

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

AUG 22 1988

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name The Village Store
other names/site number Oxford Place

2. Location

4216, 4212, 4208 Oxford Avenue
street & number 2906, 2902 Corinthian Avenue N/A not for publication
city, town "Old Ortega," Jacksonville N/A vicinity
state Florida code 012 county Duval code 031 zip code 32210

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

[Signature] State Historic Preservation Officer, Bureau of Historic Preservation, Florida Department of State
Signature of certifying official
Date 8/5/88

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Alton Byer Entered in the National Register 9/29/88
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce - Office building
Specialty stores

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Trade - specialty stores

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style; other
Georgian Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Stucco
Brick
roof Asphalt
other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Summary:

The Village Store is a 1923 one-story, hip roofed, masonry vernacular flatiron building with Georgian Revival elements located on its original site in the "Old Ortega" area of Jacksonville, Florida. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles in a diamond pattern, and the stucco exterior has brick trim. The building retains its basic integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship, as well as feeling and association.

Setting:

The flatiron configuration of the building is appropriate for its triangular lot located in the commercial area of Old Ortega on Ortega Island in Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida. It is bounded by Corinthian Avenue, Baltic Street (formerly Park Street), and Oxford Avenue. Baltic and Oxford converge on a traffic circle surrounding Cortez Park. One of the corner entrances faces the circle.

In 1923, the little village of Ortega was centered around three buildings next to Cortez Park: the flatiron building called "The Village Store"; a small concrete block grocery store on the southeast corner of Corinthian and Oxford, directly across from the Oxford side of the Village Store (now the site of another building, the Ortega Grocery & Market); and a small post office on the opposite side of the Park, at the corner of Baltic and Cherokee Avenue (now the site of an apartment building). The streets were dirt and large oak trees filled with Spanish moss were everywhere. The only sidewalks and streetlights were around the new flatiron building.

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A street car line ran down Park Street (now called Baltic) behind the flatiron building, and looped around Cortez Park to return to downtown Jacksonville. A two-story frame farm house was next to Cortez Park and there was a similar one across from the trolley tracks behind the flatiron building. Aside from the paving of the streets, provision of street parking, removal of the old street lights, and the addition of more shops, the immediate setting has changed little since the 1920's. The area is still distinguished by its trees, and there is a conspicuous lack of paved asphalt parking lots. Two of the original Ortega Company buildings remain near Cortez Park, on Cherokee Avenue: a 1913 house and a 1915 hunting lodge. It remains an exclusive area.

Original Construction:

The Village Store is a one-story flatiron building with eclectic architectural style. Although primarily Georgian Revival in style, its formal, symmetrical elements are arranged irregularly. These elements decorate what would have been a very plain, orderly building, one with a stucco exterior and brick trim painted a uniform color. A brick water table with a rough faced belt course surrounds the building. There are two clipped entrances: one at the corner of Park and Oxford, and one at the corner of Corinthian and Oxford. In addition, there are other service entrances, either single or double doors, with varying numbers of lights. The side facing Oxford Avenue is considered the main facade, as evidenced by the building's current name, Oxford Place. The rear of the building faces Baltic Street, and the side faces Corinthian Avenue.

The most distinctive architectural features are the gabled wall dormers irregularly placed around the building. There is one over each clipped entrance and each display window. Because the windows are not uniformly distributed, the gables are arranged differently on each side of the building: there are three on the Oxford and Corinthian sides and two on the Baltic side. Although spaced irregularly, the dormer elements themselves are very regular. Centered in the middle of the face of each gable is a round louver surrounded with course brick. A full unadorned cornice surrounds the building, breaking at the gables, but extending into the gable area giving the

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illusion of a gable return. A gutter, following the cornice line, extends the width of the overhang. Even with this uniformity, variety is introduced again with decorative wrought iron lamps hanging below each louver, on the Corinthian Avenue side only.

The clipped entrances at the corners of Corinthian and Oxford and Park and Oxford contribute significantly to the character of the building. Centered under the gable and louver of each corner are double French doors surmounted by fanlights, both of which have rolled glass. Each half of the French door has ten lights. The entry is surrounded with a double brick arch with a keystone. An unusual brick arrangement at the corners of the water table creates decorative alternating notches on either side of the clipped entrances. Variety is again seen at the entrance at the corner of Oxford and Baltic where two wrought iron lamps, different from those on Corinthian Avenue, flank the double French doors.

The original display windows vary, but usually have three slightly inset fixed ribbon windows with nine lights and three multi-light transoms, all with rolled glass. Some are modifications of this arrangement, having a door in one of the three units, or having only two units. In spite of these variations, the building is unified by the rough brick belt course which continues from the top of the water table to surround each display window. There are also occasional utility windows.

The unusual shape and construction of the building depend on its supporting iron posts and beams. There are four six-inch posts in the largest store, 2906 Corinthian; one in the shop behind it, 4208 Oxford; and one in the wall between that shop and the next one, 4212 Oxford. A ten-inch beam runs northeast to northwest the entire length of the building.

Much of the interior of the building remains as constructed. The building was originally planned as a two-story medical office building. After the death of its original owner during construction, the plans were changed to make it a one-story commercial building for six shops. The floors are concrete and white paint still covers most of the original plaster walls. The ceilings are fifteen feet

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high in most areas; one store has installed a dropped ceiling for air conditioning pipes. All of the doors and brass fixtures are original.

Alterations:

In 1948, the architect Clyde E. Harris redesigned two of the stores. He removed an interior wall to enlarge the interior space and replaced the mullioned windows on the Corinthian Avenue side with plate glass. Except for floor coverings, plumbing fixtures, and wall paper in two stores, the building remains remarkably unchanged from its 1920's appearance.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce
Architecture

Period of Significance

1923-1938

Significant Dates

1923

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Marsh & Saxelbye

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary:

The Village Store is significant under Criterion A as one of the earliest commercial structures in Old Ortega Village. It is also significant under Criterion C as an early design by Saxelbye and Marsh, an architectural firm that dominated design work during Jacksonville's 1920's building boom. Mulford Marsh (1889-1946) supervised the construction of the building; while Harold F. Saxelbye (1885-1964), who was considered the "most artistic" architect in the city during this period, designed the unusually shaped building.

Historic Context:

Ortega Island lies off the west bank of the St. Johns River, where the Ortega River flows into the St. Johns. Briefly settled by the Abraham Jones family during the 1770's, the island was developed by subsequent owners as a plantation that produced lumber, cypress shingles, sugarcane, corn, and sea island cotton. After the Civil War, it was broken into small farms.

In the late nineteenth century, the city of Jacksonville began a period of great expansion. Growth immediately after the Great Fire of 1901 was explosive, and continued through the 1920's, following the financial tides of the times. Steady growth of new subdivisions was experienced until the depression of 1914-1916, but resurged in 1924.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) 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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

A

17

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3	3	4	8	9	6	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is on an unnumbered triangular lot lying east of Block 30, south of Block 28, and west of Block 31, Ortega, Duval County, Florida, and is bounded by Park Avenue on the west, Corinthian Avenue on the east, and Oxford Avenue on the south.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire area historically associated with the building.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Prof. Thelma D. Brownett/ Barbara E. Mattick, Historic Sites Specialist
organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date August, 1988
street & number R.A. Gray Bldg., 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (904) 487-2333
city or town Tallahassee, Florida state Florida zip code 32399-0250

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The development of Ortega Island was part of this movement. The entire island was purchased by the Jacksonville Ortega Town Company on February 26, 1902. U.S. Senator Wilkinson Call was president of the development company. He sold it four years later to the Ortega Company.

To promote development of the 5000-acre property, the company built a wooden, swing-span bridge, connecting the island to the mainland in 1908. An extension of the Jacksonville electric trolley system crossed it shortly thereafter, providing ready access to Ortega for the first time. The wooden bridge was replaced with a steel bascule-pier span in 1927.

The bridge and trolley promoted development of the little island. The town was platted and lots sold for \$500. Unlike other Jacksonville residential developments of the 1920's, such as Riverside, Avondale, and San Jose, Ortega's primary appeal was to excursionists interested in hunting and fishing on the forested St. Johns River island. More rustic than the other suburban areas, many of the first houses built on the island were "large barn-like structures or small bungalows. Most of them were incomplete in some way, perhaps lacking interior finish . . ." One owner recalled that their house had "no ceiling . . . It was just uprights . . . just boards." The houses were eventually completed, and they remain today as some of the fine Georgian Revival and Bungalow houses of the Ortega area.

The residential areas of Ortega grew around a small village nucleus. A post office was established in 1912, and the St. Columba Episcopal Mission was built in 1919. The first school, a one-room wooden building, was opened in 1920, and employed two teachers. The Village Store, its first commercial building, was built in 1923. Ortega was annexed by the City of Jacksonville in 1925. Even so, growth of the Ortega area remained slow; its population in 1932 was described as "sparse".

Historic Significance:

Dr. George Dickerson purchased a triangular lot at Cortez Park in 1922, where he planned to build a two-story building to house medical offices. His death during

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construction altered the intent. His wife changed the structure to a one-story commercial building, and six shops opened there in 1923. The building is one of the original commercial buildings erected in the Old Ortega Village, a 1920's development. At that time the flatiron building had the only shops in the area. It, along with the post office, Episcopal mission, and school, formed the nucleus around which the community continued to develop.

There have been only three owners of the building since its construction in 1923: the Dickersons; Mrs. John Varnedoe, the postmistress; and Professor Thelma Brownett, the current owner who purchased the property in 1972. Tenants in the shops have included a drug store, barber and beauty shops, dry cleaning and laundry, sundry and specialty shops, as well as public service agencies, such as the post office, the Ortega Branch of the Jacksonville Public Library, and an office of the State Road Department. The building has been continuously utilized as a commercial property, and remains an integral part of the Ortega community.

Architectural Significance:

The Village Store, now called Oxford Place, incorporates many of the architectural elements associated with Boomtime Jacksonville, especially the Georgian Revival style. Its flatiron shape is unusual, but the building is more architecturally significant as one of the early designs of Harold F. Saxelbye. Responsible for nearly 1300 commissions, most of which were in Jacksonville, he was one of the most important and artistic architects in the city.

Harold F. Saxelbye (1885-1964) was born in Hull, England. He became an architectural apprentice at the age of twelve, and at eighteen became a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects. In 1904, he moved to New York where he practiced with an architectural firm until going to Jacksonville in 1913 to design the Mason Hotel (later known as the Mayflower Hotel, now demolished). He worked briefly with the Jacksonville firm of Talley & Summer before forming a partnership with Mulford Marsh in 1919. Their association lasted until Marsh's death in 1946.

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Marsh & Saxelbye was one of Jacksonville's most successful architectural firms during the 1920's. Their work was diverse, including private residential, commercial, educational, and institutional buildings. They were major contributors in the development of the Riverside, Avondale, and San Jose suburbs. Saxelbye also designed Epping Forest, Alfred I. DuPont's Jacksonville estate. His public building designs include: the Hotel George Washington; United States Federal Building; Jacksonville Police Headquarters; Spring Park and Hendricks Avenue schools, and Fletcher High School; Taliaferro Memorial Chapel; First Church of Christ, Scientist; Hope Haven Hospital; and stores, including Levy's, Furchgott's, Max Moss', and Purcell's. Outside of Jacksonville, his work included: Miami's Alfred I. DuPont Building, Ponte Vedra Inn, and the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity house at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

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Section number 9 Page 1

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Davis, Thomas Frederick. History of Jacksonville, Florida and Vicinity, 1513 to 1924. St. Augustine: Florida Historical Society, 1925.

Snodgrass, Dena. The Island of Ortega: A History. Jacksonville: Ortega School, 1981.

Ward, James Robertson. Old Hickory's Town: An Illustrated History of Jacksonville. Jacksonville: Florida Publishing Company, 1982.

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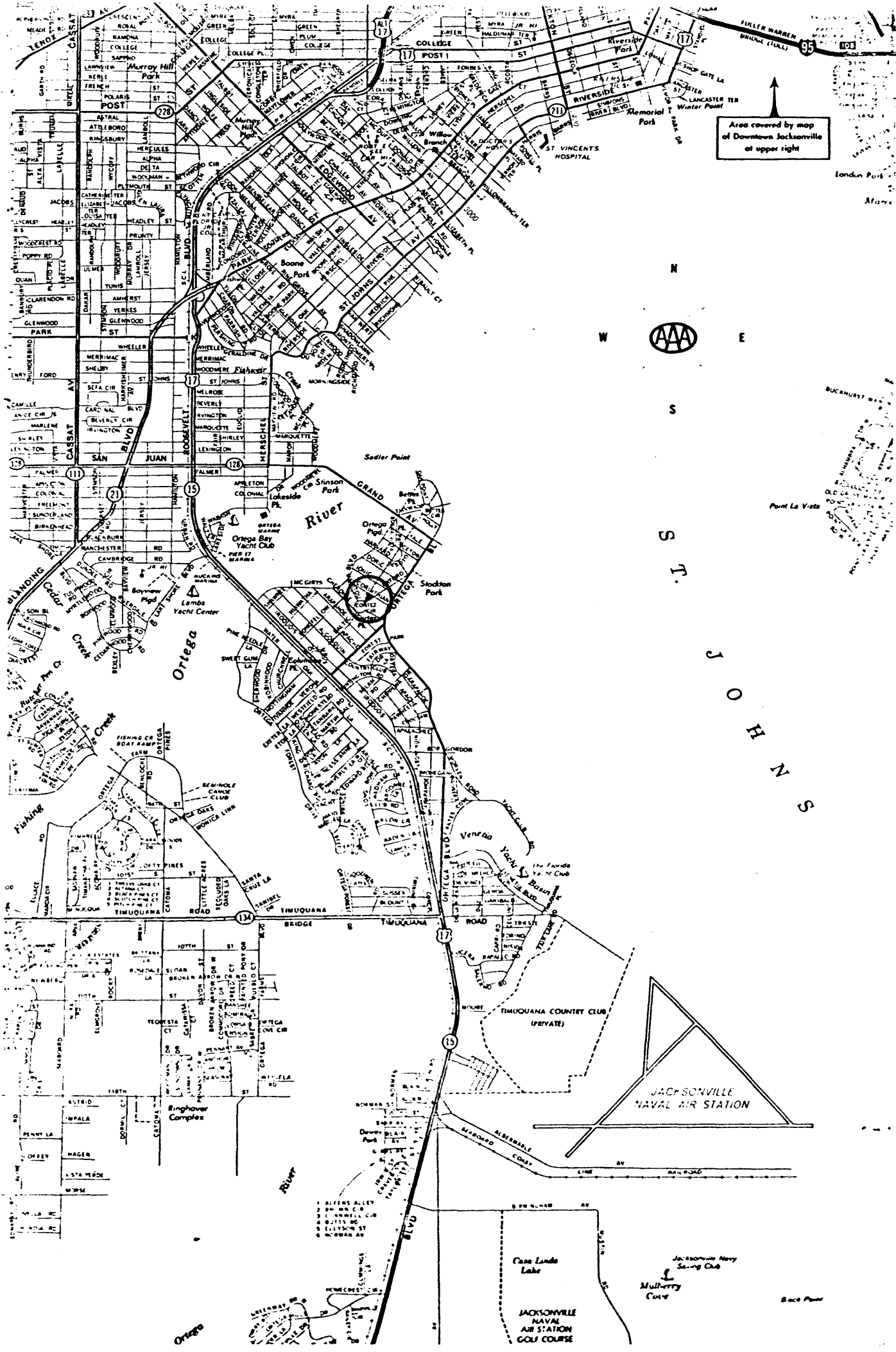
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Photographs 1
Section number _____ Page _____

1. The Village Store or Oxford Place
2. Old Ortega Village, Jacksonville, Florida
3. Thelma Brownett
4. 1987
5. Thelma Brownett
6. See descriptions below.

Photograph number:

1. Overall view, pointed end of the flatiron at the corner of Oxford and Baltic, facing Cortez Circle.
2. Front and side elevations, corner of Oxford and Corinthian Avenues.
3. Front elevation on Oxford Avenue.
4. Front elevation on Oxford at the corner of Oxford Avenue and Baltic Street.
5. Close-up of French windows with rolled glass, corner of Oxford and Corinthian Avenues, taken from Oxford Avenue.
6. Close-up of fan window, decorative molding, gable, and louver at the corner of Oxford and Corinthian Avenues.
7. Rear elevation, facing Baltic Street.
8. Side elevation, facing Corinthian Avenue.
9. Close-up of light fixture, louver, gable, and molding on the Corinthian Avenue side.
10. Detail of supporting posts and beams, interior of one shop.
11. Detail of supporting posts and beams above lowered ceiling.



Area covered by map of Downtown Jacksonville at upper right



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W E
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S T. J O H N S

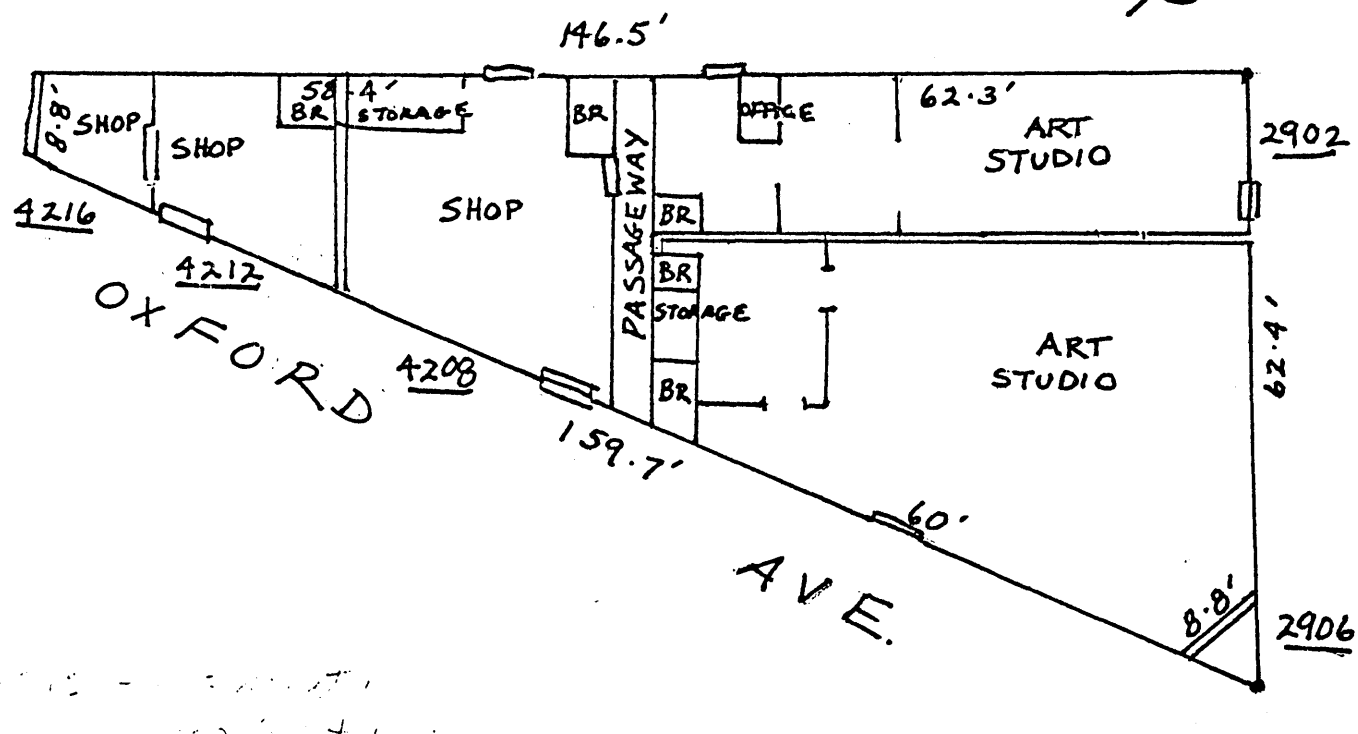
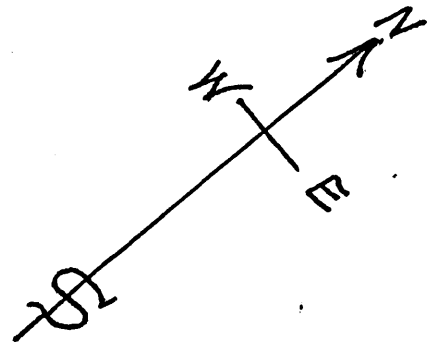
JACKSONVILLE NAVAL AIR STATION

JACKSONVILLE NAVAL AIR STATION GOLF COURSE

Jacksonville Navy Sailing Club
Mulberry Cove

Back Point

(NOW BALTIC ST.)
PARK AVE.



[Faint handwritten notes, possibly describing lot dimensions or survey details.]

"OXFORD PLACE"
FLOOR PLAN OF FIVE SHOPS