

2020

Designation Application and Report  
Planning and Development Department

Of the City of Jacksonville regarding

**PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF  
The Garden Club of Jacksonville**

**1005 Riverside Avenue**

**LM-19-03**



Submitted by Joel McEachin  
Prepared in accordance with Chapter 307, City of Jacksonville Ordinance Code  
January 22, 2020

On File  
Page 1 of 110

**I.**

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

---

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- I.** Planning and Development Department - Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations.
- II.** Designation Application for the property at 1005 Riverside Avenue
- III.** Legal Description and Map.
- IV.** Proof of Publication of Public Notice.
- V.** List of Property Owners Located within Three Hundred and Fifty (350) Feet of the Proposed Landmark.

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

**LM-19-03**

**The Garden Club of Jacksonville  
1005 Riverside Avenue**

*GENERAL LOCATION:* Southeast corner of Riverside Avenue and Post Street in the Riverside Historic District.

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-19-03**, sponsored by the Garden Club of Jacksonville.

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

- (A) Consistent with action of the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission, the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department began preparing a designation application for the property located at 1005 Riverside Avenue.
- (B) Consistent with the JACKSONVILLE ORDINANCE CODE, SECTION 307.104(d), the Planning and Development Department determined that the application for designation of the property at 1005 Riverside Avenue as a Landmark was complete. 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 1005 Riverside Avenue as a Landmark was published in the *Financial News and Daily Report*. Proof of publication is attached to this report.
- (C) If designated, any activity affecting the exterior of buildings and the site of the proposed landmark will require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission. Before issuing the Certificate of Appropriateness, the Commission will review the proposed activity for consistency with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*. Routine repairs and maintenance, alterations, and new construction not seen from the public right-of-way and other projects consistent with the Secretary's Standards can be pre-approved by the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department. However, the following activities will require a review by the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission.

1. Additions to historic buildings or structures.
2. Window replacement or major changes to or addition of door and window openings.
3. Demolition of all or part of historic buildings.
4. New construction and additions.
5. Enclosure of porch, porte-cochere, or garage.
6. Porch replacement.
7. Relocation of historic buildings.
8. Roof replacement with material different from existing or change in roof form.
9. Storefront restoration or replacement.
10. Mothballing the building per Chapter 307.303
11. Other work the Planning and Development Department has determined to be in conflict or potentially in conflict with the Secretary's Standards.

(D) In preparing the application, the Planning and Development Department has found the application to meet five of the seven criteria. The five criteria include the following;

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

The establishment of garden clubs across the country was a continuation of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century movement of affluent upper and middle class women in organizing to address Progressive era issues considered not receiving sufficient attention by male dominated national, state and local governments. Examples of these issues included child welfare, education, crime, housing, sanitation and health along with civic beautification and preservation of natural resources. Woman's Clubs are the most recognized of these new organizations with the first such club established in Florida in 1887. Many of the members of the Woman's Club movement were also founders and early members of garden clubs. Both organizations provided numerous opportunities for self-improvement, personal intellectual stimulation, camaraderie and leadership training for its members.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Linda D. Vance, *May Mann Jennings, Florida's Genteel Activists*. (Gainesville, Florida: University Presses of Florida, 1985), pp. 53, 54 & 55.

James B. Crooks, *Jacksonville, After the Fire, 1901 – 1919, A New South City*. (Jacksonville, Florida: University of North Florida Press, 1991), pp. 74 – 84.

National Register of Historic Places Application, Woman's Club of Jacksonville, Adapted November 3, 1992.

The Garden Club of Jacksonville has an unmatched record of community service regarding beautification, park improvement, environmental preservation, municipal planning, as well as floral and horticulture education and promotion in the City for nearly one hundred years. On March 25, 1922, seventeen women from prominent families were called to a meeting at the residence of Mrs. Arthur G.(Ninah) Cummer and voted to form the Garden Club of Florida, a title changed at the April 28, 1924 meeting to the Federation of Garden Circles which was officially chartered in 1929. The Club was one of the four founders of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs in 1924 with several of their members later serving as President including Mrs. Cummer, Mrs. Merle B. (Harriett) Mann and Mrs. Halle (Nellie) Cohen. The state federation was established on April 25, 1924 in a small house on Fisk Street used as ticket booth for the early flower shows with the first board meeting being held on January 15, 1926 at the grand estate of Mrs. George (Grace) Trout called Marabanong located at Empire Point in South Jacksonville. Before 1960, the Garden Club of Jacksonville hosted the state conventions in 1926, 1938, 1945, 1948, 1955 and 1959. In addition to serving as the second president of the Florida Federation, Mrs. Cummer was elected as the first president of the National Council of State Garden Clubs.<sup>2</sup>

Following a concept established by the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, the Jacksonville Club organized its rapidly growing memberships into individual garden circles that were established across the city. The establishments of a circle were initiated by women in the community and were generally autonomous in their organization, bylaws and activities as long as consistent with the constitution and bylaws of the Garden Club of Jacksonville. Starting with 20 members and one circle in 1922, the Club grew by 1949 to 2300 members and over one hundred circles. At that time, the club was recognized as the largest garden club in the world. Additionally, the Club was recognized nationally with the Fisher Medal presented by the National Council of State Garden Clubs at their 1950 national conference in Richmond, Virginia. The Fisher Medal recognized the local club that “*performed the greatest service in the community in proportion to its size*”. The construction of the Garden Club complex at 1005 Riverside Avenue starting with Unit 1, latter called the Garden Club Room completed in 1947, followed by the 900 seat auditorium building that opened in 1958, established a significant visual presence for the Club while enhancing its activities and programs, as well as providing a large new venue for public and private events.<sup>3</sup>

The original 1922 objective of the Garden Club of Jacksonville was, “*to promote interest in gardens, their design and management – to cooperate in the protection of wild flowers and native plants, and to encourage Civic Planting.*” Over the years, this objective has significantly broaden as the Club became involved in many inter-related programs, activities and initiatives in the general areas of education, social service, civic planning, beautification and environmental preservation. These accomplishments were based on developing a solid administrative foundation set by articles of constitution and by-laws which established a board of directors and

---

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Fred B. Noble, Editor, *The History of the Garden Club of Jacksonville, Florida*. (Garden Club of Jacksonville, Florida, 1960), pp. IX, 1, 10

<sup>3</sup>Noble, p. 1, 8, 9 & 15.

*Gordonia*, Monthly Newsletter of the Garden Club of Jacksonville, Vol. 1, # 5, March, 1949, p. 1.  
Ibid, Volume II, # 9, May, 1950.

RAP Community New, June, 1981, Vol IV.

an executive committee which were advised by a growing number of committees. There were originally only four officers and three committee chairmen for Program, Exchange and Exhibit and Distribution. By 1960, there were six officers, a four member Board of Trustees and 31 committee chairmen.

The success of the Garden Club can also be attributed to the fast growing number of circles which not only initiated its own programs and activities, but also supported those of the Club. For the purposes of this report, the accomplishments and activities of the Garden Club and its affiliated circles are broken down into Education and Promotion; Community Service and Civic Improvement. Please note that the accomplishments and activities discussed further in this report do not respect a comprehensive list but a selective sample from readily available sources..<sup>4</sup>

### Education and Promotion:

The Garden Club has been most active and successful in the area of education and promotion of gardening and horticulture among Jacksonville's diverse population. The earliest and largest initiative was the sponsorship of flower shows with the first one being held on April 16 -17, 1923 at the end of Fiske Street between Riverside Avenue and the river. Continuing today at the Club's Auditorium Building, the shows were held in a variety of venues over years including Willow Branch Park, Scottish Rite Temple, Windsor Hotel, the Armory and the Woman's Club. A popular Camilla show started in 1936 that drew thousands of visitors each year. In addition to the flower shows were garden tours and plant displays at various places such as Cohen Brothers Department Store, Roosevelt Mall, the Greater Jacksonville Fair and the Home and Patio Shows. Many of these events were accompanied by seminars and demonstrations. With the establishment of their own meeting facilities, the Club offered classes and demonstrations in all aspects of flower arrangement and horticulture including the accrediting of flower show judges. Additional education opportunities were presentations by knowledgeable speakers with the first being Dr. Harold Hume of the Glen St. Marys Nursery, who was also an advisor in the landscape plan developed for Memorial Park. The Club has also developed over the years a larger collection of books available for use by members.<sup>5</sup>

The Garden Club has received national recognition for their programs and activities among Jacksonville's youth, particularly among those with special needs who participated in what was later termed "garden therapy". By 1960 and 61, the Club promoted junior gardener programs in fifty-seven local public schools that engaged over 4,000 students. The club also provided the opportunity for students to attend Junior Nature Camps that in 1967 & 68 drew 5,416 participants. Junior gardeners also took part in flower and horticulture shows where they received awards along with encouragement and valuable advice. In 1964 & 65, the Club planted a garden for blind children at Central Riverside Elementary School. A year later, the program at Central Riverside Elementary School for blind students received significant coverage from the local media, as well as being featured on the CBS Morning News with Mike Wallace. A

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp. 4, 5, 8 & 9.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, pp. 5, 6, 22, 23, 29 41, 42& 48.

Newsletter, Riverside-Avondale Preservation, Inc., April, 1984.

Year Book, 1967 – 68, p. 337. By 1968 the club had fifty accredited judges.

Year Book, 1967 – 68, p. 337.

*Gordenia*, Vol. X, # 2, November. – December, 1957

celebration was also held that included attendance by the mayor, superintendent of schools and city parks director. This event was the first national recognition for a Florida garden club. The Club also received an award for its programs with junior gardeners at the annual conference of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs in 1953.<sup>6</sup>

A few years after being formed, a member of the Club, Mrs. Fred B. (Eva) Noble and later her daughter, Miss Mary Noble, wrote a weekly column on gardening and horticulture in the Sunday edition of the *Florida Times Union* entitled “Flower Garden Notes”, and later “Gardens in the News”. Mrs. Noble also served as the editor of *The History of the Garden Club of Jacksonville, Florida, March 25, 1922 to May 1, 1960*, the first official history of the Club. An expert in the growing of orchids, Miss Noble became the garden editor for the Times Union. In 1948, the Club began producing a monthly newsletter named the *Gordonia* after the *Gordonia Lasaianthus*, the bloom of the loblolly pine, the official flower of the organization and in 1980 made the official flower of Jacksonville by the City Council. Produced for nine years, each edition of the newsletter usually contained a president’s message, circle news, announcements, state and district news and a variety of articles on flowers and horticulture. In 1960, year books were produced for each year that highlighted accomplishments and activities, as well as identified members of the board, committee members and general membership of the Club. During its first ten years, the Club produced and distributed The Primers, which focused on subjects related to gardening and landscaping.<sup>7</sup>

The club also sponsored other events that were well received in the community. One was the hugely popular Annual Pageant of Crosses usually held during the week of Palm Sunday. Recognized as the Club’s gift to the City, the pageant, which started in 1959, included scores of crosses of varying size and shapes all made of live flowers. The kinds of crosses made over the years included Calvary, Pilgrim, Crusader, Rainbow, Greek, Latin, Anchor, Mariner’s, Nestorian, Cross of Lorraine, Papal, Tau, St. Martin’s and St. Andrews. As an example of its popularity, the event on Palm Sunday in 1960, called “the Beauty of Holiness Symbolized with Flowers and Music”, had an attendance of 10,000 to 12,000. After the program had ended, the crosses were given to hospitals, nursing homes and retirement centers. In March of 1949, the Club sponsored an exhibit of paintings by noted artist and Jacksonville native, Lee Adams. The paintings appropriately featured birds, flowers and tropical fruit.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Noble, p. 24.

1960 – 1961 Year Book, p. 327

1964 – 1965 Year Book, p. 335

1965 – 1966 Year Book, p. 337

1970 - 1971 Year Book, p. 336

*Gordonia*, Vol. V, # 8, May, 1953, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Noble, pp. 24, 32 & 83.

Riverside-Avondale Preservation, Inc. Newsletter, April, 1984.

1960 – 1961 Year Book, p. 332.

*Jacksonville Journal*, October 14, 1980 & October 31, 1983.

<sup>8</sup> Noble, pp. 24, 32 & 56.

Riverside-Avondale Preservation, Inc. Newsletter, April, 1984.

1960 – 1961 Year Book, p. 332.

*Florida Times Union*, April 2, 1982 & December 30, 1973.



To promote excellence in flower arrangement and horticulture, the Club started an awards program with the first awards banquet on May 24, 1961. Since that time, new awards were established with most named after former presidents to recognize their valuable service to the Club. Some of these early awards include: The Winnifred H. Price Award for outstanding circle achievement; The Nellie Cohen Horticultural Award for achievement in the hybridization of plants and creation of new flowers; The Malcolm Fortson Roadside Improvement Award; The Eva Noble Award which included a trophy with the name of winning circles; The Gerbera Circle Award to recognize the first place circle in standard flower shows; Many awards were established to recognize junior gardeners.<sup>9</sup>

### Community Service:

The Garden Club of Jacksonville received a U.S. Navy Certificate of Achievement for Service in World War II. This award related to a variety of community services performed by the Club during the war years that included providing small Christmas trees, flower arrangements, fruit baskets and other holiday gifts to patients at the naval hospital in Jacksonville, a practice that continued long after the war had ended. By 1979, the Club provided 250 Christmas trees at the naval hospital. In addition to bringing Christmas cheer to hospital patients, members of the Club were involved in such activities as working in the military motor pool, serving in the Gray Ladies Canteen, working in the surgical dressing room making bandages and knitting Afghans. They also made contributions to the Red Cross, War Chest, blood donations and purchase of war bonds. Similar to their efforts in support of allowing unemployed citizens the opportunity to grow vegetables on vacant lots during the Depression, the Club also championed the planting of Victory Gardens and proper food storage. The February 6, 1943 Camellia Show also featured a display of a mixture of fresh Vegetables grown from Victory Gardens along with canned vegetables with the proceeds from the show going to the Army-Navy Relief Fund. In a later conflict, the Club made and airmailed 41 permanent arrangements to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Hospital in Vietnam, done at the request of war correspondent, Helen Musgrove, nickname, "Patches".<sup>10</sup>

One of the Clubs's most noted public service was contributing to improving the grounds of charitable institutions, schools and churches. Examples include beautifying the grounds of the Clara White Nursing Home, Sunny Acres Park, City Rescue Mission, Pine castle, Parental Home for Girls, Duval Medical Center, Hope Haven Hospital, Jacksonville Children's Museum (MOSH) halfway houses operated by the Trinity Rescue Mission and provided 1,000 plants in 1926 to landscape the new Woman's Club building. Additionally, Club provided other services such as providing 150 live Christmas trees decorated with candies and toys for residents at the Sunland Training Center in Gainesville and provided free flower arrangement classes for clients at the Northeast Florida State Hospital in Macclenny. Flower arrangements were also provided to the public library and the Traveler's Aid Society. Other examples include decorating the stage

---

<sup>9</sup> Year Book – 1961 – 62, p. 11.

Year Book – 1963 – 64, p. 11.

Year Book – 1964 – 1965, p. 333.

Year Book – 1966 – 67, p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Noble, pp. 25, 28 29 & 78.

Undated article – Murray Hill Scrap Book – 1940.

Year Book 1970 – 71, p. 337.

*Florida Times Union*, December 16, 1979 & July 2, 1972.

for the dedication of the new International Airport and distributing brochures on City-County Consolidation. The Club was active participants in the placement of Blue Star Memorial Markers along public highways to honor the men and women of the armed forces. One of the first such markers was dedicated on March 17, 1950 along U.S. 1, three miles north of St. Augustine, with the 6<sup>th</sup> one being dedicated on November 28, 1952 at the welcome station located at the Florida-Georgia line.<sup>11</sup>

#### Civic Improvement:

Beyond beautification projects for charitable institutions and schools, the Club has long been an active champion for the visual enhancement of the City. The preservation and expansion of the tree canopy on public lands has been a project of the Club since its early history. For a period, the Club would coordinate with the appropriate City department on the removal of trees on public land, as well as the location of new parks such as the development of the 32 acre Boone Park in March, 1925 and the unsuccessful efforts made over many years to create a public park on the site of the Old Isaiah D. Hart plantation, "Paradise" located near Marietta in West Jacksonville. Representing the Garden Club, Mrs. Cummer was appointed to the City's Park Advisory Committee becoming its first president. Over the years, the Club and associated circles have made many contributions to upgrading city parks such as coordinating the planting of hundreds of azaleas in Willow Branch Park and Riverside Park along with flowering trees in Boone Park. The Club was active in having the Sabal Palm designated as the state tree.

The club also partnered with other organizations in the successful efforts to save the magnificent Treaty Oak making it the centerpiece of a city park on the Southside. Later, the Club played a significant role in the successful efforts to stop the City Council from approving the construction of a new children's museum in Treaty Oak Park while attempting to establish a precedent of the City not constructing buildings in parks. Through the leadership of the Avondale Circle, the Club supported the creation of Native Park in 1932 which occupies one of the Avondale pocket parks fronting Park Street. In addition to planting and preserving native trees and plants, the park featured labels identifying them by botanical name. The Club was also involved in the plans for the Peace Memorial Park located within Willow Branch Park. Located across Park Street opposite the Willow Branch Library, the memorial included the planting of Peace Roses for distributing on Memorial Day.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Year Book, 1969 – 70, p. 339  
*Gordonia*, Vol.1, # 5, March, 1949, pp. 1 & 2.  
Year Book – 1968 – 69, p. 340  
Year Book – 1969 – 70, p. 339.  
Year Book – 1969 – 70, p. 338  
*Gordonia*, Vol. II, # 9, May, 1950, p.  
*Gordonia*, Vol V, # 3, December, 1952, p. 2.  
Year Book – 1960 – 61, p. 327.  
Noble, p. 18  
*Gordonia*, Vol. IX # 2, November, 1956, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Jacksonville Journal*, January 24, 1967.  
Murray Hill Circle Scrap Book, 1940.  
Noble, pp. 11, 12, 20 & 42.  
Year Book, 1964 – 65, p. 332.

To ensure the perpetuity of Jacksonville's tree canopy, the Club was a leader in the planting of trees and scrubs on public land while encouraging their planting on private property. One of the early tree planting and preservation campaigns occurred in the mid-1920s, when the Club launched "Save the Tree and Make Jacksonville an Evergreen City" Part of the campaign included Park Commissioner, St. Elmo, "Chick" Acosta agreeing to coordinate the removal of trees on public property with the Club and to begin removing sycamore trees with the native oaks. By 1948 and 1949, the Club had been credited with planting 1,875 trees and 22,219 shrubs. Many times these plantings are associated with Arbor Day activities. For Example, the 1964 – 65 Arbor Day included the planting of 13, 819 trees and scrubs with one circle alone planting 3,168. Some of these tree plantings involved the use of saplings from the Treaty Oak.<sup>13</sup>

Another aspect of the visual enhancement of the city is addressing visual blight, particularly litter which was noted as early as 1923 by the Club's first speaker, Dr. Harold Hume. In 1969 and 70, the Club initiated an anti-litter campaign called "Clean-up of Jacksonville Week". To encourage public participation, awards, funded by a Sears Foundation grant, were given for the cleanest school, shopping center and gas station. A second litterbug campaign was done in 1970 and 71. In addition to providing a representative on the Downtown Beautification Council, the Club also participated in the revamping of Hemming Plaza. At different times, the Club has campaigned for the removal of illegal billboards and improper bus benches with advertisement.<sup>14</sup>

Significant but less known are the involvement of the Club in the development of the City's first comprehensive and the hiring of the City's first planner, George W. Simon. In 1926, the Club became very interested in municipal planning and civic improvements and recommended that each circle devote one meeting on city planning and zoning. A special planning committee was formed under Mrs. Cummer that study the issue and came up with a report and recommendations approved by the Board of Directors. The recommendations were submitted to the City Commission on June 28, 1926 in form of a resolution. In the resolution the Club "*wanted to go on record as opposed to the needless mutilation and destruction of trees; to the damage of homes, churches, and surrounding properties through the injurious and indiscriminate location of far too numerous small stores and filling stations; and also to the granting of permits for the erection of tall apartment buildings within the purely residential sections of the city*". Having a very modern tone, the recommendations included: the hiring of an expert to supervise the trimming and replacement of all trees and shrubs belonging to the city; in the process of making municipal improvements, particularly the widening of streets, all trees should be preserved whenever possible, even at additional expense; To avoid and reduce the number of unsightly utility poles and to end the mutilation of trees, "*install conduits for complete underground*

---

<sup>13</sup> Year Book, 1964 – 65, o, 334.  
Noble, pp. 14, 33.

<sup>14</sup> Year Book, 1969 – 70, p. 3.  
Year Book, 1970 – 71, p.  
Year Book, 1963 – 64, p. 316.  
Year Book, 1967 – 68, p.337.  
Noble, p. 32.  
Year Book, 1964 – 65, p. 333.

wiring systems” when street are constructed, re-paved or widen; and to establish procedures for the implementation of the comprehensive plan.<sup>15</sup>

In her 1927 report, Club president, Mrs. (Grace) Trout stated the need for, “*a definite, well-thought city plan, supplemented by wise zoning ordinances for the protection of property holders*”. Greatly influenced by the persistent and intense lobbying of the Garden Club, the City Council in 1927 made budgetary provisions to start the development of a plan in 1928. In January of 1928, a Planning Advisory Board was appointed composed of representatives from twenty-one different civic organizations. The Club appointed Mrs. Trout as their representative who was later selected as chairman for the Planning Advisory Board. Club member, Mrs. Cummer also was appointed to the advisory board. The City went on to select George Simon as the first municipal planner but the position was inadequately funded. In response, the Garden Club with the assistance of Mayor John T. Alsop was able to find sufficient funds to hire George Simon in May of 1928. The comprehensive plan, including a draft zoning ordinance, was developed and presented to the City Commission in June of 1930.<sup>16</sup>

***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 1005 Riverside Avenue, the Garden Club of Jacksonville, 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.***

Nellie McArthur Cohen is recognized for her significant contributions to the growth and development of the Garden Club of Jacksonville as well as the development of clubs on the state and national level. A native of Georgia born in 1907, Nellie Cohen moved to Jacksonville at a young age but her life-long interest in horticulture was sparked by visits to her ancestral home where her grandfather grew fine fruits and vegetables. In 1931, she married Halle Cohen, a World War I veteran and the son of Jacob Elias Cohen, one of four brothers who founded the Cohen Brothers Department Store.<sup>17</sup> In 1936, Halle Cohen became the president and chairman of the board of Cohen Brothers, positions he held until his death in 1956. A noted horticulturist in his own right, Halle Cohen founded the Jacksonville Rose Society in 1954, and served as president of the Jacksonville Orchid Society, as well as recognized as one of the founders of the Men’s Garden Club. Halle and Nellie Cohen worked as a team in creating a beautiful garden on the grounds of their residence at 2241 River Road, which featured a wide variety of rare flowers and plants. They were generous in allowing the public to visit their gardens.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> *The Comprehensive City Plan of Jacksonville, Florida*. City Planning Advisory Board, with George W. Simon, Jr., Consulting Municipal Engineer, 1931, p. 4, 5, 6 & 7.

Noble, p. 13.

A c.1938 article from the Murray Hill Circle Scrapbook, c.1940, claimed that securing a city planner was the Club’s greatest accomplishment.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 30

*Florida Times Union*, December 26, 1985, D-8

<sup>18</sup> Noble, p. 30.

In addition to serving twice as president of the Gloriosa Rothschildiana Garden Circle, Nellie Cohen served as the president of the Garden Club of Jacksonville in 1945, 46 and 47. While president she provided the leadership for the Garden Club's successful initiative to find a permanent home. Before 1939, the records, horticultural papers, books, and awards traveled from president to president. In that year, the club was able to acquire a central location in the corner of the balcony in the Cohen Brothers Department Store. After moving to a larger space in the garden center located in the store's basement, the club was able to rent a finished room on the second floor. During her presidency, the club held a large Camilla Show at Cohens Brothers that drew over 6,000 visitors.<sup>19</sup>

After being informed of the availability of prime real estate at the corner of Riverside Avenue and Post Street, Nellie Cohen activated the membership to purchase the lot. After serving as president, she went on to head the Building Committee that secured the necessary funds to purchase the property and eventually construct a clubhouse. Halle and Nellie Cohen were also the first patrons of the building fund with a \$1,000 donation. On November 21, 1947, Nellie Cohen presided over the dedication of Unit 1, the Garden Club Room, designed by Jacksonville architect, Russell Seymour.<sup>20</sup>

A graduate of the University of Illinois, Russell Seymour came to Jacksonville in 1930 starting his fifty year architectural practice. In addition to designing and building a Tudor Revival style apartment building at 2223 St. Johns Avenue, where he also resided, Seymour designed numerous churches. His many residential designs included two grand Neoclassical Revival style houses featuring two-story columns in Ortega (Algonquin Avenue) and Maple Lane in San Marco. His most recognized design was the extensive alteration made to the large wood-frame gym of the old Concordia School for girls (1919 – 1925) at 645 Oak Street on behalf of the Friday Musicale that acquired the building in 1929. Starting with only eleven original members, the Friday Musicale, officially organized in 1893 to promote music in Jacksonville, had grown to 450 by 1945. In that year, the club hired Seymour to design plans for a complete renovation of the building. The renovations included sheathing the exterior in brick and constructing a formal entryway highlighted by massive front columns. In addition to programs by the Friday Musicale the building became a popular venue for hosting social events. In 1995, the Friday Musicale building was destroyed by fire but rebuilt following the 1945 renovation plans provided by his widow, Florence Seymour.<sup>21</sup>

---

Ennis Davis & Sarah Gojekian, *Cohen Brothers, The Big Store*. (Charleston, South Carolina: The History Press,), pp. 56 – 61.

Jacksonville Planning and Development Department. Designation Application and Report – Proposed Designation of Hallie and Nellie Cohen Residence, 2241 River Road, LM-13-06, July 24, 2013.

Pleasant Daniel Gold, *History of Duval County Florida*. (St. Augustine, Florida: The Record Company, 1928), pp 372 & 373.

*Florida Times Union*, March 10, 1956, Sec. 2, p. 17.

<sup>19</sup> Noble, pp. 30, 31 51 & 62.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Wood, p. 132.

*Florida Times Union* February 26, 1997, Metro, B-1; March 20, 1998, D-1 and April 2, 1996, B-5.

*Jacksonville Journal*, October 18, 1945

*Florida Times Union*, March 25, 1951.

*Florida Times Union*, September 18, 1919, p. 10.

By 1949, the Club had 2300 members and over one hundred circles and at that time was recognized as the largest garden club in the world. The Garden Club complex was completed with the dedication on June 22, 1958 of the Auditorium Building that not only accommodated the many functions and activities of the Garden Club of Jacksonville, but also hosted numerous community and social events. Nellie Cohen also served the Club as vice-president, chairmen of the Horticulture Committee, the Camilla Show, the Building Committee and the Finance Committee.<sup>22</sup> Nellie Cohen went on to serve as president of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs in 1951, being the third Jacksonville resident to serve in that prestigious position. She also served as chair of the Garden Center of the National Council from 1949 – 1951. As a board member of the National Council, Nellie Cohen traveled the country promoting the establishment of garden clubs while spreading the word about the successes of the Jacksonville club. During her national travels, she visited a variety of both private and public gardens, an experience she shared with the local Club. Following her strong interest in promoting horticulture, Nellie Cohen wrote many articles appearing in such publications as the American Orchid Society Bulletin, Home Gardening, National Gardener, the *Florida Times Union*, as well as the Club newsletter, the *Gordonia*.<sup>23</sup>

Nellie Cohen was a patron member of the Jacksonville Club in addition to having a life membership on National Council of Garden Clubs, trustee of the American Orchid Society, as well as a member of the American Camilla Society, American Rose Society, the California Orchid Society and the Royal Horticultural Society in London. For 19 years, she grew orchids and had 100s of plants at her San Marco residence where she also maintained a collection of rare books on orchids. Her achievements in horticulture were recognized by having three new flowers named in her honor. They included a Camilla called “Nellie Cohen”, a Hemerocall “Nellie Cohen” and an orchid known as ‘Laelia Cattleya Nellie Cohen’. The Club honored her by establishing the Nellie Cohen Horticultural Award to recognize achievements in the hybridizing of plants and the creation of new flowers. Nellie McArthur Cohen died in 1985 and is buried next to her husband, Halle, at Oakwood Cemetery in South Jacksonville.<sup>24</sup>

---

*Resident Community News*, September, 2017, p. 32.

*Jacksonville Architecturally*, Volume Number One, 1940 – Files of the Historic Preservation Section of the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department.

Oral Interview – Florence Seymour, January 31, 1997 – Files of the Historic Preservation Section of the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department.

Florence Seymour (1904 – 2006) was one of three artists selected to paint large oil-on-canvas of story book characters displayed at Corinne Scott Elementary School for 58 years. The artists were sponsored by the Work Progress Administration during the Great Depression to provide jobs for unemployed artists. With the closing of Corrine Scott Elementary School, the murals were moved to the Andrew Robinson Elementary School in 1992. She also painted ten murals for the Friday Musicales (*Florida Times Union, Westside Community News*, January 29, 1992, p. 1 and June 22, 2006,. p. B-1).

<sup>22</sup> *Gordonia*, Volume V, # 2, November, 1952, p. 5.

Noble, p. 30

<sup>23</sup> Noble, pp. 30 & 31, 63 – 67.

*Gordonia*, Volume IV, # 1, October, 1951, p. 1.

*Gordonia*, Volume 11, # 1, September, 1949, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Noble, pp. 30 & 31, 63 – 67.

*Gordonia*, Volume 11, # 1, September, 1949, p. 1, 5 & 9.

**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.*

The Auditorium Building of the Garden Club of Jacksonville represents another example of the variety of excellent designs produced by the prominent Jacksonville architectural firm of Saxelbye & Powell. Saxelbye & Powell are a continuation of the earlier 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). 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 well into the 1990s becoming Saxelbye, Powell, Roberts & Ponder. Born in Anderson, South Carolina, Harry Cornelius Powell, Sr. (1906 – 1980) attended the College of Charleston, and was later employed as a clerk in a music store before becoming a draftsman in 1925. Powell had relocated to Jacksonville around 1928 working as a musician but returning to drafting in 1938.<sup>25</sup> Powell retired from the company as a Senior Partner in January of 1980. Saxelbye & Powell continued to be very prolific with much of their commissions based on local and regional corporate accounts that included Florida National Bank chain, Haverty's Furniture, W.T. Grant, *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. The firm also designed numerous residences many for executives associated with these companies.

Identified only by project name, the designs listed below were completed between 1946 and 1964 with the death of Harold Saxelbye. One of their most significant designs was the corporate headquarters for the Florida National Bank that opened in 1960. Built by the nationally prominent construction company, the George A. Fuller Company of New York City, the eleven story building at 214 North Hogan Street in Downtown Jacksonville was named in honor of Edward Ball, long associated with the Florida National Bank chain and was instrumental in having the building constructed. Additionally, Saxelbye & Powell designed numerous Florida National Bank branches across the state including such places as Bartow, Perry, Belle Grade, Vero Beach, Gainesville, Ocala, Port St. Joe, Deland, Daytona Beach, as well as Jacksonville branches in Arlington, Murray Hill and Lakeshore. Buildings

---

<sup>25</sup> [www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/12292138/person/262162490327/facts](http://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/12292138/person/262162490327/facts).  
*Florida Times Union*, November 14, 1980, B-6.

designed for the Gulf Life Insurance Company include a six-story office building and several branches in Jacksonville and others in Daytona Beach, Waycross, Columbus and Atlanta. Haverty's Furniture buildings associated with the firm are found in Shreveport, Houston, Memphis, Winston-Salem, Columbia (South Carolina), Montgomery, Tampa, Roanoke, Augusta and Dallas.<sup>26</sup> Some other commercial designs include the downtown office of Stockton, Whatley and Davin Company, Morrison Cafeteria, the Blue Cross – Blue Shield building in the 500 block of Riverside Avenue, the entryway gates into Evergreen Cemetery, the Cloister Hotel in Sea Island, Georgia and buildings associated with Marineland.<sup>27</sup>

Saxelbye & Powell also had several government contracts. For the City of Jacksonville, the firm designed the original Gator Bowl in 1947, a public swimming pool, the recreation building at Woodstock Park and the Wolfson Baseball Stadium (Municipal Baseball Grandstand) in 1954. Public schools in Duval County designed by the firm include the Biltmore Elementary School (PS# 78, 1951) and Inglewood Elementary School (PS# 87, 1955) with another school design in Nassau County, Fernandina Elementary School. The operation and control tower at the U.S. Navy – Mayport Base was designed by Saxelbye & Ponder. Under contract with the State of Florida, the partnership designed the Florida A&M University Stadium. In addition to the 1958 building for the Garden Club of Jacksonville, some other institutional work include All Saints Episcopal Church (1965), Avondale Baptist Church, Main Street Baptist Church, St. Paul's by the Sea Episcopal Church, Grace Episcopal Church, Lakewood Baptist Church, Lakewood Presbyterian Church, Riverside Park Church of Christ, Lakeshore Baptist Church, South Side Baptist Church, the First Methodist Church and the Jacksonville Jewish Center, all in Jacksonville, as well as the First Baptist Church of Madison, Florida. The Cummer Museum and Gardens and the Duval County Medical Society building were designed by Saxelbye & Powell.<sup>28</sup>

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

The design of the 1958 Garden Club of Jacksonville Auditorium Building reflects a contemporary interpretation of the Neoclassical Revival style, popular from 1895 into the 1950s. The most distinctive feature of the style is the full height porch columns usually with classical capital in the Ionic or Corinthian orders. The facades are usually balanced by the placement of windows and entryways, some further enhanced with decorative surrounds. Some Neoclassical Revival designs have boxed eaves and gable ends frequently with dentils or modillions. Windows tended to be rectangular double-hung sashes with six or nine divided lights. In later years mainly after 1925, the Neoclassical Revival style became simpler in design with more slender columns without fluting, as well as the use of side gable roofs. In addition to being

---

<sup>26</sup> Wood, p.12.

Marsh & Saxelbye Project List – Unpublished, Files of the Historic Preservation Section, Jacksonville Planning and Development Department.

The Early Work of H.F. Saxelbye, A.I.A., A Special Presentation for the San Jose Estates Preservation by Saxelbye, Powell, Roberts & Ponder, Architects & Planners. Unpublished, Files of the Historic Preservation Section, Jacksonville Planning and Development Department.

*Jacksonville Daily Record*, March 29, 2010.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.



popular in residential designs, the Neoclassical Revival style, which projects a strong sense of power and stability through its imposing monumental qualities, was especially appealing for the design of governmental and religious buildings, as well as some commercial buildings, particularly banks. The popularity of the Neoclassical Revival style was greatly stimulated by the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893 in which prominent architects from around the country designed numerous classical style buildings around a central court. Widely publicized throughout the country, the central buildings of the exposition tended to be monumental in scale and fused elements of a variety of earlier styles such as the Georgian, Adams, Early Classical and Greek Revival.<sup>29</sup>

The most significant Neoclassical design feature of the Garden Club of Jacksonville auditorium is the full height columns found on both the Post Street and Riverside Avenue elevations. The smooth rounded columns have classical Ionic capitals. Although the Riverside Avenue façade is balanced with its central row of columns framed by projecting gables highlighted with a multi-light sash window topped with a blind arch, the Post Street elevation has an unequal number of windows on each side of the formal entryway. However, the façade is balanced by the window design and their general placement. Some of the examples of Neoclassical Revival style designs in Jacksonville include the Jacksonville Free Public Library (101 E. Adams St.), the Old Florida National Bank Building (51 W. Forsyth St.), the Jacksonville Terminal (1000 W. Bay St.), Annie Lytle Elementary School (1101 Peninsular Place), Martha Washington Hotel (1636 King Street), and the Mount Olive A.M.E. Church (841 Franklin St.).

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

It is the determination of the Planning and Development Department that the subject property at 1005 Riverside Avenue, the Garden Club of Jacksonville, 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 impacted character-defining features, as well as represent alterations difficult, costly, or impossible to reverse. Further, the degree and nature of any exterior deterioration, as well as the evidence of long term and potentially on-going neglect are also a factor in evaluating potential landmarks for their suitability for preservation or restoration.

The two buildings forming the complex of the Garden Club of Jacksonville has very few alterations with none impacting character defining features. No significant additions were added to the buildings as originally designed and constructed. Per Jacksonville Building Permit Records, two permits related to constructing the 1947 and 1958 buildings and one demolishing the one story wood frame exhibit building. All of the other permits dealt with repairs and mechanical upgrades. The two buildings have all of their original windows and doors, as well as

---

<sup>29</sup> Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*. (New York: A Borzoi Book, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984), pp. 343 – 353.

wall and roof treatments. The two buildings have been well maintained over the years and have no evidence of significant deterioration.

### **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 the Garden Club of Jacksonville, **(LM-19-03)** as a City of Jacksonville Landmark.

**II.**

**DESIGNATION APPLICATION**

---

**JACKSONVILLE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION DESIGNATION APPLICATION  
FOR LANDMARK OR LANDMARK SITE**

*Jacksonville Ordinance Code, Sections 307.103 and 307.104*

**Landmark Designation No:** LM-19-03

**Site Name:** The Garden Club of Jacksonville, Florida

**Site Address:** 1005 Riverside Avenue

**Legal Description:** 01-109-56-2S-26E, RIVERSIDE, LOT 1, N. 66 2/3 FT LOT 2 BLOCK 5

**Real Estate Assessment Number:** 090142-0000

**Panel Map Number(s):** 232

**Florida Master Site File Number (if available):**

**Property Owner:** Garden Club of Jacksonville, Inc.  
1005 Riverside Avenue  
Jacksonville, Florida, 32204

**Type of Ownership:** Non-profit - Institutional

**Application Sponsored By:** Garden Club of Jacksonville, Inc.  
1005 Riverside Avenue  
Jacksonville, Florida, 32204

**Date of Construction:** Original – 1947 & 1958

**Original Architect:** Russell Seymour – 1947 Building  
Saxelbye & Powell – 1958 Building

**Original Builder:** William E. Arnold Company – 1958 Building

**Period of Significance:** 1947 - 2019

**Historic Use:** Institutional - Clubhouse      **Current Use:** Institutional - Clubhouse

**I. HISTORIC AND PRESENT PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE LANDMARK OR LANDMARK SITE: THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA.**

**Setting:** The Garden Club of Jacksonville is located along the St. Johns River at the southeast corner of Riverside Avenue and Post Street in the Riverside Historic District. The lot has a frontage along Riverside Avenue of 168' 8" and 431' along Post Street which terminates at the St. Johns River. To the northeast of the property is the vacant site of the Woman's Club of Jacksonville building. The property of the Garden Club is separated from the old Woman's Club property, which is owned by the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, by Post Street which has been widened to accommodate angled parking. Immediately adjacent to the Woman's Club site is the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens. To the south of the subject property is predominately office uses while the west side of Riverside Avenue accommodates offices, including one-high rise office building at the corner of Riverside Avenue and Post Street. **(Photos 1 – 7)**

**Summary – Physical Description: Garden Club of Jacksonville, 1005 Riverside Avenue**

The site of the Garden Club of Jacksonville is occupied by two separately constructed one-story buildings and a large parking area between the buildings and the river. The parking lot is fenced along Post Street, the river and the southeast property line by a decorative wrought-iron style fence accessed by gates along Post Street and one coming off Riverside Avenue. The smaller 1947 rectangular painted brick building, originally called Unit I now the Garden Club Room, runs parallel to Post Street immediately behind the 1958 Auditorium Building. The red brick Auditorium Building, which has frontage on both Riverside Avenue and Post Street, is divided into three distinct sections, the large auditorium, one-story connector and garage building. The L shape Auditorium Building and the Garden Club Room together enclose a ground-level patio that faces the parking area and the river. Both buildings have gable roofs covered with terra cotta shingles. For consistency purposes, the direction in which different elevations face will be described as north, south east and west. North is towards Post Street, south the rear of the 1958 building, east the parking lot and river and west being towards Riverside Avenue.

**Description: North Elevation of the Auditorium Building:**

Being at the corner of two streets, the Auditorium Building has primary decorative facades fronting both Riverside Avenue and Post Street. Since the Auditorium Building runs parallel to Riverside Avenue, the primary façade of the north elevation fronting Post Street is not as wide as the one along Riverside Avenue. **(Photos 8 & 9)** Since having a porte-cochere accessed by a circular driveway from Post Street, the north elevation of the Auditorium Building serves as the primary entryway. It also provides more direct access to the building from both the parking lot and the parking spaces along Post Street. **(Photos 10 & 11)** Both the porte-cochere and the primary building have a stucco gable end highlighted along the sides and bottom with a dentil course under a slightly projecting cornice line. **(Photos 12 & 13)**

Projecting out from the primary gable end, the pediment of the porte-cochere is supported by four evenly spaced round hollow columns with a smooth finish capped with Ionic capitals. The columns set on a round Tuscan style base that in turn rest on a square platform setting on a short brick knee wall. Running parallel to the building, the low knee wall is topped by cement coping. **(Photos 14, 15, 16, & 17)** The name of the Club is centered in the frieze above the columns **(Photo 18)**. Located under the porte-cochere, the slightly recessed entryway is defined on each side by a square pilaster. **(Photo 19)** Accessed by low steps covered with sandstone pavers, the entryway accommodates three pairs of wooden doors having a single upper light and panels below. Above each pair of doors is a large rectangular divided light transom with twelve square panes. Slightly recessed decorative rectangular

panels are centered above each of the transoms. **(Photos 20, 21)** Although all three pairs of doors provide access to the lobby, the central door pair lines up with the entryway leading into the auditorium space. **(Photo 22)** To the west of the porte-cochere are three wooden double-hung sash windows with six over six lights. The windows are trimmed out on each side and on the top and rest on a cement sill. **(Photos 23 & 24)** The decorative fanned brick headers above each window are composed of alternating soldier and header bricks. Between the top of the windows and below the wide frieze board of the roof are slightly recessed rectangular squares filled with rows of header brick. **(Photo 25)** Between the second and third window is a small marble corner stone with name of the Club and the date of construction. **(Photo 26)** The third window near the Riverside Avenue corner is located in a part of the wall plane that slightly recesses and is defined by a smaller gable end fronting Riverside Avenue. **(Photo 27)** The wall treatment to the east of the porte-cochere mimics the west but with only two windows rather than three. **(Photo 28)**

### **Description of the Riverside Avenue or West Elevation.**

Fronting Riverside Avenue, the other primary elevation is defined at the corners by two gable ends that frame a recessed porch covering door pairs and full height windows. **(Photos 29 & 30)** The recessed porch is supported by eight evenly spaced round hollow columns with a smooth finish capped with Ionic capitals and setting on a Tuscan style base. **(Photos 31, 32 & 33)** The matching gable ends are completely lined with a dentil course below which is a broad frieze board. Centered in the wall of the pediment is a single wooden double-hung sash window with six over six lights. The windows are in a slightly recessed blind arch filled with brick headers. The arch is defined by a header composed of two rows of header bricks visually setting on a decorative square cement or cast stone trim with the top of the arch having a cement or cast stone key stone. **(Photos 34, 35 & 36)** The recessed porch containing the row of windows and doors has a slightly raised sandstone paver floor and framed on each side by a pilaster. Centered in the recess are three wooden door pairs with four vertical lights with the tall wood windows having fifteen lights. **(Photos 37, 38, 39 & 40)** A wide sandstone paver walk runs from the recessed porch to the public sidewalk along Riverside Avenue. **(Photo 41)** The remaining property on both sides of the walk is an open lawn with landscaping. On the north end of this area is the original ornate wrought-iron sign, as well as a new brick ground sign installed in 1994. **(Photos 42, 43, 44 & 45).**

### **Central Patio**

The east elevation of the Auditorium Building, which faces the parking lot and the river, and the north elevations of the connector building and garage building along with the south elevation of the Garden Club Room, frame a large patio constructed of sandstone pavers. The patio is open on the east towards the river and is connected to the parking lot by a small walkway, also constructed of sandstone pavers. The patio and walkway are defined on the east with a decorative wrought-iron fence containing a gate centered on the walkway. **(Photo 46)** In the center of the patio is a round pool highlighted by a three tier fountain. The pool is surrounded by a low knee wall sheathed with sandstone. **(Photos 47 & 48)** Except for walkways providing access to the buildings, the patio is surrounded by landscaping, as well as enhanced by small statues and concrete benches **(Photos 49 & 50).**

### **Description of the East Elevation of the Auditorium Building and North Elevations of the Connector Building and Garage Building (All Elevations Facing the Ground-Level Patio).**

The primary view of the ground-level patio and the river is from the east elevation of the Auditorium Building. The east elevation has a wide frieze board with a dentil course. This elevation has a grouping of three full height wooden windows separated by two wide mullions. Each window is further divided by two smaller mullions that create a pattern of two columns of nine panes each flanked by a single column also

divided into nine lights. A pair of wooden doors is found on each side of the three window grouping and provides access to a raised patio. Each door is broken vertically into a column of five panes. Above each of the door pairs is a large transom divided into fifteen panes. The façade is further balanced with the transoms sharing the same header height of the window grouping. **(Photos 51, 52, 53 & 54)** Lining up with the window grouping is a set of steps leading down to the patio and fountain. Framed on each side by decorative wrought-iron rails, the steps are centered within the raised patio that continues on each side past both door pairs before curving back to the east façade on the north end and terminating into the wall of the connector building on the south. Both the steps and raised patio floor are paved with sandstone. A curving sandstone walkway leads from the ground level patio to both the side entrance to the lobby of the auditorium and to the front entrance of the Garden Club Room before continuing towards Post Street. **(Photos 55, 56, 57 & 58)**

The connector building, which houses a large kitchen, maintenance rooms and restrooms, is composed of two parts differentiated by their height. **(Photo 59)** The taller first part runs out from the east elevation of the auditorium and has a row of three wooden double-hung sash windows with six over six lights. Although sharing a continuous cement sill, the windows are divided vertically by a brick column. Having no dentil course, this part of the connector does have a wide frieze board that forms a continuous header for the three windows. The higher and lower parts of the connector building, both covered by a gable roof, are divided by a raised parapet with cement coping. Centered below the raised parapet is a rounded louvered vent. **(Photo 60)** Just past the raised parapet, the lower part has a recessed entryway that provides access from the ground level patio by a set of steps. The decorative fanning header of the entryway has the same brick design found on the north and west elevations of the auditorium. **(Photos 61)** This elevation has three windows with all having the header created by the frieze board. Two windows towards the west share a continuous sill but are divided by a large square of header brick. Towards the east end of this part of the connector is a single window. This window and the pair to the west are fixed wood window with a four light pattern. **(Photo 62)**

Higher than the adjacent part of the connector building, the garage building has a gable roof fronting the north and is connected by a brick walk to the path leading from the ground level patio. The north elevation of the garage, which is slightly projecting beyond the wall plane of the connector building, has a circular louvered vent centered in the stucco gable end below which is a pair of wooden panel door. Above the doors is the same decorative brick header. The east elevation of the garage building, which faces the parking lot and the river, has three equally spaced, single wooden double-hung sash windows with six over six lights. Each of the three windows has a decorative brick header. **(Photos 63 & 64)**

### **Rear Elevations of the Auditorium Building, the Connector and the Garage Building.**

Accessed by a drive-way off Riverside Avenue, the south or rear elevations of the Auditorium Building are the least visible and less decorative of the facades. This area is primarily reserved for maintenance, housekeeping and deliveries, as well as for placement of mechanical systems and safety egress. **(Photos 65, 66 & 67)** In the center of the rear elevation of the auditorium, the wall projects creating a recessed section of the wall plane on each side. This center section is further defined by being under a gable roof that projects from the larger gable of the primary roof. Both gables are lined with a dentil course and wide frieze band. **(Photos 68 & 69)** The recessed wall section on the Riverside Avenue side of the central projection has three wooden double-hung sash windows with a six over six light pattern. The window nears the corner of the building is larger with the next one being small. The third window closest to the projection is the smallest and is located higher up on the wall. **(Photos 70 & 71)** The only fenestration on the projecting central section is a set of concrete steps accessing a pair of metal panel style doors that provides safety egress from the auditorium and a single louvered window to the east. **(Photo 72).** The wall to the east of the central section has a grouping of three shorter sash windows with six over six lights sharing a common sill and having decorative brick headers. **(Photo 73)** The first part of the connector

between the auditorium and raised parapet wall has a grouping of four smaller double-hung windows. Although sharing a continuous sill, the windows are divided by a column of brick. **(Photo 74)**

Attached to the east wall of the first part of the connector building is a more contemporary small addition constructed of horizontal siding and covered with a shed roof. **(Photo 75)** To the north of the shed addition, the second part of the connector building recesses back towards the north to reveal a raised open corridor running east from the wall of the first part. A pair of doors provides access to the interior of the first part of the connector building connecting it with the open corridor. A set of concrete steps to the north of the shed addition provides access to the corridor and the entryway into the first part of the connector. **(Photos 76)**. The roof of the open corridor is supported by pairs of wooden square columns with connecting horizontal rails. The corridor covers three doors that access a utility room and two restrooms before terminating in the doorway leading into the garage building. **(Photo 77)** Setting at a right angle to the corridor, the west elevation of the garage building frames a large vehicular door accessed by the driveway. The gabled south elevation of the garage has no fenestration and is topped off with a raised parapet wall lined with cement coping. **(Photo 78)** The east wall of the garage, which faces the parking lot and the river, has three evenly spaced single sash windows with six over six lights. The windows have the same cement sills and decorative brick header found on other parts of the buildings. **(Photo 79)**.

### **Physical Description of the 1947 Garden Club Building.**

The rectangular 1947 Garden Club Room is immediately behind the Auditorium Building and is connected to it by a covered walkway secured with decorative wrought iron fencing and gates. **(Photos 80, 81 & 82)** Covered with a tile roof, the building is constructed of painted jumbo brick and has gables facing east and west. A dentil course and cornice runs beneath the narrow eaves which have returns at each corner of the building. **(Photo 83)** Located immediately behind the Auditorium Building, the front elevation, which faces west, has a central entryway composed of a wooden door pair with four horizontal lights and a large panel on the bottom. On each side of the door pair is matching side lights with four horizontal lights lining up with the ones on the doors. The horizontal divided transom is composed of three sections located above the two side lights and doors. The pair of doors and sidelights are flanked on each side with a casement window composed of four horizontal divisions. Above each window is a transom composed of four lights. The wide mullions separating the casements line-up with the vertical division of the transoms. Centered in the upper gable end of the front elevation is an arched louvered vent surrounded on each side by a smaller rectangular vent. **(Photos 84 & 85)**

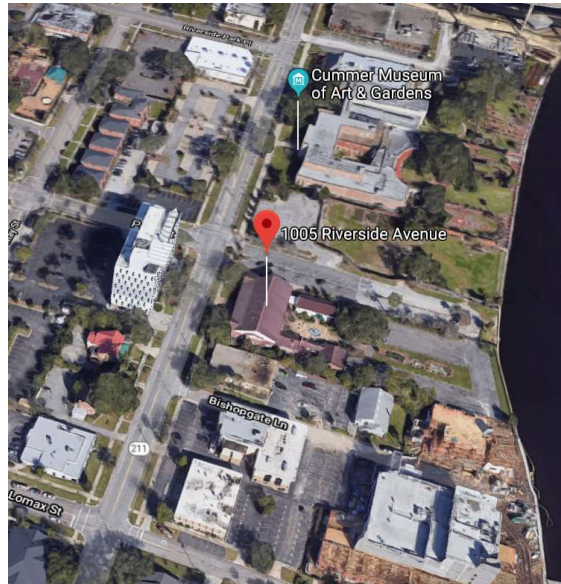
Paralleling Post Street, the north side elevation is composed of four evenly spaced casement windows with transoms. The basic design of these windows replicate the ones found on the front elevation but has three casements instead of two. The casements in each window are divided vertically by a wide mullion which is also used to horizontally separate the three transoms above the casements. **(Photos 86 & 87)**. Facing the ground level patio, the south side elevation has the same basic fenestration placement of four openings but with one opening providing access to the patio from the Garden Club Room. **(Photo 88)** The first opening near the front corner of the building is composed of three evenly placed single windows. Divided by a vertical brick column, each window has a single four light casement with the transom being divided horizontally into two sections. **(Photo 89)** On both sides of the more centrally placed door opening, is a casement window replicating the ones found on the north elevation. Accessed from the patio by sandstone steps, the entry way has a pair of doors composed of a nine light grid in the upper half and a pair of wood panels in the bottom half. **(Photo 90)** Fronting the parking lot and the river, the east elevation is divided into two equal sections by a large exterior chimney. Each section has a casement window divided into two vertical casements by a wide mullion which is also used to horizontally separate the transoms from the casements. On each side of the chimney at the apex of the gable end is a louvered vent. **(Photos 91 & 92)**



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 1



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 2



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 3



Photo credit Google

THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 4

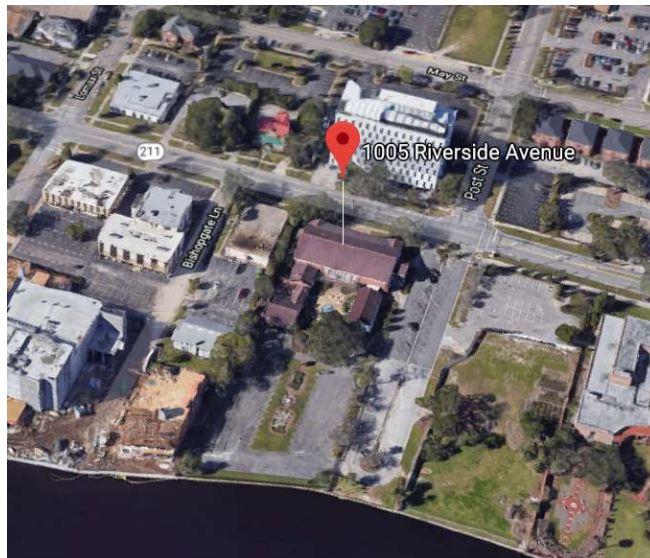


Photo credit Google

THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 5



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 6



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 7



Photo credit Google

THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 8



Google

Photo credit Google

THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 9



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 10



Photo credit Google

THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 11

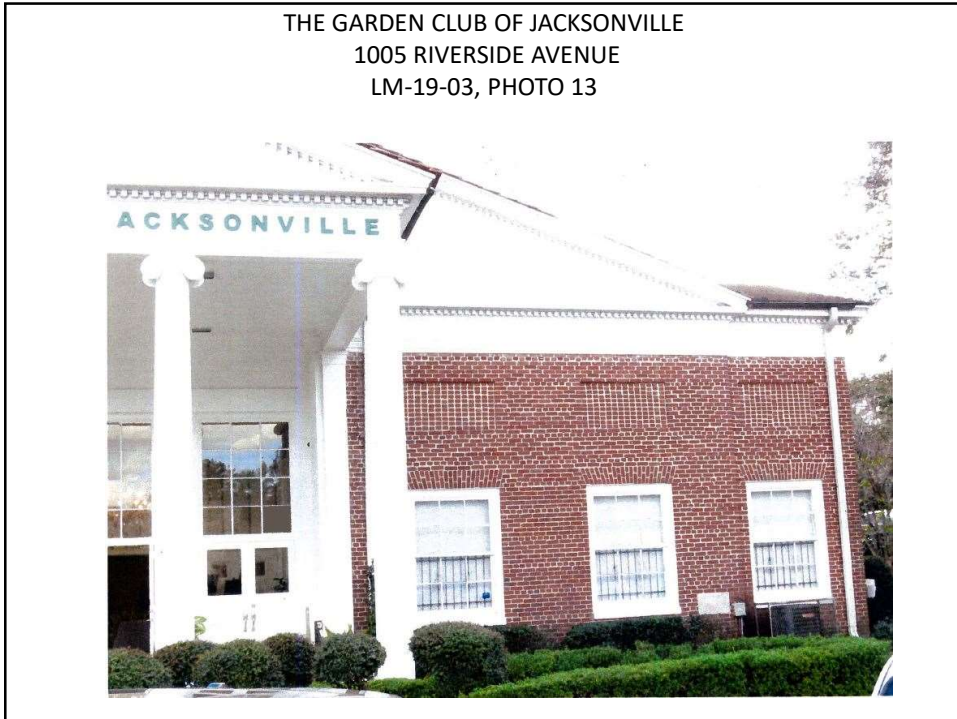


Photo credit Google

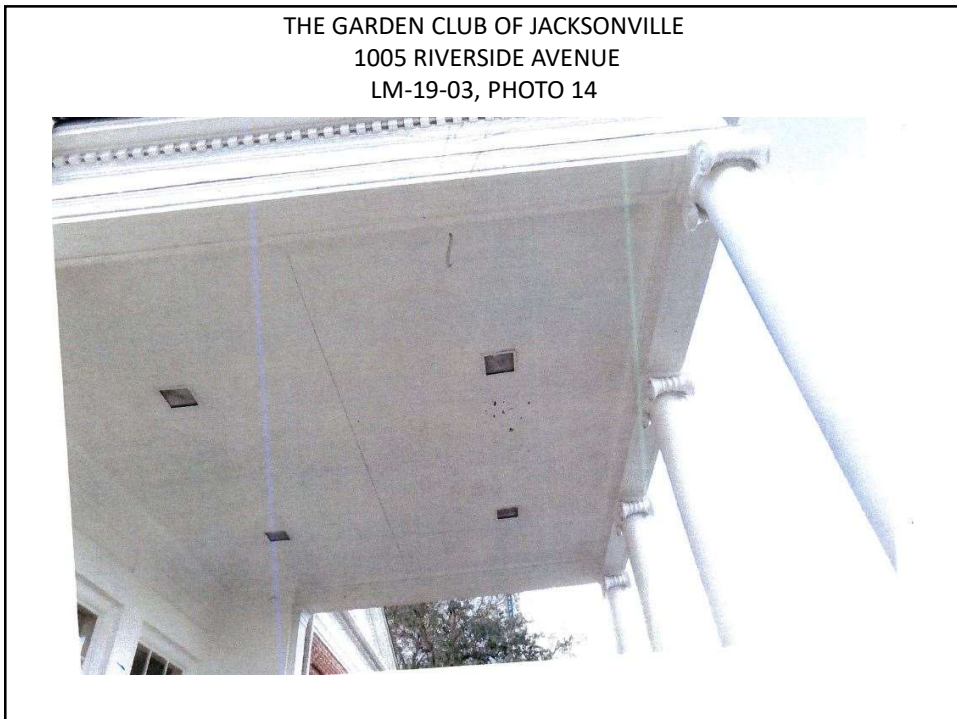
THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 12



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 13



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 14



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 15



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 16

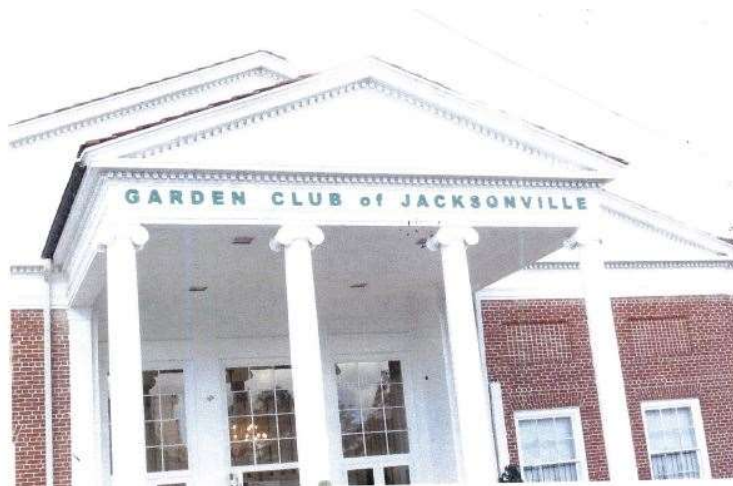




THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 17



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 18



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 19



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 20



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 21



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 22



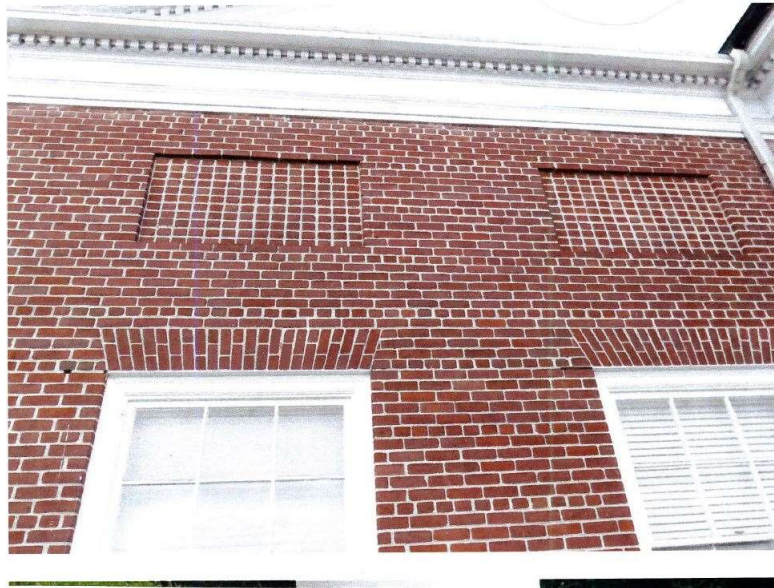
THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 23



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 24



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 25



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 26



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 27



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 28



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 29



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 30



Photo credit Google

THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 31



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 32





THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 33



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 34



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 35



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 36



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 37



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 38



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 39



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 40



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 41



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 42



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 43



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 44



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 45



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 46



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 47



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 48





THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 49



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 50



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 51



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 52



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 53



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 54



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 55



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 56



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 57



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 58



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 59



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 60



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 61



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 62



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 63



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 64





THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 65



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 66



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 67



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 68



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 69



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 70



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 71



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 72



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 73



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 74



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 75



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 76



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 77



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 78



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 79



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 80





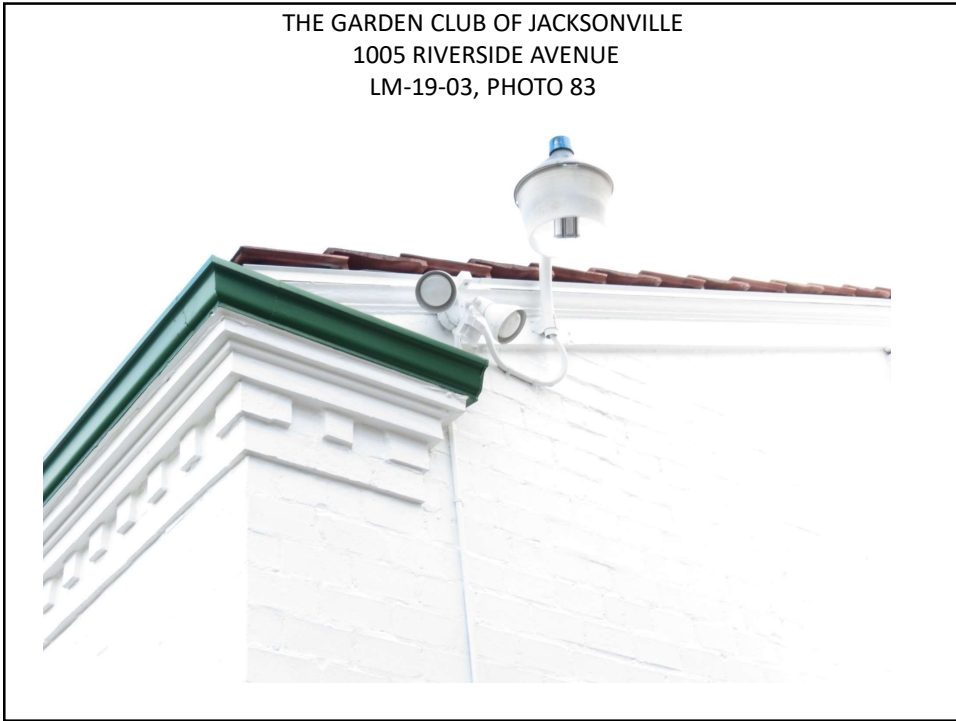
THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 81



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 82



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 83



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 84



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 85



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 86



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 87



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 88



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 89



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 90



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 91



THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVENUE  
LM-19-03, PHOTO 92



**II. HISTORIC, ARCHITECTURAL OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF LANDMARK OR LANDMARK SITE AS RELATED TO APPLICATION CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION**

**8-1: NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE – The Garden Club of Jacksonville, 1005 Riverside Avenue**

**SUMMARY: The Garden Club of Jacksonville**

For nearly one hundred years, the Garden Club of Jacksonville has developed an unmatched record of community service in regards to beautification, park improvement, environmental preservation, municipal planning as well as floral and horticulture education and promotion in the City. Starting with 20 members and one circle in 1922, the Club grew by 1949 to 2300 members and over one hundred circles. At that time, the club was recognized as the largest garden club in the world. After purchasing a prime lot at the corner of Riverside Avenue and Post Street, the Garden Club constructed a small brick building in 1947 followed by the much larger Auditorium Building that was completed in 1958. Both buildings not only accommodated the many functions and activities of the Garden Club of Jacksonville, but also hosted numerous community and social events. The 1947 building was designed by Jacksonville architect, Russell Seymour and the Neoclassical style Auditorium Building being designed by the local architectural firm of Saxelby & Powell.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT –RIVERSIDE**

**Summary:**

This historic context statement relates to properties, such as the Garden Club of Jacksonville, located within the boundaries of the original Riverside plat. Beginning around the turn of the century, many parts of Riverside were replatted as new subdivisions, particularly occurring with the large water lots. Until they were separately platted in 1869, the Brooklyn and Riverside Subdivisions were part of the same 800-acre land grant originally made to Francis Richard during the Second Spanish Period. Immediately after the Civil War, the owner of the 800 acres, Miles Price, sold the south 500 acres, to Boston millionaire, John Murray Forbes, who platted it as Riverside, while Price platted the remaining 300 acres as Brooklyn. During the 1880's and 90's, Brooklyn developed primarily as a residential neighborhood. Middle and upper class white families constructed substantial homes along Commercial Avenue, later renamed Riverside Avenue. However, the majority of houses were small wood frame structures occupied by African-Americans, many whom migrated to the Jacksonville after the Civil War to take advantage of employment and housing opportunities. After the fire of 1901, the rapid growth of downtown resulted in the gradual replacement of these large homes and mansions by commercial, industrial and warehouse uses along Riverside Avenue and Park Street.

Except for the large water lots, the original Riverside Subdivision has remained basically intact as originally platted in 1869. The majority of buildings in Riverside reflect middle and upper income taste in residential architecture during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although the area is composed primarily of private residences, it contains a number of other types of buildings that contribute to the neighborhood feeling of Riverside. These include apartments, schools, churches, civic buildings, clubhouses, museums and small-scale commercial buildings.

Most buildings in the district reflect late nineteenth and early twentieth century revival styles such as the Colonial Revival, Spanish Eclectic and Tudor, or the more modern movements of the first quarter of the twentieth century, such as the Prairie style and Craftsman style. Vernacular architecture and Victorian period styles such as the Queen Anne are found in lesser numbers and associated primarily with buildings constructed prior to the Great Jacksonville Fire of 1901. Many of the historic residences in Riverside were designed by some of Jacksonville's early pioneer architects, including Roy A. Benjamin (1888 - 1963), Ransom Buffalow (1861 - 1922), Henrietta Cuttino Dozier (1872 - 1947), Mellen Clark Greeley (1880 - 1981), George Olaf Holmes (1862 - 1934), William Mulford Marsh (1889 - 1946), Harold Frederick Saxelbye (1885 - 1964), Wilbur B. Talley, and Henry Taylor (? - ca. 1934). Although not trained professionally as architects, Ransom Buffalow and Henry Taylor did both design and construction projects in Jacksonville.

### **Colonial Period to the End of the Nineteenth Century:**

The area that includes the Brooklyn and Riverside Subdivisions were part of a Second Spanish Period land grant originally made to Francis Richard. Eight Hundred acres of Richard's grant were taken over by Philip Dell in 1801 from a concession made by the colonial governor of East Florida. The property ran along the St. Johns River from McCoy's Creek southwest to the bend in the river between present day Barrs Street and King Street. Dell developed a plantation on his property that stretched for two miles along the St. Johns River south from McCoy's Creek. Called "Dell's Bluff" because of the sixteen-foot high elevation along the river, the plantation was transferred to John H. McIntosh in 1805 who in turn sold it to Francis Ross in 1813. "Dell's Bluff" changed hands several more times before being purchased by James Winter in 1847. Winter developed a plantation producing cotton, corn and sugar cane, as well as constructed a home near the present intersection of Riverside Avenue and Stonewall Street.<sup>1</sup>

Several years before the Civil War, the Winter estate was sold to Miles Price who already had a plantation called "Gravelly Hill", six miles west of Jacksonville. A native of Screven, Georgia, Price purchased the property at a Commissioner's sale in 1858 for \$1,528. In 1868, Price platted three hundred acres of the parcel which constituted the Brooklyn neighborhood. Ironically, it is assumed that Price, a Confederate veteran, gave it the unlikely name of Brooklyn.

During the 1880's and 90's, Brooklyn developed primarily as a residential neighborhood. Middle and upper class white families' constructed substantial homes along Commercial Avenue, later renamed Riverside Avenue. However, the majority of houses were small wood frame structures occupied by African-Americans, many whom migrated to the Jacksonville after the Civil War to take advantage of employment and housing opportunities. Located to the west of Riverside Avenue towards Myrtle Avenue and McCoy's Creek, these structures reflected the simple Frame Vernacular styles of traditional worker houses.

Some of the prominent citizens that built and occupied substantial homes along Riverside

---

<sup>1</sup> *Abstract of Title to Riverside Property of the Indian River Association.* Drew Company, Undated (c. 1902). *T. Frederick Davis, History of Jacksonville, Florida and Vicinity, 1513 – 1924.* (St. Augustine, Florida: The Record Company, 1925, 1990 reprint), p. 42.



Avenue in Brooklyn included Francis Elias Spinner, former Secretary of the Treasury under Lincoln, Johnson and Grant, industrialist, Frederick M. Robinson, lumberman, J.K. Russell and publisher, Horace Drew. Another noted Brooklyn resident was Jacksonville mayor, J.C. Greeley, father of architect Mellen C. Greeley. In the 1890's, Brooklyn experienced a residential boom along Riverside Avenue with the construction of seventy-four structures having a total value of \$200,000. After the fire of 1901, the demand for new houses shifted this residential growth further west along Riverside Avenue into the Riverside Subdivision.

After the fire of 1901, the rapid growth of downtown resulted in the gradually replacement of these large homes and mansions in Brooklyn by commercial, industrial and warehouse uses. Some of the early commercial and light industrial buildings constructed in Brooklyn along Riverside Avenue included the Jacksonville Traction Company car barn and power plant (1903-streetcars), Delcher Brothers warehouse (1910), the Yale Steam Laundry, the Jacksonville Concrete Company, and the Lubin Manufacturing Company (film studio). Some of Jacksonville's early automobile dealerships were originally located along Riverside Avenue such as the Chrysler and Royal Motors constructed in 1916 at the site of the Greeley house.

Subdivision development in Riverside dates from 1868 when Edward M. Cheney, editor of the main Jacksonville newspaper, the *Florida Union*, purchased the southern 500 acres of Dell's Bluff from Miles Price for \$10,000 in gold. Cheney acted as agent for John Murray Forbes, a Boston millionaire, who subdivided the land and named it Riverside. The original Riverside Subdivision extended along the river from just east of Rosselle Street to a point west of Barrs Street following the south boundary of the Ross Grant (original 800 acre grant that included both Riverside and Brooklyn). The west and north boundaries were just west of Stockton Street. After being physically and visually cut-off from the Riverside neighborhood by the construction of the Fuller Warren Bridge and I-95, the area located south of Forest Street to Rosselle Street is often considered part of Brooklyn. However, the area between Forest Street to the north and Rosselle Street to the south is composed of two pre-1901 plats, Supplementary Plat of Riverside and Brooklyn Addition.<sup>2</sup>

Forbes had personal ties to Florida going back to the British period (1763 – 1783) when his grandfather served as rector at St. Augustine where his father was born. Forbes began visiting Florida in the 1850s probably for health reasons. After being platted, he kept one lot between Fisk Street and Rosselle Street where he built a house but never occupied it.<sup>3</sup> Just south of the Forbes residence, journalist, lawyer and land developer, Edward M. Cheney built one of the first residences along Riverside Avenue in c. 1870. In addition to being the Secretary of the Jacksonville Board of Trade and agent for the New England Emigrant Aid Company, Cheney was the editor and owner of the *Florida Times Union* for six years. After selling the paper to Walton, Fowle & Co., Cheney began practicing law and in 1878 served as the city attorney.

---

<sup>2</sup> Supplementary Plat to Riverside, Q-434 and Brooklyn Addition, 45 – 113.

Two smaller re-plats of the Supplementary Plat to Riverside included Pipes Replat, Plat Book 6, Page 39, 1914 and Forest and Date Street Addition, Plat Book 3, Page 20, 1905.

<sup>3</sup> Wayne W. Wood, *Jacksonville's Architectural Heritage, Landmarks for the Future*. (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, Revised Edition, 1996), p.110.

George Hallam, *Riverside Remembered*. (Jacksonville, Florida: Drummond Press, 1976), pp. 5  
The Forbes residence was sold in 1889 to John Quincy Burbridge

Located near the current site of the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, the Cheney residence was a rambling two-story frame house with lower and upper porches on the front and rear elevations, as well as an attached smaller two-story section that probably housed a kitchen on the first floor and domestic help on the second. In 1877, Cheney sold the house to Heber R. Bishop and moved to Philips in South Jacksonville where he died in 1890.<sup>4</sup>

When Riverside was originally platted in 1869, the subdivision included 118 blocks, most with ten lots. Twelve blocks along the St. Johns River, called water lots, between Rosselle Street and Barrs Street were identified each containing five lots. These deep lots ran from Commercial Street (Riverside Avenue) to the river. Before the turn of the century, these lots were not intensively developed, and contained one to two large residential structures. Because of a strong population growth in Jacksonville creating the need for additional housing, many owners of the water lots began to replat them into smaller parcels. One of the earliest replats of the Riverside water lots that occurred before 1901 was filed by real estate investor, Andrew J. Hedrick. Pre-1901, he replatted a section of Block 5 between Lomax Street and Post Street. Further north of A.J. Hedrick's Subdivision are L'Engle Subdivision of Lots 1 & 2, Block 3, Riverside (Plat Book 1, Page 120) and Perry's Subdivision of Lot 3, Block 3, Riverside (Plat 6, Page 84) at the southeast corner of Gilmore Street and Riverside Avenue. Perry's Subdivision was platted in 1916 by Charlotte and P.C. Perry.

In 1899, Alice Doty, wife of Clarence T. Doty purchased Lots 1, 2 and the east half of 3 of A.J. Hedricks Subdivision, part of which was replatted as Doty's Addition to Lot One, filed in January of 1911 (Plat Book 4, Page 15). Largest part of Doty's Addition is filled property created by a new bulkhead. Clarence Doty was later responsible for the construction of the Fenimore Apartments in 1921 - 22 at 2200 Riverside Avenue. In 1908, Frederick Phillips filed a replat of Lots 3, 4, and 5 of Block 6 of A .J .Hedrick Subdivision, which included dedicating property for Lancaster Terrace and the alley that connects Lancaster Terrace and Lancaster Street (Plat Book 3, Page 21). Further south along Riverside Avenue, Horace B. Snell replatted lot 1 of Block 40, Riverside in 1912 which included seven lots on the south side of Margaret Street between Riverside Avenue and the river (Plat Book 4, Page 95). Separated by undivided lots, these various replats, all located north of Goodwin Street have lost their historical residential presence, except for the pocket of older homes along Lancaster Terrace and Lancaster Street.

Part of the original Riverside Subdivision included a fourteen-acre tract set aside for a public park. In 1893, the Land Mortgage Bank of England, who had purchased the remaining unsold tracts of the Riverside Subdivision, deeded this property to the City of Jacksonville, which developed it as Riverside Park. A provision of the donation was that the City had to develop and maintain the property as a park although the Land Mortgage Bank was responsible for fencing the property. The Land Mortgage Bank of England was one of several British-owned companies active in Florida real estate, forestry, citrus farming and phosphate mining around the turn of the century. The Land Mortgage Bank of Florida, Ltd. along with the Indian River Association and the Florida Syndicate, Ltd. were represented by Riverside resident, William

---

<sup>4</sup> Hallam, p. 106.  
Wood, p. 160.

Moore Angas. Moving to Jacksonville in 1895 from Darlington, England, Angus constructed a residence at 1650 Goodwin Street in 1902.<sup>5</sup>

However, according to the records in the Real Estate Division of the Jacksonville Public Works Department, the park land was acquired by the City for five dollars from John M. and Sarah Forbes via their attorneys, Mellen W. Drew and Benjamin Hazeltine on January 9, 1889. The 1889 deed described the property, all of Block 28, as a city park bounded by Gilmore Street to the north, Cleveland Street (Park Street) to the east, south by Post Street and Margaret Street and to the west by Lemon Street (College Street). An 1895 source also stated that the park “was donated to the City by a Mr. Forbes of Boston”.<sup>6</sup>

The oldest City owned park after Hemming Park, the fourteen acre parcel was cleared by city prisoners assisted by local residents. In addition, sidewalks, a carriage road and two spring-fed ponds were constructed with landscaping being completed in 1894. The park was fenced with pedestrian turnstiles for public access at each entryway in order to keep out roaming cattle, not uncommon in the area at the time. After the turn of the twentieth century with the extension of the streetcar down Riverside Avenue, Riverside Park became popular with residents from different parts of the city.<sup>7</sup>

With continued use of the park especially by young people, the City had a park supervisor who lived on the grounds to coordinate activities and oversee maintenance.<sup>8</sup> Riverside Park was enhanced with a bandstand, as well as a comfort station and tool house in 1913. The comfort station and tool house were replaced with a new brick facility in 1929.<sup>9</sup> In addition, the park later featured at least three clay tennis courts, a basketball court, area for volleyball, horseshoe pits and playground. With the construction of a new recreation center and the hiring of a full time park director, the park hosted tennis tournaments until the opening of new tennis facilities at Boone Park. The shell paved carriage road was closed in 1931 due to concerns regarding the safety of strolling women including nurses with babies created by an increase in both the number and speed of automobiles. A unique feature at Riverside Park was the construction of

---

<sup>5</sup> Wood, p. 58

Davis, pp. 333& 334.

Frank Orser, “Florida and the British Investor”, Revisited: The William Moore Angas Papers at the University of Florida. *Florida Historical Quarterly*, LXXII, #2, October, 1993.

Howard Zoll, Jacksonville Parks and Recreation Department, “History of Riverside Park- RE #090410-0000”, unpublished – Vertical File, Riverside Park, Historic Preservation Archives, Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, pp. 1 - 7.

<sup>6</sup> Zoll, pp. 1 & 2.

Deed Book BN-229, January 9, 1889.

S. Paul Brown, *The Book of Jacksonville, A History*. (Poughkeepsie, New York: A.V. Haight, 1895), pp. 55 &56.

<sup>7</sup> Wood, p. 58

Zoll, pp. 2 & 3.

Davis, pp. 333 & 335.

*Florida Times Union, River City News*, May 13, 1998, W-4.

<sup>8</sup> *Florida Times Union*, September 16, 1906.

<sup>9</sup> The Confederate Park comfort Station and tool house was built at the same time as the one at Riverside Park.

Together both buildings cost \$6,000 and were constructed by O.P. Woodcock (Jacksonville Building Permit Record, # 546, September, 1929). As of 2019, the one at Confederate Park is still being used.

the City's first greenhouse for the growing of plants and flowers used to beautify municipal properties. In addition to a rose garden first planted in 1894, the Men's Garden Club working with the city opened a Camilla garden in 1967.<sup>10</sup>

In 1941 one of the ponds was filled-in in order to accommodate the construction of an electric substation funded by the Depression-era Public Works Administration (PWA). In 1964, the substation was significantly expanded. In 1954, the fourteen acres of Riverside Park was reduced to 11.39 acres when properties on the north end were acquired to accommodate the western approach to the new Fuller Warren Bridge which was incorporated as part of I-95. As a result, the tennis courts, playground, bandstand and recreation center were removed along with the visual and physical connection to Annie Lytle Elementary School. In 1983, the City proposed to create sixty parking spaces along the perimeter of the park which was soon abandoned due to public outcry. Riverside Park has had numerous upgrades in more recent years including the restoration of the popular duck pond.<sup>11</sup>

### **Twentieth Century:**

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.<sup>12</sup>

Between 1901 and 1920 Jacksonville experienced its greatest period of growth prior to the post-World War II era. It became Florida's largest and in many ways it's most important city. By 1910 it was a major port and railroad center. Its population numbered over 28,000, the largest in the state. Over the next decade it grew phenomenally, totaling 57,699 residents by 1920. Its population was 20,000 more than that of Tampa, the second largest city. Commercial development and building construction in the downtown area was unprecedented. In residential neighborhoods, the rapidly expanding population stimulated a tremendous demand for housing, most notably in the Riverside and Springfield subdivisions. Riverside was the focus of much of the housing construction in Jacksonville. The overwhelming percentage of its building stock dates from the

---

<sup>10</sup> Wood, p. 58

Zoll, p.3 & 4.

<sup>11</sup> Zoll, pp. 4 &5.

<sup>12</sup> For more on the 1901 fire see: Bill Foley and Wayne W. Wood, *The Great Fire of 1901*. (Jacksonville Historical Society, 2001).

Davis, pp. 219-228.

Historic Property Associates. *A Re-Survey of the Riverside Historic District, Jacksonville, Florida*. St. Augustine, Florida, April, 1992, pp. 1- 5.

James Robertson Ward, *Old Hickory's Town, An pp. 11-13 Illustrated History of Jacksonville*. (Jacksonville: Old Hickory's Town, Inc., 1985), pp. 175-186.

1900-1920 period. Its development was inextricably woven with that of Jacksonville during the city's most significant period.

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Riverside Avenue became the address of choice for many of Jacksonville's most prominent families. Approximately fifty elegant mansions, that constituted what was commonly called the Row, were constructed along both sides of Riverside Avenue from Lackawanna Avenue, now Edison Avenue, to Margaret Street. This part of Riverside Avenue soon developed as Jacksonville's most popular and scenic corridor attracting both local residents and visitors. Some of the noted business, civic and political leaders that had residences along the Row included Henry T. Armington, J.P. Beckwith, Mayor J.E.T. Bowden, Edward A. Champlain, Colonel Raymond Cay, John G. Christopher, Walter Coachman, Jr., John M. Des Rochers, Charles E. Garner, John E. Hartridge, J. Dobbins Holmes, Samuel B. Hubbard, William E. Kay, Edward Lane, James R. Munoz, C.B. Rogers, Robert W. Sims, Telefair Stockton, Episcopal Bishop Edwin G. Weed and Lorenzo Wilson.<sup>13</sup> Except for the residences of William J. Kelly at 1521 Riverside Avenue and that of R. L. Springfellow later belonging to James L. Medlin at 1541 Riverside Avenue, all the mansions along the Row have been demolished to accommodate new commercial and institutional uses, as well as highway and bridge expansions.<sup>14</sup>

The most well-known family to move to the Row was that of wealthy Michigan Lumberman, Wellington Wilson Cummer and his wife, Ada Gerrish Cummer, who moved into a massive Neoclassical style residence constructed in 1897 adjacent to the Edward Cheney house on the east side of Riverside Avenue at Fisk Street. Born in Toronto, Canada in 1846, W.W. Cummer moved to Michigan in 1860 where he started a lumber business in 1871 and later opened a plant near Cadillac, Michigan in 1876. Investing in southern timberland by 1890, W. W. Cummer moved his family to Duval County in 1896 where he built a large lumber and crate plant at Milldale located at Sand Fly Point at the mouth of the Trout River and the St. Johns River. In addition to owning over 500,000 acres in Florida, the company constructed and operated a standard gauge one hundred mile railroad, the Jacksonville & Southwest Railroad, to transport lumber and later phosphate from the Newberry area in Central Florida to the sawmill and docks at Milldale. The line was sold in 1903 and become part of the Atlantic Coast Line system in 1904.<sup>15</sup> The Cummer Mill became one of the largest employers in Duval County with a labor force of 1,150 workers. In 1907, the river channel was dredged to 24 feet which allowed for the company to build facilities for shipping phosphate to Europe.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> George Hallam, *Riverside Remembered*. (Jacksonville, Florida: Riverside Avondale Preservation, 1976), pp. 46-52.

Wood, p.110.

<sup>14</sup> Wood, p. 151.

Jacksonville Museum of Science and History and Jacksonville University had their beginnings in one of the large houses along the Row. Called the Children's Museum, MOSH was first located in the Lorenzo Wilson residence with the Jacksonville Jr. College starting at the old Charles E. Garner - William E. Kay residence.

The Georgian Revival style residence of Walter Coachman, Jr. is still standing but completely covered with contemporary sheathing.

<sup>15</sup> Pleasant Daniel Gold. *History of Duval County*. St. Augustine, FL: The Record Company, 1928), pp. 186 & 457; Davis, p. 348.

<sup>16</sup> Costing \$25,000 to build, W.W. Cummer residence was designed by Michigan architect, William Williamson. James B. Crooks, *Jacksonville after the Fire, 1901-1919, A New South City*. (Jacksonville, FL: University of North Florida Press, 1991), pp. 29, 65-66.

W.W. Cummer was joined by his two sons, Waldo and Arthur, who constructed grand residences on each side of their parent's house creating the "Cummer Compound" sited between Riverside Avenue and the St. Johns River. Waldo and Clara Cummer moved into the old Cheney house in 1898 which he later moved about 200 feet towards the river in order to accommodate the construction of a new residence. In c. 1908, Waldo Cummer had the Cheney residence placed on a barge and moved up the river into Willow Branch Creek. At that point, the house was pulled by mules and placed on a small lot (2959 Riverside Avenue) requiring it to be turned sideways resulting in the original front door to face the side of the adjacent house.<sup>17</sup>

While attending the University of Michigan in 1892 with his brother Waldo, Arthur Gerrish Cummer met and later married fellow student, Ninah May Holden from Michigan City, Indiana. After their marriage in 1897, Arthur and Ninah Cummer moved to Jacksonville and constructed a \$20,000 brick veneer half-timbered residence in 1902. After construction of the Tudor Revival style residence, the Cummers began planting elaborate gardens with the assistance of landscape architects. Their riverfront property was landscaped in 1910 with a traditional English style garden which was modified in 1931 to include an Italian garden. The gardens were enhanced with a curved arbor, two blue reflecting pools, brick paths, terraces, nooks, carved chairs and stone fountain with lion, all graced with a large stately oak tree. With the death of their father in 1908, Waldo and Arthur Cummer assisted by their brother-in-law, John L. Roe, took over management of the vast family businesses.<sup>18</sup>

Over her many years of traveling to Europe, Ninah Cummer accumulated a significant art and antiques collection. To better display some of these pieces, she added a large drawing room to the residence in 1931. Called the "Tudor Room", the large drawing room was richly detailed with heavy mahogany paneling and an ornate ceiling. After the death of her husband, Ninah Cummer remained in their Riverside Avenue residence and continued her many philanthropic pursuits. Following her wishes, the Cummer residence was demolished for the construction of a new art museum that would preserve and display her valuable collection. During the demolition process, the elegant "Tudor Room" was carefully dismantled and reconstructed in the new museum building that opened in 1961 as the Cummer Gallery of Art.<sup>19</sup>

Construction of a large residence next door to Arthur and Ninah Cummer, was started by Chicago resident Mrs. Harriet Hubbard Ayer as a winter home. Never finished, the residence was purchased in 1893 and completed by prominent Jacksonville developer, Telfair Stockton. In 1905, it was sold to Jacksonville businessman, C.B. Rogers, who resided in the residence until 1925. Falling into disrepair, the house was demolished and the land sold to the Woman's Club of

---

Jean Hall Dodd, *Arthur Gerrish Cummer*. (Jacksonville, Florida: Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, 1996), pp.3 & 4.

Hallam, pp. 20 & 21.

<sup>17</sup> Wood, p. 160.

<sup>18</sup> Hallam, pp. 55 – 60.

Wood, p. 150

Dodd, p. 2

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Jacksonville in 1926 for \$125,000.<sup>20</sup> The Woman's Club of Jacksonville was founded in January of 1897 by forty local women. The club grew rapidly and by 1903 had constructed its first clubhouse in Downtown Jacksonville at 16 East Duval Street. To accommodate their growing membership and diverse programs, the club constructed a new clubhouse on their Riverside Avenue parcel.<sup>21</sup>

The Tudor Revival style building at 861 Riverside Avenue was built by contractor W.T. Hadlow from a design by Jacksonville architect, Mellen C. Greeley. Within two years after completion, the membership of the Woman's Club had increased from four hundred to eight hundred members. Since 1927 until recently, the building has served as a popular venue while housing the many important functions, activities and programs of the Woman's Club of Jacksonville. Over the years, the club has taken a leadership role in addressing a multitude of social, health, educational and environmental issues while providing opportunities for self-improvement.<sup>22</sup>

On March 25, 1922, seventeen women met at the home of Ninah Cummer for the purposes of forming a local garden club. From that meeting, the Garden Club of Jacksonville was organized under first president, Ninah Cummer. The Garden Club was committed to fostering the knowledge and appreciation of gardening while addressing issues related to beautification of public property, municipal planning and environmental protection. The club provided a variety of community services to numerous organizations including military and civilian hospitals, schools, churches and institutions. These activities were accomplished by having the membership organized into smaller circles that represented many parts of the community. The circles not only supported the programs of the Garden Club such as the popular flower shows, but also could initiate their own projects. The original name of the club since 1922 was the Federated Circles of the Garden Club of Jacksonville but changed to the current name in 1949.<sup>23</sup>

For over twenty-five years, the Garden Club met in private homes, institutions such as the Woman's Club, as well as being accommodated on the second floor of the Cohen Brothers Department Store. In 1946, the club purchased a parcel at the corner of Post Street and Riverside Avenue across from the Woman's Club and began an enthusiastic campaign to raise money for the construction of a permanent home. A temporary wood framed exhibition hall was constructed on the property soon followed by a permanent masonry building referred to as Unit 1, later renamed the Garden Club Room. Designed by Jacksonville architect, Russell Seymore, this first building was dedicated on November 21, 1947. In May of 1957, the club voted to go forward with plans for the construction of the large auditorium. Reflecting elements of the Neoclassical Revival style, the masonry building, dedicated on June 22, 1958, was designed by Saxelbye and Powell and constructed by William E. Arnold, Company.<sup>24</sup> By the late 1940s, the Garden Club of Jacksonville

---

<sup>20</sup> Hallam, pp. 46 and 49.  
Wood, p. 151.

<sup>21</sup> National Register of Historic Places application, the Woman's Club of Jacksonville, Listed November 3, 1992.  
<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Mrs. Fred B. Noble, *The History of the Garden Club of Jacksonville, Florida*. (Garden Club of Jacksonville, 1960), pp. 1 & 8.

*Gordonia*, Newsletter of the Garden Club of Jacksonville, March, 1949, Vol. 1, # 5, p.1.

<sup>24</sup> Noble, pp. 62 – 73.

at 1005 Riverside Avenue was recognized as the largest garden club in the world with over 2300 members.<sup>25</sup>

The most recognized and iconic landmark in Riverside is the six acre Memorial Park highlighted by the bronze statue entitled “Spiritualized Life”.<sup>26</sup> Before the park was constructed at Winter’s Point, the river front property was vacant and undeveloped, used primarily for picnics and a spot for baptisms by local black churches. During the 1890s, the property was being considered for the construction of a \$500,000 hotel which was never initiated except possibly constructing bulk heads along the river front and leveling of the grounds. Soon after the end of World War I, the Jacksonville Rotary Club sponsored a campaign for a memorial to commemorate those Floridians who died during the Great War. With the proposed memorial quickly receiving wide community support, the Jacksonville Rotary Club was joined by over thirty organizations in convincing the City of Jacksonville to buy the parcel, known as the “Robinson property, in 1919 for \$125,000.”<sup>27</sup>

The Jacksonville Rotary Club formed the Citizen Memorial Committee under prominent businessman, Morgan V. Gress, to plan and develop the park and memorial. Well known philanthropist and master gardener, Mrs. Arthur (Ninah) Cummer, head of the Landscape Subcommittee, was advised by prominent horticulturist, Dr. H. Harold Hume, who recommended the selection of the Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts to design the park.<sup>28</sup> Their father, Frederick Olmsted, Sr. was the most well-known and respected landscape architect in the country. Frederick Olmsted, Sr. and his sons, John Charles and Frederick Olmsted, Jr. were responsible for over 6,000 landscape designs across the country that included some of the most significant parks and gardens in America such as the U.S. Capitol grounds, the Cloisters in New York, the Boston Commons, as well as Central Park with Calvert Vaux in 1856. Using a nineteenth century Romantic style design, the Olmsted plan included a large open space defined by a curving promenade on each side leading to a central plaza where the memorial was located. It was commonly referred to as being the “finest small urban park by the Olmsted Brothers that exist today”. The Jacksonville architectural firm of Benjamin & Greeley provided architectural planning, writing project specifications and construction supervision.<sup>29</sup>

Florida Sculptor, Charles Adrian Pillars, was selected out of more than one hundreds candidates by the Citizens Memorial Committee to design the memorial. Born 1870 in Rantoul, Illinois, Pillars, who began sculpturing at twelve years old, was a protégé of nationally prominent sculptor, Lorado Taft, as well as working with Daniel Chester French in the design and fabrication of the head and

---

<sup>25</sup> *Gordonia*, Newsletter of the Garden Club of Jacksonville, March, 1949, Vol. 1, # 5, p.1

<sup>26</sup> Memorial Park is located in both the National Register and local Riverside Historic District and was individually listed on the National Register on October 25, 2017.

<sup>27</sup> Wood, p. 153.

Davis, pp. 334 -335

National Register of Historic Places Application – Memorial Park, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> A native of Russell, Ontario, Canada, Dr. H. Harold Hume, taught horticulture at the Florida Agricultural College in Lake City, forerunner of the University of Florida and later Dean of the College of Agriculture, the Provost of Agriculture and interim president of the University of Florida. After retiring from academia, he became general manager of the large Glen St Mary’s Nursery which provided many of the plants first used in Memorial Park (National Register, p. 12).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

National Register Application –Memorial Park, p. 22.



bust of the sixty foot statue named *Republic*, recognized as the centerpiece sculpture of the 1893 Columbian Exhibition. Pillars relocated to Jacksonville for health reasons in 1908 where he opened his own studio and taught classes. From 1919 to 1932, he resided in St. Augustine. Pillars design was a twenty-foot high bronze statue resting on a twelve sided concrete basin. Entitled *Spiritualized Life Sculpture*, also known as *the The Winged Figure of Youth*, the statue featured a winged youth holding an olive branch of peace and rising up from a globe that depicted winds of chaos created by a world at war. Centered in the park along the river front, the statue was unveiled on Christmas Day, 1924. Also, a parchment containing the names of 1,220 Floridians that died in the war was placed in a lead box and buried in the plaza around the statue.<sup>30</sup>

During the early 1900s, most of the river front south of Margaret Street did not have a bulkhead allowing water to flood beyond Riverside Avenue to Oak Street. Many of the houses originally fronting Riverside Avenue, such as 2160 Oak Street and 1650 Goodwin Street, were connected to the river by wet open spaces. After the construction of bulkheads and the filling of low areas, the large water lots between Margaret Street and Osceola Street began to be platted. Horace B. Snell replatted Lot 1 of Block 40, Riverside in 1912 (Plat Book 4, Page 95) which included seven lots on the south side of Margaret Street between Riverside Avenue and the river. The earliest replat of the water lots, that now comprises what in recent years is called the St. Johns Quarter, was filed in 1904 by William T. Simmons who owned a local shoe business. Simmons replatted the upper half of Block 41 creating five residential lots between Riverside Avenue and Simmons Street (St. Johns Avenue).

In January of 1911, local attorney, Sam R. Marks replatted Lots 2 and 3 of Block 43 into Block A and Block B which were divided by extending Simmons Street into the middle of Block 43. Block A was divided into six parcels with Block B having five parcels. The following month in February of 1911, Frederick Phillips replatted the lower half of Block 41 which created sixteen residential lots with eight facing River Boulevard and eight facing Simmons Street. Phillips was a partner in the firm of Phillips and Turnbull, Civil Engineers and Contractors. In May of 1913, the Indian River Association filed two plats in the area now comprising the St. Johns Quarter. Lots 4 and 5 of Block 40 were subdivided into eight lots, A through H. In Block 42, Lots 4 and 5 were also divided into twelve lots with A through F located between Riverside Avenue and Simmons Street, while lots G through L located between Simmons Street and River Boulevard. In September of 1914, the Indian River Association filed a dock plat that was accessed from lot N located between River Boulevard and the river. The dock plat included twelve berths for each of the lots located in the subdivision of Lots 4 and 5, Block 42, as well as a berth reserved for the Indian River Association, Ltd.

The remaining sections of St. Johns Quarter resulted from a series of replats filed between 1910 and 1913. In August of 1910, realtor, Charles A. Cheatham subdivided Lot 3 of Block 42. Acting as the agent of the property owner, Grace G. Talbot, Cheatham had Lot 3 divided

---

<sup>30</sup> Wood, p. 153.

National Register Application, pp. 7, 14, 15 & 17.

Pillars also designed the statues of inventor, John Gorrie and General Edmund Kirby Smith that were placed in the U.S. Capitol building representing two well-known Floridians.

into eight parcels, four located between Riverside Avenue and Simmons Street (St. Johns Avenue), and three between Simmons Street and River Boulevard. Lot 1 of the subdivision was a thin piece of property located between River Boulevard and the river. Lot 1 of Block 43 was subdivided into eight lots on the south side of Osceola Street between Riverside Avenue and the river. This subdivision was filed in October of 1910 by Tracy L. Acosta, state agent for the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company. In December of 1910, Riverside resident, Robert L. Stringfellow subdivided Lots 1 and 2 of Block 42. This subdivision included three thin parcels between River Boulevard and the river, seven parcels between River Boulevard and Simmons Street, as well as eight parcels between Simmons Street and Riverside Avenue. In the wholesale grocery business, Stringfellow constructed the house at 1541 Riverside Avenue in 1906 - 1907.

Two significant structures in the St. Johns Quarter is the apartment building at 2107 River Boulevard and the Leon Cheek Residence at 2263 River Boulevard. Constructed around 1870, the three-story apartment house at the corner of River Boulevard and Godwin Street was moved to its present location (Lot 1 of Phillips Replat of Block 41, filed 1911) between 1903 and 1913. Known as the Rochester and later the Riverside House, it was built in c.1870 as a tourist home and was originally located along Riverside Avenue near the present site of the Florida Publishing Company. In 1928 – 29, Leon Cheek constructed a \$100,000 residence at 2263 River Boulevard at the corner of River Boulevard and Osceola Street. Designed by Jacksonville architect, Roy Benjamin, the residence had a monumental presence reflecting the Jacobethan Revival style. Leon Cheek was the head of the Neal-Cheek Coffee Company the forerunner of the Maxwell House Coffee Company.<sup>31</sup>

Less known is the association of Riverside with the short period when Jacksonville was billed as the “World’s Winter Film Capital”. From 1908 to 1922, the City was home to over thirty silent motion picture studios. With the early success of the first production company in Jacksonville, the Kalem Studio in 1907, other companies were attracted to the City including the Lubin Motion Picture Company that built a movie studio complex at 740 – 750 Riverside Avenue in the former home of the Florida Yacht Club. Located between Riverside Avenue and the St. Johns River, the first film produced at the Lubin Studio was “Outwitting Dad” released April 21, 1914 and included various scenes shot in Riverside. Oliver, “Babe” Hardy of Laurel and Hardy fame started his professional career in 1914 in “Outwitting Dad”.<sup>32</sup>

Another housing option that developed for accommodating the growing population of Jacksonville during the early twentieth century was apartments. Although Riverside had numerous apartment buildings scattered through the neighborhood, some of the most noted include the San Juline

---

<sup>31</sup> Wood, p. 150.

<sup>32</sup> Richard Nelson, *Lights! Camera! Florida! Ninety Years of Moviemaking & Television Production in the Sunshine State*. (Tampa, Florida: Florida Endowment for the Humanities, 1987, 1991 reprint), pp. 13 & 14.

In addition to more warmer and sunnier days for filming and the presence of less static electricity (dangerous for nitrate film), Jacksonville had more favorable railroad and shipping rates, excellent hotels and was a major stop for ministerial shows that had both black and white performers. The only scenery that Jacksonville couldn’t provide was mountains.

Blair Miller, *Almost Hollywood, The Forgotten Story of Jacksonville, Florida*. (Lanham, Maryland: Hamilton Books, 2013), pp. 40, 41, 42, 45, 46, 47, 52, 54, 55, 58, 60, 61, 85 & 90.

Apartments, (1916) 1617 – 1637 Riverside Avenue; the Park Lane (1926), the most visible and perhaps the best known apartment building in the area at the end of Margaret Street; the Napier Apartments (1923) at 1530 – 1536 Riverside Avenue and the Fenimore Apartments (1921 – 1922) at 2200 Riverside Avenue..<sup>33</sup>

As the Riverside neighborhood grew and expanded during the first quarter of the twentieth century, it soon acquired the trappings of a fully development community with its own schools, churches and shopping districts. To accommodate the growing population of Riverside, several public schools were constructed including Anne Lytle Elementary School, PS # 4 (1891 & 1917) at 1011 Gilmore Street, originally called the Riverside Park School; Central Riverside Elementary School, PS # 18 (1916) at 2555 Gilmore Street and John Gorrie Jr. High School (1923 – 1924) at 2525 College Street. By the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century most of the major denominations had established a presence in Riverside, usually as missions of downtown churches. Some of the more noted churches included Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd (1918, 1920 – 21 and 1928) at 1100 Stockton Street; Riverside Park United Methodist Church (1913 & 1949) at 819 Park Street; Riverside Presbyterian Church (1922 & 1927) at 849 Park Street, Riverside Park Church of Christ (1925) at 856 Margaret Street and the former sanctuary of the Church of Latter Day Saints (1925) at 2165 Park Street, now owned by the Junior League of Jacksonville.<sup>34</sup>

One of the earliest neighborhood based commercial shopping areas outside of the immediate environment of Downtown Jacksonville was the Five Points Shopping District that began developing in the 1920s to serve the growing Riverside population. Because of its size (four stories) and mixed use, the Riverside (Five Points) Theatre Building (1926) at 1018-1028 Park Street became the signature building of Five Points. During the historic period, smaller clusters of businesses developed in the 800 block of Stockton Street and the 2200 block of Oak Street. Predominately surrounded by residential use, many of the buildings had stores on the first floor and apartments on the upper floors.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Wood, pp. 131, 152 & 154.

<sup>34</sup> Wood, 143, 120, 139 & 170.

*Florida Times Union & Jacksonville Journal*, December 5, 1976, B-1.

*Florida Times Union – Westside News*, February 15, 1997, pp. 1 & 5.

*Florida Times Union*, February 21, 1915, p. 12

Paula Ferrell Harding, *Riverside Park United Methodist Church, 1888 – 1988, 100 Years of Living, Loving, Praising and Praying – The Sunday School That Grew*. (Jacksonville, Florida: Riverside Park United Methodist Church, 1988), p.2.

*Florida Times Union*, September 6, 2015, B-1.

*Sunday School Informu*, Dedication Edition, Riverside Park Methodist Church, Volume 2, No. 1, July, 1922, pp.1 & 3.

*RAP Community Newsletter*, April, 1988, pp. 4& 5

*Liahona*, the Elder's Journal, c.1925, pp. 376 & 377.

Dean C. Jesse, Editor, *Letters of Brigham Young to His Sons*. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company with the Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1974), pp. 263, 264 & 265.

*Florida Times Union*, December 13, 1926, p. 1.

*RAP Community News*, March, 1981, Volume III, # 1, pp. 1 & 6.

<sup>35</sup> *Duval County Plat Books*, C.O. Chamberlin & Joseph Barrett's S/D of Block 29, Riverside, Book 1, Page 117 (1893) and Book 1, Page 120 (1894).

Wood, pp. 138 & 137.

Jacksonville Building Permit Record, # 526 – 1925, #.

Jacksonville Building Permit Record, # 526 – 1925; #637 – 1926 - # 71 – 1929; #641-1927 & #36 – 1920.

The seeds of Riverside's residential decline started before World War II predominately resulting from institutional and commercial expansion fostered by placing a large part of Riverside into a mixed use zoning category. The most significant impact to the residential decline as a result of institutional expansion was in the general area between Park Street to the St. Johns River and from Rosselle Street to King Street. In the 2000 block of Riverside Avenue, the nine bed Rogers Hospital was opened in 1911 by Carey Rogers. The name of this private facility was changed in 1915 to Riverside Hospital and was purchased in 1920 by Doctors Edward Jelks, Turner Cason and Harry Peyton. In 1921, they expanded the hospital with the addition of the Riverside Clinic which was recognized as one of the first medical facilities in Florida to perform X-rays, electrocardiograms and chemical testing.<sup>36</sup>

Wings were added to the hospital in 1937 and 1948 increasing the number of beds to 49. Chartered as a non-profit community hospital in 1958, a major expansion occurred in 1968 with the construction of a six-story tower which increased the number of beds to 183. To accommodate the last major addition in 1982, the original hospital building was demolished. By the time it was purchased by the nearby St. Vincent's Health System, Riverside Hospital occupied the entire block, as well as expanded across Oak Street to create additional parking spaces. Riverside Hospital ceased operation in 1996 with the clinic closing in 1998. In 2000, the 2.9 acre site was sold and cleared for new commercial uses. To accommodate this expansion over the years required the demolition of numerous historic residences with the last on that block being the Klutho designed Prairie style residence of George W. Clark removed in 1979.<sup>37</sup>

The much larger St. Vincent's Medical Center at 1800 Barrs Street originated in 1916 with the takeover of the 42 bed Desoto Sanitarium at the corner of West 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Boulevard in Springfield by the Daughters of Charity who had previously worked in a field hospital at Camp Cuba Libre during the Spanish American War. In 1916, the name was changed to St. Vincent Hospital. With generous financial support from the community; the Daughters of Charity were able to purchase the Riverside property of Augustus King at the foot of Barrs Street in 1926. In 1928, the new 200 bed St. Vincent's Hospital opened. The rapid and extensive expansion of St. Vincent's Hospital began with an addition in 1955 that added an additional 165 beds. Changing its name to St. Vincent's Medical Center, the complex was expanded in 1972 with the addition of a six-story medical wing followed in the late 1970s with the construction of the Dillon Professional Building and parking garage. Having a total of 518 beds, St. Vincent's Medical System significantly grew in 1990 with a 42 million dollar expansion plan.<sup>38</sup>

---

*Jacksonville Journal*, January 8, 1986.

<sup>36</sup> *Florida Times Union*, June 30, 1996, A-1; June 13, 1998, B-1 & June 23, 2001, A-12.

<sup>37</sup> *Florida Times Union*, June 30, 1996, A-1; June 13, 1998, B-1 and June 23, 2001 A-12.  
Wood, p. 381.

<sup>38</sup> *Resident Community News*, May, 2016, P.33.

*Florida Times Union*, *Westside Community News*, September 30, 1992, p. 1.

*Florida Times Union*, May 5, 2014.

*RAP Community Newsletter*, April, 1980, Volume II, No. 2.

Jacksonville Building Permit Record, # 226 – 1928.

With its tremendous growth, St. Vincent's Medical System could no longer accommodate many of its auxiliary uses on the consolidated campus at Riverside Avenue and King Street requiring the use of satellite facilities throughout different parts of Riverside. Frustration of residents at the continued loss of historic buildings and the construction of incompatible modern buildings greatly contributed to the formation of Riverside-Avondale Preservation, Inc. (RAP) in 1974. Over the years, RAP has diligently monitored expansions of the St. Vincent Medical System in addition to addressing other neighborhood issues such as demolition of historic buildings, traffic, zoning and maintenance of parks and right-of-ways. The organization has taken necessary actions when needed including the development of public awareness and leadership.<sup>39</sup>

Early city plans and zoning maps had most of Riverside in residential categories with some commercial zoning following the boundaries of established business districts such as Five Points, 800 block of Stockton Street and in the 2200 block of Oak Street. By the time of Consolidation in 1968, the majority of the area between Margaret Street to the St. Johns River and from Rosselle Street to Barrs Street, as well along the both sides of Park Street to King Street were placed in a mixed zoning category that allowed for single family residences, multi-family residences, offices and institutions (RMOI). Commercial zoning continued and in some cases expanded in the established business districts. The mixed use category provided the opportunity for the establishment of offices, clinics, retirement facilities and nursing homes, many times in association with the hospitals or independent medical services. High rise residential buildings were constructed along Lomax Terrace and in Five Points. The mixed use zoning and commercial categories still exist in the area (Residential-Office-Institution, ROI), but the intensity of non-residential uses has been reduced with the establishment of the local Riverside-Avondale Historic District (1998) and as part of a special zoning overlay. This part of Riverside has had a resurgence of residential uses.<sup>40</sup>

In June of 1954, the new Gilmore Street Bridge, later renamed the Fuller Warren Bridge, was opened. Connecting Riverside with South Jacksonville, this bridge was incorporated into the Jacksonville Expressway system completed in the late 1950's and early 1960's. The construction of the expressway significantly impacted the eastern side of the Riverside neighborhood by cutting off part of the old Riverside Subdivision, thus creating a strong visual and physical barrier. During the mid-1970s, new investors and homeowners began purchasing and renovating buildings in Riverside. In 1985 most of the original Riverside Subdivision, together with the Riverside Annex and New Riverside Subdivisions, constituted the first historic district in Jacksonville listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was followed in 1989 with the Avondale National Register District. In 1992, the locally designated Riverside-Avondale Historic District, which is larger than the two National Register Districts, was established creating one of the largest municipal historic districts in Florida.

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid,

<sup>40</sup> *The Comprehensive City Plan of Jacksonville, Florida*. City Planning Advisory Board, with George W. Simon, Jr., Consulting Municipal Engineer, 1931.

Zoning Maps, Adapted by Ordinance, Number U-125, September 9, 1930.

Zoning Atlas, City of Jacksonville, 1955.

*Dolph's Subdivision & Zoning Plat Book of Jacksonville, Florida and Environs*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1961, pp. 19 & 20.

Zoning and Subdivision Codes, City of Jacksonville, 1977.

Chapter 656, Jacksonville Ordinance Code (Zoning), 1990.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF PROPOSED LANDMARK AS RELATED TO DESIGNATION CRITERIA:**

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

The establishment of garden clubs across the country was a continuation of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century movement of affluent upper and middle class women in organizing to address Progressive era issues considered not receiving sufficient attention by male dominated national, state and local governments. Examples of these issues included child welfare, education, crime, housing, sanitation and health along with civic beautification and preservation of natural resources. Woman's Clubs are the most recognized of these new organizations with the first such club established in Florida in 1887. Many of the members of the Woman's Club movement were also founders and early members of garden clubs. Both organizations provided numerous opportunities for self-improvement, personal intellectual stimulation, camaraderie and leadership training for its members.<sup>41</sup>

The Garden Club of Jacksonville has an unmatched record of community service regarding beautification, park improvement, environmental preservation, municipal planning, as well as floral and horticulture education and promotion in the City for nearly one hundred years. On March 25, 1922, seventeen women from prominent families were called to a meeting at the residence of Mrs. Arthur G.(Ninah) Cummer and voted to form the Garden Club of Florida, a title changed at the April 28, 1924 meeting to the Federation of Garden Circles which was officially chartered in 1929. The Club was one of the four founders of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs in 1924 with several of their members later serving as President including Mrs. Cummer, Mrs. Merle B. (Harriett) Mann and Mrs. Halle (Nellie) Cohen. The state federation was established on April 25, 1924 in a small house on Fisk Street used as ticket booth for the early flower shows with the first board meeting being held on January 15, 1926 at the grand estate of Mrs. George (Grace) Trout called Marabanong located at Empire Point in South Jacksonville. Before 1960, the Garden Club of Jacksonville hosted the state conventions in 1926, 1938, 1945, 1948, 1955 and 1959. In addition to serving as the second president of the Florida Federation, Mrs. Cummer was elected as the first president of the National Council of State Garden Clubs.<sup>42</sup>

Following a concept established by the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, the Jacksonville Club organized its rapidly growing memberships into individual garden circles that were established across the city. The establishments of a circle were initiated by women in the community and were generally autonomous in their organization, bylaws and activities as long as consistent with

---

<sup>41</sup> Linda D. Vance, *May Mann Jennings, Florida's Genteel Activists*. (Gainesville, Florida: University Presses of Florida, 1985), pp. 53, 54 & 55.

James B. Crooks, *Jacksonville, After the Fire, 1901 – 1919, A New South City*. (Jacksonville, Florida: University of North Florida Press, 1991), pp. 74 – 84.

National Register of Historic Places Application, Woman's Club of Jacksonville, Adapted November 3, 1992.

<sup>42</sup> Mrs. Fred B. Noble, Editor, *The History of the Garden Club of Jacksonville, Florida*. (Garden Club of Jacksonville, Florida, 1960), pp. IX, 1, 10

the constitution and bylaws of the Garden Club of Jacksonville. Starting with 20 members and one circle in 1922, the Club grew by 1949 to 2300 members and over one hundred circles. At that time, the club was recognized as the largest garden club in the world. Additionally, the Club was recognized nationally with the Fisher Medal presented by the National Council of State Garden Clubs at their 1950 national conference in Richmond, Virginia. The Fisher Medal recognized the local club that “*performed the greatest service in the community in proportion to its size*”. The construction of the Garden Club complex at 1005 Riverside Avenue starting with Unit 1, latter called the Garden Club Room completed in 1947, followed by the 900 seat auditorium building that opened in 1958, established a significant visual presence for the Club while enhancing its activities and programs, as well as providing a large new venue for public and private events.<sup>43</sup>

The original 1922 objective of the Garden Club of Jacksonville was, “*to promote interest in gardens, their design and management – to cooperate in the protection of wild flowers and native plants, and to encourage Civic Planting.*” Over the years, this objective has significantly broadened as the Club became involved in many inter-related programs, activities and initiatives in the general areas of education, social service, civic planning, beautification and environmental preservation. These accomplishments were based on developing a solid administrative foundation set by articles of constitution and by-laws which established a board of directors and an executive committee which were advised by a growing number of committees. There were originally only four officers and three committee chairmen for Program, Exchange and Exhibit and Distribution. By 1960, there were six officers, a four member Board of Trustees and 31 committee chairmen.

The success of the Garden Club can also be attributed to the fast growing number of circles which not only initiated its own programs and activities, but also supported those of the Club. For the purposes of this report, the accomplishments and activities of the Garden Club and its affiliated circles are broken down into Education and Promotion; Community Service and Civic Improvement. Please note that the accomplishments and activities discussed further in this report do not respect a comprehensive list but a selective sample from readily available sources..<sup>44</sup>

### Education and Promotion:

The Garden Club has been most active and successful in the area of education and promotion of gardening and horticulture among Jacksonville’s diverse population. The earliest and largest initiative was the sponsorship of flower shows with the first one being held on April 16 -17, 1923 at the end of Fiske Street between Riverside Avenue and the river. Continuing today at the Club’s Auditorium Building, the shows were held in a variety of venues over years including Willow Branch Park, Scottish Rite Temple, Windsor Hotel, the Armory and the Woman’s Club. A popular Camilla show started in 1936 that drew thousands of visitors each year. In addition to the flower shows were garden tours and plant displays at various places such as Cohen Brothers Department Store, Roosevelt Mall, the Greater Jacksonville Fair and the Home and Patio Shows. Many of

---

<sup>43</sup>Noble, p. 1, 8, 9 & 15.

*Gordonia*, Monthly Newsletter of the Garden Club of Jacksonville, Vol. 1, # 5, March, 1949, p. 1.

Ibid, Volume II, # 9, May, 1950.

RAP Community New, June, 1981, Vol IV.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, pp. 4, 5, 8 & 9.

these events were accompanied by seminars and demonstrations. With the establishment of their own meeting facilities, the Club offered classes and demonstrations in all aspects of flower arrangement and horticulture including the accrediting of flower show judges. Additional education opportunities were presentations by knowledgeable speakers with the first being Dr. Harold Hume of the Glen St. Marys Nursery, who was also an advisor in the landscape plan developed for Memorial Park. The Club has also developed over the years a larger collection of books available for use by members.<sup>45</sup>

The Garden Club has received national recognition for their programs and activities among Jacksonville's youth, particularly among those with special needs who participated in what was later termed "garden therapy". By 1960 and 61, the Club promoted junior gardener programs in fifty-seven local public schools that engaged over 4,000 students. The club also provided the opportunity for students to attend Junior Nature Camps that in 1967 & 68 drew 5,416 participants. Junior gardeners also took part in flower and horticulture shows where they received awards along with encouragement and valuable advice. In 1964 & 65, the Club planted a garden for blind children at Central Riverside Elementary School. A year later, the program at Central Riverside Elementary School for blind students received significant coverage from the local media, as well as being featured on the CBS Morning News with Mike Wallace. A celebration was also held that included attendance by the mayor, superintendent of schools and city parks director. This event was the first national recognition for a Florida garden club. The Club also received an award for its programs with junior gardeners at the annual conference of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs in 1953.<sup>46</sup>

A few years after being formed, a member of the Club, Mrs. Fred B. (Eva) Noble and later her daughter, Miss Mary Noble, wrote a weekly column on gardening and horticulture in the Sunday edition of the *Florida Times Union* entitled "Flower Garden Notes", and later "Gardens in the News". Mrs. Noble also served as the editor of *The History of the Garden Club of Jacksonville, Florida, March 25, 1922 to May 1, 1960*, the first official history of the Club. An expert in the growing of orchids, Miss Noble became the garden editor for the Times Union. In 1948, the Club began producing a monthly newsletter named the *Gordonia* after the *Gordonia Lasianthus*, the bloom of the loblolly pine, the official flower of the organization and in 1980 made the official flower of Jacksonville by the City Council. Produced for nine years, each edition of the newsletter usually contained a president's message, circle news, announcements, state and district news and a variety of articles on flowers and horticulture. In 1960, year books were produced for each year that highlighted accomplishments and activities, as well as identified members of the board,

---

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, pp. 5, 6, 22, 23, 29 41, 42& 48.

Newsletter, Riverside-Avondale Preservation, Inc., April, 1984.

Year Book, 1967 – 68, p. 337. By 1968 the club had fifty accredited judges.

Year Book, 1967 – 68, p. 337.

*Gordonia*, Vol. X, # 2, November. – December, 1957

<sup>46</sup> Noble, p. 24.

1960 – 1961 Year Book, p. 327

1964 – 1965 Year Book, p. 335

1965 – 1966 Year Book, p. 337

1970 - 1971 Year Book, p. 336

*Gordonia*, Vol. V, # 8, May, 1953, p. 11.



committee members and general membership of the Club. During its first ten years, the Club produced and distributed *The Primers*, which focused on subjects related to gardening and landscaping.<sup>47</sup>

The club also sponsored other events that were well received in the community. One was the hugely popular Annual Pageant of Crosses usually held during the week of Palm Sunday. Recognized as the Club's gift to the City, the pageant, which started in 1959, included scores of crosses of varying size and shapes all made of live flowers. The kinds of crosses made over the years included Calvary, Pilgrim, Crusader, Rainbow, Greek, Latin, Anchor, Mariner's, Nestorian, Cross of Lorraine, Papal, Tau, St. Martin's and St. Andrews. As an example of its popularity, the event on Palm Sunday in 1960, called "the Beauty of Holiness Symbolized with Flowers and Music", had an attendance of 10,000 to 12,000. After the program had ended, the crosses were given to hospitals, nursing homes and retirement centers. In March of 1949, the Club sponsored an exhibit of paintings by noted artist and Jacksonville native, Lee Adams. The paintings appropriately featured birds, flowers and tropical fruit.<sup>48</sup>

To promote excellence in flower arrangement and horticulture, the Club started an awards program with the first awards banquet on May 24, 1961. Since that time, new awards were established with most named after former presidents to recognize their valuable service to the Club. Some of these early awards include: The Winnifred H. Price Award for outstanding circle achievement; The Nellie Cohen Horticultural Award for achievement in the hybridization of plants and creation of new flowers; The Malcolm Fortson Roadside Improvement Award; The Eva Noble Award which included a trophy with the name of winning circles; The Gerbera Circle Award to recognize the first place circle in standard flower shows; Many awards were established to recognize junior gardeners.<sup>49</sup>

### Community Service:

The Garden Club of Jacksonville received a U.S. Navy Certificate of Achievement for Service in World War II. This award related to a variety of community services performed by the Club during the war years that included providing small Christmas trees, flower arrangements, fruit baskets and other holiday gifts to patients at the naval hospital in Jacksonville, a practice that continued long after the war had ended. By 1979, the Club provided 250 Christmas trees at the naval hospital. In addition to bringing Christmas cheer to hospital patients, members of the Club were involved in such activities as working in the military motor pool, serving in the Gray Ladies

---

<sup>47</sup> Noble, pp. 24, 32 & 83.

Riverside-Avondale Preservation, Inc. Newsletter, April, 1984.  
1960 – 1961 Year Book, p. 332.

*Jacksonville Journal*, October 14, 1980 & October 31, 1983.

<sup>48</sup> Noble, pp. 24, 32 & 56.

Riverside-Avondale Preservation, Inc. Newsletter, April, 1984.  
1960 – 1961 Year Book, p. 332.

*Florida Times Union*, April 2, 1982 & December 30, 1973.

<sup>49</sup> Year Book – 1961 – 62, p. 11.

Year Book – 1963 – 64, p. 11.

Year Book – 1964 – 1965, p. 333.

Year Book – 1966 – 67, p. 13.

Canteen, working in the surgical dressing room making bandages and knitting Afghans. They also made contributions to the Red Cross, War Chest, blood donations and purchase of war bonds. Similar to their efforts in support of allowing unemployed citizens the opportunity to grow vegetables on vacant lots during the Depression, the Club also championed the planting of Victory Gardens and proper food storage. The February 6, 1943 Camellia Show also featured a display of a mixture of fresh Vegetables grown from Victory Gardens along with canned vegetables with the proceeds from the show going to the Army-Navy Relief Fund. In a later conflict, the Club made and airmailed 41 permanent arrangements to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Hospital in Vietnam, done at the request of war correspondent, Helen Musgrove, nickname, "Patches".<sup>50</sup>

One of the Clubs's most noted public service was contributing to improving the grounds of charitable institutions, schools and churches. Examples include beautifying the grounds of the Clara White Nursing Home, Sunny Acres Park, City Rescue Mission, Pine castle, Parental Home for Girls, Duval Medical Center, Hope Haven Hospital, Jacksonville Children's Museum (MOSH)halfway houses operated by the Trinity Rescue Mission and provided 1,000 plants in 1926 to landscape the new Woman's Club building. Additionally, Club provided other services such as providing 150 live Christmas trees decorated with candies and toys for residents at the Sunland Training Center in Gainesville and provided free flower arrangement classes for clients at the Northeast Florida State Hospital in Macclenny. Flower arrangements were also provided to the public library and the Traveler's Aid Society. Other examples include decorating the stage for the dedication of the new International Airport and distributing brochures on City-County Consolidation. The Club was active participants in the placement of Blue Star Memorial Markers along public highways to honor the men and women of the armed forces. One of the first such markers was dedicated on March 17, 1950 along U.S. 1, three miles north of St. Augustine, with the 6<sup>th</sup> one being dedicated on November 28, 1952 at the welcome station located at the Florida-Georgia line.<sup>51</sup>

#### Civic Improvement:

Beyond beautification projects for charitable institutions and schools, the Club has long been an active champion for the visual enhancement of the City. The preservation and expansion of the tree canopy on public lands has been a project of the Club since its early history. For a period, the Club would coordinate with the appropriate City department on the removal of trees on public

---

<sup>50</sup> Noble, pp. 25, 28 29 & 78.

Undated article – Murray Hill Scrap Book – 1940.

Year Book 1970 – 71, p. 337.

*Florida Times Union*, December 16, 1979 & July 2, 1972.

<sup>51</sup> Year Book, 1969 – 70, p. 339

*Gordonia*, Vol.1, # 5, March, 1949, pp. 1 & 2.

Year Book – 1968 – 69, p. 340

Year Book – 1969 – 70, p. 339.

Year Book – 1969 – 70, p. 338

*Gordonia*, Vol. II, # 9, May, 1950, p.

*Gordonia*, Vol V, # 3, December, 1952, p. 2.

Year Book – 1960 – 61, p. 327.

Noble, p. 18

*Gordonia*, Vol. IX # 2, November, 1956, p. 1.

land, as well as the location of new parks such as the development of the 32 acre Boone Park in March, 1925 and the unsuccessful efforts made over many years to create a public park on the site of the Old Isaiah D. Hart plantation, “Paradise” located near Marietta in West Jacksonville. Representing the Garden Club, Mrs. Cummer was appointed to the City’s Park Advisory Committee becoming its first president. Over the years, the Club and associated circles have made many contributions to upgrading city parks such as coordinating the planting of hundreds of azaleas in Willow Branch Park and Riverside Park along with flowering trees in Boone Park. The Club was active in having the Sabal Palm designated as the state tree.

The club also partnered with other organizations in the successful efforts to save the magnificent Treaty Oak making it the centerpiece of a city park on the Southside. Later, the Club played a significant role in the successful efforts to stop the City Council from approving the construction of a new children’s museum in Treaty Oak Park while attempting to establish a precedent of the City not constructing buildings in parks. Through the leadership of the Avondale Circle, the Club supported the creation of Native Park in 1932 which occupies one of the Avondale pocket parks fronting Park Street. In addition to planting and preserving native trees and plants, the park featured labels identifying them by botanical name. The Club was also involved in the plans for the Peace Memorial Park located within Willow Branch Park. Located across Park Street opposite the Willow Branch Library, the memorial included the planting of Peace Roses for distributing on Memorial Day.<sup>52</sup>

To ensure the perpetuity of Jacksonville’s tree canopy, the Club was a leader in the planting of trees and scrubs on public land while encouraging their planting on private property. One of the early tree planting and preservation campaigns occurred in the mid-1920s, when the Club launched “Save the Tree and Make Jacksonville an Evergreen City” Part of the campaign included Park Commissioner, St. Elmo, “Chick” Acosta agreeing to coordinate the removal of trees on public property with the Club and to begin removing sycamore trees with the native oaks. By 1948 and 1949, the Club had been credited with planting 1,875 trees and 22,219 shrubs. Many times these plantings are associated with Arbor Day activities. For Example, the 1964 – 65 Arbor Day included the planting of 13, 819 trees and scrubs with one circle alone planting 3,168. Some of these tree plantings involved the use of saplings from the Treaty Oak.<sup>53</sup>

Another aspect of the visual enhancement of the city is addressing visual blight, particularly litter which was noted as early as 1923 by the Club’s first speaker, Dr. Harold Hume. In 1969 and 70, the Club initiated an anti-litter campaign called “Clean-up of Jacksonville Week”. To encourage public participation, awards, funded by a Sears Foundation grant, were given for the cleanest school, shopping center and gas station. A second litterbug campaign was done in 1970 and 71. In addition to providing a representative on the Downtown Beautification Council, the Club also

---

<sup>52</sup> *Jacksonville Journal*, January 24, 1967.  
Murray Hill Circle Scrap Book, 1940.  
Noble, pp. 11, 12, 20 & 42.  
Year Book, 1964 – 65, p. 332.

<sup>53</sup> Year Book, 1964 – 65, o, 334.  
Noble, pp. 14, 33.

participated in the revamping of Hemming Plaza. At different times, the Club has campaigned for the removal of illegal billboards and improper bus benches with advertisement.<sup>54</sup>

Significant but less known are the involvement of the Club in the development of the City's first comprehensive and the hiring of the City's first planner, George W. Simon. In 1926, the Club became very interested in municipal planning and civic improvements and recommended that each circle devote one meeting on city planning and zoning. A special planning committee was formed under Mrs. Cummer that study the issue and came up with a report and recommendations approved by the Board of Directors. The recommendations were submitted to the City Commission on June 28, 1926 in form of a resolution. In the resolution the Club "*wanted to go on record as opposed to the needless mutilation and destruction of trees; to the damage of homes, churches, and surrounding properties through the injurious and indiscriminate location of far too numerous small stores and filling stations; and also to the granting of permits for the erection of tall apartment buildings within the purely residential sections of the city*". Having a very modern tone, the recommendations included: the hiring of an expert to supervise the trimming and replacement of all trees and shrubs belonging to the city; in the process of making municipal improvements, particularly the widening of streets, all trees should be preserved whenever possible, even at additional expense; To avoid and reduce the number of unsightly utility poles and to end the mutilation of trees, "*install conduits for complete underground wiring systems*" when street are constructed, re-paved or widen; and to establish procedures for the implementation of the comprehensive plan.<sup>55</sup>

In her 1927 report, Club president, Mrs. (Grace) Trout stated the need for, "*a definite, well-thought city plan, supplemented by wise zoning ordinances for the protection of property holders*". Greatly influenced by the persistent and intense lobbying of the Garden Club, the City Council in 1927 made budgetary provisions to start the development of a plan in 1928. In January of 1928, a Planning Advisory Board was appointed composed of representatives from twenty-one different civic organizations. The Club appointed Mrs. Trout as their representative who was later selected as chairman for the Planning Advisory Board. Club member, Mrs. Cummer also was appointed to the advisory board. The City went on to select George Simon as the first municipal planner but the position was inadequately funded. In response, the Garden Club with the assistance of Mayor John T. Alsop was able to find sufficient funds to hire George Simon in May of 1928. The comprehensive plan, including a draft zoning ordinance, was developed and presented to the City Commission in June of 1930.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Year Book, 1969 – 70, p. 3.

Year Book, 1970 – 71, p.

Year Book, 1963 – 64, p. 316.

Year Book, 1967 – 68, p.337.

Noble, p. 32.

Year Book, 1964 – 65, p. 333.

<sup>55</sup> *The Comprehensive City Plan of Jacksonville, Florida*. City Planning Advisory Board, with George W. Simon, Jr., Consulting Municipal Engineer, 1931, p. 4, 5, 6 & 7.

Noble, p. 13.

A c.1938 article from the Murray Hill Circle Scrapbook, c.1940, claimed that securing a city planner was the Club's greatest accomplishment.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

**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 1005 Riverside Avenue, the Garden Club of Jacksonville, 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.**

Nellie McArthur Cohen is recognized for her significant contributions to the growth and development of the Garden Club of Jacksonville as well as the development of clubs on the state and national level. A native of Georgia born in 1907, Nellie Cohen moved to Jacksonville at a young age but her life-long interest in horticulture was sparked by visits to her ancestral home where her grandfather grew fine fruits and vegetables. In 1931, she married Halle Cohen, a World War I veteran and the son of Jacob Elias Cohen, one of four brothers who founded the Cohen Brothers Department Store.<sup>57</sup> In 1936, Halle Cohen became the president and chairman of the board of Cohen Brothers, positions he held until his death in 1956. A noted horticulturist in his own right, Halle Cohen founded the Jacksonville Rose Society in 1954, and served as president of the Jacksonville Orchid Society, as well as recognized as one of the founders of the Men's Garden Club. Halle and Nellie Cohen worked as a team in creating a beautiful garden on the grounds of their residence at 2241 River Road, which featured a wide variety of rare flowers and plants. They were generous in allowing the public to visit their gardens.<sup>58</sup>

In addition to serving twice as president of the Gloriosa Rothschildiana Garden Circle, Nellie Cohen served as the president of the Garden Club of Jacksonville in 1945, 46 and 47. While president she provided the leadership for the Garden Club's successful initiative to find a permanent home. Before 1939, the records, horticultural papers, books, and awards traveled from president to president. In that year, the club was able to acquire a central location in the corner of the balcony in the Cohen Brothers Department Store. After moving to a larger space in the garden center located in the store's basement, the club was able to rent a finished room on the second floor. During her presidency, the club held a large Camilla Show at Cohens Brothers that drew over 6,000 visitors.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p. 30

*Florida Times Union*, December 26, 1985, D-8

<sup>58</sup> Noble, p. 30.

Ennis Davis & Sarah Gojekian, *Cohen Brothers, The Big Store*. (Charleston, South Carolina: The History Press,), pp. 56 – 61.

Jacksonville Planning and Development Department. Designation Application and Report – Proposed Designation of Hallie and Nellie Cohen Residence, 2241 River Road, LM-13-06, July 24, 2013.

Pleasant Daniel Gold, *History of Duval County Florida*. (St. Augustine, Florida: The Record Company, 1928), pp 372 & 373.

*Florida Times Union*, March 10, 1956, Sec. 2, p. 17.

<sup>59</sup> Noble, pp. 30, 31 51 & 62.

After being informed of the availability of prime real estate at the corner of Riverside Avenue and Post Street, Nellie Cohen activated the membership to purchase the lot. After serving as president, she went on to head the Building Committee that secured the necessary funds to purchase the property and eventually construct a clubhouse. Halle and Nellie Cohen were also the first patrons of the building fund with a \$1,000 donation. On November 21, 1947, Nellie Cohen presided over the dedication of Unit 1, the Garden Club Room, designed by Jacksonville architect, Russell Seymour.<sup>60</sup>

A graduate of the University of Illinois, Russell Seymour came to Jacksonville in 1930 starting his fifty year architectural practice. In addition to designing and building a Tudor Revival style apartment building at 2223 St. Johns Avenue, where he also resided, Seymour designed numerous churches. His many residential designs included two grand Neoclassical Revival style houses featuring two-story columns in Ortega (Algonquin Avenue) and Maple Lane in San Marco. His most recognized design was the extensive alteration made to the large wood-frame gym of the old Concordia School for girls (1919 – 1925) at 645 Oak Street on behalf of the Friday Musicale that acquired the building in 1929. Starting with only eleven original members, the Friday Musicale, officially organized in 1893 to promote music in Jacksonville, had grown to 450 by 1945. In that year, the club hired Seymour to design plans for a complete renovation of the building. The renovations included sheathing the exterior in brick and constructing a formal entryway highlighted by massive front columns. In addition to programs by the Friday Musicale the building became a popular venue for hosting social events. In 1995, the Friday Musicale building was destroyed by fire but rebuilt following the 1945 renovation plans provided by his widow, Florence Seymour.<sup>61</sup>

By 1949, the Club had 2300 members and over one hundred circles and at that time was recognized as the largest garden club in the world. The Garden Club complex was completed with the dedication on June 22, 1958 of the Auditorium Building that not only accommodated the many functions and activities of the Garden Club of Jacksonville, but also hosted numerous community and social events. Nellie Cohen also served the Club as vice-president, chairmen of the Horticulture Committee, the Camilla Show, the Building Committee and the Finance Committee.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Wood, p. 132.

*Florida Times Union* February 26, 1997, Metro, B-1; March 20, 1998, D-1 and April 2, 1996, B-5.

*Jacksonville Journal*, October 18, 1945

*Florida Times Union*, March 25, 1951.

*Florida Times Union*, September 18, 1919, p. 10.

*Resident Community News*, September, 2017, p. 32.

*Jacksonville Architecturally*, Volume Number One, 1940 – Files of the Historic Preservation Section of the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department.

Oral Interview – Florence Seymour, January 31, 1997 – Files of the Historic Preservation Section of the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department.

Florence Seymour (1904 – 2006) was one of three artists selected to paint large oil-on-canvas of story book characters displayed at Corinne Scott Elementary School for 58 years. The artists were sponsored by the Work Progress Administration during the Great Depression to provide jobs for unemployed artists. With the closing of Corrine Scott Elementary School, the murals were moved to the Andrew Robinson Elementary School in 1992. She also painted ten murals for the Friday Musicale (*Florida Times Union, Westside Community News*, January 29, 1992, p. 1 and June 22, 2006, p. B-1).

<sup>62</sup> *Gordoria*, Volume V, # 2, November, 1952, p. 5.

Nellie Cohen went on to serve as president of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs in 1951, being the third Jacksonville resident to serve in that prestigious position. She also served as chair of the Garden Center of the National Council from 1949 – 1951. As a board member of the National Council, Nellie Cohen traveled the country promoting the establishment of garden clubs while spreading the word about the successes of the Jacksonville club. During her national travels, she visited a variety of both private and public gardens, an experience she shared with the local Club. Following her strong interest in promoting horticulture, Nellie Cohen wrote many articles appearing in such publications as the American Orchid Society Bulletin, Home Gardening, National Gardener, the *Florida Times Union*, as well as the Club newsletter, the *Gordonia*.<sup>63</sup>

Nellie Cohen was a patron member of the Jacksonville Club in addition to having a life membership on National Council of Garden Clubs, trustee of the American Orchid Society, as well as a member of the American Camilla Society, American Rose Society, the California Orchid Society and the Royal Horticultural Society in London. For 19 years, she grew orchids and had 100s of plants at her San Marco residence where she also maintained a collection of rare books on orchids. Her achievements in horticulture were recognized by having three new flowers named in her honor. They included a Camilla called “Nellie Cohen”, a Hemerocall “Nellie Cohen” and an orchid known as ‘Laelia Cattleya Nellie Cohen”. The Club honored her by establishing the Nellie Cohen Horticultural Award to recognize achievements in the hybridizing of plants and the creation of new flowers. Nellie McArthur Cohen died in 1985 and is buried next to her husband, Halle, at Oakwood Cemetery in South Jacksonville.<sup>64</sup>

**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.*

The Auditorium Building of the Garden Club of Jacksonville represents another example of the variety of excellent designs produced by the prominent Jacksonville architectural firm of Saxelbye & Powell. Saxelbye & Powell are a continuation of the earlier 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). 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

---

Noble, p. 30

<sup>63</sup> Noble, pp. 30 & 31, 63 – 67.

*Gordonia*, Volume IV, # 1, October, 1951, p. 1.

*Gordonia*, Volume 11, # 1, September, 1949, p. 1.

<sup>64</sup> Noble, pp. 30 & 31, 63 – 67.

*Gordonia*, Volume 11, # 1, September, 1949, p. 1, 5 & 9.

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 well into the 1990s becoming Saxelbye, Powell, Roberts & Ponder. Born in Anderson, South Carolina, Harry Cornelius Powell, Sr. (1906 – 1980) attended the College of Charleston, and was later employed as a clerk in a music store before becoming a draftsman in 1925. Powell had relocated to Jacksonville around 1928 working as a musician but returning to drafting in 1938.<sup>65</sup> Powell retired from the company as a Senior Partner in January of 1980. Saxelbye & Powell continued to be very prolific with much of their commissions based on local and regional corporate accounts that included Florida National Bank chain, Haverty's Furniture, W.T. Grant, *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. The firm also designed numerous residences many for executives associated with these companies.

Identified only by project name, the designs listed below were completed between 1946 and 1964 with the death of Harold Saxelbye. One of their most significant designs was the corporate headquarters for the Florida National Bank that opened in 1960. Built by the nationally prominent construction company, the George A. Fuller Company of New York City, the eleven story building at 214 North Hogan Street in Downtown Jacksonville was named in honor of Edward Ball, long associated with the Florida National Bank chain and was instrumental in having the building constructed. Additionally, Saxelbye & Powell designed numerous Florida National Bank branches across the state including such places as Bartow, Perry, Belle Grade, Vero Beach, Gainesville, Ocala, Port St. Joe, Deland, Daytona Beach, as well as Jacksonville branches in Arlington, Murray Hill and Lakeshore. Buildings designed for the Gulf Life Insurance Company include a six-story office building and several branches in Jacksonville and others in Daytona Beach, Waycross, Columbus and Atlanta. Haverty's Furniture buildings associated with the firm are found in Shreveport, Houston, Memphis, Winston-Salem, Columbia (South Carolina), Montgomery, Tampa, Roanoke, Augusta and Dallas.<sup>66</sup> Some other commercial designs include the downtown office of Stockton, Whatley and Davin Company, Morrison Cafeteria, the Blue Cross – Blue Shield building in the 500 block of Riverside Avenue, the entryway gates into Evergreen Cemetery, the Cloister Hotel in Sea Island, Georgia and buildings associated with Marineland.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> [www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/12292138/person/262162490327/facts](http://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/12292138/person/262162490327/facts).

*Florida Times Union*, November 14, 1980, B-6.

<sup>66</sup> Wood, p.12.

Marsh & Saxelbye Project List – Unpublished, Files of the Historic Preservation Section, Jacksonville Planning and Development Department.

The Early Work of H.F. Saxelbye, A.I.A., A Special Presentation for the San Jose Estates Preservation by Saxelbye, Powell, Roberts & Ponder, Architects & Planners. Unpublished, Files of the Historic Preservation Section, Jacksonville Planning and Development Department.

*Jacksonville Daily Record*, March 29, 2010.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.



Saxelbye & Powell also had several government contracts. For the City of Jacksonville, the firm designed the original Gator Bowl in 1947, a public swimming pool, the recreation building at Woodstock Park and the Wolfson Baseball Stadium (Municipal Baseball Grandstand) in 1954. Public schools in Duval County designed by the firm include the Biltmore Elementary School (PS# 78, 1951) and Inglewood Elementary School (PS# 87, 1955) with another school design in Nassau County, Fernandina Elementary School. The operation and control tower at the U.S. Navy – Mayport Base was designed by Saxelbye & Ponder. Under contract with the State of Florida, the partnership designed the Florida A&M University Stadium. In addition to the 1958 building for the Garden Club of Jacksonville, some other institutional work include All Saints Episcopal Church (1965), Avondale Baptist Church, Main Street Baptist Church, St. Paul's by the Sea Episcopal Church, Grace Episcopal Church, Lakewood Baptist Church, Lakewood Presbyterian Church, Riverside Park Church of Christ, Lakeshore Baptist Church, South Side Baptist Church, the First Methodist Church and the Jacksonville Jewish Center, all in Jacksonville, as well as the First Baptist Church of Madison, Florida. The Cummer Museum and Gardens and the Duval County Medical Society building were designed by Saxelbye & Powell.<sup>68</sup>

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

The design of the 1958 Garden Club of Jacksonville Auditorium Building reflects a contemporary interpretation of the Neoclassical Revival style, popular from 1895 into the 1950s. The most distinctive feature of the style is the full height porch columns usually with classical capital in the Ionic or Corinthian orders. The facades are usually balanced by the placement of windows and entryways, some further enhanced with decorative surrounds. Some Neoclassical Revival designs have boxed eaves and gable ends frequently with dentils or modillions. Windows tended to be rectangular double-hung sashes with six or nine divided lights. In later years mainly after 1925, the Neoclassical Revival style became simpler in design with more slender columns without fluting, as well as the use of side gable roofs. In addition to being popular in residential designs, the Neoclassical Revival style, which projects a strong sense of power and stability through its imposing monumental qualities, was especially appealing for the design of governmental and religious buildings, as well as some commercial buildings, particularly banks. The popularity of the Neoclassical Revival style was greatly stimulated by the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893 in which prominent architects from around the country designed numerous classical style buildings around a central court. Widely publicized throughout the country, the central buildings of the exposition tended to be monumental in scale and fused elements of a variety of earlier styles such as the Georgian, Adams, Early Classical and Greek Revival.<sup>69</sup>

The most significant Neoclassical design feature of the Garden Club of Jacksonville auditorium is the full height columns found on both the Post Street and Riverside Avenue elevations. The smooth rounded columns have classical Ionic capitals. Although the Riverside Avenue façade is balanced with its central row of columns framed by projecting gables highlighted with a multi-

---

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*. (New York: A Borzoi Book, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984), pp. 343 – 353.

light sash window topped with a blind arch, the Post Street elevation has an unequal number of windows on each side of the formal entryway. However, the façade is balanced by the window design and their general placement. Some of the examples of Neoclassical Revival style designs in Jacksonville include the Jacksonville Free Public Library (101 E. Adams St.), the Old Florida National Bank Building (51 W. Forsyth St.), the Jacksonville Terminal (1000 W. Bay St.), Annie Lytle Elementary School (1101 Peninsular Place), Martha Washington Hotel (1636 King Street), and the Mount Olive A.M.E. Church (841 Franklin St.).

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

It is the determination of the Planning and Development Department that the subject property at 1005 Riverside Avenue, the Garden Club of Jacksonville, 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 impacted character-defining features, as well as represent alterations difficult, costly, or impossible to reverse. Further, the degree and nature of any exterior deterioration, as well as the evidence of long term and potentially on-going neglect are also a factor in evaluating potential landmarks for their suitability for preservation or restoration.

The two buildings forming the complex of the Garden Club of Jacksonville has very few alterations with none impacting character defining features. No significant additions were added to the buildings as originally designed and constructed. Per Jacksonville Building Permit Records, two permits related to constructing the 1947 and 1958 buildings and one demolishing the one story wood frame exhibit building. All of the other permits dealt with repairs and mechanical upgrades. The two buildings have all of their original windows and doors, as well as wall and roof treatments. The two buildings have been well maintained over the years and have no evidence of significant deterioration.

## 9-1 – MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES –

### Books and Articles

Brown, S. Paul. *The Book of Jacksonville, A History*. Poughkeepsie, New York: A.V. Haight, 1895.

Crooks, James B. *Jacksonville After the Fire, 1901-1919, A New South City*. Jacksonville, Florida, University of North Florida Press, 1991.

Davis, Ennis & Sarah Gojekian, *Cohen Brothers, The Big Store*. Charleston, South Carolina, The History Press, 2012.

Davis, T. Frederick. *History of Early Jacksonville and Vicinity, 1513 - 1924*. St. Augustine: The Record Company, 1924.

Jessee, Dean C., Editor, *Letters of Brigham Young to His Sons*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Desert Book Company with the Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1974.

Dodd, Jean Hall. *Arthur Gerrish Cummer*. Jacksonville, Florida: Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, 1996.

Foley, Bill and Wayne W. Wood. *The Great Fire of 1901*. Jacksonville Historical Society, 2001.

Gold, Pleasant Daniel. *History of Duval County*. St. Augustine, FL: The Record Company, 1928.

Hallam, George. *Riverside Remembered*. Jacksonville, Florida: Drummond Press, 1976.

Harding, Paula Ferrell. *Riverside Park United Methodist Church, 1888 – 1988, 100 Years of Living, Loving, Praising and Praying – The Sunday School That Grew*. Jacksonville, Florida: Riverside Park United Methodist Church, 1988.

McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: A Borzoi Book, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984.

Miller, Blair. *Almost Hollywood, The Forgotten Story of Jacksonville, Florida*. Lanham, Maryland: Hamilton Books, 2013.

Nelson, Richard. *Lights! Camera! Florida! Ninety Years of Moviemaking & Television Production in the Sunshine State*. Tampa, Florida: Florida Endowment for the Humanities, 1987, (1991 reprint).

Noble, Mrs. Fred B. *The History of the Garden Club of Jacksonville, Florida*. Garden Club of Jacksonville, 1960.

Orser, Frank, “Florida and the British Investor”, Revisited: The William Moore Angas Papers at the University of Florida, *Florida Historical Quarterly*, LXXII, #2, October, 1993.

Vance, Linda D. *May Mann Jennings, Florida's Genteel Activists*. Gainesville, Florida: University Presses of Florida, 1985.

Ward, James Robertson. *Old Hickory's Town, An Illustrated History of Jacksonville*. Jacksonville: Old Hickory's Town, Inc., 1985.

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

#### Miscellaneous Sources:

*Abstract of Title to Riverside Property of the Indian River Association*. Drew Company, Undated (c. 1902).

Duval County Clerk of the Circuit Court, Deed Books BN-229, January 9, 1889; 10, 129 & 193.

Historic Property Associates. *A Re-Survey of the Riverside Historic District, Jacksonville, Florida*. St. Augustine, Florida, April, 1992.

Garden Club of Jacksonville, Year Books.

*Gordonia*, Newsletter of the Garden Club of Jacksonville.

*Jacksonville Architecturally*, Volume Number One, 1940 – Files of the Historic Preservation Section of the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department.

Jacksonville Building Permit Record, # 526 – 1925; #637 – 1926 - # 71 – 1929; #641-1927; #36 – 1920 & # 226 – 1928 and # 546 - 1929.

Jacksonville Planning and Development Department. Designation Application and Report – Proposed Designation of Hallie and Nellie Cohen Residence, 2241 River Road, LM-13-06, July 24, 2013.

*The Comprehensive City Plan of Jacksonville, Florida*. City Planning Advisory Board, with George W. Simon, Jr., Consulting Municipal Engineer, 1931.

Zoning Maps, Adapted by Ordinance, Number U-125, September 9, 1930.

Zoning Atlas, City of Jacksonville, 1955.

*Dolph's Subdivision & Zoning Plat Book of Jacksonville, Florida and Environs*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1961, pp. 19 & 20.

Zoning and Subdivision Codes, City of Jacksonville, 1977.

Chapter 656, Jacksonville Ordinance Code (Zoning), 1990.

*Liahona*, the Elder's Journal, c.1925.

Murray Hill Circle - Undated article – Murray Hill Scrap Book – c1940.

National Register of Historic Places Application – Memorial Park, 1620 Riverside Avenue, Listed October 25, 2017

National Register of Historic Places application - the Woman's Club of Jacksonville, 861 Riverside Avenue, Listed November 3, 1992.

Sanborn Maps of Jacksonville, 1903 & 1913.

Seymour, Florence - Oral Interview – January 31, 1997 – Files of the Historic Preservation Section of the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department.

*Sunday School Informu*, Dedication Edition, Riverside Park Methodist Church, Volume 2, No. 1, July, 1922.

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

Zoll, Howard. Jacksonville Parks and Recreation Department, "History of Riverside Park- RE #090410-0000", unpublished – Vertical File, Riverside Park, Historic Preservation Archives, Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, pp. 1 - 7.

### **Newspapers**

*Florida Times Union*,

September 16, 1906.

February 21, 1915, p. 12

September 18, 1919, p. 10

December 13, 1926, p. 1.

March 25, 1951.

March 10, 1956, Sec. 2, p. 17

July 2, 1972.

December 30, 1973.

December 5, 1976, B-1.

December 16, 1979

November 14, 1980, B-6

April 2, 1982.

December 26, 1985, D-8

January 29, 1992, p. 1

September 30, 1992p.

April 2, 1996, B-5.

June 30, 1996

February 15, 1997.  
February 26, 1997, B-1  
March 20, 1998, D-1  
May 13, 1998, W-4.  
June 13, 1998, B-1  
June 23, 2001, A-12.  
June 22, 2006, B-1.  
September 6, 2015, B-1.  
May 5, 2014.

*Jacksonville Journal*, October 18, 1945.  
*Jacksonville Journal*, January 24, 1967.  
*Jacksonville Journal*, October 14, 1980 & October 31, 1983.  
*Jacksonville Journal*, January 8, 1986.

*Resident Community News*, May, 2016.  
*Resident Community News*, September, 2017..

*RAP Community Newsletter*, April, 1980, Volume II, No. 2.  
*RAP Community News*, March, 1981, Volume III, # 1.  
*RAP Community New*, June, 1981, Vol IV.  
*RAP Community Newsletter*, April, 1988.

**III.**

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION AND MAP**

---

# JACKSONVILLE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

LM-19-03

*The Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission* will hold a Public Hearing, pursuant to Section 307.104, *City of Jacksonville Ordinance Code* on **Application No.: LM-19-03** regarding the proposed designation of the Garden Club of Jacksonville, Inc., 1005 Riverside Avenue, as a City of Jacksonville Landmark as noted below:

**Date:** Wednesday, January 22, 2020

**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) 255-7835.

**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, he will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he 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**

01-109-56-2S-26E, RIVERSIDE, Lot 1, N. 66 2/3 FT, LOT 2, BLOCK 5 – RE-090142-0000



**IV.**

**PROOF OF PUBLICATION OF PUBLIC NOTICE**

---

JACKSONVILLE  
**Daily Record**

**PROOF OF PUBLICATION**

(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 LS-19-03 The Garden Club of Jacksonville, Inc.

in the Court of Duval County, Florida, was published in said newspaper in the issues of 1/8/20

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 8th day of January, 2020 A.D. by Rhonda Fisher who is personally known to me.

JANET MOHR  
Notary Public, State of Florida  
My Comm. Expires 12/18/2020  
Commission No. GG55826

  
Notary Public, State of Florida

Seal

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON APPLICATION TO DESIGNATE THE GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE, INC. AS A CITY OF JACKSONVILLE HISTORIC LANDMARK**  
**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that on the 22th day of January, 2020 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 Garden Club of Jacksonville, 1005 Riverside Avenue as a City of Jacksonville Historic Landmark, pursuant to *Jacksonville Ordinance Code 307.104.*  
**Exhibit A**  
**Legal Description**  
01-109-56-2S-26E, RIVERSIDE, Lot 1, N. 66 2/3 FT, LOT 2, BLOCK 5 - RE-090142-0000  
This application (LM-19-03) is being sponsored by the Garden Club of Jacksonville, Inc. 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) 255-7834. All interested parties are notified to be present and will be heard at the *Public Hearing.*  
**DATED** this 8th day of January, 2020 A.D.  
**Jack C. Demetree, III**  
**Chairman**  
**Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission**  
**City of Jacksonville**  
n. 8 00 (20-00132D)

V.

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

---

090204 0010  
PADGET PREMIERE PROPERTIES LLC  
1000 RIVERSIDE AVE SUITE 601  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32204

090150 0000  
1045 RIVERSIDE LLP  
6100 KENNERLY RD SUITE 101  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32216

090148 0100  
SEA 151 LLC  
3520 PIEDMONT RD NE SUITE 410  
ATLANTA, GA 30305

090202 0000  
1050 RIVERSIDE AVENUE LLC  
1050 RIVERSIDE AVE  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32204

090142 0000  
GARDEN CLUB OF JACKSONVILLE  
1005 RIVERSIDE AVE  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32204-4122

090143 0000  
SEA 151 LLC  
3520 PIEDMONT RD NE SUITE 410  
ATLANTA, GA 30305

090153 0000  
SIMPSON BRYAN JR  
1061 RIVERSIDE AVE  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32204-4152

090199 0000  
BRAMD HOLDINGS LLC  
1034 RIVERSIDE AVE  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32204

090146 0000  
BLANDING ORANGE PARK LLC  
8650 OLD KINGS RD S STE 12  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32217

090212 0000  
MAY POST REAL ESTATE HOLDINGS  
LLC  
707 PENINSULAR PL  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32204

090200 0000  
1044 46 RIVERSIDE AVENUE LLC  
13028 NORMEDS RD  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32223-0831

090208 0000  
DEETTE HOLDEN CUMMER MUSEUM  
FOUNDATION INC  
829 RIVERSIDE AVE  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32204-3336

URBAN CORE MICHELLE TAPPOUNI  
1434 LAURA ST N  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32206

RIVERSIDE AVONDALE PRESERVATION  
SOCIETY ADRIENNE BURKE  
2623 HERSCHEL ST.  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32204