

Jacksonville's Main Fire Station - Past 'n' Present

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Construction is nearly finished in Jacksonville of a new public safety center. The \$30 million project will house the police and fire department administrative offices, along with a new Fire Station 1. Located on the east end of the building, the station will have two stories and four bays that face Marine Boulevard. Housed at Station 1 are Engine 1, Rescue 1, and Battalion 1.

The 95,000 square-foot facility will also house the city's 911 call center, the city's emergency operations center, and its Intelligent Transportation Center. The building will front a new extension of Court Street at the intersection of Marine Boulevard. It was designed by Gantt Huberman Architect. (Why are we blogged about Jacksonville, you ask? That's easy. Lee Wilson's been at the beach this week and has been transmitting photos from there and parts in-between.)



Current Fire Station 1

The complex replaces the current public safety center that's located next door, which will be demolished and used as a parking area for the new center. The block-long building was constructed in 1957 and also originally housed City Hall. The fire station is located on the south end, and is a two-story structure with four bays. This was the city's sole fire station (correct?) until they opened Station 2 six years later at 820 Barn Street, and a third station at 190 Huff Drive in 1985. Today, the Jacksonville Fire Department has five fire stations.



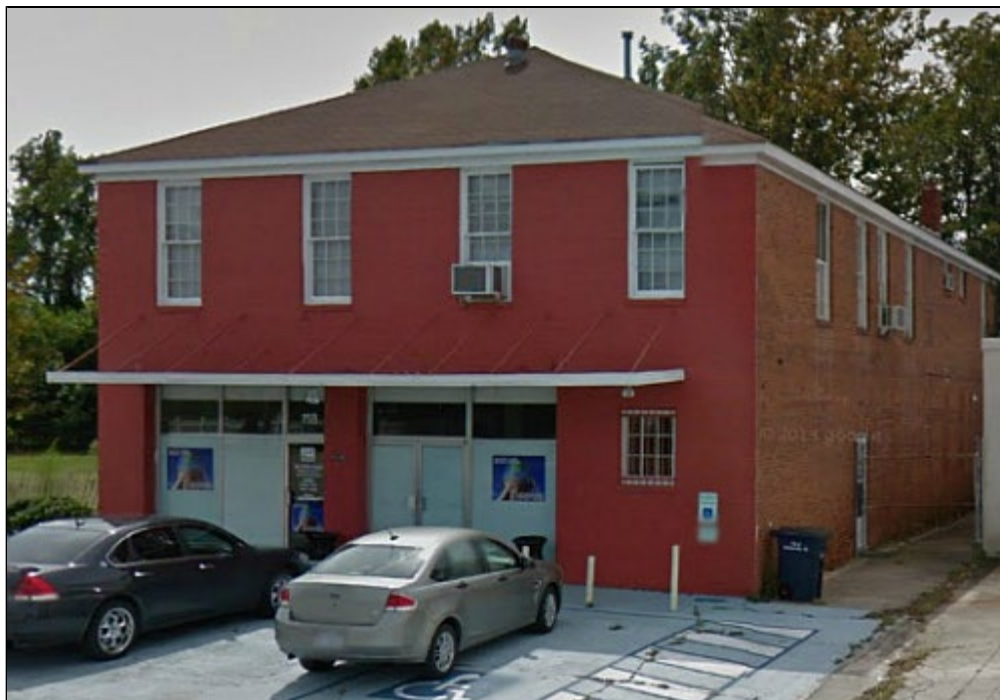
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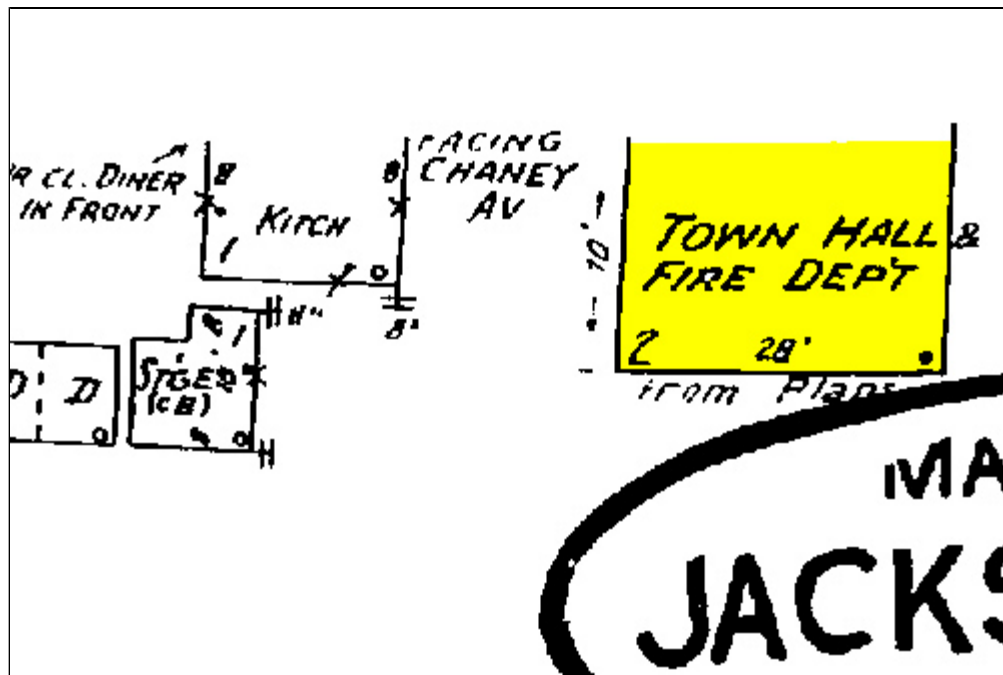
Bing Maps photo

Town Hall and Fire Station

Before 1957, the fire department was located in a two-story town hall building at 118 Chaney Avenue. The building was planned by July 1943 and appears on Sanborn Fire Insurances Maps of that month as "from plans." Tax records state the building was erected in 1950, but it was listed in city directories as early as 1948 city directory. The original address was 120 Chaney Avenue. It is presently occupied by the Jacksonville Volunteer Fire Department, who lease out the first floor. (Who/what are they? Non-profit organization formed in 1960. They currently support the mission of the fire department, and provide rehab at structure fires, help with public education, and other tasks.)



Google Maps photo

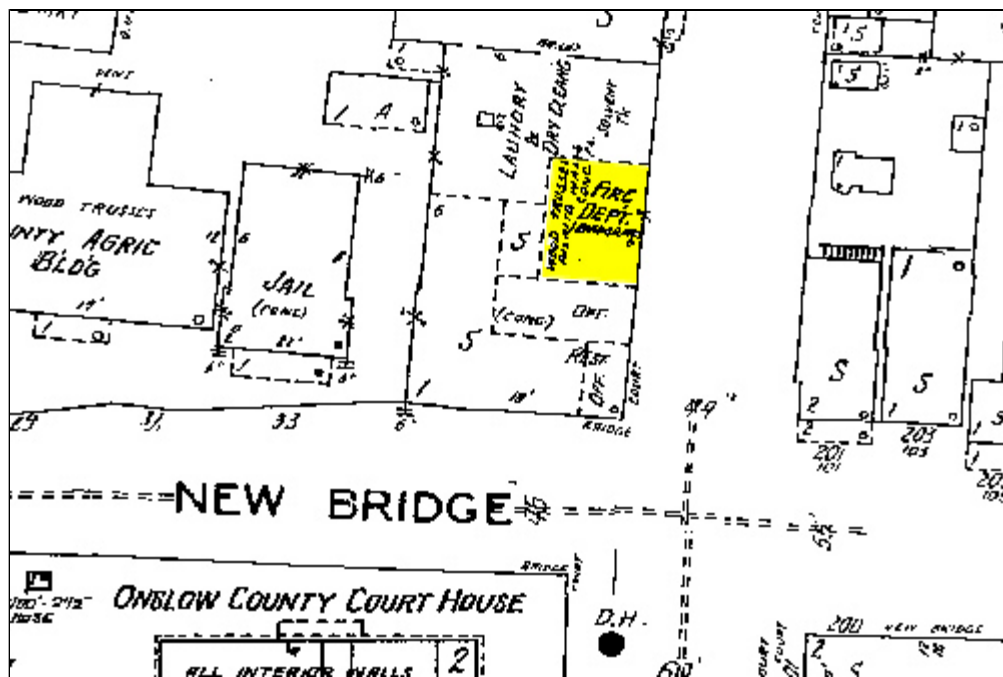


Temporary Station

Before Chaney Street, the fire department occupied a temporary location on the west side of Court Street, north of New Bridge Street. It was housed in the center of a one-story building with multiple occupancies, including a laundry and dry cleaner, and a restaurant. It appears in the July 1943 Sanborn map. Based on aerial maps, the building is long-gone and the site is occupied by the current Onslow County courthouse building.

The fire department is described that year as "volunteer, one Chief, one Asst. Chief, and twenty-three men. One station, one Dodge/Darley truck, 750 GPM, 100 gallons, with 150 feet of one-and-a-half inch hose, 1,200 feet of two-and-a-half inch hose, and 800 feet of two-and-a-half inch hose in reserve. Alarm by telephone and electric siren." The water system was equipped with forty-five triple hydrants and eight double hydrants.





Hose House

Before the Court Street location, the fire department was housed in a one-story building on the south side of the intersection of Mill Avenue and William Street. The one-story "hose house" housed one hand-drawn cart with 750 feet of two-and-a-half inch hose, along with a hand reel with no hose. That was probably a "reserve unit." It appears in Sanborn Maps dated March 1925.

The fire department that year is described as having "no organized company," but equipped with the aforementioned apparatus. There was "no man on duty at any hour" and an additional 1,250 feet of two-and-a-half inch hose "distributed about town." The water system consisted of seventeen double hydrants, with a regular pressure of forty pounds and "fire pressure" of 100 pounds.

