NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90

4516

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

RECEIVED
SEP 4 2019
Natl. Reg. of Historic Places
National Park Service

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville

other names/site number DU21853

2. Location

street & number 7405 Arlington Expressway ☐ not for publication

city or town Jacksonville ☐ vicinity

state Florida code FL county Duval code _____ zip code 32212

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Alissa Lotane, Deputy SHPO 8/22/19
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

_____
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

_____
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☑ entered in the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

10.15.2019

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
- ☐ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ buildings
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
5	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
1	0	objects
6	1	total

Name of related multiple property listings
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility
RELIGION: church school

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility
RELIGION: church school

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Organic

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls CONCRETE BLOCK
WOOD
roof WOOD
other GLASS

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☒ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL HISTORY
ARCHITECTURE
ART

Period of Significance

1966-1970

Significant Dates

1966

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Broward, Robert C., architect
Wood, Memphis, artist

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
_____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record
_____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State Agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other
Name of Repository
Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property roughly 2.2 acres

UTM References
(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	444154	3355297
2			
3			
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Andrew Waber, Historic Preservationist

organization Florida Division of Historical Resources date May 2019

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6430

city or town Tallahassee state FL zip code 32399

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items
(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville, Inc.

street & number 7405 Arlington Expressway telephone (904) 725-8133

city or town Jacksonville state FL zip code 32212

Summary

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville is a complex of five buildings connected by a series of covered walkways and platforms. The complex was designed between 1966 and 1968 by the renowned local architect Robert C. Broward, a protégé of Frank Lloyd Wright. It features a sanctuary, a north and south wing used for classrooms, and two smaller buildings used for offices and meeting spaces. All of the buildings feature a complex use of concrete block, wood, and glass. The centerpiece of the complex is the elaborate sanctuary. The exterior features a distinctive use of concrete block, particularly with buttresses and a chimney along the west elevation of the building. The roof is also distinctive, featuring a combination flat and gabled roof that does not fully enclose at the ridge. A line of glass skylights forms the ridge, providing natural sunlight into the hall below. The roof is topped by a stripped-down stylized steeple, which is a simple bell tower covered by a three-sided wood shingle roof and connected to the roof via four exposed steel posts. The interior of the hall is a single large open space that is one-story in height on the north and south sides but reaches to the full height of building in the center. Wood and glass are heavily used on the interior, particularly with full-height glass walls on the east and west sides of the room; the curved glass skylight extending across the center; the thick exposed wood beams; and the wood paneling along the ceiling. The chapel has a ground floor and the congregational hall's location on the first floor facing the small body of water on the west side of the property that was intended to give the feeling of free-floating above the ground. The centerpiece of the interior is a large abstract modern tapestry titled *Let There Be Light* designed by noted local artist Memphis Wood. The tapestry was custom-designed for the church, and the space adjacent to the concrete block chimney was intentionally built and set aside for the tapestry. It is considered a contributing object to the nomination. The north and south wings are simple one-story rectangular buildings connected via a covered flat roof walkway. There are also two smaller buildings centrally placed in the complex, the central office and the building that houses the Susan B. Anthony Room. A modern elevator has been installed adjacent to the Susan B. Anthony Room building for ADA accessibility purposes. In addition to the buildings, there is a playground, a wood gazebo, and a wood boardwalk that all postdate the period of significance and are therefore considered non-contributing to the nomination.

Setting

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville is located along the Arlington Expressway service road in the Arlington community, not far from the intersection with Arlington Road. Although the general area around the church has been heavily developed with both commercial and residential construction, special care has been maintained by the congregation to maintain the naturalistic setting of the church lot. The church sits atop the west bank of Red Bay Branch, a small tributary of Strawberry Creek, which in turn is a tributary of the Arlington River to the south. The lot on which the church stands remains wooded.

The architect Robert C. Broward was a student of Frank Lloyd Wright who studied at both Taliesin West and Taliesin East. True to his training, Broward carefully crafted the building to the surrounding environment. He even designed the church to be built without cutting down any trees on the site. Hence, for this building, the setting is crucial and has been maintained, as the adjacent Arlington Expressway is barely visible from the church grounds.

Physical Description

The Unitarian Universalist Church consists of a five-building complex sited and joined together as a single entity through covered walkways and platforms. The complex includes the chapel, north and south wing buildings, the office building, and a small building housing the Susan B. Anthony Room.

Chapel Exterior

The centerpiece of the complex is the chapel (Photos 1-4). It is a multi-story building consisting of a first floor and a ground floor. The building is constructed with concrete block, glass, and wood. The exterior of the chapel features a prominent concrete block chimney, stylized concrete block buttresses, and cantilevered spaces on the first story (Photo 5). The chapel features a complex roof, with a combination flat and steeply pitched A-frame roof that does not fully enclose at the ridge. Instead, curved skylight extend along the ridgeline of the roof, which, along with the prominent fixed glass windows on the east and west elevations, give the building an open-ended look. The church features a character-defining stylized steeple, which extends from the roof (Photo 6). The steeple features a small bell covered by a wood shingle shelter and connected to the roof via four metal posts. A small hole was cut into the roof to allow for a rope connecting to the bell to be controlled from the inside.

Chapel First Floor

The chapel's interior has two floors. The first floor serves as the gathering place for religious services while the ground floor functions as a kitchen and general social hall. The first floor interior is a single, open space that features heavy usage of wood, most notably in the large exposed beams and the wood paneling seen in the ceiling (Photos 7-8). The spatial dimension of this area is complex, with a simple one-story high flat ceiling along the north and south sides of the space while the center of the ceiling is curved and reaches the full height of the building. A curved skylight runs through the center, providing much natural sunlight into the room (Photo 9). The centerpiece of this space is a large full-height tapestry titled *Let There Be Light*, which was designed by noted local artist Memphis Wood (Photos 10-11). The tapestry, which is considered a contributing object, was custom-designed for the church and the interior of the church was designed with the tapestry taken into account. The tapestry fronts the space where the concrete block chimney is located on the west side of the chapel. Also on this end is a dais and two alcoves, one that functions as the pastor's entryway into the church, and the other

that functions as the organ space for music during the service. These alcoves extend out from the building as cantilevered rooms (Photos 12-13). There are also large fixed glass windows on the rear of the space, which allows for complete visibility through the center of the building and gives the chapel an open-ended appearance (Photo 14).

Chapel Ground Floor

The ground floor of the chapel is the social hall, which has three primary spaces: the social hall, dining room, and kitchen (Photos 15-17). The relative lack of adornment in this space reflects its largely utilitarian purpose, with drop ceilings, linoleum tile flooring, and either wood paneling or exposed concrete block walls. The most distinctive element in this space is the prominent concrete block fireplace which features a quote from Frank Lloyd Wright inscribed on it: “What a man does, that he has.” The west wall is composed mostly of glass, with metal glass doors and large metal fixed windows that gives the space an open view of the Red Bay Branch. The fixtures in the kitchen have been largely replaced, but the space is retained and there is still a distinctive wood light covering in the center of the ceiling.

North and South Wing

The north and south wings of the complex function primarily as classroom spaces for both youth and adult education (Photos 18-19). There are some exceptions to this, however. On the west end of the south wing is the Duncan Fletcher Room, which is a single open space used as a boardroom for administrative meetings (Photo 20). On the west end of the north wing, there are men’s and women’s public bathrooms. The classrooms are named after prominent historical figures such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Charles Darwin, and are arranged alphabetically (Photos 21-24). Both buildings are one-story in height with overhanging flat roofs that also function as walkway shelters (Photos 25-26). There are some key design differences between the two wings. The south wall of the south wing, which faces the Arlington Expressway service road, is a solid wall with no glass. The north wing, on the other hand, makes free use of glass on both the north and south sides of the building. When originally built in 1966, the south wing had sliding glass doors accessing its interiors, which was quickly determined to be inconvenient for classroom use (Photo 27). When the north wing was completed in 1968, also by Broward, the sliding glass doors on the south wing were partially infilled with conventional wood single doors. The buildings currently reflect the 1968 design by Broward.

Both buildings also have ground floor spaces. The south wing ground floor room, known historically as the Meditation Room, currently functions as a supply closet (Photo 28). Historically, a Buddhist monk lived here. On the north wing, the ground floor room was used historically as the caretaker’s residence (Photo 29).

Pastor's Office and Susan B. Anthony Room Buildings

One of the primary entrances into the complex is via a large exterior wooden staircase that leads to a platform and exterior walkway running between the Susan B. Anthony Room building and the north wing (Photo 30). There is a second walkway running along the south end of the north wing that separates the pastor's office building from the north wing. The pastor's office building is a simple square space with two offices and a small corridor faced primarily with glass (Photo 31). This space historically and currently serves as the office for the church's pastor. To the west of the north wing, separated by a walkway, is the small building which houses the Susan B. Anthony Room (Photo 32). A wood deck overlooking Red Bay Branch extends from the west side of this building and an exterior elevator was added to the north side of the building for ADA accessibility reasons (Photo 33). The Susan B. Anthony Room functions as a meeting room space.

Non-Contributing Resources

There are three non-contributing elements: a wood garden structure consisting of a bench and trellises, a memorial garden, and a playground, that all postdate the period of significance and are therefore considered non-contributing (Photos 34-35).

Alterations

There have been a few changes to the complex of buildings since their initial construction. When originally constructed in 1966, the south wing classrooms had sliding glass doors. Due to their inconvenience, the doors were partially infilled when the north wing was finished by Broward in 1968. This change took place during the period of significance and is a historic alteration. In the kitchen located on the ground floor of the chapel, the countertops and appliances have been replaced and modernized. Sometime after the period of significance, there was an exterior elevator added next to the building that includes the Susan B. Anthony Room. Due to deterioration, some of the wood used in the walkways have been replaced.

Integrity

The building complex is still in its original location near the Arlington Expressway. Over the years, the congregation has maintained the wooded surroundings of the lot and the buildings are still in a spot overlooking the Red Bay Branch. Hence, the complex retains its integrity of location, setting, and association. Although there have been some changes to the buildings, many of the character-defining features of the complex have been retained, including the distinctive chapel with its complex roof system, bell tower/steeple, cantilevered spaces, and stylized concrete block buttresses and chimney. The interior of the chapel, which is the most important interior space in the complex, also retains its integrity, including the thick exposed beams, multi-

height ceiling, alcoves, and full-height tapestry custom-made for the church. The north and south wings all maintain their historic 1968 design and appearance as do the office and Susan B. Anthony Room buildings. The complex system of covered walkways and platforms physically and visually connecting the entire complex have been maintained. The buildings also retain their original concrete block, wood, and glass construction. There has been an elevator installed adjacent to the Susan B. Anthony Room building due to ADA accessibility issues. This elevator has been installed in a manner which does not detract visually from the complex, however. Hence, the church complex retains its integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling.

Summary

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville is being proposed for listing at the local level under Criterion A for Social History, and Criterion C for Architecture and Art. The period of significance extends from 1966 to 1970. The church building is the first in the city of Jacksonville constructed specifically for a Unitarian Universalist church (UUC). The UUC Jacksonville congregation has served as the mother church for a number of other UUC congregations in northeast Florida, including the Buckman Bridge UUC and the UUC congregations in St. Augustine and Fernandina. Originally known as the Unitarian Fellowship of Jacksonville following its reestablishment in 1950, the congregation quickly stood out for its liberal teachings and its integrated body was deemed anathema in what was a strongly conservative city. The Reverend Charles W. McGehee, who was named minister of the church in 1960, was one of the most visible and outspoken white leaders of the Civil Rights movement in the community.

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville is considered one of the hallmark designs of noted local architect Robert C. Broward. The church is a locally significant example of Organic Style architecture, which is best embodied in the close interaction between the building and the site; the usage of natural colors and the expression of materials through the use of unpainted Ocala block and wood; the opening up of interior spaces through the use of glass walls and transoms; and the use of non-traditional organic shapes. The church complex was recognized as a significant design almost immediately, receiving an Award of Merit from the Florida Association of Architects in 1967, a Merit Award from the Jacksonville Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1976, and the first ever Test of Time Award by the Jacksonville AIA Chapter in 1991. In 2018, the University of Florida named the UUC of Jacksonville as one of the 50 Flagship Structures that "represent the character and scope of mid-century modern architecture in Florida."[1] The church is also locally significant for Art. The centerpiece of the chapel's interior is a large-full height fine art tapestry designed by noted local artist Memphis Wood. It is an excellent example of a fine art textile from the 1960s, an era when modern art was expanding into alternative mediums and fiber artists were creating textiles as artistic centerpieces. The work, which was custom-designed for the church, is an unusual syncretization of fiber art and architecture. The tapestry was custom-designed for the church and the interior space was designed and set aside for the tapestry. Known as "Jacksonville's First Lady of Art," Wood was a fixture in the local art scene who was known particularly for her work in textiles. The UUC tapestry is one of her most significant and well-regarded commissions.

[1] University of Florida, "Florida's Mid-Century Modern Architecture (1945-1975): A Survey of the Modern Structures, Architects, and Design Trends of the Sunshine State," (Gainesville, FL, October 2018), p. 109.

Historical Context – History of Unitarianism and Universalism

Although Unitarian Universalism as it is practiced today adheres to no formal religious framework, the two foundational churches, the American Unitarian Association (AUA) and the Universalist Church of America (UCA), have their origins in liberal Protestant Christian theology. In fact, the term "Unitarian" is a Christian concept. A key tenant of Unitarian Christian thought is the denial of the Trinity, which is the belief that God, the Holy Spirit, and the Jesus are three distinct persons but one being or essence. The Unitarians also crucially deny the divinity of Christ. An important idea within Universalism as was originally practiced by the Universalist Church of America was the belief in universal salvation and the lack of belief in eternal damnation by God. Although the general schools of thought guiding their theology can be traced back much further in Europe, both have their origins in the United States in the 18th century. Universalism in the US began in the Mid-Atlantic area, particularly Pennsylvania, while Unitarianism in the US originated from the Congregationalist traditions of New England. Both congregations grew during the Second Great Awakening, which was a religious movement that swept through the country in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, although the Universalists were more evangelical and hence were more widespread by the 19th century. At its height, Universalism was the ninth largest Christian denomination in the United States. Although not as widespread as Universalists, the Unitarians had a strong following amongst the educated classes of New England. Harvard became an important center of Unitarian thought at this time. The Unitarian Church was well known for its close association with the Transcendentalist Movement in the early 19th century. Some of the leading transcendentalists came from the Unitarian church, including Ralph Waldo Emerson, who was a former Unitarian minister. Both congregations also gained liberal reputations and counted among their membership some of the great reformers of the 19th century, including William Lloyd Garrison, Horace Mann, Clara Barton, Dorothea Dix, Susan B. Anthony, and Julia Ward Howe, among others.[2]

Although the founding theological principles of the Unitarians and Universalists were different, both denominations soon followed similar paths. The advancement of science and the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origins of Species* led to a growing degree of rationalism and skepticism within the churches. The Universalist belief in the spiritual equality of all men and women and the belief in universal salvation gradually drew them into social causes and into a more liberal line of thinking. This was not done without resistance, however. In the 1870s, a conservative backlash within the Universalist church led to a more stringent control over theology, mandating the acceptance of certain beliefs by ministers and eliminating the "liberty clause."[3] In 1899, the church passed the Boston Declaration, which restored the "liberty clause."

[2] Christian Universalist Association, "What is the Difference between Christian Universalism and Unitarian Universalism?" https://christianuniversalist.org/resources/articles/unitarian/; Andrew Greenwood and Mark W. Harris, *An Introduction to the Unitarian and Universalist Traditions* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

[3] The "liberty cause" was a foundational concept of Universalism, which granted individual churches the right to issue additional articles of faith provided they did not contradict the three basic articles laid out in the 1803 Winchester Profession of Faith.

Much like the Unitarians, the Universalists were also heavily involved in the Social Gospel Movement and in fact the two denominations often combined their efforts. In 1917, the Universalist Church of America issued its Declaration of Social Principles and Social Program. Echoing a sentiment shared with Unitarians, the Universalists rejected the idea of original sin, stating that they "… denounce as superstition the teaching that men are led into sin by inherent depravity as by devils of an unseen world; but we hold it to be self-evident that mankind is led into sin by evil surroundings, by the evils of unjust social and economic conditions, which condemn one to be born in the squalor and filth of the slums and another amidst the equally demoralizing influences of unearned luxury."[4]

By the 1920s and 1930s, humanism began to grow within the Unitarian and Universalist churches. The core of humanist belief, as defined by the American Humanist Association, is "a worldview which says that reason and science are the best ways to understand the world around us, and that dignity and compassion should be the basis for how you act toward someone else."[5] In many ways, these tenets had been practiced or advocated by Unitarians and Universalists for years, in a form often referred to as religious or Christian humanism. What differed was the nontheistic basis of humanism. By the 1920s, Unitarians in particular were at the forefront of humanist thought. In 1927, a group of Unitarian students and professors from the University of Chicago established the Humanist Fellowship and began publishing the *New Humanist* magazine. Charles Francis Potter, a Unitarian minister, established the First Humanist Society of New York. In 1933, a group of 34 intellectuals, including prominent Unitarians such as Lester Mondale and Raymond Bragg, were signatories to the first Humanist Manifesto. Considered a milestone in the history of the modern humanist movement, it established a 15-point statement of beliefs that clarified the core concepts of modern humanism. In 1941, two Unitarian ministers, Curtis W. Reese and John H. Dietrich, formed the American Humanist Association (AHA).[6]

The infusion of humanism into the Unitarian and Universalist churches had a transformative influence upon both denominations. The Christian principles upon which both denominations were founded were largely replaced by the larger principles of secular humanism. Both churches began accepting atheists, agnostics, and non-Christians into their membership. The churches had by now become more of an embodiment of the Ethical societies established by Felix Adler in the previous century. The bond between the Unitarians and Universalists became stronger in the 1940s after a formal attempt by the Universalists to gain mainstream recognition by joining the Federal Council of Churches failed. They officially changed their name from the General Convention of Universalists to the Universalist Church of America. Much as they were before, the

[4] Universalist Church of America, "A Declaration of Social Principles," https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.uuma.org/resource/collection/9DC33407-5764-418F-9A5C-F22E1012A3C0/A_Declaration_of_Social_Principles.pdf.
[5] American Humanist Association, "Frequently Asked Questions," https://americanhumanist.org/about/faq/.
[6] American Humanist Association, "Our History," https://americanhumanist.org/about/our-history/.

congregations and the clergy were heavily involved in social activism, which was accepted as a central tenet of this humanist religion. This was perhaps most evident during the Civil Rights Era of the 1950s and 1960s, when Unitarians and Universalists were among the most outspoken predominantly white denominations to fully embrace the movement. Hence, when Unitarianism was reestablished in Jacksonville in the 1950s, it was markedly different than that practiced in the early 20th century. Much as in Jacksonville, the congregations in the south tended to be small and faced heavy opposition from the white population around them. Many either faced threats of violence or were directly attacked themselves. The most notable example of this was Rev. James Reeb, a Unitarian Universalist minister who was murdered during the civil rights protests in Selma, Alabama, in 1965.[7]

Unitarianism in Florida

As the Unitarian church was a liberal congregation with its origins in New England and was strongly associated with the abolitionist cause, it saw very limited growth in the South for most of the 19th century. Its development in the state of Florida was virtually nonexistent for most of the 19th century. To tend to the scattered Unitarians and promote the denomination, the AUA assigned a single circuit rider, the Rev. Jonathan C. Gibson, to traverse north Florida and south Georgia. The Rev. Gibson was a Confederate veteran and Alabama native who moved to Florida after the Civil War, where he became a Baptist minister. A contemporary account in 1902 mentioned that Gibson had five or six preaching stations, including at the towns of Bristol and Edwards, Florida. There was an estimated 500 people attending Gibson's services according to an informant, but the accuracy of this number and the total number who actually joined the Unitarian church are unknown. The first Unitarian church founded in the state was in Bristol, which started in 1900. Gibson was later joined by Rev. Francis McHale, who established churches in Mt. Pleasant and Rock Bluffs, Florida. By 1912, there were four Unitarian churches in operation in the state.[8]

Universalism in Florida

Although they were more successful than the Unitarians nationally in the 19th century, the Universalists saw limited development in the south and even more limited development in Florida. The first Universalist church in Florida was founded in Tarpon Springs in 1898, followed by Orlando in 1912 and St. Petersburg in 1914. While the individual churches were usually either officially Unitarian or Universalist, the two denominations often combined their efforts in the state by mutually supporting congregations. This was perhaps most notable in

[7] Greenwood and Harris, p. 105-106, 169-170.
[8] American Unitarian Association, "Jonathan Christopher Gibson," in *Unitarian Yearbook 1913* (Boston, MA: American Unitarian Association, 1913) p. 155-156; American Unitarian Association, "Francis M. McHale," in *Unitarian Yearbook* p. 153; Christian Register Association, "American Unitarian Association," in *the Christian Register* vol. 81, no. 1 (January 2, 1902), p. 4. Christian Register Association, "National Alliance of Unitarian Women," in *The Christian Register* vol. 81, no. 51 (December 18, 1901), p. 497-498.

Jacksonville and St. Petersburg, where both congregations relied on financial support from the Unitarians and Universalists. In St. Petersburg, the Universalist congregation officially changed its name to the United Liberal Church in recognition for its association with both liberal denominations.[9]

Historical Context – Unitarianism in Jacksonville Prior to 1966

The origins of Unitarianism in Jacksonville dates back to the early 20th century. Duncan U. Fletcher, a two-time mayor of Jacksonville and longtime U.S. senator from Florida, helped organize the first Unitarian church in the city and the second in the state. The first meeting of the United Liberal First Unitarian Congregational Society took place in Fletcher's home in 1906. By 1908, thanks in large part to financial support from Fletcher and the American Unitarian Association, a large church edifice was built at the corner of Hogan and Union streets. Fletcher's role within the Unitarian church was fraught with political risks and was often used by his political opponents to attack his character. By the 1920s, Unitarian church membership began to decline as the political environment in the city began to get more conservative. The congregation relied on $300 a year from both the AUA and the Universalist Church of America. Only 19 families remained by 1930, and by 1931, the congregation leased its church building and parsonage. The relocation of Senator Fletcher to Washington, DC, and his death in 1936 was a major blow to the local church. In 1931, both the AUA and the UCA discontinued the $300 stipends to the church. By 1943, when the church building was sold to the Church of the Nazarene, the original incarnation of the Unitarian church in Jacksonville, the United Liberal First Unitarian Congregational Society, ceased to function. In 1944, the Rev. Lon Ray Call stated that there were only five Unitarians remaining in the city.[10]

In 1950, Francis Alberti and his wife Dorcas, who were both natives of New England and devout Unitarians, were responsible for the rejuvenation of the church. Led by the Albertis, a group of 18 people met at the Roosevelt Hotel on West Adams Street and formed the Unitarian Fellowship of Jacksonville. They initially met in the homes of members before meeting at a variety of places, including the Seminole Hotel, the Ahaveth Chesed Jewish synagogue, the Southside Nursery School, and the Jacksonville YWCA. By now, several student ministers who brought with them humanist beliefs began to shape the congregation. The group was evicted from the YWCA after inviting a University of Florida professor to give a presentation on the Kinsey reports.[11] It was the integrated body of the fellowship that generated the most trouble, however. They met at the College of

[9] Unitarian Universalist Church of St. Petersburg, "A Brief History of the Unitarian Universalist Church of St. Petersburg," http://uustpete.org/church-history.
[10] Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville, "Roots to Wings: Our History Our Mission in Northeast Florida 1906-2016" [unpublished manuscript], p. 3-5; Gordon D. Gibson, *Southern Witness: Unitarians and Universalists in the Civil Rights Era* (Boston, MA: Skinner House Books and Unitarian Universalist History and Heritage Society, 2015), p. 87.
[11] These reports, titled *Sexual Behavior of the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior of the Human Female* (1953), take their name from Alfred C. Kinsey, one of the authors. These groundbreaking studies on human sexuality generated a considerable amount of controversy at the time of their publication.

Music at 2004 Herschel Street, where a group of Filipino children were observed in front of the building during one of their services. As neighbors complained, further investigation revealed that an African American man had been regularly meeting with the group. When given an ultimatum to segregate or face eviction, the fellowship decided to leave. The congregation next met at the Independent Life Building, and it was here where they met considerably more resistance.[12]

In 1956, the fellowship drew the ire of segregationists in the community when they invited State Representative John B. Orr to speak before the group in the Independent Life Building auditorium. Orr, who was a Unitarian, was the lone representative who voted against the Pupil Assignment Law, the state's effort to circumvent the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. He was also a member of the NAACP, a fact which led some to petition for his removal from office.[13] The talk, which was integrated, was overwhelmed by members of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) who showed up to heckle Orr. Members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Daughters of the American Revolution were also present as observers and soon began pressuring Independent Life to evict the fellowship, which was successful.[14]

The church members quickly realized that they needed to acquire a permanent location, and in 1957, they purchased a large two-story Mediterranean Revival residence at 3116 St. Johns Avenue in the Riverside neighborhood of Jacksonville. They purchased the building using a $6,000 loan from an AUA fund set up specifically to aid southern congregations experiencing racial problems. This building would serve as the first permanent Unitarian home since the sale of the original church in 1943. The troubles of the congregation were not over, however, as neighbors pressured the seller into cancelling the sale and the owner had to close on the transaction over their objections. By 1958, the congregation was given full church status and was served by minister-at-large Grant Butler. In 1960, the Rev. Charles White McGehee was hired as the permanent minister. With the national merger of the Unitarian and Universalist churches in 1961, the congregation's name was changed to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville (UUCJ).[15]

Under the leadership of Rev. McGehee, the UUCJ gained a reputation for its support of local civil rights initiatives in the city. The civil rights movement literally reshaped the congregation, as old members left and new members were drawn in to the cause. One of the black members of the congregation, Isaiah Williams, served as an advisor to the local NAACP's Youth Group and played an active role in the events of the Ax Handle Saturday riots in 1960. McGehee himself was one of the most outspoken white ministers to publicly support the movement. In 1963, the NAACP staged a March for Jobs and Freedom in the city, which ended at

[12] Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville, p. 5-6; Gibson, p. 87-88.
[13] *Florida Star,* "John Orr's Voice Against Prejudice is Encouraging Amidst Demagogues," August 4, 1956; *Fort Pierce News-Tribune*, "Move to Oust Rep. Orr of Dade Said Under Way," July 26, 1956.
[14] Gibson, p. 88-89.
[15] Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville, p. 6-7; Gibson, p. 89-90.

city hall. The event received wide publicity in the community and McGehee received attention as the only white minister in attendance at the march. This also drew the ire of the KKK, who threatened his life. As a result of this threat, members of the congregation guarded both his home and church grounds.[16]

One civil rights protestor was effusive in his praise for Rev. McGehee during this time:

> At NAACP mass meetings, you could always find Rev. McGehee somewhere near the front of the church standing on his crutches. Many times, he was the only white person in attendance. He courageously and consistently supported the Youth Council and the sit-in demonstrations… [white ministers including McGehee] would call Mr. Pearson or me at various times with much-appreciated words of encouragement. With all the negatives we endured from the white community, their words spoke loud enough for us.[17]

The UUCJ was particularly active in the Human Rights Council (HRC) and the Urban League. The HRC was a council set up to help provide interracial cooperation in the efforts to fight racial injustice. The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee provided the funds for an executive secretary, Ernest Lent. One of the council's most important roles during the fight for civil rights was in the local school desegregation fight. After the federal government issued a mandate to desegregate the local schools, the county commission decided to place the issue on a straw ballot before the primaries. The HRC was able to successfully sue to have the measure struck down by the courts.[18]

In 1964, shortly after the infamous Birmingham church bombings, Alabama governor George Wallace was scheduled to give a speech at the civic auditorium. There was a real threat of violence between the KKK and the black militants who were planning on picketing the speech. In a peace deal brokered by the NAACP and the HRC, protestors were allowed provided that they were white women. Members of the church were solicited for the purpose.[19]

In 1965, Rev. McGehee was one of a number of Unitarian Universalist ministers present at Selma, Alabama, during the civil rights protests that took place there. While at Selma, three of them were attacked by an angry white mob. The Rev. James Reeb died as a result of his injuries. His death made international headlines and played a major role in the successful conclusion of the Selma march, which helped gain support for the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. On March 14, 1965, Rev. McGehee was one of ten white ministers present at

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[16] Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville, p. 7-8; Gibson, p. 90-92; Alfred W. Hobart, ed., "UU Witness in the Southeast, 1950-66," https://alfredhobart.wordpress.com/uu-witness-in-the-southeast-1950-66/.
[17] Rodney L. Hurst, Sr., *It was Never about a Hot Dog and a Coke!: A Personal Account of the 1960 Sit-In Demonstrations in Jacksonville, Florida and Ax Handle Saturday* (Livermore, CA: WingSpan Press, 2005), p. 123.
[18] Gibson, p. 90-91.
[19] Gibson, p. 91; Hobart, ed.

St. Stephen AME Church in Jacksonville to hold a public biracial memorial service to Rev. Reeb. Rev. McGehee was in Selma shortly afterwards for the final march on Montgomery.[20]

Historical Significance – Construction of New Church Edifice (1966-1968)

As the congregation began to grow, they decided to build a new church. They purchased five acres of land along the Arlington Expressway and held an open competition for the design of the new church edifice. Robert Broward, who was a member of the congregation, won the competition and was selected as the architect. From the beginning, the church was laid out with the landscape in mind. Broward camped onsite prior to designing the building. No trees were removed during the church's construction and all public spaces within the church were orientated on the hill overlooking the pond. With the exception of the tapestry, all colors were kept natural, with the wood left unfinished and the walls unpainted. Working closely with the congregation to solicit their input, Broward designed much of the preliminary sketches while in a hospital bed recuperating from an automobile accident. After completing the chapel and the South Wing in 1966, Broward finished the North Wing in 1968. The building complex as it sits now looks essentially as it did when completed in 1968.[21]

UUCJ Shortly after completion, ca. 1966 (source: UUCJ, "Roots to Wings, p. 9)

The centerpiece of the chapel's interior is the tapestry that was custom designed for the church by Memphis Wood, who spent five months working on it. The symbology of the tapestry, titled, *Let There Be Light*, is complex, as Wood herself explained:

> After considering the long history in deep significance of the wheel or sun shape, I chose this configuration as the principle motif for the chancel hanging of the Unitarian Universalist Church. Sun wheels appear in rock engravings that date back to the Neolithic Epoch before the wheel was invented. They have continued to be used to this present time. The circle may mean a symbol of totality. Carl Jung used the Hindu word *Mandala*, a magic circle which he calls the symbolic representation of the nuclear atom of the human psyche "whose essence we do not know" to designate structures of this order. To some, circles are projections of the archetype of wholeness; the circle, being without beginning or end, can be taken as a symbol of the idea of God. The square and rectangle… may symbolize the earth, the body, and reality. As no two people are alike, no two circles in my work are exactly alike, symbolizing that the inner core of each individual is unlike any other. There are times for the

[20] Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville, p. 8; Gibson, p. 91; Hobart, ed.
[21] Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville, p. 8-9, 13.

Memphis Wood working on Unitarian Universalist tapestry (source: UUCJ, "Roots to Wings," p. 10)

human being to be earthbound and times for his spirit to soar above mundane affairs. So the squares and circles counterbalance each other for equilibrium.

Wide and narrow bands of color strike sharp chords of harmony. The blues, greens, and reds in juxtaposition set up a vibration in the upper section. The more subdued tones in the lower section are intended to be subordinate to the minister's presence and his spoken word. The colors and shapes are designed to mount in intensity and brilliance with a strong upward thrust going from low key colors toward the bottom gathering strength and vibrancy and exploding into a paean of joy in a burst of harmony in the arch. The goal is to dazzle, but not to blind, to intrigue, but not to dismay. The aim is to present a work in keeping with dignity and beauty of architecture and with the tenets of this church.[22]

The new church was formally dedicated on September 18, 1966. The congregation quickly made use of its new facilities. By 1970, one of the first Head Start programs in the city was operating out of UUCJ. This program, which began in 1965 as a result of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "Great Society," was started to help provide a suitable preschool education and nutrition for economically disadvantaged children. In 1972, the congregation helped form Unicity, a non-profit which raised money for the poor living in District Six of the city. The group managed to acquire and build a daycare and community center, which were given over to District Six.[23]

The congregation was also active in adult education programs, held weekly coffee socials, and hosted discussions and speakers of a variety of topics. They hosted services and gatherings for other religious groups that were too small to own their own facility, including the Buddhists. The UUCJ also offered social support programs for people and remained a center of political activism. They established Earth Day in the city of Jacksonville and set aside a portion of their lot as a small nature preserve known as Tree Hill. In 1970, the national Unitarian Universalist Association became the first mainstream religious denomination to accept openly homosexual clergy and members. The UCCJ opened their doors to the Metropolitan Community Church, which is a Christian church established by and for the LGBT community. Established in California by Tallahassee native Troy Perry in the late 1960s, the church spread into Florida in the 1970s and remains a major force within the LGBT community. The MCC in Jacksonville faced considerable difficulties in finding accommodations in the city and the use of the UCCJ sanctuary would have been crucial to the establishment

[22] Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville, p. 10-11.
[23] Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville, p. 13

and survival of the church in the city. There have been gay and lesbian leaders in the congregation, including Rev. Ron Hersom, who was the minister of the church and was gay. Today, the UCCJ is considered an Affirming congregation, meaning that not only are LGBT people are welcomed as members but can also hold leadership within the church.

In 1976, Rev. McGehee formally resigned as minister of the church and for several years afterward, it suffered through declining membership. In the 1980s, under the leadership of Rev. John DeWolf-Hurt, the congregation's prospects improved. The UCCJ served as the mother church for several Unitarian Universalist churches in northeast Florida, including St. Augustine, Fernandina, and Orange Park. In 1999, the church built a small nature walk on the property, known as the William C. Fleming Nature Walk. The Charles McGehee Memorial Garden was added in 2001. This was followed in 2012 by the placement of a labyrinth on the grounds, which was later named for Nancy Deverauex.

Architectural Context – Organic Architecture

The term "Organic Architecture" was first coined by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1914. The concept of Organic Architecture at its core was a philosophy of architecture in which the buildings are designed to fit the natural landscape on which they are constructed. It was a concept that became a hallmark of Wright's Taliesin schools. Architectural historian Stuart Graff describes as five core concepts of Wright's Organic Architecture:

- Simplicity and repose are qualities that measure the true value of any work. From this, Wright saw the need to simplify the design of a structure, reducing the number of distinct rooms and rethinking them as open spaces, including even those to be contained within a single room. Windows and doors should be treated as part of the ornamentation of a structure, and even furnishings be made a part of the structural whole. In true democratic fashion, the style of a building should respond to the unique personality of the individual with which it is associated.
- A building should appear to grow easily from the site, and be shaped as if it was itself created by nature for and from that landscape
- Color should derive from fields and woods to fit with these natural forms
- The nature of the materials from which a building is constructed should be expressed freely
- Buildings must be sincere, true, gracious, loving, and filled with integrity[24]

Some of the hallmarks of Organic Architecture include the integration of the building to the site; free expression of materials; the use of interior spaces to shape the overall form of the building; a consistent design throughout the building; and the full integration of ornament, mechanical systems, and furnishings within the overall design of the building.[25]

[24] Stuart Graff, "Organic Architecture and the Sustaining Ecosystem," in "Perspective," *Frank Lloyd Quarterly* vol. 29, no. 1 (Winter 2018), https://franklloydwright.org/organic-architecture-and-the-sustaining-ecosystem/.
[25] Frank Lloyd Wright Trust, "Wright - Organic Architecture," http://www.flwright.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/Wright-Organic-Architecture.pdf.

Architectural Significance – Robert C. Broward, architect

Robert C. Broward (1926-2015) was a native of Jacksonville, Florida, who was one of the most significant architects operating in the city in the mid-20th century. While attending Georgia Tech as an architectural student in the late 1940s, he made a bold and ambitious move in 1949 to join Frank Lloyd Wright while he was working on the Florida Southern College campus in Lakeland, Florida. The Florida Southern College campus (NHL 2012), which was built between 1938 and 1958, contains the single largest collection of Wright-designed buildings in the world and Broward was an assistant for Wright for much of the project. Broward impressed Wright enough to be offered a chance to study at both Taliesin West and Taliesin East. His experience working under Wright had a profound influence upon Broward's career. Many of the design philosophies learned under Wright, including Organic Architecture, were carried over into Broward's professional career when he returned to Jacksonville in 1956.[26]

Practicing architecture from 1956 to 2000, Broward had a long and prolific career in the city and was recognized as one of the most important local architects operating here rather early in his career. In total, Broward was responsible for 514 projects over the course of his long career. In addition to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville, some of Broward's most significant designs include the Wesley Manor Retirement Village in Fruit Cove, the Jacksonville Art Museum, the Drake residence, and the Klein/Kelly residence in Jacksonville. Broward himself specifically cited the UUCJ as his favorite and most significant design of his career. He was known for personally camping out and scouting building sites prior to construction and was also known for incorporating art within his designs. The UCCJ is perhaps the most notable example of this. Broward received a number of honors over his life in recognition for his contributions to architecture. He received a lifetime achievement award from the FAIA in 1989. In 2011, he was selected to the American Institute of Architects' College of Fellows. The following year in 2012 he was selected to the Florida Artists Hall of Fame.[27]

Architectural Significance – Organic Architecture

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville is one of the best examples of midcentury Organic Architecture in the city. The building was custom-built to the natural setting of the environment, even to the point of no trees being removed from the site during its construction. The building is also unpainted, relying entirely on the natural colors of the wood and concrete block. The lines of the interior and exterior of the chapel in particular were designed to flow into nature. The spatial arrangement of the chapel interior and the heavy use

[26] Lee Butcher, "Broward in His Environment as an Independent Architect," *Jacksonville Business Journal* May 23, 2005; Charlie Patton, "Iconoclastic Jacksonville Architect Robert C. Broward had Died at 89," *St. Augustine Record*, July 2, 2015; Jennifer Hoesing, "Spotlight on Robert C. Broward," https://culturebuildsflorida.org/2012/04/03/spotlight-on-architect-robert-c-broward/.
[27] Ibid.

of glass was clearly designed to give an open-ended feel to the building and to draw in the natural surroundings. The architect, Robert C. Broward, was a protégé of Frank Lloyd Wright and was quick to point out the influences of Wright on the building. This is literally present in the building itself, with a quote from Wright inscribed in the fireplace on the ground floor social hall. Years later, Broward noted Wright's philosophy in the selection of the site itself: "Wright believed that a building should be of the hill, not on it."[28]

After its completion, the Unitarian Church of Jacksonville received a number of awards and recognitions. Broward received an Award of Merit from the FAIA in 1967, a Merit Award from the Jacksonville Chapter of the American Institute of Architects; and the first ever award for Excellence in Architecture from the Jacksonville AIA Chapter in 1991 for his design of the church. In 2018, the University of Florida named the UUC of Jacksonville as one of the 50 Flagship Structures that "represent the character and scope of mid-century modern architecture in Florida."[29]

Art Context – "New Tapestry" and Fiber Art

By the 1960s, the modern art scene was expanding into alternative mediums and fiber artists began pushing for textiles as fine art pieces. The development of fiber art was heavily influenced by the post-World War II upheavals. A number of prominent European refugees brought an influx of new ideas and directions in the medium which were inspired by both cultural traditions and the Bauhaus movement. Among them was Anni Albers, a textile designer and instructor at the Bauhaus school who fled to the United States in 1933. Albers' 1949 solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York was the museum's first exhibition of weaving. New directions in architecture in the United States after the war also influenced fiber arts, as architects sought interior furnishings more in line with modern designs. In 1961, Lenore Tawney hosted a solo exhibition at the Staten Island Museum featuring forty woven pieces which generated much attention and criticism from within both the fine art and craft circles. This was followed by the first Biennale Internationale de la Tapisserie in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1962, which was conceived to promote experimental artwork within tapestries, which they referred to as "New Tapestries." In addition to Tawney, Mildred Constantine and Jack Lenor Larsen also emerged as major figures in the fiber art world, a role cemented by the 1969 exhibition *Wall Hangings*, which was held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. At the same time, there was a revival of interest in traditional folk art forms inspired by social movements such as the hippies, black nationalists, and feminists, among others. One form that grew especially popular in the 1960s and 1970s was macramé, which is a textile produced through knotting techniques. By the end of the decade, textile artists were drawing upon a variety of

[28] Jane Greer, "The Church in the Hill," in *UU World* (Spring 2007), https://www.uuworld.org/articles/the-church-in-hill.
[29] University of Florida, p. 109.

inspirations and techniques outside of traditional American and European sources to produce works designed to serve as centerpieces as opposed to mere decorations.[30]

Art Significance

The large tapestry located in the chapel, titled *Let There Be Light*, is an excellent example of a fine art textile from the 1960s, an era when modern art was expanding into alternative mediums and fiber artists were creating textiles as artistic centerpieces. The work, which was custom-designed for the church, is an unusual syncretization of fiber art and architecture. The architect Broward was known for incorporating art into his designs, and it is no different with this church, as the chapel's interior was laid out to accommodate the tapestry. *Let There Be Light* also represents one of the most important commissions of Memphis Wood (1902-1989), who was a locally significant figure in the art world in Jacksonville. Known as the "Jacksonville's First Lady of Modern Art," she was one of the most significant textile artists in the city. She was especially known for her work with fiber art, and the tapestry she designed for the UUCJ is one of her most significant commissions. A native of Georgia, Wood arrived in Jacksonville in the late 1920s and worked as an art teacher in the public school system until she retired in 1962. She later taught art at Jacksonville University. She was one of the founders of what is now the Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville.[31]

Criterion Consideration A

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville is currently owned by a religious institution and operated as a church edifice. The significance of the property, however, derives from its association with the activities of the congregation and for the architecture and art displayed in the church itself.

[30] Elissa Auther, "Fiber Art and the Hierarchy of Art and Craft, 1960-1980," *Journal of Modern Craft* vol. 1, no. 1 (March 2008), p. 17-19; Jenelle Porter, "About 10 Years: From the New Tapestry to Fiber Art," in *Fiber Sculpture 1960-Present*, Jenelle Porter, ed. (New York: Delmonico Books, 2014), p. 167-173.
[31] Mandarin Museum and Historical Society, "Memphis Wood," http://www.mandarinmuseum.net/mandarin-history/mandarin-artists/memphis-wood.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary encompasses a portion of lot number 1425040000 of the Duval County Property Appraiser's Office records. It encapsulates the church complex and parking lot, bordering the Red Bay Branch on the west and the Arlington Expressway service road on the south. Please see boundary map for more details.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the property directly associated with the historic operations of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Photographs

Name of Property: Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville

City or Vicinity: Jacksonville County: Duval State: Florida

Photographers: Andrew Waber and David Laffitte Date Photographed: May 2019

Description of Photographs(s) and number, including description of view indicating direction of camera

1. View of chapel main (west) façade, facing east
2. View of chapel main (west) façade, facing east
3. Detail view of concrete block buttress, facing northeast
4. View of chapel rear (east) elevation, facing southwest
5. View of area north of chapel, facing east
6. Detail view of steeple, facing northwest
7. View of chapel interior west end, facing west
8. View of chapel interior east end, facing east
9. Detail view of chapel ceiling
10. View of chapel tapestry, facing northwest
11. View of chapel tapestry, facing northwest
12. View of chapel north alcove, facing north
13. View of chapel south alcove, facing south
14. View of chapel rear elevation windows, facing west
15. View of social hall, facing southwest
16. View of social hall cafeteria, facing northeast
17. View of social hall kitchen, facing northeast
18. View of south wing, facing southwest
19. View of north wing, facing northwest
20. Interior view of Duncan Fletcher Room, facing west
21. Interior view of south wing classroom, facing
22. Interior view of south wing classroom, facing
23. Interior view of north wing classroom, facing
24. Interior view of north wing lounge, facing
25. View of south wing walkway, facing southeast
26. View of north wing walkway, facing east
27. Detail view of infilled south wing sliding glass door, facing
28. View of north wing caretaker’s residence, facing southwest

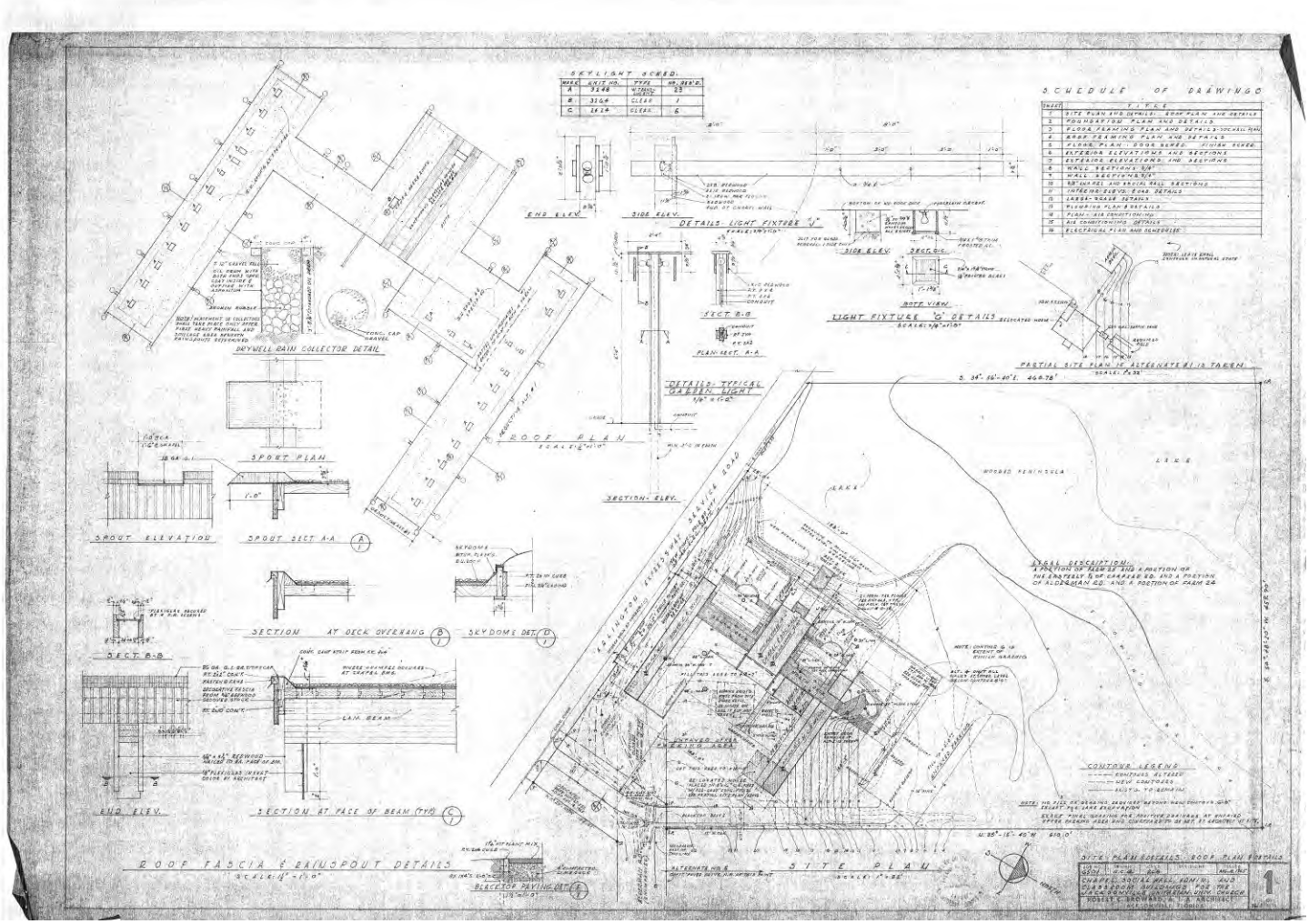
29. View of south wing meditation room, facing south
30. View of north elevation wood stairs, facing south
31. View of minister's office, facing north
32. View of Susan B. Anthony Room, facing west
33. View of exterior elevator, facing west
34. View of wood garden bench and trellis, facing northeast
35. View of playground and memorial garden, facing east

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number Figures Page 1 Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville
Jacksonville, Duval Co., FL

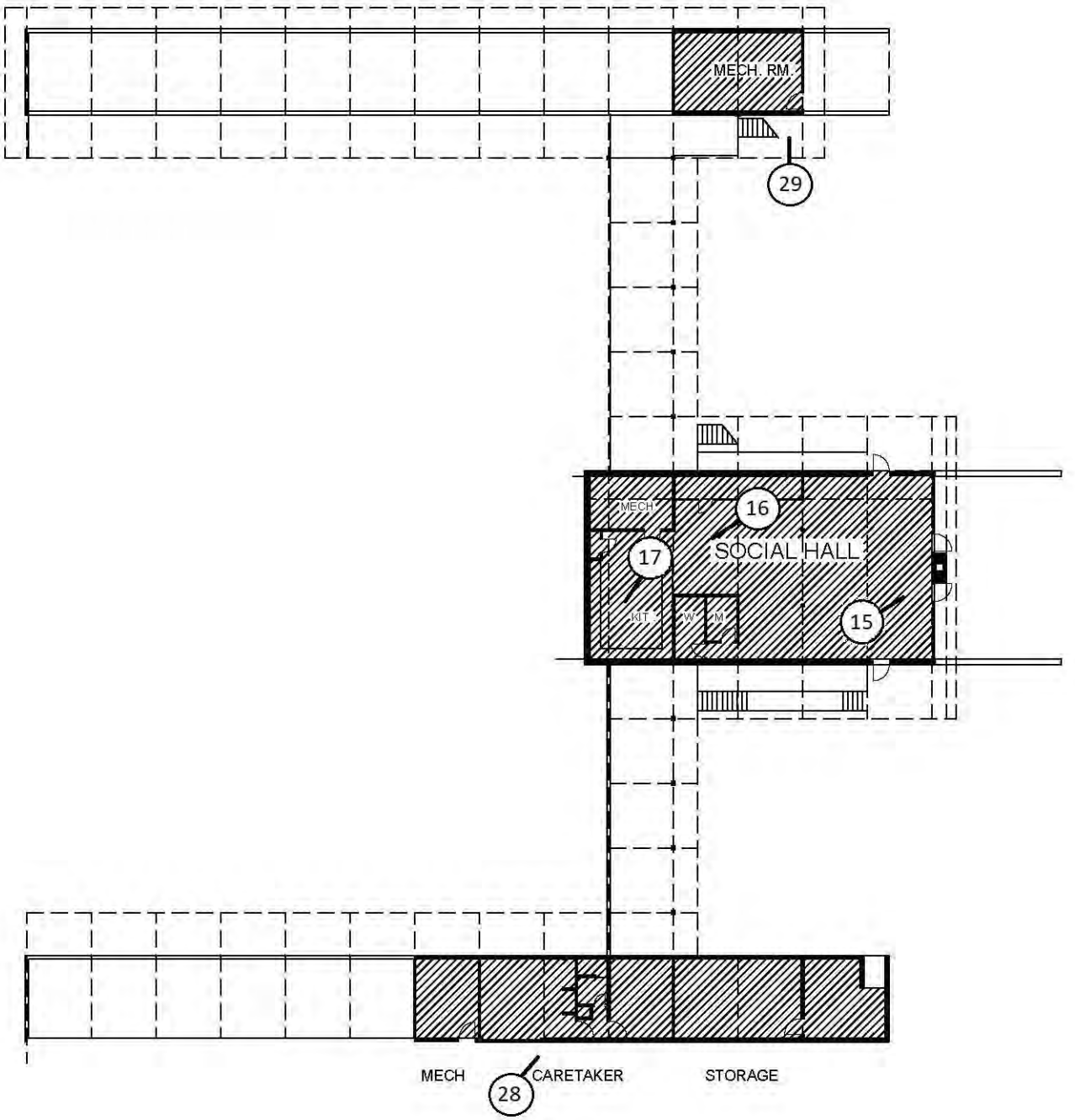
Figure 1:



Original site plan and roof plan of Unitarian Universalist Church as drawn by Robert Broward
(source: Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville)

Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville

Jacksonville, Duval County, FL
Ground Floor Level



North

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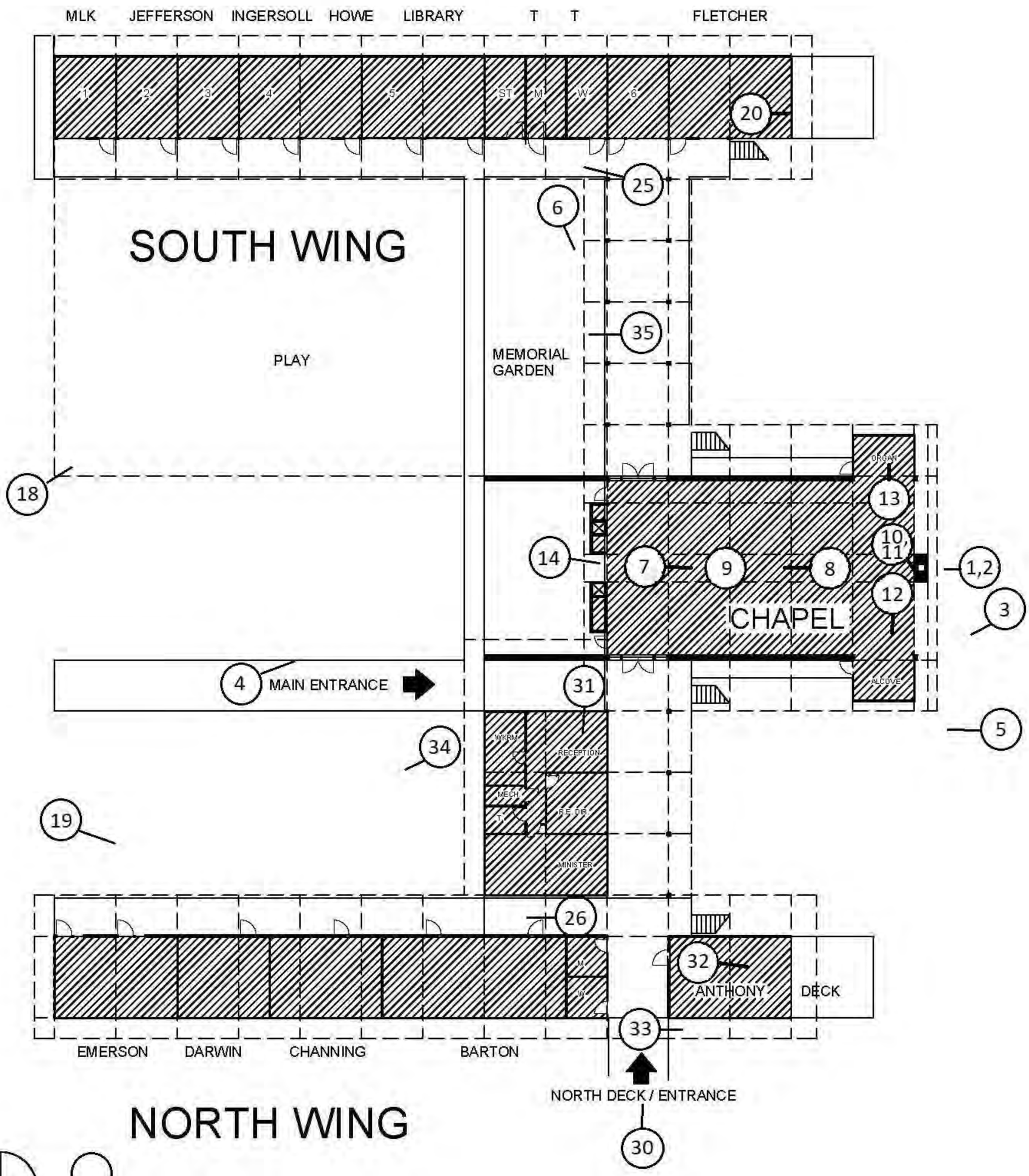
Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville

Jacksonville, Duval County, FL

First Floor Level

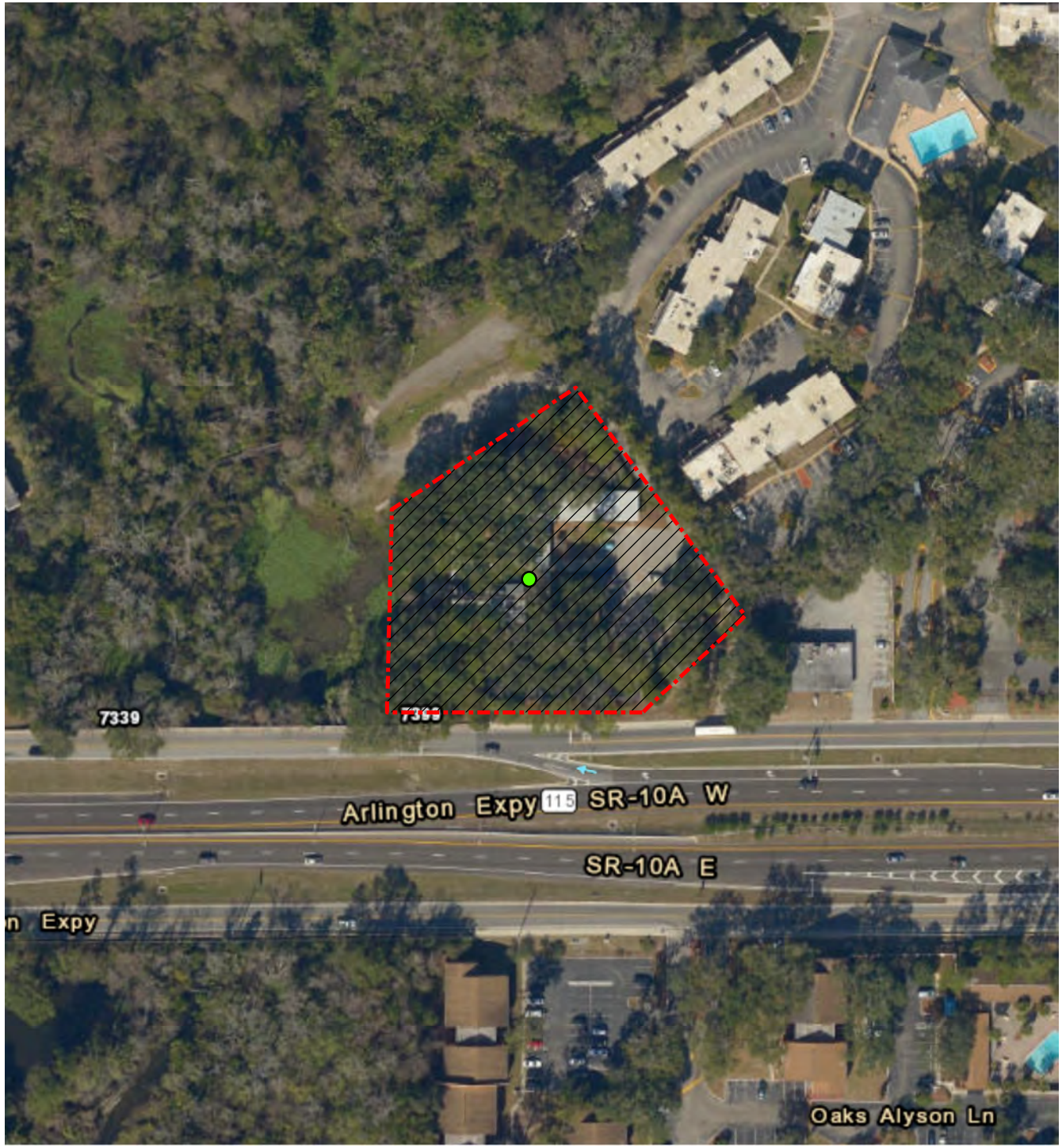


Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville

7405 Arlington Expressway
Jacksonville, Duval Co., FL

UTM:
17R 444154 3355297

Datum: WGS84



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Proposed National Register Boundary

Date: 5/20/2019

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Feet

Meters
0 20 40 80

Basemap Source: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville

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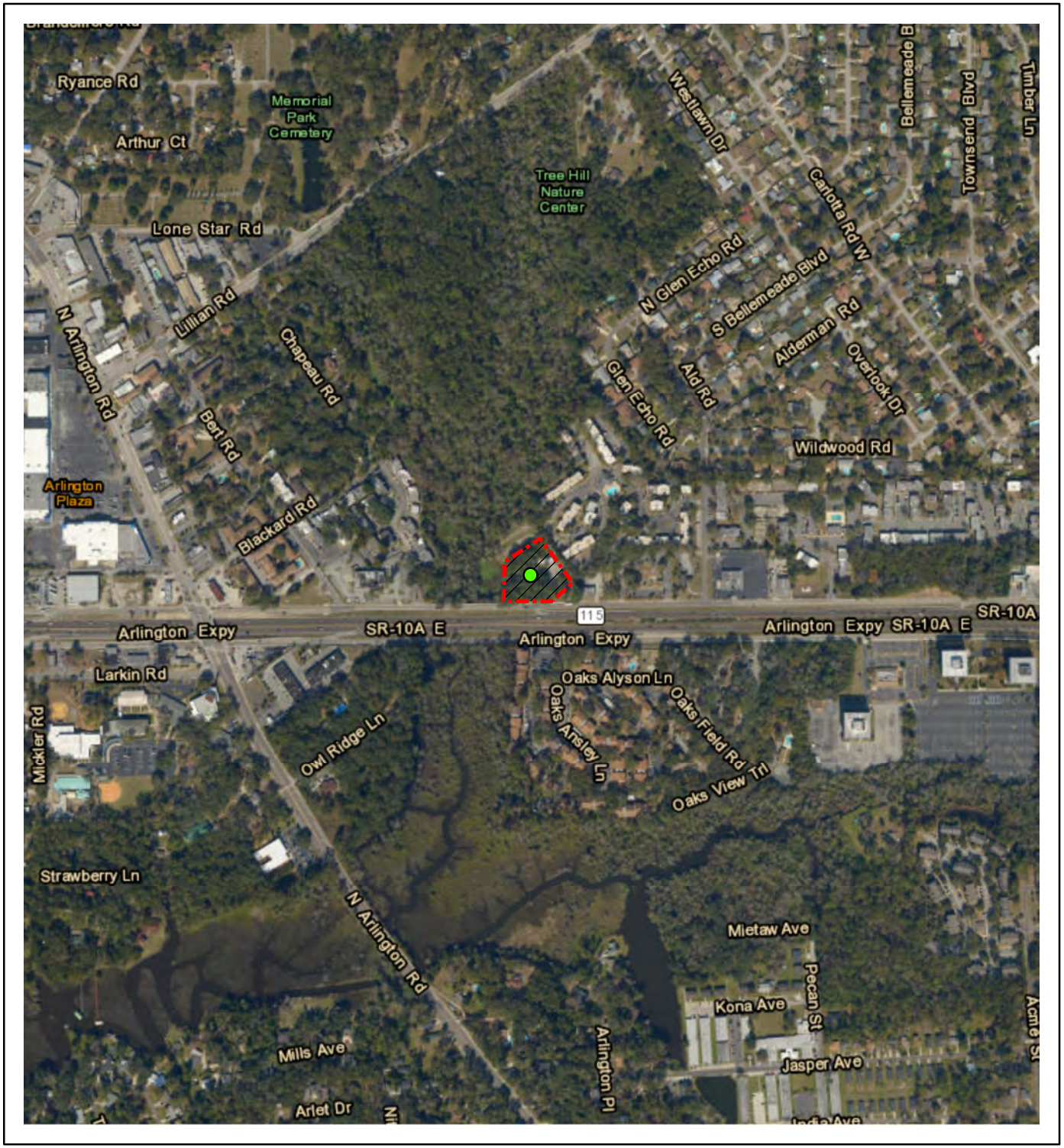
17R 444154 3355297

Datum: WGS84



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1:10,000

Proposed National Register Boundary

Date: 5/20/2019

0 425 850 1,700 Feet

0 105 210 420 Meters

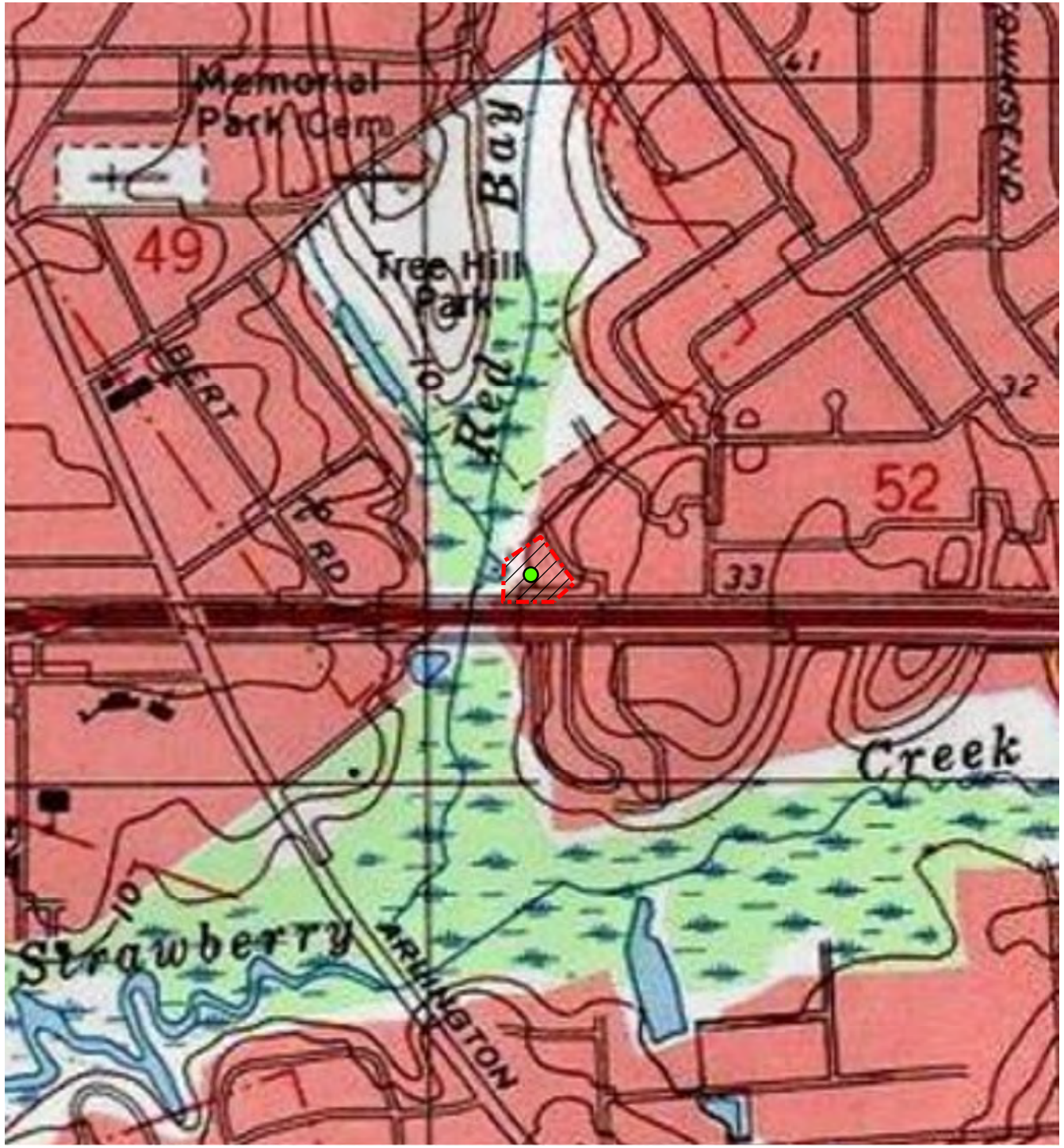
Basemap Source: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville

7405 Arlington Expressway
Jacksonville, Duval Co., FL

UTM:
17R 444154 3355297

Datum: WGS84



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61
57


SERVICE AUCTION 2018
RECYCLE CENTER


TODAY'S
FELLOWSHIP
HOUR HOST IS
PAMELA BULLEY


1 in 5 people with HIV don't know they're infected.
How well do you know yourself?
☐ Positive
☐ Negative
Free HIV Test
Free Condoms
Right Now!
TESTING
HERE


CLARA BARTON


WARNING
Security
Cameras In Use
WELCOME


UU
Unitarian Church
WE ARE:
WE LOVE OUR NEIGHBORS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Nomination
Property Name:	Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville
Multiple Name:	
State & County:	FLORIDA, Duval

Date Received:	Date of Pending List:	Date of 16th Day:	Date of 45th Day:	Date of Weekly List:
9/4/2019	9/20/2019	10/7/2019	10/21/2019	

Reference number:	SG100004516
Nominator:	SHPO

Reason For Review:

__X__ Accept _____ Return _____ Reject **10/15/2019** Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:	An excellent example of organic design, the church complex was designed by a member who also happened to study under FL Wright. There is noted art in the building, including a tapestry designed and installed specifically for the sanctuary. The church is also noted as a center for social reform - a leader in the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and later for LGBTQ rights.
Recommendation/ Criteria	Accept / A & C

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

Acosta, Ruben A.

From: Popoli, Christian <CPopoli@coj.net>
Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2019 7:39 AM
To: Waber, Andrew J.; McEachin, Joel
Cc: Acosta, Ruben A.
Subject: RE: Unitarian Universalist Jacksonville
Attachments: universalist church.pdf

Andrew,

My apologies, completely slipped my mind. It was heard on June 26th, and the Commission voted to support the proposed nomination.

Attached are the excerpts from the minutes.

Christian Popoli, MAURP
City Planner Supervisor
Community Planning Division, Historic Preservation Section
City of Jacksonville | Planning and Development Department
214 North Hogan Street, Suite 300
Jacksonville, FL 32202
(904) 255-7852
www.coj.net

CITY OF JACKSONVILLE
ONE CITY. ONE JACKSONVILLE.

From: Waber, Andrew J. <Andrew.Waber@DOS.MyFlorida.com>
Sent: Monday, August 05, 2019 5:52 PM
To: Popoli, Christian <CPopoli@coj.net>; McEachin, Joel <MCEACHIN@coj.net>
Cc: Acosta, Ruben A. <Ruben.Acosta@dos.myflorida.com>
Subject: Unitarian Universalist Jacksonville

Hello Christian and Joel

I am wondering if you all have had a chance to place the Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville before your local board? We have received any message from your office yet on this proposal so we were wondering where you all were on it. It is slated to go before the Florida NR Review Board on the 8th.

Andrew Waber

Historic Preservationist | Survey & Registration | Division of Historical Resources | Florida Department of State | 500 South Bronough Street | Tallahassee, Florida 32399 | 850.245.6430 | 1.800.847.7278 | Fax: 850.245.6439 | Andrew.Waber@DOS.MyFlorida.com | www.flheritage.com

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Historical Resources

Do we have a staff report?
MR. SCOTT: Through the Chair, the applicant is not here.
THE CHAIRMAN: All right. So I guess we can go ahead and defer that. So we'll defer COA-19-22233, 1021 Park Street, and move along to new business, a National Register nomination.
MR. POPOLI: Through the Chair, the State Division of Historical Resources sent us this application to review as the certified local government. The request is for an individual nomination to the National Register for the Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville located at 7405 Arlington Expressway.
This structure is a church building that's still in use that was designed by Robert Broward. He was a noteworthy local architect who designed in the modern mid-century -- mid-century modern style, and he's known for a number of exceptional structures throughout the city, but also particularly in the Arlington area.
You may recall a couple years back there was a number of news articles on the

restoration of the Butterfly House, which is a residential structure that he also designed. I'm trying to find some pictures.
COMMISSIONER STANSEL: Towards the end.
MR. POPOLI: So -- here we go (indicating).
As I said, it's a mid-century style structure. Although certainly unique, like a lot of religious institutional structures in this time period, it has the central A-frame style influences with the large vaulted space and lots of natural light.
This particular one sat on a very large parcel that's heavily wooded and gives it a real quiet and peaceful setting as compared to its actual location along the Arlington Expressway. Portions of it do peek out along the expressway if you're going slow enough that you can see it.
But the structure not only is almost entirely original on the exterior, a majority of the interior elements are still original as well, including some of the outlying buildings and classrooms, down to the original light fixtures and wall treatments.

This particular element, the -- well, what was up there earlier, the belfry and the cross are actually visible from the expressway. But noted for its large wooden beams and bead board, it's really a beautiful structure. Anyone who has lived in Arlington for some time is happy to take you and show you.
Old Arlington, Inc., is very supportive of this as well. They worked on the nomination with the State. Personally, it's one of my favorite structures in the area. And as a new resident of Arlington, I'm excited that this is being proposed to the National Register.
So I would encourage you to support it. And if you do, we would send your recommendation on to the State.
THE CHAIRMAN: Any questions for Christian?
COMMISSION MEMBERS: (No response.)
THE CHAIRMAN: All right.
MR. POPOLI: Do we need to open the public hearing?
THE CHAIRMAN: I will. I'll open the public hearing.
Anybody here to speak on this?

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: (No response.)
THE CHAIRMAN: Seeing none, we'll close the public hearing.
And I take a vote, I presume?
MS. WEST: So what you're doing is just making a recommendation. You can vote on the recommendation, yes.
THE CHAIRMAN: So we'll vote on the recommendation, unless anybody has comments.
COMMISSION MEMBERS: (No response.)
THE CHAIRMAN: All those in favor of the nomination?
COMMISSION MEMBERS: Aye.
THE CHAIRMAN: Those opposed?
COMMISSION MEMBERS: (No response.)
THE CHAIRMAN: Hearing none, yes, you have nominated.
Unless anybody else has anything else, we are adjourned.
(The above proceedings were adjourned at 4:44 p.m.)
- - -

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of STATE

RON DESANTIS
Governor

LAUREL M. LEE
Secretary of State

August 30, 2019

Dr. Julie Ernstein, Deputy Keeper and Chief,
National Register of Historic Places
Mail Stop 7228
1849 C St, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Dr. Ernstein:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville (FMSF#: 8DU21853) in Duval County**, to the National Register of Historic Places. The related materials (digital images, maps, and site plan) are included.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (850) 245-6364 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Ruben A. Acosta
Supervisor, Survey & Registration
Bureau of Historic Preservation

RAA/raa

Enclosures