

**The Watson House**

206 Charlotte Street, St. Augustine, Florida

HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT

Historic Preservation Program, DCP, University of Florida

Prepared by Caleb Arsenault, Graduate Assistant

2024

## **University of Florida Historic St. Augustine (UFHSA)**

UFHSA is a University of Florida direct support organization created to ensure the long-term preservation and interpretation of state-owned historic properties in St. Augustine through historic preservation initiatives and education programs that will be responsive to the state's needs for professionals in historic preservation, archaeology, cultural resources management, cultural tourism, history, and museum administration, and will help meet needs of St. Augustine and the state through educational internships and practicums.

For more information visit: [www.staugustine.ufl.edu](http://www.staugustine.ufl.edu)

## **Preservation Institute St. Augustine (PISA)**

PISA offers applied research and learning in the documentation and preservation of cultural resources and historic urban environments including laboratory analysis and conservation of architectural materials. The work of PISA helps inform ongoing efforts to preserve the oldest continuously inhabited settlement of people of European and African descent in the continental United States.

For more information visit: <https://dep.ufl.edu/historic-preservation/research/pisa/>

## **Historic Structure Report**

The Watson House Historic Structure Report is part of a series of studies that are undertaken and published by the PISA. As defined by the National Park Service and U.S. Department of the Interior:

A historic structure report provides documentary, graphic, and physical information about a property's history and existing conditions. Broadly recognized as an effective part of preservation planning, a historic structure report also addresses management or owner goals for the use or re-use of the property... The report serves as an important guide for all changes made to a historic property during a project – repair, rehabilitation, or restoration – and can also provide information form maintenance procedures (see *National Park Service Brief 43 – The Preparation and Use of Historic Structure Reports* <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/preservation-brief-43-historic-structure-reports.pdf>).

# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION

CULTURAL RESOURCE DATA

METHODOLOGY

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

CHRONOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT AND USE

ARCHAEOLOGY

EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

ARCHITECTURAL EVALUATION

CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

TREATMENT AND WORK RECOMMENDATIONS

REFERENCES

APPENDICES

## INTRODUCTION

This Historic Structure Report is intended to guide the maintenance of the Watson House, located in St. Augustine, Florida. The report has been compiled to provide an analysis of the site's current condition as well as its historical, architectural, and archaeological significance in order to recommend proper treatment for continued use. The Watson House is a contributing structure to the St. Augustine Town Plan National Historic Landmark District, the highest federal designation that a historic property or district can be granted. The building is operated by University of Florida Historic St. Augustine, Inc., a direct support organization charged with preserving and interpreting historic sites in St. Augustine.

The Watson House is a two-story, rectangular, British Colonial style building. The house was reconstructed in 1968 by the St. Augustine Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission as an example of British Period (1763 – 1784) architecture. The east façade of the building is set on the property line abutting Charlotte Street with a masonry fence that extends north. An opening in the fence serves as an entrance to the parking lot on the northeast of the property. The north façade features the entrances to the building with an open porch with pronounced wooden posts and a simple balustrade. A wooden fence extends from the masonry fence on the east to the west side of the building with an entrance into the yard from the parking lot.

The current condition of the Watson House is good. The building retains most of its significant architectural character. The structure appears to be devoid of any substantial faults or signs of deterioration in the interior. The exterior of the building and the landscape have several issues that should be addressed promptly to prevent more immediate problems. Generally, the

Watson House necessitates moderate repair and cleaning in addition to regular preventive maintenance.



**Administrative Data**

- Building Name: Watson House
- Building Address: 206 Charlotte Street, St. Augustine
- County: St. Johns
- State: Florida
- Section – Township – Range: 18-7S-30E
- Block 28 – Lot 4; Parcel ID 1989200000
- Acreage: 0.15
- Flood Risk: Zone AE - 7

**Ownership**

- Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund of the State of Florida

**Current and Historic Names (from most recent to earliest historic site name):**

- Watson House

**National Register Status:**

- The Watson House is a contributing structure to the St. Augustine Town Plan National Historic Landmark District.

**Short Significance Description:**

- The Watson House contributes to the significance of the St. Augustine Town Plan Historic District. The designated area includes representations of multiple architectural styles and generally follows the historic plan of the colonial city. Additionally, the district meets significance under criteria A, B, C, and D.

**National Register Date:**

- NHL (District) – April 15, 1970

**Significance Level:**

- National

**Historic Use:**

- Residential

**Present Use:**

- Residential

## METHODOLOGY

Since 2010, the Watson House has been studied and maintained by the University of Florida's Historic Preservation Program (UFHP) as a part of the Preservation Institute St. Augustine (PISA). The building is currently operated by UF Historic St. Augustine, Inc. as residential rental units (one on each floor). In the Fall of 2023, graduate students and the instructor of the Built Heritage: History and Materials Conservation I (DCP6711C) course visited the site of the Watson House and the Governor's House Library to conduct historical research and a condition assessment. The class assisted in the composition of several components of this report. The first was gathering and analyzing historical research stored in both physical and digital archives. The second was an examination of the condition of the Watson House's landscape, exterior, interior, and systems on two separate site visits.

The field research did not include any intrusive or destructive tests. Students documented and assessed signs of visible deterioration and damage. Assessment tools included historical and contemporary photographs, drawings, and documentation. The final submission from each student was a synthesis of recommended treatments for the Watson House including the property, interior, and exterior. Each proposal was considerate of the history, significance, and current use of the building in addition to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The narrative description of the Watson House and its historic context is based on both primary and secondary research. This includes maps, books, photographs, and more gathered from local organizations like the St. Augustine Historical Society, the Castillo de San Marcos National Monument, the Governor's House Library, and the University of Florida Digital Collections.

## **Archival Research**

- UF Digital Collections
- UF Library at Governor's House, St. Augustine
- St. Augustine Historical Society
- Florida Division of Historical Resources
- Castillo de San Marcos National Monument\
- St. Johns County Property Appraiser

## **Document Review**

- Florida Master Site File 8SJ00541
- National Register of Historic Places, St. Augustine Historic District Nominations & Revisions (1970 – 2015)
- St. Augustine Historic Preservation Master Plan, 2018

## **Field Work**

- October 5, 2023
- October 26, 2023

## **Material Condition Assessment**

- August 2023 – December 2023

## **Research Team**

- Cleary Larkin, Ph.D., R.A.; Director, Historic Preservation Program; Director, Preservation Institutes Nantucket & St. Augustine
- Linda Stevenson, Ph.D., AIA, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Historic Preservation Program
- Caleb Arsenault, Master's Student, Historic Preservation Program
- HP Class DCP6711 Fall 2023: Robert Gonzalez, Oleksii Babynets, Raymond Wincko, Manal Almalki

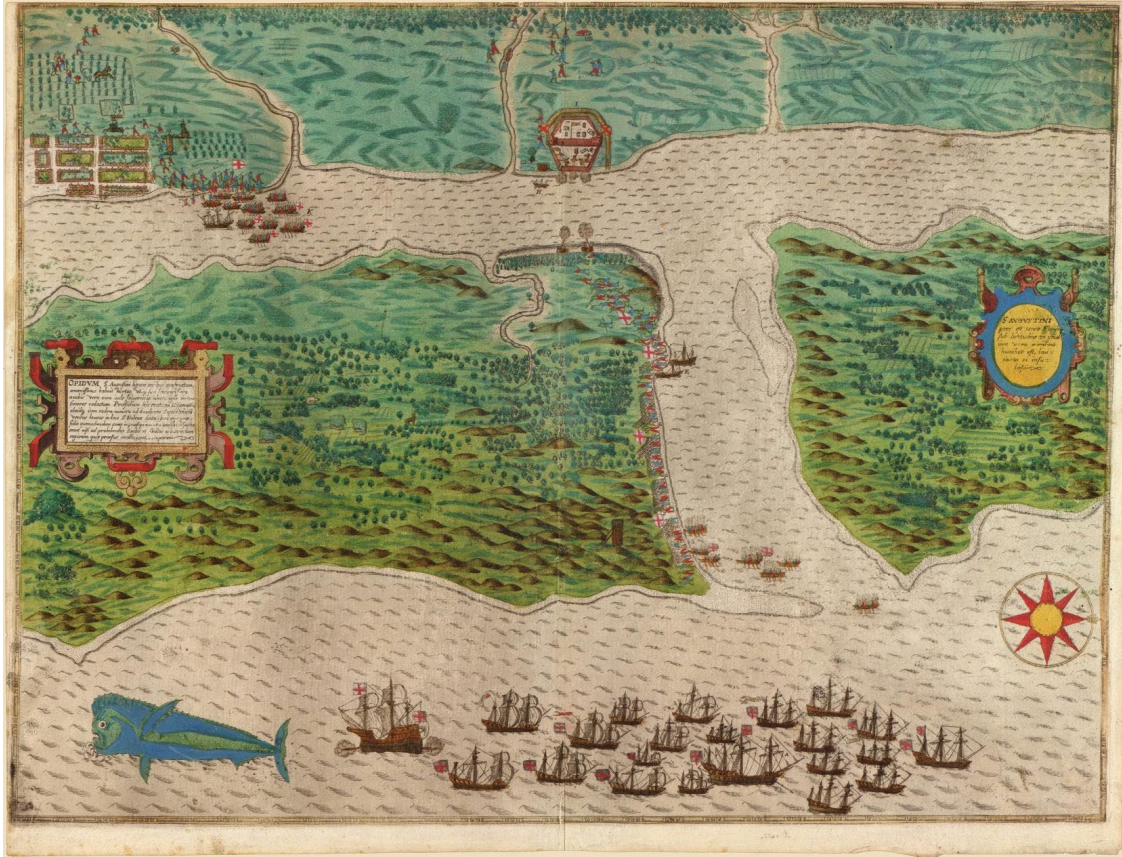
## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### First Spanish Period (1565 – 1784)

St. Augustine was permanently settled by Don Pedro Menéndez de Avilés on behalf of the Spanish Empire in 1565. Its location was favorable for the defense of both Spanish territory and trade. The settlement briefly relocated to Anastasia Island across the Matanzas Inlet in 1566 before returning to the mainland in 1572.<sup>1</sup> Upon returning to the initial settlement area, St. Augustine developed in a gridiron pattern now recognized as the St. Augustine Town Plan (a National Historic Landmark District). The town plan for St. Augustine is based on the Laws of the Indies (1573) which was an early set of rulings that guided the design of Spanish settlements. Blocks in St. Augustine developed outward from the plaza like many other Spanish settlements of the period. Figure 1 roughly depicts the grid layout of St. Augustine as it appeared around the time of Sir Francis Drake's raid of Spanish settlements in the 1580s.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sabrina Crewe and Janet Riehecky, *The Settling of St. Augustine* (Milwaukee: Gareth Stevens Publishing, 2003), 17-18.



**Figure 1.** Boazio, Baptista. [Map and views illustrating Sir Francis Drake's West Indian voyage, 1585-6]. Map. 1589. Library of Congress. <https://lcn.loc.gov/2007626708>.

After several raids on St. Augustine, the settlement's defenses were greatly strengthened with the construction of the Castillo de San Marcos north of the town, completed in 1695. In tandem with other defensive fortifications such as the Cubo Line (1704), St. Augustinians were able to expand further away from the plaza. Unoccupied land to the north of the town square, in particular, was developed and provided residences for Spanish soldiers stationed at the Castillo de San Marcos. Regardless of the multiple defensive measures that St. Augustine prepared over the centuries, the town was still attacked on occasion, including General James Oglethorpe's siege of St. Augustine in 1740. Nevertheless, the core of St. Augustine has adhered to the same plan first laid out by the Spanish all the way to the present.

## **British Period (1763 – 1783)**

In 1763, Spain ceded the territory of Florida to Great Britain in exchange for Havana, Cuba. The agreement was part of the First Treaty of Paris which brought an end to what is known in the United States as the French and Indian War. The British divided the newly acquired territory into an east and west province to better manage control of the region. Being well defended, strategically located, and relatively well developed, St. Augustine was established as the capital of East Florida.

After nearly two centuries of habitation, both the town plan and architecture of St. Augustine were inherently Spanish. East Florida Governor James Grant was indifferent to the new capital, finding it smaller and less developed than he was expecting.<sup>2</sup> Some of the buildings that were previously owned by wealthy Spanish families were constructed of coquina and tabby while a great many more were wood construction. Additionally, the town had scarcely developed beyond its defensive walls to the west. In 1769, writer William Stork published a book that critiqued the town's Spanish architecture, remarking that "the Spaniards consulted conveniency more than taste."<sup>3</sup> Consequently, British residents constructed buildings in their own style and renovated Spanish style homes with new features such as second floors, fireplaces, and balconies.

---

<sup>2</sup> Michael Gannon, *The History of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013), 148-149.

<sup>3</sup> William Stork, *A Description of East-Florida: with a Journal* (London: W. Nicoll, 1769), Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/descriptionofeast00instor/page/n7/mode/2up>, 8.



## **Second Spanish Period (1783 – 1821)**

On September 3, 1783 the British defeat during the American Revolution was officiated with the Treaty of Paris. Additionally, the British ceded Florida back to the Spanish in exchange for the Bahaman Islands. Despite the cession, Florida was left divided into the east and west provinces that had been established by the British. Some Spanish families returned to Florida, however, the number of former British subjects and other nationalities that chose to remain was far greater for a time. Therefore, the culture and architecture of Florida during this period was reflective of its diverse inhabitants.

St. Augustine was in poor condition when the Spanish Governor Manuel de Zéspedes arrived. The overall plan of the town had remained the same, though many of the buildings, both public and private, had been improperly maintained. According to historical records, about 40% of the residences in St. Augustine were derelict when the Spanish returned to the town.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, civil matters were complex as returning families claimed ownership of properties that they had been forced to abandon decades prior.

## **U.S. Territorial Period and Reconstruction (1821 – 1877)**

The Adams-Onís Treaty, which was an agreement to transfer ownership of Florida from Spain to the United States of America, was signed in 1819. The treaty was fully ratified and became effective on February 22, 1821. There was no shortage of American settlers who ventured further south into Florida over the following decades. During Andrew Jackson's presidency (1829 – 1837), American forces attempted to forcefully relocate the Seminole people to present day Oklahoma. Some leaders refused to leave and fled into the Florida Everglades.

---

<sup>6</sup> Mark R. Barnes, "St. Augustine Town Plan Historic District Additional Documentation Study," Florida Master Site File Form – FMSF SJ05567 (Tallahassee: Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, 2007), 12.

The ensuing conflict between the Seminoles and the Americans led to what is recognized as the Second Seminole War (1835 – 1842).

While the land speculation and Seminole War boosted the economy of Florida for a time, significant development of infrastructure was necessary for most towns. Several prominent railroad lines were established to aid with moving materials and people into Florida. The Civil War (1861 – 1865) once again put a halt to development as the economy crumbled and parts of the rail lines that had been established were either destroyed by Union forces or reclaimed by the Confederacy. Immediately following the war, the state was slow to develop in the social and economic turmoil of Reconstruction.

### **Gilded Age and Tourism Era (1887 – 1920)**

One of Florida's greatest assets that helped rejuvenate the state after Reconstruction was its environment. Many wealthy Americans looking to escape the bleak winters of the north found refuge in Florida's sub-tropical climate and natural springs. Individuals like Henry Flagler and Henry Plant invested in the Florida railroads and the tourism industry which regularly brought resources and people to the state. The development that such magnates encouraged supported the economy and the expansion of Florida, especially in coastal municipalities like St. Augustine, Tampa, and Palm Beach.

Many cities witnessed the construction of grand hotels to support the influx of tourists. In St. Augustine for example, the remnants of Spanish architecture inspired the design of prominent hotels such as the Hotel Ponce de Leon and the Hotel Cordova. This period brought money and people that Florida desperately needed to rebuild and expand its cities. The steady flow of

tourists lasted through World War I as Americans and Europeans alike turned to Florida as their destination for vacations while Europe and the Middle East were engaged in conflict.

## **Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Reconstruction and Restoration**

The mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century was a period of significant rehabilitation and reconstruction in St. Augustine. Communities that were already engaging in heritage tourism like Charleston and Colonial Williamsburg inspired St. Augustine to do the same. When the creation of the St. Augustine Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission (later renamed the Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board) was approved by the Florida Governor in 1959, the city's preservation goals became more unified. Residents of the historic city have always revered aspects of its culturally diverse past, but this commission was formed specifically to direct the management of historic architectural resources in St. Augustine.



**Figure 3.** *The St. Augustine Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission, April 28, 1965.* Photograph. 1965. St. Augustine Restoration, Inc. University of Florida Digital Collections. <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/USACH00528/00004/citation>.

As the oldest continuously occupied European settlement in the contiguous United States, the priority of the commission was to preserve and interpret the colonial structures of St. Augustine. Undoubtedly, one of the greatest challenges was finding a way to showcase early colonial construction given that the 1702 Siege of St. Augustine by James Moore had destroyed nearly every building in St. Augustine. The commission understood that St. Augustine was distinguished from most other historic cities by its Spanish heritage. It therefore decided to rely on the rehabilitation of remaining buildings and the reconstruction of others to create a comprehensive sense of place.

Few of the projects carried out by the commission represented original British architecture for a few reasons. The first is that the British only controlled the town for twenty-

one years of the city's history whereas the Spanish occupied St. Augustine for more than two-and-a-half centuries. The second reason is that most of the historic buildings that survived to the present day are representative change over time through multiple eras, the British Period included. The Arrivas House in Figure 4, for example, was constructed in the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century and its architecture reflects multiple periods of significance from the Second Spanish Period on.



**Figure 4.** *Arrivas House After Restoration from St. George Street, Looking Southwest, 1963.* Photograph. 1963. St. Augustine Restoration, Inc. University of Florida Digital Collections. <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/usach00499/00013>.

One event that shaped St. Augustine's historic architecture was the celebration of its quadricentennial in 1965. The commemoration achieved national approbation in the years leading up to it and Congress formed the St. Augustine Quadricentennial Commission in 1962 to

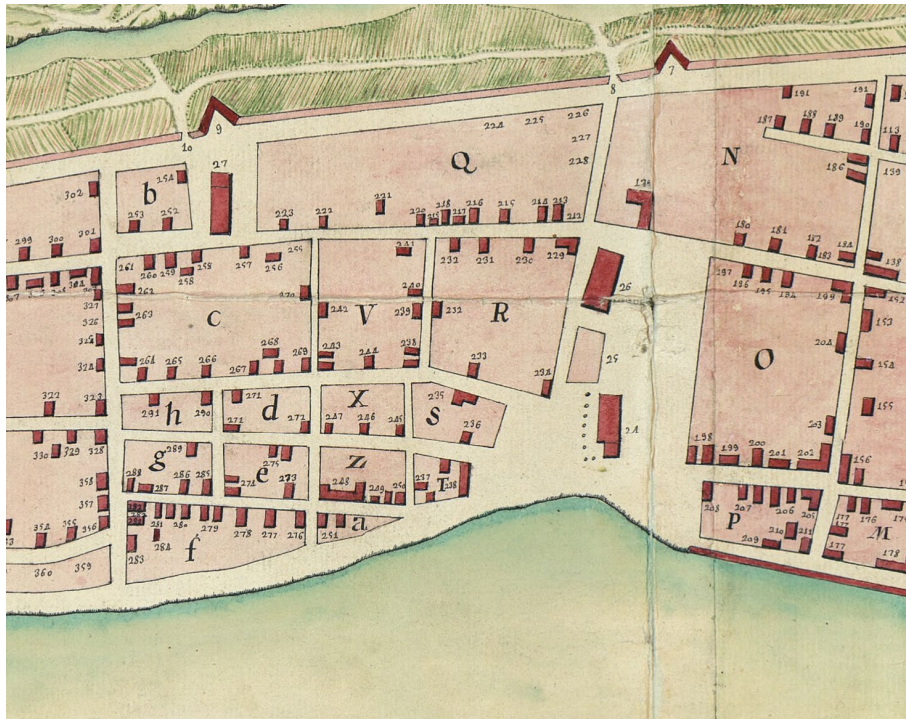
manage the celebration. The event brought together Spanish, Latin American, British, and American nationalities with various historical, architectural, and cultural exhibits in the six-year commemoration. Approximately twenty-nine projects completed by the St. Augustine Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission were part of the San Agustín Antíquo Living History Museum including the Gallegos House and the Salcedo House & Kitchen on St. George Street. This museum was comprised of multiple buildings around the plaza and St. George Street where guests could learn about colonial life in St. Augustine.

The quadricentennial celebration provided St. Augustinians with the resources and networks necessary to sustain city-wide preservation efforts. Furthermore, the National Historic Preservation Act was passed in 1966 which has provided guidance and recognition for historic sites across the country. The St. Augustine Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission and various other organizations continued to rehabilitate and restore historic buildings throughout St. Augustine in the following decades, however, their methods now conformed to national standards. Additionally, many historic structures throughout the city were nominated to the National Register of Historic Places between the 1970s and 1980s. Overall, the historic preservation movement in St. Augustine thrived from the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

# CHRONOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT AND USE

## History of the Property

The Watson House is on a tract of land that has been a part of St. Augustine’s town plan since its permanent settlement in 1572. Situated approximately forty yards from the plaza, the property has been occupied by many structures over the past 450 years. The first known record of construction on the property was documented in the 1764 Puente Map which documented “houses of stone and boards, the property of Dn. Juan Jose de Arransate.”<sup>7</sup> In Figure 1, the building designated as number “236” on block “S” appears to be located on the site of what is now the Watson House.



**Figure 1.** Juan Joseph Elixio de la Puente. *Plano de la Rl. Fuerza Baluartes Y Linea de la Plaza de Sn. Agustin de Florida*. Map. January 22, 1764. University of Florida Digital Collections. <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/USACH00236/00001/images>.

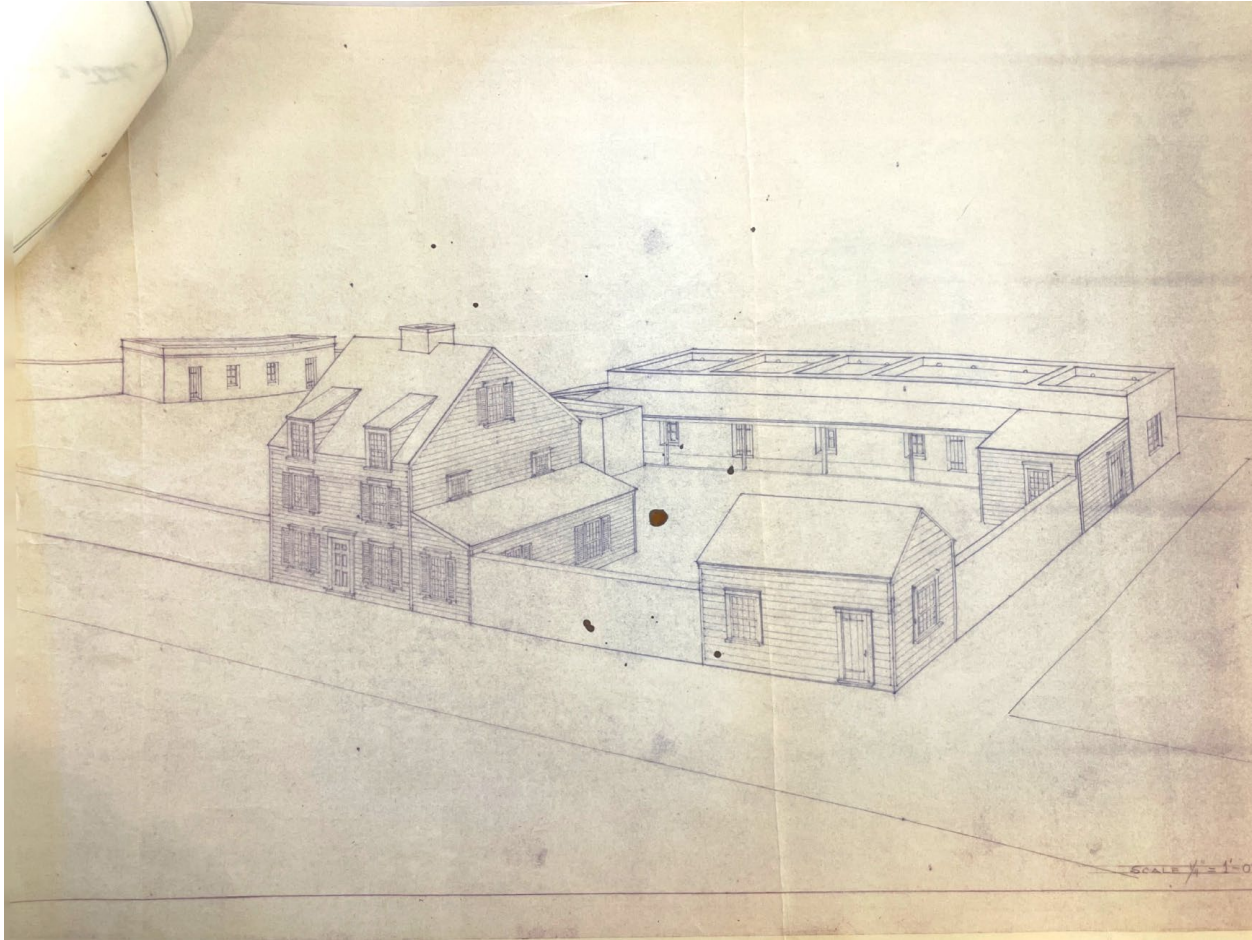
<sup>7</sup> Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board, *Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Guide Book* (Florida: Department of State, 1971), 67

The next significant owner was James Penman, who purchased the land in 1772. Penman was an attorney, merchant, planter, and friend of Dr. Andrew Turnbull of the New Smyrna colony. Little is known about what buildings Penman constructed or lived in on the property during his ownership. He resided on the property until 1779 when he moved to Georgia.

William Watson purchased the land for his residence in 1779. Shortly after arriving in St. Augustine, he converted a stable building on his property into a home followed by the construction of his own house. According to Mariano de la Rocque's map of St. Augustine in 1788, there was a small, rectangular building on the northeast of the property (Figure 2). It is likely that the structure was built during or shortly after Watson's ownership of the property. This is supported by the early drafts to reconstruct the Watson House which included this building as part of the project (Figure 3). When Spain regained control of Florida in 1783, most of the British residents of St. Augustine, including William Watson, fled.



**Figure 2.** Mariano de la Rocque. *Plano Particular de la Ciudad de Sn. Agustin de la Florida*. Map. 1788. University of Florida Digital Collections. <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00016134/00001/images>.



**Figure 3.** [Early C of the Watson House and Spanish Military Hospital Reconstruction]. Drawing. 1960s. Governor’s House Library Special Collections.

The property and its buildings were left in the care of Father Pedro Camps and a young Minorcan in his care named Martin Mateo Hernandez. There are no known records of any alterations to the Watson House during this period. Hernandez’s family inherited the property and maintained it until 1802.<sup>8</sup> The Watson House was acquired by the Spanish Military Hospital sometime after and was used as an apothecary. There is no further documentation regarding any other uses of the building under the hospital’s ownership or any changes that were made to the structure to support its new use.

---

<sup>8</sup> David Nolan, “Watson House: FMSF SJ00541,” Florida Master Site File Form (Tallahassee: Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, 1979), 3

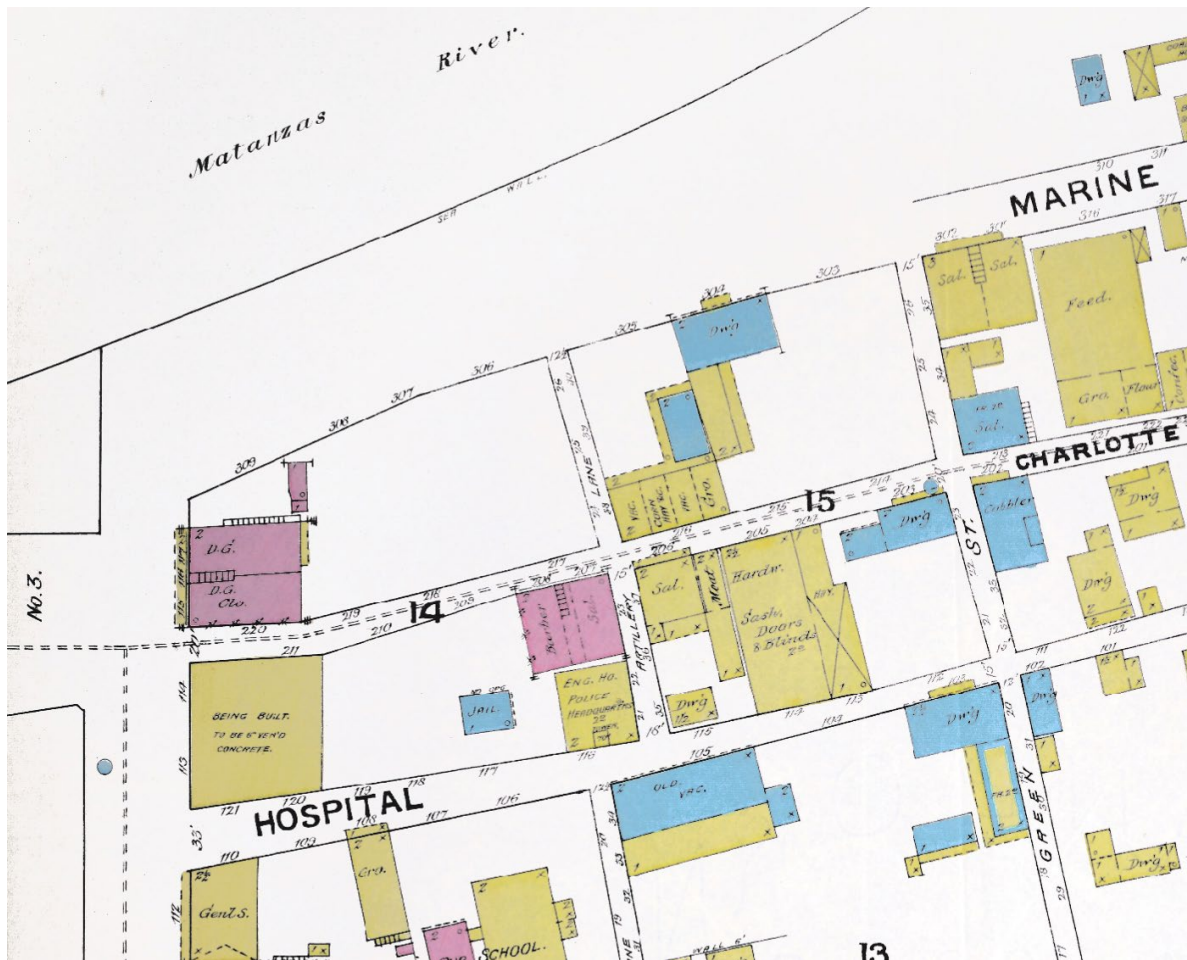
Little is known about the Watson House during the American territorial period to Reconstruction. The next record of note was the purchase of the property by Cesemer Masters in 1877 from C. Bravo, however, the Watson House disappeared from maps by 1894, having presumably burned down in the St. Augustine fire of 1887.<sup>9</sup> As Figure 6 depicts, a brick structure appears in place of the Watson House by 1888. From that moment on, little was recorded of the property and its structures until it was procured by the St. Augustine Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission.



**Figure 5.** *[Northwest View of the St. Augustine Plaza After the 1887 Fire]*. 1887. Photograph. Diocese of St. Augustine. <https://www.dosafl.com/timeline/1800s/>.

---

<sup>9</sup> Nolan, "Watson House: FMSF SJ00541," 3



**Figure 6.** Sanborn Map Company. *St. Augustine, St. Johns County, Florida, 1888.* Map. 1888. University of Florida Digital Collections. <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00074227/00002/images>.

The St. Augustine Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission began the reconstruction of the Watson House in 1968. The project began years prior when the commission planned to reconstruct both the Spanish Military Hospital and the Watson House as a joint site.<sup>10</sup> The two buildings became part of a broader collection of historic architecture operated by the commission and functioned as such for decades. Unlike some other properties, there was no intent for the Watson House to function as a museum. Instead, the interior of the building has only ever been used as leased residential spaces.

<sup>10</sup> Plans, concepts, and communication are kept on file at the Governor’s House Library which houses a part of the St. Augustine Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission’s documents.



**Figure 7.** [*Construction of Watson House from Charlotte Street, Looking Northwest*]. Photograph. c. 1968. St. Augustine Restoration, Inc. University of Florida Digital Collections. <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/usach90029/00005>.

The State of Florida assigned the management and care of the Watson House to University of Florida Historic St. Augustine, Inc. in 2010. Since then, the organization has provided routine maintenance and repair to the building. The University of Florida continues to lease both the first and second floor for residential purposes. Overall, the Watson House has retained a high degree of its architectural significance since its reconstruction.

## **Ownership History**

The Watson House, both the original and the reconstruction, transferred ownership many times. Only a select few left significant and lasting impacts on the building and its property. The most significant period during the original construction's existence was under the ownership of

the home's first occupant, William Watson. Watson designed and assembled the building which was reconstructed by the City of St. Augustine's Preservation Board nearly 200 years after its initial construction. The reconstructed building now serves as an example of British architecture in St. Augustine and a testament of the work carried out in the city by its original creator, William Watson.

## **William Watson**

The original William Watson House was designed and constructed by its namesake. William Watson's presence in East Florida lasted nearly the entire British Period, stretching from his arrival in 1766 to 1784 when he returned to England. His arrival in Florida coincided with the establishment of Dr. Andrew Turnbull's colony in New Smyrna. Watson was the lead carpenter in charge of overseeing the construction of Turnbull's home and plantation buildings.<sup>11</sup> In 1777, Minorcan colonists marched to St. Augustine to seek refuge and the New Smyrna colony was abandoned. It is likely that Watson had lived near the colony while it was in operation and that he moved to St. Augustine when New Smyrna was abandoned. Watson purchased the piece of property where he constructed his residence in 1779.

William Watson's primary occupation during his residence in St. Augustine was a carpenter. His typical work included both renovating buildings within the city and constructing new dwellings.<sup>12</sup> Renovations during the British Period included altering Spanish construction with features such as second floors and chimneys. The clapboard second floors, balconies, and chimneys were added for the convenience of British occupants who were accustomed to a different lifestyle than the colonial Spanish.

---

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Schafer, "St. Augustine's British Years, 1763-1784," *El Escribano*, 38, 121, St. Augustine Historical Society.

<sup>12</sup> Albert Manucy, *The Houses of St. Augustine, 1565-1821* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 37.

One of Watson's first displays of skill in St. Augustine was his conversion of an old stable building on his property into a 7-room residence followed by the construction of his own house.<sup>13</sup> The exact style that his home was constructed in is uncertain as Watson only recorded the dimensions of his residence. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to suspect that the architecture was British Colonial. The reconstruction has been depicted as such with additional inspiration from the Charleston Single House design. This choice is consistent with the historical record as both St. Augustine and Charleston were significant British trading ports and would have influenced each other.

When Florida returned to Spanish possession in 1783, William Watson, like most British subjects, did not permanently remain in the territory. Ultimately, Watson entrusted his property with Minorcan religious leader Father Pedro Camps and Martin Mateo Hernandez, marking the end of the original structure's most significant period. The former stable building became what is more commonly recognized as the Spanish Military Hospital and Watson's private residence became the apothecary decades after his departure from Florida.

### **St. Augustine Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission**

The current Watson House is a reconstruction that was completed by the St. Augustine Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission (later renamed Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board). Beginning with its formation in 1959, the commission was dedicated to the "restoration" of St. Augustine's architectural past. Since the group was created before the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, its approach to preservation was neither standardized nor understood in the same capacity that it was in the following decade. The work of the

---

<sup>13</sup> Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board, *Guide Book*, 68.

commission was primarily reconstruction and projects roughly akin to rehabilitation and restoration.

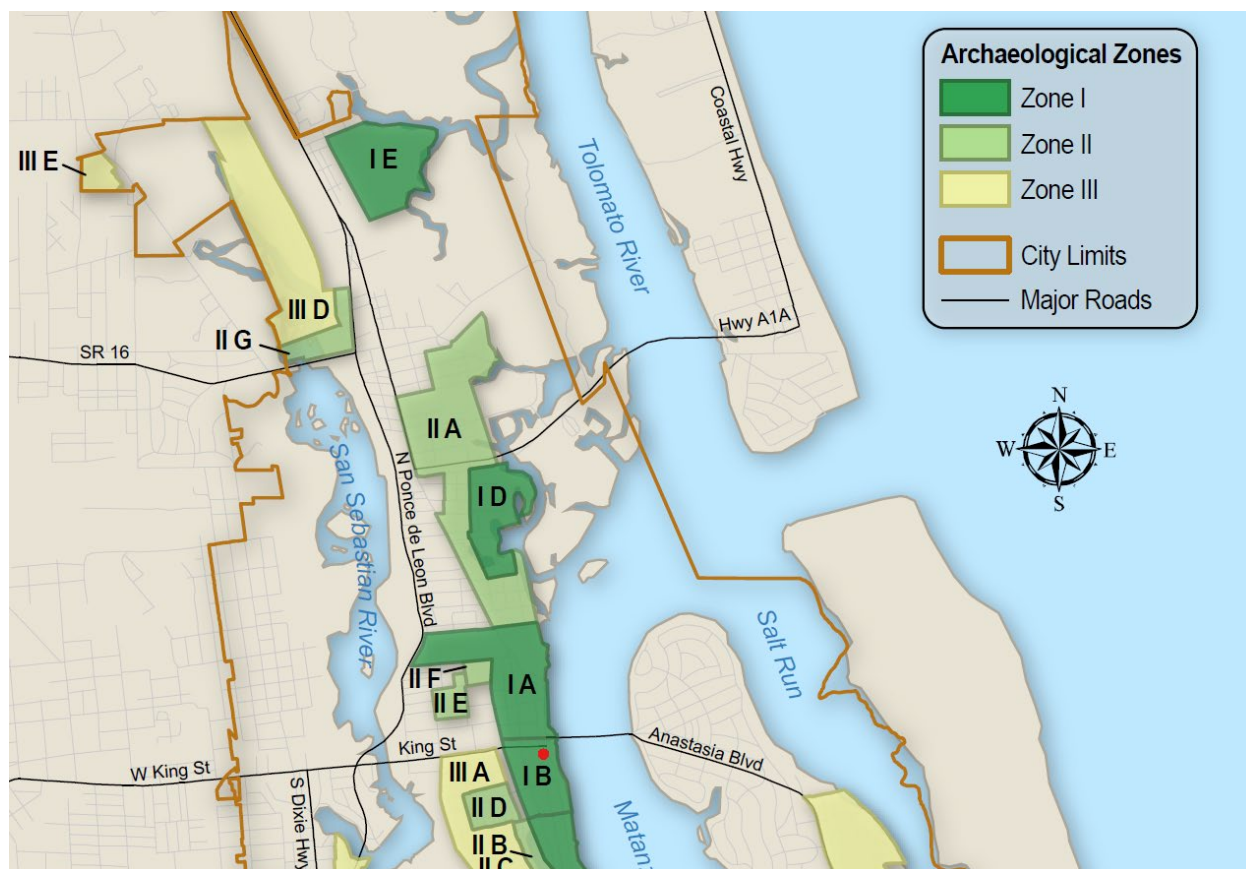
The commission recognized the significance of the Spanish and British colonial periods as well as early American territorial influence in St. Augustine. A majority of the buildings that were restored or reconstructed represent Spanish architecture. As such, the commission deemed it important to reconstruct the Watson House to be one of a few examples of comprehensive British Colonial architecture in St. Augustine. The function of the building after completion, however, appears to have been uncertain. Outside of informative pamphlets, there were no attempts to integrate the property into the greater narrative of St. Augustine. Without interpretation, the Watson House continued to be utilized as a leased residential building essentially isolated from the historical context of other restored and reconstructed buildings in the city.

## **University of Florida**

Multiple state-owned properties in St. Augustine were placed in the care of University of Florida Historic St. Augustine, Inc. in 2010 including the Watson House. This decision was made to encourage ongoing use, preservation, and interpretation of historic properties in the city, many of which had been projects of the St. Augustine Restoration and Preservation Commission. The Watson House currently operates as a duplex with separate living spaces on the first and second floors. The property is managed by the university which has provided routine maintenance and repair for more than a decade.

# ARCHAEOLOGY

The Watson House is located within archaeological Zone I B which includes the Plaza de la Constitución, the original downtown settlement of St. Augustine, and the church and cemetery of La Soledad. There are a total of eighteen archaeological zones within city limits, of which Zone I B has the potential to yield some of the oldest findings. This zone's earliest period of significance dates back to the 1572 settlement of mainland St. Augustine.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, centuries of continuous habitation make it highly likely that this area contains remnants of English and American occupation up to the present day.



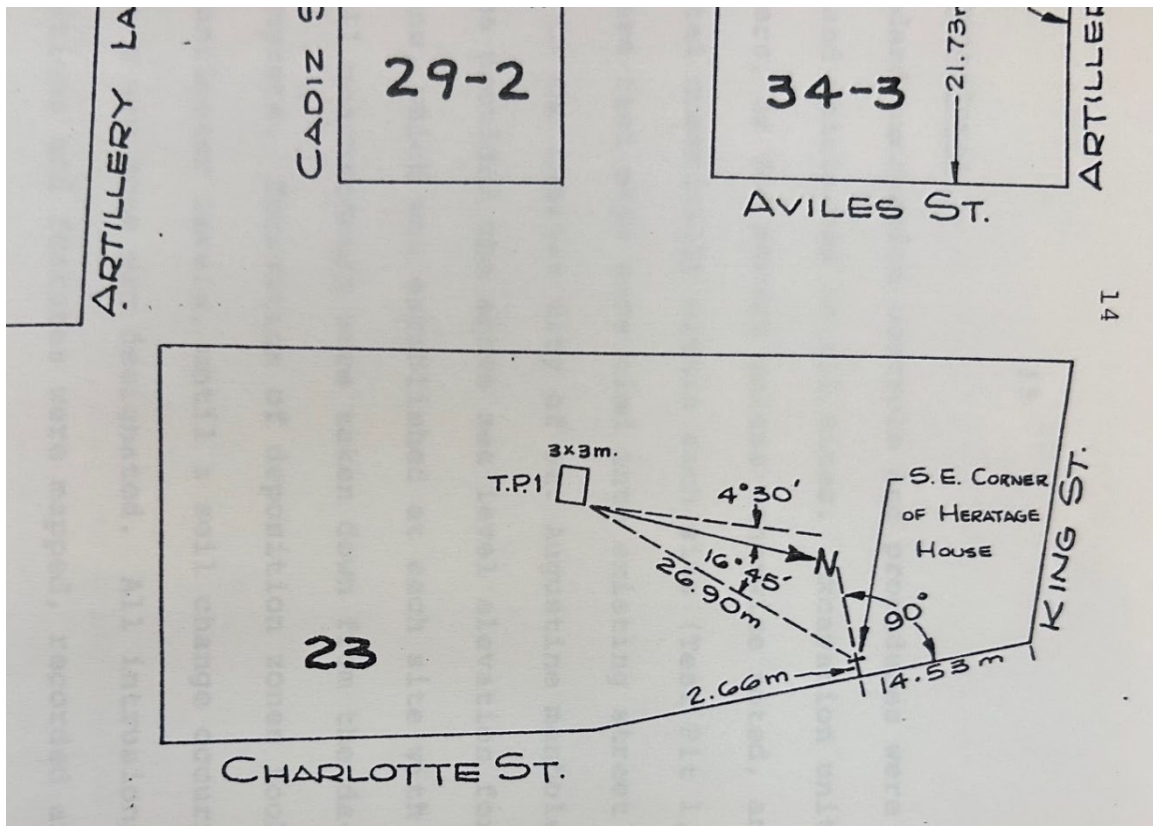
**Figure 1.** Location of the Watson House Within Archaeological Zone IB. Image. 2023. City of St. Augustine. <https://www.citystaug.com/175/Archaeology-Zones>.

<sup>14</sup> "Archaeology Zones," City of St. Augustine, <https://www.citystaug.com/175/Archaeology-Zones>.

An archaeological survey of St. Augustine was conducted in the late 1976 which included a test dig on the site of the Watson House. The work was directed by archaeologist Kathleen Deagan who published her findings in 1978 under the title: *Archaeological Strategy in the Investigation of an Unknown Era: Sixteenth Century St. Augustine*. Deagan established four archaeological sites around the city, designating the property of the Watson House as *Block 23*. The site was selected because of its location on the edge of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century settlement and its potential to yield evidence related to the plaza and the church of La Soledad in particular.<sup>15</sup> One test pit, pictured in Figure 2, was dug in front of the Watson House near the western edge of the property to discover if there were sufficient archaeological findings to justify further excavation.

---

<sup>15</sup> Kathleen Deagan, *Archaeological Strategy in the Investigation of an Unknown Era: Sixteenth Century St. Augustine* (Tallahassee: Florida State University, 1978), 67-68.



**Figure 2.** Deagan, Kathleen. *Archaeological Strategy in the Investigation of an Unknown Era: Sixteenth Century St. Augustine*. Tallahassee: Florida State University, 1978. p.14.

As previously established, the property had been graded and the Watson House reconstructed about a decade prior to this archaeological investigation. It was determined that the land had been so disturbed in the late 1960s that no archaeological information relevant to the project existed, and that it is unlikely that any evidence remains in situ.<sup>16</sup> The decision to reconstruct the Watson House without first conducting a survey of the property unfortunately compromised any remaining archaeological evidence on site. For this reason, future archaeological examination of the Watson House, at least to the previously tested depth, is impractical.

<sup>16</sup> Deagan, *Archaeological Strategy*, 12-13.

## EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Watson House is an important cultural resource due to its architectural significance (National Register Criterion C) and its association with the national and local preservation movements (Criterion A). The property is not individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but it is locally distinguished by the aforementioned criteria. Like most buildings in St. Augustine that were reconstructed from the late 1950s to the early 1970s, the Watson House is designated as a contributing property to the St. Augustine Town Plan National Historic Landmark District. The district is significant because its design according to the original town plan remains mostly intact and it is part of the oldest continuously occupied European settlement in the continental United States.

The Watson House is one of the few examples of British Period architecture in the city.. The building is part of a greater collection of state-owned properties that were rehabilitated and reconstructed to educate the public and maintain a sense of place within the historic city. St. Augustine's Spanish colonial architecture and town plan make the city unique in comparison to others like Charleston which emphasizes its British influence. The significance of the Watson House's is highlighted by the rarity of its British architecture in St. Augustine.

The Watson House's association with the local and national preservation movements of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century is significant. The creation of the St. Augustine Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission in 1959 stands out as one of the nation's earliest and most unified approaches to preservation prior to federal regulation. The Watson House was one of the buildings completed by that commission during its period of extensive reconstruction and

restoration in St. Augustine. The principles and methods employed in the reconstruction of this building reflect both the goals of local preservationists and the state of the national movement.

# ARCHITECTURAL EVALUATION

## Description

The current appearance of the Watson House is the result of the reconstruction carried out by the St. Augustine Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission (SAHRPC) in 1968. The Director-general of the commission, Earle W. Newton, spearheaded the project with assistance from archaeologist Robert Steinbach to provide an architectural example of a British residence in the historic city. The Watson House has been maintained as part of a larger collection of historic properties that were preserved by the SAHRPC. Currently, the building is divided into two leased residential spaces which are not open to visitors.

## Site

The Watson House occupies the southeast section of the site which totals less than a quarter of an acre. The address of the parcel is 3 Aviles Street because the building is situated on the same parcel as the Spanish Military Hospital Museum, another reconstructed building completed by the SAHRPC in 1966 and opened as a museum in 1968. Because the Watson House and the structure now known as the Spanish Military Hospital Museum were historically well-connected, it was deemed appropriate to reconstruct both buildings on the acquired property.



**Figure 1.** [Parcel 1989200000 – The Watson House]. [Digital Map]. St. Johns County, FL Property Appraiser. 2024.

<https://qpublic.schneidercorp.com/Application.aspx?AppID=960&LayerID=21179&PageTypeID=1#>.

Unlike most buildings on Charlotte Street to the north and south, the entryway to the Watson House is not situated along the street. Instead, the building's entrances are within the yard, accessed by the gravel parking lot or the door in the masonry wall along Charlotte Street. The building is bordered by a masonry wall which extends from the Watson House along the street on the east (Figure 2). The north perimeter of the property is defined by a wooden fence and low-lying vegetation (Figure 3). The wooden fence continues to the west, dividing the shared parcel between the Watson House and the Spanish Military Hospital Museum (Figure 4). To the south, the Watson House is abutted to an adjacent building, with a gap of no more than three feet between the structures (Figure 5).



**Figure 2.** View of the Watson House property looking south on Charlotte Street.



**Figure 3.** View of the northwest corner of the Watson House property. Note the wooden fence that separates the property from the Spanish Military Hospital Museum (left) and the former Florida Heritage House (right).



**Figure 4.** View of the southwest corner of the Watson House.



**Figure 5.** View of the south boundary of the Watson House property. Note the neighboring building to the right.

The property of the Watson House is visually divided into two distinct areas. The area designated for parking at the Watson House is an adjacent lot to the north of the building separated by a wooden fence with a small opening to the yard beyond (Figure 6). The parking area measures roughly twenty-eight feet by thirty-nine feet, the shorter dimension being parallel to the north-south axis. The space is mostly unpaved and the transition from Charlotte Street's

brick-paved road to the dirt parking area is stark. A fenced area along the western edge of the lot appears to house utilities for the property and may be a shared space between the Watson House and the Spanish Military Hospital Museum.



**Figure 6.** View of the Watson House from the parking lot.

The second space within the property of the Watson House is the yard, accessed through a doorway along Charlotte Street or from the parking area. The yard is comprised mostly of grass with a series of circular, concrete pavers that lead from the parking lot to a concrete pad adjacent to the porch of the building (Figure 7). The concrete of this area appears to be mixed with a coquina-like aggregate. Two pairs of brick steps on the east end and middle of the pad lead to the porch of the Watson House.



**Figure 7.** Yard view of the Watson House facing east. Note the masonry well, the concrete stepping stones, and the concrete pad in front of the porch.

There is a masonry well within the yard approximately seven feet to the northwest of the Watson House. This structure appears to be made of a coquina-like material with a clear indication of having been reconstructed or restored at a previous, undocumented time. The top of the well is covered with a metal grate. It is clear that the well is in a state of disuse considering its condition and the stagnant water that is retained within the bottom of the structure.

**Building Summary**

The Watson House is a two-story British Colonial period reconstruction. The building is consistent with the dimensions of the original structure but appears to have been stylistically influenced by the Charleston single house. An article published in 1968 documented Earle W.

Newton stating that materials from a home in Lynn, Massachusetts were used in the reconstruction of the Watson House, mimicking how British St. Augustinians used to ship in materials from Charleston.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, an analysis of the Watson House's plans from the 1960s reveals that many architectural and stylistic elements of the building were already in possession by the St. Augustine Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission. This indicates that aside from the original dimensions of the building which were well documented, creative liberties were taken when reconstructing the rest of the Watson House.

The primary construction materials of the Watson House are brick and wooden clapboard siding. The structure is on a brick and concrete foundation with two pairs of brick steps that lead up to the porch. Most of the building is painted in an olive green-like color while accents like the windows and frames, doors and doorways, railings, and more are painted in an off-white color. The structural material of the building itself is brick with a wooden clapboard exterior and a plaster interior. A brick chimney protrudes from the west end of the building. On the street façade, a masonry garden wall the height of a single story and coated in plaster extends north and south, enclosing the yard.

## **Roof**

The Watson House has a side gable roof with a moderate pitch and gables on the east and west ends of the building. The entirety of the roof is surfaced with rectangular wooden shingles. A shed extension extends from the north side of the building with a low pitch to create the two-story porch. On the northwest side of the building, a brick chimney extends from the first floor to several feet above the roof's ridge. The chimney's cap is comprised of an arched piece of thin metal.

---

<sup>17</sup> Anne Carling, "First Major English Period Building Being Rebuilt on Charlotte Street," *The St. Augustine Record*, February, 1968, <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/usach00518/00001>.

## **Façades**

### North

The north side of the Watson House is the primary façade which includes the porch and both entrances to the building. The foundation rises approximately a foot from the ground to a wooden porch deck. Two pairs of brick steps lead upward from a circular paved pad to the porch. On both the first and second floors, a six-panel wooden door is offset to the left with a pair of 6/9 double-hung sash windows with louvered wooden shutters to its right. The positions of these openings are symmetrical.

The porch is fully visible from the north façade. A total of ten cedar posts on the lower and upper end of the porch provide structural support. The rafters of the porch roof are exposed and clearly visible. The east side of the first-floor porch is enclosed by the masonry fence that extends from the house to the yard. The west side of the porch has a U-shaped staircase that leads to the second floor of the porch. The stairway and second floor share a simple wooden balustrade.

To the right of the porch the recessed ell of the building is visible. This section of the building is also sided with wooden clapboards and has a shed style roof with rectangular wooden shingles. On the north side of the building are two fixed four-pane windows, one on the first floor and the other on the second floor. These windows are just over a square foot in size and do not have shutters. On the ground directly in front of the ell is an extension off of the building several feet high with a rectangular shingle shed roof and metal flashing.



**Figure 8.** View of the Watson House’s front façade from the yard.

West

The most prominent feature on the west façade of the Watson House is the brick chimney, laid in a common bond pattern. The chimney narrows at the base of the second floor and again at the base of the attic. Also from this view, the simple balustrade of the U-shaped staircase and second floor porch are clearly visible. Finally, a narrow wooden door with a louvered panel at the bottom is located to the right of the chimney on the first floor. This door is presumably used for accessing the utilities of the building or for outdoor storage and it is unknown if this was original to the reconstruction in 1968.

South

The south elevation of the Watson House is partially obscured by the building immediately behind it but features multiple windows. Four 6/9 double-hung sash windows with louvered shutters are on the main bay of the building with two on each floor. Additionally, a fixed four-pane window is located on the first floor of the structure's ell. While not easily detected from an exterior perspective, another fixed four-pane window is located on the second floor directly above the one on the first floor.

### East

The east façade of the Watson House is the side visible from the street and exhibits significant architectural character. The first floor of the street façade is plastered masonry rather than wooden clapboard siding like the rest of the building. There are four 6/9 double-hung sash windows with louvered shutters on the east side of the Watson House. The lintels of the windows in the masonry wall are simpler than those of the windows on the rest of the building. Another unique feature of this side of the Watson House is its fan-shaped attic louver located symmetrically between and above the windows.



**Figure 9.** View of the Watson House's east façade from Charlotte Street, looking northwest.

### **Door Openings and Doors**

There are two entrances to the interior of the Watson House which are both six-panel wooden doors. The frames of the two entrance doorways are simple wooden frames with slightly stylized heads. Both the doors and doorways on the exterior of the Watson House are painted white. The interior doors are six-panel wooden doors as well. The door frames are bordered with

simple decorative wooden casing. Both the doors and doorways within the Watson House are painted in a mahogany color.

## **Window Openings and Windows**

The Watson House has two window types and a total of fifteen windows. There are twelve 6/9 double-hung sash windows with louvered shutters around the building (Figure 10). These are located on the north, east, and south façades with four on each side. The frames of the windows in the lower masonry wall on the east façade are simpler than the rest. Most of the window frames have a slightly stylized head whereas the frames in the masonry wall have flat casings that are flush with the exterior wall (Figure 11).

The other windows are fixed with four panes. There are three of these windows and all are located on the north façade on the building's ell. Two of these windows are on the second floor and one is on the first. There is a semi-circle attic louver on the east gable of the Watson House.



**Figure 10.** View of the second floor windows and attic louver on the east façade of the Watson House.



**Figure 11.** View of a first floor window on the east façade of the Watson House.

## **Interior – First Floor**

### Entrance

The first room upon entering the first floor is a hallway approximately three feet wide. The doorway to the south connects to the bedroom and the doorway to the west leads to the living room and the rest of the rooms. A 6/9 double-hung sash window is on the north wall of the

hallway. The flooring consists of wooden boards and the walls are painted in an off-white color. The wood of the doors, doorways, and window frame, in addition to elements of decorative trim, are painted dark brown. The ceiling has a single light fixture and is painted white.

### Bedroom

The first floor bedroom has two entrances, one from the entry way and the other from the kitchen. Two 6/9 double-hung sash windows are located on the east side of the room, with a view towards the street. Another 6/9 double-hung window is located between two large closets, in the center of the south wall. The flooring consists of wooden boards and the walls are painted in an off-white color. The ceiling is painted white and has dark brown wooden trim along some of the walls.

### Living Room

Access to the living room can be attained by traversing the main corridor of the apartment or the small passageway that connects it to the bedroom through the kitchen. The living area is characterized by illumination from the window on the northern side. Furthermore, a brick chimney occupies the central area of the western wall. The flooring consists of wooden boards, and the walls are painted in an off-white color. Like the rest of the interior, the ceiling is painted white with some elements of dark brown wooden trim.

### Kitchen

The kitchen on the first floor is several feet wide and just slightly longer than the entrance. The cabinets and appliances are set against the south wall. The room has wooden board flooring, and the walls are painted in an off-white color. The cabinets are painted in the same dark brown color as the doorways and trim. The ceiling is painted white and features two light fixtures. The west side of the kitchen narrows slightly, transitioning to the ell of the building. The

ell comprises a small section of the Watson House and contains two rooms, only one of which is separated by a doorway. There is a framed opening trimmed with casings painted dark brown, which defines a room with the laundry equipment. Beyond that, a door leads to the bathroom. This section is much smaller than the other rooms.



**Figure 12.** View of the first floor Kitchen in the Watson House. Note the doorway to the Bathroom in the back.

## Bathroom

The west side of the washer and dryer area features a wooden doorway that leads to the bathroom. The bathroom includes a toilet, a sink, and a bathtub/shower. A fixed four-pane window is on the north side of the wall. This room has the same wall and ceiling paint in addition to the wooden trim as the rest of the interior rooms. The flooring of the bathroom is thin plank boards, making it the only room on the first floor without full length wooden boards.

## **Interior – Second Floor**

### Entrance

The entrance of the second floor is reached by the second floor porch doorway and leads to all of the rooms on the floor. The dimensions, materials, and appearance of the entrance are the same as the first floor. The doorway to the west leads to the bedroom and the west doorway opens into the living room. A 6/9 double-hung sash window is on the northern wall with a clear sightline through the porch. The flooring is standard wooden boards and the walls are painted in an off-white color. The ceiling is painted white with a single light fixture and dark brown wooden trim.

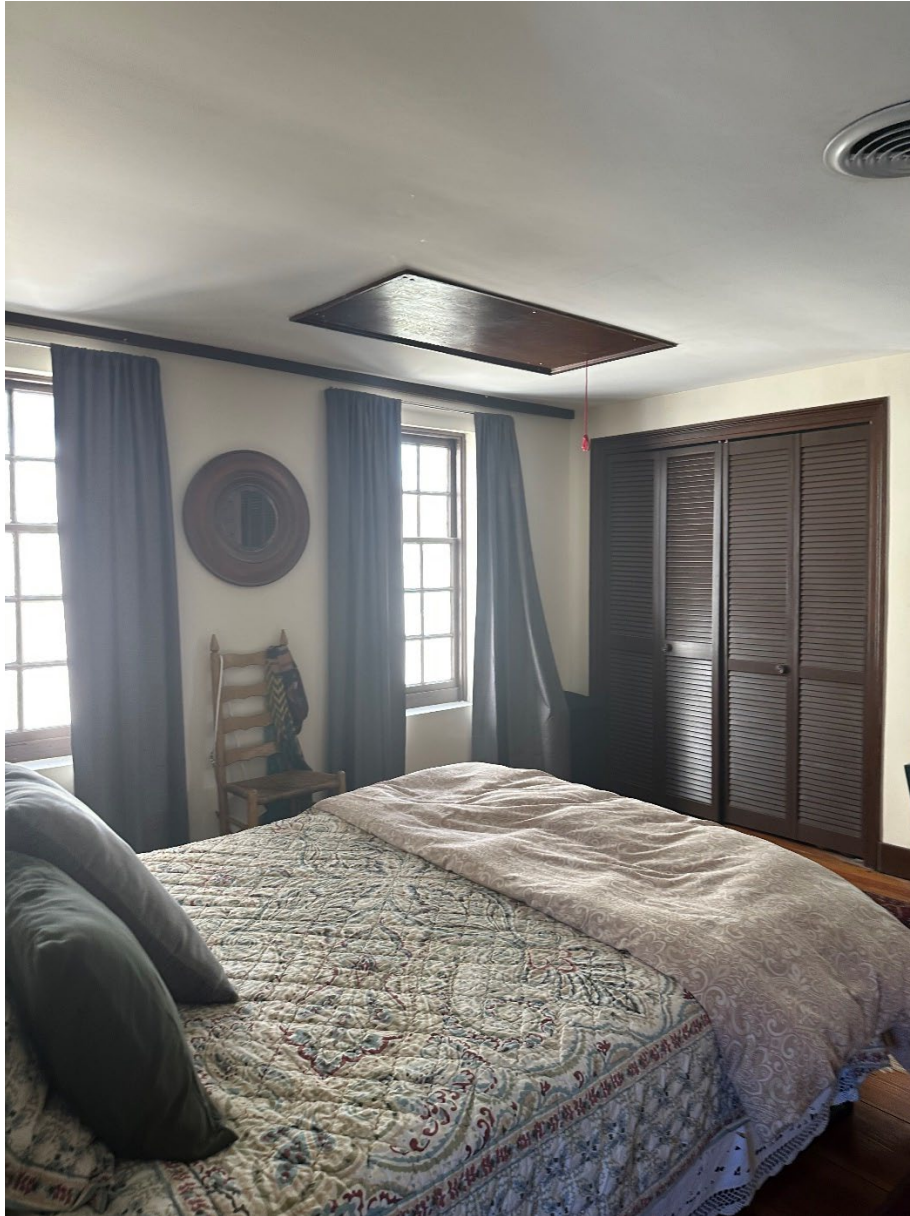


**Figure 13.** View of the second floor Entrance in the Watson House. Note the doorways to the Bedroom (left) and the Living Room (center).

### Bedroom

The second floor bedroom shares many similarities to the floor below. Two 6/9 double-hung sash windows are located on the east side of the room, with a view towards the street. Another 6/9 double-hung window is located between two large closets, in the center of the south wall. The flooring is wooden boards and the walls are painted in an off-white color. The ceiling

is painted white and has dark brown wooden trim along some of the walls. There is an attic access hatch in the ceiling.



**Figure 14.** View of the second floor Bedroom in the Watson House. Note the access hatch to the Attic in the ceiling.

### Living Room

The second floor living room is identical to the first floor living room. A doorway in the southeast corner leads into the kitchen and a doorway in the northeast corner connects to the

entrance. A 6/9 double-hung sash window is located on the north wall and a fireplace is centrally located on the west wall. Above the fireplace is a small wooden mantle with two wooden brackets supporting it. The room has wooden board flooring and the walls are painted in an off-white color. The ceiling is painted white with decorative dark brown wooden trim.



**Figure 15.** View of the second floor Living Room in the Watson House.

### Kitchen

The kitchen on the second floor shares many similarities with the one on the first floor. There are three doorways in the room with the one on the east leading to the bedroom, the one on the northeast corner connecting to the living room, and the one on the west opening into the bathroom. The cabinets are painted the same color as the wooden trim and doorways and, along with the appliances, are located along the south wall. The flooring consists of wooden boards and the walls are painted in an off-white color. The ceiling is painted white with two light fixtures located within the room.

A section of the room narrows leading to the ell of the building and is denoted by a segment of dark brown wall and ceiling trim. This space is used for housing the washing machine and dryer and is not separated from the kitchen by any wall or doorway. The area is decorated like the rest of the interior and has a single light fixture in the ceiling. A doorway on the west wall of this space leads to the bathroom.



**Figure 16.** View of the second floor Kitchen in the Watson House. Note the doorway to the Bathroom in the back.

### Bathroom

The bathroom on this floor is almost identical to the one on the first floor. The room has a toilet, and sink, and a shower/bath. A fixed four-pane window is located on the north wall. The flooring of the second floor bathroom is unique as it consists of mosaic tiles rather than wood

like the rest of the interior spaces. The walls are painted in an off-white color and the ceiling is painted white with dark brown wooden trim.



Figure 17. View of the second floor Bathroom in the Watson House.

# CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

## Landscape

The condition of the overall landscape is fair. The parking area transitions roughly from the street to the partially surfaced lot. The grass in the immediate yard of the property is in good condition. The concrete pad in front of the porch of the Watson House is in poor condition with major cracks as well as significant chips and missing fragments. As this is the most traversed part of the yard and connects to the house itself, this is the most immediate concern in the landscape.



**Figure 1.** View of the concrete pad that leads to the porch of the Watson House.

The well located within the yard is in poor condition. The masonry blocks of the well itself are significantly weathered. Furthermore, the metal grate covering the opening of the well is rusted. Because it is uncertain exactly how old the well is and if it is related to the reconstruction of the Watson House, its restoration is not urgent. A consideration should be made for the safety of those accessing the property because the well is below knee-level and has rough, sharp surfaces in addition to the rusted grate.



**Figure 2.** View of the well on the property of the Watson House.

## Fencing

The condition of both the masonry fence and wooden fence on the property is good. It is apparent that the masonry wall in particular has been maintained with only minor signs of delamination (Figure 3). These areas are primarily on the street façade of the wall which receives light traffic. Additionally, the street is susceptible to flooding during storms which may stimulate weathering. All things considered, both the masonry and wooden fence appear to be devoid of any significant concerns.



**Figure 3.** View of the yard wall of the Watson House from Charlotte Street. Note the blistering and staining.

## **Roof**

The condition of the roof appears to be good. A permit was submitted for a new cedar shake roof system on January 13, 2017.<sup>18</sup> With proper maintenance, wooden shingles should last about thirty years. Taking this into consideration, 2047 is the latest expected date to replace the wooden shakes. Based on an examination of the second floor's ceiling (the attic was not evaluated in this study), there appear to be no leaks. The roof requires no further repair beyond the replacement of its shingles.

## **Wood Siding**

The wood siding of the Watson House is in good condition. Areas near the ground and within the porch appear to have the most deteriorated siding panels. In most cases, these boards are stained with dirt and algae as well as rust from weathered nails in some cases. Less common, though still present, are boards that are warped, which appear to have been caused by either water damage or stress. Such panels are primarily found on the porch. The majority of the siding, however, is in good condition. Aside from the aforementioned panels, the rest of the boards do not require any replacement, repair or repainting.

---

<sup>18</sup> Permits were issued by the University of Florida Environmental Health and Safety Building Codes Enforcement.



**Figure 4.** Low view of the exterior stairway on the porch of the Watson House. Note the condition of the steps, the siding, and the visible part of the railing.

On both floors of the south façade and the second floor of the east facade, there are vines on the wood siding and windows (Figure 5). This vegetative growth has the potential to facilitate deterioration through moisture and can be a nuisance. The growth originates from the south alley behind the building which is unkempt. While the vines themselves are not of immediate concern, they are part of a larger landscaping issue between the south side of the Watson House and the neighboring building.



**Figure 5.** View of the east façade of the Watson House. Note the vines that begin in the southeast corner and run up the building to the exterior of the east side.

## **Paint**

The paint on and within the Watson House is in good condition. There appear to be no notable areas on the exterior paneling where paint is missing. The paint on the wood siding on the first floor porch, especially around the stairs, is cracking in small patches. Additionally, the algae growth on the wood gives the green paint a darker appearance and forms green stains on the white paint.

The paint on the interior is in good condition. Two rooms on the second floor appear to be the only areas inside the Watson House where the paint is deteriorating. The first is the bathroom where the paint appears to be blistering beside the shower (Figure 5). This is likely the result of moisture from the shower leaking and should be quickly addressed before more of the paint is affected. The living room is the other location with noteworthy deterioration of the paint. Above the fireplace is an area of approximately one square foot where the paint is cracking and peeling (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** View of a blister in the wall of the second floor Bathroom. Note the proximity to the shower.



**Figure 7.** View of the fireplace in the second floor Living Room. Note the peeling paint below the mantel.

## **Doors**

The doors and doorways of the Watson House are in excellent condition. The interior doors show little to no signs of damage, deterioration, or missing paint. The entryway doors on both the first and second floors have accumulated a moderate amount of staining and minor scratches on the exterior (Figure 7). None of the doors or frames of the Watson House require any immediate intervention.



**Figure 8.** View of the second floor Entrance door.

## **Windows**

Generally, the windows and frames of the Watson House are in fair condition. Most of the frames and shutters are moderately dirty and scratched (Figure 7). Some of the shutters are crooked because of failing hinges. The shutter dogs on the 6/9 double-hung sash windows are in varying condition. Most of those on the first floor are rusted and their paint has partially chipped while those on the east and south façade of the second floor appear to be in a better state.

The glass panes of the windows are in good condition apart from a single window on the north façade on the ell of the first floor. The window is a fixed four-pane window of which every pane is broken (Figure 7). It appears that someone has attempted to cover the window from within, however, moisture and outside objects are not prevented from entering through the broken window. Furthermore, broken glass shards have yet to be removed from the panes, leaving the potential for injury. The repair of this window is of the highest priority.



**Figure 9.** View of the broken window on the first floor ell of the Watson House.

### **Interior – First Floor**

The first floor interior of the Watson House appears to be devoid of any notable faults.

## **Interior – Second Floor**

Two rooms of the Watson House's second floor interior have problems in need of treatment. First is the previously mentioned blister in the paint of the bathroom which requires further investigation. The second is a spot in the paint above the living room fireplace which is peeling. The repair of this patch is not an immediate concern. For further analysis and images, see the preceding "PAINT" section and Figures 5 & 6.

# TREATMENT AND WORK RECOMMENDATIONS

## Treatment Approach

The Watson House is a historic property managed by University of Florida Historic St. Augustine Inc. (UFHSA). The building is now rented as two apartment units. For more than fifty years, the Watson House has been one of the few representations of British Period architecture in St. Augustine. There is also an opportunity to interpret the Watson House with emphasis on its association with the early historic preservation movement.

The recommended method of treatment to the Watson House is preservation. The National Park Service defines preservation as a means of treatment as:

The act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to the standards established by the Secretary of the Interior, the following recommendations also adhere to the City of St. Augustine's *Architectural Guidelines for Historic Preservation*. These guidelines are specific to the historic buildings of the city and are considerate of local historic districts, materials, architectural forms, and more.

## Specific Recommendations

Overall, the Watson House is in excellent condition and very few concerns need to be addressed immediately. The most proactive decision is to continue ongoing maintenance and

---

<sup>19</sup> The Secretary of the Interior, "The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: Preservation as a Treatment and Standards for Preservation," National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/treatment-standards-preservation.htm>.

monitoring of the building and property. The following recommendations are based on non-invasive analyses conducted at the Watson House from August to December 2023. Each suggestion lists the location or concern followed by the recommended form of treatment.

### Parking

- Repave or fill in the area where the road transitions to the gravel lot
- Create a level pathway through the parking area and yard that extends to the porch of the building
- Regularly check for significant potholes in the surface of the parking area

### Fence and Yard Wall

- Regularly inspect the wooden fence for rot, splitting, or damage and conduct general maintenance
- Regularly inspect the masonry yard wall for cracks, stains, or damage in the plaster or masonry and conduct general maintenance
- The blisters in the paint of the yard wall should be sanded and repainted

### Landscape and Site Components

- The concrete pad that connects the gate of the east yard wall to the porch of the building should be inspected for underlying structural issues. Pending the assessment, the pad should either be repaired and repainted or replaced with reinforced concrete
- Analyze the well on the property for historical significance and structural integrity. Unless research indicates that the well is significant to the Watson House, it is advisable to refrain from restoring it to better condition. For the time being, it would be best to clean the structure and repair the corners which have deteriorated the most.
- Conduct a thorough cleaning of the brick foundation and assess for any signs of damage

- Remove vegetation and detritus from around the foundation of the building, especially along the south side
- Remove the vines that extend from the south façade to the upper floor of the east façade
- Conduct routine maintenance and monitoring of the landscape and vegetation

#### Decay and Rot

- Routinely inspect and repair wooden architectural elements for signs of decay and rot
- Ensure that current and replacement wooden elements are properly treated and sealed and that the exterior paint is maintained

#### Pest Infestation

- Inspect for signs of infestation regularly and treat accordingly

#### Ultraviolet (UV) Damage

- Ensure that coatings such as sealants, paints, and stains are properly applied and maintained

#### Moisture Intrusion

- Windows, doors, joints and cracks should be regularly inspected for proper sealing and promptly repaired if damaged

#### Paint

- Clean the exterior siding, foundation, and masonry wall with a light pressure wash or cleaning solution to remove the dirt, algae, and other residue
- Sand and repaint areas with blistered paint in the masonry wall

#### Roof

- Annually inspect for leaks, missing or damaged flashing, and shakes in need of replacement

- Inspect the roof after major weather events

### Porch

- Routinely inspect the porch, especially the wooden posts, for structural stability and damage
- Replace warped, split, and rotten boards of wood siding with new treated and painted boards
- Clean, repair, and level the brick steps that lead up to the porch

### Windows

- Promptly repair the broken fixed four-pane window on the first floor ell. The replacement window should be in-kind with the other two windows on the ell with a wooden frame and four rectangular glass panes
- Inspect windows for damage after major weather events
- Consider implementing a form of protection against severe weather events

### Interior

- Determine the cause of the large blister in the wall of the second floor bathroom and address the underlying cause appropriately. Then, sand and repaint the affected area
- Determine the cause of the peeling paint above the fireplace in the second floor living room and address the underlying cause appropriately. Then, sand and repaint the affected area

## REFERENCES

- [*Construction of Watson House from Charlotte Street, Looking Northwest*] c. 1968. Photograph. St. Augustine Restoration, Inc. UF Digital Collections. Accessed December 12, 2023. <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/usach90029/00005>.
- “City of St. Augustine Historic Preservation Master Plan,” 2018. <https://www.citystaug.com/450/Master-Plan>.
- “Home.” UF Historic St. Augustine. May 2, 2024. <https://www.staugustine.ufl.edu/index.html>.
- “St. Augustine Historic District, St. Augustine, Florida.” National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form. June 4, 1986.
- Arrivas House After Restoration from St. George Street, Looking Southwest, 1963*. Photograph. St. Augustine Restoration, Inc. UF Digital Collections. Accessed December 12, 2023. <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/usach00499/00013>.
- Barnes, Mark R. “St. Augustine Town Plan Historic District Additional Documentation Study.” 2007. Florida Master Site File – FMSF SJ05567, Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, Florida.
- Carling, Anne. “First Major English Period Building Being Rebuilt on Charlotte Street.” *The St. Augustine Record*, February, 1968. <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/usach00518/00001>.
- City of St. Augustine Interactive Map*. [computer map]. Using ArcGIS [GIS software]. <https://www.city.staug.com/462/Geographic-Information-Systems-GIS-Maps>.
- Crewe, Sabrina, and Janet Riehecky. *The Settling of St. Augustine*. Milwaukee: Gareth Stevens Publishing, 2003.
- Davenport, Patricia. “Watson House: FMSF SJ00541,” May 12, 2016. Florida Master Site File, Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, Florida.
- Deagan, Kathleen. “Archaeological Strategy in the Investigation of an Unknown Era: Sixteenth Century St. Augustine.” Tallahassee: Florida State University, 1978. Retrieved from Governor’s House Library – St. Augustine, FL.
- Gannon, Michael. *The History of Florida*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013.
- Jackson, A., S. Kim, and M. Hylton III. “Watson House: FMSF SJ00541,” May 28, 2021. Florida Master Site File, Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, Florida.
- Manucy, Albert C. *The Houses of St. Augustine, 1565-1821*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992.
- Nolan, David. “Watson House: FMSF SJ00541,” March 1979. Florida Master Site File, Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, Florida.

Schafer, Daniel. "St. Augustine's British Years, 1763-1784." *El Escribano*, 38. St. Augustine Historical Society.

St. Augustine Historic Preservation Board. *Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board Guide Book*. Florida: Department of State, 1971.

Stork, William. *A Description of East-Florida: with a Journal*. London: W. Nicoll, 1769. Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/descriptionofeast00instor/page/n7/mode/2up>.

The City of St. Augustine. "Architectural Guidelines for Historic Preservation." October, 2011. <https://www.citystaug.com/DocumentCenter/View/153/Architectural-Guidelines-for-Historic-Preservation-PDF?bidld=>.

"The Menorcans." National Park Service. Aril 14, 2015. <https://www.nps.gov/foma/learn/historyculture/menorcans.htm>.

The Secretary of the Interior. "The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: Preservation as a Treatment and Standards for Preservation." National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/treatment-standards-preservation.htm>.

*The St. Augustine Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission, April 28, 1965*. Photograph. St. Augustine Restoration, Inc. UF Digital Collections. Accessed December 12, 2023. <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/USACH00528/00004/images>.

University of Florida Environmental Health and Safety Building Codes Enforcement. University of Florida, Gainesville.

\*Unless otherwise cited, the images within the figures were taken on site by the research team between August and December 2023.

## APPENDICES

### **Timeline of Known Owners:**

1764 – Property was under ownership of Don Juan Jose de Arrasate

? – Sold to James Henderson

1772 – Purchased by James Penman

1779 – Purchased by William Watson

? – Stables on the property were converted into a home

? – Watson House constructed

1783 – Property left in care of Father Pedro Camps & Matin Mateo Hernandez

1802 – Hernandez's final descendants passed, property became part of the Spanish Military Hospital

? – Property entered the possession of C. Bravo

1877 – Cesemer Masters purchased the property

? – Watson House was destroyed (Unknown cause, likely a fire in 1887)

1894 – Watson House no longer appeared in Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

1899 – Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps indicated a new building on the property

1907 – Vincent J. Mickler purchased the property

? – Acme Machine Company (F. W. Cheatharn, proprietor) acquired the property

1968 – Watson House was reconstructed by the St. Augustine Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission

June 1997 – Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board was abolished. The City of St. Augustine assumed temporary management of the Watson house.

July 2010 – The University of Florida assumed responsibility of the Watson House

December 2010 – UF Historic St. Augustine, Inc. was formed to manage the Watson house

\*See the history and references sections for further information