

Chapter 6: NORTH AND SOUTH OF ATLANTIC AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING AREA ANALYSIS

The North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area is roughly bounded by 14th Street at the west, the waterway at the north and east, and Beech Street, the non-historic school, and Hickory Street at the south, as illustrated on Figure 96. While Atlantic Avenue is a major road and could have been utilized to divide the area into two Neighborhood Planning Areas, larger boundaries were chosen. The blocks immediately surrounding Atlantic Avenue, to both the north and south, are unified in their landscaping with small medians. They also contain a concentration of the earliest resources within the Neighborhood Planning Area, after which development proceeded to both the north and south. Thus, while Atlantic Avenue would function as a good geographic barrier from which to define two Neighborhood Planning Areas, that would have separated the cohesive nature of the area immediately surrounding Atlantic Avenue. There are some differences in the character defining features of the area to the north and to the south of Atlantic Avenue, and these are noted within this section of the report.

Included below is a summary of the Neighborhood Planning Area's predominant character defining features, and an entire list of character defining features is included later in this section of the report.

- *Architectural Styles* – Unlike other identified Neighborhood Planning Areas, this area is not unified by the repetition of one or two architectural styles. Rather, it distinguishes itself for its variety of architectural styles encompassing various periods of development. It contains good examples of Masonry Vernacular, Frame Vernacular, Cape Cod Revival, Minimal Traditional, Modern Vernacular, and Ranch residences. Many of the residences have a higher level of architectural detail than those found in other Neighborhood Planning Areas. The designs also often exhibit Modern and Contemporary influences in their design features, common to later historical periods than those found in the other identified Neighborhood Planning Areas.
- *Landscaping* – The landscaping throughout the Neighborhood Planning Area is not cohesive. However, the blocks to the north and south of Atlantic Avenue retain a unique designed landscape in their small medians. As these blocks were some of the first to be developed within the Neighborhood Planning Area, they also contain mature trees which provide a canopy over the streets. The landscaping in this area functions as a threshold, differentiating it and providing a distinct sense of place when one travels north or south from the major thoroughfare of Atlantic Avenue.
- *Street Patterns and widths* – The street patterns and width are not uniform throughout the Neighborhood Planning Area. Those south of Atlantic Avenue are primarily a grid, and north is varied with grid, curvilinear, and cul-de-sac patterns. The northern portion of the Neighborhood Planning Area has a unique character due to its varied street patterns. It is one of the few historically developed portions of Fernandina Beach which is not solely set on a grid but also incorporates curvilinear and cul-de-sac forms.

History and Development Patterns

The development patterns of the historic resources in the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area are illustrated in Table 5. The four historic periods established during the survey reflect the developmental history of the area. These patterns of development also provide the contexts necessary for determining the significance of the various historic resources.

Table 5: Development Patterns of Resources within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Planning Area

Periods of Development	Number of Parcels
Florida Land Boom Period (1920-1929)	5
Depression and New Deal Period (1930-1940)	37
World War II and Post-War Period (1941-1949)	74
Modern Period (1950-1961)	479
Non-Historic (Post 1961)	418

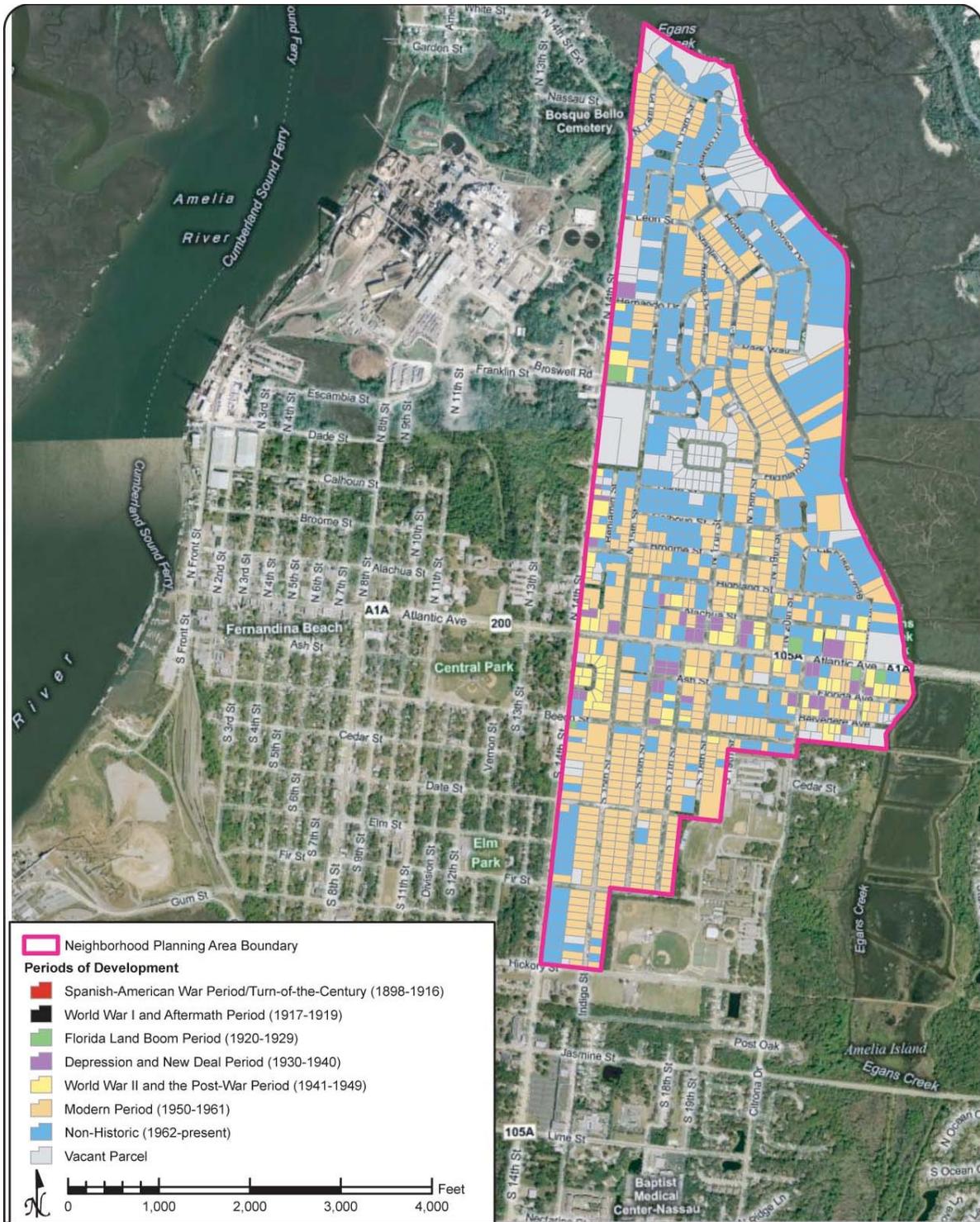


Figure 96: Development Patterns in the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area



The earliest residences constructed within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area date to the Florida Land Boom Period (1920-1929). As previously discussed, Fernandina did not experience the large development boom the rest of the state was witnessing during the 1920s. The 1920s development in the Neighborhood Planning Area was rather isolated at the time, located between the centers of activity at the beach to its east, and downtown to its west.

Development picked up during the 1930s, as the population was booming due to the construction of the two mills. The Fernandina Beach area had a 45% increase in population from 1935 to 1937 and building permits for 1937 totaled \$6,308,900 (Florida State Planning Board and City Commission Fernandina 1940: 42). The area developed a temporary housing shortage, and the mayor asked people not to come to town until new structures were constructed (Florida State Planning Board and City Commission Fernandina 1940: 42). The planning area saw steady development during the 1930s and 1940s aimed at meeting the increased demand. During these periods, development was still concentrated in the blocks immediately north and south of Atlantic Avenue. A 1938 map of the City, noting its points of interest, does not even indicate the streets to the north and south of Atlantic Avenue within the Neighborhood Planning Area, indicating its lack of development (Figure 97). An aerial photograph in 1947, facing east from the harbor, also shows primarily trees in the still largely undeveloped area (Figure 98).

In the Modern Period, the greatest period of growth occurred within the Neighborhood Planning Area. Development occurred throughout all portions of the planning area, and it was during this period that the construction industry was able to catch up to the growing demand for housing created by the area's mills. Unlike many Florida communities, Fernandina Beach did not see a lot of large scale tract or suburban developments during the Post-World War II and Modern periods. This is evident in the development in the Neighborhood Planning Area, which consisted primarily of a block to a few blocks at a time by one developer, or the construction of single houses. The varied character of the development is illustrated in the Character Defining Features section of the report. While almost 500 houses were constructed during the 1950s in the neighborhood, they were not part of any unified development scheme. Figure 99 is a 1960 aerial photograph of the Neighborhood Planning Area, showing development located in pockets scattered throughout the area. An August 16, 1995 article in the *Wall Street Journal* noted that the residential subdivision was a fairly foreign concept in Fernandina Beach until that time (Johnson 1995).

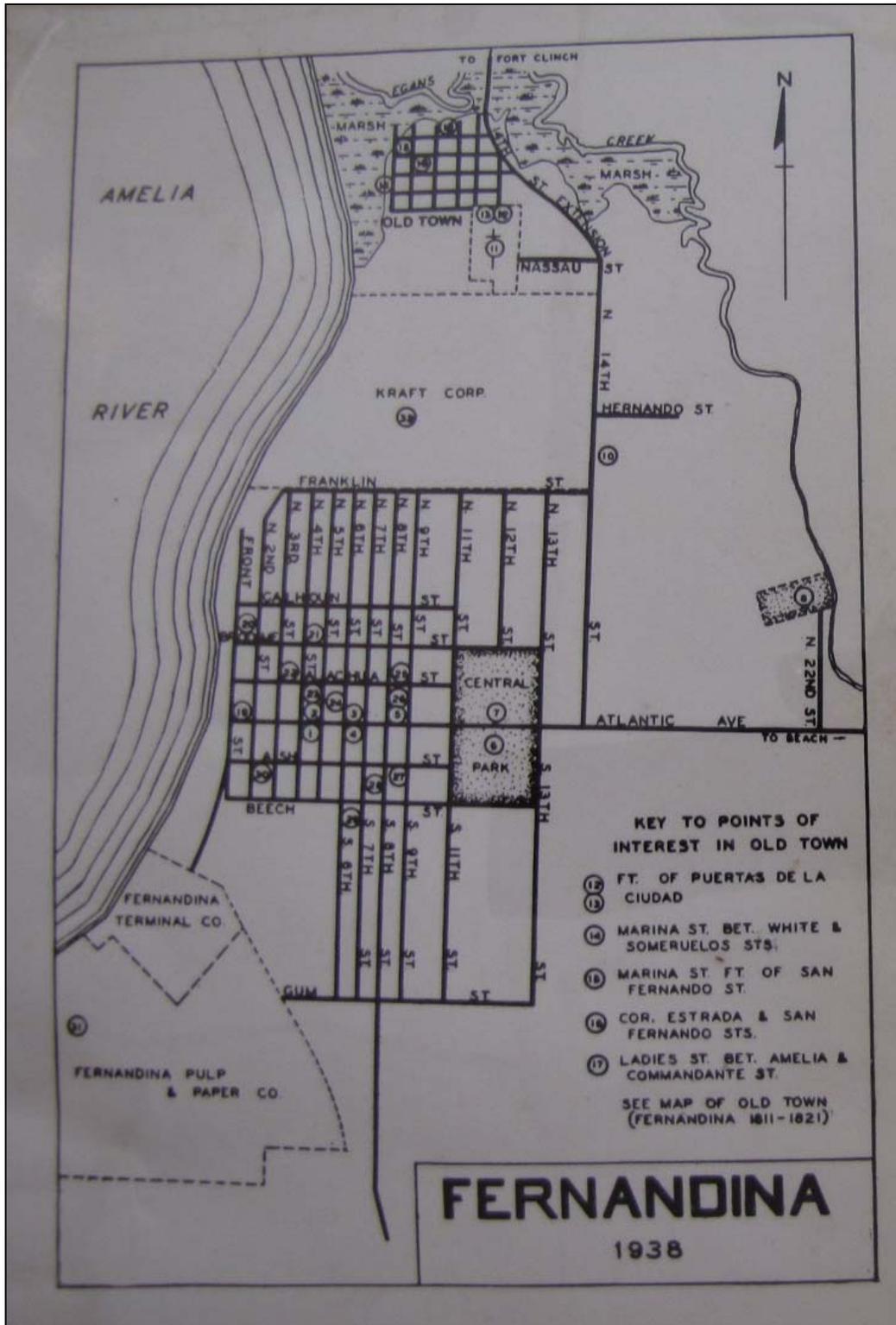


Figure 97: Fernandina Map Noting Key Points of Interest
 Courtesy of Amelia Island Museum of History



Figure 98: 1947 Aerial Photograph of Fernandina Beach, facing east from the Harbor
Courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection, State Archives and Library of Florida



Figure 99: 1960 Aerial Photograph showing the layout and sparse development of the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area

Aerial photograph courtesy of Aerial Photography: Florida, State University System of Florida, <http://www.digital.uflib.ufl.edu/collections/FLAP/Index.htm>



Figure 100: Current Aerial Photograph for Comparison with Figure 99

With the population and development booms came new patterns of development, and residential development shifted east of downtown to the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area. The area became a popular place for families, and its distance from the mills likely made it more desirable. Jim Ewing's account of growing up in the neighborhood recalls it as a place that children played games in the yards (Ewing 2007:76). He recalls it as a desirable neighborhood in the 1950s noting that, "what it lacked in size, our house on south 17th Street made up for in location and neighborhood" (Ewing 2007: 76).

Available City Directories from the 1950s were reviewed, revealing a diverse population of residents within the Neighborhood Planning Area. This is likely due to the highly varied nature of the development which consisted of houses in a variety of scales and styles, as detailed in the Character Defining Features section of the report. Typical professions of residents within the neighborhood during the 1950s include: accountant, distributor, pulpwood worker, radio and TV service, bank treasurer/executive secretary, shrimp boat owner, chemical engineer, real estate, salesman, president of Standard Hardware, teacher, maintenance superintendent, fireman, optometrist, cafeteria worker, county tax assessor, physician, carpenter, shrimper, pilot, trainman, fisherman, acting chief of the police department, and assistant postmaster. In addition, many residents worked for the mills in roles which included superintendent, plant manager, forester, clerk, operator, supervisor, and personnel manager.

The neighborhood has remained a popular site of development through to the present. Construction has continued to infill the neighborhood non-historically, almost doubling the number of houses present in 1961.

Character Defining Features

Land use

Land use is solely of single family residential with few vacant lots (Figure 101-Figure 104).



Figure 101: Typical Street of Single Family Residences in the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 15th Street, facing southeast at 104 S 15th Street



Figure 102: Typical Street of Single Family Residences in the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, Southwest corner of N 19th Street and Alachua Street, facing west



Figure 103: Typical Street of Single Family Residences in the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, Calhoun Street east of N 15th Street, facing southwest



Figure 104: Typical Street of Single Family Residences in the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, N 14th Street, facing southwest at 40 N 14th Street

Height/stories

The structures are one-and two-story throughout the Neighborhood Planning Area, with one-story being the most common.

Setbacks

Setbacks are highly variable throughout the neighborhood due to its varied developmental history. Series of houses in a row, developed at the same time, typically have uniform setbacks. Later houses and those along Atlantic Avenue and 14th Street tend to have larger setbacks (Figure 105-Figure 108). Non-historic residences in the portion of the neighborhood north of Atlantic Avenue also tend to have the largest setbacks within the Neighborhood Planning Area.



Figure 105: View of Larger Setbacks of Residences along Atlantic Avenue, facing west from N 15th Street



Figure 106: View of Series of Residences with Uniform Setbacks within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, N 15th Street, facing northeast from 1131 N 15th Street (North of Atlantic Avenue)



Figure 107: View of Large Setbacks for Non-historic Residences within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 2052 N Oak Marsh Drive, facing east (North of Atlantic Avenue)



Figure 108: View of Series of Residences with Uniform Setbacks within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, Florida Avenue, facing northeast from 2213 Florida Avenue (South of Atlantic Avenue)

Density

The neighborhood has a moderate density with few vacant lots.

Building materials

The building materials for the structures include concrete block, brick, and wood frame. Exteriors are primarily covered in stucco, scored stucco, vinyl or metal siding, weatherboard, brick, concrete block, or asbestos shingles.

Garage entrances

A variety of garage types are present in the neighborhood. These include integral one-car, integral two-car, detached one-car, and detached two-car garages as well as integral and detached one- and two-car carports (Figure 109-Figure 111).



Figure 109: Representative View of One-car Detached Garage within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 103 S 15th Street, facing west



Figure 110: Representative View of Two-car Integral Carport within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 1806 Ash Street, facing southeast



Figure 111: Representative View of One-car Integral Carport within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 205 S 17th Street, facing east

Porch enclosures

The majority of the houses within the Neighborhood Planning Area have small covered entrances/entrance porches, and large front porches are less common (Figure 112-Figure 114). Small covered entrances/entrance porches are typically open with no rail and simple supports. Larger porches are often screened.



Figure 112: Representative View of Small Open Entrance Porch within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 602 S 15th Street, facing east



Figure 113: Representative View of Small Open Entrance Porch within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 206 S 17th Street, facing east



Figure 114: Representative View of Small Screened Entrance Porch within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 204 S 17th Street, facing east

Fences and walls

Few residences within the Neighborhood Planning Area have fences. Those that exist typically delineate the property line rather than providing a solid enclosure (Figure 115 and Figure 116). However, there are some wooden picket fences and chain link fences throughout the neighborhood (Figure 117). Retailing walls are located along some of the properties on Atlantic Avenue.



Figure 115: Representative View of Small Fence Delineating the Property Line within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 157 N 19th Street, facing northeast



Figure 116: Representative View of Small Fence Delineating the Property Line within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, SW corner of Broome Street and N 19th Street, facing west



Figure 117: Representative View of Chain Link Fence within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 1131 N 15th Street, facing east

Scale

The scale of residences is highly varied throughout the neighborhood from modest one-story residences to large multi-story structures. There are a higher number of large, multi-story structures in the portion of the Neighborhood Planning Area north of Atlantic Avenue. A random sampling of 20 structures was selected to determine an approximate average square footage for the Neighborhood Planning Area. The approximate average is 1709 square feet.

Floor area ratio

The floor area ratio for these homes is highly varied throughout the neighborhood with homes of different heights, lot coverage, and lot size.

Lot coverage

The lot coverage is varied throughout the neighborhood. It appears to average between 25% and 50% with each house having some yard/green space. The area north of Atlantic Avenue contains more large lots which typically contain the larger residences, but also leave ample yards and cover 25% of the lot.

Street patterns and widths

The street patterns and widths are highly varied throughout the Neighborhood Planning Area as illustrated on Figure 118-Figure 121. The area south of Atlantic Avenue has a grid street pattern. To the north of Atlantic Avenue, street patterns are more varied and include curvilinear and cul-de-sac plans as well as grid. Small landscaped medians are also located on the streets immediately north and south of Atlantic Avenue. The majority of the streets are paved; however, there are some gravel streets.



Figure 118: Representative View of Street within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, S 15th Street, facing south at Date Street (South of Atlantic Avenue)



Figure 119: Representative View of Street within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, S 17th Street, facing north at Fir Street (South of Atlantic Avenue)



Figure 120: Representative View of Street within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, S 15th Street, south of Atlantic Avenue facing south



Figure 121: Representative View of Street within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, Stanley Drive, facing south from 504 Stanley Drive (North of Atlantic Avenue)

Accessory structures

Accessory structures within the Neighborhood Planning Area consist primarily of garages and carports. The most common are one-car detached garages, as illustrated in Figure 109 on page 114.

Architectural styles

Architectural styles in this neighborhood are varied as the area was developed throughout multiple historic and non-historic periods. The primary historic styles include Masonry Vernacular, Frame Vernacular, Cape Cod Revival, Minimal Traditional, Modern Vernacular, and Ranch (Figure 122- Figure 128).



Figure 122: Representative Photo of Masonry Vernacular Residence within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 1721 Atlantic Avenue, facing northeast



Figure 123: Representative Photo of Masonry Vernacular Residence within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 1139 N 15th Street, facing west



Figure 124: Representative Photo of Frame Vernacular Residence within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 23 N 17th Street, facing west



Figure 125: Representative Photo of Cape Cod Revival Residence within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 12 S 16th Street, facing east



Figure 126: Representative Photo of Modern Vernacular Residence within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 1927 Atlantic Avenue, facing northeast



Figure 127: Representative Photo of Ranch Residence within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, SW corner of N 17th Street and Atlantic Avenue, facing southwest



Figure 128: Representative Photo of Minimal Traditional Residences within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, facing north at 33 Oak Grove Place

Spatial relationships

This neighborhood was not cohesively developed. Atlantic Avenue, 14th Street, 18th Street, and Beech Street are the major thoroughfares throughout the Neighborhood Planning Area.

Sidewalks and landscaping

This neighborhood has sidewalks in various portions, but they have limited connectivity and are not cohesively located throughout the Neighborhood Planning Area. Landscaping is also highly varied, as illustrated in Figure 118-Figure 128 on pages 119-125. Designed medians, located on the blocks immediately north and south of Atlantic Avenue, are the only manicured landscaping within the Neighborhood Planning Area. The remaining landscaping throughout the neighborhood is natural. It varies in level from lots which are heavily wooded and greened, to those which may have only a few small trees and shrubs.

Massing

Massing is varied throughout the Neighborhood Planning Area with the majority of the residences in rectangular or L-shaped forms, and some irregular structures.

Roof line and pitch

The residences in this neighborhood feature gable and hip roofs (Figure 129-Figure 132). They most commonly have a low pitch but there are some with steeper pitches.



Figure 129: Representative Photo of Low-pitch Hip Roof Residence within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 502 Stanley Drive, facing southeast



Figure 130: Representative Photo of High-pitch Hip Roof Residence within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 21 N 18th Street, facing northwest



Figure 131: Representative Photo of High-pitch Gable Roof Residence within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 1821 Atlantic Avenue, facing north



Figure 132: Representative Photo of Low-pitch Gable Roof Residence within the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 308 S 15th Street, facing northeast

Lot size and width

The lot size and width varies throughout the neighborhood as illustrated on Figure 96 on page 103. The average lots size within the Neighborhood Planning Area is .367 acres, according to the records of the Nassau County Property Appraiser. Larger lots are mostly concentrated in the area north of Atlantic Avenue.

Elevation features

The elevation features and level of ornament on the residences throughout the Neighborhood Planning Area are highly varied. The majority of the residences have a prominent front entrance on the main elevation. They have both asymmetrical and symmetrical façade arrangements.

Parking and driveways

The majority of the residences feature paved off-street parking (Figure 132, page 127). Some of the residences have a concrete pad and the portion of the driveway connecting to the street is unpaved (Figure 123, page 122). The swale is also utilized for parking.

Doors and windows

The doors and windows vary throughout the neighborhood. The primary window types are metal single hung sash with a variety of light configurations. There are also wooden double hung sash and metal awning windows found throughout the neighborhood.

Building orientation

Residences are typically set parallel to the roadway; however, some are set at an angle to the street.

Trees and shrubbery

The majority of the lots throughout the neighborhood have trees and shrubs. Shrubbery often is used to delineate property lines. The trees and medians in the blocks immediately north and south of Atlantic Avenue create a strong canopy which gives the area a unique character (Figure 120, page 120, Figure 133). This area surrounding Atlantic Avenue was the first portion of the Neighborhood Planning Area to be developed, and contains what appear to be mature trees.



Figure 133: Representative View of Landscaping in the Blocks Immediately North and South of Atlantic Avenue, Beech Street, facing west at S 19th Street

Topography

Topography throughout the Neighborhood Planning Area is varied. The portion north of Atlantic Avenue contains more rolling hills and sloping topography, while the portion south of Atlantic Avenue is primarily flat and even.

Recommendations

It is the evaluation of Janus Research that the North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area is not eligible for designation as a local or National Register historic district. The area was not cohesively developed. The residences do not share any developmental history or associations and review of plat maps shows that it was not cohesively platted. Figure 134 and Figure 135 show the large number of subdivisions which were platted within the Neighborhood Planning Area. They illustrate that very small sections of the overall neighborhood were developed in pieces over time. The Neighborhood Planning Area contains resources from virtually every period of development, primarily dating from 1950 and later. A historic aerial photograph from 1960 shows that development in this area was still sparse (Figure 99, page 107). The varied dates of construction are illustrated on Figure 96 on page 103.

As illustrated in the History and Development Patterns discussion, non-historic development is located throughout the Neighborhood Planning Area. This significantly breaks up any historic sense of place or cohesion to the architecture. The Character Defining Features section of the report illustrates that the streetscape and landscape features are varied throughout the development and it lacks any elements which unite it as a potential historic district.

Still, as illustrated by the photographs throughout the Character Defining Features section of the report, there are many potentially individually eligible historic structures throughout the planning area. This area is recommended for future survey aimed at identifying individually significant historic resources. In addition, the landscaping in the blocks immediately north and south of Atlantic Avenue creates a unique sense of place and should be evaluated for eligibility for designation as a historic landscape feature. Protection of the streetscape would preserve the area's unique character. The documentation of the resources within the Neighborhood Planning Area would add to the broader understanding of the City of Fernandina Beach's history, especially its later periods of historical development. The table within Appendix C notes any historic structures within the Neighborhood Planning Area which have not been previously recorded, and should be the focus of future survey work. Priorities for future survey efforts are discussed further in the Conclusions section of this report. Once additional documentation has occurred, individually eligible resources could be listed in the National Register or locally designated.



Figure 134: Plat Map Outlines showing the large numbers of subdivisions platted within the northern portion of the Neighborhood Planning Area

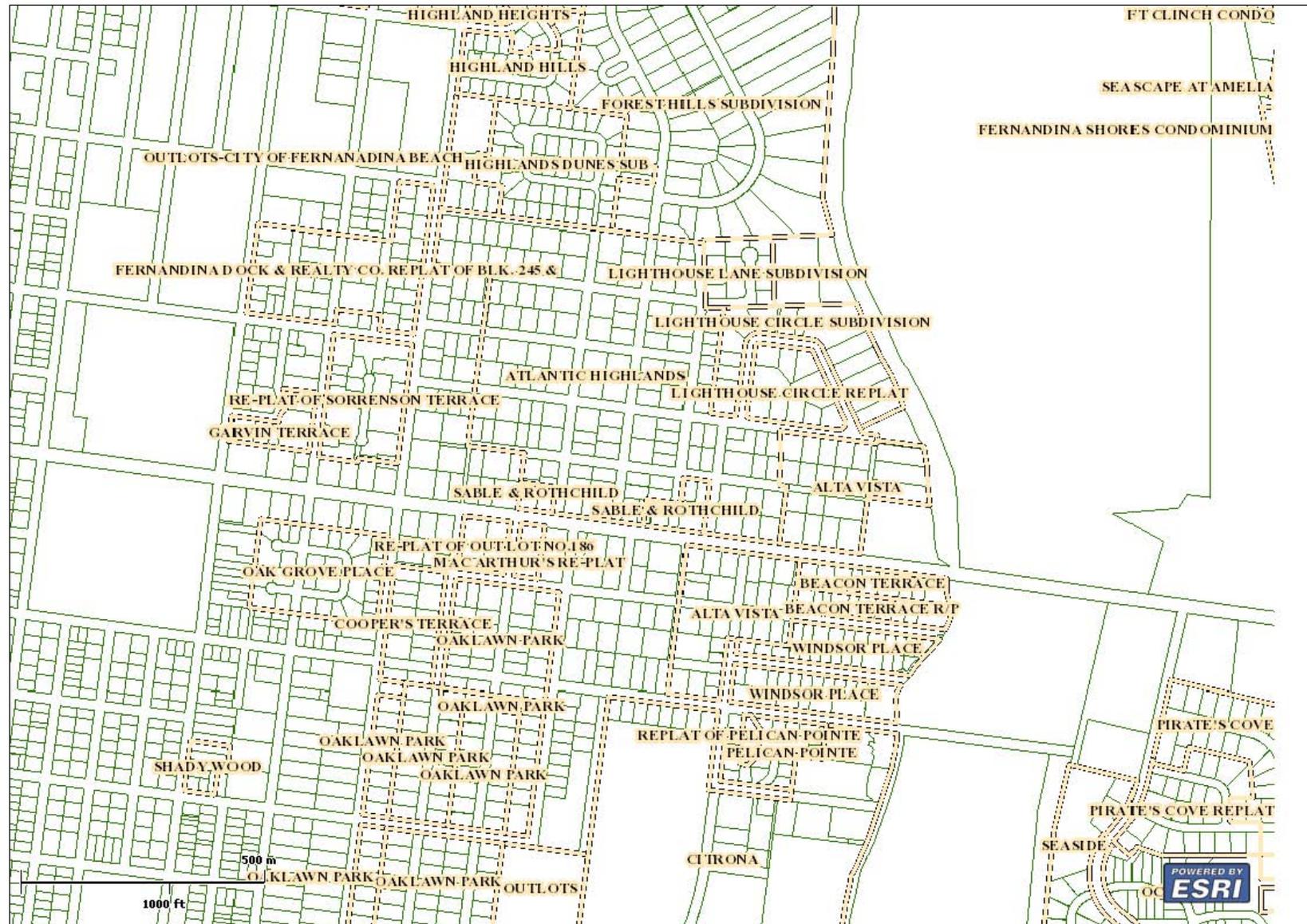


Figure 135: Plat Map Outlines showing the large numbers of subdivisions platted within the southern portion of the Neighborhood Planning Area