

In FSU's Shadow

A project to build awareness of endangered historic sites in the area neighboring Florida State University

Composed by the students of HIS 6934 Section 8, Spring 2008:

Tara Benton

Albert Dorsey, Jr.

Michael James Douma

Elena Gellepis

Patricia Ann Jordan

Amanda Ellen Meter

Brent Kiesel Newman

Supervised by Prof. Jennifer Koslow

Introduction:

In January 2005, Florida State University (FSU) unveiled its Comprehensive Master Plan. According to Figure MP.4, "Land Acquisition Program," FSU aspires to acquire property extending south from Jefferson to Madison and between Varsity and Copeland. The color drawing of the school's ten-year plan renders much of the area as green spaces. This representation of Florida State University also includes areas of College Avenue that, while not designated on Figure MP.4 as areas for acquisition, are included as important for establishing a sense of place as a major entry axis for the University (Figure 3.3). In addition to these areas, the figures and maps leave open the question of the fate of a few structures along Learning Way (formerly Wildwood Drive), Traditions Way (formerly W. Park), and Woodward.

As students of this University who have spent the semester investigating the relationship between memory and history, we have concluded that the physical structures we inhabit on campus and in the adjacent community—our classrooms, our spaces of leisure, our living quarters, our paths to campus—link us with our past. The University's commitment to commemorating its history is evident from its placement of monuments and memorials along campus walkways. Whether it is strolling past the Integration Monument on the way to the Union or the exhibit on the way into the Suwanee Room, these markers instill social meanings. They help students see themselves and their experiences as part of a legacy. They also serve as sources of inspiration.

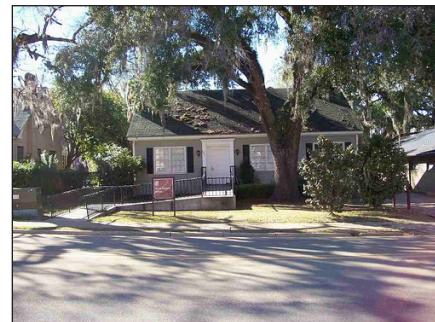
Consequently, we have researched the areas we believe will be impacted by FSU's Master Plan with an eye towards identifying those structures we believe foster a sense of place. Monuments help commemorate, but they cannot replace the tangibility of a building in conveying history. We at FSU are fortunate to possess a few spots on campus where commemorative statues and historic structures serve to reinforce each other. For instance, the Black Student Union, the former Unitarian Fellowship Building, and the Integration Monument are steps from each other.



*The old Unitarian Fellowship Building
938 Learning Way*



Integration Monument



*Black Student Union and Museum
206 S. Woodward Ave*

Moving just beyond the official borders of campus, the history of the University is tied to its neighborhood. These were the streets where the schools' faculty, students, and staff (office, maintenance, groundskeepers, custodians, and cooks) lived and raised their families.

The Survey:

Using census manuscripts and Sanborn maps from 1930, we surveyed College, Pensacola, Jefferson, Lorene, Woodward, Lafayette, St. Augustine, and Madison to see what structures remained. Approximately 600 people once lived in these neighborhoods. Serving as the corridor between the capital and the college, many civic leaders and FSCW faculty lived along College Avenue. The houses along Jefferson Street play a critical role in understanding the history of undergraduate life. Once students were allowed to live off campus in the 1920s, the sorority houses along this street functioned as significant sites for exerting independence. Hence, they are the remnants of an important period of transition in college life. The area along the southern border of the campus such as St. Augustine, Lafayette, and Madison provide evidence of the diversity of working-class residents in the area. These streets housed African Americans and whites whose occupations ranged from bell-boys to practical nurses. Unskilled laborers lived alongside of carpenters, electricians, and cooks. These individuals worked for FSCW, FSU, FAMU, private families, the city, the state, and the local industries (lumber yards, an iron works, crate factory, cement works, and the railway) in the area.

What Has Already Been Lost:

The former residence of Dr. Edward Conradi, FSCW's longest serving president (1909-1941), is now a parking lot. Other structures in the area have met a similar fate. As we write this report, the Orion Parker house (left), one of the few Italianate houses left in Tallahassee, is in the process of being demolished.



415 West College Avenue "Orion Parker House"

Built in 1920, 415 West College Avenue was originally owned by Orion Parker, a Tallahassee contractor and his family. Later Florida State University's Greek community used it as a chapter house and residence. It now sits vacant.



447 West College Avenue

Built in the 1923, 447 West College Avenue once housed Florida State College for Women teachers, including Ada Knight. Until recently, the property was used by Florida State University's Greek community as a chapter house and residence. It now sits vacant.

Ideas for the Future:

We propose that FSU consider integrating some or all of these structures into the landscape of its development designs. While these could work for perhaps centers of research, they could also be readapted in their use. For instance, Starbucks' rehabilitation of an old residential dwelling located at the corner of Woodward and Learning Way provides a successful model for adapting the use of a building while maintaining its historic integrity. The Hecht House is an example of adaptive reuse of a dwelling for current programs.

If either option is not feasible, we recommend moving some of these structures so that they will not be lost to the history of this city. In the past, FSU has successfully salvaged historic homes by relocating them to the Law School Green. Perhaps a similar effort could be made to create a symbolic mini-neighborhood to capture the spirit of the FCSW/FSU residential community.

We also recommend some other alternative creative formats that would use these neighborhood buildings to generate FSU pride of place. Students receive campus tours for orienting them to the campus today but we also recommend providing them with guided tours of their campus that tells them about campus life in the past, whether it be the location of the Night of the Bayonets, the Unitarian Church's meetings for integration, or the use of Works Progress Administration and Federal Emergency Relief Administration funds during the New Deal in the 1930s to create Johnston, Longmire, Landis and renovate the Eppes building.

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**938 Learning Way
Former Site of the Unitarian Fellowship of Tallahassee**



Photograph by Amanda Meter, February 2008



Completing construction, 1957 (Courtesy of the Unitarian Church Archives)

The Old Unitarian Fellowship Chapel is both architecturally and historically significant to Florida State University and the greater Tallahassee community. The diamond-shaped chapel was designed by architect Ernest Daffin and built from Ocala limestone by Arthur Fixel and Custom Builders of Quincy in 1957. It is the only building in Tallahassee that is diamond-shaped with a canted roof; there is not one right angle, anywhere. Dr. Paul Finner, a retired FSU psychology professor, donated the land adjacent to the southern end of Florida State University's campus to the church.

Originally designed to fit 100 people comfortably, the building proudly served as a gathering place for open-minded thinkers. It was used by such organizations as the Philosophy Club, the Young People's Socialist League, and the Council on Human Relations, the first integrated civil rights organization in Tallahassee. The building served as the site for the congregation until the mid-1960s when FSU's administration turned down the fellowship's request to expand and the Unitarian Universalist Church moved to a new space on North Meridian. The property once housed FSU's School of Nursing and is now used for storage.



Inside the church, circa 1957
(Courtesy of the Unitarian Church Archives)



Expansion Plan, Barrett-Daffin & Bishop, November 1961
(Courtesy of the Unitarian Church Archives)

206 S. Woodward Avenue The Black Student Union and Museum

The building at 206 South Woodward Avenue is home of the FSU Black Student Union, which was organized on campus in 1968. Constructed in 1962, it was home of Aliya Demetree who sold it to FSU in 1965. The 1930 census record indicates she was a Syrian immigrant whose family worked as wholesale grocers. (The Demetrees also owned the original property where the Sweet Shop now sits.) After the purchase, the name was changed to the Miller House. In 1974 it became the Habilitative Science building and during the late 1970s it became the Center for Minority Culture, housing all minority student organizations. Since 1990 it has solely housed the Black Student Union and Museum.



Photograph by Albert Dorsey, Jr. 2008

918 & 922 Traditions Way Former residences of FSCW Faculty

Faculty members of Florida State College for Women resided along Traditions Way (formerly Park Avenue). These two structures, which now house the Center for Civic Education and Service and the Center for Intensive English Studies, are the remnants of this former neighborhood. Professor of Psychology, Dr. Paul Finner and his family owned 922 Traditions Way (left). Professor of Modern Languages, Dr. Arthur Seymour and his family lived at 918 Traditions Way (right).



Photograph by Amanda Meter, February 2008



Photograph by Amanda Meter, February 2008

250 S. Woodward Avenue
Former residence of FSU President Doak Campbell

The Stavros House for Economic Advancement sits at 250 South Woodward Street. The house was formally the residence of Dr. Doak Sheridan Campbell, the third president of Florida State College for Women, who began his tenure in February of 1942. According to former FSU First Lady, Shirley Marshall, the house was formally called the McIntosh House and was moved from the area where the Supreme Court House building currently stands. Wings were added to both sides of the McIntosh House as well as a front porch and a two car garage.



Photograph by Albert Dorsey, Jr. 2008

408 W. College Avenue
Former Residence of Milton Smith, owner of the Tallahassee Democrat

THE TALLAHASSEE DAILY DEMOCRAT

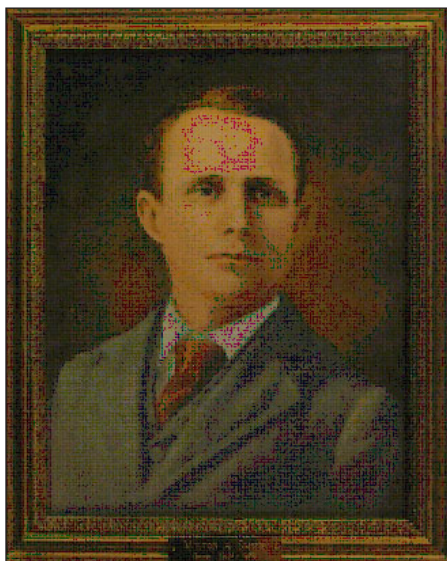
Good Government; Honesty in Public Office; Equal Justice to All—Special Privileges to None

VOLUME I.

TALLAHASSEE FLORIDA, TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 1913.

NUMBER 12.

Now Sigma Nu Fraternity House, this building was once the residence of Milton Smith, the owner and editor of the Tallahassee *Democrat* from 1908 to 1929. Born in Anniston, Alabama, Smith worked as a farmer before moving to Tallahassee, where he bought the Weekly True Democrat and converted the paper into an afternoon daily.



During Smith's tenure, he oversaw the construction of a newspaper building at 115 South Adams, hired the first newspaper delivery boys in the city, and employed a new linotype printing system.



Photograph by Amanda Meter, February 2008

Smith was a promoter of Tallahassee and was known for his boundless enthusiasm for this city and its community. Whenever possible, he used his paper to promote the town and its industries.

524 West College Avenue
Former residence of FSCW Faculty Arthur Williams and Sarah Herndon
Former residence of FSCW Alumni Association Founder Rowena Longmire



Photograph by Amanda Meter, February 2008

This house was the residence of Arthur “Pi” Williams, Vice President of Florida State College for Women, first chairman of Florida State University’s History Department, and the namesake of the Williams Building. Williams sketched the original plan for the structure that was completed in 1912. While Williams was employed at the college, faculty meetings were held in the residence and it was not uncommon for the entire faculty to be invited to Sunday dinner.



Arthur Williams, 1934 FSCW *Flastacowo*



His sister-in-law, Rowena Longmire, was founder of the FSCW Alumni Association and for whom the Longmire Alumni Building is named. Sarah Herndon, a professor in the English Department from 1928-1972 also lived here. The space was purchased by the Seminole Christian Student Center in 1970 from Arthur’s widow, Elizabeth Williams.

Rowena Longmire, 1932 FSCW *Flastacowo*

535 W. College Avenue
The “Greene-Lewis” House

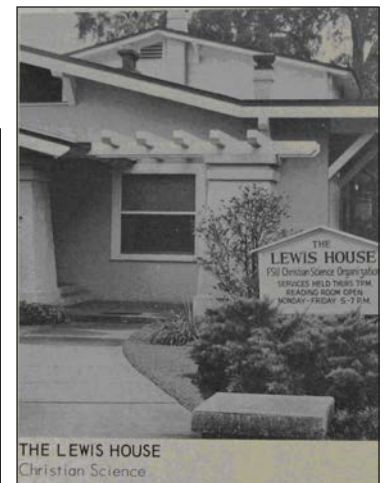
The “Greene-Lewis” House is an architecturally significant Craftsman Bungalow that was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998. Designed by Foster C. Gilmore and built in 1916, the house originally belonged to E. Peck Greene, a state chemist.

In 1928 the Lewis Family, who founded the Lewis State Bank in Tallahassee and were Christian Science practitioners, purchased the home. The house was set in trust by Clara Lewis for Christian Science women attending Florida State University.

Currently owned by the Asher Student Foundation, the home still provides scholarship housing to Christian Science students.



Photograph by Amanda Meter, February 2008



FSU *Tally-Ho*

509 W. Jefferson Street



Photograph by Elena Gellepis, 2008

This compact but well preserved example of a hip-roof, two storied, stuccoed Foursquare Bungalow still retains its original wood double-hung windows and 15-paned front door with 5-paned sidelight panels. The well proportioned $\frac{3}{4}$ width front porch also has a hip-roof and Craftsman-style elephantine half-columns on a stuccoed brick pediment/half-wall base. The front steps are offset to align with front door. Both roofs have the exposed rafter tails typical to Bungalow/Craftsman architecture.

This was the residence of Alie M. Middlebrooks, who managed a lumberyard located in the Gaines Street business district. The Middlebrooks family is one of Tallahassee's oldest and most well known lineages, scions of the antebellum Live Oak Plantation in northeast Leon County.

Besides its Middlebrooks linkage, 509 West Jefferson Street is one of only a very few Foursquare structures remaining in Tallahassee.

540 W. Jefferson Street



Photograph by Elena Gellepis, 2008

Currently used as the FSU Center for Marriage and Family Counseling, this transitional Craftsman has several unusual Victorian elements incorporated into its design. The narrow verticality of the house and the diamond-paned upper sashes of the front windows are typically Victorian, while the low pitch of the rooflines accented with knee-braces is typically Craftsman. The leaded-glass transom above the (not original) front door is a Victorian element, although the wrap-around porch with its side-gable roof, exposed rafter tails and square half-columns set on brick pedestals is a Craftsman hallmark.

This blending of the two architectural styles is extremely rare in Tallahassee; and may be the only example of this blended transitional design left standing in the downtown area.

701 W. Jefferson Street The Sweet Shop



Photograph by Elena Gellepis, 2008

The Sweet Shop has been a well-known and well-loved part of college life at both FSCW and FSU for at least four generations.

Originally constructed in 1921 by Moses Demetree as a family home, the building was soon leased and converted in 1922 to business use by T. J. Hawes, who ran it as The Wisteria Tea Room for the ladies of FSCW.

The business was taken over in 1924 by the Frain family who renamed the little restaurant The Sweet Shop.

The Blount family took over as proprietors in 1926, and enlarged the business by joining the Jefferson Street structure to the duplex that was located behind it on Gray Street. The Blounts also added the architecturally out-of-character but kitschy front porch to expand seating in the 1940s. The Sweet Shop remained a Blount family business until 1978, when the last family member retired. Since then the business has been operated by a various individuals until it was closed in early 2008.

After the Mecca Grill was demolished a few years ago, The Sweet Shop is the only remaining iconic “Malt Shop” left on the university perimeter, and is probably in eminent danger of being lost if the University does not intervene to promote its continued existence.

811 West Jefferson Street



Photograph by Elena Gellepis, 2008

Currently the Rotary Scholarship House, this Colonial Revival Bungalow is one of *the* very few remaining homes left directly adjacent to the University that has not been significantly remuddled. Although the original footprint of the home has undergone expansion, the additions were appended to the rear of the structure and do not detract from its architectural integrity; neither does the metal fire-escape staircase installed on the west side of the home negatively impact the facade. This home is very probably the only original example of this particular style of uniquely American architecture in Tallahassee.

647 W. Pensacola Street

Former residence of FSCW/FSU faculty member Anna Forbes Liddell

Built in 1928, the small yellow bungalow at 647 West Pensacola Street was the home of Dr. Anna Forbes Liddell. Not stymied by the gender inequalities of her time, Dr. Liddell persevered to be one of the first two women to earn a Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, after which she accepted a position as an associate professor of Philosophy at Florida State College for Women.

For nearly forty years, 1926-1962, she taught in the Philosophy and Religion Department, serving as the department head for a considerable amount of that time. She was the first professor at FSCW to teach a credited course via closed circuit television. Dr Liddell received the first Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor award, the highest honor faculty can confer on a colleague.

In the midst of all these personal accomplishments, Dr. Liddell managed to find time to campaign for women's rights. As a teenager she marched with suffragettes down Fifth Avenue in New York City and while in her nineties she testified in front of the Florida House of Representatives in support of the Equal Rights Amendment. Although, Anna Forbes Liddell stood only four feet ten inches tall, her shadow still spreads across Florida State's campus and Tallahassee.



Photograph by Brent Newman, 2008

701 W. Pensacola Street

Former residence of Harry Lee Baker, Florida's first State Forester



Photograph by Brent Newman, 2008

Henry Lee Baker, Florida's first State Forester, resided at 701 West Pensacola Street. A leader at the United States Forestry Service, Baker was integral in the formation of the Florida Forestry Service (FFS) in 1927. Baker was selected as Florida's State Forester during the organization's second meeting on February 23, 1928.

As the head of the FFS until 1940, Baker established forest fire control programs and created a state nursery to promote tree planting. He also worked with the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression developing state parks, a fire tower network, and extensive telephone lines throughout Florida.



<http://www.flasf.org/hof/hof-baker.htm>



Photograph by Brent Newman, 2008

736 & 738 Pensacola Street

This is an excellent example of an unaltered Craftsman style bungalow. Popularized in the early twentieth century as affordable and modest, Craftsman houses held particular appeal for America's emerging middle classes. Most of these homes had a low-pitched roof and a horizontal shape. The efficient floor plan centered on the living room. The rest of the rooms connected to the living room without the use of hallways. The style incorporated locally handcrafted wood, glass, and metal work that was both simple and elegant. Very few homes of this once prolific architectural style remain, much less in an unaltered state.

668, 672, and 674 W. St. Augustine Street

These three adjacent homes, built in 1928, physically represent the frame vernacular architecture of Tallahassee's residential neighborhoods in the late 1920s. The residents of these three homes in the decades after they were built were laborers, carpenters, cooks, dressmakers, laundresses, and warehousemen. These inhabitants represent the diversity of labor and people in this mixed-race neighborhood, near Florida State University.



Photographs by Tara Benton, 2008

One notable resident was Willis Jiles, the African American proprietor of The Jiles Shoe Factory. He owned and lived in 668 St. Augustine from 1928 until he moved to 672 St. Augustine in 1934. Jiles, a cobbler educated at Tuskegee Institute, once operated his business in Tallahassee's historic Union Bank Building. Despite minor alterations, these three homes retain their historical appearance.

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Tallahassee City Directory, 1934

**612 South Copeland Street
The New Way Laundry**

Lucuis Mitchell built the New Way Laundry building in 1923. It was the second commercial laundry facility in Tallahassee. The building is architecturally unique, it has a stepped Dutch gable on gable styled roof that served as roof vents. Alterations such as the addition of stucco façade have not damaged the historic integrity of the building. The structure remained the New Way Laundry until the 1950s when it was converted into office space.



Photograph by Patricia Ann Jordan, 2008

Photograph by Sharyn Ehlers Thompson, 1989



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Ad from 1927 Tallahassee City Directory

Additional Historically Significant Structures:

423 W. College Avenue

currently Alpha Epilison Pi House. In 1930, Nellie Clark, a widow, ran this as a boarding house for FSCW employees. Roomers included Ameilia Clark, Carrie Smith, Alethea Smith, and Anna Sharp.

Photograph by Amanda Meter, 2008



514 W. College Avenue

Zeta Tau Alpha Sorority House

Photograph by Amanda Meter, 2008



655 W. Jefferson Street

Ruge Hall Episcopal Student Center. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places

Photograph by Elena Gellepis, 2008



661 W. Jefferson Street

Chi Omega

Photograph by Elena Gellepis, 2008



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