floor, and a casket factory on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. A narrow "bridge" connects these two halves of the building on each floor via fire doors and includes a nonhistoric staircase that connects the covered drive to the second floor of the bridge and a historic casket elevator (photos 9, 12-13, 24, 26, and 27).

The three-bay front (south) façade is faced with a textured brick with a rough circular brush finish (photos 2 and 5). The center bay includes a stained glass window at the first floor level flanked by two arched niches. A recessed porch in the east bay provides access to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. What appears to have been designed as a matching recessed porch on the west side, has historically been enclosed as an entrance foyer for the first floor and, historically, the chapel. The second floor has a window centered in each bay. Above the second floor windows, the front façade features intricate brick corbeling and three arched vent openings, a nameplate reading "Lawton L. Pratt," and a moderately pitched parapet crowning the central bay.



On the west side elevation the front half of the building is faced with smooth brick laid in a common bond pattern, the rear half of the building is stuccoed (photos 1 and 7). In the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the front half, four lancet-arched stained glass windows mark the historic location of the chapel with two nonhistoric nine-over-one vinyl windows in historic segmentally arched openings mark the entrance foyer close to the front façade. Six historic segmentally-arched window openings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor are filled with nonhistoric nine-over-one vinyl windows. The rear portion of the building is stuccoed and contains historic steel windows in rectangular openings. The majority of these windows are nine-light awning windows except for a 20-light window located in the "bridge" area of the second floor. Additionally there are three metal, louvered vents are roughly centered along the rearmost section of this elevation on the first floor.

On the east side elevation the one-story covered entrance drive is alongside the front half of the building. It is composed of a six-foot brick common bond wall topped with a frame wall and roof. Above the covered drive, the front portion of the building is stuccoed and painted except for the south-most bay at the front, which is of the same finished brick as the front façade. The second floor of the front half of the building on this façade also contains a bay window, and frame enclosure marks a recently enclosed porch halfway along this façade at the "bridge" connection between the front and rear portions. The windows in the front portion are primarily nonhistoric nine-over-one vinyl windows in historic segmentally arched openings. The rear section of the building is stuccoed and pierced by historic nine-light steel awning windows, three on the first floor and one on the second floor at the north end.



The north rear elevation (photo 6) has minimal detailing and is covered in historic stucco. There are three nine-light metal windows with awning equally spaced along the second floor, and only one window roughly centered on the drive on the first floor.

The architectural style of the Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home has vernacular architectural elements that were typically used by African American master builders and architects at the turn-of-the-twentieth century. Elements of the Gothic Revival style on the property include the embattled parapet walls and Gothic-arched chapel windows. The textured brick, round-arched niches, and round-arched vents in the parapet are elements of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. These vernacular forms often used brick masonry as well as stucco finishes on the exterior—both of which are found on this property.



## **SECTION 4: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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

The Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home is a significant reminder of the cultural, historical, and architectural heritage of its African American master builders and architect as an example of the work of Joseph Haygood Blodgett. Such professionals represented the professional class that emerged in black enclaves in the segregated South.<sup>4</sup> Blodgett was a self-trained architect and builder as African Americans were unable to get licensed even as contractors in the City of Jacksonville until 1955, over 20 years after his death.<sup>5</sup> Blodgett entered the construction and real estate industry in Jacksonville in the late 1890s and built numerous houses and businesses, many of which are located on parcels under his ownership. After losing most of his buildings in the Great Fire of May 3, 1901, which destroyed most of Downtown Jacksonville including parts of the outlying community of LaVilla, Blodgett utilized a \$5,000 loan from the State Bank of Florida to revive his business. By 1919 had constructed 258 houses, of which he owned 100. The Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home is perhaps the only commercial building designed and built by Blodgett still extant in Jacksonville and the surrounding area.<sup>6</sup>

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

The Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home is not known to be the site of a significant local, state, or national event.

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

While the Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home is associated with Lawton L. Pratt who was a prominent early 20<sup>th</sup>-century black businessman, more information would need to be gathered to establish the context for significance under Criterion B of the National Register of Historic Places. Lawton L. Pratt established his Funeral Home business in 1900 on the 400 block of Broad Street before having the funeral home built in 1915.<sup>7</sup> He sold life insurance from the property and was known to be a very talented undertaker who could “restore” the looks of the deceased for an open casket funeral. One prominent example of his funerary skills was for Bessie Coleman, a barnstorming, female, black pilot who died in a fiery crash in the Jacksonville area in 1926. Pratt also helped establish the local chapter of the Negro Business League.<sup>8</sup>

- 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.**

Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home was designed and built by master builder, and self-taught architect, Joseph Haygood Blodgett who is identified in the *African American Architects in Segregated Jacksonville, 1865–1965* as one of the six African American architects to have had a significant impact on Jacksonville, Florida, during segregation. These architects “played a pivotal role in the development and sustenance of their community” as they not only designed, but were often the general contractor for their buildings, as is the case with Blodgett. Their buildings included a full spectrum of residences,

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<sup>4</sup> Baker, Chris. “African American Architects in Segregated Jacksonville, 1865-1965” *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, April 22, 2019. On file at the Division of Historical Resources, Tallahassee, Florida, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Baker, Chris. “African American Architects in Segregated Jacksonville, 1865-1965” *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, April 22, 2019. On file at the Division of Historical Resources, Tallahassee, Florida, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Wilson, Dreck Spurlock, ed. *African American Architects: A Biographical Dictionary 1865 – 1945*. London: Routledge, 2004, pp. 42-43.

<sup>7</sup> R.L. Polk & Co, *Jacksonville City Directory 1916* (Jacksonville, Florida: R&L Polk & Co, Publishers, 1916), p. 794.

<sup>8</sup> Gilmore, Tim. *LaVilla: Lawton Pratt Funeral Home*. <https://jaxpsychogeo.com/the-center-of-the-city/lavilla-lawton-pratt-funeral-home/>.



commercial buildings, civic and religious buildings, and educational facilities that were segregated from white Jacksonville. They designed and built commercial buildings for the African American professional class, as well as numerous homes in the upper-middle class African American suburbs like Sugar Hill in the 1920s and Durkee Gardens in the 1940s. As noted in the context their legacy is not only in their buildings, but also in their mentorship and leadership. These architects represented the professional class that emerged in black enclaves in the segregated South and actively supported the interests and uplifting of their community, which was besieged by inequality.<sup>9</sup>

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

While the Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home is identified in the *African American Architects in Segregated Jacksonville, 1865–1965* as perhaps the only commercial building of Blodgett's to remain in Jacksonville it does not appear to have value for the quality of its architecture, but as an example of an African American self-taught master builder and architect, who persevered in segregated Jacksonville to be one of the wealthiest men in the area.

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

While the Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home is identified as the work of master builder and self-taught African American architect, Joseph Haygood Blodgett, it does not appear to have value on its own as an example of particular architectural period or method of construction. The property along with other properties identified in *African American Architects in Segregated Jacksonville, 1865–1965* have merit as a collection of properties that are worth of study for the period of 1865–1965 regarding segregation in architecture, building, and in city planning. It should be noted that one of the signature elements of Joseph Haygood Blodgett was a second-floor bay window on a secondary elevation in his residential projects.

**Its suitability for preservation or restoration.**

Overall, the Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home is in good condition and retains integrity of location as it is still located in its original location and retains integrity of setting as it is still located in the historic African American neighborhood of LaVilla in Jacksonville, Florida, just northwest of the white central business district. The property retains its integrity as a two-part commercial block building with intact chapel and offices on the first floor, with residential and office space on the second floor. Further, the exterior retains significant architectural elements including the corbelled brickwork, round-arched niches and vents, Gothic-arched chapel windows, and unique textured brick and stuccoed facades. These architectural elements retain integrity of materials and their inherent workmanship of a master builder and architect of segregated Jacksonville. Given this, the property retains integrity of association as a commercial, mixed-use two-part commercial block building designed by Joseph Haygood Blodgett.

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<sup>9</sup> Baker, Chris. "African American Architects in Segregated Jacksonville, 1865-1965" *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, April 22, 2019. On file at the Division of Historical Resources, Tallahassee, Florida, p. 4.

## **HISTORIC CONTEXT – DOWNTOWN JACKSONVILLE**

### **The Civil War & Reconstruction<sup>10</sup>**

The Civil War clearly was a watershed event in American history, fundamentally reshaping life for African Americans in the South, including Florida. Emancipation and the Reconstruction Era that followed the war provided a glimpse of hope and, with the support of the federal government, a semblance of economic and political power. A Republican state government, facilitated and supported by the United States Congress, worked between 1868 and 1876 to pass legislation aimed at guaranteeing the civil and voting rights of African Americans. Elected state leadership was dominated by freedmen and their white allies. They enacted real change but were met with considerable resistance from Democrats and former Confederates, even though federal troops occupied the state. Resistance was especially strong in rural areas where the Ku Klux Klan waged a violent campaign of repression against African Americans and their allies.

Southern intransigence eventually succeeded as economic concerns, political scandal, and fatigue undermined the resolve of many northern Republican activists and leaders who provided the impetus for Reconstruction. As a result, Southern Democrats regained their political power after the presidential election of 1876 and the Compromise of 1877. Federal troops left Florida in 1877, and newly elected conservative Democratic officials, including Governor George F. Drew, quickly worked to undermine the gains that African Americans had made during Reconstruction.

### **Post Reconstruction**

Jacksonville's shift from Reconstruction-era governance to the resurgence of Southern Democratic power was not as linear as in many other parts of the South. A conservative Democratic city government came into power after Reconstruction, but its hold was tenuous, and in 1887, a coalition of white Republicans, African Americans, and labor unions elected a Republican mayor. Supporters of labor unions dominated the city council, which included five African Americans. The new government placed African Americans in positions of power and influence. They served as municipal judges and chaired the board of police commissioners. Twenty-three black residents were commissioned as police officers.

Tragedy struck Jacksonville in 1888 when a yellow fever epidemic swept through the city. Opponents of the local government took advantage of the devastation caused by the disease and campaigned on a platform that blamed the sitting Republican government and the black population of Jacksonville for the epidemic. Apparently, most white citizens of Jacksonville agreed, and the city returned to conservative Democratic control in 1889. The city government moved quickly to disenfranchise poor black and white voters. Officials passed a poll tax less than a year after the election. In subsequent years, they moved to further limit the voting rights of African Americans. By 1907, they had gerrymandered local voting districts to ensure that African Americans, who made up a sizable percentage of the local population, would not be able to influence elections. These machinations eliminated black representation in local government until the 1960s. Stripped of their voting rights, African Americans lost representation in elected office, could not serve on juries, and were unable to find employment in government or law enforcement.

State and local officials also moved to enact legislation to legally marginalize the black population from the white population. For example, the state passed a new Constitution in 1885 that imposed poll taxes and codified school segregation. Two years later, it passed a statute providing for the segregation of transportation. The United States Supreme Court validated southern segregation laws in 1896 with the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, which held that racial segregation of public facilities was constitutional as long as the separate facilities were "equal." The decision resulted in the implementation of aggressive racial segregation statutes throughout the South. Indeed, they seeped into all aspects of southern life. Moreover,

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<sup>10</sup> Until noted otherwise this narrative history is from the context, *African American Architects in Segregated Jacksonville, 1865 - 1969*.

separate facilities rarely were equal in quality.

The geography of southern cities such as Jacksonville was shaped by segregation after 1896. The city of Jacksonville passed its own ordinances codifying segregation. For example, local street cars became legally segregated in 1901. The local government also barred African Americans from all but the most menial city jobs.

Black and white neighborhoods, churches, and businesses existed in separate spheres. The normalization of legal segregation belied the goals and hopes of the Reconstruction-era reformers who had hoped to empower African Americans. Instead, formerly enslaved individuals and their offspring found themselves consigned to a liminal space in southern society. Public spaces such as schools, theaters, hotels, restaurants, churches, and hospitals were segregated, as was public transportation.

The overall economic condition of Jacksonville's African American community reflected racial disparities. Black residents made up nearly 50 percent of the city's population in 1900, but they were confined mostly to poverty-stricken neighborhoods on the margins of downtown. Employment opportunities generally were limited to low-paying, unskilled labor. Seventy-seven percent of the unskilled workforce was black. Another 17 percent were skilled workers, such as carpenters, stone masons, painters, and bricklayers. In contrast, only 17 percent of the white workforce was employed in unskilled and skilled trades. Instead, the vast majority of white workers were classified as white-collar workers, while African Americans accounted for only 5 percent of the white-collar work force.

However, the next decade brought important changes. Employment patterns shifted slightly. White-collar employment among the city's African American population increased to 35 percent by 1910. Many of these jobs were created by black-owned businesses and an emerging professional class. There also was an increase in blacks working in skilled trades. This shift was influenced partly by the railroads that attracted skilled workers to Jacksonville regardless of their race. Over the same period, white employment in the unskilled and skilled trades increased. Overall, white residents still dominated the professional class citywide, and black residents still composed most of the unskilled working class, but African Americans were finding their own economic path among the inequality of Jim Crow Jacksonville.

Indeed, the failure of Reconstruction, rise of institutional segregation, and marginalization of African American citizens presented a devastating setback, but they did not erase African Americans from southern cities. Black communities found spaces within the cities in which they lived. Historian James B. Crooks writes that Jacksonville in 1910 was essentially two cities. One was the white part of town that was optimistic, prosperous, and marked by "skyscrapers, department stores, churches, and handsome suburbs." Black Jacksonville was characterized by overcrowding and a lack of opportunity. However, he notes that the African American community pressed on throughout the 1910s.

### **African American Communities in Jacksonville**

Early African American communities developed in Jacksonville just after the Civil War in the Brooklyn and LaVilla neighborhoods west of downtown. Over time, African American settlement spread west and north, most notably to Sugar Hill, Durkeeville, and Moncrief. Durkeeville, a large area of mixed residential and commercial properties, was the forefront of black neighborhood expansion in the 1930s and 1940s. The area held suburbs that attracted working class and affluent African Americans (Durkee Gardens) as well as the community structure, such as the churches and businesses that supported them.

The stark racial division of Jacksonville's black and white communities was presented graphically in maps created by the Homeowners Loan Corporation (HOLC) in the 1930s. The maps shaded segregated neighborhoods in red and characterized them as "Hazardous." However, the designation reflected racial bias and not a true characterization of actual conditions. "Hazardous" neighborhoods were non-white

neighborhoods. Created in 1936, the Jacksonville HOLC map does not specify the neighborhoods by name, but it shows Brooklyn and LaVilla near the center of the map north of the St. Johns River and Mixontown, Durkeeville New Town, and Sugar Hill to the north and northwest of Brooklyn and LaVilla. Other black neighborhoods such as Oakland are located in the red-shaded [hazardous] area to the east.

These neighborhoods, which were set apart from white Jacksonville, were settings in which local African Americans worked to maintain their own culture and traditions and pursue their own aspirations. These enclaves were remarkably self-sufficient, with their own social, spiritual, and commercial infrastructure. They also held a network of support institutions, including churches, fraternal organizations, mutual aid societies, and other organizations.

Jacksonville's black neighborhoods reflected a national phenomenon. Segregated communities throughout the United States provided an infrastructure for the development of an African American professional class. Historian Leon Litwack writes that a class of "upwardly mobile black entrepreneurs emerged . . . to serve an increasingly separate society." For example, black insurance companies stepped in to fill a void left by white insurance companies' refusal to serve black southerners. Similar dynamics resulted in the development of black banking, burying, and other businesses. A plethora of other services were run by black entrepreneurs, ranging from barbering to entertainment and news. Black businessmen stood alongside ministers and educators as community leaders. They also formed the core of a black middle class that developed in the first half of the 20th century. This black middle class strove to emulate the white middle class but did so in a way that "fostered race pride and provided the comradery and social interaction denied black men and women in the larger society."

### **Emergence of African American Entrepreneurs**

A diverse professional class developed within Jacksonville's African American community in the first decades of the 1900s and played a pivotal role in local development and preservation. Unable to dependably access white-owned institutions, Jacksonville's African Americans established their own. By the 1920s, a professional community was well established and concentrated along West Beaver Street and Broad Street. Two black-owned banks, S. H. Hart and Son and Anderson & Company, served Jacksonville in 1920. Abraham Lincoln Lewis's Afro-American Life Insurance Company was thriving. Established in 1901, the firm provided residents with low-cost insurance and burial benefits. The business experienced robust growth in the first decade of the 20th century, with 81 branches and locations in Jacksonville, Tampa, and Miami. Lewis became one of the first African American millionaires in Jacksonville.

Black entrepreneurs also operated two movie theaters and numerous small businesses, such as the Lawton Pratt Funeral Home. Established in 1900 and located on Beaver Street, the mortuary continues to serve Jacksonville's African American population and is the oldest funeral home in Florida. African Americans operated half of the barber shops and more than half of the dry cleaners in town in 1920. They also owned 86 restaurants and more than 110 grocery stores. Black professionals included tailors, dressmakers, printers, doctors, teachers, lawyers, dentists, cigar manufacturers, bicycle and automobile repairmen, jewelers, contractors, draftsmen, and architects. There also were locally published newspapers, including the *Florida Sentinel*, which served the African American community. The *Florida Sentinel* closed during the Great Depression but reopened in Tampa after World War II. The newspaper is still publishing.

Like much of the state of Florida, Jacksonville underwent a period of active growth and real estate development in the 1920s. However, the benefits of the development were not felt by the segregated communities. Indeed, except for the unskilled jobs they provided, the projects did not benefit any of the African American areas. Developers hired black residents for only the most menial jobs. Black builders and contractors filled the void by constructing homes and other buildings in their own communities, which were ignored by the larger development impulse.

The African American community suffered the blows of the Great Depression along with many Jacksonville residents. However, the segregated neighborhoods were more vulnerable due to their history of marginalization. Jacksonville's black neighborhoods became an area of particular concern for reformers, who understood that federal New Deal funding was available to finance projects in the African American neighborhoods. In response, the Municipal Housing Board of Jacksonville conducted a study in 1934 to assess the conditions of the city's segregated areas.

Instead of focusing on the poverty and inequality that segregation engendered, they emphasized crime. The board concluded that the black neighborhoods were riddled with crime and sexually transmitted disease; however, it did note that housing was overcrowded and often unfit for habitation.

The report invigorated the existing efforts led by Mayor John T. Alsop to construct a low-income housing complex for black residents. The Municipal Housing Board appointed an advisory committee made up of leaders of the African American community, including Eartha M. M. White and A. L. Lewis. Their task was to provide insight into the characteristics and nature of the black community to inform the design of the housing complex, known as Durkeeville.

Subsequently, a group of Jacksonville's most prominent architects designed a 215-unit housing complex that was built northwest of the city among predominantly black neighborhoods. No African American architects were involved in the design of Durkeeville, which was built in 1936. Constructed using Public Works Administration funding, the complex coincided with the initial development of a middle-class neighborhood, Durkee Gardens. The homes in Durkee Gardens, most of which were constructed in the late 1930s and early 1940s, were designed by both white and black architects.

### **Post-World War II Urban Renewal**

Post-World War II urban renewal brought changes to Jacksonville's African American communities. On one hand, the core neighborhoods, which were located near downtown, came under pressure from urban renewal projects and alterations in the local landscape. For example, Jacksonville and the state of Florida undertook infrastructure projects that directly affected the established neighborhoods. Construction of the Jacksonville Expressway in the 1950s and 1960s physically cut off many of the segregated areas from the rest of the city. The physical isolation weakened the fabric of the neighborhoods and undermined their resilience. Construction of Interstate 95 also isolated African American neighborhoods and cut through the middle of the LaVilla and Sugar Hill neighborhoods. Many of the homes in Sugar Hill subsequently were demolished by the Jacksonville office of Housing and Urban Development in the 1960s. Other neighborhoods, such as Durkee Gardens and the areas along Moncrief Road, were less affected by urban renewal and were able to retain more stability. By maintaining community solidarity, the community was able to retain strength in the face of adversity.

Jacksonville's African American communities clearly contained an economically diverse and active population that, while closed out of the dominant white society, provided residents with a semblance of economic opportunity, security, neighborhood betterment, and, in the words of historian Earl Lewis, the ability to "act in their own interests." Lewis points out that the history and composition of southern urban African American communities served to create a foundation for the civil rights era of the 1950s and 1960s. Although Jacksonville's African American population was closed out of mainstream politics in the early 1900s, people continued to press for their own interests where possible. They lobbied the local government for the establishment of parks within their neighborhoods, including the site that is now James P. Small Park. Residents pressed for the establishment of new schools and the reconstruction of dated schools. They also worked with the city to improve living conditions in their neighborhoods. Cumulatively, these actions reflect the fact that Jacksonville's African American community may have been pushed to the margins, but people were not politically disconnected.

### **Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century Urban Renewal<sup>11</sup>**

The downtown revitalization efforts of the 1970s continued into the 1980s under the leadership of Mayor Jake Godbold who served from 1979 – 1987. During this “billion dollar” decade, major projects completed during his administration included the rehabilitation of the old Jacksonville Terminal into a convention center; restoration of the Florida Theatre as a performing arts center; the opening of the Jacksonville Landing, a James Rouse designed festival marketplace; a new Florida National Bank Building and Omni Hotel; Metropolitan Park, a public park and outdoor venue east of downtown; and the first leg of the Automated Skyway Express. During the mayoral administration of Tommy Hazouri, the city constructed a jail, city hall annex and parking garage in downtown. Private projects included a new American Heritage Building across from the Jacksonville Landing and the Barnett Center. As part of Mayor Ed Austin’s River City Renaissance, the old St. James Building (Cohen Department Store) was rehabilitated as a new city hall, and the construction of the Florida Times-Union Performing Arts Center, and the I.M. Sulzbacher Homeless Shelter. Residential options were also increased by the rehabilitation of the Carling Hotel and the Lynch Building into apartments, as well as the townhouses built as part of the Cathedral Project.

### **African Americans & Undertaking**

People have purposefully cared for the bodies of their dead since at least 10,000 B.C., with one of the earliest intentional burials sites thought to be Qafzeh in Israel. In this Middle Paleolithic rock shelter, early humans were placed in coffins with burial items, such as garments, trinkets, and food. Ochre residue suggests that the remains were ceremonially painted before being positioned in the coffins, and there is additional evidence of a feast.<sup>12</sup> While there is no logical reason why humans should care for the empty container that is a body after death— to embalm it, dress it, display or create ritual- the fact that we do so is regarded as one of the things that brings us as a species from nature into culture. The distinct ways that humans care for the departed are an outgrowth of the awareness of their own mortality and potential for afterlife, which are thought to be some of the most fundamental elements of ancient societies.<sup>13</sup> Although Qafzah represents the earliest of mortuary practices in the archeological record, funerary practices would emerge wherever civilizations did. The early historic records of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Ancient Greece and Rome, Celtic, Asia, and the Americas all document distinct cultural perceptions of death, the afterlife, and burial rites. In many cases, these long-standing beliefs and practices (or elements of them) are still held and carried out today. The legacy of African American mortuary practices represents an especially significant and complex story. Many of these traditions have persisted through generations in spite of diaspora and enslavement, and hundreds of years of suppression and forced cultural assimilation. Today, black owned and operated mortuaries in the United States, like the Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home, serve as significant cultural institutions that represent this rich and intricate heritage .

The majority of the people brought to the Americas as slaves came from West African tribes where there was a diverse and vibrant history of mortuary traditions. In many of these origin cultures it was common for older women to be in charge of bathing and dressing the body of the deceased in a shroud or animal skins, for there to be a presentation of gifts to the departed as burial items believed to be necessary for a comfortable afterlife, and for public wailing and communal weeping to take place. A common theme was that a *good* or *proper* burial was critical to help the spirit transition to the next world. Mourners would

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<sup>11</sup> Until otherwise noted this section of the narrative history is from *The Downtown Jacksonville Historic District* listed on May 2, 2016.

<sup>12</sup> Martin, Anthony. “The History of Funeral Rites and Rituals of The Ancient World.” March 08, 2022. <https://choicemutual.com/funeral-rituals-ancient-world/#:~:text=The%20first%20burials%20may%20have,very%20deliberately%20in%20a%20cave.>

<sup>13</sup> Beck, Julie. “Why Humans Care for the Bodies of the Dead.” The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/11/why-humans-care-for-the-bodies-of-the-dead/415425/>

travel from afar to visit the interment site in the days and weeks after the burial to pray that the spirit was at peace, and a celebratory memorial service might be held a few weeks to a year after the ritual, featuring singing, drumming, dancing, and feasting, to honor the dead and mark the official end of the funeral ritual observations. Today, in Ghana and other sub-Saharan states, there remain traditions of brightly colored and extravagantly carved coffins to demonstrate passions of the departed. These practices contrasted boldly with the more private and quieter death rituals familiar in modern Europe and other western countries

Forcibly removed from their home countries and transported across the seas, African slaves in the Americas faced limited opportunities for cultural expression and practices. Out of fear of rebellions, most slaveholders barred gatherings or traditional practices of any kind, including the burial or mourning of the departed. As a result, deceased slaves were often interned without ceremony on non-crop-producing land. In order to avoid diverting valuable labor from productive roles, children too young to work in the fields were tasked with digging graves. But while cultural practices were oppressed, they were not eradicated, and elements continued to be discretely performed. Gatherings took place under the cover of night in “hush harbors,” where dampened quilts were hung in wooded areas near the slave quarters to muffle the sounds of the mourners. The placement of personal items on a grave became a well-documented practice, and one that is more than an emotional gesture. Black graves in the South decorated with white seashells and pebbles suggest signs of the remembrance of African customs and beliefs in gods associated with the ocean and an underworld below the water. Pipes have also regularly been found driven into burial mounds to serve as speaking tubes that may allow communication with the deceased and mirrors that are said to catch the flashing light of the spirit and hold it there.<sup>14</sup> When slaveholders did make concessions for slaves to meet and conduct funerals, they were reportedly shocked by happy and jubilant behavior displayed by attendees, which contrasted with white traditions of dark, somber mourning. Having been introduced to Christian ideas of heaven and salvation, death began to be viewed by slaves as a release from the agony and humiliation of oppression, marking slave burials a joyous homegoing or homecoming celebration, although the jubilant behaviors may also have been an expression of pageantry familiar to West-African funerary processions. Whether carried out discretely or openly, additional documented practices around slave burials included for the body to be bathed, wrapped in cloth, and laid out on a cooling board; for the family to gather for a wake at night, with prayers and worship, and the body carried to the grave before dawn. Burials would often take place in the afternoon, with mourners working together to shovel dirt to bury the departed. Afterward, everyone would gather for a feast.<sup>15</sup>

Regardless of culture, for most of modern history, death and dying was initially a family affair that took place in the home. Family members cared for and comforted the dying and were the ones to prepare the corpse and enact traditions or ritual. For Western cultures, this shifted in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with the emergence of death services industry and the trade of the undertaker. Fulfilling an economic niche, these individuals “under took” the myriad of tasks associated with preparing and burying the dead, including readying the corpse for viewing and interment, building the coffin, digging the grave, and directing the funeral procession.<sup>16</sup> Ironically, the Civil War, which brought emancipation to the slaves, was the very event that hastened development in embalming technologies, popularizing and elevating death services, and the battlefields were the very places where African Americans were introduced to undertaking and embalming. These new skills allowed them to later serve their own communities and, ultimately, rise to a middle class.

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<sup>14</sup> African Burial Customs in America, a Story. <https://aaregistry.org/story/slaves-brought-burial-customs-from-africa-to-the-united-states/>

<sup>15</sup> <sup>15</sup> Dave, Allen. Presented at 2016 International Cemetery, Cremation, and Funeral Association University. “Celebrating the History of African American Funeral Traditions”. Available at <https://agoodgoodbye.com/funeral-traditions/celebrating-the-history-of-african-american-funeral-traditions/>.

<sup>16</sup> “Death Through the Ages: A Brief Overview” Death and Dying: End of Life Controversies. *Encyclopedia.com* . <https://www.encyclopedia.com/caregiving/legal-and-political-magazines/death-through-ages-brief-overview>

Modern embalming and undertaking originated during the Civil War period when Dr. Thomas Holmes received a commission as a captain in the Army Medical Corps to embalm army officers killed in the frontlines. While the carnage of the battlefield was unprecedented and tragic, it was also terrible and immediate logistical problem, and a safe and effective means of handling the dead became an urgent health concern. Until this time, methods to delay body decomposition consisted mainly of ice-cooling or encasing bodies in air-tight receptacles.<sup>17</sup> And while the science of embalming had been around since the Egyptians, modern attempts with chemical combinations had been tried with mixed results that often still left bodies decomposed before burial, especially if they had to be sent any distance. Holmes, however, had developed safe methods to disinfect a body to prevent possible transmission of pathogens, to prevent the body from decomposition without the necessity of ice in order to allow for transport and burial at a later time, and to restore the body to a life-like appearance or after trauma. When Holmes realized the broader commercial potential of this form of preservation, he resigned his commission and began offering private services, but not before his methods became common practice and the embalming tent became a battlefield staple.<sup>18</sup>

At the start of the Civil War, chemical embalming by injection was performed by men with medical training, since only they were familiar with the process, while undertakers performed the various tasks of removing, transporting, and preparing the dead for funerals. As the war wore on, it was not uncommon for black soldiers to be recruited for the difficult and grim labor of burying and recording the dead, or to even be trained as assistants to medical embalmers. One of the most notable examples is of a slave by the name of Prince Greer, who brought the body of his deceased owner to an embalmer so that he could be preserved and returned to his estate in Texas. When a position became available to study under the embalmer, Greer stayed on and learned the trade, becoming the first recorded African American to hold such a position.<sup>19</sup>

The decade following the war found the dedicated surgeon-embalmer playing a less important role and as medical practitioners retreated from the field, undertakers advanced to it.<sup>20</sup> What had been a *mélange* of trades (coffin making, funeral services, etc.) became formal programs of study, professional societies, and licensing. In 1882 the first formal class of embalmers began at the Clark School in Ohio, which would later become the Cincinnati School of Embalming, where Lawton Pratt would receive his education and training. This period saw emergence of black embalmers and undertakers, who combined their experiences gained with embalming on the battlefield along with their experience with slave-burials, returning to African American communities to become pioneering funeral professionals.<sup>21</sup>

The US Supreme Court validated southern segregation laws in 1896 with *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, which held that racial segregation of public facilities was constitutional as long as the separate facilities were “equal.” The decision resulted in the implementation of aggressive racial segregation statues throughout the South that seeped into all aspects of life and shaped the geography of southern cities such as Jacksonville. Black and white neighborhoods, churches, and businesses existed in separate spheres. Even places of burial remained separate. Opening his business in Jacksonville in 1900, Lawton Pratt is recognized as the second licensed black funeral director in Florida. A graduate of the Cincinnati School of Embalming,

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<sup>17</sup> Lee, James C. “The Undertakers Role During the American Civil War.” *America’s Civil War*, Issue November 1996. <https://www.historynet.com/the-undertakers-role-during-the-american-civil-war/>

<sup>18</sup> Groeling, Meg. “The Aftermath of Battle: The Burial of the Civil War Dead.” Pages 62, 63

<sup>19</sup> Groeling, Meg. “The Aftermath of Battle: The Burial of the Civil War Dead.” Pages 64

<sup>20</sup> Lee, James C. “The Undertakers Role During the American Civil War.” *America’s Civil War*, Issue November 1996. <https://www.historynet.com/the-undertakers-role-during-the-american-civil-war/>

<sup>21</sup> Dave, Allen. Presented at 2016 International Cemetery, Cremation, and Funeral Association University.

“Celebrating the History of African American Funeral Traditions”. Available at <https://agoodgoodbye.com/funeral-traditions/celebrating-the-history-of-african-american-funeral-traditions/>.



Pratt operated for many years out of leased space on nearby Broad Street<sup>22</sup> until he commissioned the construction of his family-run mortuary at 525 West Beaver Street. Built in 1915, the two-story brick building was designed and constructed by Joseph Haygood Blodgett, one of Jacksonville's pioneer African American developers. Characteristic of many black-owned mortuaries, the business operated on the ground floor while the mortician and his family lived on the second level.<sup>23</sup> Additional services were also conducted from the building, such as the manufacturing of caskets. Pratt, who was noted as a pioneer in his field and highly regarded as an instructor and mentor for mortuary students, was also one of the organizers of the Florida Negro Funeral Directors and Embalmers Association (now known as the Florida Morticians Association), which initially met at the 525 West Beaver Street location.<sup>24</sup>

Pratt operated the funeral home at 525 West Beaver Street until his death in 1943, at which point Oscar Hillman, who apprenticed under Pratt, assumed responsibilities alongside his wife Evelyn. After Oscar's passing in 1978, Evelyn continued the business until 2002, when Anthony Walton and his wife took ownership, and the business became known as Hillman-Pratt & Walton Funeral Home.<sup>25</sup>

### **LaVilla – Harlem of the South**

During the Civil War, Jacksonville and northeastern Florida fell under Union control, and the area currently known as LaVilla was the site of a large Union garrison where many slaves sought refuge with Union troops and, under the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, gained freedom. After the war, the cite attracted additional freedmen, some of whom left rural areas, and the town became incorporated as LaVilla. The population was mostly black, and during the Reconstruction era many blacks were elected to positions in Lavilla's government, including mayor and councilmen. By 1887, LaVilla and five other suburbs, including Riverside and Springfield, were annexed by the City of Jacksonville. Lavilla was the site of the Great Fire of 1901, which spread and destroyed most of downtown, but the neighborhood was largely spared. In 1902, the state legislature passed a new constitution, adopting barriers to voter registration and voting that resulted in the deliberate disfranchisement of African Americans and excluding them from politics.

A vibrant music and entertainment scene emerged, attracting many nationally renowned jazz artists to play at local black clubs on and off Ashely Street. Such clubs were segregated under the state laws that imposed Jim Crow. In 1929, the Ritz Theatre opened, becoming an important stop on what was called the Chitlin' Circuit for black entertainers. It became LaVilla's primary performance venue. In the first half of the 20th century, the neighborhood was an important center of African-American culture. LaVilla was so synonymous with black culture in the region that it was considered "the Mecca for African American cultural and heritage" and even referred to by some as "the Harlem of the South."<sup>26</sup>

After the 1960s, the neighborhood entered a period of decline. The railroad industry restructured, leading to a massive loss of jobs here and across the country. In addition, the construction of I-95 in 1959 in Jacksonville disrupted and divided the neighborhood. With the end of legal segregation following civil

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<sup>22</sup> R.L. Polk & Co, *Jacksonville City Directory 1916* (Jacksonville, Florida: R&L Polk & Co, Publishers, 1916), p.794.

<sup>23</sup> Jacksonville's Legacy: African – American Heritage Trail, Jacksonville Historic People & Places. First Edition. Page 46. [https://www.coj.net/welcome/docs/cvb13-008848-1-afriamericanherittrail\(m\)lorez.aspx](https://www.coj.net/welcome/docs/cvb13-008848-1-afriamericanherittrail(m)lorez.aspx)

<sup>24</sup> Long, Jacob. First Coast News. "114 Year Old Funeral Home Sees Change in Segregated Industry." 4/30/2014 <https://www.firstcoastnews.com/article/news/local/114-year-old-funeral-home-sees-change-in-segregated-industry/77-271190497>

<sup>25</sup> Gilmore, Tim. "LaVilla: Hillman-Pratt & Walston (The Oldest Funeral Home in Florida), *Jax Psucho Geo*, available at <https://jaxpsychogeo.com/the-center-of-the-city/lavilla-the-oldest-funeral-home-in-florida-hillman-pratt-walton/>

<sup>26</sup> The Coastal, Harlem of the South: The History of LaVilla. December 3, 2018. <https://thecoastal.com/flashback/history-lavilla-neighborhood/>

rights legislation in the mid-1960s, many residents left the area.<sup>27</sup> Mayor Ed Austin's "River City Renaissance" Plan in 1993 demolished almost 50 square blocks of the legendary black neighborhood of LaVilla in the attempts to continue revitalization efforts in downtown Jacksonville. The Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home was never condemned or purchased as part of these efforts and continued as one of last functioning business from the Old LaVilla District until closing in 2019.<sup>28</sup>

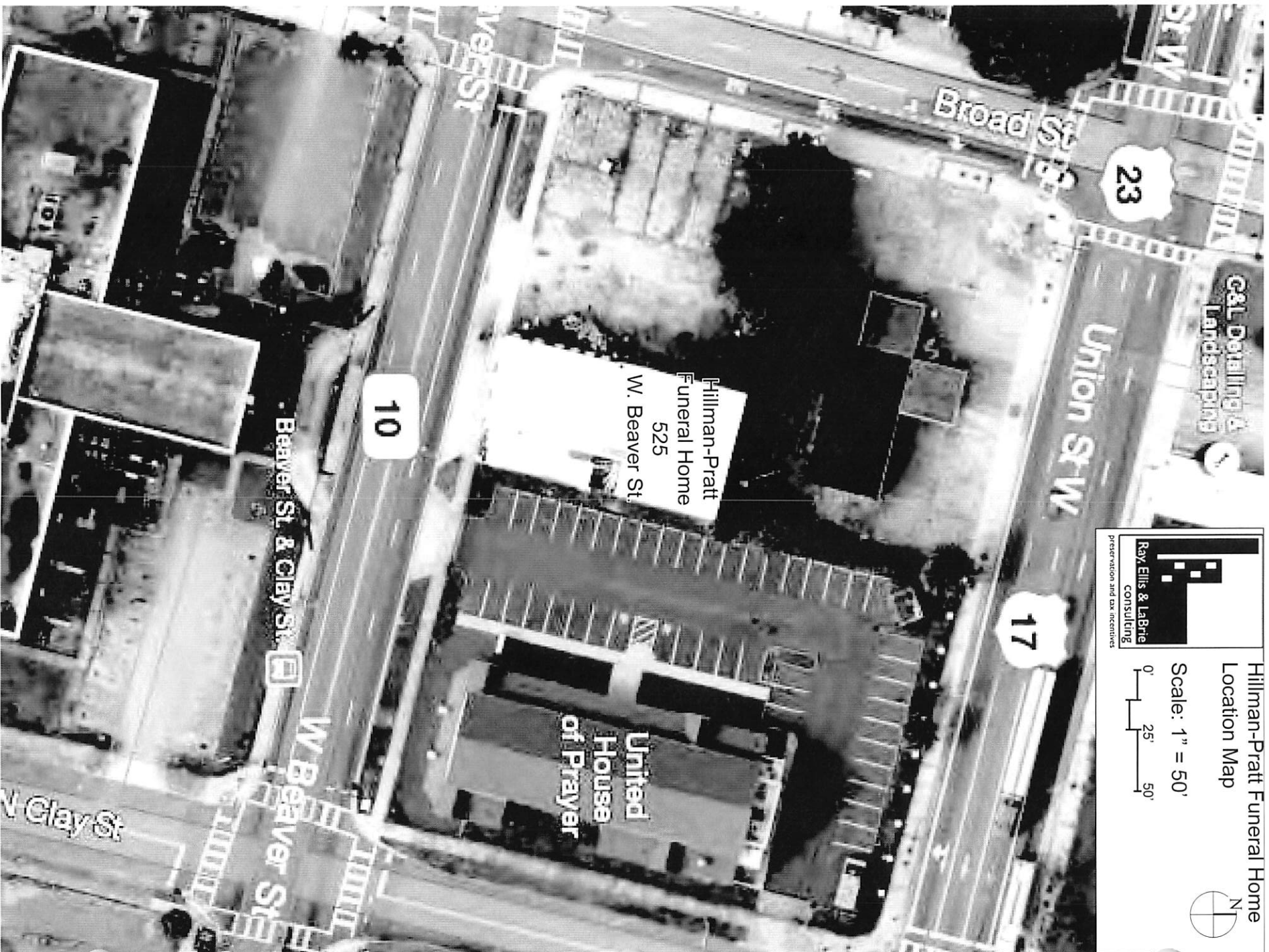
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<sup>27</sup> The Coastal, Harlem of the South: The History of LaVilla. December 3, 2018.

<https://thecoastal.com/flashback/history-lavilla-neighborhood/>

<sup>28</sup> Gilmore, Tim. *LaVilla: Lawton Pratt Funeral Home*. <https://jaxpsychogeo.com/the-center-of-the-city/lavilla-lawton-pratt-funeral-home/>.

Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home  
Landmark Designation Application  
Appendix B: Mapping



G&L Detailing & Landscaping

23

Union St W

17

Hillman-Pratt  
Funeral Home  
525  
W. Beaver St.


United  
House  
of Prayer

10

Beaver St & Clay St

W Beaver St

W Clay St

  
Ray Ellis & LaBrie  
Consulting  
preservation and tax incentives

Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home  
Location Map

Scale: 1" = 50'



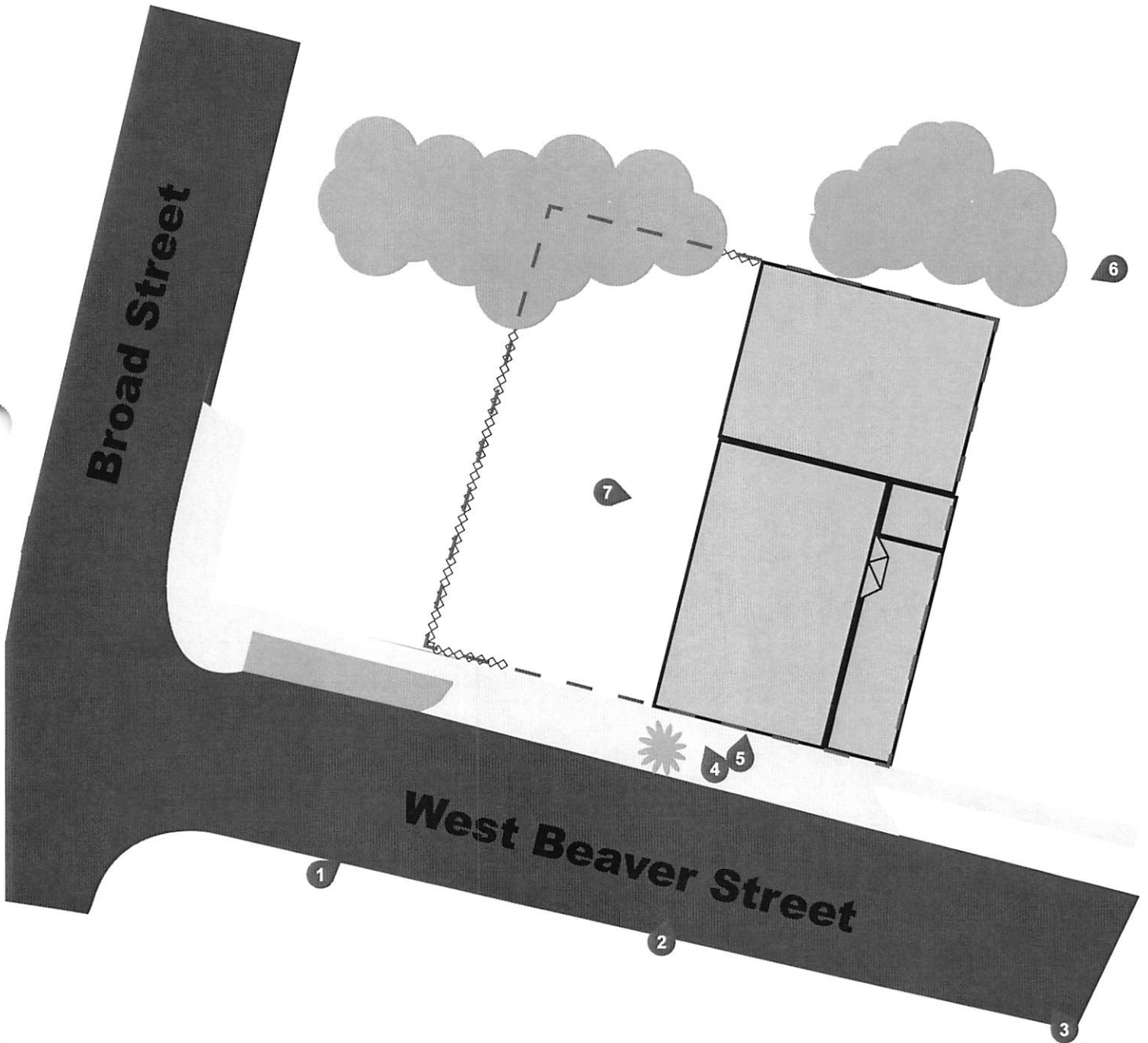


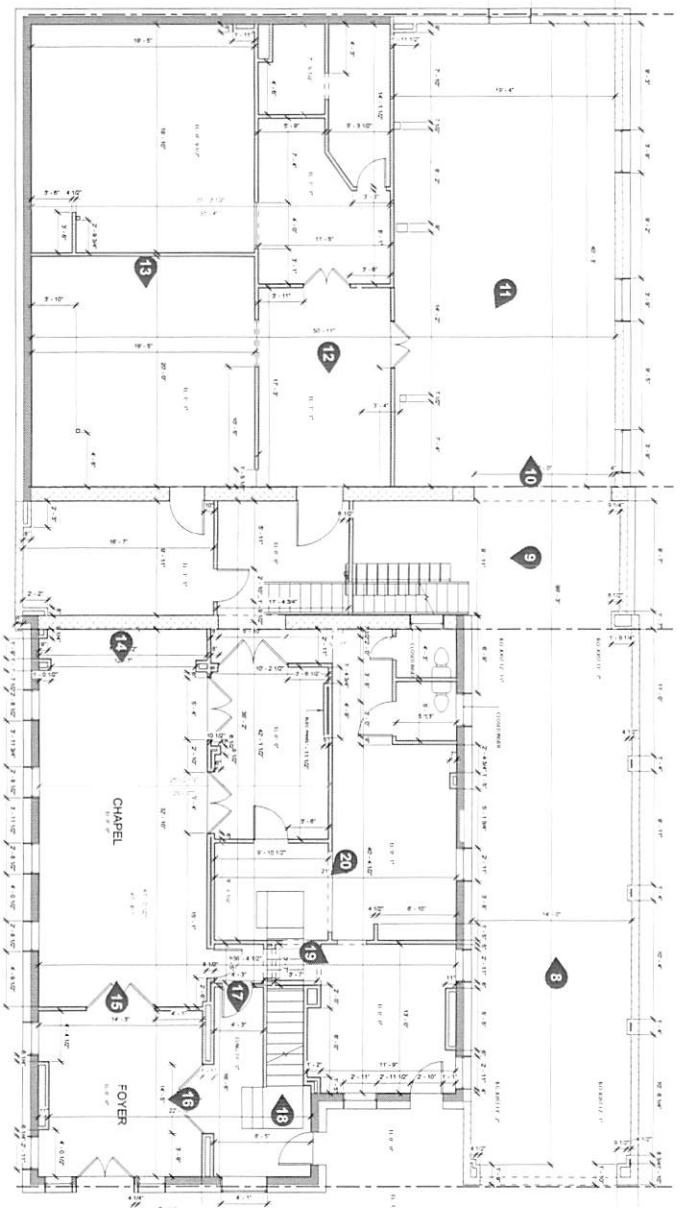
Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home  
Photographic Key - Site



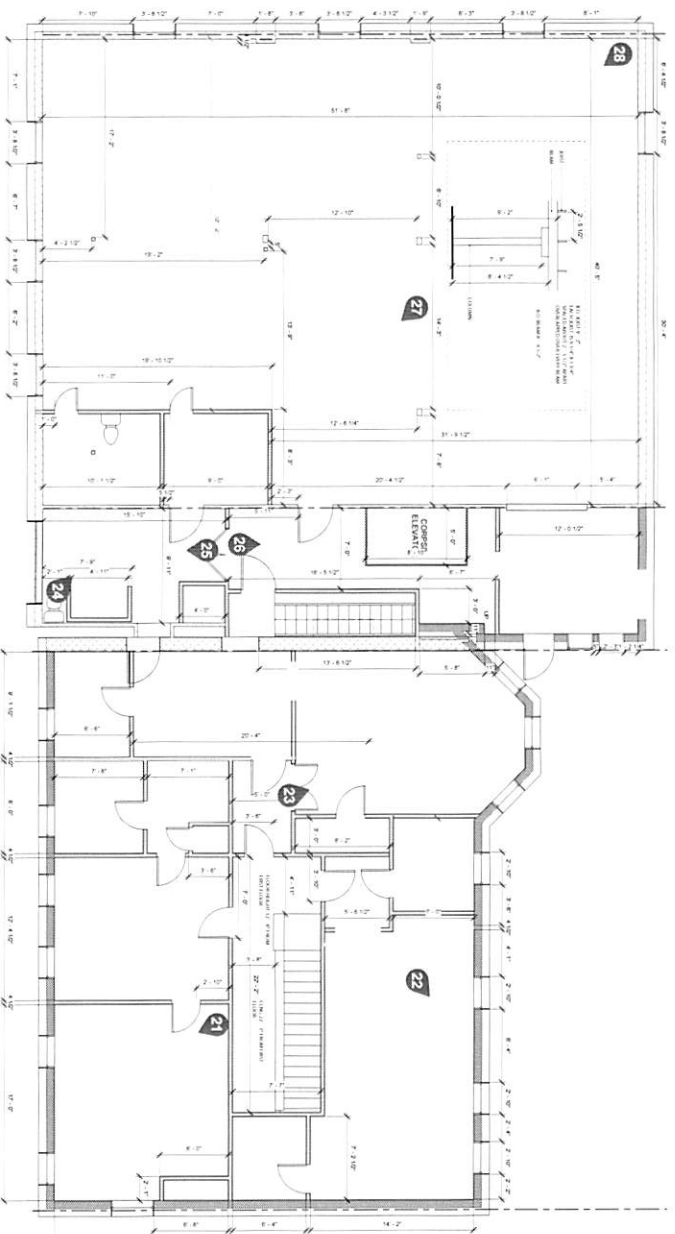
Not to Scale

— — Legal Boundary






**1st Floor**



**2nd Floor**

**Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home**  
Photographic Keys



Scale: 1" = 10'

0' 5' 10'

Roy Ellis & Labrec Consulting  
Preservation and restoration

Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home  
Landmark Designation Application  
Appendix C: Photographs



1 of 28: Oblique view of the west side and south front elevations; photographer facing northeast.



2 of 28: South front elevation; photographer facing northeast.

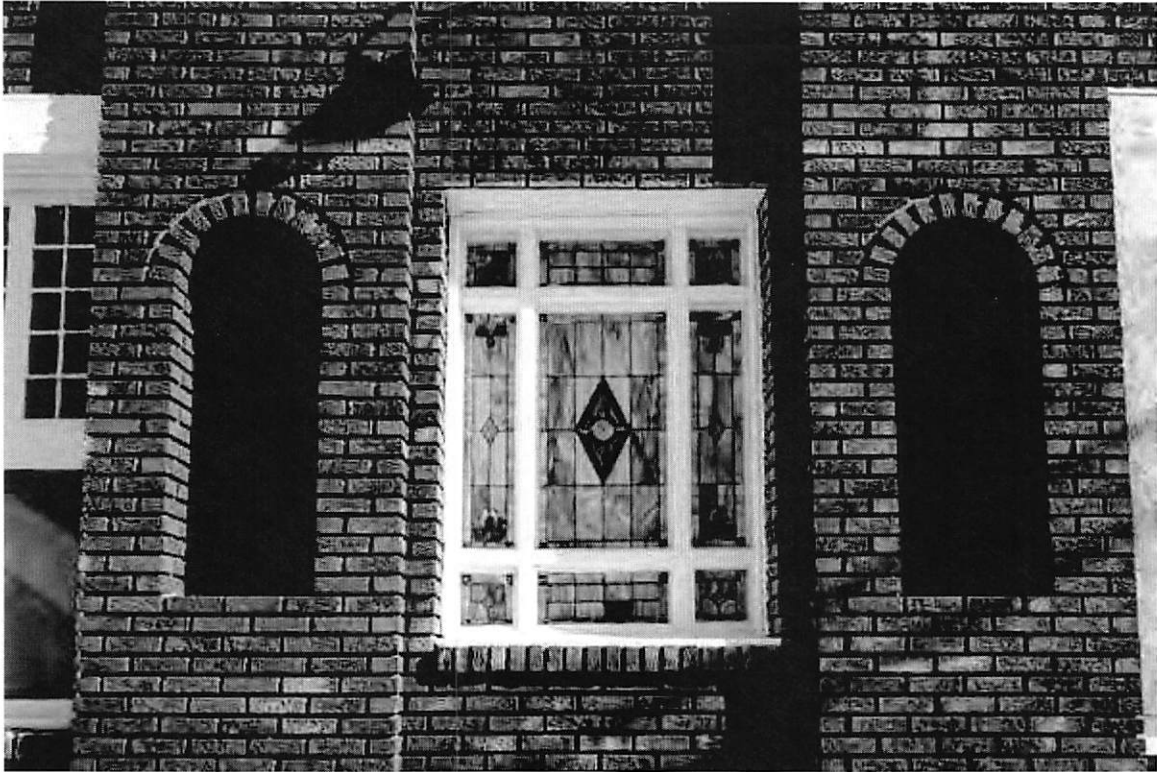




3 of 28: Oblique view of the south front and east side elevations; photographer facing northwest.



4 of 28: Detail of front entrance, photographer facing northwest.



5 of 28: Detail of stained glass window and niches; photographer facing northwest.



6 of 28: Oblique view of the east side and north rear elevations; photographer facing southwest.



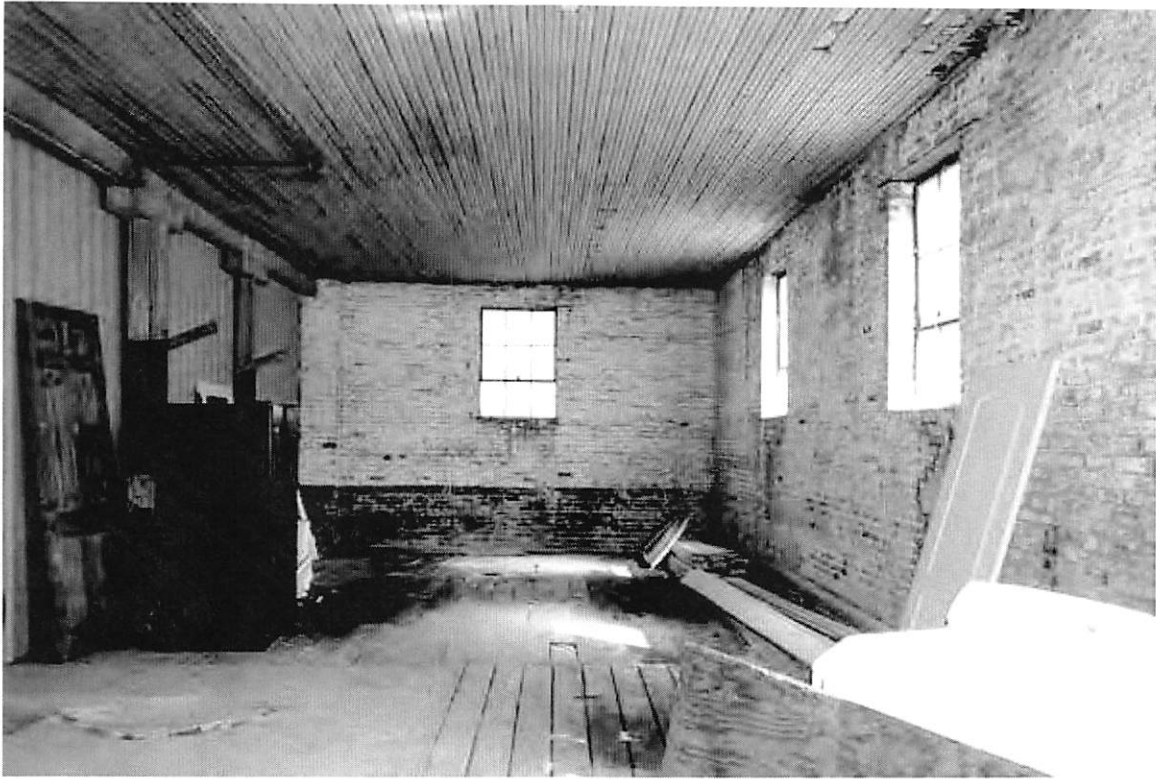
7 of 28: Detail of stained glass windows of chapel; photographer facing southeast.



8 of 28: Interior view along covered drive to garage; photographer facing northeast.



9 of 28: Interior view of nonhistoric rear stair and historic casket elevator; photographer facing northwest.



10 of 28: Interior view of garage area of property; photographer facing northeast.



11 of 28:Detail of typical support post of garage; photographer facing southwest.





12 of 28: Detail of typical fire door; photographer facing southwest.



13 of 28: Detail of room where “restorative” and embalming work was undertaken, photographer facing southwest.



14 of 28: Interior view of Chapel; photographer facing southwest.



15 of 28: Interior view of Chapel; photographer facing northeast.



16 of 28: Detail of fireplace in foyer before chapel; photographer facing northwest.



17 of 28: Interior view of first floor hallway for apartments; photographer facing southeast.



18 of 28: Interior view of historic main staircase; photographer facing northeast.



19 of 28: Detail of fireplace in entrance foyer; photographer facing southeast.

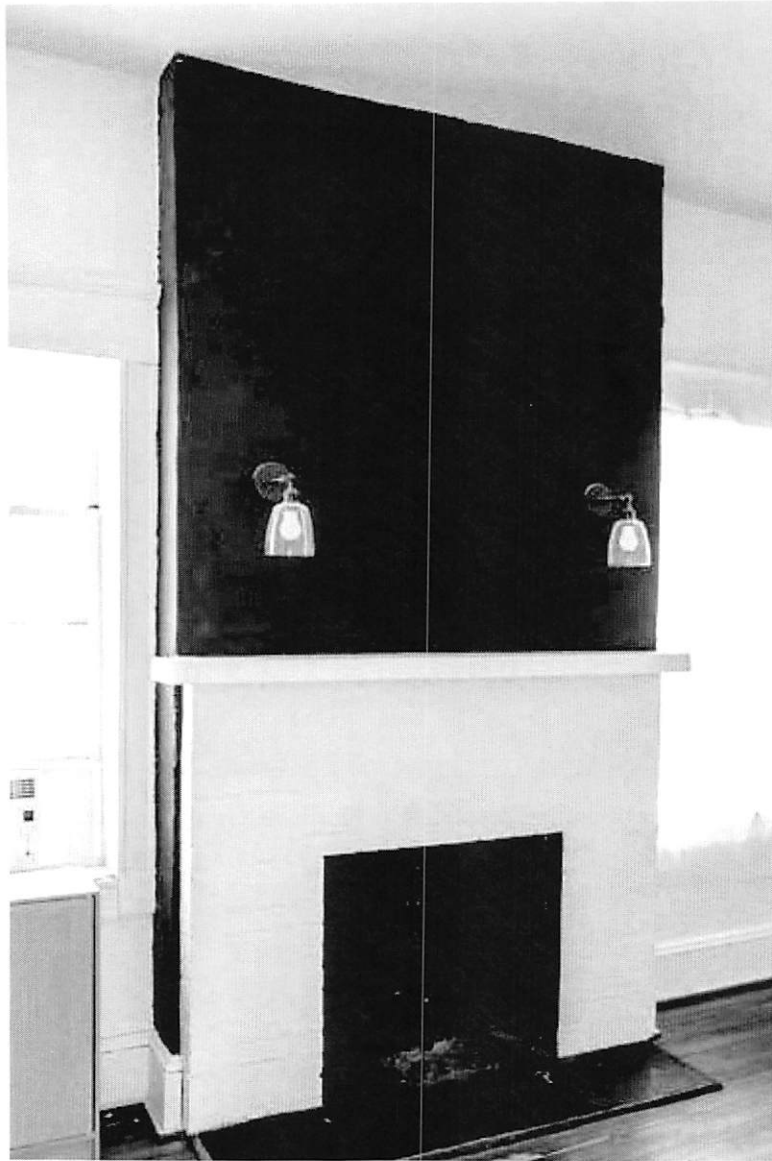


20 of 28: Detail of Lawton L. Pratt safe found under main staircase; photographer facing southwest.





21 of 28: Detail of fireplace found in second floor northeastern apartment; photographer facing northeast.



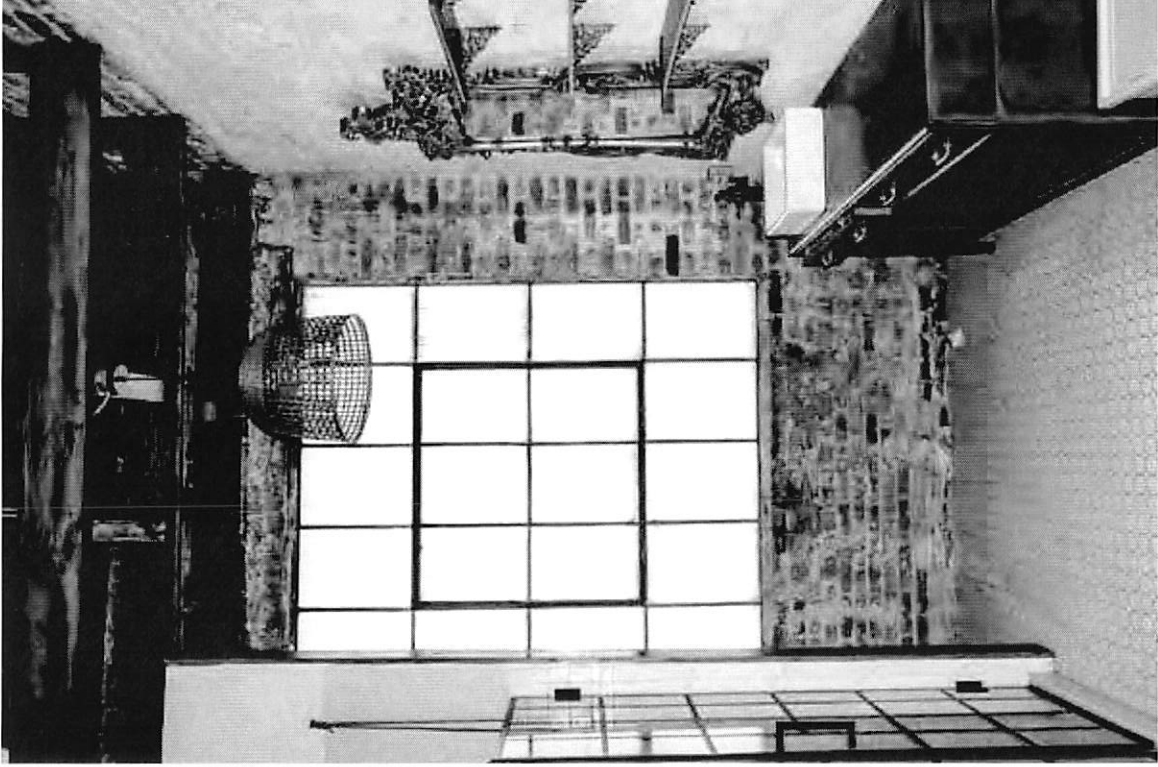
22 of 28: Detail of fireplace found in second floor southeastern apartment; photographer facing south.



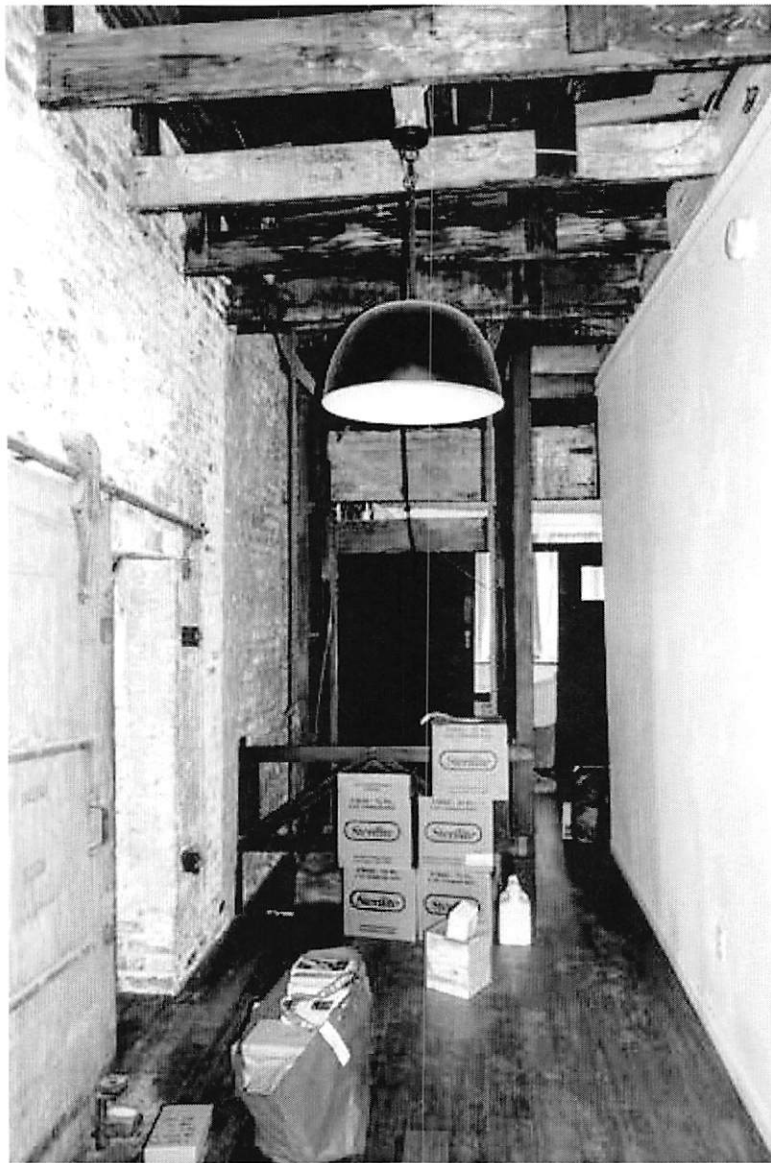
23 of 28: Interior view of second floor bay window room; photographer facing southwest.



24 of 28: Detail of typical historic fire door of second floor; photographer facing east.



25 of 28: Detail of historic metal awning window of second floor; photographer facing northeast.



26 of 28: Interior view of "bridge" area between the front and rear buildings; photographer facing southeast.



27 of 28: Detail of another historic fire door found on second floor; photographer facing east.



28 of 28: Interior view of the second floor casket factory; photographer facing east.



Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home  
Landmark Designation Application  
Appendix D: Figures



Figure 1: Circa 1919 photograph of the Lawton L. Pratt Funeral Home, courtesy of Florida Memory, State Library and Archives of Florida.



Figure 2: Early 20th Century postcard of the Lawton L. Pratt Funeral Home, courtesy of the City of Jacksonville, Planning Department.



Figure 3: Appears to be based on same circa 1920 postcard found in Figure 2, courtesy of the City of Jacksonville, Planning Department.



Figure 4: Circa 1930s photograph of the Lawton L. Pratt Funeral Home, courtesy of Florida Memory, State Library and Archives of Florida.

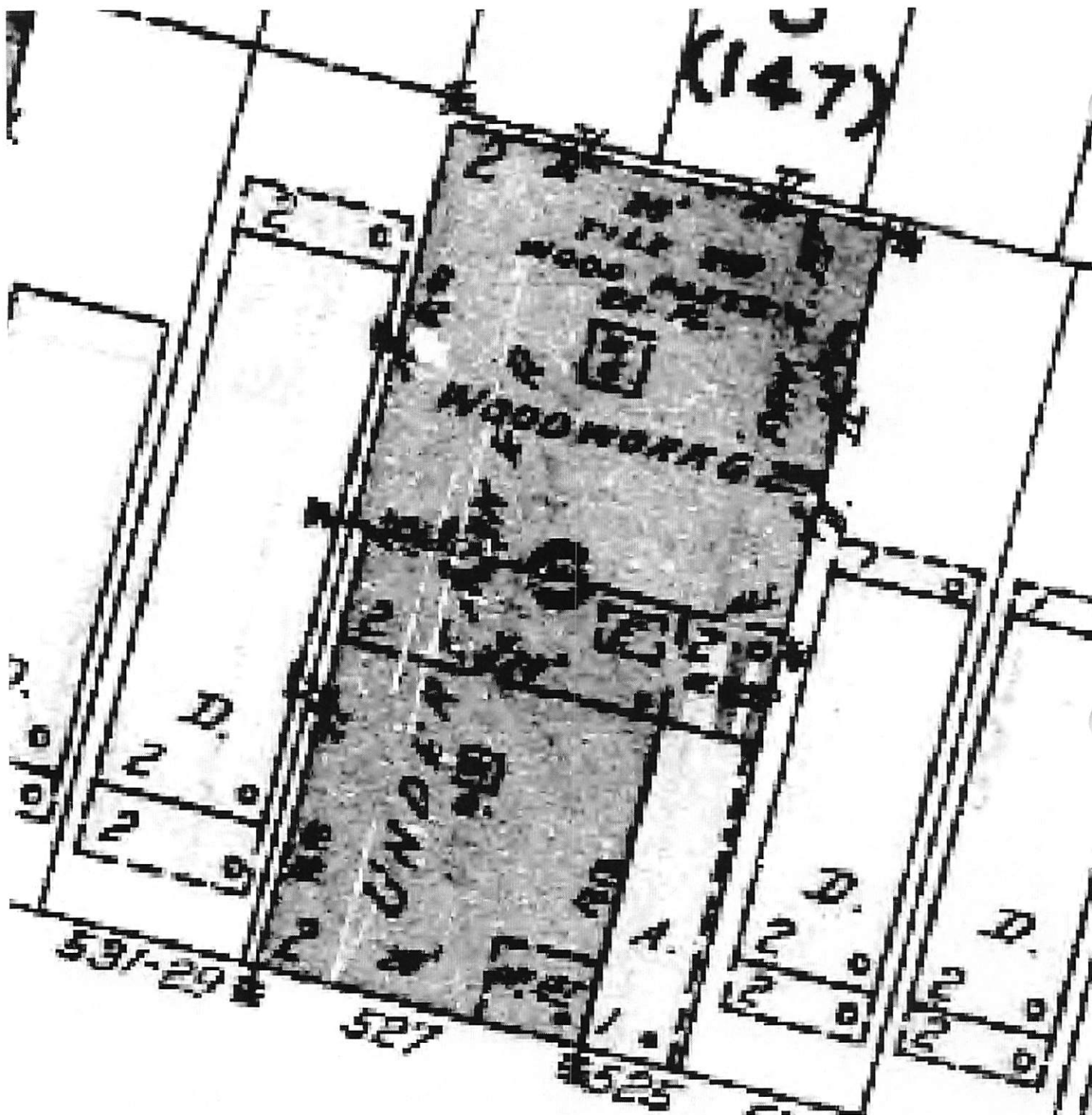


Figure 5: 1949 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, courtesy of EDR.

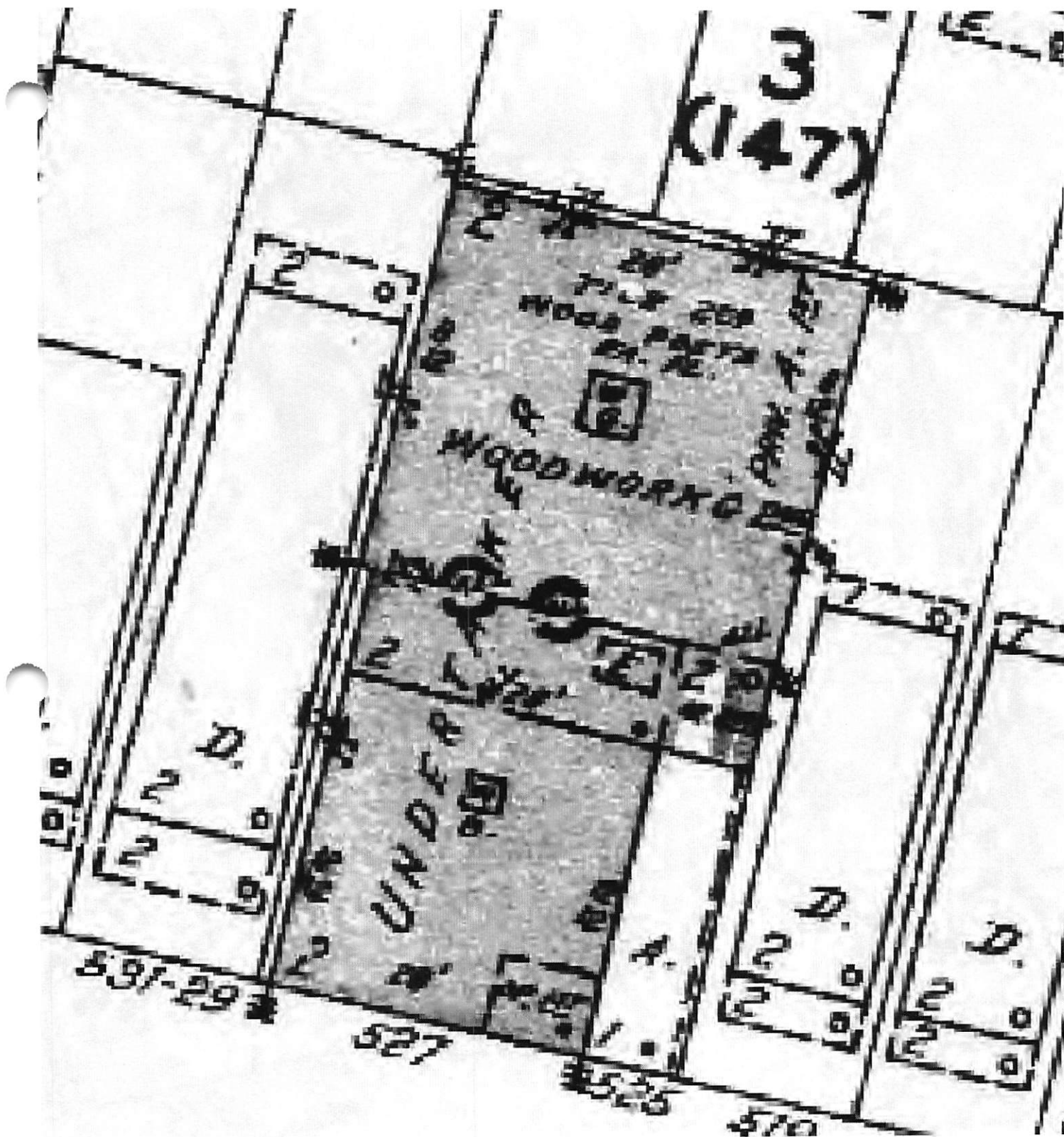


Figure 6: 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, courtesy of EDR.

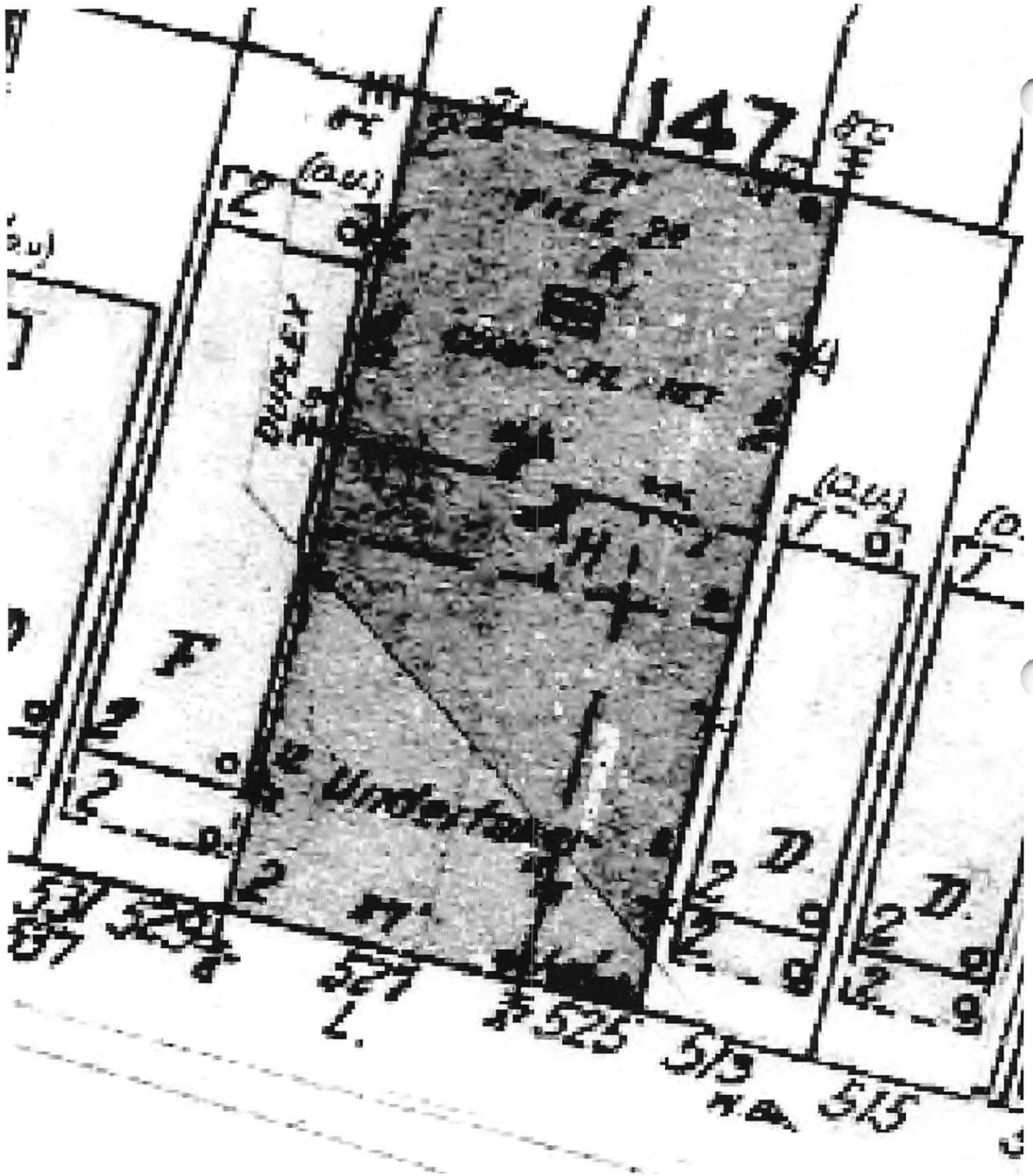


Figure 7: 1957 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, courtesy of EDR.



Figure 8: 1959 Aerial, courtesy of EDR.

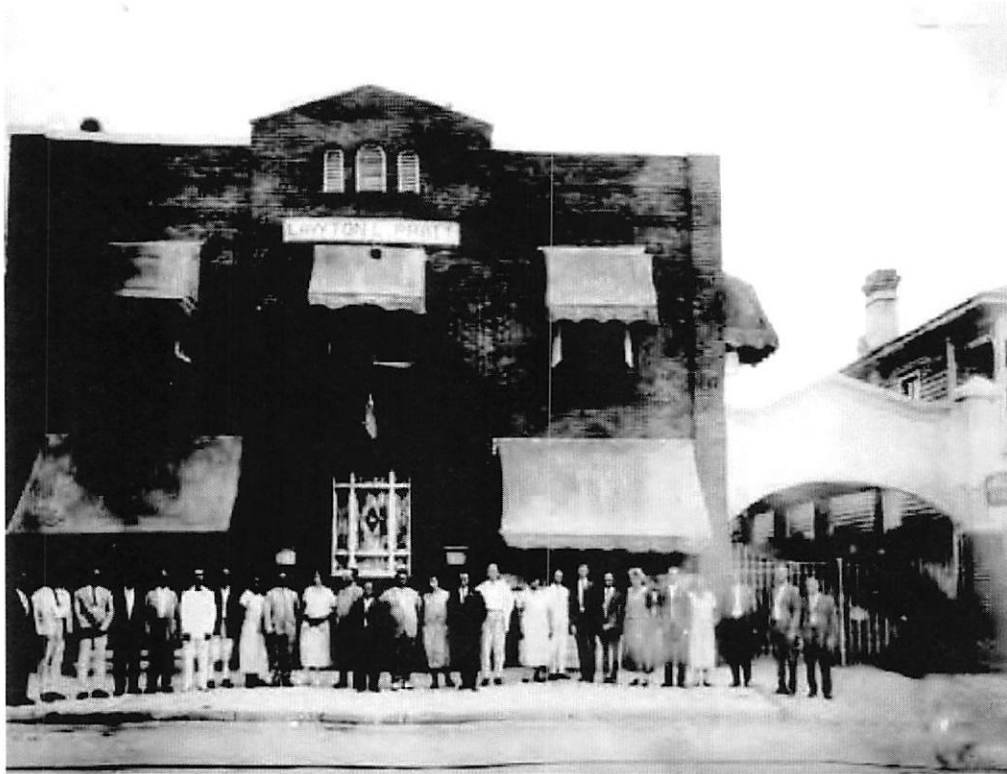


Figure 9: Mid-20th Century photograph of the Lawton L. Pratt Funeral Home, courtesy of Florida Memory, State Library and Archives of Florida.



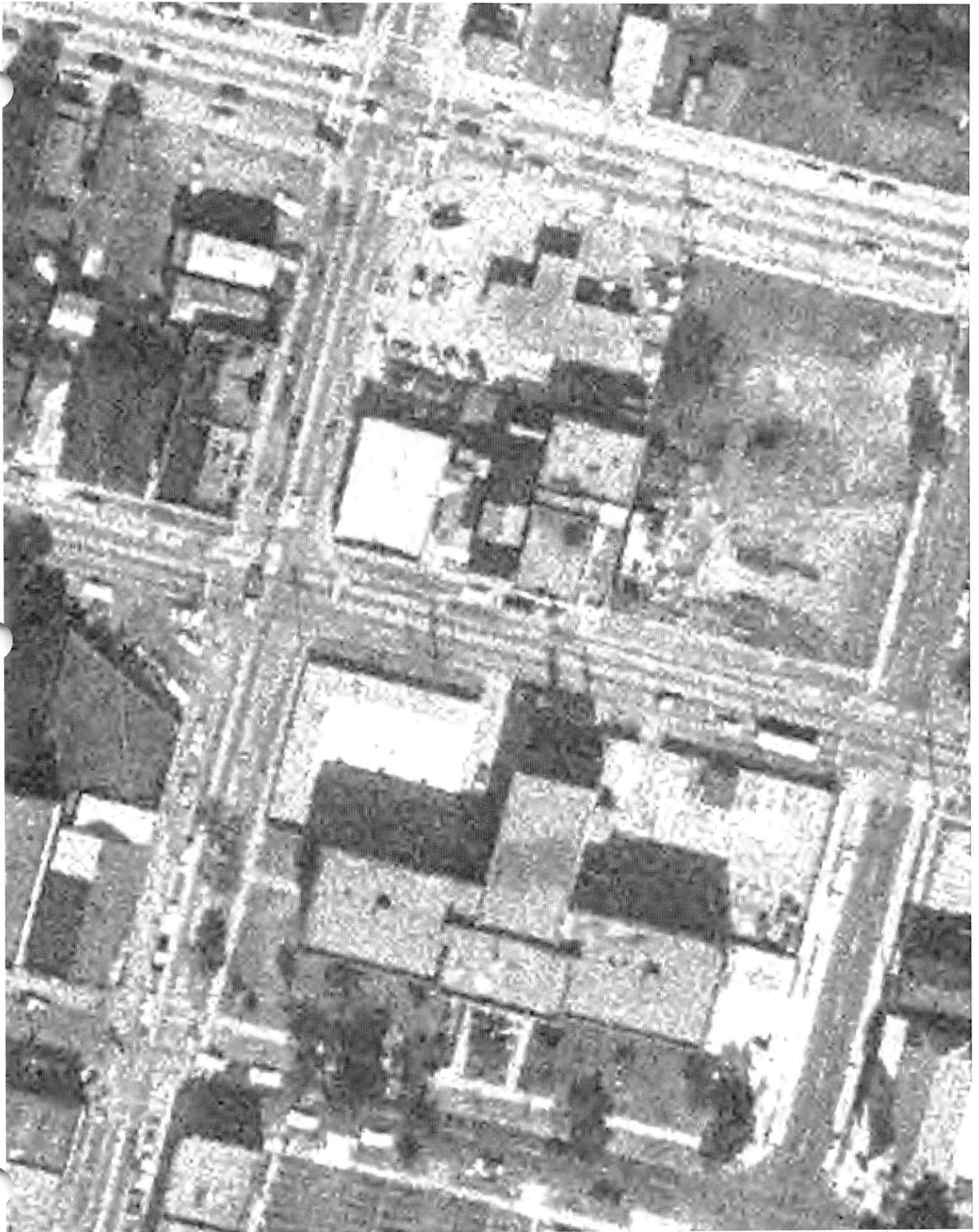


Figure 10: 1969 Aerial, courtesy of EDR.

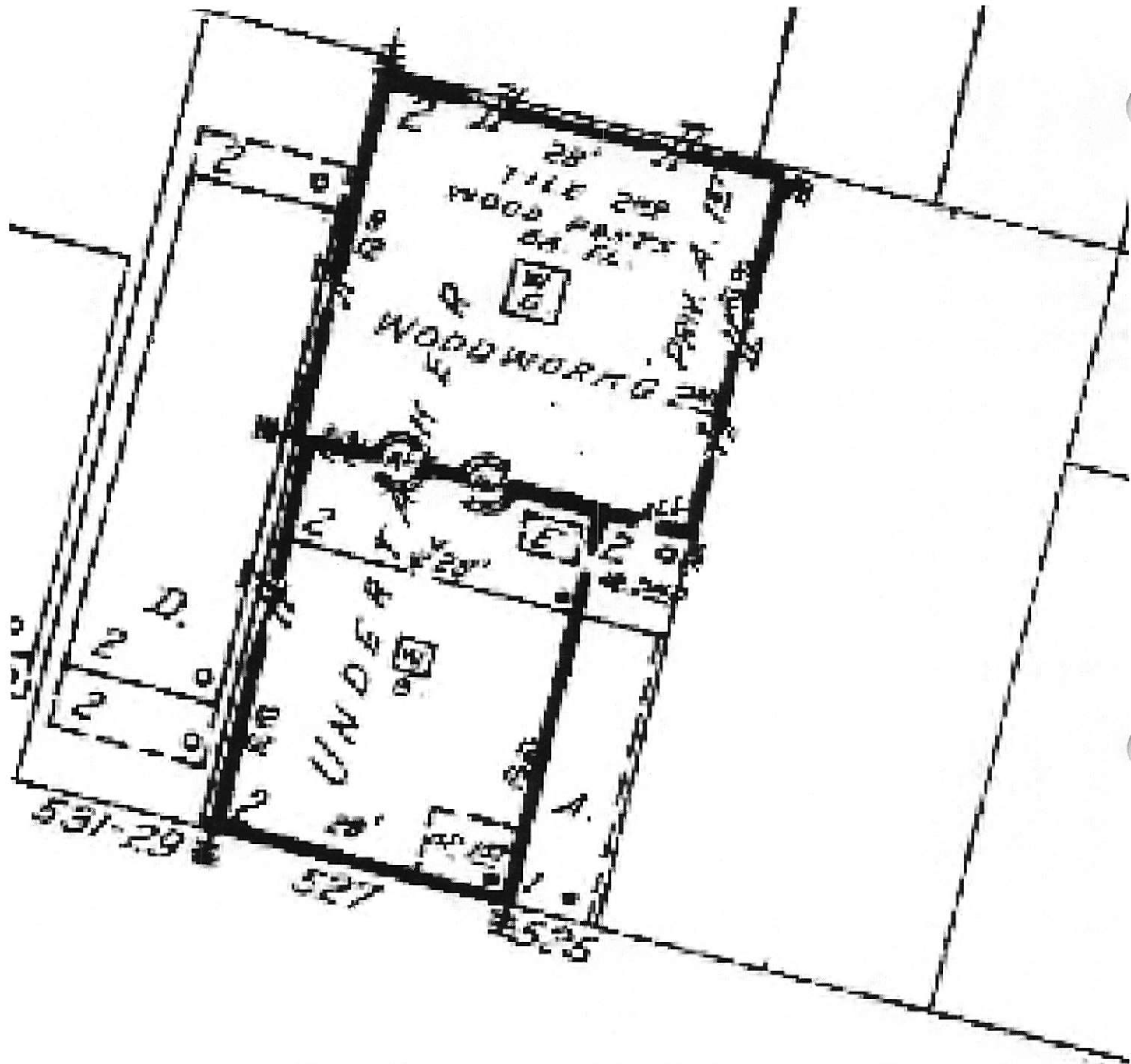


Figure 11: 1972 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, courtesy of EDR.



Figure 12: 1975 aerial, courtesy of EDR.



Figure 13: 1982 aerial, courtesy of EDR.



Figure 14: Late 20th Century photograph of the Lawton L. Pratt Funeral Home, courtesy of the Florida Department of Historical Resources, Master Site File.



Figure 15: 2015 photograph of chapel, by Tim Gilmore.



Figure 16: 2019 photograph of upstairs hallway, by Tim Gilmore.



Figure 17: 2019 photograph of "bridge" between house and casket factory on second floor, by Tim Gilmore.



Figure 18: 2019 photograph of second floor casket factory support post, by Tim Gilmore.



Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home  
Landmark Designation Application

Appendix E: Legal Description & Real Property Owners within 350 Feet

**EXHIBIT "A"**

That certain tract or parcel of land being all of Lots "A" and "B", of Taylor's Replat of the West 105 feet of Block 115, Hart's Map of Jacksonville, as recorded in Plat Book 1, Page 120 of the Former Public Records of Duval County, Florida, together with part of Lots 9, 10 and 11, of J. M. Barrs Subdivision of Block 115, Harts Map of Jacksonville, as recorded in Plat Book 1, Page 37, of said Former Public Records, and a part of Lot 2, Block 115, Hart's Map of Jacksonville, all being more particularly described as beginning at the Southwest corner of said Lot "B", said corner being situated in the Northerly right of way line of West Beaver Street (a 70 foot right of way, as presently established); thence North  $14^{\circ}40'53''$  East, along the Westerly line of said Lot "B", 104.74 feet to the Northwest corner of said Lot "B", the same being the Southwest corner of Lot "F", of said J. M. Barrs Subdivision; thence South  $75^{\circ}37'45''$  East, along the Northerly line of said Lots "B" and "A" and an Easterly prolongation thereof, 108.20 feet; thence South  $14^{\circ}34'28''$  West, along the Westerly line of the lands described in Official Records Volume 8213, Page 481, a distance of 104.81 feet to the Southwest corner of said aforementioned lands, said corner being situated in said Northerly right of way line of West Beaver Street; thence North  $75^{\circ}35'30''$  West, along said Northerly right of way line, 108.39 feet to the point of beginning.

<b>Real Estate No.</b>	<b>Owner</b>
074673 0000	SIMON MARY ALYCE 0 STATE ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202
074639 0000	SILVER STREET CAPITAL LLC 0 BROAD ST, JACKSONVILLE, 32202
074640 0000	530 UNION STREET LLC 530 UNION ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202
074671 0000	COMMUNITY FAMILY TRUST LLC 514 STATE ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202
074665 0000	LAVILLA SQUARE LLC 531 UNION ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202
074664 0000	SPRINGFIELD ACQUISITIONS INC 523 UNION ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202
074637 0000	525 BEAVER LLC 0 BEAVER ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202
074666 0000	SAMS VINCENT GARDNER ET AL 0 BROAD ST N, JACKSONVILLE, 32202
074676 0000	DWIGHT CHARLOTTE ET AL 810 CLAY ST, JACKSONVILLE, 32202
074615 0000	CITY OF JACKSONVILLE 0 BEAVER ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202
074305 0000	RENAISSANCE DEVELOPMENT ONE INC 0 UNION ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202
074300 0000	SHAHLA MASOOD KASRAEIAN REVOCABLE TRUST 434 UNION ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202
074667 0000	DAVIS PAULINE E TRUST 0 BROAD ST, JACKSONVILLE, 32202
074301 0000	SHAHIA MASOOD KASRAEIAN REVOCABLE TRUST 0 CLAY ST, JACKSONVILLE, 32202
074654 0000	WALKER WILLIE J 609 UNION ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202
074672 0000	JENKINS WILLIAM N JR 0 STATE ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074645 0000 525 BEAVER LLC  
525 BEAVER ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074644 0010 UNITED HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLE OF THE CHURC  
505 BEAVER ST, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074610 0000 CLARA WHITE MISSION  
613 ASHLEY ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074670 0000 SPRINGFIELD ACQUISITIONS INC  
0 UNION ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074303 0000 SHAHLA MADSOOD KASRAEIAN TRUST  
715 CLAY ST, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074618 0000 HISTORIC STANTON INC  
521 ASHLEY ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074296 0000 RENAISSANCE DEVELOPMENT ONE INC  
0 BEAVER ST, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074609 0000 CLARA WHITE MISSION  
615 ASHLEY ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074298 0000 RENAISSANCE DEVELOPMENT ONE INC  
0 BEAVER ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074669 0000 RENAISSANCE DEVELOPMENT ONE INC  
0 BROAD ST N, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074638 0000 525 BEAVER LLC  
0 BEAVER ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074614 0000 HOOSE HOMES AND INVESTMENTS LLC  
618 BEAVER ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074625 0000 TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH OF JACKSONVILLE FLORIDA INC  
622 UNION ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074658 0000 MCMICHAEL LAMAR  
0 UNION ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074655 0000 AGENTCHASE LLC  
0 BROAD ST N, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074302 0000 SHAHLA MASOOD KASRAEIAN TRUST  
432 UNION ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074621 0000 TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH OF JACKSONVILLE INC  
627 BEAVER ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074309 0000 LAURVELL FLORIDA LLC  
817 CLAY ST, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074616 0000 CLARA WHITE MISSION  
0 BEAVER ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074624 0000 CLARA WHITE MISSION INC  
605 BEAVER ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074295 0000 ASHLEY AND PEARL PARKING LLC  
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074283 0000 ASHLEY AND PEARL PARKING LLC  
420 BEAVER ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

074282 0000 ASHLEY AND PEARL PARKING LLC  
434 BEAVER ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

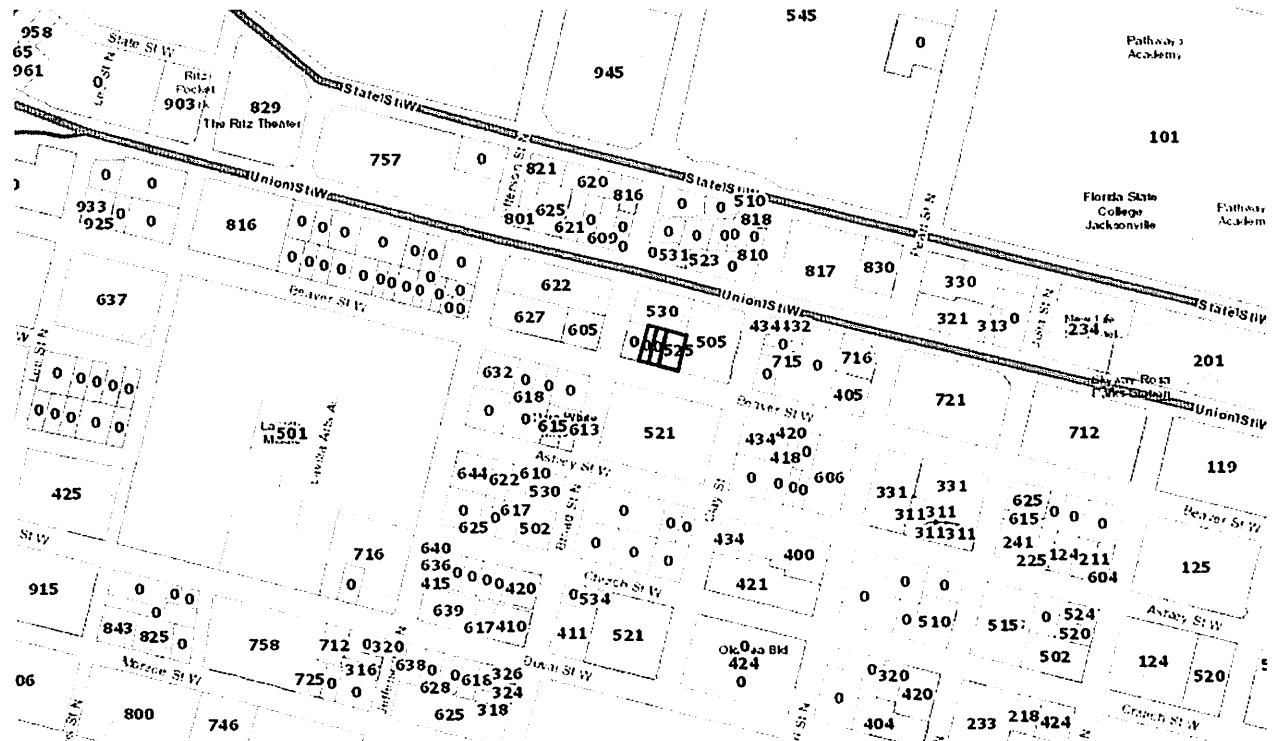
074276 0000 FIVE H LLP  
0 ASHLEY ST W, JACKSONVILLE, 32202

### III. Legal Description and Location Map

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**EXHIBIT "A"**

That certain tract or parcel of land being all of Lots "A" and "B", of Taylor's Replat of the West 105 feet of Block 115, Hart's Map of Jacksonville, as recorded in Plat Book 1, Page 120 of the Former Public Records of Duval County, Florida, together with part of Lots 9, 10 and 11, of J. M. Barrs Subdivision of Block 115, Harts Map of Jacksonville, as recorded in Plat Book 1, Page 37, of said Former Public Records, and a part of Lot 2, Block 115, Hart's Map of Jacksonville, all being more particularly described as beginning at the Southwest corner of said Lot "B", said corner being situated in the Northerly right of way line of West Beaver Street (a 70 foot right of way, as presently established); thence North  $14^{\circ}40'53''$  East, along the Westerly line of said Lot "B", 104.74 feet to the Northwest corner of said Lot "B", the same being the Southwest corner of Lot "F", of said J. M. Barrs Subdivision; thence South  $75^{\circ}37'45''$  East, along the Northerly line of said Lots "B" and "A" and an Easterly prolongation thereof, 108.20 feet; thence South  $14^{\circ}34'28''$  West, along the Westerly line of the lands described in Official Records Volume 8213, Page 481, a distance of 104.81 feet to the Southwest corner of said aforementioned lands, said corner being situated in said Northerly right of way line of West Beaver Street; thence North  $75^{\circ}35'30''$  West, along said Northerly right of way line, 108.39 feet to the point of beginning.



958  
65  
961

State St W  
Ritz  
Theater  
903  
829  
The Ritz Theater

757

945

545

Pathway  
Academy

101

Florida State  
College  
Jacksonville

Pathway  
Academy

933  
925

816

821

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#### IV. Proof of Public Notice

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STATE OF FLORIDA,

S.S.

COUNTY OF DUVAL,

Before the undersigned authority personally appeared Rhonda Fisher, who on oath says that she is the Publisher's Representative of the JACKSONVILLE DAILY RECORD, a weekly newspaper published at Jacksonville, in Duval County, Florida; that the attached copy of advertisement, being a Notice of Public Hearing on Application to Designate a City of Jacksonville Historic Landmark

in the matter of LM-22-05 525 West Beaver Street

in the Court, was published in said newspaper by print in the issues of 4/7/22.

Affiant further says that the JACKSONVILLE DAILY RECORD complies with all legal requirements for publication in Chapter 50, Florida Statutes.

\*This notice was published on both jaxdailyrecord.com and floridapublicnotices.com.



Rhonda Fisher

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 7th day of April, 2022 by Rhonda Fisher who is personally known to me.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON APPLICATION TO DESIGNATE 525 WEST BEAVER STREET LM-22-05 AS A CITY OF JACKSONVILLE HISTORIC LANDMARK

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that on April 27, 2022 at 3:00 P.M., the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Jacksonville will hold a public hearing for the consideration of 525 West Beaver Street as a City of Jacksonville Historic Landmark, pursuant to *Jacksonville Ordinance Code 307.104*. The public hearing will be in Conference Room 1002, 1st floor of the Ed Ball Building, 214 North Hogan Street, Jacksonville, Florida.

**Exhibit A**  
**Legal Description**

That certain tract or parcel of land being all of Lots "A" and "B", of Taylor's Replat of the West 105 feet of Block 115, Hart's Map of Jacksonville, as recorded in Plat Book 1, Page 120 of the Former Public Records of Duval County, Florida, together with part of Lots 9, 10 and 11, of J.M. Barrs Subdivision of Block 115, Harts Map of Jacksonville, as recorded in Plat Book 1, Page 37, of said Former Public Records, and a part of Lot 2, Block 115, Hart's Map of Jacksonville, all being more particularly described as beginning at the Southwest corner of said Lot "B", said corner being situated in the Northerly right of way line of West Beaver Street (a 70 foot right of way, as presently established); thence North 14°40'53" East, along the Westerly line of said Lot "B", 104.74 feet to the Northwest corner of said

Lot "B", the same being the Southwest corner of Lot "F", of said J.M. Barrs Subdivision; thence South 75°37'45" East, along the Northerly line of said Lots "B" and "A" and an Easterly prolongation thereof, 108.20 feet; thence South 14°34'28" West, along the Westerly line of the lands described in Official Records Volume 8213, Page 481, a distance of 104.81 feet to the Southwest corner of said aforementioned lands, said corner being situated in said Northerly right of way line of West Beaver Street; thence North 75°35'30" West, along said Northerly right of way line, 108.39 feet to the point of beginning.

RE # 074645-0000

This application (LM-22-05) is being sponsored by Eric J. Adler, 1710 North Main Street, Jacksonville, Florida, 32206 on behalf of the property owner, 525 Beaver Street LLC, 1710 North Main Street, Jacksonville, Florida, 32206. A copy of the application may be examined in the Offices of the Planning and Development Department, 3rd Floor, Ed Ball Building, 214 North Hogan Street, Jacksonville, Florida (904) 255-7800. All interested parties are notified to be present and will be heard at the *Public Hearing*.

Please note: At this time all visits to the Planning and Development Department are by appointment only. To make an appointment, please contact the Historic Preservation Section at historicpreservation@coj.net or by phone at (904) 255-7800.

DATED this 7th day of April, 2022.

Jack C. Demetree, III  
Chairman  
Jacksonville Historic  
Preservation Commission  
City of Jacksonville

Apr. 7 00 (22-02401D)

V. List of Property Owners Located within 350 Feet of  
the Proposed Landmark

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# JACKSONVILLE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

LM-22-05

*The Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission* will hold a Public Hearing, pursuant to Section 307.104, *City of Jacksonville Ordinance Code* on **Application No.: LM-22-05** regarding the proposed designation of the building at 525 West Beaver Street, as a City of Jacksonville Landmark as noted below:

**Date:** Wednesday, April 27, 2022

**Time;** 3:00 P. M.

**Place:** Conference Room 1002  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Ed Ball Building  
214 North Hogan Street  
Jacksonville, Florida

Information concerning the proposed designation is on file with the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission and available for inspection from 8:00 A. M. until 5:00 P. M. Monday through Friday at the Offices of the Planning and Development Department, Suite 300, 214 North Hogan Street, Jacksonville, Florida, (904) 255-7800.

**Please note:** At this time all visits to the Planning and Development Department are by appointment only. To make an appointment, please contact the Historic Preservation Section at [historicpreservation@coj.net](mailto:historicpreservation@coj.net) or by phone at (904) 255-7800.

**PLEASE NOTE:** You have received this notice as owner of real property located within 350 feet of the proposed landmark per Section 307.104(f). Only the property associated with the proposed landmark as identified above is impacted by the historic designation.

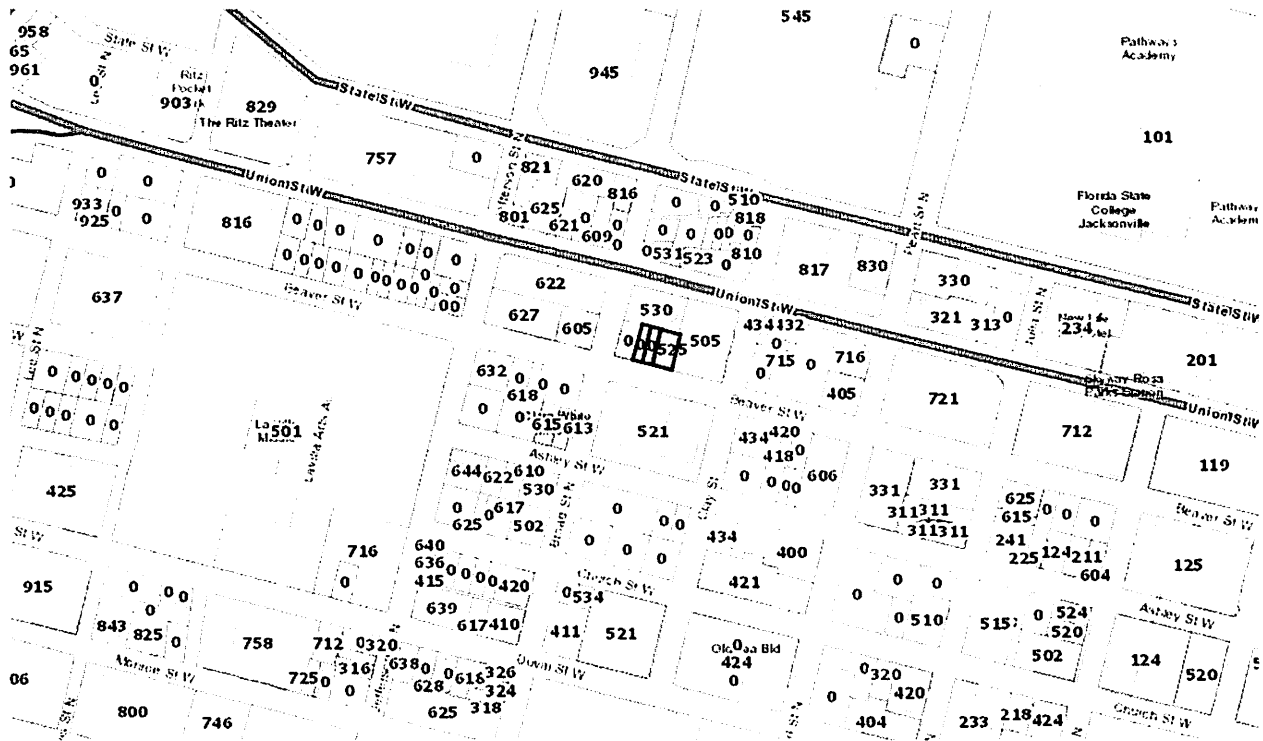
**ALL PERSONS INTERESTED ARE NOTIFIED TO BE PRESENT AT SAID TIME AND PLACE, AND THEY MAY BE HEARD WITH RESPECT TO THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION.**

The Commission will make a recommendation as to whether the referenced property should or should not be designated as a Local Landmark. The recommendation will be forwarded to the Jacksonville City Council for final action.

*If a person decides to appeal a decision of the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission with respect to any matter considered at such meeting, they will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. § 286.0106, Florida Statutes*

### Exhibit A LEGAL DESCRIPTION

RE #s 074637 0000, 074638 0000, and 074645 0000



RE	LNAME	LNAME2	MAIL_ADDR1	MAIL_ADDR2	MAIL_ADDR3	MAIL_CITY	MAIL_STATE	MAIL_ZIP
074638 0000	525 BEAVER LLC		1710 MAIN ST N			JACKSONVILLE	FL	32206
074640 0000	530 UNION STREET LLC		5891 S MILITARY TRL NUM A-11			LAKE WORTH	FL	33463
074655 0000	AGENTCHASE LLC		P.O. BOX 10411			JACKSONVILLE	FL	32247
074296 0005	ASHLEY AND PEARL PARKING LLC		C/O CONTEGA BUSINESS SERVICES LLC	1 INDEPENDENT DR STE 1200		JACKSONVILLE	FL	32202
074283 0000	ASHLEY AND PEARL PARKING LLC		7563 PHILIPS HWY STE 208			JACKSONVILLE	FL	32256
074611 0000	CITY OF JACKSONVILLE		C/O CITY REAL ESTATE DIV	214 N HOGAN ST 10TH FL		JACKSONVILLE	FL	32202
074608 0000	CLARA WHITE MISSION INC		613 W ASHLEY ST			JACKSONVILLE	FL	32202-4747
074671 0000	COMMUNITY FAMILY TRUST LLC		16192 COASTAL HWY			LEWES	DE	19958
070484 0000	COTTEN FRED L JR ET AL		C/O FRED COTTEN JR	6632 BANBURY RD		JACKSONVILLE	FL	32211-5457
074667 0000	DAVIS PAULINE E TRUST		C/O PAULINE E DAVIS TRUSTEE	2224 RIBAULT SCENIC DR		JACKSONVILLE	FL	32208-2563
074676 0000	DWIGHT CHARLOTTE ET AL		C/O LYDIA DWIGHT WOODEN	1369 W 11TH ST		JACKSONVILLE	FL	32209
074276 0000	FIVE H LLP		C/O PAUL HARDEN	1431 RIVERPLACE BLVD SUITE 901		JACKSONVILLE	FL	32207
074618 0000	HISTORIC STANTON INC		C/O MAMIE L DAVIS	1751 UNIVERSITY BLVD S		JACKSONVILLE	FL	32216
074614 0000	HOOSE HOMES AND INVESTMENTS LLC		7563 PHILIPS HWY SUITE 208			JACKSONVILLE	FL	32256
074672 0000	JENKINS WILLIAM N JR		2262 LAUREL BLOSSOM CIR			OCOE	FL	34761-5200
074309 0000	LAURVELL FLORIDA LLC		33 SUMMIT DR			EAST BRUNSWICK	NJ	08816
074665 0000	LAVILLA SQUARE LLC		4928 TOP ROYAL LN			JACKSONVILLE	FL	32277
074674 0000	LEE KITTY K ET AL		2555 DELLWOOD AVE			JACKSONVILLE	FL	32204
074658 0000	MCMICHAEL LAMAR		345 FORSTYH ST			JACKSONVILLE	FL	32202
074669 0000	RENAISSANCE DEVELOPMENT ONE INC		8640 PHILIPS HWY SUITE 21/22			JACKSONVILLE	FL	32256
070490 0000	ROBERT ANNIE B LIFE ESTATE		14722 STARRATT CREEK DR			JACKSONVILLE	FL	32226
074666 0000	SAMS VINCENT GARDNER ET AL		PO BOX 551153			JACKSONVILLE	FL	32255
074301 0000	SHAHIA MASOOD KASRAEIAN REVOCABLE TRUST		1431 RIVERPLACE BLVD 3702			JACKSONVILLE	FL	32207
070485 0000	SHAW TIMOTHY RAY		8263 OLD KINGS RD			JACKSONVILLE	FL	32219-2919
074639 0000	SILVER STREET CAPITAL LLC		1704 MAIN ST N			JACKSONVILLE	FL	32206
074673 0000	SIMON MARY ALYCE		1546 W 13TH ST			JACKSONVILLE	FL	32209-5434
074670 0000	SPRINGFIELD ACQUISITIONS INC		PO BOX 330108			ATLANTIC BEACH	FL	32233-0108
074625 0000	TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH OF JACKSONVILLE FLORIDA INC		800 HAMMOND BV			JACKSONVILLE	FL	32221-1398
074644 0010	UNITED HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLE OF THE CHURCH		C/O BISHOP S C MADISON TR	1665 NORTH PORTAL DR NW		WASHINGTON	DC	20012-1053
	URBAN CORE CPAC	KIM PRYOR	245 5TH ST W			JACKSONVILLE	FL	32206
074650 0000	WALKER LAW OFFICES		625 UNION ST W STE 3			JACKSONVILLE	FL	32202
074654 0000	WALKER WILLIE J		625 W UNION ST #3			JACKSONVILLE	FL	32202-4764
	Council Member Reggie Gaffney	District 7	117 West Duval Street	4th Floor		JACKSONVILLE	FL	32202

## VI. Photographs and Images

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