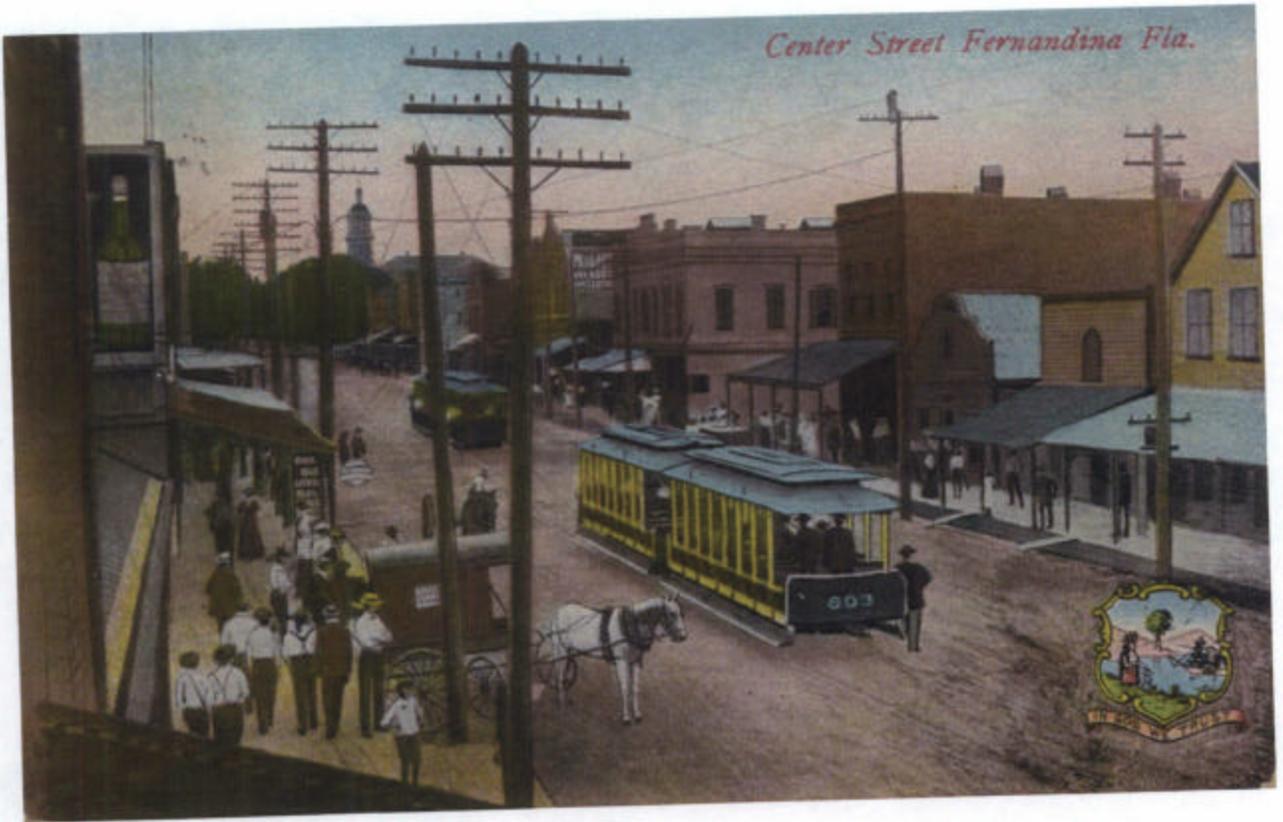


  
Bland  
& Associates, Inc.



CHAPTER ONE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This project was initiated on 21 February 2007 by Bland & Associates, Incorporated (BAI) of Jacksonville, Florida. The goal of this project was to "update a previous survey of the City," with the City being the City of Fernandina Beach. In general terms, the City of Fernandina Beach, Florida, lies within Nassau County (Figure 1-1) in portions of Sections 17, 21, 22, and 23 of Township 3 North, Range 28 East of the Fernandina Beach, FL-GA, USGS topographic quadrangle map (USGS 1994).

All fieldwork and final report for this project had to be completed by 30 June 2007 for submittal to the Division of Historic Resources (DHR). In order to meet this deadline, a very fast rate of work or "crash schedule" was demanded and received by the City. As specified in Exhibit A of Grant No. F0604, this contract had the following, project-specific, goals:

"Conduct a historic structure survey of the City of Fernandina Beach to update a previous survey of the City. Florida Master Site File forms will be completed on all newly surveyed structures and updated on all previously recorded structures within the survey area. A survey log sheet and final survey report, meeting the requirements of Chapter 1A-46.001 FAC, will be produced."

"Two copies of the final survey report with a survey log sheet and one copy of each Florida Master Site File form, with accompanying photos and maps, will be submitted to the Department at the end of the grant period as final products." However, it should be noted that the new DHR regulations for digital submission of photographs, and the transition of the Florida Master Site File (FMSF) to a "folder-less" format, means these Smartforms will be digitally submitted on a Compact Disk (as requested).

The contract and grant application also specified that 25 to 50 new historic structure forms would be recorded with SMARTFORM II files, and 485 previously recorded historic structures would be revisited and have their paper site file forms updated with SMARTFORM II files (Grant application: page 6).

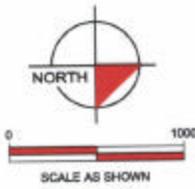
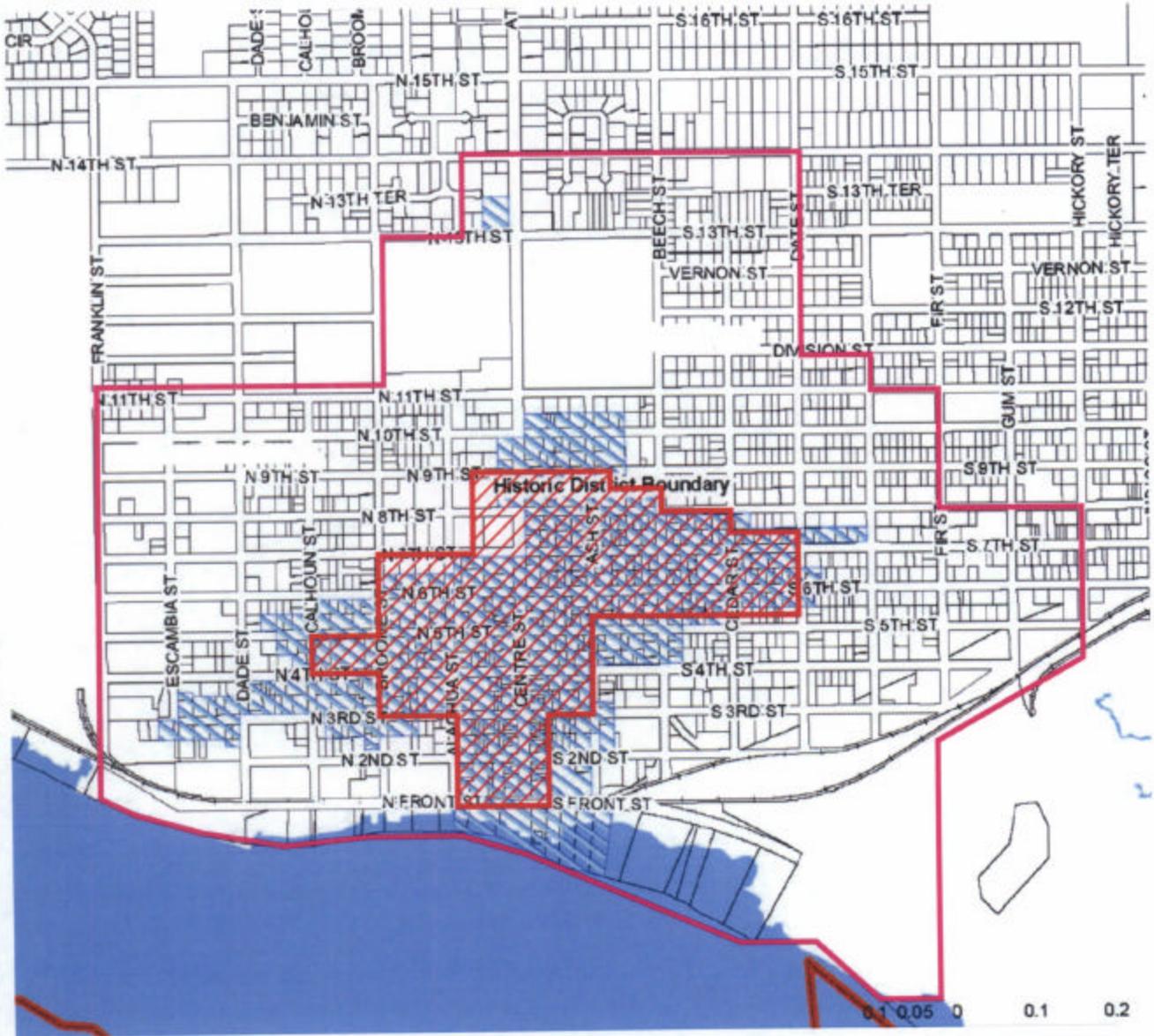
Based upon these contract requirements, a project-specific research design was developed before fieldwork commenced. It was necessary to incorporate the specific requests and needs of the City, DHR requirements, the requests of the public, the requests of the local historic advisory committee, the previous results of earlier research within the City of Fernandina Beach, and the constricted time-frame involved within this research design. This research design therefore revolved around the numerous goals which we were requested to address. This project also needed to lay the groundwork for additional cultural resource studies, and provide much need contextual information that would assist the City with its comprehensive planning efforts. In order to meet these specific goals, a number of tasks were outlined and completed. These tasks included the following:



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Charleston, SC      Jacksonville, FL      Atlanta, GA

**LEGEND**

- AREA SURVEYED
- ▨ HISTORIC DISTRICT
- ▨ LOCAL ORDINANCE AREA



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**The Historic Structure Survey Update Project**  
City of Fernandina Beach  
Nassau County, Florida  
*Project Location*

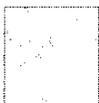
Figure: 1-1  
Project No.: BAIJ0701088.01  
Scale: 1" = 1000'-0"  
Date: April 2007

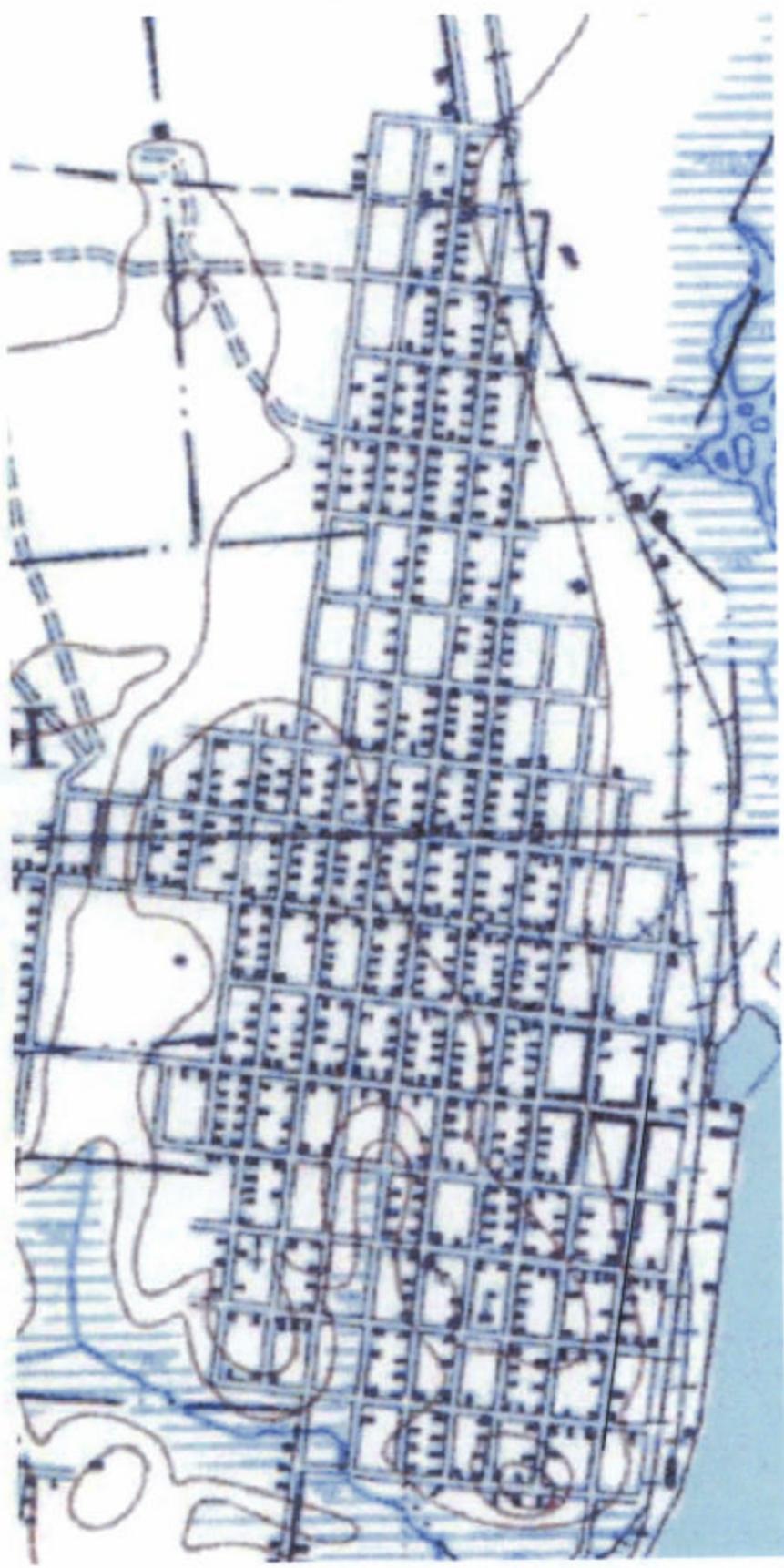
1) BAI personnel revisited all previously recorded, historic structures located within the City of Fernandina Beach. Fieldwork consisted of physically going to each structure and verifying its current condition and mapped location; each structure was digitally photographed in accordance with current DHR, digital photograph standards. An updated SmartForm II computer file for each resource was completed for submission to the FMSF. A very large part of this project consisted of the reconciliation of massive quantities of raw data which were generated by several previous historic structure surveys within the City.

2) Numerous, new, historic structures were recorded within the City of Fernandina Beach during the current project. Many of these consisted of previously unrecorded, African-American structures; the City was particularly interested in recording these resources due to the increasing rate of development in the area and the attendant management concerns. Previously recorded historic structures in the City were also revisited, and their FMSF forms were updated. In total, 518 resources were updated / recorded with Smartform II files as a result of this project.

3) BAI met with numerous local citizens of the City, and these informants provided a wealth of historic information. Through public requests for assistance, multiple public meetings with local historical societies, meetings with local community leaders and pastors, meetings with county staff, cooperation with local law enforcement, and going door to door, BAI strongly encouraged all residents of the City to contact us with any historic information. BAI also asked citizens to contact us via the internet and phone, and we received valuable data using this method. Countless citizens specifically requested that we correct data that was incorrect in regard to their private, historic properties. The Amelia Island Museum of History, the City of Fernandina Beach Clerks Office, the public library, and the Nassau County Courthouse were several invaluable, local resources. This level of public involvement was necessary in order to make the report as inclusive as possible, and to address as many of the cultural resource concerns of the local citizenry.

4) Extensive historic background research was also conducted on the history of the City of Fernandina Beach. Specific emphasis was placed upon the examination of previously unstudied architectural themes, as well as synthesizing historic themes of the area. The records examined by our historian included architectural renderings and blueprints, articles of incorporation, contracts, leases, and property agreements, deeds, director's minutes, inventory books, legal instruments, ledger books, maps, city directories, maps, newspapers, periodicals, Sanborn Company maps, and microfilm collections of government records and documents. From a cartographic standpoint, we also used old military aerial photographs, military atlases, old geological maps, service maps from 1917 (Figure 1-2), Gazetteers, old road maps, city guides, current and old municipal records, and anything else we could locate. The goal of this documentary research was to provide a historic context for the historic development of the City.





1917 Map of the City of Fernandina Beach,  
1:62500 (USGS 1917)

Figure: 1-2  
Project No.: BALJ0701088.01  
Scale: Not to Scale  
Date: April 2007

The Historic Structure Survey Update Project  
City of Fernandina Beach  
Nassau County, Florida  
Figure 1-2

 **Bland & Associates, Inc.**  
Archaeological and Historic Preservation Consultants

Building-specific histories were also developed on numerous structures, which led to some significant discoveries. For example, as part of the current project, the survey team discovered the previously unknown original architect, builder, and date of construction (1938) for the Nassau County Jail, which is now the location of the Amelia Island Museum of History. The architect for the Nassau County Jail was, Roy A. Benjamin, one of the most famous architects of the early 1900s. Mr. Benjamin is widely known as the architect who designed over 200 movie theaters in the Southeast during the early days of the silver screen era.

5) Current regulations and laws that apply to historic structures have been incorporated throughout this report. Numerous other topics are addressed in depth within this report in direct response to questions regarding regulatory procedures, eligibility requirements, protective measures, examples of effective ordinances, and due processes. In this manner, one function of this report is to serve as a suggested reference library, and to provide regulatory linkages to the historic preservation ordinance and zoning and planning regulations currently in place within the city.

6) A FMSF Survey Log Sheet and a comprehensive report were also prepared and given to the City and DHR. The required number of reports was also submitted to the state and the City.

11) The structural resources of the City of Fernandina Beach are a non-renewable resource of growing importance to heritage tourism, and historic structures with above ground remains are especially well suited to public interpretation exhibits. From a land planning standpoint, an up-to-date historic structure survey is the important step in determining how historic structures and their settings should be preserved, used, managed, and interpreted. Historic structure surveys are simply essential within the urban and heritage tourism planning process, and they are a critical step before more detailed historic preservation plans, interpretive plans, and adaptive use concepts can be developed. This project represents the first phase of a modern, comprehensive management effort on the part of the City to administer its diverse and irreplaceable cultural resources. To this end, BAI has made numerous management recommendations regarding the City's future supervision of its cultural resources, and these recommendations can be found at the end of this report.

