

Green Gables/The Wells House

1501 S Harbor City Boulevard
Melbourne, Florida 32901

Preliminary Local Designation Report

June 17, 2014



Prepared By:



LITTLEJOHN ENGINEERING ASSOCIATES

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1501 S Harbor City Boulevard/Green Gables
Preliminary Local Historic Designation Report

I. Location

The property is located at 1501 S Harbor City Boulevard, on the northeast corner of the intersection of Harbor City Boulevard/US 1 and Riverview Drive. Figure 1 shows the specific location of the property.

Figure 1: Location Map



Source: City of Melbourne GIS Data and Littlejohn Engineering Associates, Inc., 2014.

II. General Information

The general information related to the 1501 S Harbor City Boulevard property is as follows:

A. Name of the Property

1. Historic Names

The property is known as the Wells House, in honor of its original owner, William Twining Wells, one of the most influential men in Melbourne at the turn of the last century. It is also known as Green Gables due to the green color of the shingle siding in the gables.

2. Current Name

The property is currently known as the W.T. Wells House/Green Gables.

B. Brevard County Property Appraiser Information

1. Property Address

The property address is 1501 S Harbor City Boulevard, Melbourne, Florida 32901, according to the property appraiser. The Florida Master Site File lists the address as 1501 Riverview Drive. The property is part of the W.T. Wells Subdivision of Melbourne and was constructed in 1896 by William Twining Wells. Historically, the property is located on the corner of Dixie Highway (now South Harbor City Boulevard) and Indian River Avenue/Palm Avenue (now Riverview Drive/Silver Palm Avenue).

2. Present Owner

The present owners of the property are David R Fletcher, Charles R McClung, and Joly Properties LLC (descendants of W.T. Wells).

3. Present Use

The present use of the property is "Residential Improvement Not Suitable For Occupancy" according to the Brevard County Property Appraiser, which means it is a vacant single family home in a state of disrepair.

4. Condition

The house has been under the care of a local member of the family; however, it has been vacant for many years. The roof in one section has sustained hurricane damage; water intrusion will continue to deteriorate the house unless repaired. The original plumbing system will require an overhaul to comply with current codes. Portions of the original plaster ceilings have fallen, exposing the flooring on the second floor. The house itself is almost completely hidden from the adjacent rights-of-way due to the mature trees and unmaintained landscape.

5. Zoning District

The property is currently zoned C-1 (Neighborhood Commercial). This district allows neighborhood retail uses intended to serve the surrounding residential areas. Other permitted uses include bed & breakfast, office/financial institutions, retail, business services, and personal services. While single- and two-family residential uses are permitted in the C-1 zoning district, multi-family residential uses on this property would be required to obtain conditional use approval from the city council due to the proximity to a four-lane (or larger) roadway and the size of the parcel (over 1 acre).

A contemporary multistory office building is located just north of Green Gables on land that once was part of the Well's estate. To the south on Riverview Drive is a mixed use neighborhood of professional offices, small craft shops, apartments, and some of the most historic homes in Melbourne.

6. Site Size

The site is approximately 1.15 acres in size.

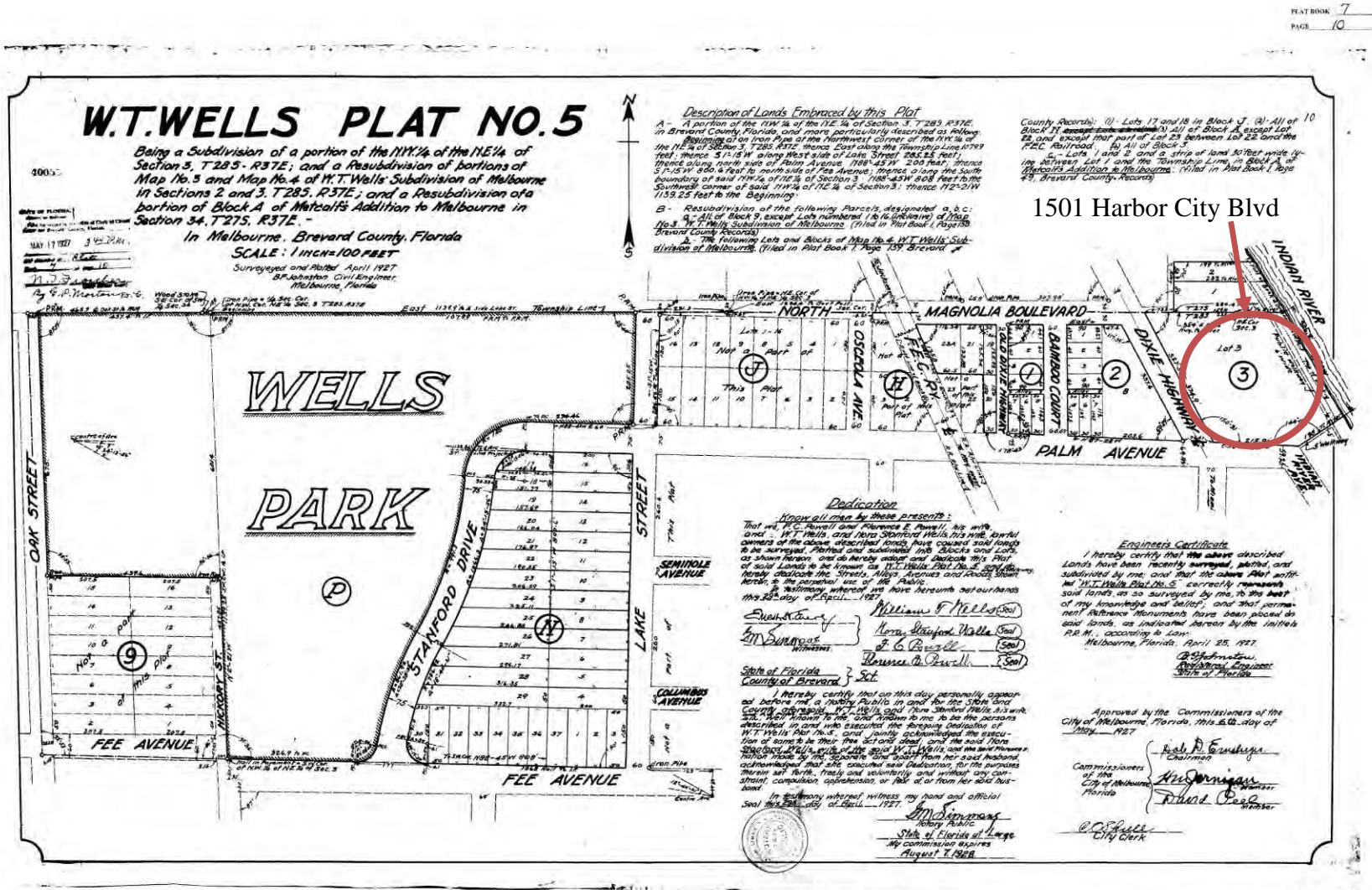
7. Parcel Identification Number

The parcel identification number of the property is 28-37-03-FG-3-3.01.

8. Boundary Description

Lot 3, Block 3, W.T. Wells Plat No. 5 and that portion of street lying between Block 3 and new location of State Road No. 4 by Project 608-5440 as described in Deed Book 265, page 55, Public Records of Brevard County, Florida, except that portion of the above described real property conveyed to Katherine L. Craft by Warranty Deed recorded in Deed Book 407, page 256, of the public records of Brevard County, Florida; and except that portion of the above described real property conveyed to Gladys L. McClung, a single woman, by Warranty Deed recorded in Official Records Book 1086, at page 398, of the public records of Brevard County, Florida; and except that portion of the above described real property conveyed to Katherine L. Craft, a single woman, by Warranty Deed recorded in Official Records Book 1096, page 397 of the public records of Brevard County, Florida; and except that portion of the above described real property conveyed to Lois L. Fletcher, a widow, by Warranty Deed recorded in Official Records Book 1100 at page 639 of the public records of Brevard County, Florida; and except any portion thereof lying within U.S. Highway No. 1, a/k/a Harbor City Blvd.

Figure 2: W.T. Wells Plat No. 5



Source: Public Record of Brevard County, Florida (Plat Book 7, Page 10).

III. Significance

A. Ownership History of the Land

- 1896 – William Twining (W.T.) Wells
- 1933 – Stanford Wells
- 1972 – Gladys L McClung
- 1982 – Charles Roy McClung (Trustee)
- 1997 – Lois L. Fletcher, David R. Fletcher
- 2000 – David R. Fletcher, Lyman T. Fletcher
- 2012 – Joly Properties LLC, Lyman T. Fletcher, Juanita A. Deloach

B. Construction History

1. Construction

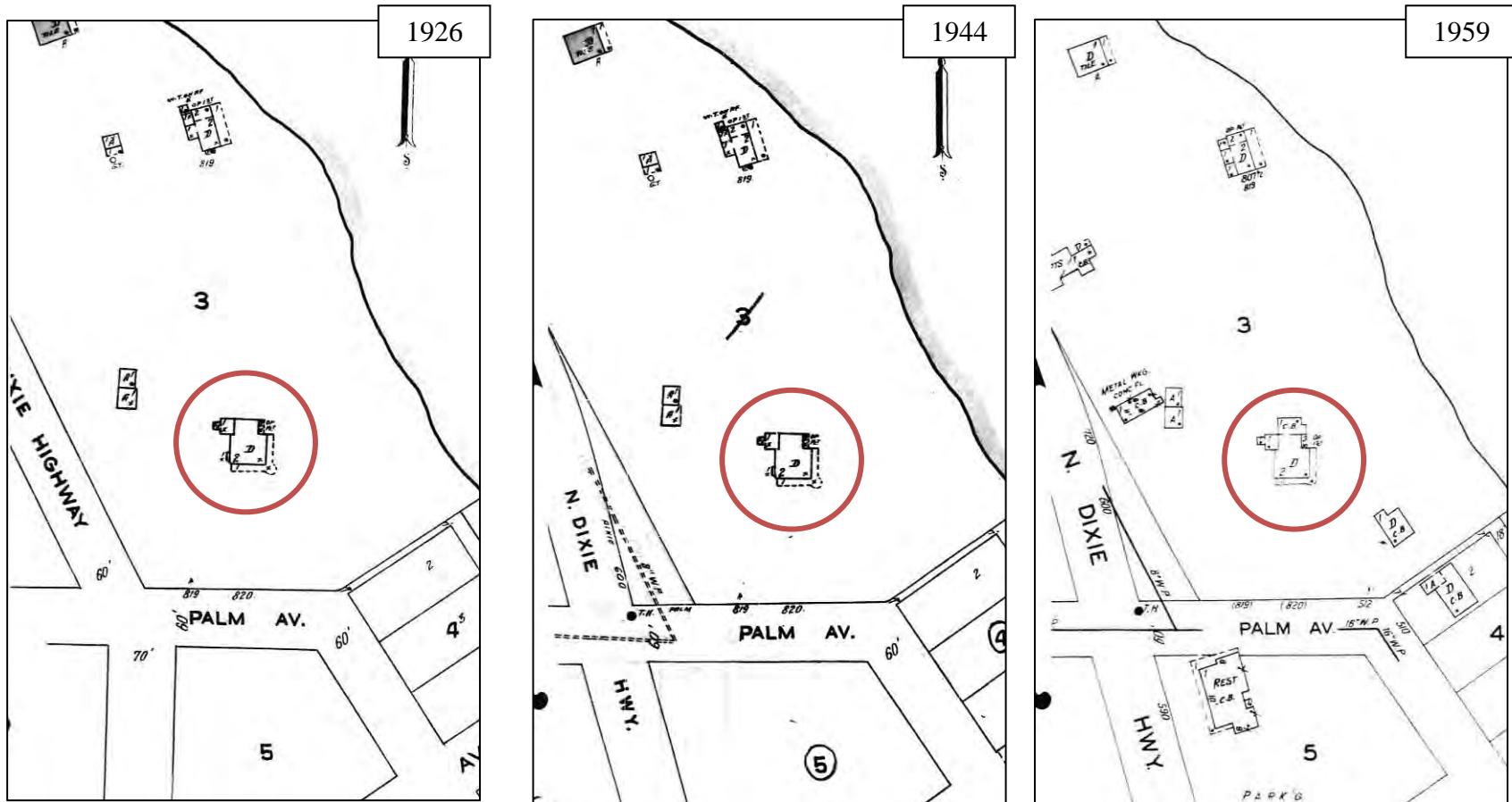
According to the Indian River Advocate, the house was built in 1896 by Baker and Bell (builder) for W.T. Wells. This was just 8 years after the City of Melbourne was incorporated in 1888. The structure was constructed in the Queen Ann style, which was a popular building style between 1880 and 1900. The original design was a basic Four-Square style dwelling. It is rumored that the house was originally wired for electricity at construction, prior to the availability of electric service in Melbourne, and powered by a generator and an artesian well (Couch Pump in Grant, Florida is known to have made private generators that were designed to be driven from an artesian well). However, the current wiring/fuse box is most likely from the early 1900's.

The structure appears on the historic maps produced by Sanborn Map Company in 1926, 1944, and 1959 (see **Figure 3**). The "D" inside of the shapes on the map denotes dwellings, while the dashed lines represent porches. The number of floors is noted in the upper left corner of the dwellings. The Sanborn maps also indicate four additional structures located on the property. None of the other buildings still exist, although remains of an out building can still be seen in the northwest corner of the property.

2. Additions and Alterations

Newspaper clippings from the East Coast Advocate indicates that major additions were completed in 1901, 1902, and 1910. These initial improvements transitioned the house from the classic 'Four-Square' style to a Queen Anne style house. The most significant change was the addition of the octagonal tower and "The Octagon" porch on the southeast corner of the house. A bathroom was also added on the second floor between the two south facing bedrooms, taking a portion of the balcony/walkway. The second floor was expanded eastward on the northeast corner of the house to accommodate another bathroom, and resulting space underneath this addition was made into a porch with trim that matches the original porch. A cross gable was added to the roof to cover this expansion.

Figure 3: Sanborn Map Company, 1924, 1944, 1954



Source: Environmental Resources, Inc.

There were additional changes to the house that may have been made during the 1910s or possibly even later. A laundry room/pantry was added to the west of the kitchen. The existing bay window on the west façade was extended up to the second floor. The southern portion of the balcony was enclosed, and the railing for the remaining balcony on the east façade was removed. While many renovations were made in the early years of the house, these improvements match the original style and building materials of the house.

Additional additions and alterations were completed in the 1950s (estimated), including the addition of a mother-in-law suite on the north end of the house (shown on the 1954 Sanborn Map) and the expansion of the living room eastward, which resulted in the addition of a modern window. The current house is approximately 2,000 square feet.

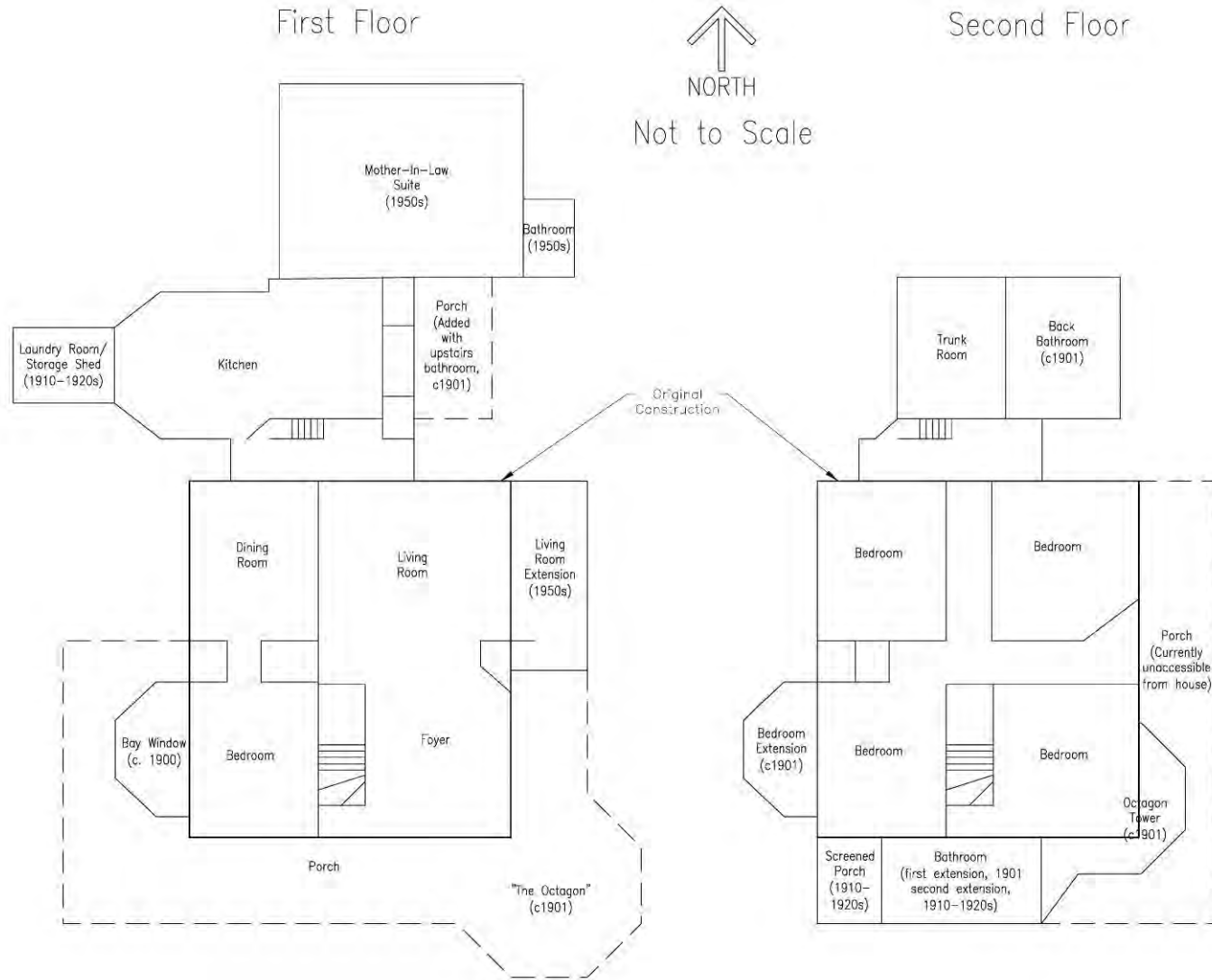
Figure 4: Historic Photographs – South/East Façades



Source: Wells family album in the possession of Francis McClung Allen

Note the addition of the octagonal tower and the complementary octagonal porch, “The Octagon,” on the southeast corner of the porch. Together they are one of the most defining characteristics of the house. An addition on the south end of the second floor can be seen (a bathroom addition serving the front two bedrooms), as well as the expansion of the north end of the second floor (cross gable roof and diamond windows barely visible above the tree tops). Doors from the second floor led to a walkway or balcony that extended around the south and east sides of the house. This feature was later enclosed on the (south side of house) or abandoned (east side of house) as the house was expanded. Additional research is necessary to determine the original exterior colors, but based on these photos the trim was white with a different color on the main body.

Figure 5: Sketch Floor Plans



Source: Littlejohn Engineering Associates, based on sketches by John Daly.

3. Construction Materials

The building is a 2 story wood frame American Four-Square/Queen Anne style home with a front and side porch. The Queen Anne style is seen in the gable roof, conical tower, brackets, and a veranda with a hip roof which is supported by posts. The external wall is clapboard siding. Fenestration consists of 2/2 double hung sash windows. The interior of the house retains the original plaster walls and ceiling. The house includes unique fretwork between the foyer and the living room. There is a standing seam metal roof on the main structure and pressed metal roof over the tower. The original roof material was wood shingles. The structure is raised on piers of mixed masonry materials (brick, concrete block, and fired clay hollow blocks). The original foundation consisted of brick piers with wood lattice infill. Today, the brick piers have been finished in stucco and the lattice replaced with masonry units finished with stucco. A few of the original wood lattice panels remain behind the masonry infill. The original steps, wraparound porch, and handrails were constructed in wood. The current steps and porch are concrete with brick lattice between masonry posts.

C. Statement of Significance

1. Structure

Green Gables is a classic American Four-Square house which was modified over the years preserving its Queen Anne style. American Four-Square was a popular residential building style popular from the mid-1890s to the late 1930s, and was characterized by a simple square or rectangular floor plan, pitched hipped roof, and symmetrical façade. The house is approximately 2,000 square feet. Green Gables is one of the earliest Queen Anne style residences in Melbourne, although it is not as exuberant as some of the Queen Anne styling seen in communities that were developed at the turn of the century. Green Gables is one of the last remaining structures from pre-1900 Melbourne. The Queen Anne style is rare in Melbourne and the surrounding communities.

When built in 1896, Green Gables sat alone about a mile north of downtown Melbourne. The estate faces the Indian River, and travel would have originally primarily occurred via boat. The structure was built by a local builder under the direction of W.T. Wells, who asked for elements of the Queen Anne style added to the building, and thus the structure exhibits the technology and building capability of Melbourne at the end of the 1890s.

Figure 6: Green Gables and Surrounding Landscape, c. 1898



Source: Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

Green Gables retains a clear tie to its builder/owner and to the community. The original structure has been largely unchanged since the 1920s, other than the addition of the mother-in-law suite on the northeast corner of the house in the 1950s.

2. Wells Family

Wells was a college trained metallurgical engineer. Most of his fortune came from his patent on an improvement on the method for producing “Rustless Iron” in 1888. W.T. Wells Patents for a part of a locomotive engine as well as the process of coating iron and steel with rustless oxide can be seen in Figure 8. The patent for rustless iron and his subsequent production of rustless iron is where the Well’s wealth was acquired.

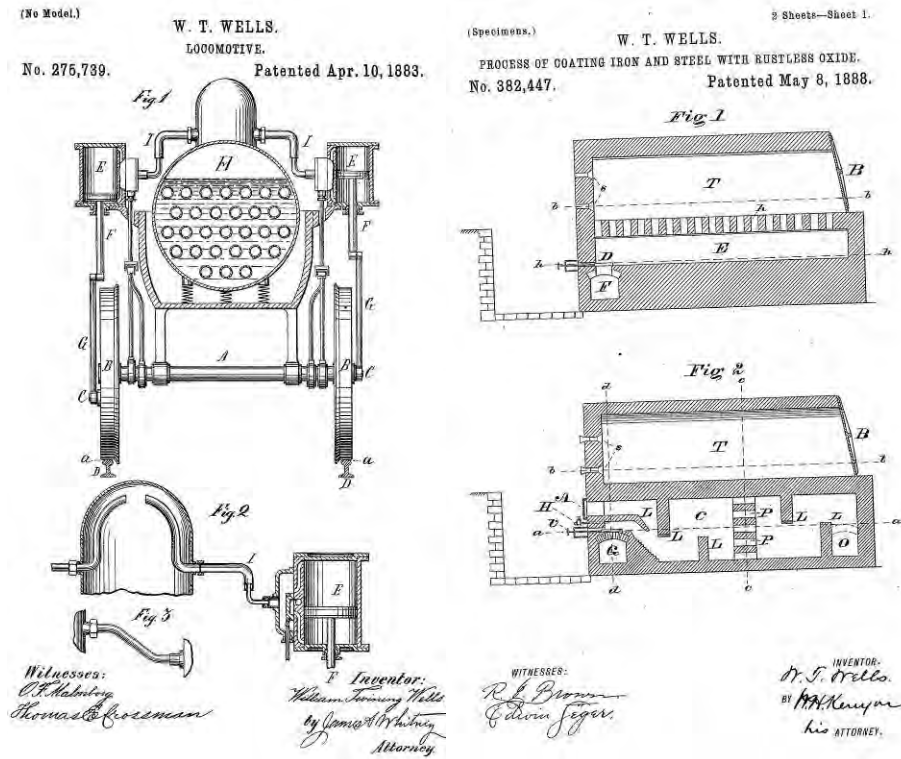
According to the East Coast Advocate, W.T. Wells and his family generally spent November-May at Green Gables between 1896 and his death in 1930. Wells maintained a 10-12 acre pineapple plantation on the east side of the Indian River, and had an orange grove on his home site. When they were not in Florida, they often traveled to a family home in New York, but were also known to go on trips around the world. Elements within the home reflect materials that may have been brought back from their travels, such as the fret work between the foyer and the living room which is rumored to be from India. The son of W.T. Wells, Stanford, lived at Green Gables until his death.

Figure 7: W.T. Wells and Nora Stanford Wells



Source: Chautauqua Program (Personal research of John Daly).
Wells family album in the possession of Francis McClung Allen.

Figure 8: W.T. Wells Patents



Source: Personal research of John Daly.

Figure 9: Stanford Wells

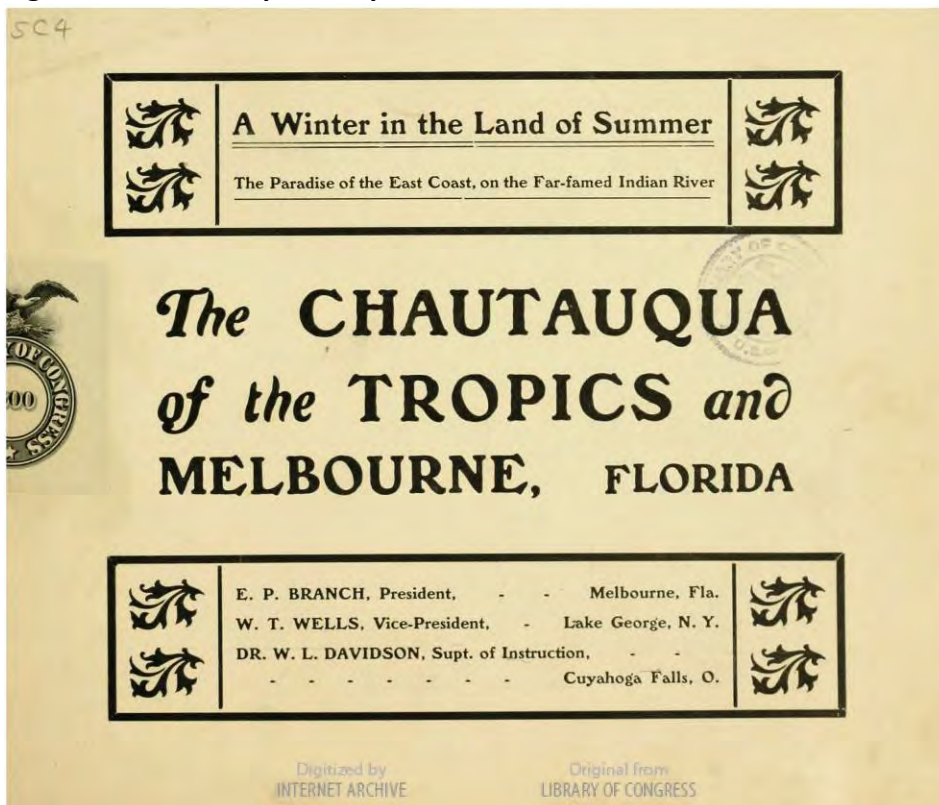


Source: Wells family album in the possession of Francis McClung Allen

3. Contribution to Melbourne

W.T. Wells was one of the most prominent men in Melbourne during his lifetime. His generous contributions to society and the city endure today in Wells Park and numerous roadways. During his time in Melbourne, W.T. Wells built an auditorium and library within Melbourne and also provided land to the city for a public park (Wells Park). Newspapers during this period also indicate that W.T. Wells surveyed and graded roads, planted shade trees along local roadways, established the high school, hired teachers, and organized a Chautauqua group for the community. The Chautauqua Institute was founded in 1874 near Chautauqua Lake in southwestern New York state and provided adult education events with speakers, teachers, musicians, entertainers, preachers, and specialists. As seen in Figure 11, Mr. Wells was once the Vice-President of Chautauqua. By 1907, Wells was the President of the Chautauqua. He also assisted in bringing the railroad to Melbourne. It is rumored that W.T. Wells built Riverside Drive as a driveway from downtown Melbourne to his house, as the orientation of the house aligns with the roadway. Mrs. Wells often accompanied him in their many activities, and was given much of the credit for ‘working with the books’ for the new library as Mr. Wells oversaw the construction.

Figure 10: Chautauqua Pamphlet



Source: Personal research of John Daly.

IV. Contextual History¹

Melbourne is located on a natural harbor on the Indian River Lagoon, which was originally named “Crane Creek.” The initial settlers of “Crane Creek” were Capt. Peter Wright, Balaam Allan, and Wright Brothers, all freedmen who came in 1867. Please see Peter Wright’s land grant in Figure 12. In the 1880s, the first official subdivisions were recorded in the Village of Eau Gallie and the Town of Melbourne. In 1884, William Gleason filed the Eau Gallie Village Plat, and in 1886 William Camp filed the first plat of Melbourne.²

The Town of Melbourne was incorporated on December 22, 1888, adopting a corporate seal that included a pineapple plant, a crane and a palmetto tree³. The town was named for its first postmaster, Cornthwaite John Hector, an Englishman who was said to have come from Melbourne, Australia⁴.

As in many other Florida cities, the growth of Melbourne and neighboring Eau Gallie would not begin in earnest until the arrival of the railroad. Henry Flagler’s Florida East Coast Railway arrived in Eau Gallie in 1893 and just months later was extended to Melbourne. Flagler’s tracks would continue their march down the east coast, arriving in Miami in 1896, and to Key West in 1912. The railroad brought tourists, settlers and an inestimable boost to the region’s economy, as produce and timber could now be shipped to out-of-state markets.

Melbourne developed steadily during the 1880s and first half of the 1890s. The financial profit in the citrus grove industry attracted a number of settlers to Melbourne. During the 1890s, a large number of residential buildings were built along Riverview Drive and Melbourne Avenue. To service the community’s needs, Melbourne’s commercial area started growing north of Crane Creek along Front Street. Some of the businesses included merchandise stores, a meat market, a newspaper, lumber yards, hotels, a telegraph office and a post office. The local economy, however, suffered serious devastating freezes during the winter of 1894-1895, which killed citrus groves and other crops in the area.

In the early 1900’s Melbourne was a popular winter destination for The Chautauqua of the Tropics. The natural beauty of Melbourne and the surrounding area was promoted to visitors as seen in Figure 13. Their annual events in Melbourne would last from one to two weeks at a time.

Between 1896 and 1920, the area recovered from the devastating effects of the freezes. The replanting of orange groves along with the development of other industries, such as commercial fishing, lumbering and ranching helped the local economy recover. The Union Cypress Lumber Company at Hopkins was the most important industrial complex constructed near Melbourne. George Hopkins established it in 1912, south of Crane Creek. The Union Cypress Mill not only propelled Melbourne into the Industrial Revolution but it also provided Melbourne’s first electricity, out-patient hospital and moving picture house.

¹Barile, Diane. “The Elizabeth Eaton Residence Designation Report”, October 2007

²Olausen, Stephen. Page 9

³www.melbourneflorida.org/info/history

⁴Other sources say that Hector was actually from New Zealand

Figure 11: General Land Office Grant – Peter Wright

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The United States of America,

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, GREETING:

Homestead Certificate No. 595
Application 4786

Whereas, there has been deposited in the General Land Office of the United States a CERTIFICATE of the Registrar of the Land Office at Gainesville Florida, whereby it appears that, pursuant to the Act of Congress approved 20th May, 1862, "To grant Homesteads to actual settlers on the public domain," and the acts supplemental thereto, the claim of Peter Wright

has been established and duly consummated in conformity to law for the Lots numbered one, two, and three of Section two, in Township twenty eight, South of Range thirty seven East, in the District of Lands subject to sale at Gainesville Florida, containing one hundred and twenty nine acres and fifty hundredths of an acre

according to the Official Plat of the Survey of the said Land returned to the General Land Office by the SURVEYOR GENERAL.

Now know ye, That there is therefore granted by the UNITED STATES unto the said Peter Wright the tract of Land above described: To Have and to Hold the said tract of Land, with the appurtenances thereof, unto the said Peter Wright and to his heirs and assigns forever:

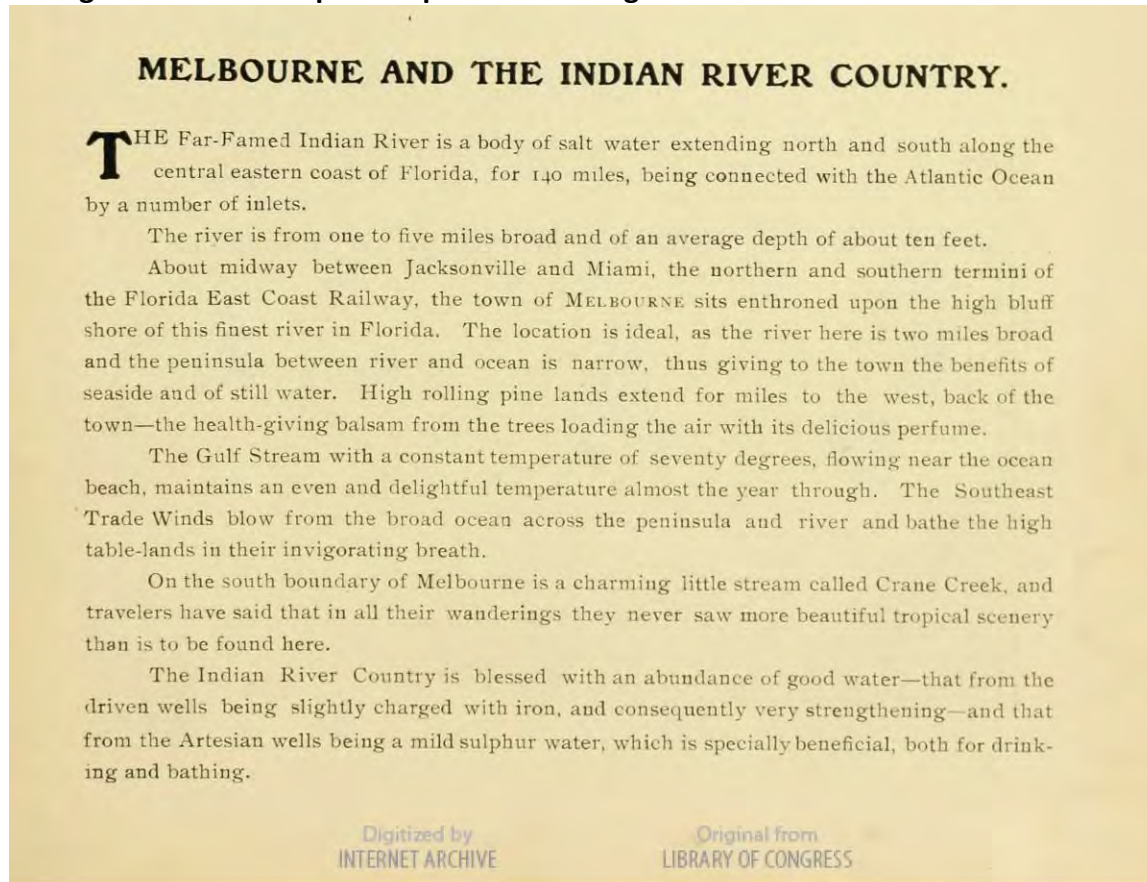
In testimony whereof, F. W. Grant, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, have caused these letters to be made Patent, and the Seal of the General Land Office to be hereunto affixed.



Given under my hand, at the CITY OF WASHINGTON, the first day of February, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seven ty six, and of the Independence of the United States the One hundredth.

BY THE PRESIDENT: W. S. Grant
By [Signature], Sec'y.
[Signature], Recorder of the General Land Office

Source: Research of Diane Barile.

Figure 12: Chautauqua Pamphlet Promoting Melbourne's Natural Charms

Source: Personal research of John Daly.

In 1919, a devastating fire destroyed the commercial district along First Street in downtown Melbourne. On August 31st of the same year, another fire partially destroyed the Union Cypress Sawmill in Hopkins, leaving hundreds of workers out of jobs. The fires, along with the national economic depression during World War I, ended a prosperous period of development.

The end of World War I, however, brought a wave of new settlers to Florida, and by the 1920s, the State was poised for the phenomenon dubbed as the “Florida Real Estate Boom.” In a 1925 book, “The Truth about Florida,” author Charles Donald Fox explains that the Boom in Florida eclipsed all other mass migrations, including the California Gold Rush in 1849:

There is reflected in the great migration to Florida the natural result of the knowledge, that here, within thirty-six to forty hours’ train travel of sixty million of our population lies a land of upwards of thirty million acres. Two-thirds of this immense area is capable of agricultural development, and because Nature has cast her favoring smile upon it above

practically all other sections of our country, it is capable of producing scores of varieties to satisfy the demands and needs of half the population of the United States.⁵

By 1923, Melbourne had made significant strides toward civic improvement, including the construction of paved roads, concrete sidewalks, electric street lamps and improved water and sewer systems. A new commercial area was developed along Melbourne and New Haven Avenues to replace the old commercial area along First Street that was destroyed by the 1919 fire. After the completion of Dixie Highway from Montreal to Miami in 1915, the number of automobile tourists increased dramatically every year. Newly mobile northerners and adventurous men and women from around the nation came to see Florida's unique sites and communities. Melbourne's landscape began to change as a plethora of auto related businesses appeared along Dixie Highway between Crane Creek and the current location of Line Street. According to a 1959 Sanborn map, there were still 7 automobile related developments along this same short stretch of Dixie Highway.

From early automobiles, modified to carry sleeping quarters, kitchen equipment, and barrels of water, to the sophisticated campers as luxurious as nice homes, Florida's vacationer-explorers used their vehicles to find out-of-way locations of interest and comfortable places to live for a few days or weeks. Adventure bound tourists came to the Melbourne area and slept in tents beside the road or in their cars. Tent Cities and Tourist Camps evolved in both Eau Gallie and greater Melbourne. In 1919 a group of these tourists met in Tampa and formed an organization known as the Tin Can Tourists. They pioneered camper travel and although this organization died out between 1980 and 1989, there was a comeback and it is still in existence to this day. The Tin Can Tourist and other visitors would often vacation at Midway Colony on the grounds of the current Riverview Park. What started as Midway Camp, a Tent City in 1922, gradually became Midway Colony which grew to include 140 cottages, a swimming pool, and a 1,200 foot fishing pier, as well as a recreation hall. The tourist related growth along Dixie Highway continued until the area was filled with cottages, motels and trailer parks.

The tremendous increase in tourism and record breaking citrus crops attracted many people to the Melbourne area. Due to the increase in the population along with the increasing demands for expansion, the Town of Melbourne and Eau Gallie reincorporated as cities in 1923 and 1925, respectively.

Between 1921 and 1926, Melbourne experienced tremendous development in the commercial and residential areas. Mediterranean and Florida Vernacular were the dominant building styles. Several new subdivisions were platted in areas north and west of Melbourne's commercial district based on the tenets of the National City Beautiful Movement. Indian River Bluff and Country Club Colony were some of the subdivisions that were designed by incorporating curvilinear streets and irregular building lots to produce "more interesting building sites"⁶.

After World War II, Melbourne experienced dramatic growth with the development of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) facilities in Cape Canaveral. In 1969, the City of Eau

⁵Fox, Charles Donald. The Truth about Florida, pages 10-11

⁶Olausen, Stephen, page 19

Gallie merged with the City of Melbourne and formed the largest city in Brevard County at the time.

Green Gables is the northern most home in the Historic Riverview Village, which is Melbourne's first neighborhood and oldest residential district. Riverview Village is a neighborhood of old historic homes located between the Indian River Lagoon bluff and South Harbor City Boulevard (US-1) that stretches north of the Melbourne Causeway for four blocks. The older homes on the river side of Riverside Drive were mostly built in the period from 1890 to 1905. Riverboat crews, laying over in Melbourne, often worked as carpenters on these homes. These historic homes mark the transition of Melbourne from a settlement of pioneers into a "modern" city. Many of the early settlers and the community's leaders, like W.T. Wells and family, made their homes along this street. The Carleton Hotel (1887), which was known as the town's finest hotel was once located at the southern end of Riverview Village near the present day Melbourne Causeway (1921). The predecessor of the Melbourne Causeway was a public pier, which stretched over 1,000 feet into the Indian River Lagoon. According to the Indian River Advocate newspaper the Wells would pick up tourists staying at the Carleton and take them to Melbourne Beach for the day.

South of the Carleton Hotel was a set of steps known as the Trysting Steps (Figure 13). These originally wooden steps mounted the 25-foot high river bluff, providing a means for pedestrians to go from the Front Street business section to the hotels and residences in Riverview Village. The steps traversed an Indian mound or shell midden which continued along the bluff. They were later replaced with concrete steps. The Bluff Walk (Figure 14), an unpaved riverside promenade, stretched from the top of the Trysting Steps to Green Gables. The steps were a popular place for the young people of Melbourne to meet during their courtships and the Bluff Walk was the local "Lover's Lane" on cool evenings, if the mosquitoes weren't too bad. The Bluff Walk ended at the Well's property. Both the Trysting Steps and the Bluff walk have been lost now. The steps and Indian mound were cleared for development on the site and the public lost access to the water front.

In 1903 a fire destroyed both The Carleton Hotel and the neighboring Idylewild Hotel. The rebuilt New Carleton Hotel reopened a year later only to burn again in 1925. Both the original Carleton Hotel and the New Carleton Hotel can be seen in Figure 15.

Figure 13: Trysting Steps



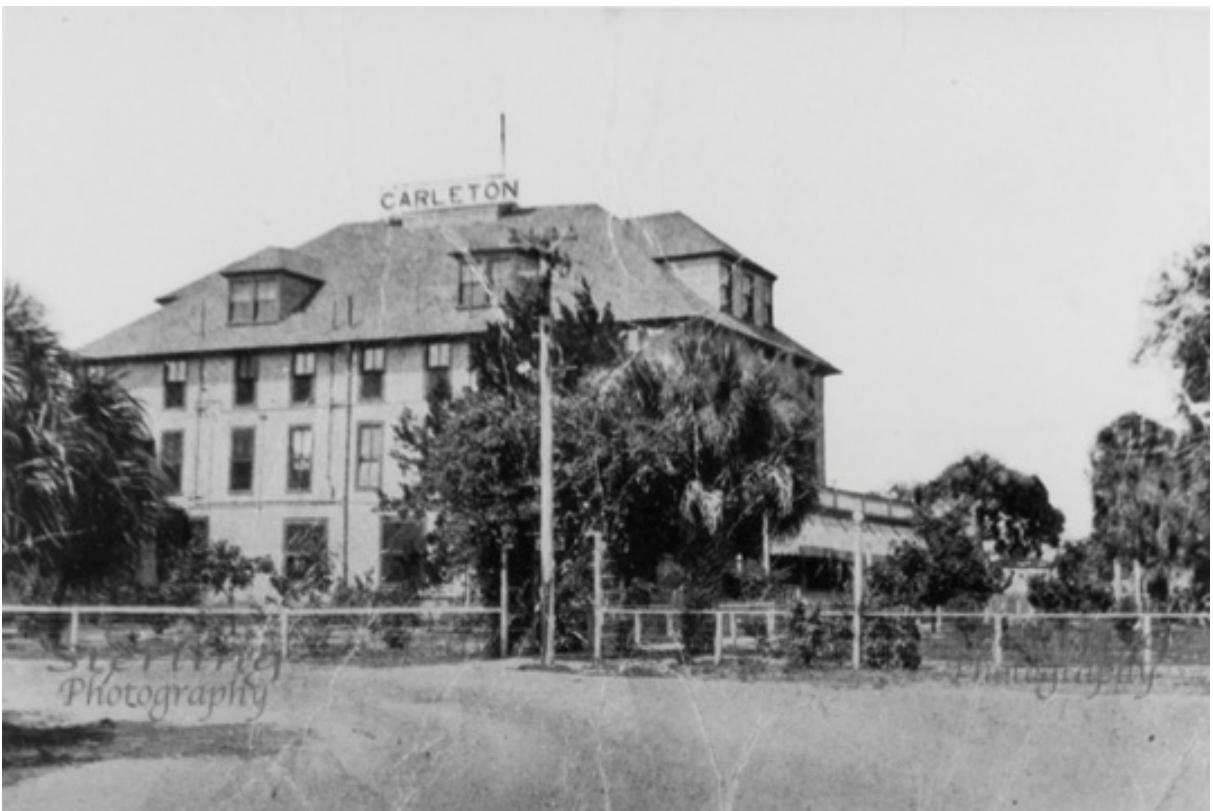
Source: Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

Figure 14: Bluff Walk



Source: Florida Historical Society

Figure 15: Carleton Hotel

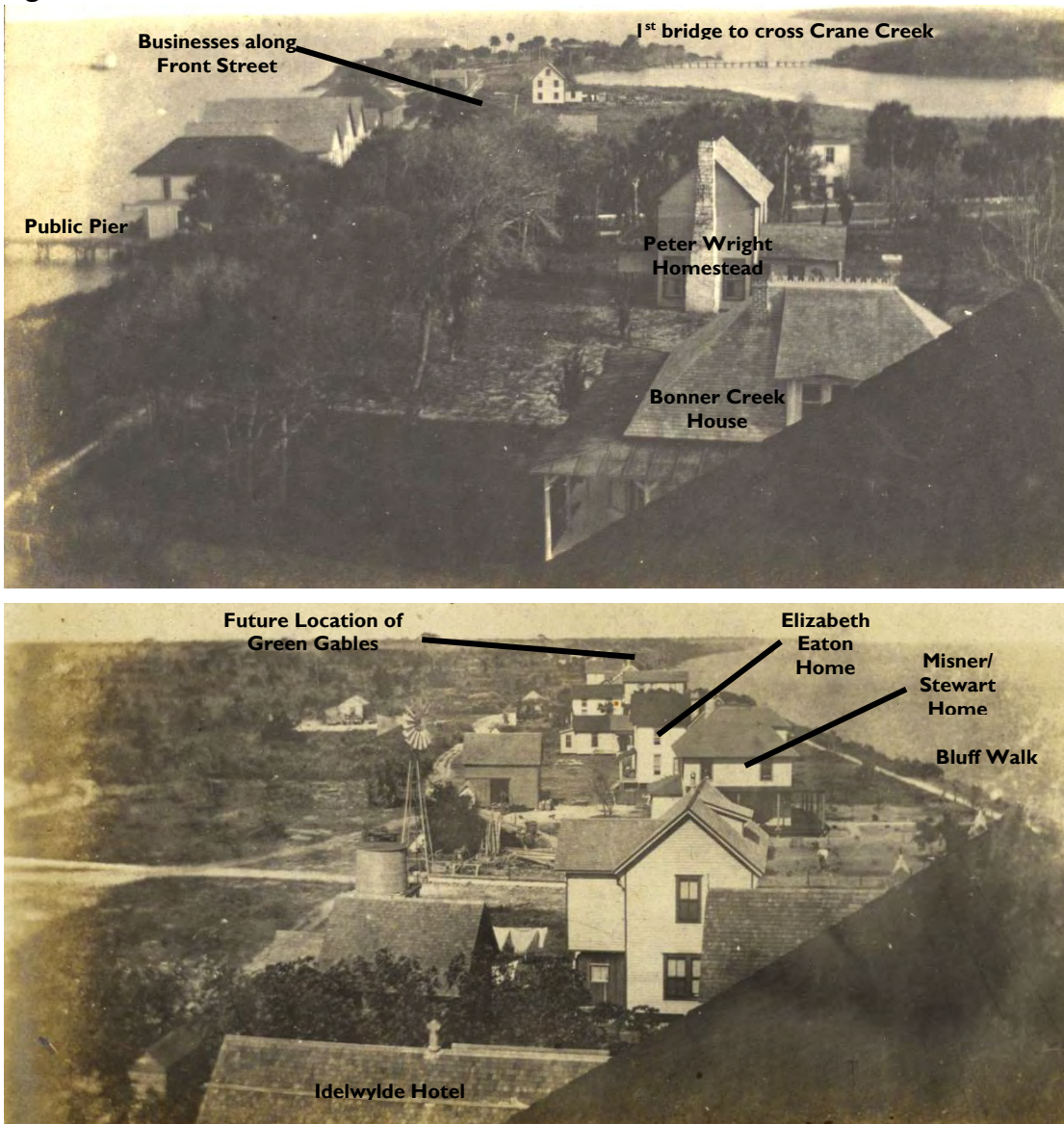


Source: Sterling Photography

Early views of Melbourne, taken from the Carleton Hotel, can be seen in Figure 16. The view to the south is shown in the top photo with the view to the north in the bottom photo (prior to the construction of Green Gables, which is to be located north of the last home seen here). Key landmarks are identified within each image.

Over the years, many of the historic homes in the Historic Riverview Village have been purposely razed due to development pressure, damage from the 2004 hurricanes and/or demolition by neglect. Green Gables is one of fewer than 25 pre-1900 structures remaining in Melbourne.

Figure 16: Views from the Carleton Hotel



Source: Wells family album in the possession of Francis McClung Allen.

V. Architectural Significance

A. Property Features

The predominant architectural and site features of the property include:

- A 2-story main house
- Post-supported balcony and wraparound porch with Chippendale style trim
- 2/2 double hung sash windows
- Conical tower
- Complex, steeply pitched roof
- Decorative wood patterned shingles
- Decorative brackets on tower cornice
- Diamond shaped windows
- Brick chimney
- Gate column of Coquina stone on southwest corner of property
- Remnants of former outbuilding on northwest corner of property (possible carriage house)

B. Building Placement/Orientation

The primary building is setback approximately 140 feet from South Harbor City Boulevard and 130 feet from Riverview Drive. The main entrance is located on South Harbor City Boulevard; however, the primary façade of the building is oriented towards Riverview Drive.

Figure 17: Location of Green Gables – 1900 vs 2011



Source: Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

C. Building Form and Architecture

The architectural style of the structure is Queen Anne. According to the Florida Master Site File (ID #BR01454):

Queen Anne was a popular residential building style in the United States between 1880 and 1900 and remained popular through the first decade of the 20th Century. The name of the style is misleading. It draws most heavily upon earlier Jacobean and Elizabethan precedents rather than the more restrained Renaissance architecture of the reign of Queen Anne (1702-1714). English architect Richard Norman Shaw is most often credited for developing the style in his designs for grand manor houses during the mid-nineteenth century. The first American example is generally considered to be the Watts-Sherman House in Newport, Rhode Island.

The Queen Anne style was very popular in northern Florida between 1880 and 1910, as it was in most states in the South. Unfortunately, the buildings were often built close to commercial districts or along major transportation arteries. As towns grew into cities, many of the Queen Anne structures were razed to create space for modern buildings. Examples of the style are now relatively scarce.

Identifying features of the Queen Anne style include steeply pitched roof lines with intersecting extensions; irregularly shaped floor plan; decorative truss work and patterned shingles in the roof gables; veranda porches with spindle work or decorative brackets between turned porch roof supports; canted bay extensions; polygonal or conical towers; various exterior fabrics, often different from one story to the next; multi-paned double-hung sash windows with decorative glazing patterns; and massive corbelled chimneys with decorative brick work.

The south side of the structure faces Riverview Drive and has the primary entrance at the center of the structure. The south and east façades, seen in Figure 18, highlight 'The Octagon' porch and tower, which provides a view of the Indian River, and originally would have a view of downtown Melbourne (before the maturity of many of the trees that were planted in the area). The house features green patterned shingles along the top of each floor and in some of the gables, which gave the house its name (Figure 19). While the house was originally built as a traditional Four-Square, many additions over the years transformed the house into the Queen Anne style, as is seen in the transformation of the west façade (Figure 20), south façade (Figure 21), and east façade (Figure 22). On the west façade, a bay window was added to the first floor, and then extended onto the second floor. A pantry/laundry room was added by extending the kitchen, and a mother-in-law suite was added to the north end of the house (Figure 23). On the south façade, the addition of the octagon tower and "The Octagon" porch is seen, as well as the enclosure of the second floor balcony into the house. While the balcony was not enclosed into the house on the east façade, the railings have been removed. The large window on the east façade is on a modern extension of the living room. This addition is obvious when viewed from the east but it does not intrude on the lines of the house when viewed from the front/south. The chimney serves two ground floor fireplaces in the living room and the foyer.

Figure 18: South/East Façades



Source: Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

Figure 19: Green Gables



Source: Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

Figure 20: West Façade, 1899 and 2009



Source: Wells family album in the possession of Francis McClung Allen and Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

Figure 21: South Façade, 1897 and 2009



Source: Wells family album in the possession of Francis McClung Allen and Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

Figure 22: East Façade



Source: Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

Figure 23: Mother-in-Law Suite (1950s)



Source: Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

Figure 24: Hurricane Shutters

Source: Wells family album in the possession of Francis McClung Allen and Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

As seen in Figure 24, the octagonal porch features hurricane shutters from the early 1900s, some of which are still operational. The cut flower between the ladies is a native Yucca plant.

The kitchen (downstairs) and trunk room (upstairs) were built as a separate wing which is connected to the main house by a passageway. This wing has a gable roof which runs north-south. When the original upstairs bathroom was added in the northeast corner of the second floor, it was capped with a gable roof running east-west. The diamond windows which already existed on the east wall of the second story were moved east with the expansion and a porch created underneath the addition on the first floor, as seen in Figure 25. Note the Chippendale style trim between columns, the thicker, replacement columns, and the wood barrel on the porch bottom. The decorative wood trim of straight cuts is repeated on the south porch. It is unusual that the scroll work typical of the Queen Anne style in other parts of the country was not used here. The mother-in-law suite now extends to the north on this corner of the house.

Figure 25: East Façade (Upstairs Bathroom)

Source: Wells family album in the possession of Francis McClung Allen and Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

The clapboard siding is generally in good condition around the house, with scattered areas of decay where water has intruded, as seen in Figure 26. The 2/2 windows have been protected with boarding and some original screens survived. The extension over the porch, while enclosed into the house, retains the original slight slope that was intended to drain water from the second floor balcony.

The foundation of the house consists of piers of mixed masonry materials and brick piers with wood lattice infill. All of the piers and openings have been covered with stucco from the outside of the house, but are still visible from the crawl space under the house, as seen in Figure 27.

Figure 26: West Entrance to Masonry Porch



Source: Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

Figure 27: Foundation

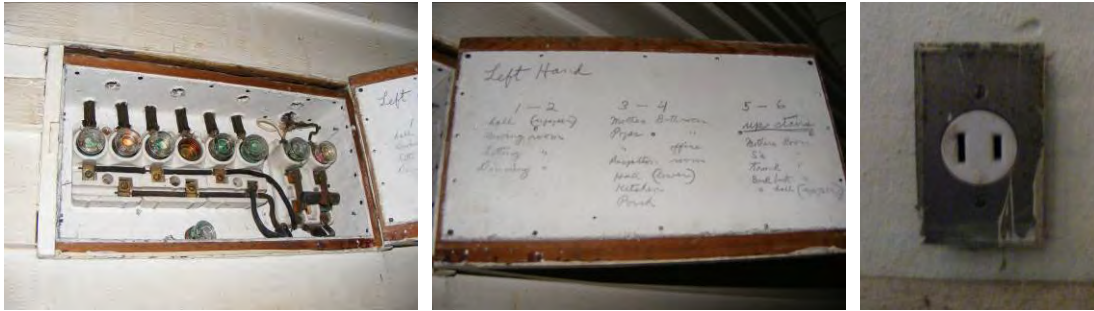


Source: Carl Andren

D. Interior

The interior of the structure has remained largely unchanged with many of the original details remaining. The electric system in place is original within 10 years of the structures construction, as seen in Figure 28. Interior details such as doorknobs, hinges, and light fixtures remain throughout the house, other than where vandalized, as seen in Figure 29.

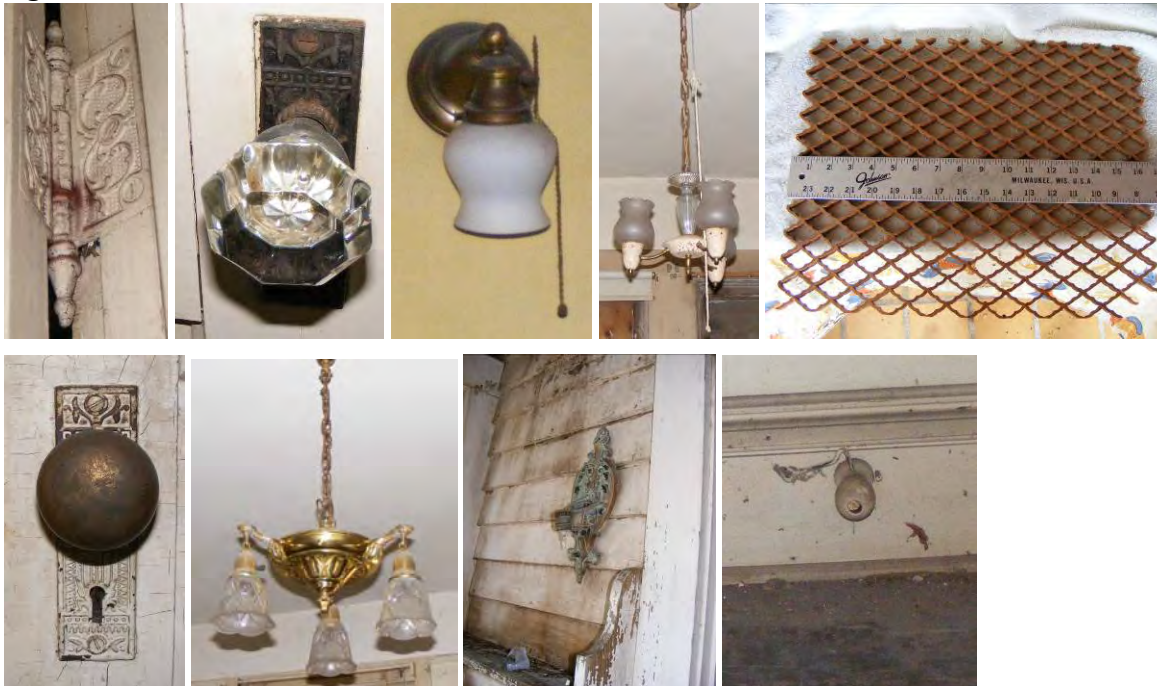
Figure 28: Early Electric System



Source: Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

The name of the rooms on the fuse box door read: Hall (upper), Sewing Room, Sitting Room, Dining Room, Mothers Bathroom, Pops Bathroom, Pops Office, Reception Room, Hall (lower), Kitchen, Porch, Upstairs: Mothers Room, S's Room, Trunk Room, Back bath, Back hall (upper)

Figure 29: Interior Details



Source: Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

The entry foyer features a staircase on the west side (Figure 30) and a fireplace on the east side (Figure 31). The original picture rail can also be seen in these photographs. The screen work/fret work between the foyer and living room and along the staircase is a distinctive feature of the house and is believed to have come from India. The screen work/fret work remains in the house, as shown in Figure 32. The fireplace in the entry foyer features wood spindles and carving on the facing and the mirror. Cast iron trim surround the firebox with brown and cream colored glazed tiles beyond that. The hearth is also covered in glazed tiles that match the surround. The fireplace in the foyer was one of two fireplaces that provided heat for the home (as the kitchen stove was in the other wing). A vent adjacent to the fireplace in the foyer carried heat upstairs. Both the fireplace in the foyer and the fireplace in the living room are served by a single chimney, which is unusual. The original mantels have survived on both fireplaces, as seen in Figure 33, and the original mirrors remain over the foyer and living room fireplaces, although they appear to have been switched from their original locations. The spindle work on the mirror in the living room matches the wood work of the foyer fireplace.

Figure 30: Historic Interior Photos - Foyer



Source: Wells family album in the possession of Francis McClung Allen.

Figure 31: Historic Interior Photos – Foyer Fireplace



Source: Wells family album in the possession of Francis McClung Allen.

Figure 32: Foyer and Stairs



Source: Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

Figure 33: Fireplaces



Source: Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

Figure 34: Kitchen



Source: Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

The Wells were well traveled and their home included furnishings from various exotic destinations. In the mirror of the living room (Figure 35) one can see a reflection of an Egyptian wall hanging/tapestry juxtaposed to wooden shoes from Holland. Part of the Egyptian wall hanging can also be seen in the photo above from the foyer. The wood mantel features decorative brackets and carving on the main facing similar to the fireplace in the foyer. The cast iron trim around the firebox also matches the material and pattern in the other fireplace. The same brown and cream colored glazed tiles are used but the pattern on the living room fireplace is different.

Figure 35: Historic Interior Photos – Living Room



Source: Wells family album in the possession of Francis McClung Allen.

The living room has the most significant damage within the house. Water has intruded at the seam where the room was extended, which caused damage to the original plaster ceiling, as seen in Figure 36.

Figure 36: Water Damage

Source: Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

The bathrooms, both which are located upstairs, feature many of the original fixtures, as seen in Figure 37. It was rumored that Green Gables had either the first or second bathtub in Melbourne. Another local legend holds that this was the first or second bathtub in Brevard County.

The widow's walk at the peak of the house is accessible by a ladder in the attic (Figure 38). Note the original wood shingles which are covered by the current metal roof.

Figure 37: Upstairs Bathrooms



Source: Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

Figure 38: Attic



Source: Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.

E. Landscape

Judging from the volume of photos taken of the Well's garden, they must have placed a lot of significance and pride on their landscaping. Their landscape palette gives us insight into the types of plants that were popular in the late 1800's and early 1900's, both ornamental and food crops.

The birth of the Well's garden can be seen in Figure 39. In the photo on top (c. 1897) a gentleman walks with one foot in front of the other and looks down as he paces off an entry path to the front steps. Nearby a lady holds up a small stake in each hand, which she will use to layout paths and landscape beds. In the bottom photo of the east garden (c. 1898) a lady waters the newly planted/transplanted Live Oaks. Note the stakes and small plants now defining the meandering pathways. There was a strong artesian well on the south end of the property.

Figure 39: Newborn Landscape



Source: Wells family album in the possession of Francis McClung Allen.

By 1899 native Blanket Flower/Gaillardia line the pathways and grass is starting to cover the sandy soil. Figure 40 shows the garden in 1899, with the public pier on the Indian River Lagoon and two of the Well's horses in the background. Within three short years the lawn became established and the paths were been improved with the addition of gravel (Figure 41). According to the Well's grandchildren, the gravel paths were still in use up until the 1950's. Here exotic Oleanders, Palms, Bamboo and Century Plants are interspersed with native Live Oaks and Pines.

Figure 40: East Garden in May 1899



Source: Wells family album in the possession of Francis McClung Allen.

Figure 41: East Garden c. 1902



Source: Wells family album in the possession of Francis McClung Allen.

The pathways on the Wells property led to the Bluff Walk, which is seen in Figure 42. The first two images show the Bluff Walk along the Indian River Lagoon and the pathways leading to it from Green Gables, before (c.1898) and after (c.1899) the addition of "The Octagon" The bottom photograph shows a gate at the end of the Bluff Walk and plantings of Century Plants and Oleander.

Figure 42: Bluff Walk



Source: Wells family album in the possession of Francis McClung Allen.

The garden was well established in 1906, as seen in Figure 43. The plant palette is diverse and includes Century Plants, Bamboo, a Rubber Tree, Cabbage Palms, and Date Palms. Remnants of the Date Palm to the right of the octagonal porch are still growing on the property. Several clumps of the Bamboo remain on the property as well. The south porch (Figure 44) was clad in a variety of vines which would have provided additional shade from the southern sun as well as

flowers. Note the baby carriage at the bottom of the step in the photo on the left. The photo on the right was taken around 1899 before the addition of the octagonal porch.

The landscape on the west side of the home was dominated by pineapple plants and Citrus trees. Figure 45, which shows the gardens on the west side of the home, was taken in the same approximate location of the current S Harbor City Boulevard/US 1.

Green Gables had a small dock on the Indian River Lagoon, as seen in Figure 46. This sunny moist location proved to be the perfect location for the Well's banana crop along the river bank. The bank of the river and dock were approximately 25' below the ground level of the house.

Figure 43: South Lawn



Source: Susan Craft

Figure 44: South Porch



Source: Wells family album in the possession of Francis McClung Allen.

Figure 45: West Garden

Source: Susan Craft

Figure 46: Dock and Bananas

Source: Wells family album in the possession of Francis McClung Allen.

In the over 100 years since the gardens were planted, the plants and trees on the property have matured to the point where the house is barely seen from the public right-of-way. The existing vegetation is seen in Figure 47. The live oaks have matured with limbs reaching higher than the original widow's peak. A lone column of Coquina stone and colored grout is located on the southwest corner of the property. Additional research is needed to determine its origin or connection to Green Gables. The cluster of live oaks seen in the bottom photo is the same group of trees being watered by hand in Figure 39.

Any improvement on the grounds should include the removal of exotic invasive plants including Brazilian Pepper, Schefflera, and Camphor Trees. A large dead oak should also be removed to prevent damage when it falls.

Figure 47: Existing Conditions



Source: Littlejohn Engineering Associates, March 2014

VI. Eligibility Criteria

Article XI of the Melbourne City Code, "Preservation of Historic Resources and Districts, Archaeological Sites and Zones," contains the criteria for designating historical properties on the Melbourne Register of Historical Places. The following is an excerpt from Section 10-229:

"...the historic preservation board shall recommend for designation as historic resources [those resources] that are significant in Melbourne's history, architecture, archeology, and culture and possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or association..."

A. Integrity Issue

Before determining the significance of a property nominated for designation, the property must be reviewed for "integrity", that is, the property must maintain its original character despite any alterations that may have occurred over time.

In the case of the 1501 Harbor City Boulevard property, it is clear that some additions and alterations have been made over the course of time. The following are considerations that can be objectively evaluated:

- Has the general form (plan shape) been maintained? **Yes**
- Have the alterations/additions been made during a period of significance, typ. whereby those alterations have been a part of the evolving history of the house? **Yes**
- Do the window openings maintain their original dimensions, even though the window type may be different from the original configuration? **Yes**
- Are the original roof slopes maintained? **Yes**
- Are the original construction materials still evident? **Yes**
- Is the original character of the resource, dating from its initial construction period, still apparent even though additions and alterations may have occurred? **Yes**
- Do the major alterations/additions affect a major elevation? **Yes, on north side**

The major alterations to the exterior were the addition of the mother-in-law suite on the northeast corner and the living room expansion on the east side of the house.

Despite the alterations, the structure still maintains its Queen Anne style characteristics, including the conical tower, gable roof, wrap-around porch, and double hung sash windows. "It is significant for its association with the development of Melbourne's residential area during the Florida Period of Expansion of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."

Therefore, the 1501 Harbor City Boulevard property meets the "test" for the retention of sufficient integrity.

Figure 48: Historic Photo, c. 1902



Source: Wells family album in the possession of Francis McClung Allen.

B. Designation Criteria

The 1501 Harbor City Boulevard property is significant in Melbourne's history and architecture; possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, culture, and workmanship; and meets the following criteria contained in Section 10-229 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance:

- Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- Recognizes the quality of design and construction, and embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architecture type, period, style and method of construction.

C. Recommendation

LEA/Staff would recommend the listing of the 1501 Harbor City Boulevard property in the Melbourne Register of Historic Places. However, owner consent is required prior to designation. Therefore, LEA/Staff recommends that the City of Melbourne Historic Preservation Board contact the owners, relay the information in this report, and ask for their consent in listing 1501 Harbor City Boulevard in the Melbourne Register of Historic Places.

VII. Planning Context

The historic designation is a tool for a community to retain its physical integrity. Many of the historic structures that have made a significant contribution to the history of the community have been destroyed. The W.T. Wells House/Green Gables is one of the last remaining structures from pre-1900 Melbourne.

The designation of the 1501 Harbor City Boulevard property will provide a process for protection in the future from inaccurate or unsympathetic alterations and unnecessary demolition to assure the preservation of the character and uniqueness of the property. Once the house is designated as a local historic landmark, exterior alterations and /or demolition of the building will require City approval. The designation may also serve as an “object lesson” to others who may consider the designation of their historic properties.

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