

Chapter 8: BEACH SOUTH OF ATLANTIC AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING AREA ANALYSIS

The Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area includes the parcels adjacent to S Fletcher Avenue from Atlantic Avenue to the southern City limits, as illustrated on Figure 167 and Figure 168. 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. This area is similar in character to the Beach North of Atlantic Neighborhood Planning Area, and one of the main characteristics which differentiates it is that the majority of the Neighborhood Planning Area consists of residences set along one major north-south street, rather than east-west blocks of development.

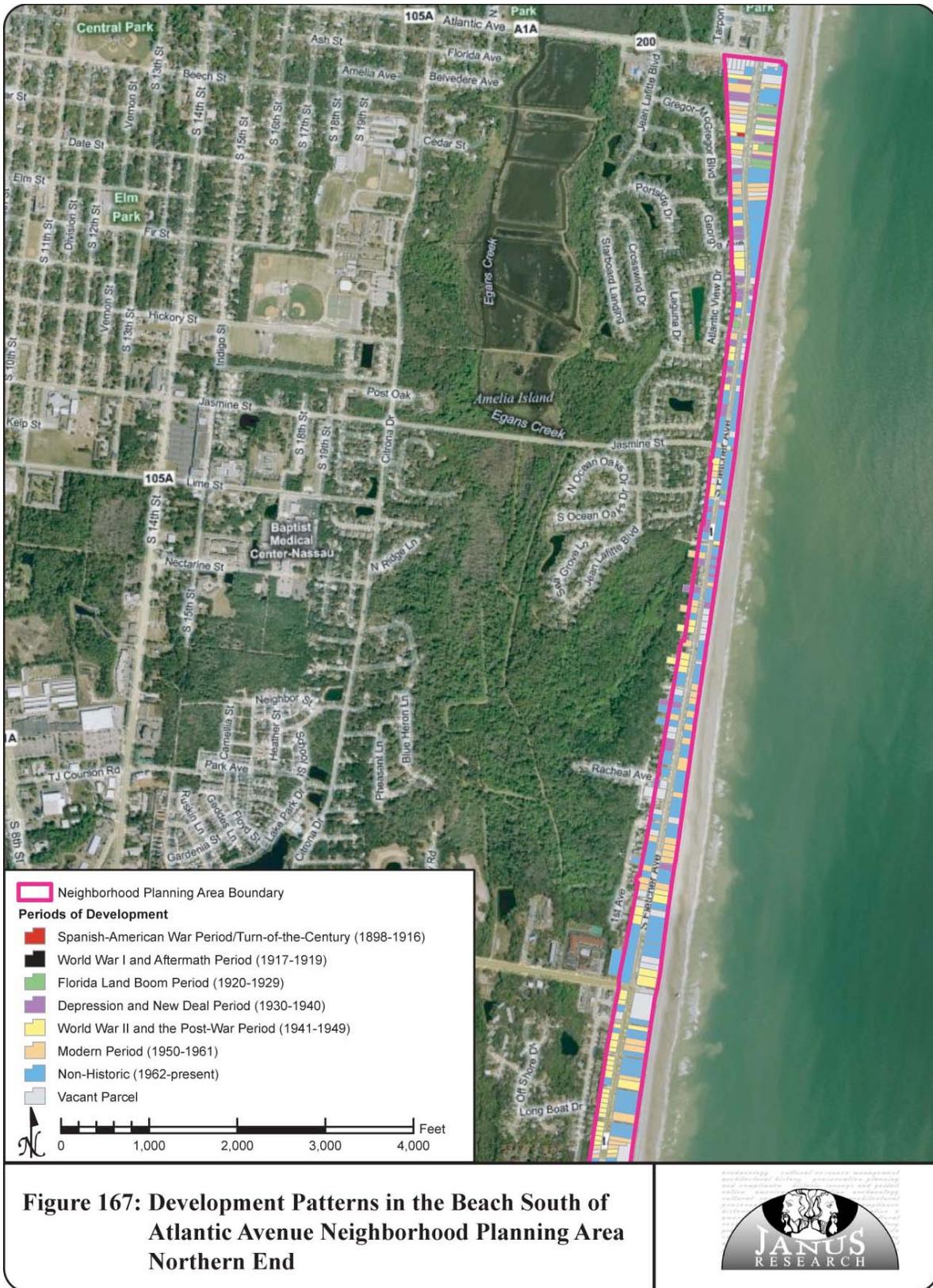
- *Height/stories* – The structures vary in height from one to three stories throughout the Neighborhood Planning Area. The earlier structures are typically lower in height and the later historic and non-historic are higher. Like the Beach North of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, it is a rare remaining portion of Florida's oceanfront development of such a low scale, which gives it a unique sense of place.
- *Porch enclosures* – Structures within the Neighborhood Planning Area typically have a porch which faces the ocean. These vary in size and form, and although some have screened or other enclosures the majority are open wooden porches with simple rails. They are most commonly located on the second story of the structures, but there are some first story and multi-level porches.
- *Landscaping* – Like the Beach North of Atlantic Avenue, this Neighborhood Planning Area has a low level of landscaping, contrasting with the majority of the historic development within the City. The landscaping which is present is natural and consists primarily of grasses which occupy both vacant and built lots, and palm trees on some of the built lots. It does not have the heavily wooded and greened lots found throughout the majority of the other Neighborhood Planning Areas.

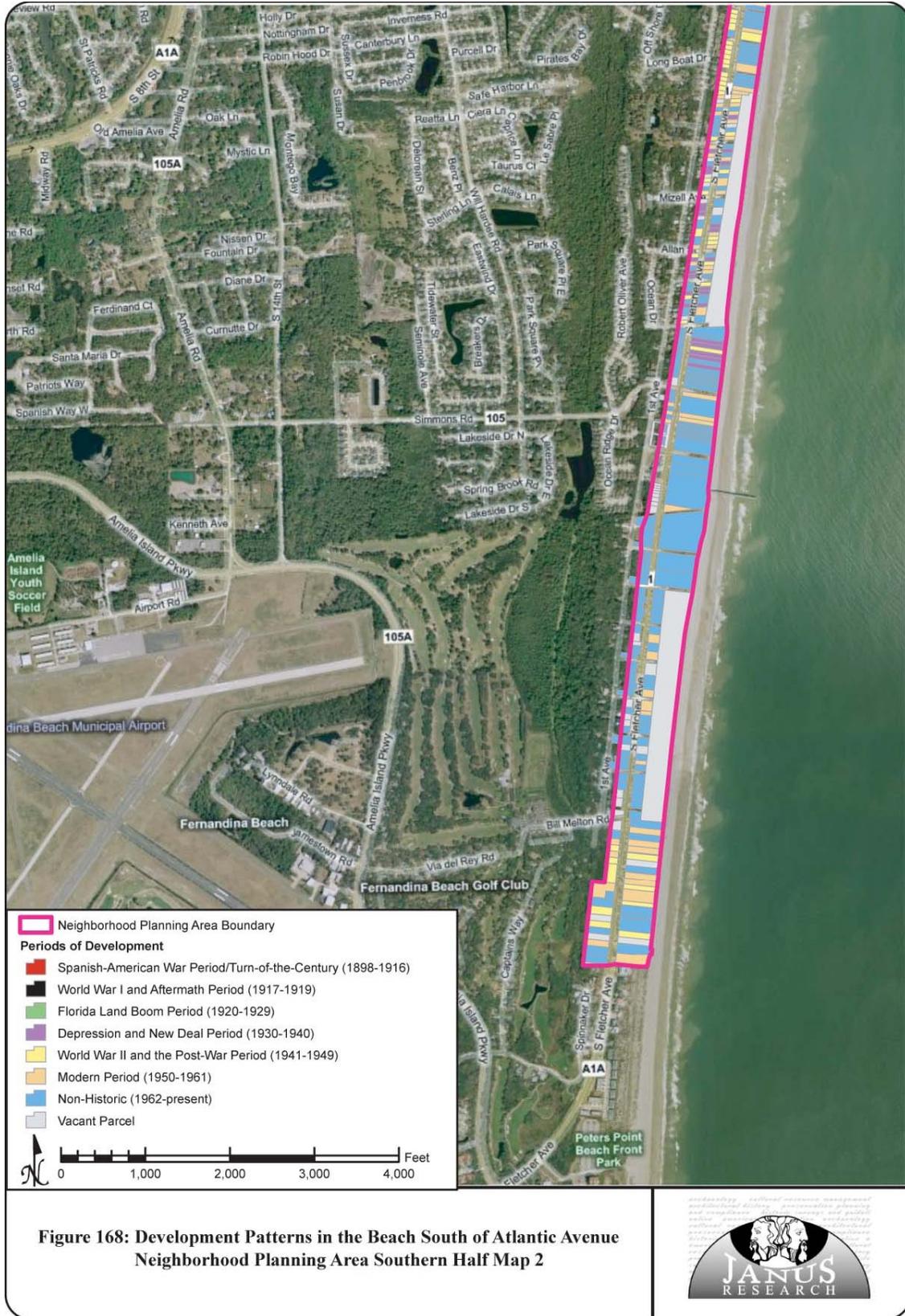
History and Development Patterns

The development patterns of the historic resources in the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue area are illustrated in Table 7. The six historic development 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 7: Development Patterns of Resources within the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue
Neighborhood Planning Area**

Periods of Development	Number of Parcels
Spanish-American War Period/Turn-of-the-Century (1898-1916)	1
World War I and Aftermath Period (1917-1919)	0
Florida Land Boom Period (1920-1929)	10
Depression and New Deal Period (1930-1940)	51
World War II and Post-War Period (1941-1949)	75
Modern Period (1950-1961)	89
Non-Historic (Post 1961)	665





The Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area follows the same general developmental history that is included on pages 133-136 for the Beach North of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area. It contains one early resource, 185 S Fletcher Avenue, which dates to 1900. Scattered development occurred during the 1920s while the majority of the land on the beach was government owned. Development during the 1920s was primarily simple, Frame Vernacular structures located just south of Atlantic Avenue, at the north end of the Neighborhood Planning Area.

The construction of the mills in the 1930s brought a new wave of construction which continued steadily through the subsequent decades to meet the area's expanding population. Fletcher Avenue originally only extended through the 1900 block (just north of Sadler Road), and was expanded during the 1940s, when the Navy bought land to build the airport as a training field for navy pilots (Spring 1996). The airfield blocked the existing route to the south of the island so Fletcher was extended to provide a new route. Review of available City Directories from the later 1950s shows that the residents had a variety of professions and employers including city firefighter, Container Corporation, painter, salesman, electrician, meat counter at Lowe's grocery, field manager for Glidden Co., storeman, clerk, electrician, US Army Corps of Engineers, farmer, mechanic, state roads department, teacher, chemist, mechanic, Buccaneer Pontiac, shrimper, lab tech, ironworker, pilot, nurse, millwright, broker, city building inspector, chemist, deputy county sheriff, superintendent City Sanitary and Street Department, and manager of Nassau Building and Supply.

Many lots in the area remained undeveloped as late as 1960, as illustrated in Figure 169 and Figure 171. Today, new construction combined with demolition has resulted in over three times as many non-historic structures than historic structures located within the Neighborhood Planning Area.



Figure 169: 1960 Aerial Photograph showing the layout and low level of development of the Northern Portion of the Beach 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>*

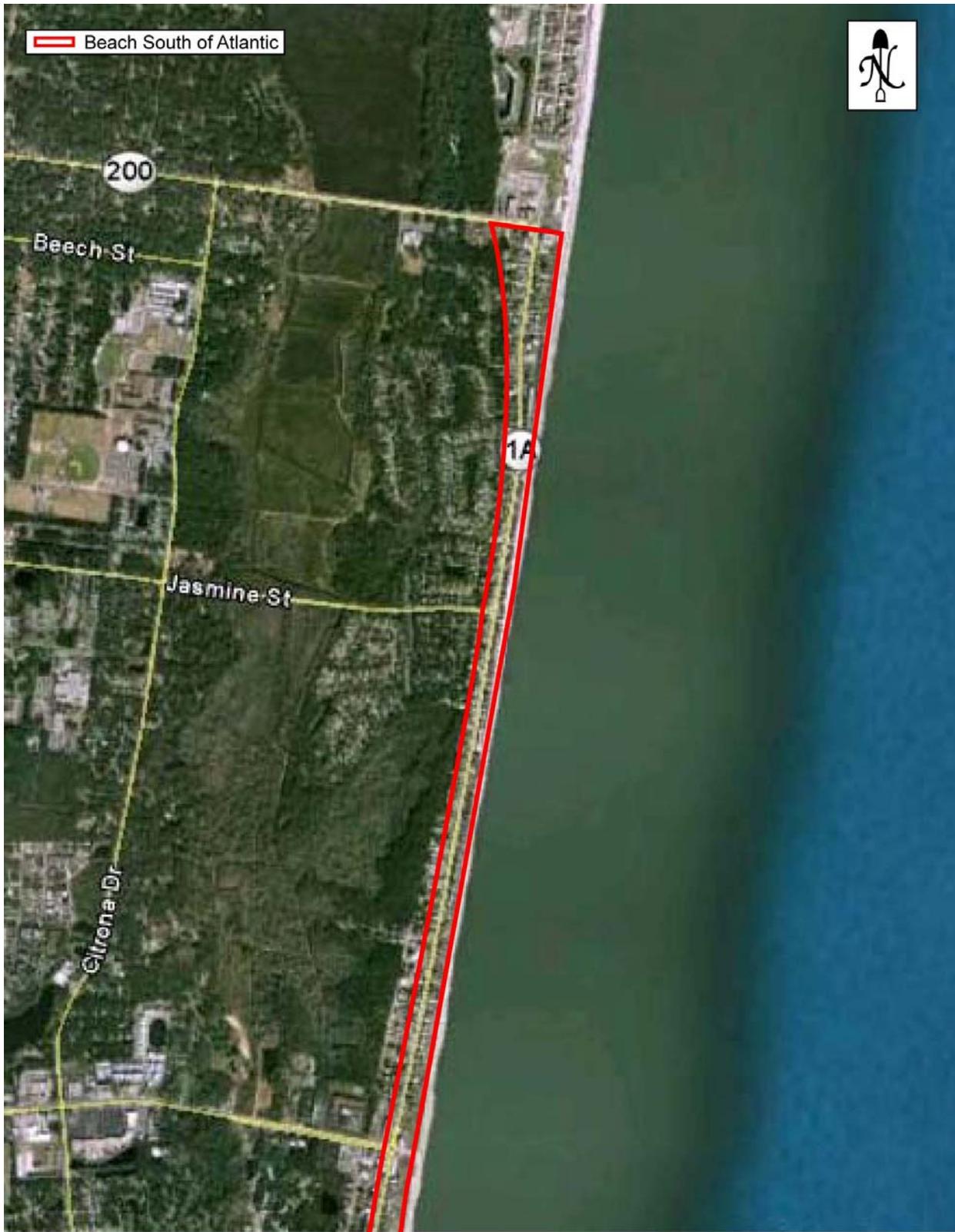


Figure 170: Current Aerial Photograph for Comparison with Figure 169



Figure 171: 1960 Aerial Photograph showing the layout and low level of development of the Southern Portion of the Beach 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>*

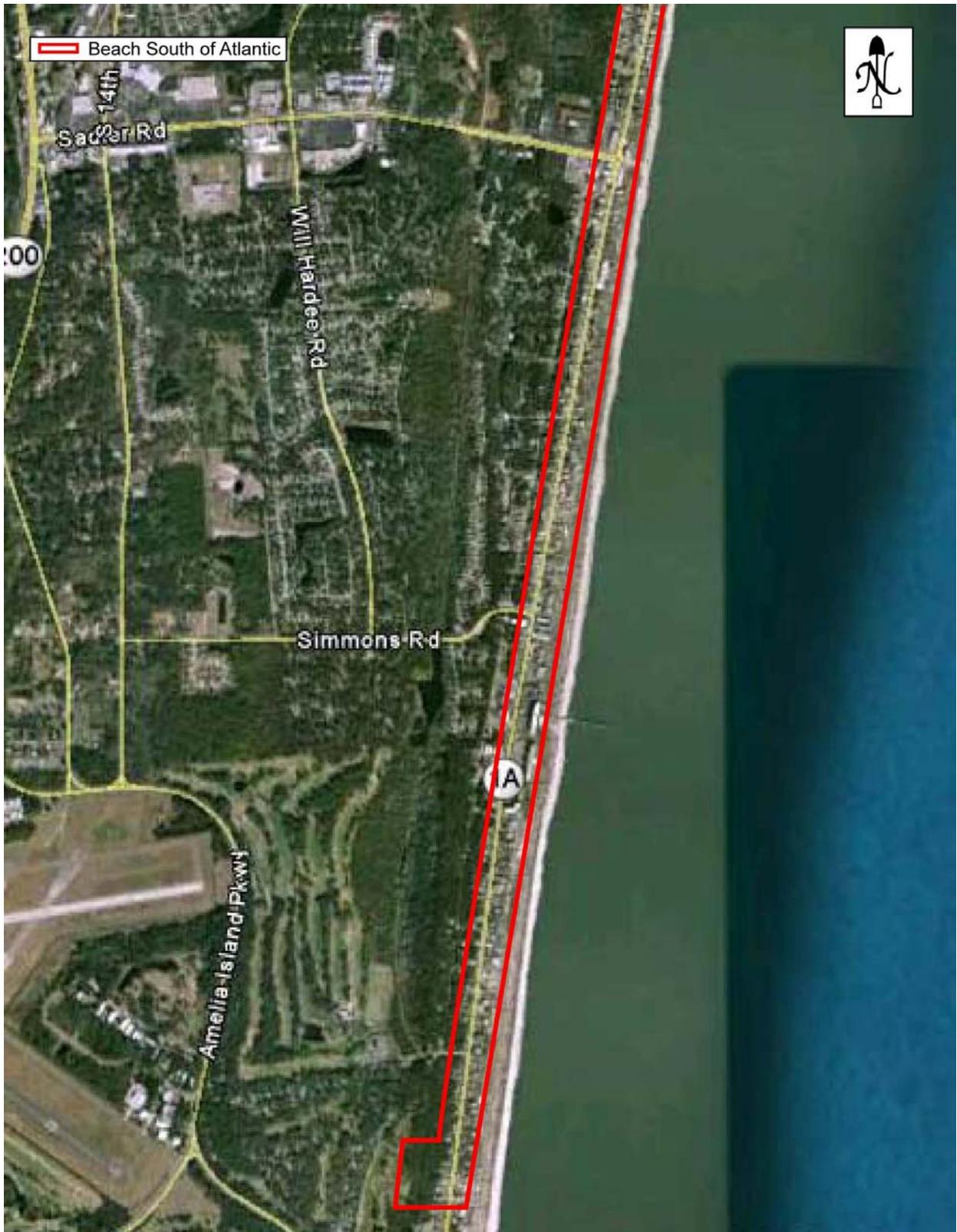


Figure 172: Current Aerial Photograph for Comparison with Figure 171

Character Defining Features

Land use

Land use is primarily single-family residential, with some multi-family, hotel, and commercial uses (Figure 173-Figure 176). There are some vacant lots throughout the Neighborhood Planning Area.



Figure 173: Typical Single Family Residences in the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, S Fletcher Avenue, facing southeast from 224 S Fletcher Avenue



Figure 174: Typical Single Family Residences in the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, S Fletcher Avenue, facing southeast from 707 S Fletcher Avenue



Figure 175: Typical Single Family Residences in the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, S Fletcher Avenue, facing southeast from 1676 S Fletcher Avenue



Figure 176: Typical Multi-Family Residential Development in the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, S Fletcher Avenue, facing northeast at 3200 S Fletcher Avenue

Height/stories

The structure heights vary and are primarily one to three stories throughout the Neighborhood Planning Area. The earlier structures are typically one to two stories in height and the later historic and non-historic are two to three.

Setbacks

Setbacks vary throughout the entire area with some residences set closer to the street and others have slightly larger setbacks (Figure 177 and Figure 178).



Figure 177: View of Varied Setbacks in the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, S Fletcher Avenue, facing east at 190 S Fletcher Avenue



Figure 178: View of Varied Setbacks in the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, S Fletcher Avenue, facing southeast at 56 S Fletcher Avenue

Density

The overall density throughout the Neighborhood Planning Area is low as the area consists primarily of low rise single family development, and some vacant lots are present throughout.

Building materials

Residences in the neighborhood are of concrete block and wood frame construction. The exterior fabric of the structures includes primarily stucco, weatherboard, shingles, and metal or vinyl siding.

Garage entrances

The majority of the garages throughout the Neighborhood Planning Area are integral one and two car garages (Figure 179 and Figure 180).



Figure 179: Typical Residence with Integral One-Car Garage, 707 S Fletcher Avenue, facing west



Figure 180: Typical Residences with Integral Two-Car Garages, S Fletcher Avenue, facing northeast from 982 S Fletcher Avenue

Porch enclosures

The majority of the porches within the Neighborhood Planning Area are open wooden porches with simple rails (Figure 181-Figure 183). They are most commonly located on the second story of the structures, but there are some first story porches. Enclosed and screened porches are less common within the Neighborhood Planning Area.



Figure 181: Representative View of Wooden Porches with Simple Rails in the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, S Fletcher Avenue, facing southwest from 982 S Fletcher Avenue



Figure 182: Representative View of Wooden Porch with Simple Rails in the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 46-57 S Fletcher Avenue Unit A2, facing southwest



Figure 183: Representative View of Wooden Porch with Simple Rails in the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 521 S Fletcher Avenue, facing west

Fences and walls

The majority of the structures within the neighborhood do not have fences or walls, but there are some small wooden fences as illustrated in Figure 183, above. Existing fences and walls are typically low and delineate the property line rather than provide privacy.

Scale

Residences throughout the Neighborhood Planning Area greatly vary in scale from modest one-story single family structures to larger multi-story and multi-family structures. A random sampling of 20 structures was selected to determine an approximate average square footage for the Neighborhood Planning Area. The approximate average is 1983 square feet.

Floor area ratio

The floor area ratio of the structures is varied, but is typically low as they are primarily low rise structures which do not cover the entire lot.

Lot coverage

Lot coverage in the neighborhood is varied. It appears to range from approximately 25% to 75% with the majority of the houses having a small yard/green space.

Street patterns and widths

There is one major north-south roadway throughout the Neighborhood Planning Area, S Fletcher Avenue, which has a relatively uniform width throughout the area. The layout of the streets is evident on Figure 167 and Figure 168 on pages 161 and 162, and typical views of the streetscape are included in Figure 184-Figure 186.



Figure 184: Representative View of Street within the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, S Fletcher Avenue, facing southeast from the Elizabeth Pointe Lodge at 98 S Fletcher Avenue



Figure 185: Representative View of Street within the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, S Fletcher Avenue, facing south from 508 S Fletcher Avenue



Figure 186: Representative View of Street within the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, S Fletcher Avenue, facing south from south of New York Avenue

Accessory structures

Accessory structures are uncommon within the Neighborhood Planning Area.

Architectural styles

Architectural styles include primarily Frame Vernacular (Figure 187 and Figure 188) and Masonry Vernacular (Figure 189 and Figure 190) residences.



Figure 187: Representative Photo of Frame Vernacular Residence within the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 748 S Fletcher Avenue, facing west



Figure 188: Representative Photo of Frame Vernacular Residence within the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 46-57 S Fletcher Avenue Unit B2, facing southwest



Figure 189: Representative Photo of Masonry Vernacular Residence within the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 2734 S Fletcher Avenue, facing east



Figure 190: Representative Photo of Masonry Vernacular Residence within the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, 1255 S Fletcher Avenue, facing west

Spatial relationships

The structures are typically oriented to the ocean and their designs allow for views and access to the beach. S Fletcher Avenue is a major thoroughfare through the Neighborhood Planning Area.

Sidewalks and landscaping

There are sidewalks along the west side of S Fletcher Avenue throughout the majority of the northern portion of the Neighborhood Planning Area. They are located immediately at the edge of the roadway pavement. The landscaping is natural rather than manicured. It is generally of a lower level than in the western portion of the City, as illustrated by the photos throughout this section of the report. It consists primarily of grasses on both the built and vacant lots, and palm trees on the built lots.

Massing

The residences are most commonly rectangular in form; however, there are some irregular forms present.

Roof line and pitch

The majority of the residences feature gable roofs; however, there are some hip, flat, and gambrel roof structures (Figure 191-Figure 193). The pitch varies but is typically moderate.



Figure 191: Representative View of Residence with a Hip Roof, 583 S Fletcher Avenue, facing southwest



Figure 192: Representative View of Residences with Hip and Gable Roofs, S Fletcher Avenue, facing southwest at 528 S Fletcher Avenue



Figure 193: Representative View of Residences with Hip and Gable Roofs, S Fletcher Avenue, facing southeast at 212 S Fletcher Avenue

Lot size and width

The lot size and width varies throughout the neighborhood as illustrated on Figure 167 and Figure 168 on pages 161 and 162. The average lot size within the Neighborhood Planning Area is 1.426 acres, according to the records of the Nassau County Property Appraiser.

Elevation features

The elevation features vary, but the majority of the residences feature windows facing the ocean. Many feature porches of various sizes and stories 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 although there are some unpaved driveways (Figure 194).



Figure 194: Representative View of Driveways, S Fletcher Avenue, facing northwest at 1255 S Fletcher Avenue

Doors and windows

The doors and windows vary throughout the neighborhood and many structures feature replacement windows and doors. The primary window type is metal single hung sash with a variety of light configurations.

Building orientation

Residences are typically set parallel to the roadway.

Trees and shrubbery

The streets within the Neighborhood Planning Area are not lined with trees and the trees which exist throughout the Neighborhood Planning Area typically do not provide a large amount of shade or cover, as illustrated by the photos throughout this section of the report.

Topography

The Neighborhood Planning Area's topography is primarily flat and even with sand dunes and more built up land at the east, providing a buffer form the beach and ocean.

Recommendations

It is the evaluation of Janus Research that the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area is not eligible for designation as a local or National Register historic district. The historic resources throughout the Neighborhood Planning Area have undergone a high level of alterations and there are many non-historic structures throughout, as illustrated on Figure 167 and Figure 168 on pages 161 and 162. Only 25% of the structures within the Neighborhood Planning Area are historic and could be potentially contributing to a historic district and, as previously indicated, many of these structures have undergone substantial alterations.

Similar to the Beach North of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area, the Beach South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Area's development is unique for its small scale. Thus, it faces similar threats due to modern regulations for beachfront construction, as described on pages 148-149.

It is recommended that the Beach North and South of Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood Planning Areas be treated in a similar manner for future work which should focus on documentation and recognition of the area's history. The Neighborhood Planning Area is considered of high priority for future survey efforts in Fernandina Beach. Survey efforts will identify those structures which do retain adequate historic integrity for local historic designation or listing in the National Register. 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. A documentation project should also focus on raising public awareness of the history of the beach and its significance. This could be done through creation of an exhibit, a brochure and tour highlighting the remaining significant structures, and an oral history project to document recollections of the beach throughout history.