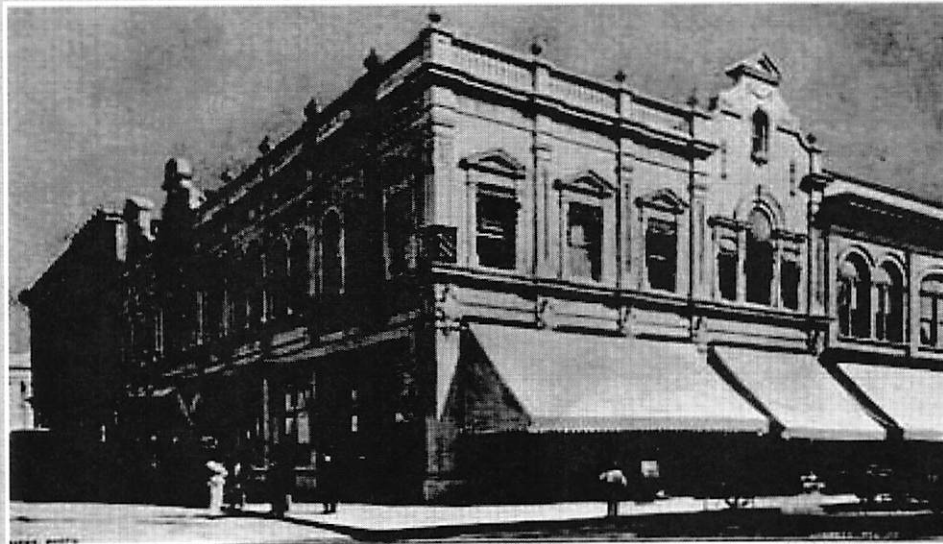


**THE OLD BISBEE BUILDING  
51 WEST BAY STREET  
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA**

**LM-20-05  
LANDMARK DESIGNATION**



THE BISBEE BLOCK



September 23, 2020

Prepared by Joel McEachin  
with assistance from:

Blair Knighting, AICP  
Kimley-Horn

**I.**

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

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

**LM-20-05**

**Old Bisbee Building  
51 West Bay Street**

*GENERAL LOCATION:* Northeast Corner of West Bay Street and North Laura Street in Downtown Jacksonville.

Prepared in accordance with the JACKSONVILLE ORDINANCE CODE, SECTION 307.104, the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department hereby forwards to the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission, its "Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations" on the Landmark Designation, LM-20-05, sponsored by: **Regions Bank**  
250 Riverchase Parkway East  
Suite 600  
Birmingham, Alabama 35244

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

- (A) Consistent with the JACKSONVILLE ORDINANCE CODE, SECTION 307.104, the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department began preparing a designation application for the property located at 51 West Bay Street.
- (B) The Planning and Development Department determined that the application for designation of the property at 51 West Bay Street 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 51 West Bay Street 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 the building and site of the proposed landmark at 51 West Bay Street 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. New construction and additions visible from the public right-of-way.
  2. Replacement of original windows and doors or major changes to or addition of door and window openings.
  3. Demolition of all or part of the original building and early additions.
  4. Enclosure of porch, porte-cochere, or garage.
  5. Replacement or removal of original porches and porte-cochere.
  6. Relocation of historic buildings.
  7. Roof replacement with material different from the existing, unless going back to the original material.
  8. Storefront restoration or replacement unless replicating the original in design and material.
  9. Mothballing the building per Chapter 307.303
  10. 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 six of the seven criteria. The six 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.

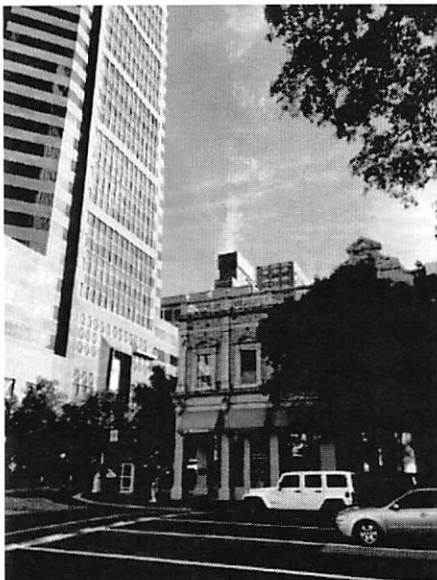


Figure 1-Photo of Bank of America Tower next to Old Bisbee Building

In this block of mostly large-scale office towers, this two-story building on a prominent corner helps Jacksonville citizens visualize early Downtown Jacksonville prior to the modern era of skyscrapers that took over Jacksonville. If a person stands in the middle of the intersection of W. Bay Street and Laura Street and looks around, it is striking the difference in scale the two-story Old Bisbee Building is alongside the Drew Building compared to the large office towers surrounding them. These two buildings really do capture the cultural landscape that Downtown evoked one hundred years ago after the fire. Even though these two buildings are smaller scale, they fit in well with the all glass modern towers. They bring

the sense of history to an otherwise modern portion of Downtown.

It is obvious when looking at the Old Bisbee Building and the Drew Building next to it that post-fire Downtown Jacksonville was proud of their craftsmanship, tradesmen, and their City. The quality and detail added to the exterior is amazing considering this building was built just months after the great fire when building in Downtown was fast and furious. William Bisbee and Gottfried L. Norrman



Figure 2-Bisbee Block

could have withheld on the detail and craftsmanship and built the quickest, cheapest building to get back up and running, but their pride for the City and their individual brands shows through the design and quality of the building. The building truly embodies the cultural heritage of post-fire Downtown Jacksonville.

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 building at 51 West Bay Street does not meet this criterion...

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

William Adolphus Bisbee is the son of Cyrus Bisbee. William was born in Jacksonville on December 13, 1861.<sup>1</sup> Cyrus Bisbee was one of the early Jacksonville settlers. Cyrus Bisbee, known to have come to Florida in 1835, was a very well-known businessman in Jacksonville. He was known for being the agent for the first line of steamers and steam cars that came to Jacksonville.<sup>2</sup> He also owned a warehouse on the wharf which he used to accept the first boat load of contraband at the start of the Civil War.<sup>3</sup>

William followed in his father's footsteps and became a well-known businessman as well. He worked in various mercantile and prescription businesses but ultimately ended up in real estate. He was well respected in Jacksonville. To prove this point, at the young age of twenty-seven, he was elected as the City Treasurer by Jacksonville's City

<sup>1</sup> *Makers of America, Florida Edition, Vol IV, 1911*

<sup>2</sup> *Makers of America, Florida Edition, Vol IV, 1911*

<sup>3</sup> *Makers of America, Florida Edition, Vol IV, 1911*

Council.<sup>4</sup> One very interesting fact about William, he was always pushing for what he thought was right. He owned a steam tugboat named Dauntless (see photo #5), which he used to support the Cubans during the Cuban War of Independence by bringing goods to Cuba. The Cubans were so thankful to Bisbee's efforts during the war; Dauntless led the boat procession and was given a gold sword by the new Cuban president.<sup>5</sup> To add to William's businessman resume, he was the founder of the Georgia Telegraph Company, the first underground telephone service in the south.<sup>6</sup> The Bisbee family owned this parcel at least before the 1850s as shown on a 1850s map of Jacksonville (see photo #6). In addition to the Old Bisbee Building, William is known for commissioning famous local architect Henry J. Klutho to design Florida's first ten (10) story building on W. Forsyth, the second Bisbee Building.<sup>7</sup>

The Bisbee family, especially William, is known to have had an important impact on the growth of Jacksonville, especially post-fire. William's investment in the Old Bisbee Building in combination with the second Bisbee Building ensured the survival of post-fire Jacksonville.

- 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.

William A. Bisbee commissioned Atlanta architect, Gottfried L. Norrman, to design the Old Bisbee Building and hired well-known local builder Lloyd M. Boykin to build the structure. Norrman was extremely well-known in the south in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century. Norrman was especially known for his proficiency in many high styles, such as Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival, and Shingle Style. He also completed important works in Charlotte, Savannah, South Carolina, and Alabama.<sup>8</sup> In addition to his many commissions in Atlanta, he was honored to design a few buildings for their three Great Expositions (1881, 1887, and 1895).<sup>9</sup> In 1892, he founded the Southern Chapter of American Institute of Architects (AIA) and became a Fellow in 1897.<sup>10</sup>

Lloyd M. Boykin is known as a local builder in Jacksonville. Per his obituary,<sup>11</sup> Lloyd Boykin came to Jacksonville in 1901, more than likely trying to make a name for himself in the rebuilding boom. The move to Jacksonville certainly paid off, as Boykin became a well-known contractor/builder in the area. The buildings he is known for are elaborately detailed, such as the Old Bisbee Building, the Holmes Block, the Hutchinson-Suddath Building, and the

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**L. M. BOYKIN,**  
**General Contractor and Builder.**

Room 4, Udemann Block. 108 West Forsyth St.  
Jacksonville, Florida.

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<sup>4</sup> *Makers of America, Florida Edition, Vol IV, 1911*

<sup>5</sup> *Filibustering with the Dauntless, Florida Historical Quarterly*

<sup>6</sup> *Makers of America, Florida Edition, Vol IV, 1911*

<sup>7</sup> *Makers of America, Florida Edition, Vol IV, 1911*

<sup>8</sup> North Carolina Architects and Builders article

<sup>9</sup> North Carolina Architects and Builders article

<sup>10</sup> North Carolina Architects and Builders article

<sup>11</sup> FTU obituary, 1929

*Figure 3-1902 City Directory Ad*

Covington Building (J.H. Churchwell) all on East Bay Street. These buildings are all well designed and still very successful developments in the Downtown area.

Not only is this building linked to a very influential architect, but it is also linked to one of the best builders in post-fire Jacksonville.

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



*Figure 4-Current View of the Old Bisbee Building*

The Old Bisbee Building is a fine example of an early 1900s Beaux Arts style structure. It is one of the last remaining Beaux Arts style structures in Downtown. The first floor has been altered from the original design; however, the second floor is completely intact one hundred and twenty years later. This style includes very ornate examples of craftsmanship which the Old Bisbee Building exudes. It is absolutely astonishing the quality and craftsmanship that went into designing and building this structure, especially considering the time frame at which it was built. It was built just months after

the Great 1901 Fire when everyone in Jacksonville was racing to rebuild. It would have been easy to build a quick, simplified structure but obviously the owner, William A. Bisbee, the architect, Gottfried L. Norrman, and the builder, Lloyd M. Boykin, desired a quality product which is still evident today.

Any building that is still standing after one hundred and twenty years was well built with quality material. According to the Florida Times Union article from 1901,<sup>12</sup> they used steel girders to support the open areas along each façade in order to have the recessed areas along both elevations (see photos #1, #3, & #4). This was a fairly progressive method of construction in the early 1900s.

Post-fire, most everyone rebuilt using brick instead of wood cladding Downtown. The Old Bisbee Building was constructed using brick as well as terra cotta for the detailing. Terra Cotta is an interesting building material because it can be molded to allow for every decorative detailing but also is fire-retardant. The brick and the terra cotta exterior would help protect the building against another potential fire. It is obvious; this structure was designed and built to last a lifetime as evident one hundred and twenty years later.

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<sup>12</sup> FTU article, 1901



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

According to *A Field Guide to American Houses*,<sup>13</sup> the Beaux Arts style is a “classical style and has many of the same details found in other styles of Renaissance classical inspiration which, however, seldom have exuberant surface ornamentation that characterizes the Beaux Arts....Roof-line balustrades and balustraded window balconies are common, as are elaborated window crowns and surrounds.” In addition, McAlester’s book described oval and floral details as being character defining features of the style.

The Old Bisbee Building, encompassing the prominent corner of W. Bay and N. Laura Streets, evokes the Beaux Arts style. The human-scale of the two-story building allows the passerby to enjoy the clearly ornate details of the façade (see photos #7 & #8). The character defining features which embody the Beaux Arts style are described below.

Because the first floor has been altered over the years, the second floor contains the majority of the Beaux Arts detailing. The majority of the window openings on the second floor are single triangular pediment window surrounds supported by Doric pilasters with floral swags which match the Doric pilasters supporting the second-floor entablature. The triangular pediments are detailed with dentil moldings and floral garland in the friezes. The floral swags and floral garland are signature details of the Beaux Arts style (see photos #18 & #19). In addition to the triangular pediment windows along the N.



Figure 5-Triangular Pediments on the Second Floor

Laura St façade, this façade features three groupings of two windows pairs which feature arched lintels and keystones (see photo #16).

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<sup>13</sup> McAlester, 1991



*Figure 6-N. Laura Street Elevation*

other pilasters. The entablature on each floor feature egg and dart moldings, dentil moldings, and floral moldings (see photo #18). The first-floor frieze is distinguished by plain terra cotta panels, whereas the second-floor frieze feature floral motifs separated by pilasters (see photo #15). Those Doric pilasters support a balustrade surrounding the entire parapet with urns placed on top to align with the pilasters (see photo #16). The symmetrical balustrade is a classic detail of the Beaux Arts style.

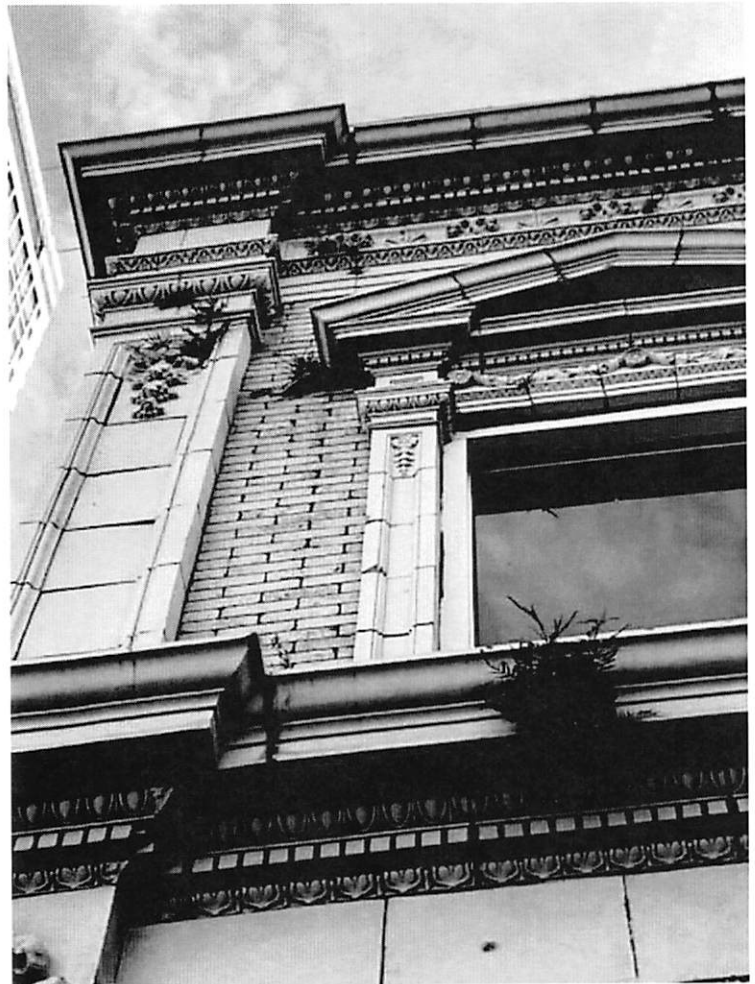
It is clearly evident the Old Bisbee Building is historically significant but can also be described as a fine example of a Beaux Arts style building with the oval insets on the parapets, the numerous ornate floral details, and the nod to the classical styles with the pedimented window surrounds.

Interestingly, there are three parapets that tower above the balustrade; two on the N. Laura Street elevation side by side and one on W. Bay Street (see photos #9, #10, & #11). Each parapet is slightly different; however, they all feature two oval insets indicative of the Beaux Arts style. The parapets flank the ends of the building on each elevation plus one “extra” or asymmetrical parapet to the right of the N. Laura Street parapet. The two end parapets are topped with triangular pediments and the “extra” parapet along N. Laura St. features a segmental pediment.

Below the W. Bay Street parapet and the “extra” parapet are Palladian windows with Doric pilasters which match all the

G. Its suitability for preservation or restoration.

Overall, the structure is in relatively good shape. The alterations over the years to the first floor can be restored considering there is pictorial evidence of the original design. The windows were all replaced with metal windows similar in design to the original. There are some areas which are experiencing deferred maintenance issues such as the plants growing in the mortar joints. Overall, the structure is suitable for restoration and preservation.



*Figure 7-Deferred Maintenance Issues*

### **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 Old Bisbee Building, 51 West Bay Street, **(LM-20-05)** as a City of Jacksonville Landmark.

**II.**

**DESIGNATION APPLICATION**

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# OLD BISBEE BUILDING 51 W. BAY STREET



THE BISBEE BLOCK.

CITY OF JACKSONVILLE FOR REGIONS BANK

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

*Jacksonville Ordinance Code, Sections 307.103 and 307.104*

**Landmark Designation No:**

LM-20-05

**Name of Proposed Landmark:**

Old Bisbee Building

**Address or General Location of Proposed Landmark:**

51 West Bay Street

**Legal Description of Proposed Landmark:**

See Attachment III

**Real Estate Assessment Number(s) of Proposed Landmark:**

073663-0000

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

224

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

DU7607

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

Regions Bank

**Type of Ownership of Proposed Landmark:**

Private

**Application of Proposed Landmark Sponsored By:**

Regions Bank  
250 Riverchase Parkway East  
Suite 600  
Birmingham, Alabama, 35244

**Date of Construction of Construction of Proposed Landmark:** 1901  
**Original:** 1901

**Additions/Major Alterations:** Various alterations through its history

**Original Architect of Proposed Landmark (if Known):**  
Gottfried L. Norrman

**Original Builder of Proposed Landmark (if Known):**  
Lloyd M. Boykin

**Period of Significance of Proposed Landmark:**  
1901 – 1970

**Historic and Current Use of Proposed Landmark:**  
Historically it was built for stores and office use. It is currently used as a financial institution.

**Original Use:** Retail/office

**Current Use:** Financial/Office

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

Summary:

The Old Bisbee Building located at 51 W. Bay Street was built by William A. Bisbee in 1901, directly after the famous 1901 fire in Downtown Jacksonville. It is known as the “Old” Bisbee Building because not shortly after the construction of the building, Mr. Bisbee endeavored to build the second Bisbee Building, a ten (10) story building designed by local architect H.J. Kultho.



Figure 1-1901 Artist Depiction of the Building

The Old Bisbee Building, a two-story brick and terra cotta structure, was constructed to house retail and offices. The architect, who was well-known in Atlanta, Georgia, designed the building in the Beaux Arts style with terra cotta clad symmetrical Doric pilasters adorned with floral swags along the second-floor façade (see photo #7). In addition to the floral swags on the pilasters, the frieze surrounding the building contains decorative repetitive floral motifs (see photo #18). Lastly, the northernmost parapet on the N. Laura Street façade features oval terra cotta insets as well as an oval segmented window below the pediment (see photo #10). All of these character defining features are typical in the Beaux Arts style. Currently, the main entrance is located on the corner of W. Bay and N. Laura Streets with an employee entrance along N. Laura Street below the “Bisbee Building” name plate (see photo #13 & #14). Overall, the integrity of the original design and scale are still evident in the second floor. The first floor has been altered throughout the years.

The Jacksonville’s Architectural Heritage Book<sup>1</sup> produced by the Jacksonville Historic Landmarks Commission is considered the authority on local landmarks. In this book, the Old Bisbee Building is listed as a four-star building. Four stars is the highest designation allotted in the book. The four-star designation is reserved for buildings with “[g]reat significance to the city and warrants the maximum preservation efforts.” To provide context, the Drew Building to the right of this building along Bay Street is a recent local landmark (2016) and is listed only as a three-star in the Heritage Book (see photo #9).

<sup>1</sup> Wood, Wayne.



Setting:

The Old Bisbee Building is located at 51 W Bay Street in Downtown Jacksonville, FL. 32202. The two-story building is located on the northeast corner of N. Laura Street and W. Bay Street. The façade along W. Bay Street contains two storefront bays compared to the seven storefront bays along N. Laura Street. The building directly adjacent along W. Bay

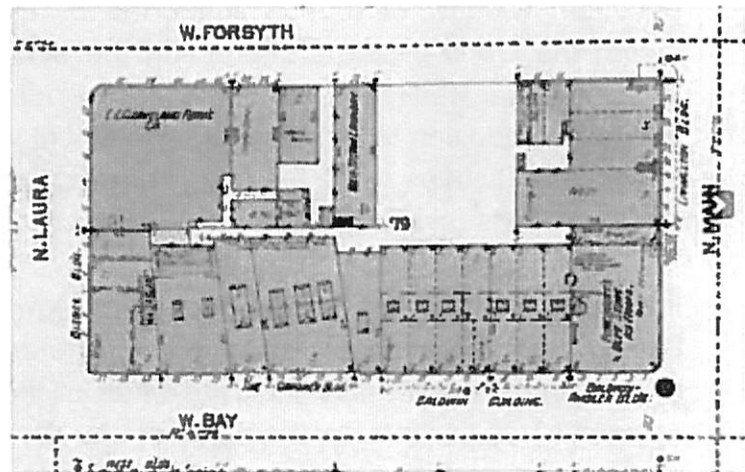


Figure 2-1903 Sanborn Map

is known as the H. & W. B. Drew Building; designated a local landmark in 2016 by owner request. Directly adjacent along N. Laura Street is a surface parking lot that will soon be a large parking structure. Across N. Laura Street, is the Bank of America tower built in 1990 (see photo #19). Directly across W. Bay Street is the Wells Fargo tower built in 1975 (see photo #8). This small portion of the block, compared to the surrounding large office towers, invokes the human scale of early 1900s Downtown Jacksonville.

Physical Description of Proposed Landmark:

The Old Bisbee Building is a highly ornate Beaux Arts building. The second floor of the building especially articulates the Beaux Arts style. The first floor has been altered a few times throughout its history as depicted in a few historical photos (see photos #1, #3, & #4). A Florida Times Union article from September 22, 1901<sup>2</sup> includes an artist depiction of the structure (see photo #1). This 1901 depiction indicates the first floor is slightly different from the pre-1909 photos of the building (see photos #4 & #5). We know these photos are pre-1909 because the H. & W. B. Drew Building to the right was altered in 1909 to add a third story<sup>3</sup>. The main building material is composed of a tan brick in a running bond pattern with tan terra cotta detailing throughout. The entire building is constructed of a red brick with the tan brick on the exterior as shown on the Sanborn Maps (see photo #2) and the interior photos (see photos #23, #24, & #25). Even though the first floor of the current building has been altered from the historical photos, the second floor is completely intact with the original Beaux Arts elements. The original wood windows were replaced at some point in the recent history of the building.

<sup>2</sup> FTU article, 1901.

<sup>3</sup> Landmark Designation Report (LM-15-03), Jacksonville Historic Preservation Section.

The majority of the window openings on the second floor are single triangular pediment window surrounds supported by Doric pilasters with floral swags which match the Doric pilasters supporting the second-floor entablature (see photo #15). The triangular pediments are detailed with dentil moldings and floral garland in the friezes. In addition to the triangular pediment windows along the N. Laura St. façade, this façade features three groupings of two windows pairs which feature arched lintels and keystones (see photo #8).

Interestingly, there are three parapets that tower above the balustrade; two on the N. Laura Street elevation side by side (see photo #8) and one on the W. Bay Street (see photo #9). The parapets flank the ends of the building on each elevation plus one asymmetrical parapet to the right of the N. Laura Street parapet. The two end parapets are topped with triangular pediments and the "extra" parapet along N. Laura St. features a segmental pediment (see photos #10 & #11). Below the W. Bay Street parapet and the "extra" parapet are Palladian windows with Doric pilasters which match all the other pilasters. The windows are further distinguished by scroll keystones. The entablature on each floor feature egg and dart moldings, dentil moldings, and floral moldings (see photo #18). The first-floor frieze is distinguished by plain terra cotta panels whereas the second-floor frieze feature floral motifs separated by pilasters (see photo #21). Those Doric pilasters support a balustrade surrounding the entire parapet with urns placed on top to align with the pilasters (see photo #15).

The first floor has gone through a few alterations throughout the one-hundred-and-twenty-year history of the building. It appears, in the historical photos, all or most of the bays along the W. Bay Street façade were recessed as well as the first bay closest to the W. Bay Street corner (see photos #1, #3, & #4). Currently, the main entrance is located on the corner of W. Bay and N. Laura Streets with an employee entrance along N. Laura Street (see photos #13, & #14). The original "Bisbee Building" name identifier along N. Laura Street was preserved from the previous alterations to the first floor (see photo #14). Along the W. Bay Street façade, the first-floor modern storefront systems are broken up by masonry pilasters with masonry bases that align with the second-floor pilasters (see photo #7). Along N. Laura Street, the bays were originally aligned with the Doric pilasters on the second floor; however, towards the north end of N. Laura Street the pilasters were slightly altered to not quite align with the pilasters above (see photo #8). In addition, the decorative oval shields with floral swags hanging from the bottom were removed from a few places along N. Laura Street with some other shields altered to remove the bottom portions to make room for modern cable lines. One of the original unaltered oval shields is evident where the building meets the H. & W. B. Drew Building along W. Bay Street (see photo #17).

OLD BISBEE BUILDING 51 W. BAY STREET

OLD BISBEE BUILDING 51 W. BAY STREET

FOR REGIONS BANK

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

Historic Context of Proposed Landmark;  
Historic Context – Downtown Jacksonville<sup>4</sup>

### **Summary:**

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

### **Colonial Period:**

(First & Second Spanish Period & British Period)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Territorial and Antebellum Period:

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

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

Historic Property Associates, pp. 2-3.  
Davis, pp. 26-28.

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

Historic Property Associates, pp. 3-4.  
Davis, pp. 39-50.

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

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

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

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

Historic Property Associates, p. 5.  
Ward, pp. 121-23.

<sup>9</sup> Davis, pp. 76-77, 82.

Historic Property Associates, pp. 5-7.  
Ward, pp. 135-36.

Map of Jacksonville (1859), he set aside a "blackjack ridge" for use as a public square (block 39). Envisioning this block as a marketplace and general meeting area, Hart platted smaller half lots facing the park for new shops and businesses. Executors of Hart's estate donated the block to the City in January of 1866 for a consideration of \$10.00. However, interest in improving the square, at that time called the City Park, did not develop until the St. James Hotel was built immediately to the north in 1869.<sup>10</sup> In 1859, Jacksonville's long association with the railroad industry began with the completion of the Florida Atlantic & Gulf Central Railroad to Alligator (Lake City). By 1860, the city was the third largest in Florida with a population of 2,118.<sup>11</sup>

#### Civil War to Twentieth Century:

##### (Reconstruction, Tourist Era, & Spanish American War)

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

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

<sup>10</sup> *The Florida Times Union*, June 22, 1924.

Davis, pp. 115, 332-33.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 97-99, 341-42.

Historic Property Associates, p. 7.

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

Davis, pp. 116-37.

Historic Property Associates, p. 8.

Ward, pp. 139-51.

a theatre, and a library association, as well as numerous banks, shops, railroads, wharves, and elegant hotels, such as the St. James and the Windsor fronting the city park (Hemming Plaza) along with the Everett (Grand National) and Carleton that faced Bay Street.<sup>13</sup>

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

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

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<sup>13</sup> Davis, pp. 138-48, 487-90.

Historic Property Associates, pp. 9-11.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, pp. 9-11.

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

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

<sup>16</sup> Historic Property Associates, pp. 10-11.

<sup>17</sup> Davis, pp. 205-15.

Martin, pp. 110-21.



**First Half of the Twentieth Century:**

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

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

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

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

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<sup>18</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. 219-28.

Historic Property Associates, pp. 11-13.

Ward, pp. 175-86.

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

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

Historic Property Associates, pp. 13-17.

Foley & Wood, pp. 212-19.

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

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

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

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

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

The collapse of the Florida Land Boom in the 1920s followed by the onset of the Great Depression during the 1930s did slow the growth and development of Jacksonville. For example, during the height of the Florida Land Boom in 1926, building permits were valued at \$13,051,074. By 1931, building permit value had fallen to a low in Jacksonville of \$1,728,200, with most of it attributed to alterations and expansion, or to residential construction in the newer suburbs outside Downtown and adjacent urban neighborhoods. Building permit activity did significantly increase following the annexation of growing South Jacksonville to the city in 1932. During the 1930s, only a few significant new buildings were added to the downtown area. The two most significant being the United States Post Office and Courthouse at 310 West Duval Street (1932 – 1933), and the Western Union Company Building at 333 North Laura Street (1930 – 1931). The Great Depression followed by World War II resulted in the built environment of Downtown Jacksonville remaining much as it was at the end of the Florida Land Boom in 1929.<sup>22</sup>

Following World War II, Downtown continued to serve as the financial, commercial, and social heart of the city. Although residential uses had become less of a component of Downtown, a variety of offices and businesses continued to thrive well into the 1950s. At the same time, the core city also began having more competition from suburban shopping centers and commercial strips. However, between 1955 and 1965, Jacksonville's Downtown entered its greatest period of growth and redevelopment since the building renaissance following the Great Fire of 1901.<sup>23</sup> Under the leadership of Haydon Burns, a five-term mayor and later Governor of Florida, the City launched perhaps its most extensive civic improvement program. This initiative to improve downtown started in 1955 when Mayor Burns used four million dollars in Parking Lot Certified Bonds to clean-up the north bank by acquiring and removing old docks and warehouses in order to accommodate a new bulkhead. During that same year, the Jacksonville Expressway Authority was organized for the purpose of designing and funding a new highway system that would enhance traffic flow between downtown and the growing suburbs.

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<sup>21</sup> Wood, pp. 28, 33.

Historic Property Associates, pp. 17-19.

<sup>22</sup> Wood, pp. 28, 71, 81.

Historic Property Associates, pp. 20-21.

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

"Jacksonville's Decade of Progress" continued with the passage in 1958 of a thirty million-bond issue, financed through revenue certificates that funded the construction of a new city hall, courthouse, coliseum, and civic auditorium, as well as the Buckman Sewage Treatment Plant.<sup>24</sup> These new public amenities, along with the new Wolfson Baseball Park, expanded Gator Bowl, and new correctional facilities, were capped by the 1962 bond issue that funded the new main library, the south bank park and marina, as well as the parking lot and riverfront boulevard behind the new city hall and courthouse. However, the other half of the "Jacksonville Story" was the significant amount of private development stimulated by these major municipal investments in Downtown Jacksonville.

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

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

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, pp. 6, 7.

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

<sup>26</sup> Crooks, pp. 11, 12.

## OLD BISBEE BUILDING 51 W. BAY STREET

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

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



*Figure 3-Photo of Bank of America Tower next to Old Bisbee Building*

In this block of mostly large-scale office towers, this two-story building on a prominent corner helps Jacksonville citizens visualize early Downtown Jacksonville prior to the modern era of skyscrapers that took over Jacksonville. If a person stands in the middle of the intersection of W. Bay Street and Laura Street and looks around, it is striking the difference in scale the two-story Old Bisbee Building is alongside the Drew Building compared to the large office towers surrounding them. These two buildings really do capture the cultural landscape that Downtown evoked one hundred years ago after the fire. Even though these two buildings are smaller scale, they fit in well

with the all glass modern towers. They bring the sense of history to an otherwise modern portion of Downtown.

It is obvious when looking at the Old Bisbee Building and the Drew Building next to it that post-fire Downtown Jacksonville was proud of their craftsmanship, tradesmen, and their City. The quality and detail added to the exterior is amazing considering this building



*Figure 4-Bisbee Block*

was built just months after the great fire when building in Downtown was fast and furious. William Bisbee and Gottfried L. Norman could have withheld on the detail and craftsmanship and built the quickest, cheapest building to get back up and running, but their pride for the City and their individual brands shows through the design and quality of the building. The building truly embodies the cultural heritage of post-fire Downtown Jacksonville.

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

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

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

William Adolpus Bisbee is the son of Cyrus Bisbee. William was born in Jacksonville on December 13, 1861.<sup>27</sup> Cyrus Bisbee was one of the early Jacksonville settlers. Cyrus Bisbee, known to have come to Florida in 1835, was a very well-known businessman in Jacksonville. He was known for being the agent for the first line of steamers and steam cars that came to Jacksonville.<sup>28</sup> He also owned a warehouse on the wharf which he used to accept the first boat load of contraband at the start of the Civil War.<sup>29</sup>

William followed in his father's footsteps and became a well-known businessman as well. He worked in various mercantile and prescription businesses but ultimately ended up in real estate. He was well respected in Jacksonville. To prove this point, at the young age of twenty-seven, he was elected as the City Treasurer by Jacksonville's City Council.<sup>30</sup> One very interesting fact about William, he was always pushing for what he thought was right. He owned a steam tugboat named Dauntless (see photo #5), which he used to support the Cubans during the Cuban War of Independence by bringing goods to Cuba. The Cubans were so thankful to Bisbee's efforts during the war, Dauntless led the boat procession and was given a gold sword by the new Cuban president.<sup>31</sup> To add to William's businessman resume, he was the founder of the Georgia Telegraph Company, the first

<sup>27</sup> *Makers of America, Florida Edition, Vol IV, 1911*

<sup>28</sup> *Makers of America, Florida Edition, Vol IV, 1911*

<sup>29</sup> *Makers of America, Florida Edition, Vol IV, 1911*

<sup>30</sup> *Makers of America, Florida Edition, Vol IV, 1911*

<sup>31</sup> *Filibustering with the Dauntless, Florida Historical Quarterly*

underground telephone service in the south.<sup>32</sup> The Bisbee family owned this parcel at least before the 1850s as shown on an 1850s map of Jacksonville (see photo #6). In addition to the Old Bisbee Building, William is known for commissioning famous local architect Henry J. Klutho to design Florida's first ten (10) story building on W. Forsyth, the second Bisbee Building.<sup>33</sup>

The Bisbee family, especially William, are known to have had an important impact on the growth of Jacksonville, especially post-fire. William's investment in the Old Bisbee Building in combination with the second Bisbee Building ensured the survival of post-fire Jacksonville.

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

William A. Bisbee commissioned Atlanta architect, Gottfried L. Norrman, to design the Old Bisbee Building and hired well-known local builder Lloyd M. Boykin to build the structure. Norrman was extremely well-known in the south in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century. Norrman was especially known for his proficiency in many high styles, such as Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival, and Shingle Style. He also completed important works in Charlotte, Savannah, South Carolina, and Alabama.<sup>34</sup> In addition to his many commissions in Atlanta, he was honored to design a few buildings for their three Great Expositions (1881, 1887, and 1895).<sup>35</sup> In 1892, he founded the Southern Chapter of American Institute of Architects (AIA) and became a Fellow in 1897.<sup>36</sup>

Lloyd M. Boykin is known as a local builder in Jacksonville. Per his obituary,<sup>37</sup> Lloyd Boykin came to Jacksonville in 1901, more than likely trying to make a name for himself in the rebuilding boom. The move to Jacksonville certainly paid off, as Boykin became a well-known contractor/builder in the area. The buildings he is known for are elaborately detailed, such as the Old Bisbee Building, the Holmes Block, the Hutchinson-Suddath Building, and the

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**L. M. BOYKIN,**  
**General Contractor and Builder.**

Room 4, Udemann Block.      108 West Forsyth St.  
Jacksonville, Florida.

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*Figure 5-1902 City Directory Ad*

<sup>32</sup> *Makers of America, Florida Edition, Vol IV, 1911*  
<sup>33</sup> *Makers of America, Florida Edition, Vol IV, 1911*  
<sup>34</sup> North Carolina Architects and Builders article  
<sup>35</sup> North Carolina Architects and Builders article  
<sup>36</sup> North Carolina Architects and Builders article  
<sup>37</sup> FTU obituary, 1929

Covington Building (J.H. Churchwell) all on East Bay Street. These buildings are all well designed and still very successful developments in the Downtown area.

Not only is this building linked to a very influential architect, but it is also linked to one of the best builders in post-fire Jacksonville.

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



*Figure 6-Current View of the Old Bisbee Building*

The Old Bisbee Building is a fine example of an early 1900s Beaux Arts style structure. It is one of the last remaining Beaux Arts style structures in Downtown. The first floor has been altered from the original design; however, the second floor is completely intact one hundred and twenty years later. This style includes very ornate examples of craftsmanship which the Old Bisbee Building exudes. It is absolutely astonishing the quality and

craftsmanship that went into designing and building this structure, especially considering the time frame at which it was built. It was built just months after the Great 1901 Fire when everyone in Jacksonville was racing to rebuild. It would have been easy to build a quick, simplified structure but obviously the owner, William A. Bisbee, the architect, Gottfried L. Norman, and the builder, Lloyd M. Boykin, desired a quality product which is still evident today.

Any building that is still standing after one hundred and twenty years was well built with quality material. According to the Florida Times Union article from 1901,<sup>38</sup> they used steel girders to support the open areas along each façade in order to have the recessed areas along both elevations (see photos #1, #3, & #4). This was a fairly progressive method of construction in the early 1900s.

Post-fire, most everyone rebuilt using brick instead of wood cladding Downtown. The Old Bisbee Building was constructed using brick as well as terra cotta for the detailing. Terra Cotta is an interesting building material because it can be molded to allow for every decorative detailing but also is fire-retardant. The brick and the

<sup>38</sup> FTU article, 1901



terra cotta exterior would help protect the building against another potential fire. It is obvious, this structure was designed and built to last a lifetime as evident one hundred and twenty years later.

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

According to *A Field Guide to American Houses*,<sup>39</sup> the Beaux Arts style is a "classical style and has many of the same details found in other styles of Renaissance classical inspiration which, however, seldom have exuberant surface ornamentation that characterizes the Beaux Arts....Roof-line balustrades and balustraded window balconies are common, as are elaborated window crowns and surrounds." In addition, McAlester's book described oval and floral details as being character defining features of the style.

The Old Bisbee Building, encompassing the prominent corner of W. Bay and N. Laura Streets, evokes the Beaux Arts style. The human-scale of the two-story building allows the passerby to enjoy the clearly ornate details of the façade (see photos #7 & #8). The character defining features which embody the Beaux Arts style are described below.

Because the first floor has been altered over the years, the second floor contains the majority of the Beaux Arts detailing. The majority of the window openings on the second floor are single triangular pediment window surrounds supported by Doric pilasters with floral swags which match the Doric pilasters supporting the second-floor entablature. The triangular pediments are detailed with dentil moldings and floral



Figure 7-Triangular Pediments on the Second Floor

<sup>39</sup> McAlester, 1991

garland in the friezes. The floral swags and floral garland are signature details of the Beaux Arts style (see photos #18 & #19). In addition to the triangular pediment windows along the N. Laura St façade, this façade features three groupings of two windows pairs which feature arched lintels and keystones (see photo #16).



Figure 8-N. Laura Street Elevation

are Palladian windows with Doric pilasters which match all the other pilasters. The entablature on each floor feature egg and dart moldings, dentil moldings, and floral moldings (see photo #18). The first-floor frieze is distinguished by plain terra cotta panels, whereas the second-floor frieze feature floral motifs separated by pilasters (see photo #15). Those Doric pilasters support a balustrade surrounding the entire parapet with urns placed on top to align with the pilasters (see photo #16). The symmetrical balustrade is a classic detail of the Beaux Arts style.

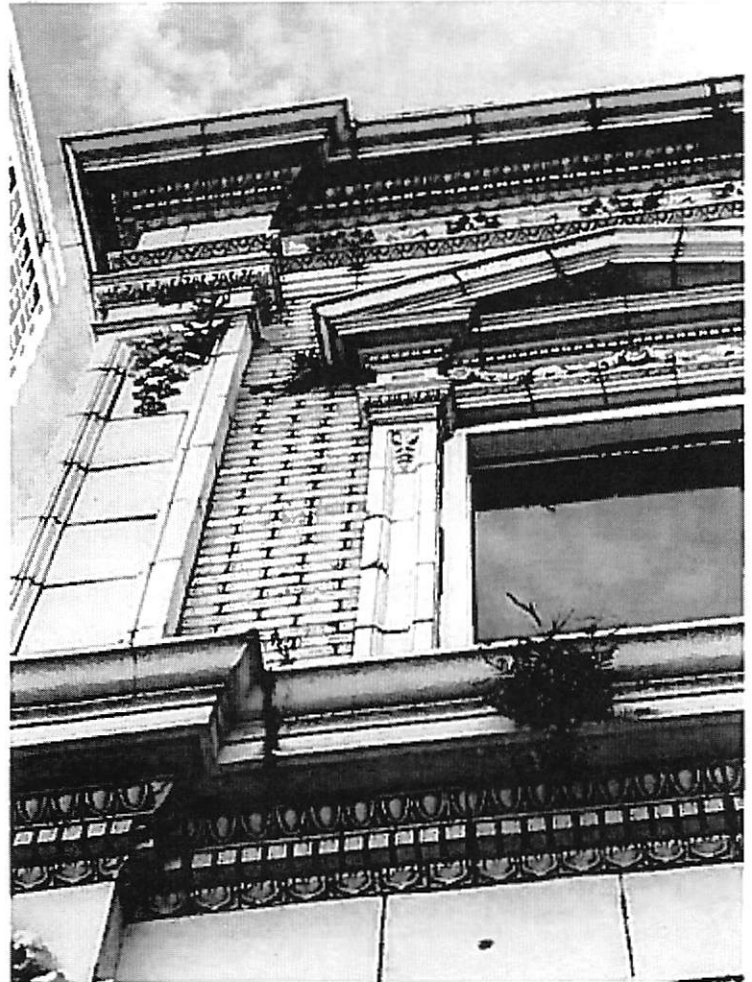
It is clearly evident the Old Bisbee Building is historically significant but can also be described as a fine example of a Beaux Arts style building with the oval insets on the parapets, the numerous ornate floral details, and the nod to the classical styles with the pedimented window surrounds.

Interestingly, there are three parapets that tower above the balustrade; two on the N. Laura Street elevation side by side and one on W. Bay Street (see photos #9, #10, & #11). Each parapet is slightly different; however, they all feature two oval insets indicative of the Beaux Arts style. The parapets flank the ends of the building on each elevation plus one “extra” or asymmetrical parapet to the right of the N. Laura Street parapet. The two end parapets are topped with triangular pediments and the “extra” parapet along N. Laura St. features a segmental pediment.

Below the W. Bay Street parapet and the “extra” parapet

7. Its suitability for preservation or restoration.

Overall, the structure is in relatively good shape. The alterations over the years to the first floor can be restored considering there is pictorial evidence of the original design. The windows were all replaced with metal windows similar in design to the original. There are some areas which are experiencing deferred maintenance issues such as the plants growing in the mortar joints. Overall, the structure is suitable for restoration and preservation.



*Figure 9-Deferred Maintenance Issues*

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Florida Times Union, *Handsome Store and Office Building to be Erected by W.A. Bisbee at Bay and Laura Streets.* Jacksonville, FL September 22, 1901, 6:3-5.

Florida Times Union, *Death Claims L.M. Boykin, Well Known Contractor Dies Sunday Morning.* October 14, 1929 p.11, col I.

OLD BISBEE BUILDING 51 W. BAY STREET

Appendix #1-Pictures



Photo 1-Artist Depiction of the 51 W. Bay Street from the 1901 FTU Article

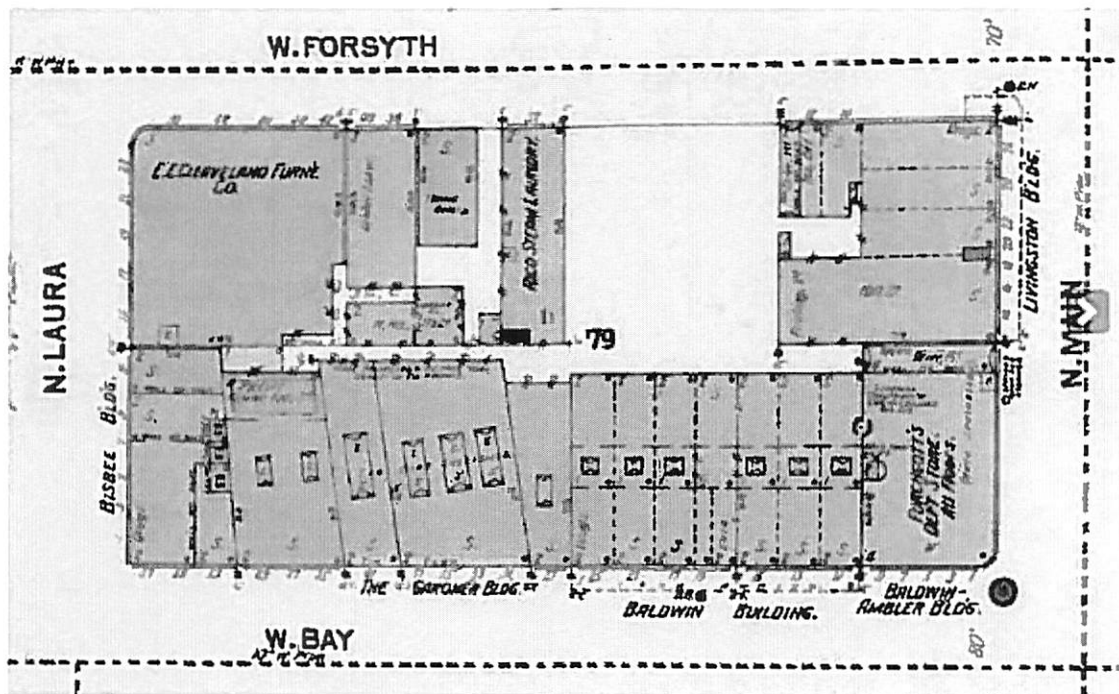


Photo 2-1903 Sanborn Map

OLD BISBEE BUILDING 51 W. BAY STREET



THE BISBEE BLOCK

*Photo 3-Florida Memory Photo of 51 W. Bay Street Prior to 1909*



*Photo 4-Florida Memory Photo of 51 W. Bay Street Prior to 1909*

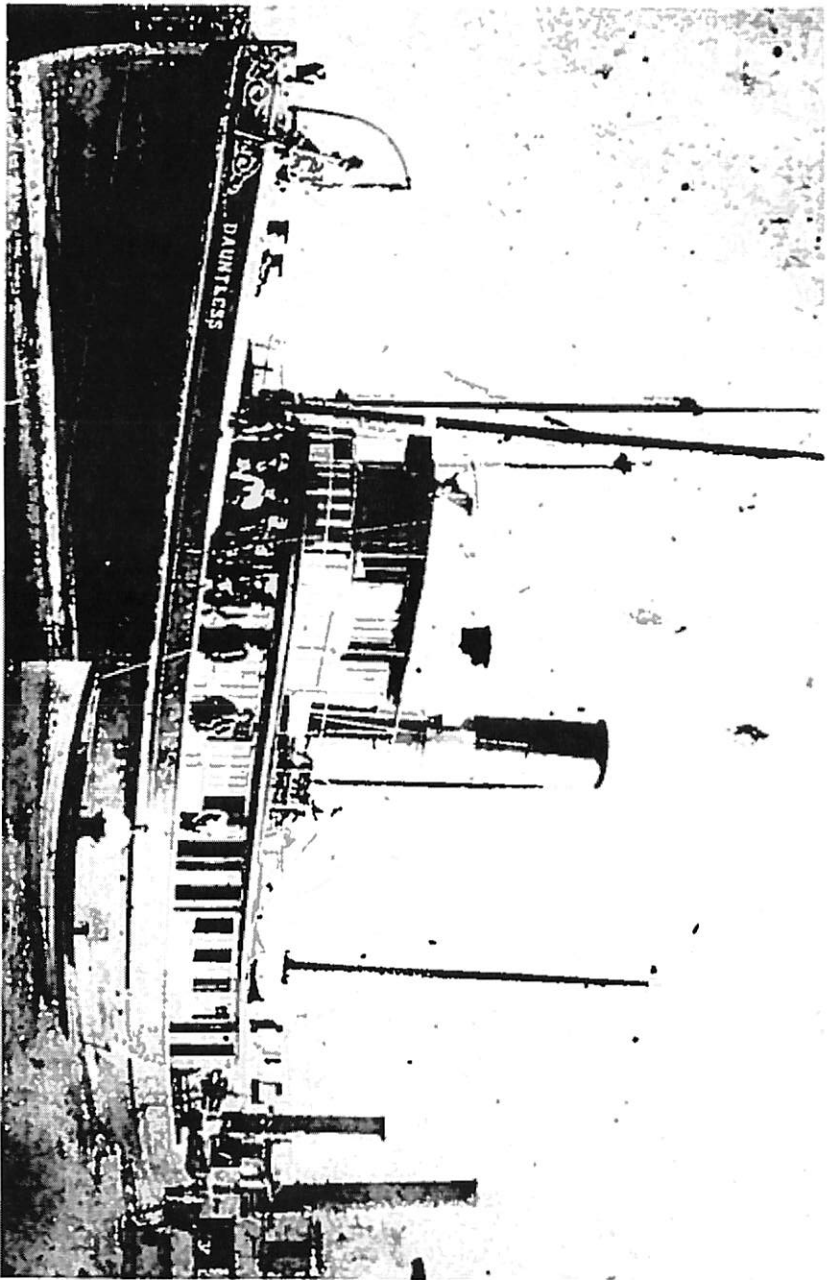
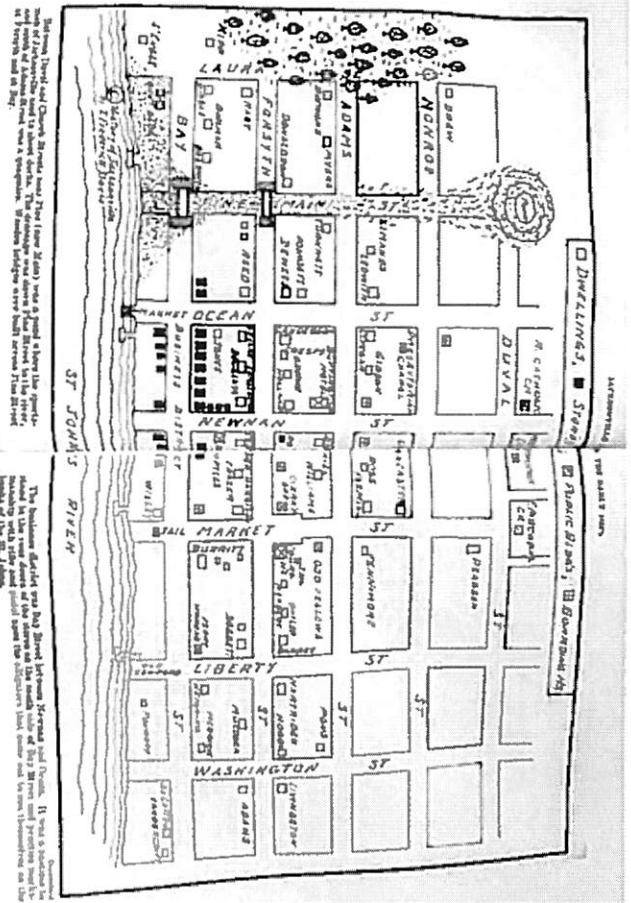


Photo 3-1895 Photo of Dauntless-William Bisbee's Tugboat from Latin American Studies



This map shows the layout of Jacksville, Nevada, in 1853. The map is oriented with the waterfront at the top. Key streets include Bay Street, Main Street, Ocean Street, and others. Buildings are labeled with names such as Adams, Forester, and others. A legend in the top right corner identifies symbols for 'Dwellings', 'Stores', 'Public Buildings', and 'Government Buildings'. The map also shows 'St. John's River' and 'Market Square'.

The building located on Bay Street between Nevada and Nevada. It was a public building in 1853. The map shows the layout of the streets and the location of the building. The map is oriented with the waterfront at the top. Key streets include Bay Street, Main Street, Ocean Street, and others. Buildings are labeled with names such as Adams, Forester, and others. A legend in the top right corner identifies symbols for 'Dwellings', 'Stores', 'Public Buildings', and 'Government Buildings'. The map also shows 'St. John's River' and 'Market Square'.

Photo 4-1853 Map of Jacksville from the Davis' Book



OLD BISBEE BUILDING 51 W. BAY STREET



*Photo 5-Old Bisbee Building as shown on the Corner of W. Bay and N. Laura Streets*

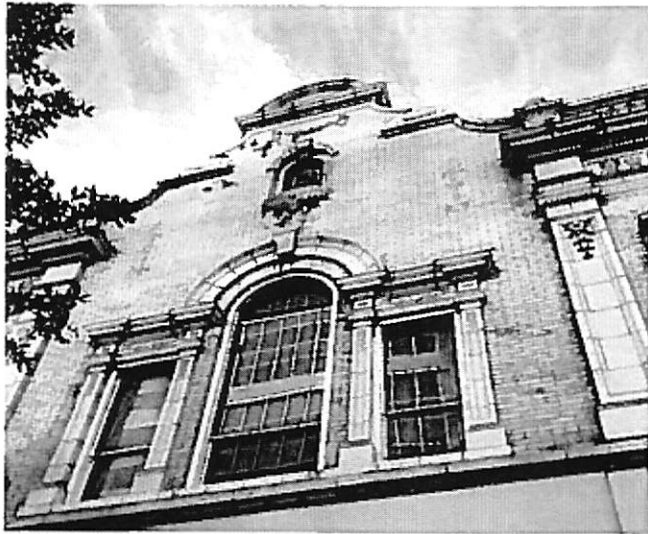


*Photo 6-N. Laura Street Elevation with the Wells Fargo Tower in the Background*

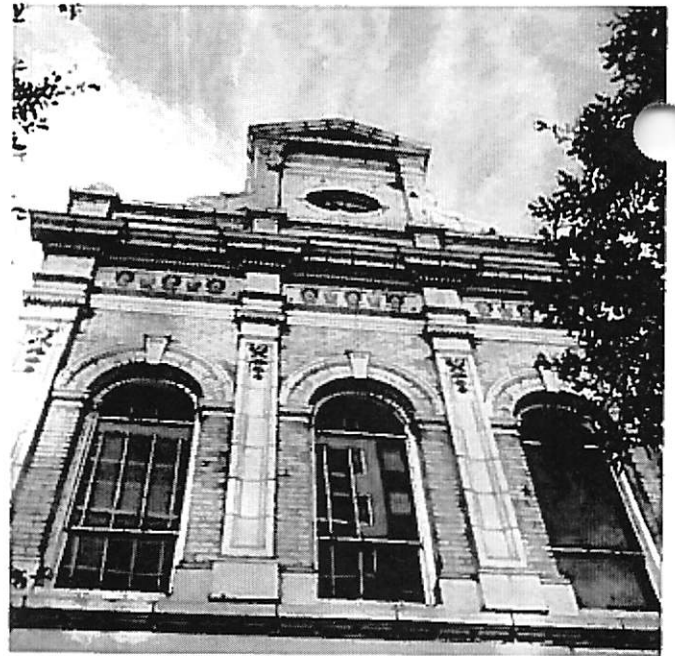
OLD BISBEE BUILDING 51 W. BAY STREET



*Photo 7-Entire Historic Block (Old Bisbee Building and H. & W. B. Drew Building)*



*Photo 8-Most Northern Parapet Along N. Laura Street*





*Photo 9-The W. Bay Street Parapet (due to the tree a direct shot of it is impossible)*



*Photo 10-Main Corner Entrance*



*Photo 11-Employee Entrance off N. Laura Street*

OLD BISBEE BUILDING 51 W. BAY STREET



Photo 12-Close-up of the Second Floor Along W. Bay Street

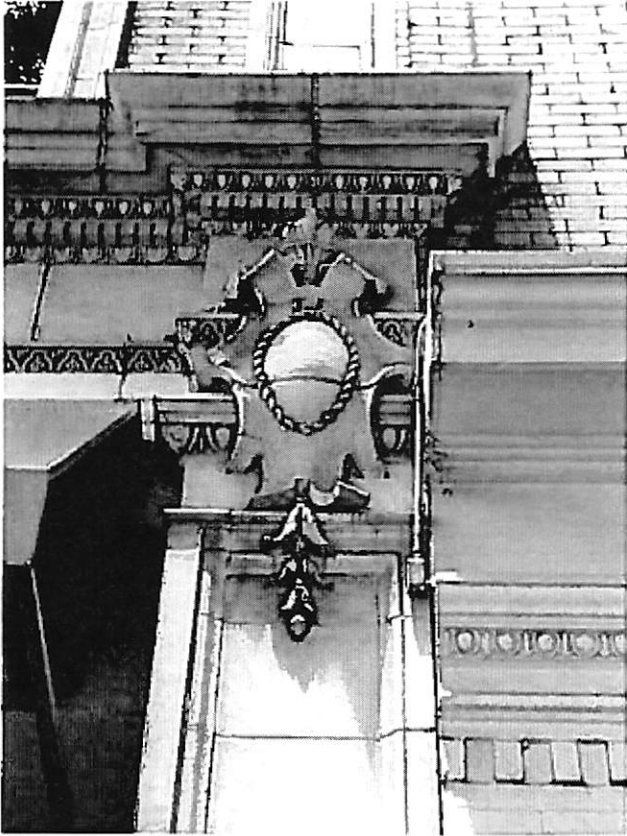


Photo 13-Close-up of the Second Floor Along N. Laura Street

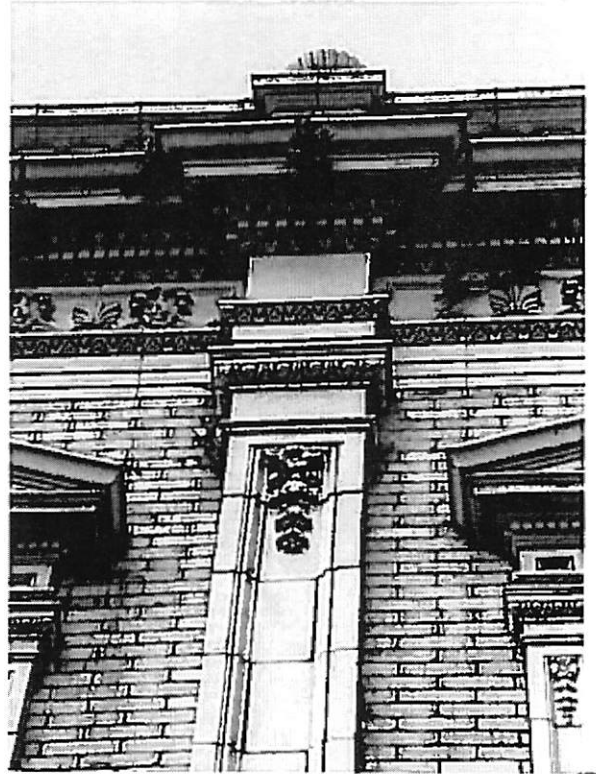
OLD BISBEE BUILDING 51 W. BAY STREET

FOR REGIONS BANK

OLD BISBEE BUILDING 51 W. BAY STREET



*Photo 15-Close-up of the Oval Shield Detail*

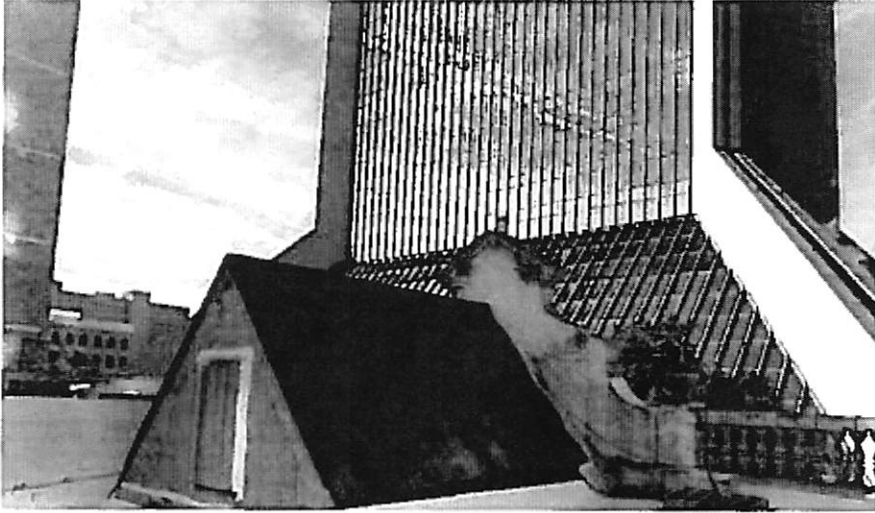


*Photo 14-Close-up of the Beaux Arts Floral Details*



*Photo 16-Rooftop View Facing N. Laura Street*

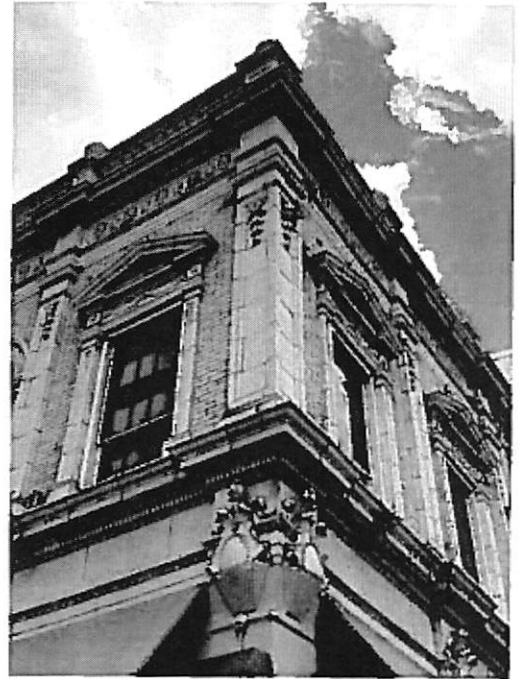
OLD BISBEE BUILDING 51 W. BAY STREET



*Photo 17-Rooftop View Facing W. Bay Street*



*Photo 19-Corner View*



*Photo 18-Exterior Facing South Along N. Laura Street*



*Photo 20-Interior of the Old Bisbee Building*



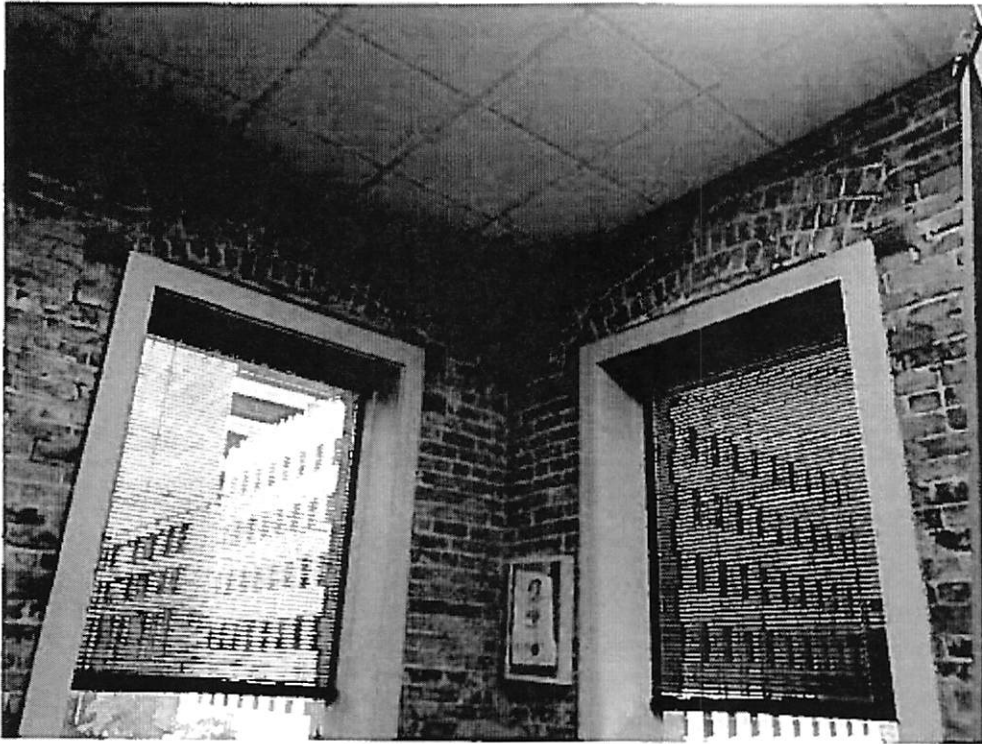
*Photo 21-Interior of the Old Bisbee Building*



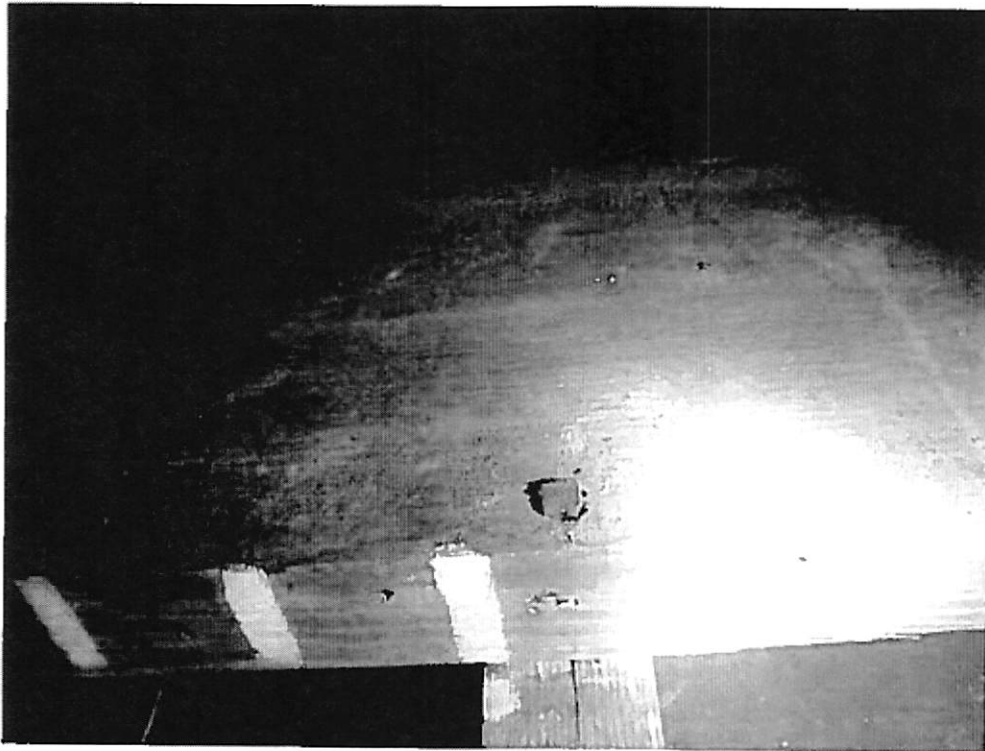
OLD BISBEE BUILDING 51 W. BAY STREET

OLD BISBEE BUILDING 51 W. BAY STREET

FOR REGIONS BANK



*Photo 22-Interior of the Old Bisbee Building*



*Photo 23-Interior Picture of the Roof Supports*

**III.**

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION AND MAP**

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# **JACKSONVILLE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

## **NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

**LM-20-05**

**The Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing, pursuant to Section 307.104, City of Jacksonville Ordinance Code on Application No.: LM-20-05 regarding the proposed designation of the Old Bisbee Building, 51 West Bay Street, as a City of Jacksonville Landmark as noted below:**

**Date: October 28, 2020**

**Time: 3:00 p.m.**

**Virtual Zoom Meeting:**

### **Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE FOR ZOOM MEETING**

**(\*\*No physical location will be available for this public meeting\*\*)**

**Notice is hereby given that the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission (JHPC) will meet on Wednesday, June 24, 2020 at 3:00 pm. via Zoom pursuant to State of Florida Executive Order 20-69 (Emergency Management-COVID-19-Local Government Public Meetings). The purpose of this meeting is for the JHPC to consider and take action on items on the JHPC agenda which can be found at the following location:**

<https://www.coj.net/departments/planning-and-development/community-planning-division/default>

Interested persons desiring to attend this meeting can only do so via Zoom (including by computer or telephone) using the following meeting access information:

By Computer

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/91925017072?pwd=WXVYSmUrazBZbW5OdTZTZHZlakJQQT09>

Meeting ID: 919 2501 7072

Passcode: 076732

One tap mobile

+16465588656,,91925017072#,,,,,0#,,076732# US (New York)

+13017158592,,91925017072#,,,,,0#,,076732# US (Germantown)

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 919 2501 7072

Passcode: 076732

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/ad470jQ4w0>

**Interested persons who cannot attend this JHPC Zoom meeting but who wish to submit public comments to be read during the public comment portion of the meeting regarding any matter on the agenda for consideration at the meeting may do so by emailing Christian Popoli at: [historicpreservation@coj.net](mailto:historicpreservation@coj.net) until 2:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting. Public comments submitted by email must be received no later than 2:00 p.m. on the date of the meeting to be read during the public comment portion of the meeting. The meeting agenda and materials can be obtained electronically by emailing [historicpreservation@coj.net](mailto:historicpreservation@coj.net)**

**Please contact Christian Popoli by telephone at (904) 255-7889 or by email at [historicpreservation@coj.net](mailto:historicpreservation@coj.net) if you have any questions regarding this notice or if you experience technical difficulties during the meeting. If you have a disability that requires accommodations to participate in the above Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission: Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, accommodations for persons with disabilities are available upon request. Please allow 1-2 business days' notification to process; last minute requests will be accepted, but may not be possible to fulfill. Please contact Disabled Services Division at: V- 904-255-5466, TTY-904-255-5476, or email your request to [KaraT@coj.net](mailto:KaraT@coj.net).**

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) 255-7859.

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

39-2S-26E .119 JACKSONVILLE HARTS MAP  
PT LOT 1, BLK 31  
(RE # 073663-0000)



IV.

**PROOF OF PUBLICATION OF PUBLIC NOTICE**

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

STATE OF FLORIDA,

S.S.

COUNTY OF DUVAL,

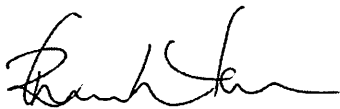
Before the undersigned authority personally appeared Rhonda Fisher, who on oath says that she is the Publisher's Representative of JACKSONVILLE DAILY RECORD, a daily (except Saturday, Sunday and legal holidays) newspaper published at Jacksonville, in Duval County, Florida; that the attached copy of advertisement,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

in the matter of LM-20-05 The Old Bisbee Building

in the Court of Duval County, Florida, was published in said newspaper in the issues of 9/3/20

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 3rd day of September, 2020 A.D. by Rhonda Fisher who is personally known to me.

ANGELA CAMPBELL  
Notary Public, State of Florida  
My Comm. Expires 04/10/21  
Commission No. GG81849

  
Notary Signature

Seal

Notary Public, State of Florida

**NOTICE OF  
PUBLIC HEARING  
ON APPLICATION TO  
DESIGNATE THE  
OLD BISBEE BUILDING,  
AS A CITY OF  
JACKSONVILLE  
HISTORIC LANDMARK**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that on the 23th day of September, 2020 A.D. at 3:00 P.M., the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Jacksonville will hold a **VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING** Via ZOOM for the consideration of the Old Bisbee Building, 51 West Bay Street, as a City of Jacksonville Historic Landmark, pursuant to *Jacksonville Ordinance Code 307.104*. For information on the Virtual Zoom meeting, please see:

<https://www.cityofjacksonville.com/planning-and-development/community-planning-division/default.aspx>

**Exhibit A**

**Legal Description.**

39-28-26E.119 JACKSONVILLE HARTS MAP, PT LOTS 1, RECD O/R 16761-6032, BLOCK 31, (RE # 073663-0000)

This application (LM-20-05) is being sponsored by the property owner, Regions Bank. 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) 255-7859. All interested parties are notified to be present and will be heard at the *Public Hearing*.

**DATED** this 3th day of September, 2020 A.D.

**Jack C. Demetree, III**  
Chairman

**Jacksonville Historic  
Preservation Commission  
City of Jacksonville**

Sep. 3 00:20:049551D

V.

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

---

073741 1000  
INVESTORS BUILDING COMDOMINIUM  
ASSOCIATION INC  
ADAMS ST SUITE 3A  
PO BOX 120  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32201-0120

073682 0000  
POI ACQUISITION CORPORATION  
5 W FORSYTH ST STE 100  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32202

073723 0000  
HERTZ JACKSONVILLE ONE LLC  
21860 BURBANK BLVD STE 300  
SOUTH WOODLAND HILLS, CA 91367

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

URBAN CORE KIM PRYOR  
245 3RD ST  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32206

073664 0000  
45 BAY STREET LLC  
1830 N MAIN ST  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32206

073687 0000  
LAURA TRIO LLC  
140 BAY ST E #B  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32202

073735 0000  
121 ATLANTIC PLACE LLC  
PO BOX 47276  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32247-7276

074459 0000  
ALLEGIANCE JACKSONVILLE LLC  
40 W 57TH ST FLOOR 29  
NEW YORK, NY 10019

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

073689 0000  
PHOENIX ADAMS RISING LLC  
10319 WESTLAKE DR SUITE 323  
BETHESDA, MD 20817

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

074464 0020  
VYSTAR CREDIT UNION  
4949 BLANDING BLVD  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32210