

John Nolen Plan, 1926



## John Nolen Plan for Venice

*Venice is the first city built to demonstrate what Florida can do to produce a community that is at once a fine resort of great charm and refinement and a city serving all the everyday needs of a soundly constructed municipality. The result is an inspiration to those who would make this world a better place to live in.*

— John Nolen, 1927

In 1925 John Nolen (1869–1937), a renowned city planner, was hired by Dr. Fred H. Albee to design a city called Venice. Albee had purchased 2,916 acres of land from the Sarasota–Venice Company with the dream of building a model city. Nolen was the first American to identify himself exclusively as a town and city planner. Educated at Harvard University, Nolen is regarded today as a pioneer in the field. He and his firm completed more than four hundred planning projects from 1905–1937. Among them were comprehensive plans for more than 25 cities across the country, including Venice, Florida.

In his Venice plan, Nolen featured a commercial center, schools, as well as parks and green spaces throughout the city's residential neighborhoods. He designed large boulevards as the major traffic arteries and smaller, hemispherical and diagonal streets for the residential sections.

Buildings had to be constructed in the Northern Italian Renaissance architectural style (now referred to as Mediterranean Revival). Design standards were established and building plans were reviewed by a committee. Standards included setbacks, orientation and relationship to neighboring buildings; varied roof lines and smooth stucco were encouraged.

In 2010, the John Nolen Plan of Venice Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The City of Venice maintains design guidelines to ensure that both new and old buildings downtown retain a Mediterranean Revival appearance. These guidelines, along with past and future preservation projects, ensure that Venice will continue to be the beautiful "City on the Gulf" and model of urban planning known as New Urbanism.

## Explore even more !



### Venice Train Depot, 1927

303 East Venice Avenue

- Constructed by Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) for \$47,500
- Tours are available through the Venice Area Historical Society. [veniceareahistoricalsociety.org](http://veniceareahistoricalsociety.org)



### Triangle Inn, 1927

351 Nassau Street S

- Built by Mrs. Augusta Miner and specifically designed to house her lodging business.
- Saved from demolition in 1991, it was acquired by the City of Venice, moved from its original location and restored.
- Today serves as the Venice Museum offering permanent and changing exhibits on the history of Venice and its neighboring communities. [venicemuseum.org](http://venicemuseum.org)

Venice MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

Open M–W  
10am–4pm



**Venice MainStreet, Inc. is committed to preserving and enhancing the character, beauty, and economic vitality of historic downtown Venice and surrounding areas.**



Visit [VeniceFL.org](http://VeniceFL.org)



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101 W Venice Ave Suite 23

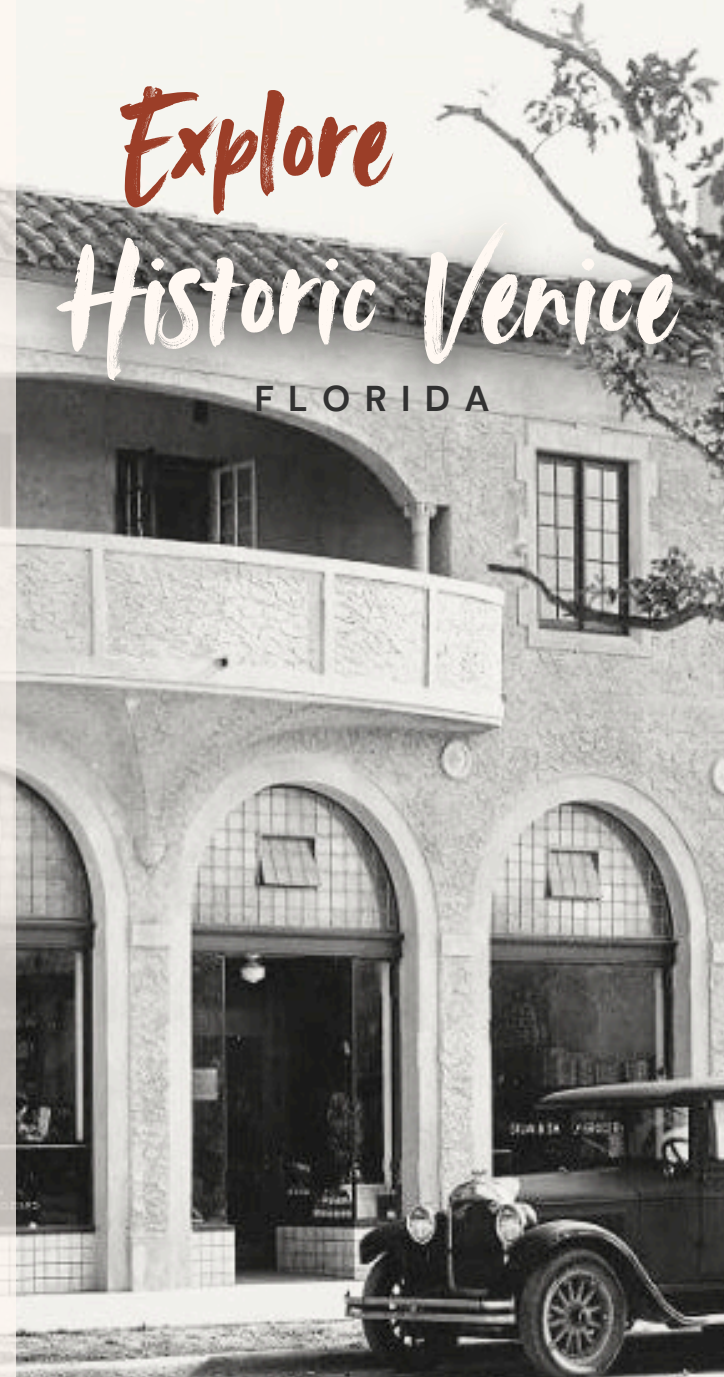


To view this tour online, with additional historic buildings, scan the QR code.



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City of Venice Division of Historical Resources.  
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# Explore Historic Venice FLORIDA



**SELF-GUIDED  
DOWNTOWN  
WALKING  
TOUR**





1

### Hotel Venice, 1926

200 N Nassau St

- 1<sup>st</sup> building built by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers in Venice
- 3 story Italian Renaissance Style
- 100 room hotel until the 1930s
- Became winter quarters for the Kentucky Military Institute from the 1930s to 1970



2

### San Marco Hotel, 1926

238 W Tampa Ave

- Originally a 92-room hotel
- Built by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers
- Construction took 90 days and cost \$300,000
- Became winter quarters for the Kentucky Military Institute from the 1930s to 1970



3

### Orange Blossom Garage, 1927

140 W Tampa Ave

- Housed a gas filling station, car storage garage, and five shops
- Used by the Kentucky Military Institute as an armory, chapel and arena
- Current home of the Venice Theatre



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### Schoolcraft Building, 1926

201 W Venice Ave

- Home to the earliest local telephone switchboard, the Venice Pharmacy and apartments
- Due to demand, the apartments were rented before completed
- Construction cost was \$45,000



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### Ennes Arcade, 1927

225-231 W Venice Ave

- Constructed of clay blocks, brick, and green roof tiles
- Two 2-story wings were connected by a roofed arcade
- Once housed the Hotel Valencia, stores, a post office, and electric company



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### Saunders Building, 1926

247-251 W Venice Ave

- The second commercial building constructed in Venice
- Intended to house a drug store, barbershop, haberdashery, and tea room
- Today it retains its Venetian columns



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### Blackburn Building, 1926

303-305 W Venice Ave

- Designed by local architect J.C. Humphrey of Sarasota
- Construction cost was \$26,000
- Northern Italian features include clay block walls and red roof tiles
- First floor had shops and second floor housed apartments



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### Lord-Higel House, 1896

409 Granada Ave

- Oldest existing structure in South Sarasota County
- Built by Joseph H. Lord; turned over to George Higel in early 1900s
- Originally located on a citrus grove south of Roberts Bay
- Moved in 2005, deeded to the City of Venice and restored



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### Sawyer Building, 1926

Nassau St S

- Harold W. Sawyer constructed this building for \$20,000
- Housed his grocery and meat market on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor; 8 offices were located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
- Purchased by the First Baptist Church in 1934 and enlarged



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### Lawton Building, 1926

229-237 Miami Ave W

- Constructed for \$15,000
- Designed by architect Harrison Gill
- "Spanish design" with stucco-covered hollow clay tile walls
- Exterior façade has not been altered since original construction



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### Wimmers Building, 1926

221-223 Miami Ave W

- Named for its first tenant H.N. "Bud" Wimmers
- He was the paymaster of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers' work crews who built Venice
- In 1926, Wimmers was appointed to the town council



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### Green Building, 1926

201-207 Miami Ave W

- Constructed for \$85,000 and modeled after the "Flat Iron" building in New York City
- Housed 10 apartments, 5 stores, 4 offices, and a gas filling station
- Today it is known as Burgundy Square, a well-preserved example of a 1920s commercial building

