

### **3. Period of Significance (1938 - 1946)**

Every significant historic property (or historic district) will have a period of significance. The National Park Service defines this as “the span of time during which significant events and activities occurred. Events and associations with historic properties are finite; most properties have a clearly definable period of significance.”<sup>3</sup>

Identifying the time span when a property achieved its significance should be based on the best available research. The period selected should take into consideration the historic use(s) of the property, modifications over time, and the reliability of information about the property at different points in its history. The Period of Significance for 624 White Street can be identified on the following basis:

- Under Criterion B (Persons), the period of significance for 624 White Street is 1938 to 1946, marking the years the house was owned by Elizabeth Bishop.
- Under Criterion C (Design/Construction), the period of significance is circa 1889 to 1946, marking its original construction through the time it was owned by Elizabeth Bishop. This period includes alterations to the property made by Bishop and Louise Crane, including moving the house back on its lot, building a porch above the cistern, and building the bookcases in the dining room.

## 4. Rehabilitation and Adaptive Use Potential:

In searching for a new use for an historic building, attempts should be made to match the new use to the spatial agreements and character of the structure. Ideally, any historic building would be used for its original purpose.

### ADAPTIVE USE POSSIBILITIES:

Whether rehabilitation or a restoration, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards clearly emphasize identifying a compatible use:

#### *GENERAL STANDARDS FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROJECTS*

The following general standards apply to all treatments undertaken on historic properties listed in the National Register.

1. Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property that requires minimal alteration of the building structure, or site and its environment, or to use a property for its originally intended purpose.

#### *STANDARDS FOR RESTORATION*

*11. Every reasonable effort shall be made to use a property for its originally intended purpose or to provide a compatible use that will require minimum alteration to the property and its environment.*

The historic use of 624 White Street during its period of significance was as a residence for Elizabeth Bishop and Louise Crane, though Bishop appears to have moved out of the house during the early 1940's and rented it to others. The house has been used as a single family or multiple family residence during its entire lifespan. There is ample evidence that the house served as a rental property or was used by several individual boarders occupying single rooms during much of its time.

The intended use for the house and property will be as an office and headquarters for the Key West Literary Seminar. The upstairs bedrooms will be utilized as Office space, and the first floor will be converted to Office and Exhibit space. The exhibits will describe and celebrate Elizabeth Bishop and her time in Key West. The Living Room will occasionally be used to give lectures or readings in. The Kitchen will be utilized as a Break Room for the office. The intention of the Owners is to restore the house back to its 1938-1946 configuration, complete with period furniture.

While the house will not be restored as a residence, this is an extremely compatible use that minimizes alterations to the character-defining features and spaces of the property and its environment, and restores the house back to its 1938-46 period of significance. Thus, the rehabilitation of the Bishop House as an office/museum meets the Secretary of the Interior's guidelines.

## 5. Architectural Analysis by Building Element:

**ITEM:** General Description – 624 White Street

**EVALUATION:** Significant, Deteriorated

### DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITION:

624 White Street is a two-story wood frame structure located on a busy residential street in Key West, Florida. The architectural style of the building is commonly known as an 'Eyebrow House'. This is an architectural style distinctive to Key West. Typically, Eyebrow houses are two story wood framed gabled structures, with the gable running parallel to the street. The buildings are generally three or five bays wide and 1 1/2 or two stories tall, with a front porch running along the entire front side. The long side of the gable extends 5 to 6 feet over the front porch, creating a large overhang over the top



The front façade of 624 White Street.

floor windows. The style developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as a means of providing shade to the second floor windows. Approximately 79 examples of Eyebrow Houses exist in Key West. This structure is an excellent example of the type. It was constructed around 1889.

The two story 'Eyebrow' portion of the building measures 32 feet x 16 feet and consists of three bays with a central interior stair. There are three distinct one-story additions at the rear of the home. The south gabled addition houses a kitchen, the center gable houses a dining area, and the north addition, a simple shed roof, houses a covered porch constructed over a concrete cistern. The center dining area is constructed very similarly to the two-story front portion of the house and may have been constructed at the same time.



General view of the interiors of 624 White Street. Finishes consist of stained wood floors, painted wood ceilings, and painted wood walls.

The finish floor of the house is set approximately 28" above grade on concrete and limestone piers. The exterior of the house consists of painted wood tongue in groove siding installed vertically. The two-

story portion of the building is roofed with metal shingles, while the rear additions are roofed with v-crimp galvalume metal roofing. The interior floors walls and ceilings of the building all consist of painted or stained tongue in groove wood.

The windows consist largely of painted wood putty glazed 6/6 wood single hung windows which are remarkably original to construction. Many of the windows also still retain their original painted wood louvered exterior shutters. A few of the rear windows have been replaced by newer aluminum jalousie and wood units, and several of the wood exterior louvered shutters have been replaced with solid board shutters.

Overall, the house is remarkably original to construction, a rarity in Old Town Key West. Very few alterations have been made to the house since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.



Interior view of the one story room at the rear center of the house.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

The building is worn and deteriorated from decades of use but is remarkably original to construction. The work on the building should focus on deferred maintenance and preservation of the existing elements. The building requires general maintenance and minor repairs as described in the other sections.

**ITEM: Site Improvements– 624 White Street**

**EVALUATION: Significant, Good condition.**

**DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITION:**

The building is sited on a rectangular lot measuring 67 feet x 90 feet. Landscaping consists of planting beds, small ground cover, and mature trees, all surrounded by white pea gravel. This is a very typical landscape of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Key West houses. The landscape is somewhat overgrown and in need of trimming, but serviceable. A worn 48” wide concrete path leads from the front gate to the front porch. The front yard is surrounded by a 3-foot-high painted wood picket fence, and the side yards are fenced with a combination of wood fencing and deteriorated chain link fencing. The rear property line is bordered by a concrete block wall. The concrete foundation walls of a structure, probably an abandoned privy, are located at the SW corner of the site. These foundations walls are approximately 8” high, and surround a shallow pit covered by plywood. At the south side yard, a shed roof is connected to the house. This v-crimp metal shed roof houses a stone laundry sink, outdoor shower, and hookups for a washing machine. This is another typical feature of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Key West homes.



This general view of the front yard shows the typical landscape of mature trees and ground cover surrounded by white pea gravel.

The house has a single parking space, located at the NE corner of the site. This parking space is surrounded by a wood picket fence and is paved in pea gravel. A small gate leads from the space to the yard.

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

The existing landscaping is markedly different than what occurred during the Period of Significance. Consideration should be given to researching the landscape during Bishop’s time and restoring it. In the meantime, the existing landscape should be trimmed. If research reveals that the privy or outbuildings existing on the site during the Period of Significance, consideration should be given to reconstructing them, if photographic evidence can be found of their appearance.



General view of the rear yard of 624 White Street.



**ITEM: Roof Structure and Roof Covering– 624 White Street**

**EVALUATION: Significant, Good condition**

**DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITION:**

The existing roof at the two-story portion of the house consists of metal shingle roofing over  $\frac{3}{4}$ " board sheathing over 2"x 3-3/4" rafters @ 24 o.c. The roof extends over the front porch. This roof was replaced with the last several years. When the roof was replaced, the roofers used metal fasteners that were too long. These nails penetrated the historic board sheathing and are now painfully visible in the porch ceiling.



There is a small attic above the second story of the house. This attic is framed with the same dimension roof rafters. The attic is accessed by a hatch in the south bedroom.

This view of the rear of the house shows the metal shingle roof at the second floor. The v-crimp roof of the kitchen addition can be seen at the bottom of the photo.

The existing roof at the kitchen addition consists of metal v-crimp roofing over  $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick board sheathing over 2" x 3  $\frac{3}{4}$ " wood rafters. This roof was replaced in the last few years.

The existing roof at the one-story center rear part of the house consists of v-crimp roofing over board sheathing over 2"x 3  $\frac{3}{4}$ " rafters @ 28" o.c. This roof structure was originally exposed to the interior, as there is a very old coat of paint on it. At some point, 1  $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 3  $\frac{3}{4}$ " ceiling joists and a painted wood  $\frac{3}{4}$ " tongue in groove ceiling was installed in this room. This roof was replaced in the last few years.



This view of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor dormer shows the aluminum ogee gutters and square downspouts on the house. These gutters and downspouts are not appropriate for the house.

The existing shed roof over the cistern porch consists of v-crimp roofing over 1x6 v-groove painted wood tongue-in-groove board sheathing over 1-3/4" x 3-1/2" rafters at 24" o.c. This roof was also been replaced recently.

Painted aluminum ogee style gutters are installed at the entire roof. This gutter and downspout system was installed when the roof was replaced within the last few years. This style of aluminum gutter is inappropriate for the period of concern. It is likely that galvanized half-round gutters and round downspouts would have been installed on the house, piped into the cistern.



**RECOMMENDATION:**

Consideration should be given to removing the existing aluminum gutters and downspouts and installing half round gutters and circular downspouts which are more appropriate to the period of significance. The downspouts should be repiped into the cistern, which will keep it full.

The rear additions are currently roofed in v-crimp roofing. According to historic photos, during 1938-1946 the rear additions were roofed with metal shingles matching the two story front house.

The nail heads, commonly called 'shiners', protruding from the porch roof should be cut off and removed.

The roofing nails used to install the new roof were too long, and have gone all the way through the sheathing.

This view of the attic over the rear central portion of the house shows the painted rafters and ceiling joists. The ceiling and joists were added later, as there is a very old coat of paint on the rafters.



General view of the attic above the second floor. A wood louvered vent can be seen at the gable wall.

**ITEM: Foundation and Floor Structure— 624 White Street**

**EVALUATION: Significant, Deteriorated.**

**DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITION:**

The floor structure of the front portion of the house consists of varying, but usually two layers of  $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 3" wood tongue-in-groove flooring over wood joists. There are various small elevation changes between the first floor rooms, signifying various layers of flooring. The joist sizes and spacing varies. A full existing framing plan showing all wood joist sizes and spacing can be found in the structural section of this report.



The flooring in the Living Room area consists of stained T&G wood, and the flooring in the south bedroom is painted T&G wood.

General view of the foundation piers and floor framing under the two story portion of the house. An original limestone pier can be seen at left, and a replacement concrete pier can be seen at left.

The wood floor framing is set on a combination of concrete and limestone foundation piers. The original foundation piers of the building were constructed of 16" x 16" limestone. Many of these piers are severely deteriorated and are no longer properly supporting the sill beams above, causing the floor framing to sag in places. This is a common issue with historic buildings in Key West. The limestone piers around the outer perimeter of the house have been removed and replaced with board-formed concrete piers measuring 12" x 12" x 22" high. The concrete is quite old; these piers were likely replaced when the house was moved in 1938.

The flooring at the south kitchen addition consists of two layers of painted wood T&G flooring over wood joists over the same concrete columns noted above.



The flooring at the center one-story rear consists of stained tongue in groove wood over a tongue in groove subfloor over wood joists over concrete and limestone piers.

This view of the rear of the house shows the cistern that the porch is constructed on. Several cracks are evident on the concrete cistern wall.

One of the most distinctive features of the house is its cistern. Located at the NE corner of the house, the cistern is



composed of 10" thick concrete walls, a concrete floor, and a 6" thick concrete slab cover. This concrete cistern cover has a large crack in it running N-S.

The walls of the cistern rise approximately 29" above grade, and are cracked in several locations. The cistern is approximately 6'-4" deep, so 48" of the cistern lies below grade. There is a concrete column at the center of the cistern. The cistern is accessed by a 23" x 23" square opening at the NW corner. This opening is covered with a wood hatch. The cistern is currently not watertight. Several tree roots have penetrated and cracked the concrete, and the plaster interior coating is cracked and delaminating. There is approximately 4" of water in the cistern.



This photo shows the interior of the cistern. There is approximately 4" of water in the cistern. Cracked and delaminated plaster is visible on the walls, as well as tree roots which have penetrated the concrete walls. The cistern is no longer watertight. Approximately 48" of the cistern lies below grade.

Before the US Navy installed the freshwater line from Florida City in 1942, cisterns were an important part of the operation of any home in Key West. They were the only source of fresh water on the island, with the exception of brackish wells. The Sanborn maps of the time show that virtually every house had a cistern behind it. The cisterns were kept full by rainwater piped in from the roof gutters and downspouts.

There is currently a covered porch built atop the cistern. The porch consists of 7'-6" high wood frame walls covered in painted wood board shutters, and a wood framed roof with v-crimp roofing.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

1. The deteriorated limestone foundation piers at the center of the building should be replaced with new concrete piers over new reinforced concrete spread footings. After the limestone piers are removed, the sill beams and floor framing should be jacked up to remove any sag from the floor framing. The new concrete piers should then be installed. The framing should bear fully on the new piers.



Another photo of the underside of the house shows a deteriorated limestone foundation pier and the historic floor framing.

2. The cistern should be repaired and made watertight again. The cracked concrete floor, walls and top slab should be repaired. The cistern overflows should be restored. The interior walls of the cistern should be recoated with plaster and made watertight again. The gutters and downspouts of the roof should be connected back to the cistern, so that it fills on a regular basis. The cistern should also be plumbed so that it can be filled with city water, or well water from the well



This photo shows the painted concrete top slab of the cistern. The access hatch can be seen at right. A crack is visible leading from the access hatch to the wall.

onsite. It is extremely likely that the cistern was operational during the period of significance. Water from the cistern was used for washing, bathing, and even drinking.

3. There are several areas of damaged wood floor framing throughout the building. These areas should be repaired in kind. Based on the door threshold heights, there are different layers of wood flooring throughout the first floor of the house. In the Library, there appears to be an additional layer of  $\frac{3}{4}$ " wood flooring. If desired, this layer of flooring could be removed, but it would be very difficult and would likely damage the underlying layer.

**ITEM:** Exterior Walls– 624 White Street

**EVALUATION:** Very significant, some deterioration

**DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITION:**

The exterior siding at the two story portion of the house consists of painted wood tongue in groove siding installed vertically. The siding is  $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick and the siding width ranges from 3" to 3-1/4". Some of the pieces of siding are a remarkable 18 feet in length. The siding is installed over full 4" thick wall studs which are set at various spacing. Horizontal 4" blocking is installed to support the vertical siding. Many of the interior walls of the house are also finished with this siding. The siding is deteriorated in many locations, especially along the base of the building.



This view of the south façade of the house shows the painted wood vertical siding.

The exterior siding at the SW kitchen addition consists of painted wood  $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 5-1/4" vertical T&G siding over 3-3/4" studs. The siding just below the west kitchen door is deteriorated and leaking.

The siding at the center rear portion consists of the same  $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 3" siding as the front of the house. This siding is set over the same 4" thick studs. There is no interior siding in this area; the rear of the exterior siding is exposed at the interior. It is very possible that the center portion of the rear of the house was constructed at the same time as the two story front eyebrow portion.



This view of the SE corner of the house shows damaged siding at the base of the building. The front porch can be seen at right.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

All rotted siding should be patched or, if too deteriorated, replaced in kind with wood matching the historic dimensions. The building should be patched and repainted on a regular basis.

**ITEM: Exterior Doors– 624 White Street**

**EVALUATION: Significant**

**DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITION:**

The front door of the house is a 4-panel painted wood door measuring 33” wide x 80.5” high. There is a set of painted wood operable louvered shutters at the exterior of this door. The door has contemporary hardware.

There are two doors at the SW Kitchen. The south exterior door is a painted wood door with operable louvers measuring 30.5” x 77.5” high. There is no landing at this door, it leads 2 steps down to a wood deck.

The west door is a painted wood ‘dutch’ style door measuring 30.5” wide a 77.5” high. The bottom leaf is a single panel. The top leaf consists of painted wood operable louvers. There is no landing at this door, just a deteriorated wood stair leading 4 risers down to grade. The louvered top portion has an aluminum security grille installed at the exterior side, as well as a screen.

Finally, there is an exterior door at the west side of the cistern porch leading to grade. This is a set of painted wood double operable louvered doors. The louvered doors are very worn, and have a battened screen installed at the exterior side. This pair of doors measures 32” wide x 80.5” high. There is no landing at this door, just a concrete 4-riser stair leading to grade.



This partial view of the front door shows the painted wood 4- panel door with painted wood operable louvered shutters. The shutters are extremely significant.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The front door hardware should be replaced with hardware matching the period of significance. This door should be patched and painted. The exterior louvers are significant. They probably date to the period of significance. The louvers should be carefully repaired and repainted.

The kitchen doors are probably significant. The doors should be repaired, and period hardware should be installed.

The louvered cistern doors should be repaired and repainted.



The painted wood louvered west door of the kitchen. This door leads to the west porch.



**ITEM: Windows – 624 White Street**

**EVALUATION: Significant**

**DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITION:**

The windows of the house are very significant. With a few exceptions, they are almost all original. The windows at the front two story portion of the house consist of 6 over 6 wood single hung putty-glazed windows. The windows measure 33” x 61”. Most of the windows still contain their original wavy glass. The front windows feature operable louvered shutters. These shutters are deteriorated and require patching and painting. The windows at the side of the house contain board shutters, which are later replacements. Many of the interior windows also feature removable slide-in screens, which are inserted on the interior side. All of these windows are deteriorated and require patching and painting.

There is one sliding window, one contemporary bifold window, and one casement window at the second floor, facing west. The sliding window is a 6 lite painted wood unit which is likely original. The bifold casement window is a contemporary replacement. The casement window at the dormer is a pair of 4 lite outswing painted wood windows with operable wood louvers. The windows and louvers are deteriorated.

There are three contemporary windows in the kitchen. The two windows facing south are aluminum jalousy style windows which are not in character with the remainder of the house. The west window is 15” wide x 31.5” high. This opening has no glass, just operable painted wood louvers with a screen at the exterior.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The wood single hung windows all require patching and repair and re-puttying. They are extremely significant and should be repaired by a craftsman qualified in historic window restoration.



A typical window at the front façade of the house. The windows and the louvered shutters are very significant.



This photo shows the painted wood inswing casement window at the bathroom dormer. The window was operable louvered shutters at the exterior.

The contemporary bifold window at the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor south bedroom should be removed and replaced with a sliding painted wood window matching the window in the north bedroom.

The two aluminum jalousie windows in the kitchen should be removed and replaced with painted wood windows which are more appropriate to the period of significance.

All of the removable sliding screens should be repaired and reinstalled.



The two aluminum jalousie style kitchen windows at the south façade. The windows should be removed and replaced with painted wood windows.

**ITEM: Interior Openings - Doors– 624 White Street**

**EVALUATION: Significant,**

**DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITION:**

There is a combination of historic and contemporary interior doors in the house. At the first floor, the door leading to the bedroom is a painted wood 4 panel door measuring 33” wide. This door is significant. The bathroom door consists of a pair of painted wood louvered contemporary doors in a 30” wide opening. There is a solid board door leading to the closet under the stairs. This door is significant.

At the second floor, the bedroom doors are painted wood 4 panel doors 32” wide x 79.5” high. Both are significant, but both have contemporary door hardware which should be removed and replaced with period hardware. The bathroom door is a painted wood 30” wide louvered double door. This door is contemporary. There are three closet doors in the north bedroom. All of these doors are painted wood 2-panel doors. These doors are significant.

There is one closet door in the south bedroom. This is a 4-panel painted wood door.



The 4 panel painted wood door leading to the north bedroom. The door is significant; the hardware is a contemporary replacement.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

All of the contemporary doors should be removed and replaced with 4 panel doors which match the period of significance. Similarly, all of the contemporary door hardware should be removed and replaced with more appropriate period hardware.



The louvered door leading to the second floor bathroom. This door is contemporary.

**ITEM:**                **Stairs– 624 White Street**

**EVALUATION:**   **Significant**

**DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITION:**

There is one interior stair at the center bay of the house. This painted wood stair leads from the Living Room to a small hallway at the second floor. The stair is composed of 16 risers, with the bottom 3 risers built as winders. The stair is approximately 30" wide, with 9" treads and 7.5" risers, for a total of 120.5" floor to floor. The stair has a built-in set of painted wood shelving at near the bottom, where the winders are installed. The stairs are worn, and one tread is creaking and requires repair. The undersides of the stair can be accessed from a small closet under the stair. The upper floor is protected by a small guardrail composed of horizontal 1x4's and a simple 5" x 5" painted wood newel post.



The interior stair, viewed from the second floor landing. The painted wood stair is very significant and probably original to construction.



The interior stair as viewed from the Living Room. The winder treads can be seen, as well as the painted wood shelving.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The loose stair tread should be repaired. The stair should be patched and painted. If safety is a concern, a painted wood handrail should be installed on the stair.



**ITEM: Porches and Appurtenances - 624 White Street**

**EVALUATION: Significant**

**DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITION:**

The main front porch of the building is significant and is a centerpiece of the house. The two story porch of a typical Eyebrow House is perhaps the most distinct characteristic of the typology. The porch is 6 feet deep and 32' wide and is protected by the side of the second-floor gable roof, which extends over it. This porch roof is a character defining definition of an eyebrow house.

The porch has three bays, which are defined by four wood columns measuring 3 ½" x 5 ½". One of these columns has sagged due to wood rot, causing the porch roof top plate to sag as well. The columns have been repaired several times with Dutchman style repairs, and are a combination of original and contemporary lumber.

The porch floor consists of painted tongue in groove wood decking set on 2" joists. The porch floor slopes slightly to drain. The porch is approximately 24" to 25" above grade.

The porch is surrounded by a 30.5" high painted wood guardrail. The guardrail is composed of 1 ¾" x 1 ½" verticals at 5" o.c. The guardrail requires patching and painting.

The porch is accessed by a simple set of wood stairs with 4 risers, leading to a concrete path. The stair is approximately 10 feet wide. The treads of this stair are 9" to 10" deep, and the risers are around 6" high. The treads are composed of 2 x 4's.



The interior stair, viewed from the second floor landing. The painted wood stair is very significant and probably original to construction.



The painted wood main stair leading from grade to the front porch.

There is a large covered porch which has been constructed atop the cistern at the NW corner of the house. This porch, measuring 11 feet x 13 feet, consists of v-crimp roofing with 1x6 board wood sheathing over 2x rafters. The porch walls are composed of wood columns sheathed in plywood at the exterior. Wood louvered panels have been installed along the interior walls, providing privacy. These louvered panels, which have operable louvers, are very deteriorated and require repair.

The porch is entered from the central rear room by a simple board door, and from the exterior by a set of concrete stairs at the west side leading to the rear yard. The porch is set approximately 29" above grade. The cistern hatch is located on this porch, at the NW corner.

The porch walls and ceiling are deteriorated and patched with various sections of wood. A deteriorated ceiling fan is installed at the center of the ceiling.

According to her letters, Elizabeth Bishop herself oversaw the construction of the porch in 1941. This direct connection to a historic figure makes the porch one of the most significant elements of the house.



General view of the covered porch at the NW corner of the house. The porch is built atop the concrete cistern cover.

The house has a side porch which faces south. This porch, which is contemporary, consists of a v-crimp roof over 1x3 sleepers over 2x4 joists over 2x4 columns with no foundations. The quality of construction is not in keeping with the rest of the house. The porch covers a utility area consisting of a washer and dryer hookup, a small ramshackle outdoor shower, a small stair and deck leading to the south kitchen door, and a stone laundry sink. The laundry sink is significant, possibly dating to the 1920's or 30's.



The side porch at the south side of the house covers a utility area used for a laundry, outdoor shower, a stone laundry sink and storage.

This porch is in bad repair and is not tied to the ground. There is a large royal poinciana tree directly adjacent to the porch which is damaging the already weak column bases and paving.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The front porch is deteriorated and requires patching and painting. The column and beam are sagging several inches due to rot in the column. All rotted columns should be repaired and repainted. The edge of the porch decking should be repaired and repainted. The guardrail should be repaired as required.



The south porch is deteriorated and probably does not date to the period of significance. Consideration should be given to removing the porch. If the porch is retained, major repairs will be required, including repairs to the columns, paving, roof and decking. Foundations will also have to be installed at the columns.

The floor of the south porch consists of uneven wood decking, brick paving, and uneven concrete. The outdoor shower can be seen in the background. The door leads to the Kitchen. The 2x4 porch columns can be seen at right.

Finally, the cistern porch is severely deteriorated. The louvered panels all require repair, and all of the wood patches on the roof and walls should be repaired with better quality repairs. The large crack in the cistern floor should be repaired and repainted. The porch ceiling and walls should be patched and painted.



The south wall of the cistern porch. A window leads to the central room. This was once an exterior wall of the house.



**ITEM:**

**Finishes/Details/Embellishments–  
624 White Street**

**EVALUATION:** Significant

**PREPARED BY:** David Salay

**DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITION:**

The finishes in the house are remarkably original and have had very few alterations over time. The house has been virtually unaltered since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, making the interior finishes extremely significant. It is a wonderful example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century conch house, both interior and exterior.



The center rear room features two walls of built-in shelving. All of the finishes are likely original to construction, or shortly after.

Generally, the finishes and details are spare and simple but extremely well built. The house's interior features painted wood built-in shelving which is located in many of the rooms, most abundantly the center rear room, which has two full walls of built-in shelving. There is built-in shelving in the Kitchen and the stairwell as well. Many of the rooms also feature built-in closets with historic hardware. These closets are found in the kitchen and both of the upstairs bedrooms.



Detail photo of the locks and handles of the cabinets in the center rear room. According to records, Bishop had these cabinets installed.

The house's finishes are composed of painted wood walls and ceilings, and painted wood or stained floors. Some of the walls are not sheathed on one side, revealing the full 4" studs and horizontal bracing. This can be seen in the center rear room, as well as the stair hallway at the second floor. The window and door trim is composed of simple 1x painted wood. Base trim consists of painted wood 1" quarter round trim, or no trim at all.



Detail photo of the white ceramic knobs and lockset on the louvers at the main entry door.

The exterior details are extremely simple as well. There are no decorations on the exterior columns. The details consist of painted wood louvered shutters, historic windows, and simple porch guardrails.



**RECOMMENDATION:**

The small details of this house are among the factors that make it a distinctive example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Key West residential architecture. Most of these elements have been removed from modern Key West residences, and it is remarkable that these small elements still exist in this house. Every effort should be made to restore the details, hardware and built-ins, rather than remove them. This includes latches, window locks, built in shelving, sliding windows, removable window screens, operable louvered shutters, door and shutter hardware, plumbing fixtures and cabinet pulls.



Detail photo of the lavatory at the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor bathroom. This fixture likely dates to Bishop's time, though the fittings have been changed. The adjacent WC is modern.



Detail photo of the latch at the SW Kitchen cabinet. This cabinet and latch likely date to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, or before.



This piece of hardware holds the single hung windows in an open position. It is found on virtually all of the windows.

**ITEM:** Interiors– 624 White Street

**EVALUATION:** Significant.

**PREPARED BY:** David Salay

**DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITION:**

The interior finishes at the house are very simple, consisting of stained or painted wood floors, painted wood walls or exposed stud walls, and painted wood ceilings. Wall baseboards consist of simple quarter rounds, or no base at all. This basic simplicity is significant and rarely seen in today's restored Key West houses. Traditional Key West houses were constructed with a very simple kit of parts, and this house has managed to keep them. Many of the painted wood floors are scratched and require repainting. Many of the walls and ceilings are water damaged or worn in various areas and require patching and painting.



This photo of the north bedroom at the second floor shows the general features of the interior: painted wood floors, walls and ceilings, with flat 1x4 or quarter round trim.

As stated before, the house contains a number of built-in shelves and cabinets, all of which probably date to the period of significance. They are simply but well built. Many of these built-in items are worn and require patching and repainting.

Other interior details include the simple wood ladder and sliding hatch leading to the second-floor attic, the sliding screen inserts at the windows, the sliding window sash at the north bedroom, and the simple stair guardrail.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Repair all water damage at ceilings and walls. Patch and paint all finishes and refinish all flooring. Care should be taken to repair and reuse all of the historic hardware, including cabinet pulls, hinges, locks, window hardware, etc.



An area of built-in shelving at the center rear room. The shelving and cabinets are simple face frame units. Elizabeth Bishop likely had these cabinets installed.

**ITEM:** Electrical Systems – 624 White Street

**EVALUATION:** Non-Historic

**DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITION:**

The electrical system is contemporary, served by a 100 amp panel located at the NE exterior corner of the house. The wiring is contemporary romex and has been installed in the last decade. The panel box, meter and weatherhead are virtually new. The weatherhead extends above the roof and is wired to a pole on White Street. There is evidence of the original cloth wiring under the house, which was probably installed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The electrical outlets are contemporary grounded receptacles installed horizontally at the base of the walls, probably in place of the original receptacles. There are GFI outlets in the bathrooms and kitchen. There is also evidence of abandoned telephone and cable/internet wiring.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The electrical system appears to meet current code, having been installed in the last few years. The capacity of the system is adequate for residential or light commercial use.



The meter, panel and weatherhead are located at the NE corner of the building. The electrical system has been recently replaced.

**ITEM: Mechanical and Plumbing Systems – 624 White Street**

**EVALUATION: Significant, deteriorated.**

**DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITION:**

Mechanical: There are no air conditioning systems in the building. The building has a very unique feature that was once common throughout Key West houses: a whole-house fan. This large diameter fan is set in the ceiling of the stair behind a grille. The fan creates a strong vacuum, moving air from the first floor through the stairwell and into the attic, where it is expelled through gable vents. When the fan is on, air moves rapidly through the house at both the first and second floors. Before the common use of air conditioning, rapid movement of air was used to cool houses, and people were accustomed to functioning in a much warmer temperature.



The whole-house fan as seen from the attic. The unit is functional, but very worn. It probably dates from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The house also contains ceiling fans in each room. These fans are contemporary and are very deteriorated but functional.

Plumbing: There are several historic plumbing fixtures in the house, especially in the second-floor bathroom, where both the bathtub and sink are historic, and probably date to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These fixtures are worn but very significant. The fittings of the bathroom lavatory have been replaced with modern fittings. The bathtub drain is damaged and the tub is not draining.



The second floor bathtub is significant and probably dates to the period of significance.

The first-floor bathroom was installed circa 1950 by the Weymouth family, according to historic interviews. The plumbing fixtures and finishes in this bathroom are contemporary and worn.

The fixtures consist of a small sink, a toilet and a contemporary shower.

The kitchen plumbing fixtures consist of a contemporary sink. The exterior south side of the house features a cast stone laundry sink that is significant, and probably dates to the early 20 century. This sink



should be restored. There is also an outdoor shower at the south side of the house which is contemporary and deteriorated. Historic accounts state that this shower was installed in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The waste piping largely consists of outdated cast iron piping. This piping is probably leaking and requires replacement.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The whole-house fan should be cleaned, overhauled and restored.

The entire plumbing system should be inspected and repaired as required. The bathroom plumbing fixtures at the second floor are very significant and should be restored. The second-floor bathroom lavatory fittings should be replaced with units more in keeping with the period of significance. The cast iron waste piping should be replaced with contemporary PVC. The laundry sink should be restored. The kitchen sink should be replaced with a fixture more in keeping with the period of significance.



The first floor bathroom. This bathroom was probably installed in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and is not significant.



The cast stone laundry sink at the south side of the house. This sink probably dates to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **6. Structural Condition Assessment**

Structural Condition Assessment  
Elizabeth Bishop House  
624 White Street  
Key West, Florida 33040-7153

*Prepared For*

Bender & Associates Architects P.A.  
410 Angela Street  
Key West, Florida 33040-7401

*Prepared By*

Atlantic Engineering Services of Jacksonville  
6501 Arlington Expressway, Building B, Suite 201  
Jacksonville, FL 32211-5795

AES Project No. 319-339  
February 21, 2020

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February 21, 2020

Mr. David James Salay, LEED AP, NCARB  
Bender & Associates Architects, P.A.  
410 Angela Street  
Key West, Florida 33040-7401

Re: Structural Condition Assessment  
Elizabeth Bishop House  
624 White Street  
Key West, Florida

AES Project: #319-339

Dear David:

Atlantic Engineering Services of Jacksonville (AES) has completed its structural condition assessment of the structure located at 624 White Street in Key West, Florida, also known as the Elizabeth Bishop House. Our assessment consisted of a visual review of the structure on December 4th and 5th, 2019. Present at the site were Mr. David James Salay, LEED AP, NCARB and Mr. Mark J. Keister, P.E.

## **BACKGROUND**

The structure located at 624 White Street is a two-story wood frame "Eyebrow House", probably dating back to the late nineteenth century (see Photographs 1 and 2). It consists of the front, two-story "Eyebrow" portion with the large porch running the full width of the house creating the "Eyebrow", and three (3) rear, one-story additions for the kitchen, center dining room, and exterior porch over the cistern.

The "Eyebrow" roof is a gable roof with metal shingle roofing on 3/4"x 3" sheathing on 2"x 3-3/4" roof joists at 24 inches on center, with the roof over the second-floor bathroom at a lower pitch roof of the same construction. The ceiling joists are 1"x6" at 24 inches on center in line with the roof joists. An extension of the "Eyebrow" roof; the front porch roof is supported by eastern 4x6 wood beams and four (4) 3-1/2"x 5-1/2" wood columns that are braced back to the front wall with 4x4 wood braces at the 4x6 wood beam. Over the kitchen and center dining room, the roofs are both gable roofs with v-crimp roofing on 3/4"x 3" sheathing on 2"x 3-3/4" roof joists at 24 inches on center. The kitchen ceiling is the roof structure and the dining room ceiling is supported by 2"x 3" ceiling joists at 24 inches on center in line with the roof joists, and appear to have been added at a later time. The rear porch roof over the cistern is a shed roof consisting of v-crimp roofing on 3/4"x 5" sheathing on 1-1/2"x 3-1/2" roof joists at 24 inches on center, supported by perimeter 3-1/2"x 5-1/2" wood beams, and 2x4 and 4x4 wood posts. South of the kitchen is an open shed roof consisting of v-crimp roofing on 3/4"x 2-1/2" sleepers at 12 inches on center, supported by 1-1/2"x 3-1/2" roof joists on 1-1/2" x 3-1/2" wood beams and 1-1/2"x 3-1/2" wood posts.

The second floor consists of tongue and groove wood flooring on a wood subfloor supported by 2"x8" floor joists at 24 inches on center. The front porch consists of 3/4"x 3" tongue and groove wood flooring on 1-1/2"x 5-1/2" floor joists at 24 inches on center, supported by perimeter and interior wood beams. The "Eyebrow" ground floor consists of tongue and groove wood flooring on a wood subfloor supported by 1-3/4"x 6" floor joists at 24 inches on center, and perimeter wood sill beams and interior wood beams. At the kitchen and dining room, the ground floor consists of tongue and groove wood flooring on a wood subfloor supported by 2"x 5-1/2" floor joists at 24 inches on center, and perimeter wood sill beams and interior wood beams. At the rear porch, the cistern cap consists of a 6" concrete slab with a center 10"x 12" concrete column and perimeter 10" concrete walls. The ground floor beams for the front porch, "Eyebrow", kitchen and dining room are supported by the original coral/limestone piers, or 11"x 12" concrete piers, which have replaced the original coral/limestone piers.

These piers bear on the shallow caprock. The cistern foundation consists of a concrete mat that serves as the cistern bottom. South of the kitchen, the shed posts bear on a broken concrete slab, two (2) bricks and a broken concrete paver. The exterior walls for the “Eyebrow” portion, the kitchen and dining room consist of vertical tongue and groove siding, on wood studs at door and window jambs, and at 3’-6” on center, maximum with horizontal 2”x 3-3/4” purlins at wall height third points. The interior of the “Eyebrow” exterior walls have horizontal tongue and groove paneling.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

Our structural condition assessment consisted of a visual review of the structure. The survey plans approximately locate the deteriorated areas pinpointed during our survey (see Appendix A).

All roofs are in excellent condition except for a deteriorated dormer joist tail, at the second-floor bathroom roof, and a termite damaged plate and ceiling joint at the valley between the dining room and the kitchen (see Photographs 3 and 4). At the two (2) central front porch columns, there is a gap between the top of the column and the roof beams (see Photograph 5). The base of these columns are rotted (see Photograph 6). All the entry columns are visibly bowed (see Photograph 7). The second floor is in excellent condition with no signs of distress. The ground floor is in good condition, but there are areas that need repair. At the front porch, the entry steps flex under foot; there is a rotted floor board, and the porch floor boards at the stairs are worn (see Photographs 8 and 9). At the south end of the “Eyebrow” ground floor; there is an area of deteriorated subfloor under the shower, and the adjacent wood beam has severe termite damage (see Photographs 10 and 11). The dining room floor and the kitchen floor each have a termite damaged floor beam (see Photograph 12). At the cistern, there is a north/south crack in the cap slab with no vertical displacement across the crack (see Photograph 13). On the north and west cistern walls, there are cracks in the concrete wall with a large crack below grade on the west wall, with poor concrete finish; honeycombed concrete and tree roots growing through the wall (see Photographs 14 and 15). The exterior siding is in good condition, but there are areas of deteriorated siding that need repair and replacement (see Photograph 16). At the rear porch, there is a deteriorated screen sill and the plywood screen replacement is deteriorated (see Photograph 17). The concrete foundation piers replacing the coral/limestone piers are in excellent condition, but the remaining coral/limestone piers vary from poor to extremely poor condition (see Photograph 18). At the shed, south of the kitchen, the shed posts do not bear on foundations but bear on whatever was available at the time of construction (see Photograph 19). Although there are no hurricane ties in the structure; the structure has survived numerous high wind events in its history with no visible distress.

## **EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The structure located at 624 White Street is in good condition but does require repair. The deteriorated joists, subfloor and wood beams need to be repaired or replaced, as well as, the deteriorated siding. The cistern cap crack should be filled with a flowable epoxy filler, and the cistern walls should have their above grade cracks epoxy injected, and the damaged below grade wall needs to be cleaned of loose concrete to sound concrete and repaired with a non-shrink repair mortar. At the entry porch, the two (2) central columns need their deteriorated bases replaced, or the entire column replaced with proper bearing restored for the roof beams they support. To correct the porch bow in the porch columns; the columns should be braced back to the second floor with a 4x4 or the columns replaced with 6x6 wood columns. The front porch entry stairs should be reconstructed and all the original coral/limestone piers should be replaced with new concrete piers bearing on the caprock. The shed posts south of the kitchen need to have proper foundations installed bearing on the shallow caprock. Although the structure has survived numerous high wind events in its history; the ground floor structure should be tied down to the foundation piers.

**CONCLUSIONS**

In general, the structure located at 624 White Street in good condition, but it does require repair in the form of joist, wood beam, wood column and siding repair. The original coral/limestone foundation piers should be replaced with new concrete piers matching the replacement concrete piers; the entry porch stair should be reconstructed, and the porch columns braced or replaced with a larger column member. At the shed, south of the kitchen, the shed posts require foundations which bear on the shallow caprock, and the ground floor structure should be tied down to the foundation piers.

It has been a pleasure serving you as a consulting structural engineer. Please contact our office if there are any questions regarding this correspondence, or if you need any additional information.

Very truly yours,  
ATLANTIC ENGINEERING SERVICES OF JACKSONVILLE  
FLORIDA CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORIZATION #791



Mark J. Keister, P.E.  
Principal

MJK/drg



02/21/20

**PHOTOGRAPHS**



**Photograph 1**



**Photograph 2**





**Photograph 3**



**Photograph 4**



**Photograph 5**



**Photograph 6**





Photograph 7



Photograph 8





**Photograph 9**



**Photograph 10**



**Photograph 11**



**Photograph 12**

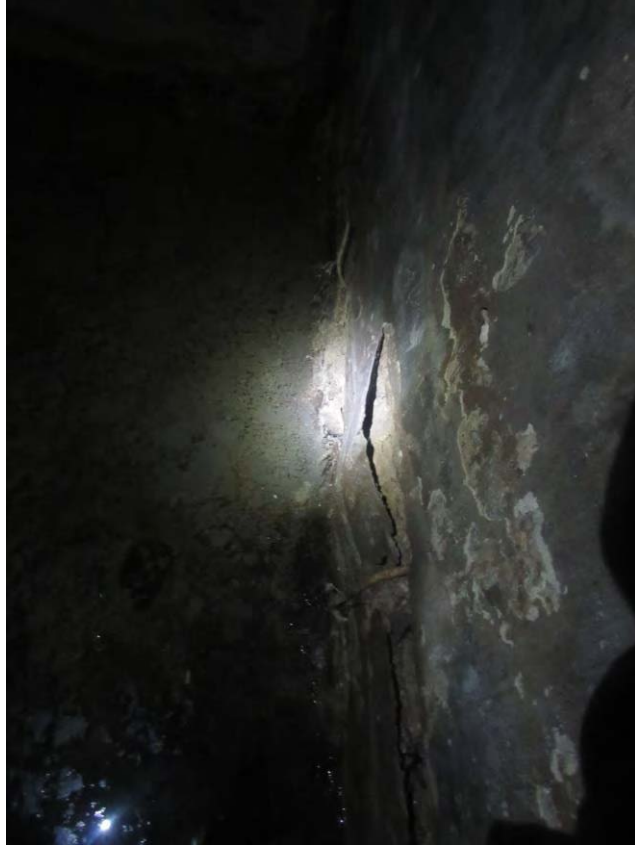




**Photograph 13**



**Photograph 14**



**Photograph 15**



**Photograph 16**



**Photograph 17**



**Photograph 18**





Photograph 19