

Furchgott's Department Store Building
128 West Adams Street
LM-21-07
City of Jacksonville Landmark Designation

August 25, 2021



Application Prepared By:

Blair Knighting, Kimley-Horn
12740 Gran Bay Parkway West, Suite 2350
Jacksonville, Florida 32258

Property Owner:

Lotus Commercial USA LLC
Starke, Florida

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I.

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT - FINDINGS,
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

**LM-21-07
Furchgott's Department Store Building
128 West Adams Street**

GENERAL LOCATION: The southeast corner of West Adams Street and North Hogan Street in 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-21-7**, sponsored by the property owner, Lotus Commercial USA, LLC.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- (A) Consistent with the JACKSONVILLE ORDINANCE CODE, SECTION 307.104, the landmark designation application for 128 West Adams Street, submitted by the property owner, Lotus Commercial USA, LLC, was found to be complete by the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department .
- (B) As required, the Planning and Development Department had signs posted in front of the property being considered for designation, as well as sent notices by U.S. Mail to each owner of real property within three hundred and fifty (350) feet of the proposed site. Notice of the public hearing on the designation of the property at 128 West Adams Street as a Landmark was published in the *Financial News and Daily Record*. Proof of publication is attached to this report.
- (C) Once designated, any activity affecting the exterior of the building and site of the proposed landmark at 128 West Adams 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 Jacksonville 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 the Furchgott's Department Store Building at 128 West Adams 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.

- (D) Utilizing the landmark designation application submitted by the applicant and additional staff research, the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department has found the application to meet five of the seven criteria. The five criteria include the following;
- (1) *Its value as a significant reminder of the cultural, historical, architectural, or archaeological heritage of the City, state or nation.*

The Furchgott's Department Store Building not only represents the tremendous growth of downtown businesses during the fifty year period following the Great Fire of 1901, but also the significant role Jacksonville once played as the primary wholesale and retail center for the region. When it finally closed in 1984, Furchgott's Department Store was one of the last large department stores remaining in Downtown Jacksonville that once included May-Cohen's, Ivey's, Levy's, Rosenblum's, J.C. Penney, Woolworth, Kress, W.T. Grant, Sears, and McCrory's. Because of its prominent location at the corner of West Adams Street and North Hogan Street, the Furchgott's Department Store Building, with its attractive and ever changing window displays, its large diverse inventory, and reputation for quality service over its 117 year history, was a popular downtown destination.

Brothers Herman and Max Furchgott migrated from Nitra in present day Slovakia to New York in the early 1860s. Joined by their brother Leopold (1852 – 1928), the brothers moved to Charleston and opened Furchgott and Bro. Dry Goods. Leopold moved to Jacksonville in 1868 to establish another store with Charles Benedict who had earlier become a partner in the company. The 117 year old history of Furchgott's Department Store in Jacksonville started with the establishment of Furchgott and Bennett's Dry Goods and Carpet Store located at the southwest corner of West Bay Street and South Main Street. At the time, East and West Bay Street was the primary commercial district in the city. In 1879, Austrian native Morris Kohn, a resident of New York City, established a buying office in that city for the company, as well as became a financial backer. With Morris Kohn becoming a senior partner in 1881, the company was renamed Kohn, Furchgott & Benedict Wholesale and Retail Dry Goods and Carpet. Leopold Furchgott and Charles Benedict operated the Jacksonville store with Max and Herman Furchgott in charge of the one in Charleston.¹

¹ Ennis Davis & Sarah Gojikian, *Cohen Brothers, The Big Store*. (Charleston, South Carolina: The History Press, 2012), pp. 78-81. *The Furchgott's Stores since 1866* by David Furchgott, research and editing by Alison Walsh and personal recollections by Maurice Furchgott, The Jewish Merchant Project, <https://merchants.jhssc.org/narrative/the-furchgott-stores-since-1866>.

The business grew so rapidly in Jacksonville that by 1885 the company constructed a new two-story brick building at #5 and #9 West Bay Street which was served by 20 employees.² Under Leopold Furchgott, a visionary retailer, the store was the first in the city to have an elevator, home deliveries by automobile, the hiring of women as members of the sales staff and use of telephones to serve black customers. With the company thriving under his leadership, Leopold Furchgott stepped down as the head of the Jacksonville store and moved to New York City. Leopold Furchgott turned the management of the company over to his brother-in-law, Frederick Meyerheim.³

It was under the leadership of Fred Meyerheim, that a new six story, 60,000 square foot department store was built at the southeast corner of West Adams Street and North Hogan Street.⁴ Officially opening on October 8, 1941, the firm referred to the new building as a “scientifically designed store” to enhance the shopping experience. As a high end department store, the new building was particularly appealing to women with its second floor featuring a Queen Anne style drawing room as well as a wide variety of shoes, dresses and suits, sportswear and negligees. In addition to an alterations department, the second floor also included a woman’s lounge and bride’s room. The basement and the first through fourth floors were used to display a variety of merchandise such as men and women clothes, jewelry, silverware, luggage, radios, toys, children’s clothes, bedding, rugs, lamps, linens and drapery. The fifth floor housed the lay-a-way department, display work room, administrative offices, as well as employee’s lounge and restrooms.⁵

Continuing under Fred Meyerheim’s son, Harold, who took over management in 1945, the store expanded in 1957 into the first floor of the adjacent Professional Building. Furchgott’s Department Store also expanded into suburban malls with the openings of stores at Roosevelt Square in 1961, Regency Square Mall in 1967 and Orange Park Mall in 1975. Consistent with other department stores during the 1970s and 1980s, Furchgott’s Department Store began struggling financially with the decline of downtown retail. The store closed in the spring of 1984 and soon filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. The three mall stores were closed in 1985. After several attempts to acquire the building, it was sold in 2005 to the Hudson Book Company that accommodated a restaurant on the first story and book storage on the remaining floors.⁶

(2) *It’s 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 128 West Adams Street does not meet this landmark criterion.

² Wanton S. Webb, Editor, *Webb’s Historical, Industrial and Biographical Florida*. (New York: W.S. Webb & Company), p. 155.

³ Davis & Jewish Merchant’s Project

⁴ Construction of the new store required the demolish of the old 1895 post office and U.S. District Court building at the northeast corner of West Forsyth Street and North Hogan Street. With a height of 178 ½ feet, the building was the tallest in Jacksonville until 1909, (Wood, p. 81).

⁵ Davis & Jewish Merchant’s Project

⁶ *Ibid*

<https://www.metrojacksonville.com/article/2011-jan-remembering-furchgott-s-departmentstore>.

“Downtown Clothing Store Will Close. But Name Carrying On”, *Florida Times Union*, June 7, 1981.

(3) *It is identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the City, state or nation.*

The Furchgott's Department Store Building at 128 West Adams Street is the only downtown building directly associated with one of Jacksonville's most important and oldest retail business until it ceased operation in 1984. The history of the business dates back to 1868 with the opening of a dry goods and carpet store on the southwest corner of West Bay Street and North Main Street by Leopold Furchgott and Charles Benedict. Leopold Furchgott, a native of Hungary and Charles Benedict born in Austria were part of the first group of Jewish immigrants, usually of German descent, to migrate south during the period immediately before and following the Civil War. Many were attracted to Florida and Jacksonville in particular because of the mild climate and growing business environment during the 1870s and 1880s.⁷

Followers of a Reformist faith, these Jewish citizens in Jacksonville became successful business owners with many establishing stores and shops along West Bay Street.⁸ Some of these early Jewish citizens were so highly regarded in the Jacksonville community to be appointed or elected to public office such as Perez Freidenburg, E.E. Bellasario, Isador Grunthal, Philip Walter, Julius Slager, Sig Hess, Jacob Huff, Charles Bennett, M.H. Pollack, Leopold Furchgott, as well as, Morris A. Dzialynski, who was elected mayor in 1881. In addition to serving as a member of the City Council, city assessor, treasurer, municipal judge, and trustee of the Jacksonville Board of Trade, Morris A. Dzialynski was also instrumental in the establishment of Congregation Ahavath Chesed (Lovers of Mercy) in 1882⁹. Some of the other Jewish families to settle in Jacksonville during this time included Zacharies, Halle, Cohen, Meyerson, Jacobs, Bucky, Ritzwoller, Tischler and Baer. To serve this growing Jewish population, various community organizations were founded such as B'nai Brith, the Hebrew Benevolent Society and the Jacksonville Young Men's Hebrew Literary Association.¹⁰

Born in 1852 in Nitra now part of Slovakia, Leopold Furchgott joined his older brothers, Max and Herman, in Charleston to established Furchgott & Bro. Dry Goods in Charleston. Leopold Furchgott along with company partner, Charles Bennett, moved to Jacksonville to open a branch store named Furchgott & Bennett.¹¹ In 1879, Austrian native Morris Kohn, a New York resident, established a buying office in that city for the firm and provided additional financial assistance. He joined the business

⁸ Some early Jewish merchants along Bay Street included Philip Halle, Aaron Zacharias, Jacob D. Bucky, Jacob Cohen, Morris Cohen, Leopold Furchgott, Charles Benedict, and Jacob E. Huff. Isador Grunthal, Hugo Grunthal, Morris Berlack, and Robert Williams established successful wholesale grocery businesses.

James B. Crooks, *Jacksonville Jewry After the Fire, 1901 – 1919*. pp. 45, 48 & 49. Files of the Historic Preservation Section of the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department.

⁹ Natalie H. Glickstein, *That Ye May Remember, Congregation Ahavath Chesed, 1882 – 1982*. (St. Petersburg, Florida: Bryon Kennedy and Co. Publisher, 1982), pp. 18 & 19.

¹⁰ Glickstein – *That You May Remember*, p. 19

Natalie H. Gickstein, *The Growth and Development – The Jacksonville Jewish Business Community, 1857-1920*. Unpublished – Files of the Historic Preservation Section of the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department.

¹¹ The company and other sources identified the firm as being formed in 1868. A history of the company researched and written by Furchgott descendants has the date as 1869. The 1868 date may relate to the opening of the first store in Charleston.

as a senior partner changing the name to Kohn, Furchgott & Bennett Dry Goods and Carpets.¹² With the Jacksonville store thriving, Leopold Furchgott moved to New York and turned over management to his brother-in-law, Frederick Meyerheim, who was responsible for the construction of a new department store building in 1941.¹³

Both Leopold Furchgott and Charles Bennett were socially prominent and very active in the community. Charles Bennett served as a county commissioner with Leopold Furchgott being a charter member of the Jacksonville Board of Trade and the Ahavath Chesed Synagogue, formed in 1882 as the first Hebrew Congregation chartered in Florida, 1st Vice President for the Jacksonville Board of Trade, Vice President for the Florida Investment and Savings Bank, Vice President for the Union Building Association, one of the Directors for the High Springs Phosphate Company, Treasurer of the Jacksonville Gala Week Association, and Treasurer of the Park Opera House.¹⁴

(4) *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.*

The Furchgott's Department Store Building represents another example of the variety of excellent designs produced by the prominent Jacksonville architectural firm of Marsh & Saxelbye. A native of Deland, Florida, William Mulford Marsh (1889 - 1946) began his architectural practice around 1912. He had no formal training in architecture, but acquired his knowledge through first-hand experience, principally with the firm of Talley and Summer. Prior to joining in partnership with Harold Saxelbye in 1919, Marsh designed several Prairie-style buildings in Jacksonville. Harold Frederick Saxelbye (1885 - 1964) was born in Hull, England and was educated at the Royal Institute of Architects in the Beaux Arts tradition, which drew on classical motifs. He moved to New York in 1904 and practiced there with the firm of Jacobs and Davies, and later as a partner in the firm of Thompson and Frohling. In 1913 he moved to Jacksonville to design the Mason Hotel (Mayflower).¹⁵

After a brief association with architects Talley & Summer, Saxelbye entered a partnership with Marsh that lasted twenty-seven years. During that period between 1919 and 1946, Marsh & Saxelbye was the most prolific architectural firm in Jacksonville, especially during the Florida Land Boom of the 1920's. The firm is noted for many excellent commercial, institutional, and residential designs in Jacksonville and throughout the state. With the death of Marsh in 1946, Saxelbye formed a partnership with Harry C. Powell that continued with the Saxelbye name well into the 1990s with the last being Saxelbye, Powell, Roberts & Ponder.

¹² The relationship of the Furchgott brothers with Charles Bennett and Morris Kohn has not been confirmed, but speculated as a possible kinship or a masonic connection.

¹³ Davis & Jewish Merchant's Project.

¹⁴ Landmark Application, LM-21-07, *Furchgott's Department Store*, 128 West Adams Street, 2021.

¹⁵ Information on Marsh & Saxelbye and their designs summarized from Wayne W. Wood. *Jacksonville's Architectural Heritage, Landmarks for the Future*. (Jacksonville, Florida: University of North Florida Press, 1989) and from files of the Historic Preservation Section of the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department.

Many of the elaborate residential designs found in San Marco, San Jose Estates, Avondale and Ortega are attributed to Marsh & Saxelbye. The design of most of these residences reflects the popular Spanish Eclectic and Tudor Revival styles popular during the 1920s and was built for prominent Jacksonville families. Examples include 1807 Avondale (1924) – John H. Churchwell; 1807 Elizabeth Place (1925 – 26) – Dr. H.A. Reaves; 3407 Pine Street (1924) – Augustus Franklin Churchwell; 3572 Richmond Street (1927) – Benjamin S. Levy; 3644 Richmond Street (1925) – Robert V. Covington; 3730 Richmond Street (1927 – 28) – Edward W. Lane; 3311 St. Johns Avenue (1925) – Witschen Family; 1849 Willow Branch Terrace (1924 – 25) – Thomas D. Aycock; 4004 San Jose Boulevard (1925 – 26) – Lawrence Howard; 2234 River Road (1929 – 30) – Carl S. Swisher; 2252 River Road (1929 – 30) – John H. Swisher; 6814 San Jose Boulevard (1927) – Alfred I and Jessie Ball DuPont; 3925 Ortega Boulevard (1925) – James W. Spratt; and 3500 Timquana Road (1924) – Archer S. Hubbard.

Noted commercial and institutional designs by Marsh & Saxelbye include the Levy Building, 135 West Adams Street (1927); Hildebrandt Building, 300 West Adams Street (1926-27); Taliaferro Memorial Building, 256 East Church Street (1923-24); Title & Trust Company of Florida, 200 East Forsyth Street (1928-29); Hamby Building, 325 West Forsyth Street (1925); Greenleaf & Crosby Building, 208 North Laura Street (1927); Atlantic National Bank Annex, 118 West Adams Street (1925 –26); Olmstead Motor Company Building, 802 North Laura Street (1927-28, demolished); Old Jacksonville Police Headquarters, 711 North Liberty Street (1926); Groover-Stewart Drug Company Building, 25 North Market Street (1925); Buckman & Ulmer Building, 29-33 West Monroe Street (1925, demolished); South Atlantic Investment Building, 37-41 West Monroe Street (1925, demolished); Fire Station #10, 1055 South McDuff Avenue (c.1927), the Jacksonville Police Substation, 1041 South McDuff Avenue (c.1927), the Western Union Building, North Laura Street (1930 – 31); U.S. Post Office & Courthouse, 311 West Monroe Street, in association with Paul P. Cret of Philadelphia and James D. Wetmore of Washington D.C. (1932-33); Crane Company Building, 1007 West Bay Street (1930, demolished); and First Church of Christ Scientist, 1116 North Laura Street (1921).

Some of the corporate clients of the firm in later years included the Florida National Bank chain, *Florida Times Union*, S.S. Jacobs Company, Gulf Life Insurance Company, Blue Cross – Blue Shield of Florida, Kent Theaters, Morrison’s Cafeteria, and the Ponte Vedra Beach Club.

- (5) *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 128 West Adams Street does not meet this landmark criterion.

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

The design of the Furchgott's Department Store Building reflects a variation of modernistic movement of the 1930s and 1940s that include elements of the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles, as well as various combinations of both styles. Not using stylistic references found on the earlier historic revival styles, designs of the Modernistic movement were more influenced by European Modernism. The Modernistic movement in both Europe and America continued beyond the 1940s into the mid-modern period, particularly as evident by the International style.¹⁶

The Art Deco style was influenced by an artistic movement in the design of architecture, jewelry, furniture, lamps and art pieces popularized by the 1925 Exposition des Decoratifs exhibition in Paris. The Art Deco style is characterized by the use of smooth wall surfaces that are embellished with abstract motifs such as geometric floral designs, chevrons and a sunrise pattern. The style usually has a strong vertical presence with the use of full height pilasters, towers and other features that project above the roof line. Usually later than the Art Deco, the Art Moderne style is characterized with a smooth wall surface many times with rounded corners, the use of glass block, circular windows and stylized neon lighting. With its streamlined more industrial appearance influenced by the design of contemporary trains, cars and ships, the Art Moderne style has a more horizontal visual presence created with the use of decorative bands.¹⁷

Modernistic influences found in the Furchgott's Department Store Building include a smooth wall surface, common in both the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles, embellished vertically with full height pilasters that define window groups on each story that line up vertically. A horizontal band separates the first story from the upper four stories. The Modernistic influence is also evident by the terrazzo floor of the West Adams Street entryway highlighted with alternating color strips and centered with a circular design framing the letter F. This entryway originally was protected by an aluminum rounded canopy topped with the Furchgott's name in aluminum cut out letters. Unlike the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles, the building has a narrow overhanging eave and a sharply clipped corner at the intersection of West Adams Street and North Hogan Street creating an additional full height wall space that faces to the northwest. This smaller wall space accommodate a vertical line of windows from the second story to the fifth story with the first story originally being a prominent display window that was later modified into a corner entryway.¹⁸

¹⁶ Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street, A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*. (New York: Alta-Mira Press, R & Littlefield Publishing Inc., 1984), pp. 46 – 53.

Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Homes*. (New York: Borzoi Book, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984), pp. 465 – 467.

Wayne W. Wood, *Jacksonville's Architectural Heritage, Landmarks for the Future*. (Jacksonville, Florida: University of North Florida Press, 1989), p.21.

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

(7) *Its suitability for preservation or restoration.*

Quoting from the landmark application submitted for 128 West Adams Street;

“Overall, the structure is in relatively good condition. Because the structure was vacant for so many years, many of the original Art Deco features have been preserved. As expected with a long vacant building, roof leaks are apparent on the interior of the 5th floor. The damage caused by the leaks are repairable. Some of the original features were removed such as the storefront, however this is a common issue with commercial structures. The existing storefront systems are similar enough the original design that they do not have a negative impact on the integrity of the overall design. In addition, the corner entrance alteration can easily be restored back to the original design. Lastly, any of the windows and storefronts that may have been filled can be restored back to the original design if necessary. The Furchgott’s building is a great example of a culturally significant reminder of Downtown’s popularity.”¹⁹

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (A) Based on the findings of this report, the Planning and Development Department recommends that the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission **APPROVE** the designation of the Furchgott’s Department Store Building at 128 West Adams Street, **(LM-21-07)** as a City of Jacksonville Landmark.

¹⁹ Landmark Application, LM-21-07.

II.

DESIGNATION APPLICATION

Furchgott's

FURCHGOTT'S
DEPARTMENT STORE
128 WEST ADAMS
STREET



FOR LOTUS COMMERCIAL USA

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I. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT- FINDINGS,
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II. DESIGNATION APPLICATION FOR THE PROPERTY AT 128 W. ADAMS STREET

JACKSONVILLE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION DESIGNATION APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK

Jacksonville Ordinance Code, Sections 307.103 and 307.104

Landmark Designation No:

Name of Proposed Landmark:

Furchgott's

Address or General Location of Proposed Landmark:

128 West Adams Street

Legal Description of Proposed Landmark:

See Attachment III

Real Estate Assessment Number(s) of Proposed Landmark:

073739-0000

Property Appraiser Panel Map Number(s) Containing Proposed Landmark:

Florida Master Site File Number (if available) of Proposed Landmark:

Owner(s) of Real Property Containing the Proposed Landmark:

Lotus Commercial USA, LLC

Type of Ownership of Proposed Landmark:

Private

Application of Proposed Landmark Sponsored By:

Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission

Date of Construction of Construction of Proposed Landmark: 1941

Original: 1941

Additions/Major Alterations: The building is almost completely intact from the original design.

Original Architect of Proposed Landmark (if Known):

Marsh and Saxelbye Architectural Firm

Original Builder of Proposed Landmark (if Known):

N/A

Period of Significance of Proposed Landmark:

1940 – 1970

Historic and Current Use of Proposed Landmark:

Historically the structure at 128 W. Adams Street was built for the Furchgott's Department Store. It is currently used as a restaurant and vacant office space.

Original Use: Retail/office

Current Use: Restaurant/Vacant Office

I. HISTORIC AND PRESENT PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE LANDMARK OR LANDMARK SITE:

Summary:

The Furchgott's Department Store building located at 128 West Adams Street was designed by the notable local architecture firm, Marsh and Saxelbye, in 1941. Marsh and Saxelbye designed the Art Deco structure for the prominent local Furchgott's Department Store chain. Leo Furchgott established the initial store in 1868 located at Bay and Main Streets¹. This Furchgott's location was earmarked for their designer departments². At the time, this part of



Figure 1 - 1941 Artist Depiction of the Building

Downtown was known as the department store center of the city. Within direct vicinity of Furchgott's there were a number of department stores such as the Levy-Wolf (see Photo 33), Cohen's, Sears, J.C. Penney, Kress, McCrory's, The Darling Shop, Broadway, Haverty's, and Rosenblum's³. Not only is the Art Deco building architecturally significant, from 1941 to the mid-1980s, Furchgott's was a retail and cultural institution in Jacksonville's downtown area (see Photo 24). It was common for people throughout the city to come to Furchgott's to have their picture taken with Santa during the holidays. The structure was vacated in the mid-1980s when the Furchgott's Department Store chain closed. This was a sign of the decline of the popularity of Downtown Jacksonville similar to other downtowns during the Urban Renewal period. Even though Downtown experienced a decline, the Furchgott's building always seemed to have a tenant in the basement including the famous *Milk Bar* in the 1990s and current tenants, *The Real Ting*, a restaurant and night club. The building reinforces a tangible reminder of the glory days of Downtown Jacksonville when the streets were full of shopping and entertained citizens.

¹ *Remembering Furchgott's Department Store*

² *Remembering Furchgott's Department Store*

³ *Vintage photos: Dining, shopping in downtown Jacksonville's heyday*

Setting:

The Furchgott's Department Store Building (locally pronounced "Ferchget's") is located at 128 W. Adams Street in Downtown Jacksonville, FL. 32202. This Art Deco style structure is a five-story building with a basement located on the southeast corner of Hogan Street and W. Adams Street. The façade along W. Adams Street contains the original main storefront entrance (see Photo 24). The corner portion of the building where W. Adams and Hogan Street meet currently contains an entrance (see Photo 1). The Hogan Street elevation also contains the original side entrance to Furchgott's. South of the building along Hogan Street is a more modern five story building where a parking lot was originally located (see Photo 4). Adjacent to Furchgott's along W. West Adams is a one-story fire-suppression connection between Furchgott's and the Professional Building. The Professional Building was designated a local landmark in 2003 (see Photo 34). Directly across W. Adams Street is the Levy Building which was built in 1927 by Marsh and Saxelbye (see Photo 33). Directly across Hogan Street is the "Aker-Cody Building" now known as the "Hogan Building," originally built in 1921 (see Photo 35). This area of Downtown was known as the department store center of Jacksonville starting in the 1940s through the 1980s.

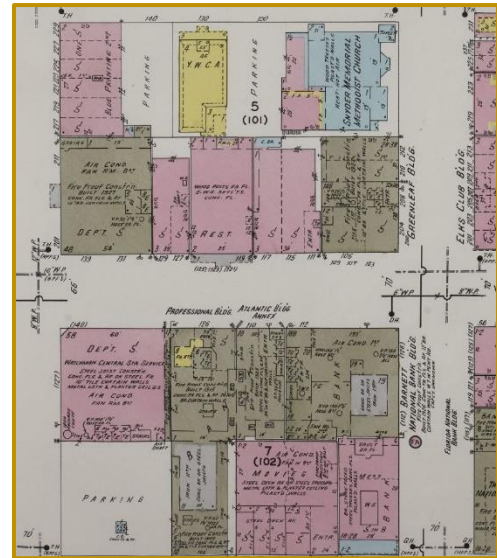


Figure 2 - 1949 Sanborn Map

Physical Description of Proposed Landmark:

The Furchgott's Department Store is a classic Art Deco style structure built in 1941. The Marsh and Saxelbye Architectural firm designed the building along with many of the historically significant structures in Downtown Jacksonville. The large five-story building occupies a prominent corner parcel in the southeast corner of West Adams and Hogan Streets (see Photo 1). The building is composed of a basement with five floors above it, containing in total six levels. According to the Sanborn Map, the building was constructed using steel joists, concrete floors, with brick walls and a smooth stucco exterior (see Photo 25). Interior inspection reveals terra cotta block walls with concrete floors.

Many of the Art Deco design elements have been preserved throughout the years. The first-floor exterior is accented by brown marble tiles (see Photo 36). Still evident between the first and second floors is a horizontal aluminum decorative band placed directly above the first-floor storefront systems (see Photo 4). This type of horizontal

banding is a common feature in Art Deco style structures. Another Art Deco feature still evident is the wide stucco entablature below the flat roof. The original curved metal canopy signifying the main entrance is still existing under the brown paint (see Photo 36). Unfortunately, the original Furchgott's sign is no longer situated above the canopy. The second to fifth floors of the West Adams and Hogan Street elevations all contain the original windows in their original openings (see Photo 2). The southern elevation that was original exposed is now directly adjacent to another five-story structure (see Photo 23). Although the building is not exposed, the original windows still exist as indicated from the interior of the building. The elevation directly adjacent to the Professional Building along West Adams Street (east elevation) does not contain windows due to the close proximity to the Professional Building. The original windows along West Adams and Hogan Streets are metal casement windows. The window design is different between the West Adam Street and Hogan Street façades however, windows are uniform on each floor (2nd floor to 5th floor). Where West Adams Street and Hogan Street meet, the corner of the building is truncated (see Photo 28). Originally this corner was a large-scale storefront window for displays on the first floor. However, at some point in the history of the building, the storefront window was converted into an entrance. On the corner of the building, above the first floor, each floor contains a large plate glass window flanked by a casement window with four openings. This window material and design are character defining features of the Art Deco style (see Photo 18).

In addition to the metal windows, the building features curved vertical striations on either side of each window opening from the 2nd floor to the roof entablature. These vertical elements, mixed with the ribbon-like window placement design on each floor, are indicative of the Art Deco style (see Photo 4). In addition to the vertical striations from the 2nd floor to the roof, there are smaller vertical details between each window opening on each floor.

The West Adams elevation features the original main entrance to the Furchgott's Department Store. As part of the main entrance, the metal canopy has been preserved as well as the original terrazzo threshold featuring the Furchgott's "F" and a stripped Art Deco design in the terrazzo (see Photo 3). Overall, the exterior of the building appears to feature the majority of the original design features with the exception to the first-floor storefront systems.

Furchgott's Department Store closed their Jacksonville stores including this West Adams Street location in the mid-1980s. The upper floors of the building have essentially been vacant since then. As such, the interior appears fairly intact with minimal alterations excluding any clothes racks. Each floor features an open floor

plan that is supported by large interior columns. The original Art Deco style elevators (see Photos 6, 7, & 8) are preserved as well as many features that speak to the department store use such as lighting, dressing rooms (see Photo 14), shoe organization stands, water fountains, time clock station (see Photo 16), and curved mannequin display areas. A few of the original executive offices can still be seen on the 5th floor. There is minor ceiling damage in these areas from roof leaks throughout the years. The majority of the wood veneer (see Photo 19) along the walls, however, has been preserved as well as the original safe (see Photo 20). These executive offices face West Adams Street. Overall, there are many interior Art Deco features preserved on the interior as well as the exterior.

Unfortunately, the exterior has been altered from the original design in a few areas. The corner of the building was original a large display window, but is now an entrance. The storefront systems have all been replaced with a similar design. A few of the vertical storefront windows along the West Adams Street elevation were filled in at some point in the history of the building (see Photo 36). In addition, a gold horizontal band was added below the transoms on both West Adams and Hogan Street elevations (see Photo 4). Overall, the alterations do not have a large negative impact on the historic structure.

II. Historic, Architectural or Archaeological Significance of Landmark or Landmark Site as Related to Application Criteria for Designation

Historic Context of Proposed Landmark;
Historic Context – Downtown Jacksonville⁴

Summary:

Today, Downtown Jacksonville is defined on the north side of the St. Johns River to include not only the central business district, but also the older neighborhoods of East Jacksonville, LaVilla, and Brooklyn that did not collectively become part of the City until 1887. However, this historic context is focused on the development of that part of Downtown Jacksonville that constituted the city limits before the 1887 expansion. Including the original 1822 plat as well as the expansions of 1832 and 1842, this area is generally defined by Hogans Creek to the east, State Street to the north, Clay Street to the west, and the St. Johns River to the south. This overview on the historical context of Downtown Jacksonville is broken into major periods that include the Colonial (1562 – 1821); the Territorial and Antebellum (1821 – 1860); the Civil War to the Twentieth Century; and the First Half of the Twentieth Century.

Colonial Period:

(First & Second Spanish Period & British Period)

During their first occupation of Florida (1565 – 1763), the Spanish colonial government at St. Augustine made very few attempts to settle and exploit the vast territories of East Florida. Except for a chain of Franciscan missions along the Atlantic Coast and west to Apalachee, as well as a few large land grants for cattle ranching, most of their activities centered around St. Augustine which served primarily as a military outpost protecting the Spanish fleet. Eleven land grants for cattle ranching were made along the St. Johns River. Being located on the narrowest point of the St. Johns River, the area later developed as Jacksonville was known by Native Americans as Wacca Pilatka, meaning the place of the cows crossing, later translated by the British as Cowford.⁵

During their occupation of Florida (1763 – 1789), the British started a policy of granting

⁴ Downtown Historic Context Provided by The City of Jacksonville's Historic Preservation Section of the Planning and Development Department.

⁵ Historic Property Associates, *Historic Building Survey of Downtown Jacksonville* (Jacksonville Downtown Development Authority, November, 1991), p. 2.

T. Frederick Davis, *History of Jacksonville, Florida and Vicinity, 1513-1924*. (St. Augustine: Florida Historical Society, 1925, 1990 Reprint), p. 25.

large parcels of land for the purpose of developing plantations and settlements. Although a total of 114 land grants representing 1.4 million acres had been awarded by 1776, only sixteen were actually settled as exemplified by the 2,000-acre grant made in 1765 to Marquis of Hastings that included the present area of Downtown Jacksonville. A significant development made in East Florida by the British was the completion of the Kings Road that connected New Smyrna south of St. Augustine with the Georgia Colony. Cutting through the southeast part of present-day Duval County, the Kings Road crossed the St. Johns River at Cowford. A small settlement, called St. Nicholas, developed during this period on the south side of the river at Cowford to serve travelers along the Kings Road.⁶

With the transfer of Florida back to Spain in 1784, the Spanish government continued the liberal land policy started by the British. Contrary to official policy elsewhere in the Spanish Empire, the crown allowed non-Catholics to settle in Florida in order to populate and develop the vast territories of East and West Florida. In 1791, a grant for 451 acres in the present-day Downtown area was made to Robert Pritchard who lived on the property for a short period. 200 acres of Pritchard's grant were later awarded to Maria Taylor in 1816 to compensate for military service provided to the Spanish government by her late husband. Most of Taylor's property later came under the ownership of Isaiah Hart who moved to the area in 1821 from St. Marys, Georgia. Also, in 1816, a fifty-acre land grant east of present-day Market Street was issued to Juan Le Maestro who sold the property to John Brady in 1817. Another early land grants recipient was Daniel Hogans who received in 1817 a concession of 255 acres located east of Hogans Creek (East Jacksonville). The LaVilla area west of Downtown was the result of a 350-acre land grant made to John Jones in 1801 and re-ceded in 1804 to Isaac Hendricks.⁷

Territorial and Antebellum Period:

To remove the threat of Spanish Florida becoming a haven for run-away slaves and to satisfy the growing desire for new lands, the United States Government acquired Florida by the Adams - Onis Treaty in 1819. By the time Florida was finally transferred to the United States in 1821, a small settlement had developed along the Kings Road on the north side of the St. Johns River. Prominent landowner, Isaiah Hart led the successful effort to have a town planned. Composed of twenty square blocks, the

⁶ James Robertson Ward, *Old Hickory's Town, An Illustrated History of Jacksonville*. (Jacksonville, Florida: Old Hickory's Town, Inc., 1985), pp. 63-64.

Historic Property Associates, pp. 2-3.

Davis, pp. 26-28.

⁷ Works Projects Administration, Historical Records Survey. *Spanish Land Grants in Florida, Volume V, Confirmed Claims, S-V*. (Tallahassee, Florida: State Library Board, May, 1941).

Historic Property Associates, pp. 3-4.

Davis, pp. 39-50.

town was named in honor of popular military leader, Andrew Jackson. The original north-south streets surveyed by Daniel H. Miller included Newnan Street, Market Street, Liberty Street, and Washington Street with the east - west streets being Bay Street, Forsyth Street, Adams Street, Monroe Street, and Duval Street. At the time, Jacksonville had a store, a hotel, and a tavern to serve the travelers crossing the St. Johns River in John Brady's ferry located at the foot of Liberty Street. On August 12, 1822, Duval County was created by the legislative council with Jacksonville serving as the county seat. In 1832, with a population of about 100, Jacksonville became the ninth Florida town to incorporate.⁸

The town's population grew as its economy strengthened with the processing and shipping of lumber and agricultural products from the interior. However, the increased settlement of the territory caused tension and friction with the Seminole Indians that resulted in warfare between 1835 and 1842. Although trade was disrupted, Jacksonville did benefit from serving as a staging area for Federal troops, as well as being a safe haven for planters and settlers displaced by the conflicts in the interior. To provide a sanctuary against attacks, a log blockhouse was constructed in 1836 at the northeast corner of Ocean Street and East Monroe Street. With the end of the Seminole Wars, the territory attracted additional settlers and land speculators resulting in Jacksonville's continued population growth. Surviving the financial panic of 1836, the city experienced a 67 percent increase in population between 1842 (450) and 1847 (750). By the time the Florida Territory was admitted to the Union as a slave state in 1845, Jacksonville's importance in the region was well established by its port which was the major center for shipping cotton and lumber from the interior.⁹

During the 1850s, Jacksonville suffered numerous calamities, including scarlet fever, smallpox epidemics, and Yellow Fever Quarantine, as well as a fire in 1854 that destroyed seventy buildings causing an estimated \$300,000 in property damage. Nevertheless, the city continued to grow and by the end of the decade had twelve steam driven sawmills producing 40 million board feet of lumber per year, a tannery, bakery, two foundries and machine shops, as well as five restaurants, two large hotels, and numerous boarding houses. Recognized as the founder of Jacksonville, Isaiah D. Hart owned much of the property in Downtown Jacksonville particularly to the north and west of the original 1822 plat. In developing what is now called Hart's Map of Jacksonville (1859), he set aside a "blackjack ridge" for use as a public square

⁸ Dena Snodgrass, "The Birth of a City", *Jacksonville Historical Society Papers*, Vol. 5, 1969, pp. 37-41.
Davis, pp. 54-56.

Historic Property Associates, p. 5.

Ward, pp. 121-23.

⁹ Davis, pp. 76-77, 82.

Historic Property Associates, pp. 5-7.

Ward, pp. 135-36.

(block 39). Envisioning this block as a marketplace and general meeting area, Hart platted smaller half lots facing the park for new shops and businesses. Executors of Hart's estate donated the block to the City in January of 1866 for a consideration of \$10.00. However, interest in improving the square, at that time called the City Park, did not develop until the St. James Hotel was built immediately to the north in 1869.¹⁰ In 1859, Jacksonville's long association with the railroad industry began with the completion of the Florida Atlantic & Gulf Central Railroad to Alligator (Lake City). By 1860, the city was the third largest in Florida with a population of 2,118.¹¹

Civil War to Twentieth Century:

(Reconstruction, Tourist Era, & Spanish American War)

During the Civil War, Jacksonville was occupied four times by Union forces resulting in the city being for the most part abandoned and significantly destroyed. Much of the military action near Jacksonville occurred in the west part of LaVilla that was connected to the interior of the state by the Old Plank Road, Alligator Road, and the railroad. During the final occupation in 1864 following the Battle of Olustee, the Federal troops constructed an earthen defensive wall with redoubts around Jacksonville connecting with McCoys Creek and Hogans Creek. Following the war, the west part of LaVilla continued to be occupied by Federal troops, many of whom were freedmen that stayed in the area after being mustered out of military service.¹²

Like the rest of Florida, Jacksonville was slow to recover from the war that had drained manpower while leaving the economy in shambles. In addition, the city became home to numerous freedmen attracted to urban areas such as Jacksonville because of potential jobs and housing, as well as the protection and welfare services provided by the Freedmen's Bureau. However, by the end of the 1860s Jacksonville began to draw new settlers and visitors who were attracted by Florida's subtropical climate. With its superior rail and steamship connections, the city soon became a popular tourist destination. Billed as the "The Winter City in a Summer Land", the number of winter visitors in the city grew from 14,000 in 1870 to 100,000 by 1885. The thriving city by 1886 featured numerous churches and a synagogue, a high school, a hospital, a theatre, and a library association, as well as numerous banks, shops, railroads,

¹⁰ *The Florida Times Union*, June 22, 1924.

Davis, pp. 115, 332-33.

¹¹ *Ibid*, pp. 97-99, 341-42.

Historic Property Associates, p. 7.

¹² For information on Jacksonville during the Civil War see: Richard A. Martin & Daniel L. Schafer, *Jacksonville's Ordeal by Fire, A Civil War History*. (Jacksonville, Florida: Florida Publishing Company, 1984).

Davis, pp. 116-37.

Historic Property Associates, p. 8.

Ward, pp. 139-51.

wharves, and elegant hotels, such as the St. James and the Windsor fronting the city park (Hemming Plaza) along with the Everett (Grand National) and Carleton that faced Bay Street.¹³

As the city grew following the Civil War, new towns and neighborhoods developed around the Downtown area, such as LaVilla, Oakland, East Jacksonville, Fairfield, Springfield, Hansontown, Riverside, and Brooklyn. In 1887, these towns and unincorporated neighborhoods were annexed into the city limits, thereby doubling the land area while increasing Jacksonville's population from 11,545 to 21,589. Jacksonville's popularity as a winter tourist destination had begun to decline with the extension of the railroad further south along Florida's Atlantic coast, as well as to the Tampa Bay area, which resulted in the development of new resorts.¹⁴ While in the midst of celebrating the annual Sub-Tropical Exhibition at Waterworks Park, Jacksonville suffered from a major yellow fever epidemic in the summer of 1888 that virtually shut the city down and resulted in 430 deaths by the end of the epidemic in November of that year.¹⁵

Another blow to the local economy occurred as a result of a severe freeze during the winter of 1894 – 1895 that destroyed the vast citrus groves located along the St. Johns River. With the shift of the citrus production further south after 1895, Jacksonville lost its prosperous citrus shipping industry. However, during the 1890s, lumber, naval stores, and cigar manufacturing played an important role in compensating for the loss of tourism and citrus trade. By 1895, Jacksonville was one of the first cities in the nation to build and maintain a municipal electric power plant. Also, the first electric trolley service connecting downtown with the adjacent neighborhoods started in that same year.¹⁶ With the outbreak of the Spanish American War in 1898, the city received an additional economic boost when it played host to over 29,000 soldiers assigned to Camp Cuba Libre, which was located in the east part of Springfield.¹⁷

¹³ Davis, pp. 138-48, 487-90.

Historic Property Associates, pp. 9-11.

¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 9-11.

¹⁵ For more about Jacksonville's experience during the 1889 Yellow Fever Epidemic see: Richard A. Martin, *The City Makers*. (Jacksonville, Florida: Convention Press, 1972).
Davis, pp. 180-86.

Richard A. Martin, *A Century of Service, St. Luke's Hospital, 1873-1973*. (Jacksonville, Florida, 1973), pp. 69-96.

¹⁶ Historic Property Associates, pp. 10-11.

¹⁷ Davis, pp. 205-15.

Martin, pp. 110-21.

First Half of the Twentieth Century:

(1901 Fire, Jacksonville Renaissance, Florida Land Boom, Depression & World War II)

By 1900, Jacksonville was the largest city in Florida in terms of population, which had reached 28,430. The signature event in the history of Downtown Jacksonville that defined the architectural character of the city during the first half of the twentieth century was the “Great Fire of 1901”. Starting in the LaVilla area west of Downtown at noon on May 3, 1901, the fire destroyed within an eight-hour period over 2,300 buildings located on 148 city blocks causing an estimated 15 million in property damage. Although only seven people lost their lives as a result of the fire, 8,677 people were left homeless. Destroying the oldest and most densely populated area of the city, the fire consumed twenty-three churches, ten hotels, including the grand St James and Windsor, as well as almost all public buildings, such as the courthouse and city hall.¹⁸

The destruction caused by the 1901 fire ushered in a new era of growth in Downtown Jacksonville referred to as the Jacksonville Renaissance (1901 – 1920). The business opportunities caused by the fire had attracted numerous architects, builders, and investors from different parts of the country. New construction in the Downtown area began to reflect a variety of architectural styles popular during the first quarter of the twentieth century, such as the traditional Colonial, Neoclassical, and Gothic Revivals, interspersed with the more modernistic designs of the Prairie School and the Chicago school of commercial architecture. These latter styles were particularly evident in the work of noted architect, Henry John Klutho (1873 – 1964) who came to Jacksonville after reading about the 1901 fire in the *New York Times*.¹⁹

The buildings constructed in Downtown Jacksonville during the Jacksonville Renaissance also reflected new construction techniques and materials, such as steel and reinforced concrete structural systems, that accommodated the first true skyscrapers in Florida. Some of these pioneer high rise buildings, all constructed

¹⁸ For more on the 1901 fire see: Bill Foley and Wayne W. Wood, *The Great Fire of 1901*. (Jacksonville Historical Society, 2001).

Davis, pp. 219-28.

Historic Property Associates, pp. 11-13.

Ward, pp. 175-86.

¹⁹ For more on Jacksonville during the two decades after the 1901 fire see: James B. Crooks. *Jacksonville After the Fire, 1901-1919: A New South City*. (Jacksonville, Florida: University of North Florida Presses, 1991).

For more on the life and works of Henry John Klutho see: Robert C. Broward, *The Architecture of Henry John Klutho: The Prairie School in Jacksonville*. (Jacksonville, Florida: University of North Florida Presses, 1983).

Historic Property Associates, pp. 13-17.

Foley & Wood, pp. 212-19.

along or near West Forsyth Street during the Jacksonville Renaissance, included the Bisbee Building (1908 – 1909), the Florida Life Building (1911 – 1912), the Atlantic National Bank Building (1908 – 1909), and the Heard National Bank Building (1911 – 1913) demolished in 1981.

In addition, many of the major denominations built new sanctuaries in or near Downtown Jacksonville during this period immediately following the 1901 fire, including Mount Zion A.M.E. Church (1901 – 1905), First Baptist Church (1903), Immaculate Conception Catholic Church (1907 – 1910), First Methodist Church (1902), St. Johns Episcopal Cathedral (1903 – 1906), Bethel Baptist Institutional Church (1904), Snyder Memorial Methodist Church (1902 – 1903), and First Presbyterian Church (1901 – 1902). The fire also resulted in the construction of new governmental buildings, including a city hall, county courthouse, and jail. A new Central Grammar School, Duval High School, and Stanton High School were rebuilt as well. Soon downtown streets were lined with new stores, theaters, banks, office buildings, and residences. Other noted downtown buildings from this period included the Dyal-Upchurch Building (1901 – 1902), the St. James Building (1911 – 1912), the Old Florida National Bank (1902 & 1906), the Florida Life Building (1911 – 1912), the Old Y.M.C.A. Building (1908 – 1909), the Rhodes-Futch-Collins Building (1913 – 1914), and the Morocco Temple (1910 – 1911).²⁰

The second period of significant new construction in Downtown Jacksonville following the 1901 fire coincided with the Great Florida Land Boom; a period of frenzied speculative development during the 1920s that forever changed the landscape of Florida. Although South Florida received the lion's share of development, virtually every section of the state experienced significant growth during the boom. Jacksonville became a primary departure point for visitors entering Florida. In early 1925 some 20-25 trains were arriving at the city each day. The Chamber of Commerce reported that over 150,000 automobiles had passed over the St. Johns River Bridge (Acosta Bridge) during the spring of 1925. In July of that year alone, building permits issued totaled \$1,177,383, ranking Jacksonville sixth in the state in new construction behind the major cities of the southern peninsula. Construction of numerous new high rise buildings, such as the Carling Hotel (1925 – 1926), the Barnett National Bank Building (1926), the Atlantic National Bank Annex (1925 – 1926), the Greenleaf & Crosby Building (1927), and the Hildebrandt Building (1926 – 1927) reflected a shift in Jacksonville's financial center from West Forsyth Street to West Adams Street. Stimulated by the Florida Land Boom, construction of these

²⁰ Wayne W. Wood, *Jacksonville 's Architectural Heritage: Landmarks for the Future*. (Jacksonville, Florida: University of North Florida Press, 1989), pp. 28, 30-85.
Historic Property Associates, pp. 13-17.

buildings also reflected Jacksonville's role as Florida's dominant commercial and financial center during the first quarter of the century.²¹

The collapse of the Florida Land Boom in the 1920s followed by the onset of the Great Depression during the 1930s did slow the growth and development of Jacksonville. For example, during the height of the Florida Land Boom in 1926, building permits were valued at \$13,051,074. By 1931, building permit value had fallen to a low in Jacksonville of \$1,728,200, with most of it attributed to alterations and expansion, or to residential construction in the newer suburbs outside Downtown and adjacent urban neighborhoods. Building permit activity did significantly increase following the annexation of growing South Jacksonville to the city in 1932. During the 1930s, only a few significant new buildings were added to the downtown area. The two most significant being the United States Post Office and Courthouse at 310 West Duval Street (1932 – 1933), and the Western Union Company Building at 333 North Laura Street (1930 – 1931). The Great Depression followed by World War II resulted in the built environment of Downtown Jacksonville remaining much as it was at the end of the Florida Land Boom in 1929.²²

Following World War II, Downtown continued to serve as the financial, commercial, and social heart of the city. Although residential uses had become less of a component of Downtown, a variety of offices and businesses continued to thrive well into the 1950s. At the same time, the core city also began having more competition from suburban shopping centers and commercial strips. However, between 1955 and 1965, Jacksonville's Downtown entered its greatest period of growth and redevelopment since the building renaissance following the Great Fire of 1901.²³ Under the leadership of Haydon Burns, a five-term mayor and later Governor of Florida, the City launched perhaps its most extensive civic improvement program. This initiative to improve downtown started in 1955 when Mayor Burns used four million dollars in Parking Lot Certified Bonds to clean-up the north bank by acquiring and removing old docks and warehouses in order to accommodate a new bulkhead. During that same year, the Jacksonville Expressway Authority was organized for the purpose of designing and funding a new highway system that would enhance traffic flow between downtown and the growing suburbs.

"Jacksonville's Decade of Progress" continued with the passage in 1958 of a thirty

²¹ Wood, pp. 28, 33.

Historic Property Associates, pp. 17-19.

²² Wood, pp. 28, 71, 81.

Historic Property Associates, pp. 20-21.

²³ James B. Crooks, Jacksonville, *The Consolidation Story, From Civil Rights to the Jaguars*. Gainesville, University Presses of Florida, 2004, pp. 1-2.

million-bond issue, financed through revenue certificates that funded the construction of a new city hall, courthouse, coliseum, and civic auditorium, as well as the Buckman Sewage Treatment Plant.²⁴ These new public amenities, along with the new Wolfson Baseball Park, expanded Gator Bowl, and new correctional facilities, were capped by the 1962 bond issue that funded the new main library, the south bank park and marina, as well as the parking lot and riverfront boulevard behind the new city hall and courthouse. However, the other half of the “Jacksonville Story” was the significant amount of private development stimulated by these major municipal investments in Downtown Jacksonville.

In 1953, the Florida Legislature passed the Regional Home Office Law that provided attractive tax benefits to out-of-state insurance companies that relocated to Florida. As a result of this legislation, Jacksonville soon became the “Insurance Center of the Southeast” becoming home for the central office of seventeen companies, five regional offices, and headquarters for twenty major general insurance agencies. Starting with the Southeast regional office of Prudential Insurance Company in 1954, other major companies making a presence in the city included Independent Life, Peninsular Life, Gulf Life, Florida Blue Cross & Blue Shield, and the Afro-American Life Insurance Company. Most of these companies constructed new office buildings in Downtown Jacksonville during the 1950s and 60s. Other major private developments that changed the skyline of Jacksonville included the national headquarters of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad (CSX) housed in a new fifteen story office building, a new four-story Sears Roebuck retail store that covered two city blocks, and the 550 room Robert Meyer Hotel.²⁵

However, this period was also a very troubling time for the city. Issues related to race relations, discredited local schools, political corruption, as well as concerns about air and water quality did much to tarnish the legacy of “Jacksonville’s Decade of Progress”.²⁶ Changes in Downtown Jacksonville during the last forty years have erased much of the architectural legacy of this significant period in the City’s history. The municipal baseball field, stadium, coliseum, and jail have been replaced by new facilities. The Jacksonville Civic Auditorium, as well as the south bank park and marina (Friendship Park) have been significantly remodeled from their original design. Currently, only the City Hall Annex, Duval County Courthouse, and Haydon Burns Public Library still have most of their architectural integrity.

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Ibid, pp. 6, 7.

Florida Times Union, January 4, 1959, p. 64.

²⁶ Crooks, pp. 11, 12.

Description of How Proposed Landmarks Meet Applicable Criteria for Designation Per *Jacksonville Ordinance Code*, Section 307.104 (Cited with Footnotes or End Notes).

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



Figure 3-1949 Photo of Furchgott's, with women at the Adams Street entrance

At the time that the Furchgott's Department Store was erected, Downtown Jacksonville was a popular place for the City's citizens to shop, dine, and see a show. The streets were full of people going to work, shopping, and experiencing everyday life. The Furchgott's Department Store was one of many department stores that attracted people to Downtown. Furchgott's is known to Jacksonville natives as the place everyone went to get their picture with Santa during the holidays. It was also known for their higher end products and their famous marketing campaigns. Everything you purchased from Furchgott's came in a box with pink strawberries on it. If a person received one of the

famous pink strawberry boxes, they knew something

special was inside.

The West Adams Street Furchgott's was not the first Furchgott's Department Store. The Furchgott's name

has a long history in the City of Jacksonville. The first store Leopold Furchgott opened in Jacksonville was actually in 1898 on

the corner of Bay and Main Streets named Kohn-Furchgotts.²⁷ Eventually, the chain grew into three other stores in Jacksonville and one in Daytona Beach.²⁸



Figure 4-Photo of the famous Furchgott's strawberry box

Not only is the Furchgott's Department Store chain culturally significant to Jacksonville, but the building itself is architecturally significant. The Art Deco style is rare in the Jacksonville area. The structure sits on a prominent Downtown corner of West Adams and Hogan Streets. The building was built by renown local

²⁷ *Remembering Furchgott's Department Store*

²⁸ *Furchgott's, Jacksonville, Florida*

architectural firm, Marsh and Saxelbye, in the Art Deco style. The majority of the Art Deco features have been preserved throughout the history of the building. This area of the Downtown still contains the majority of the pre and post war (World War II) buildings that contributed to the growth of the Downtown. This structure is also a contributing structure to the Downtown National Register of Historic District.

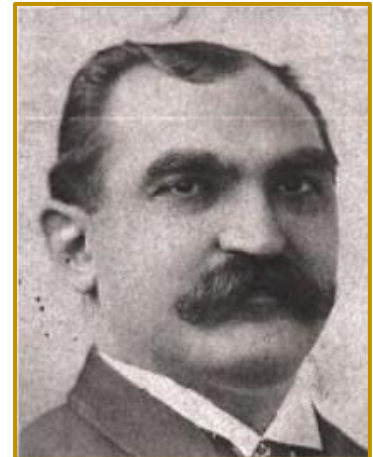
2. Its location is the site of a significant local, state or national event.

Further research would be required to determine if the location is the site of a significant local, state, or national event.

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

In 1868, Leopold Furchgott and Charles Benedict opened a dry goods store on the southwest corner of W. Bay and Main Streets.²⁹ Leopold and Charles were prominent Jewish businessmen in the community. Leopold was consistently an active member of the Jacksonville business world. Below is a list of organizations he was involved in, according to the 1899 City Directory:

1st Vice President for the Jacksonville Board of Trade, Vice President for the Florida Investment and Savings Bank, Vice President for the Union Building Association, one of the Directors for the High Springs Phosphate Company, Treasurer of the Jacksonville Gala Week Association, and Treasurer of the Park Opera House. Even Leopold's wife was active in the community, she is listed in the 1899 City Directory as a Director of the Jacksonville Library Association.



Leopold and Charles' dry goods store was right in the heart of Downtown and helped sustain the growth of the Downtown. During these times, the dry goods store was the local place to catch up on gossip and how you kept up with the happenings of the town. By 1899, the dry goods store grew big enough to employ many clerks, bookkeepers, and was advertised to have clothing, millinery, and wraps. Unfortunately, the 1901 fire destroyed most of Downtown including the buildings along Bay Street. Luckily, Furchgott was business savvy enough to have

²⁹ *The Growth and Development of the Jacksonville Jewish Business Community 1857-1920*

insurance on the building and received \$173,000 from the insurance company³⁰. It appears from the City Directory for 1904 that they were able to rebuild in the same location. Furchgott's store (under different names) was able to rebuild after the fire and stay in business until 1984³¹. This retail store was open for more than 116 years. This is a testament to the legacy of the store and the family.

4. 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.

The Furchgott's Department Store was designed in 1941 by the notable local architectural firm Marsh and Saxelbye in the Art Deco style. This structure exemplifies the variety of architectural design skills the firm developed over time. Marsh and Saxelbye did not focus on one specific style. Instead, over time they were able to master many eclectic styles indicative of their architectural talents.

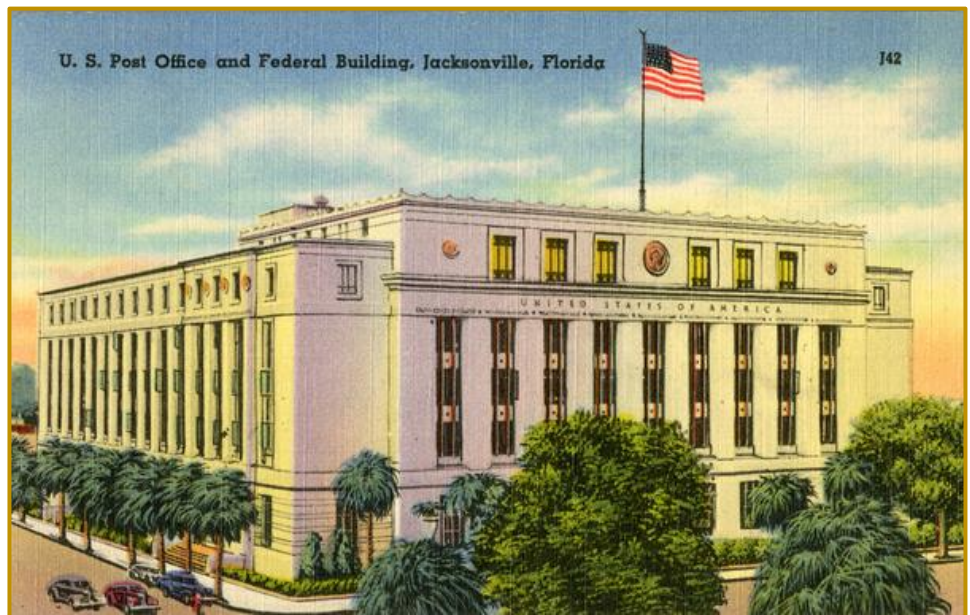


Figure 5-The old Duval County Post Office, another notable Art-Deco building designed by Marsh and Saxelbye in Downtown Jacksonville, FL

The Historic Preservation Section of the Planning and Development Department of the City of Jacksonville has researched the firm. This excerpt is from the Historic Preservation Section's archives, "A native of Deland, Florida, William Mulford Marsh (1889 - 1946) began his architectural practice around 1912. He had no formal training in architecture, but acquired his knowledge through first-hand experience, principally with the firm of Talley and Summer. Prior to joining in partnership with Harold Saxelbye in 1919, Marsh designed several Prairie-style

³⁰ *The Growth and Development of the Jacksonville Jewish Business Community 1857-1920*

³¹ *Remembering Furchgott's Department Store*

buildings in Jacksonville. Harold Frederick Saxelbye (1885 - 1964) was born in Hull, England and was educated at the Royal Institute of Architects in the Beaux Arts tradition, which drew on classical motifs. He moved to New York in 1904 and practiced there with the firm of Jacobs and Davies, and later as a partner in the firm of Thompson and Frohling. In 1913 he moved to Jacksonville to design the Mason Hotel (Mayflower). After a brief association with architects Talley & Summer, Saxelbye entered a partnership with Marsh that lasted twenty-seven years. During that period between 1919 and 1946, Marsh & Saxelbye was the most prolific architectural firm in Jacksonville, especially during the Florida Land Boom of the 1920's. The firm is noted for many excellent commercial, institutional, and residential designs in Jacksonville and throughout the state.³²

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

The Furchgott's building was designed and constructed during a period when



Figure 6—Interior elevator exemplifying Art-Deco interior architecture

materials and craftsmanship were less expensive but higher quality. For example, the Furchgott's structure was constructed of terra cotta blocks as seen in Figure 8 below. This is a much higher quality material compared to its modern-day equivalent, the concrete block. In addition, the Furchgott building was constructed using concrete floors between each level, modern construction methods would use subfloors composed of a wood product instead of concrete due to the cost. The terrazzo floor entrance invokes the Art Deco style with the alternating colored strips and the Furchgott's "F" in a circle. Terrazzo floors are extremely durable and were chosen for the aesthetics value. Unfortunately, they

are not widely used in today's construction due their application being labor intensive and costly to install. All of these elements are still preserved and will be preserved for years to come.

³² Historic Preservation Section

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

According to *A Field Guide to American Houses*,³³ the Art Deco design follows under the Modernistic style category. This design became famous after Eliel Saarinen entered it into the Chicago Tribune's design competition for their headquarters building in 1922³⁴. In McAlester's book they describe the Art Deco features as smooth stucco walls, geometric motifs, and vertical decorative elements which add a vertical emphasis.

The Furchgott's Building, encompassing the prominent corner of W. Adams and Hogan Streets, is a great example of the Art Deco style. The Marsh and Saxelbye architectural firm designed the structure in 1941 for Furchgott's Department Store. The majority of the original Art Deco characteristics have been preserved over the years. Those features include the vertical striations between windows (see Photo 2), the



Figure 7-Adams Street entrance to Furchgott's with seal, exemplifying the Art-Deco detail of the original design

geometric light fixtures inside (see Photo 17), the terrazzo entrance with strips in alternating colors (Figure 7 above), the aluminum horizontal band distinguishing the first floor from the remaining floors (see Photo 4), and the metal windows (see Photo 1). The vertical striations mixed with the horizontal elements are indicative of the Art Deco style. Within the Downtown area there are only a few examples of Art Deco structures. Furchgott's is one of the best remaining examples considering the majority of character defining features have been preserved throughout the history of the building. Some Art Deco structures mix other styles into the design, especially Art Moderne style. Furchgott's is clearly Art Deco with the vertical and horizontal elements and the terrazzo entrance.

Not only is the exterior a testament to the Art Deco style, the interior contains many Art Deco features such as the elevators with the gold paint and vertical and horizontal details in a complimentary color. The mannequin display areas are curved to add a little extra interest to an otherwise utilitarian use.

³³ McAlester, 1991

³⁴ McAlester, 1991

7. Its suitability for preservation or restoration.

Overall, the structure is in relatively good condition. Because the structure was vacant for so many years, many of the original Art Deco features have been preserved. As expected with a long vacant building, roof leaks are apparent on the interior of the 5th floor. The damage caused by the leaks are repairable. Some of the original features were removed such as the storefront, however this is a common issue with commercial structures. The existing storefront systems are similar enough the original design that they do not have a negative impact on the integrity of the overall design. In addition, the corner entrance alteration can easily be restored back to the original design. Lastly, any of the windows and storefronts that may have been filled can be restored back to the original design if necessary. The Furchgott's building is a great example of a culturally significant reminder of Downtown's popularity.



Figure 8-Original red terracotta brick exposed in the building's current condition

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III. LEGAL DESCRIPTION AND MAP

IV. PROOF OF PUBLIC NOTICE

V. LIST OF PROPERTY OWNERS
LOCATED WITHIN THE THREE
HUNDRED AND FIFTY (350) FEET OF
THE PROPOSED LANDMARK

VI. APPENDIX A: PHOTO REFERENCES

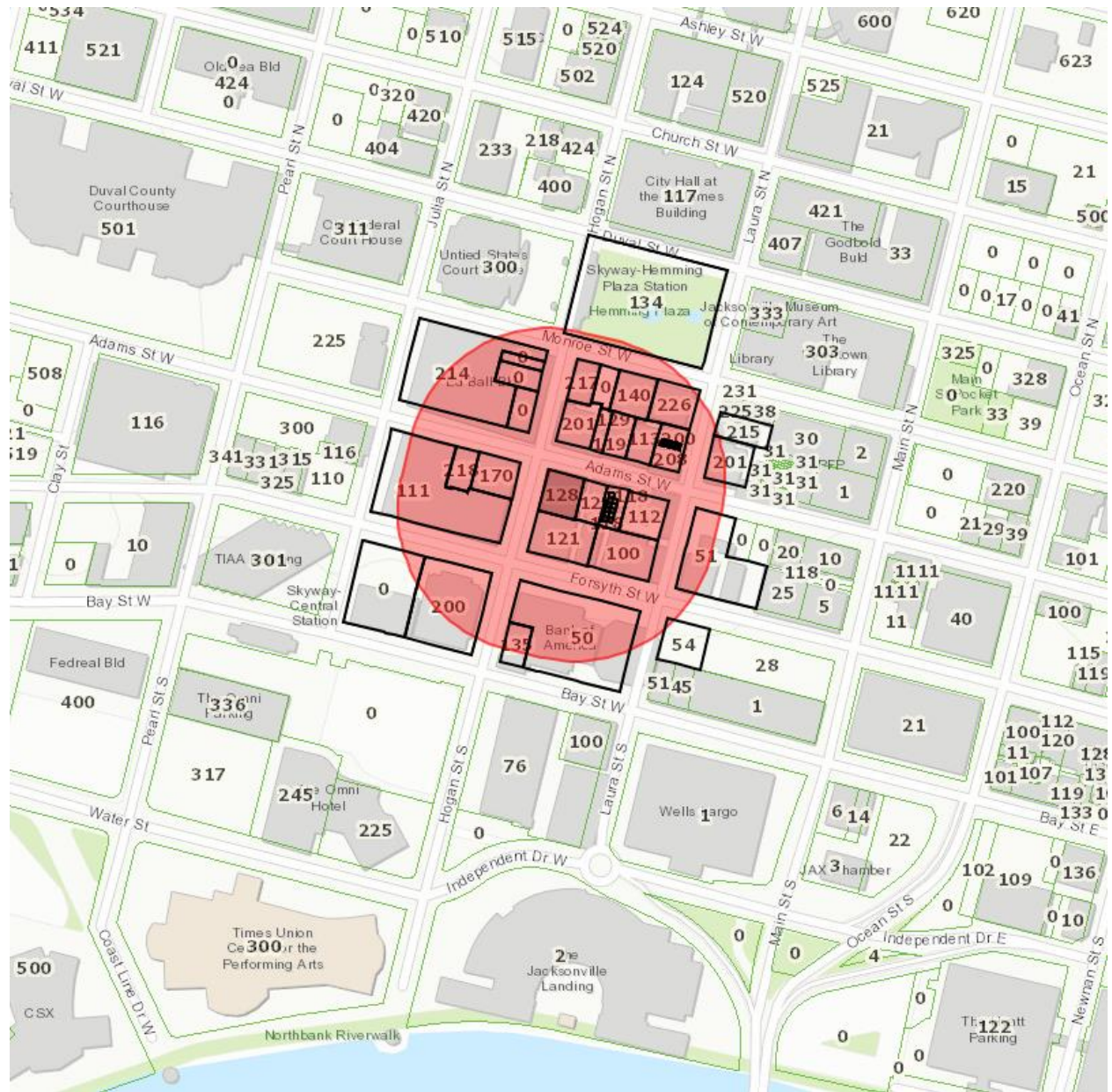
III.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION AND MAP

EXHIBIT A – LEGAL DESCRIPTION

39-2S-26E, JACKSONVILLE HARTS MAP, LOT 4 (EX E 1 FT), BLOCK 37.

RE: 073739-0000



IV.

PROOF OF PUBLICATION OF PUBLIC NOTICE

(Published daily except Saturday, Sunday and legal holidays)
Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida

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 JACKSONVILLE DAILY RECORD, a daily (except Saturday, Sunday and legal holidays) 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-21-07 The Furchgott's Department Store Building

in the Court of Duval County, Florida, was published in said newspaper in the issues of 8/4/21

Affiant further says that the said JACKSONVILLE DAILY RECORD is a newspaper at Jacksonville, in said Duval County, Florida, and that the said newspaper has heretofore been continuously published in said Duval County, Florida, each day (except Saturday, Sunday and legal holidays) and has been entered as periodicals matter at the post office in Jacksonville, in said Duval County, Florida, for a period of one year next preceding the first publication of the attached copy of advertisement; and affiant further says that she has neither paid nor promised any person, firm or corporation any discount, rebate, commission or refund for the purpose of securing this advertisement for publication in said newspaper.

*This notice was placed on the newspaper's website and floridapublicnotices.com on the same day the notice appeared in the newspaper.



Rhonda Fisher

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 4th day of August, 2021 A.D. by Rhonda Fisher who is personally known to me.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON APPLICATION TO DESIGNATE THE FURCHGOTT'S DEPARTMENT STORE BUILDING AS A CITY OF JACKSONVILLE HISTORIC LANDMARK

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on the 25th day of August, 2021 A.D. at 3:00 P.M., the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Jacksonville will hold a *Public Hearing* in Conference Room 1002, 1st Floor, Ed Ball Building, 214 North Hogan Street, Jacksonville, for the consideration of the Furchgott's Department Store Building, 128 West Adams Street, as a City of Jacksonville Historic Landmark, pursuant to *Jacksonville Ordinance Code 307.104*.

Exhibit A

Legal Description

39-2S-26E, JACKSONVILLE HARTS MAP, LOT 4 (EX E 1 FT), BLOCK 37. RE: 073739-0000

This application (LM-21-07) is being sponsored by Lotus Commercial USA, LLC. 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*.

DATED this 4th day of August, 2021 A.D.

Jack C. Demetree, III
Chairman

Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission
City of Jacksonville

Aug. 4 00 (21-05207D)

Seal

Notary Public, State of Florida

V.

**LIST OF PROPERTY OWNERS LOCATED
WITHIN THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY FEET
OF THE PROPOSED LANDMARK SITE**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON
APPLICATION TO DESIGNATE
THE FURCHGOTT'S DEPARTMENT STORE BUILDING
AS A CITY OF JACKSONVILLE HISTORIC LANDMARK**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on the 25th day of August, 2021 A.D. at 3:00 P.M., the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Jacksonville will hold a *Public Hearing* in Conference Room 1002, 1st Floor, Ed Ball Building, 214 North Hogan Street, Jacksonville, for the consideration of the Furchgott's Department Store Building, 128 West Adams Street, as a City of Jacksonville Historic Landmark, pursuant to *Jacksonville Ordinance Code 307.104*.

Exhibit A

Legal Description

39-2S-26E, JACKSONVILLE HARTS MAP, LOT 4 (EX E 1 FT), BLOCK 37. RE: 073739-0000

This application (LM-21-07) is being sponsored by Lotus Commercial USA, LLC. 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*.

DATED this 4th day of August, 2021 A.D.

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

JACKSONVILLE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

LM-21-07

The Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing, pursuant to Section 307.104, *City of Jacksonville Ordinance Code* on **Application No.: LM-21-07** regarding the proposed designation of the Furchgott's Department Store Building at 128 West Adams Street, as a City of Jacksonville Landmark as noted below:

Date: Wednesday, August 25, 2021

Time; 3:00 P. M.

Place: Conference Room 1002
1st 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: 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.

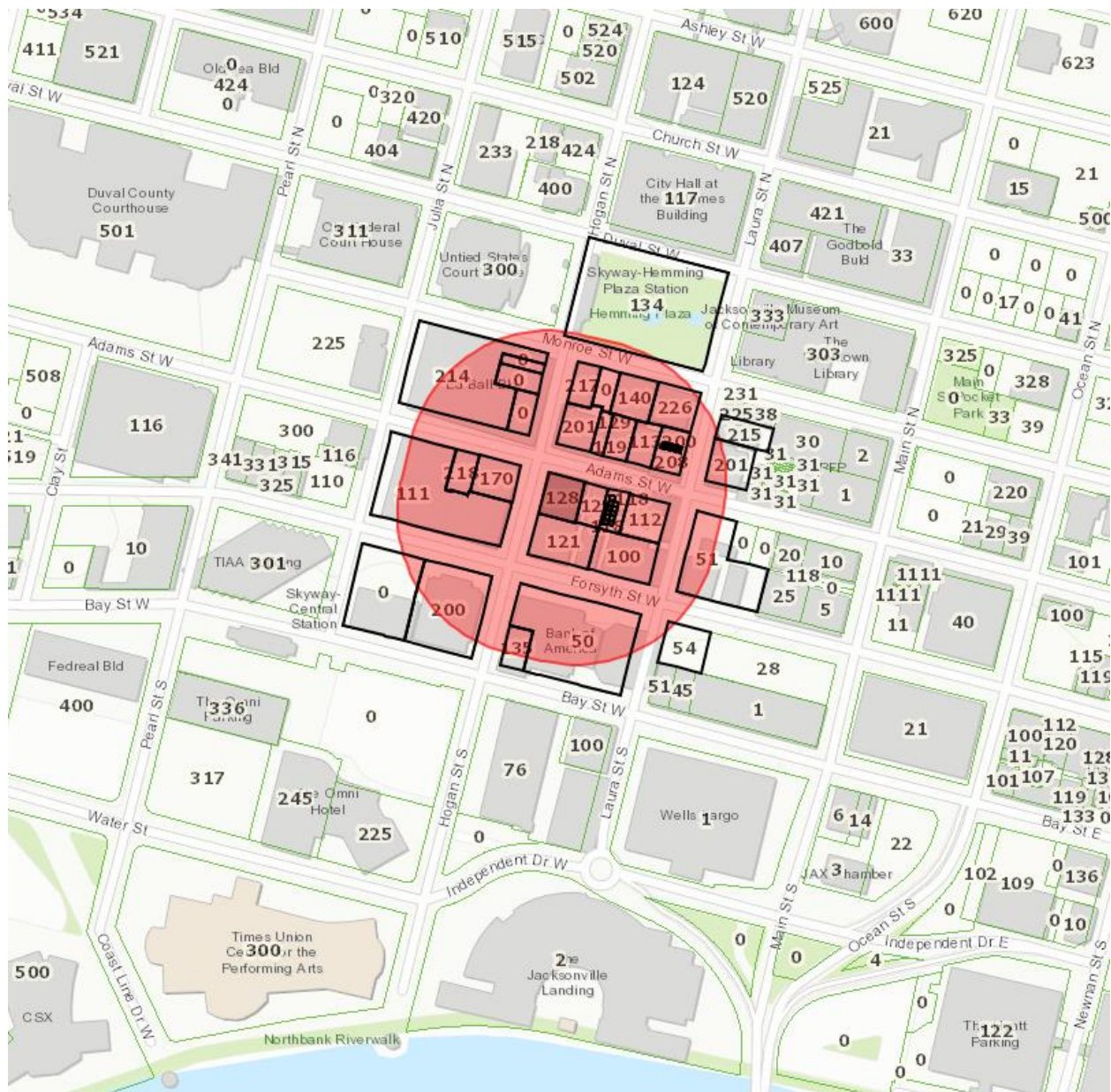
ALL PERSONS INTERESTED ARE NOTIFIED TO BE PRESENT AT SAID TIME AND PLACE, AND THEY MAY BE HEARD WITH RESPECT TO THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION.

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**

**39-2S-26E, JACKSONVILLE HARTS MAP, LOT 4 (EX E 1 FT), BLOCK 37.
RE: 073739-0000**



073738 0000
100 N LAURA ST LLC
10 W ADAMS ST
JACKSONVILLE FL 32202

073745 0000
119 WEST ADAMS STREET LLC
2011 GIBSON RD
JACKSONVILLE FL 32207

073735 0000
121 ATLANTIC PLACE HOLDINGS INC
8823 SAN JOSE BLVD STE 101
JACKSONVILLE FL 32217

073741 0000
126 WEST ADAMS STREET LLC
126 W ADAMS ST
JACKSONVILLE FL 32202-3849

073744 0000
129 WEST ADAMS LLC
2011 GIBSON RD
JACKSONVILLE FL 32207

073751 1024
208 NORTH LAURA LLC
208 N LAURA ST STE 900
JACKSONVILLE FL 32202

073748 0000
217-229 N HOGAN STREET LLC
530 W 7TH ST
LOS ANGELES CA 90014

073742 0000
BARNETT TOWER 2 LLC
100 N CITY PKWY STE 1700
LAS VAGAS NV 89106

073695 0000
CHAMBLIN BOOKMINE LLC
4551 ROOSEVELT BLVD
JACKSONVILLE FL 32210

073768 1300
CITY OF JACKSONVILLE ET AL
C/O CITY REAL ESTATE DIV
JACKSONVILLE FL 32202

073751 0000
DMJ LLC
140 W MONROE ST
JACKSONVILLE FL 32202-3706

073692 0000
ELKS CLUB INVESTMENT LLC
4114 SUNBEAM RD BLDG 3
JACKSONVILLE FL 32257

073763 0055
EXCHANGE AT ADAMS LLC
7880 GATE PKWY STE 300
JACKSONVILLE FL 32256

073751 1008
FLFVENTURE LTD
610 NORTH WYMORE RD
MAITLAND FL 32751

073751 1002
GREENLEAF BUILDING CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION INC
208 N LAURA ST
JACKSONVILLE FL 32202-3500

073743 0000
HOGAN STREET PARTNERS LLP
C/O SHOW CASE DEVELOPERS LLC
JACKSONVILLE FL 32207

073769 0000
HORSTMAN SALLY S
C/O WACHOVIA BANK NA
JACKSONVILLE FL 32231-4247

073741 1000
INVESTORS BUILDING COMDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION INC
118 W ADAMS ST SUITE 3A
JACKSONVILLE FL 32201-0120

073723 0000
JACKSONVILLE TOWER FLORIDA REALTY LP
1 WORLD TRADE CENTER STE 83G
NEW YORK NY 10007

073769 0010
KLABO EMMA J PARNELL
C/O EMMA J PARNELL-KLABO
GLEN ALLEN VA 23059

073676 0000
LAURA TRIO LLC
PO BOX 5160
JACKSONVILLE FL 32247

073669 0000
REGIONS BANK
250 RIVERCHASE PKWY E STE 600
BIRMINGHAM AL 35244

073757 0000
TALARA INVESTMENT GROUP LLC
7880 GATE PKWY STE 300
JACKSONVILLE FL 32256

073739 0000
LOTUS COMMERCIAL USA LLC
P O BOX 307
STARKE FL 32091

073741 1016
SCHULTZ BUILDING INC
118 W ADAMS ST SUITE 3A
JACKSONVILLE FL 32201-1200

073747 0000
W A KNIGHT BLDG DEVELOPMENT LLC
PO BOX 37007
JACKSONVILLE FL 32236-7007