

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Property

\_\_\_\_\_  
County and State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

## SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 16000269

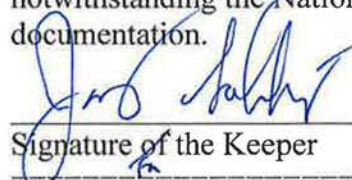
Date Listed: 5/18/2016

Property Name: Green Gables

County: Brevard

State: FL

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

5-18-2016  
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8: Significant Dates

The Period of Significance is hereby changed to 1896-c.1910 to reflect the initial construction of the house and the significant remodeling into its present form.

C. 1950 is hereby deleted as a significant date.

\_\_\_\_\_  
The Florida State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file**
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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APR 08 2016

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name GREEN GABLES

other names/site number WELLS HOUSE; Florida Master Site File #BR1454

2. Location

street & number 1501 South Harbor City N/A  not for publication

city or town Melbourne N/A  vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Brevard Melbourne code 009 zip code 32935

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Glissa Totame 8/30/14  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register  See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Jon Salter  
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5-10-2016

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

Name of related multiple property listings

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Family

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Queen Anne

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Wood

roof Asphalt Shingles

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1896

Significant Dates

1900

c. 1950

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Arch: Unknown

Blder: Baker and Bell

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of Repository

#

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 1.5 apprx.

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	5	3	8	7	7	9	3	1	0	6	6	3	4
	Zone		Easting					Northing							
2															
	Zone		Easting					Northing							

3															
	Zone		Easting					Northing							
4															
	Zone		Easting					Northing							

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carl Shiver, Historic Preservationist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date March 2016

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name John B. Daly

street & number P.O. Box 500856 telephone (321) 482-6818

city or town Malabar state Florida zip code 32950

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
DESCRIPTION

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**SUMMARY**

The two-story Queen Anne style house known as Green Gables is located at 1501 South Harbor Boulevard in Melbourne, Florida on the northeast corner of the intersection of Harbor City Boulevard/U.S. Highway 1 and Riverview Drive. This 3140 square foot single family home has six bedrooms and 2 bathrooms. The property is also known as the W.T, Wells House, its original owner who was one of the most influential men in Melbourne at the turn of the 20th century. It is also known as Green Gables due to the green color of the shingle siding in the gables. The house was built in 1896 by builders Baker and Bell just eight years after the City of Melbourne was incorporated in 1888. Green Gables started as a large Frame Vernacular house which was modified over the years. Green Gables is one of the earliest Queen Anne style residences in Melbourne and is one of the few remaining buildings from pre-1900 Melbourne. The house is set back 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 facade of the building is oriented towards Riverview Drive.

**SETTING**

Melbourne is a city in Brevard County, Florida. As of the 2010 census, the population was 76,068.<sup>1</sup> The municipal area is the second largest by size and by population in the county. Melbourne is a principal city of the Palm Bay – Melbourne – Titusville, Florida Metropolitan Statistical Area. In 1969 the city was expanded by merging with nearby Eau Gallie. Melbourne is located approximately 60 miles southeast of Orlando on the Space Coast, along Interstate Highway 95. It is approximately midway between Jacksonville and Miami. According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 39.6 square miles. The east-west street named Brevard Drive was historically the "center" of town; with addresses called "north" and "south" of this street. The north-south Babcock Street provided the same centerline for "east" and "west" directions. Melbourne Beachside has a small presence on the South Beaches barrier island. It is often confused with Melbourne Beach, a separate political entity. Tropical flora typical of more southerly locations may be grown in the Melbourne area (coconut palms, royal palms, Christmas palms, and bananas), but may be damaged or killed when subjected to infrequent light freezes.

**DESCRIPTION**

**Exterior**

The original house was characterized by a simple rectangular floor plan, pitched hipped roof, and symmetrical facade (Photo 1). The most significant change was the addition of the octagonal tower and porch on the southeast corner of the house sometime around 1897 (Photo 2). Green Gables is a two-story wood frame Queen

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Factfinder. Retrieved January 30, 2012.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 2

GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
DESCRIPTION

Anne style home with a front and side porch (Photos 3-4). The main architectural and site features of the property include a two-story main house, a post supported balcony and wraparound porch with Chippendale style trim, 2/2-light double-hung wood sash windows, a hexagonal tower a complex (Photo 5), a gazebo porch (Photo 6), steeply pitched roof, decorative wood patterned shingles, decorative brackets on the tower cornice, diamond shaped window panes, a brick chimney.

According to the Indian River Advocate, the house was built in 1896 by Baker and Bell (builder) for W.T. Wells.<sup>2</sup> This was just 8 years after the City of Melbourne was incorporated in 1888. The original design was a basic Frame Vernacular style dwelling, which was a popular building style between 1880 and 1900. Newspaper clippings from the East Coast Advocate indicates that major additions were completed in 1901, 1902, and 1910.<sup>3</sup> These initial improvements transitioned the house from the Frame Vernacular 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 (Photo 7) between the two south facing bedrooms, taking a portion of the balcony/walkway. Shortly after the completion of the tower addition, the front porch was redesigned and expanded to the west elevation (Photos 8-10). The wood deck was replaced with concrete and fitted with an open-work brick wall topped with concrete slabs. Concrete steps were constructed on the west side and a walkway extended to transverse hall (Photo 11) that bisects the front and rear sections of the house. 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. 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).<sup>4</sup> However, the current wiring/fuse box is most likely from the early 1900s.

When built in 1896, Green Gables sat alone about a mile north of downtown Melbourne. Wells laid out roads running north, west, and south from his home. The estate fronts on the Indian River to the east, and travel in that direction would have been by boat. Indian River Drive, the road to the south, initially served as the entrance to the estate. Indian River Drive has gone through several name changes and is now known as Riverview Drive. The road to the west is now Hibiscus Avenue. The road to the north became part of the Federal Highway which is now known as U.S. Highway 1. The house is presently vacant but 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,

<sup>2</sup> Indian River Advocate, October 9, 1896.

<sup>3</sup> East Coast Advocate, November 18, 1910.

<sup>4</sup> Indian River Advocate, September 14, 1896.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 3

GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
DESCRIPTION

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.

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 facade of the building is oriented towards Riverview Drive. 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 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. Additions and Alterations**

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 elevation 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 elevation 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, including the addition of a mother-in-law suite (Photo 12) 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 (Photos 13-14).

## **3. Construction Materials**

The building is a two-story wood frame 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-light 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. The living room has suffered 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. 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.



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GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
DESCRIPTION

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**Interior**

The interior of the structure has remained largely unchanged with many of the original details remaining. Interior details such as doorknobs, hinges, and light fixtures remain throughout the house. The entry foyer features a staircase on the west side and a fireplace on the east side (Photos 15-16). 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. 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. The original mantels have survived on both fireplaces, 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.

The bathrooms (Photo 17), both which are located upstairs, feature many of the original fixtures. 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.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section number     8     Page     1     GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
SIGNIFICANCE

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**SUMMARY**

Green Gables is significant at the local level under Criterion C in the Area of Architecture. Constructed in 1897 as a large two-story Frame Vernacular style dwelling, it was redesigned around 1901 to be a Queen Ann style residence which was a popular building style between 1880 and 1900 by the construction of a hexagonal two-story tower that was integrated into a hexagonal one-story porch. The house was built by William Twining Wells, who came to Melbourne in 1896 from New Jersey where he was owner of the Wells Rustless Iron Company, makers of oxidized iron. Due to his wife's tendency to pneumonia, he sought a winter home in Florida. After traveling over the state looking for a location, Melbourne was chosen as being the most desirable. The structure appears on the historic maps produced by Sanborn Map Company in 1926, 1944, and 1959. 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.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT<sup>5</sup>**

The city of Melbourne, Florida, is located on the banks of the Indian River Lagoon some 85 miles south of Daytona Beach and 60 miles east Orlando. The present city limits encompass several historic settlements, including the former town of Eau Gallie, which consolidated with Melbourne in 1969. With nearly 60,000 residents, Melbourne is the most populous city in Brevard County. The city is located in an area that has one of the most extended periods of prehistoric and historic development in the United States. The history of the region ranges from the glacial period to the events associated with the establishment of the space industry at Cape Canaveral in the 1950s. Substantive development did not begin, however, until the late nineteenth century, when steamboats and railroads made the previously isolated southern peninsula accessible. 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 Captain. Peter Wright, Balaam Allan, and Wright Brothers, all freedmen who came in 1867. The first concerted attempt to settle the Melbourne area was initiated by William H. Gleason, who purchased a large tract of land along the Indian River in 1869. Gleason was born in Tioga County, New York, in 1829. At the age of fifteen he moved with his family to Wisconsin, where he studied to become a civil engineer. Gleason's business pursuits ultimately encompassed a number of fields, including land speculation, lumbering, banking, and law. During the Civil War, Gleason served in the Union army as an engineer. In 1865, he was sent to Florida by the War Department to tour the southern portion of the state to determine the feasibility of establishing a colony for former slaves there. Accompanied by Freedmen's Bureau agent Colonel George F. Thompson, Gleason traveled extensively throughout the peninsula, logging some 1,500 miles on the expedition. Although he reported that the area was unsuited for the proposed colony, Gleason recognized the potential the area held for agricultural development. He was granted concessions by the

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<sup>5</sup> Barile, Diane. "The Elizabeth Eaton Residence Designation Report", October 2007

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section number 8 Page 2 GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
SIGNIFICANCE

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Florida Internal Improvement Board to drain swamplands east of Lake Okeechobee. For every 50,000 cubic feet of canal dug, Gleason was permitted to purchase 640 acres of land for a discounted price of forty dollars.<sup>6</sup>

With a reputation for shrewdness and a vision for the developmental potential of Florida, In 1868 Gleason won election to the post of lieutenant governor under Harrison Reed. Resigning in 1870 Gleason turned his attention to developing a town on the tract of land he had purchased in 1869, some 16,000 acres along the Indian River. The area chosen by Gleason for the community was originally known as Arlington. He renamed the place Eau Gallie, which presumably translates from the French as “bitter water,” a reference to the high saline content of the Indian River. Gleason was initially successful in advancing the growth of the nascent community. 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<sup>7</sup> the development of which was guided by a group of settlers of diverse backgrounds. The Town of Melbourne was incorporated on December 22, 1888, adopting a corporate seal that included a pineapple plant, a crane and a palmetto tree.<sup>8</sup> The town was named for its first postmaster, Cornthwaite John Hector, an Englishman who was said to have come from Melbourne, Australia.<sup>9</sup>

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.

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<sup>6</sup> East Coast Advocate, obituary of W.H. Gleason, November 14, 1902; William W. Davis, The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida (Gainesville, 1964) 523; Florida, Its Climate, Soil, and Productions... (Jacksonville, 1868) 64; Jerrel H. Shofner, Nor is it Over Yet: Florida in the Era of Reconstruction, 1863-1877 (Gainesville, 1974) 118.

<sup>7</sup> Olausen, Stephen, Page 9

<sup>8</sup> [www.melbourneflorida.org/info/history](http://www.melbourneflorida.org/info/history)

<sup>9</sup> Other sources say that Hector was actually from New Zealand.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 3 GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
SIGNIFICANCE

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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.

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, sixty million members 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.<sup>10</sup>

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.

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<sup>10</sup> Fox, Charles Donald. The Truth about Florida, pages 10-11.

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 4 GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
SIGNIFICANCE

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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."<sup>11</sup>

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

Green Gables

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 (U.S. Highway 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

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<sup>11</sup> Olausen, p. 19.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 5 GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
SIGNIFICANCE

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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.

William Twining Wells

William Twining Wells was born in Brooklyn, New York, on Aug. 6, 1854. He was educated at the city schools until he prepared for college, when he entered the School of Mines at Columbia University, showing a talent for metallurgy and its kindred subjects. Wells came to Melbourne in 1896 from New Jersey where he was owner of the Wells Rustless Iron Company, makers of oxidized iron. He had married Miss Nora Stanford, eldest daughter of Senator Charles Stanford of Schenectady, New York, and niece of the Honorable Leland Stanford, Civil War governor of California, U.S. senator and builder of the Central Pacific Railway and donor of the Stanford University at Palo Alto, California. Wells resided in Hackensack, N.J. for a number of years, and the three children were born there. He soon became well known as the inventor and developer of the Wells process of rustless iron, with furnaces at Little Ferry New Jersey, and business offices in New York. Due to his wife's tendency to pneumonia, he sought a winter home in Florida. After traveling over the state looking for a location, Melbourne was chosen as being the most desirable.<sup>12</sup>

The Strobah property, comprising 150 acres, all within the city limits, was bought and Green Gables cottage built, the family occupying it in October, 1897. It seemed very remote to the townspeople, as all life centered around the old Carleton Hotel and Congregational Church at that time. There were no streets, simply a block or

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<sup>12</sup> Melbourne Times, April 4, 1896.

**United States Department of the Interior  
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 6 GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
SIGNIFICANCE

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two by the hotel. Mr. Wells soon remedied the situation, as he enjoyed surveying and had the necessary instruments. He laid out streets in each direction from the house, bought horses and plows, put men in and grubbed them, then shelled them at his own expense and gave them to the town. He owned at that time 154 acres in the city and 2,000 acres south of town between Malabar and Palm Bay.

According to the East Coast Advocate, William 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. 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.

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, 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 Chatauqua group for the community. The Chatauqua Institute was founded in 1874 near Chatauqua 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 Chatauqua. By 1907, Wells was the President of the Chatauqua. He also assisted in bringing the railroad to Melbourne. William Twining Wells, pioneer settler of Melbourne, passed away at his home, Green Gables, on the Dixie Highway and Indian River Drive, at 10 o'clock Sunday evening, July 6. He was 75 years of age and his health had been failing for some time. W.T. Wells son Stanford Wells lived in the family home until his death in September 1971, dying at the age of 90. His mother died in New Jersey May 1975. William and Nora are buried at the Bolton Cemetery, Town of Bolton, Warren County, Bolton Road, New York. Subsequent owners of the property included Gladys L. McClung (1972), Charles Roy McClung, Trustee (1982), Lois L. Fletcher and David R. Fletcher (1997), and David R. Fletcher and Lyman T. Fletcher (2000).

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
SIGNIFICANCE

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**ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT**

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.

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

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-light 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.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number   9   Page   1  

GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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Indian River Advocate, October 9, 1896.

Melbourne Times, April 4, 1896.

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“Brevard Makes a Comeback,” Florida Trend. Vol 16, No. 8,, December 1973, 62-63.

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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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**Guidebooks**

A Brief Description of Brevard County, Florida, or the Indian River County, Its Climate, Health, Products, etc.  
2nd edition, Titusville, FL: Florida Star, 1889.

**Reports**

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Olausen, Stephen. Cultural Resources Survey of Melbourne, Florida. Melbourne, FL. 1991.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page 1

GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
GEOGRAPHIC DATA

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**Verbal 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.

The site is approximately 1.15 acres in size. The parcel identification number of the property is 28-37-03-FG-3-3.01.

**Boundary Justification**

All of the historic resources associated with the property known as Green Gables are found within the above described boundaries, and the concise boundaries are shown of the site and floor plans that accompany this National Register nomination proposal.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number      Photos      Page   1   GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

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**LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS**

1. Green Gables/Wells House
2. 1501 South City Boulevard, Melbourne (Brevard County), Florida
3. Unknown
4. 1897
5. Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.
6. Main (South) Facade, Looking Northwest
7. Photo 1 of 17

3. Unknown
4. 1897
5. Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.
6. Main (South) Facade, Looking Northwest
7. Photo 2 of 17

**Current Photographs**

**Numbers 1-3 and 5 are the same for the remaining historic photos are the same unless otherwise noted.**

3. Unknown
4. 2014
5. Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.
6. Main (South) Facade, Looking North
7. Photo 3 of 17

6. Main (South) Facade and West Elevation, Looking Northeast
7. Photo 4 of 17

6. View of the Main (South) Facade and East Elevation, Looking Northwest
7. Photo 5 of 17

6. Gazebo Porch, Looking Northwest
7. Photo 6 of 17

6. East Elevation, Bathroom Extension, Looking West
7. Photo 7 of 17

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

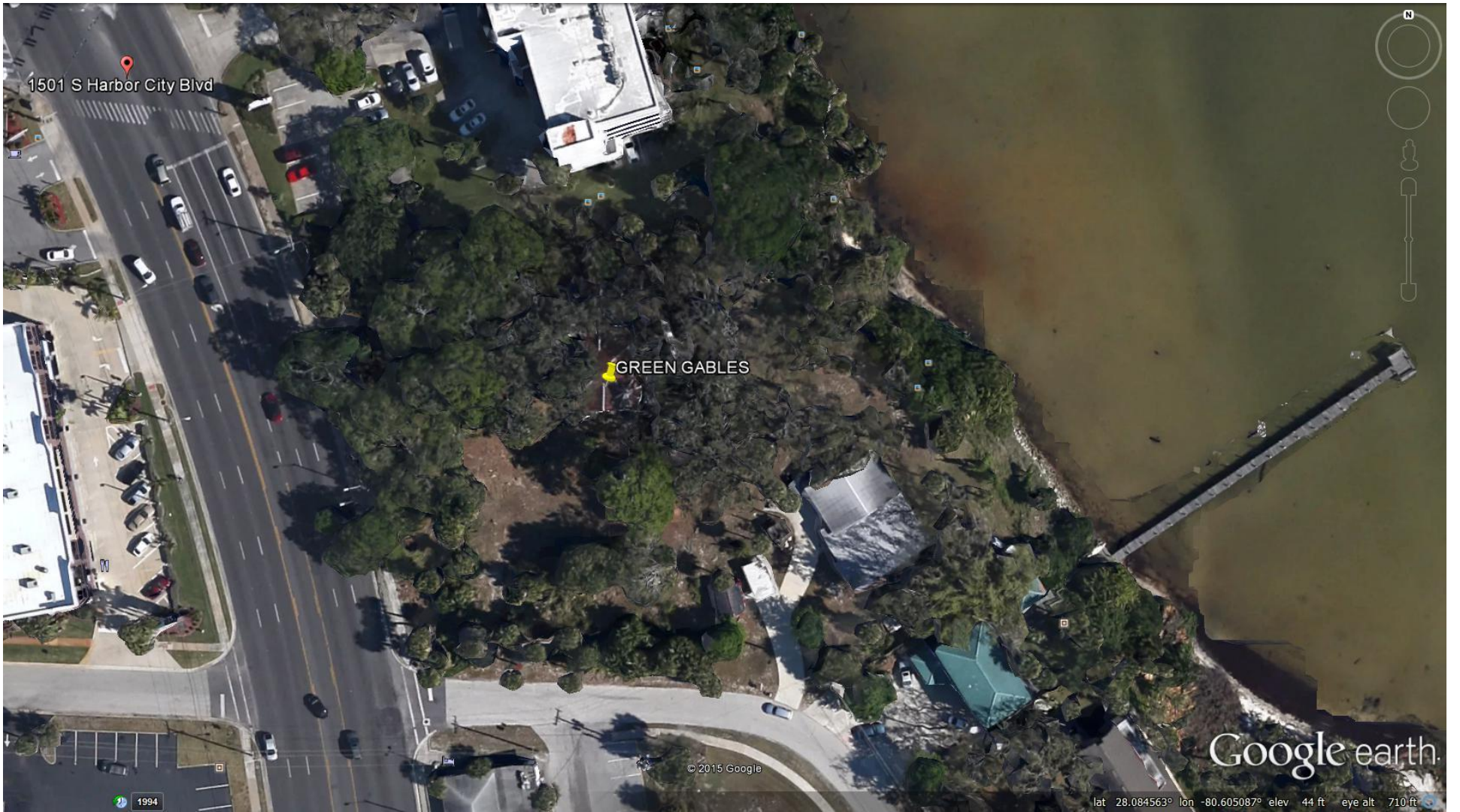
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Photos \_\_\_\_\_ Page 2

GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

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- 6. West Elevation, Porch Steps Looking East
- 7. Photo 8 of 17
  
- 6. West Elevation, Porch Steps Looking Southeast
- 7. Photo 9 of 17
  
- 6. Front Porch, Looking West
- 7. Photo 10 of 17
  
- 6. West Elevation, Storeroom Extension, Looking East
- 7. Photo 11 of 17
  
- 6. Mother-in-Law Addition, Looking Southwest
- 7. Photo 12 of 17
  
- 6. East Elevation, Living Room Extension, Looking Southwest
- 7. Photo 13 of 17
  
- 6. Mother-in-Law and Living Room Additions, Looking South
- 7. Photo 14 of 17
  
- 6. Interior, Foyer, Looking Southwest
- 7. Photo 15 of 17
  
- 6. First Floor Fireplace, Looking Northeast
- 7. Photo 16 of 17
  
- 6. Interior, 2nd Floor Bathroom, Looking Northeast
- 7. Photo 17 of 17



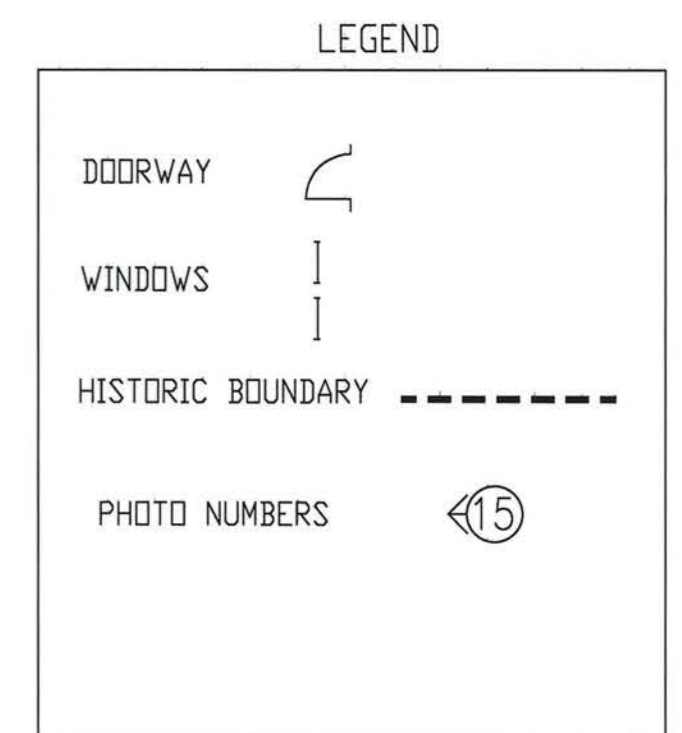
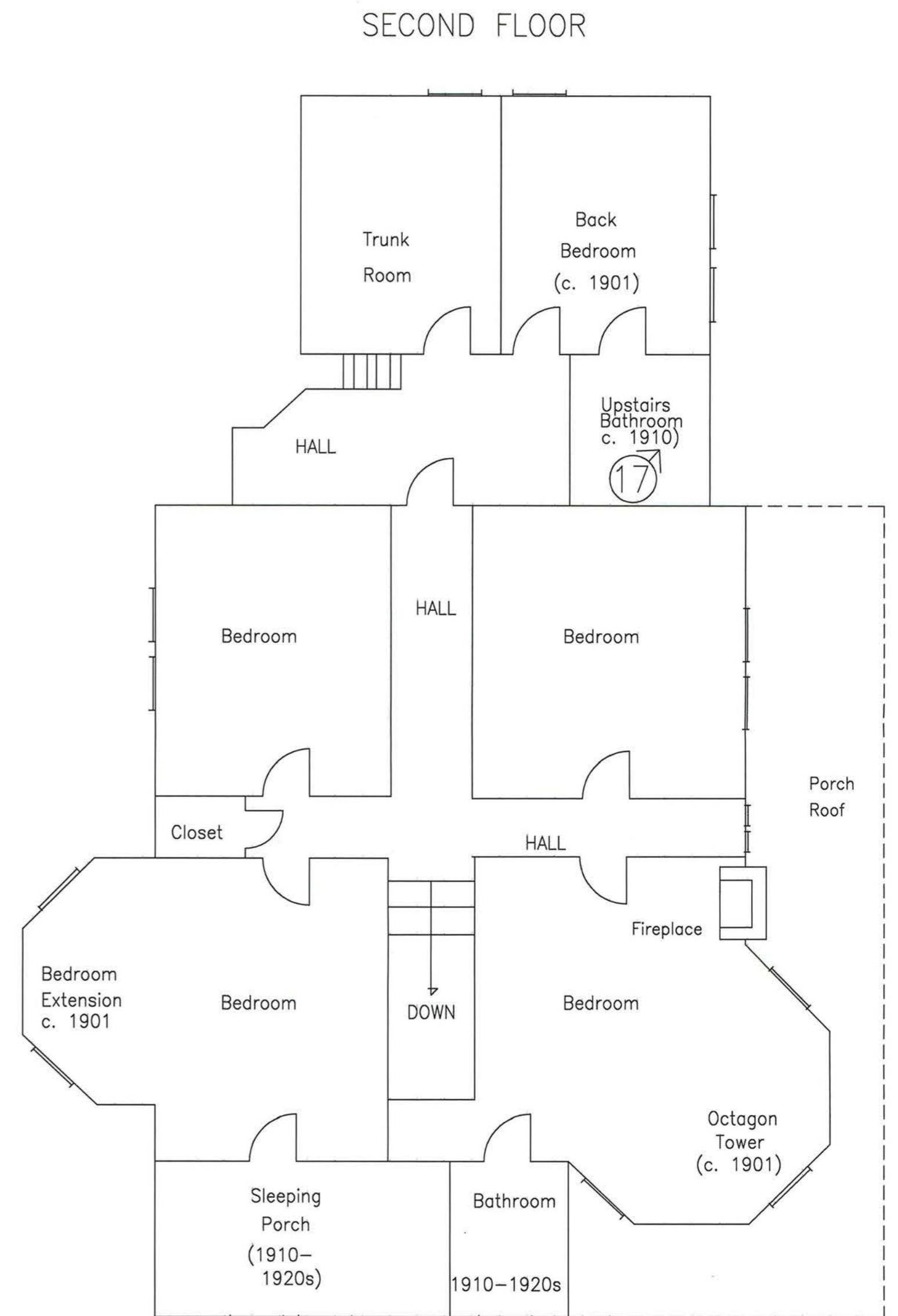
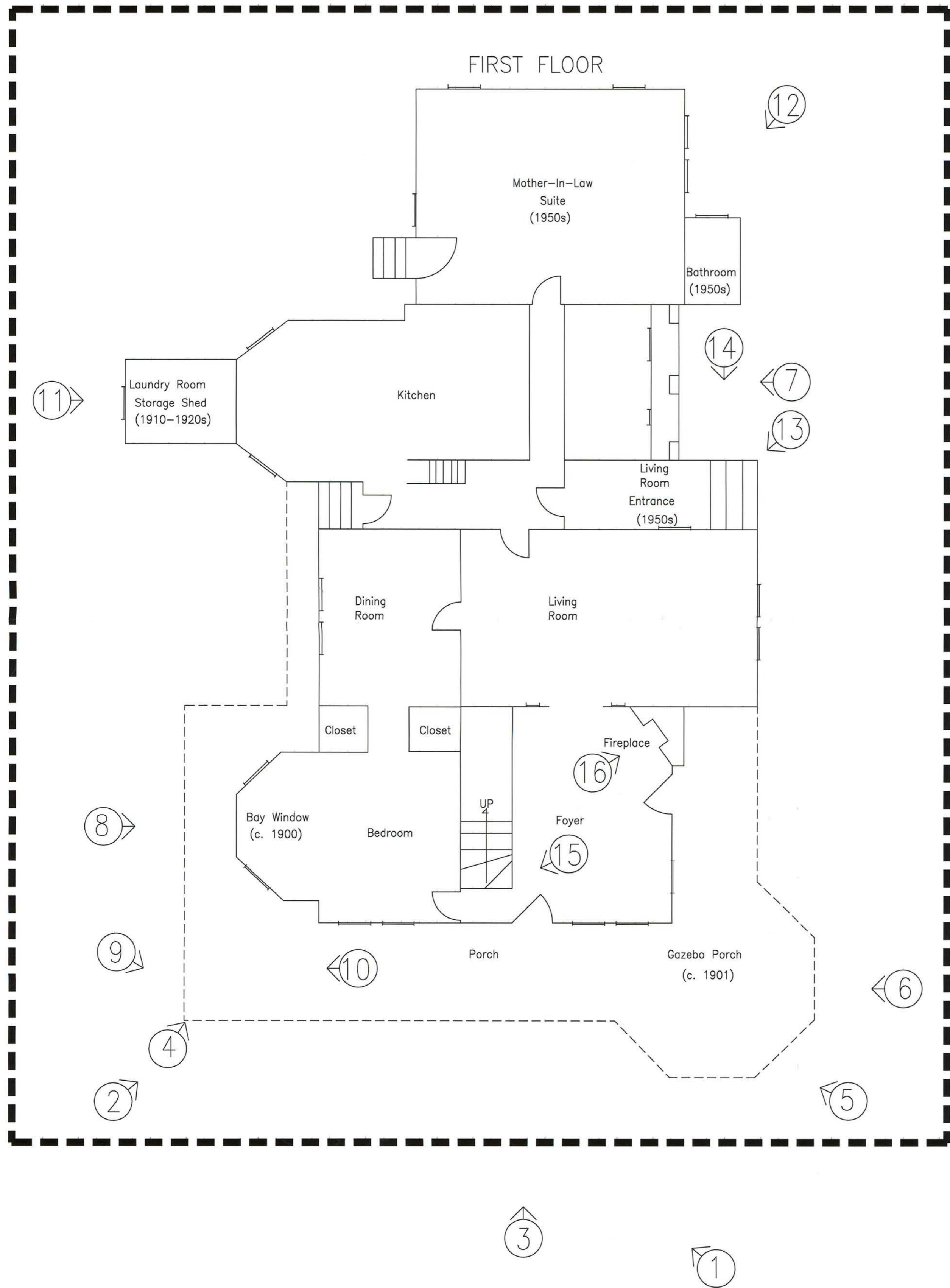
GREEN GABLES/WELLS HOUSE  
1501 SOUTH HARBOR CITY BOULEVARD  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

Latitude: 28.08461°  
Longitude: 80.605279°

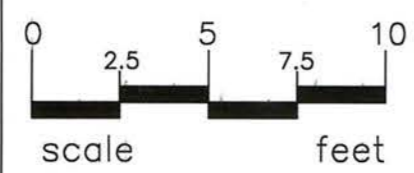
UTM References

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
17	538779	3106634





**GREEN GABLES**  
 1501 SOUTH HARBOR BOULEVARD  
 MELBOURNE (BREVARD COUNTY), FLORIDA



**Owner**  
 David Fletcher, Lyman Fletcher et al c/o Coy A. Clark  
 330 N. Babcock Street, Suite 103  
 MELBOURNE, FLORIDA 32935

**DRAWN BY:** W. Carl Shiver  
**DRAWING DATE:** MARCH 2016

THE GREEN GABLES SITE & FLOOR PLANS WERE DRAWN USING A VARIETY OF VISUAL RESOURCES INCLUDING SURVEY MAPS, COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER'S GIS MAPS, AERIAL AND HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS AND ON-SITE VIEWS. THE PLANS HAVE BEEN DRAWN TO APPROXIMATE SCALE BUT VARIATIONS WERE ALLOWED FOR THE PURPOSE OF CLARITY. THE MAP WAS PREPARED USING THE AUTOCAD COMPUTER DRAWING PROGRAM.

**PLANS REVIEWED BY:** CARL SHIVER  
 FLORIDA BUREAU OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 R.A. GRAY BUILDING  
 500 SOUTH BRONOUGH STREET  
 TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0250  
 PHONE NUMBER (850) 245-8333  
 TOLL FREE NUMBER 1-800-7278  
 FAX NUMBER (850) 245-6437

**DRAWING NUMBER**  
 N/A

**P.O. Box** 500856  
 Malabar, Florida 32950  
 Phone: 321) 482-6818, Email: john@dalypreservation.com

**SHEET NO.** 1 **OF** 1

**SITE & FLOOR PLANS**

SCALE IS APPROXIMATE AND INTERIOR DIVISIONS BASED ON AVAILABLE PHOTOS AND WINDOW LOCATIONS.



























NO  
Trespassing







**NO TRESPASSING**  
HUNTING OR FISHING  
VIOLATORS PROSECUTED  
UNDER PENALTY OF LAW









National Register of Historic Places  
Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Green Gables  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: FLORIDA, Brevard

DATE RECEIVED: 4/08/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/29/16  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/16/16 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/24/16  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000269

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 5-18-2016 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Interesting variation of Queen Anne style*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept C

REVIEWER J. Galt DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N Y see attached SLR Y N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

# City of Melbourne



Community Development Department  
900 E. Strawbridge Avenue • Melbourne, FL 32901  
Phone (321) 608-7500 • Fax (321) 608-7519 • E-Mail: [p&z@melbourneflorida.org](mailto:p&z@melbourneflorida.org)

via Email and USPS

January 22, 2016

Mr. Michael Zimny  
Historic Site Specialist  
Division of Historical Resources  
Florida Department of State  
500 S. Bronough Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Tallahassee, FL 32399  
[mfzimny@dos.state.fl.us](mailto:mfzimny@dos.state.fl.us)

RECEIVED  
JAN 23 2016  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
DIVISION

**RE: Florida National Register Nomination Proposal for Green Gables,  
1501 S. Harbor City Boulevard, Melbourne, FL**

Dear Mr. Zimny,

In response to your letter to Kelly Delmonico, City of Melbourne Planning Department, dated November 24, 2015, this letter is confirmation for finding of eligibility for the Green Gables property regarding proposed nomination in the National Register of Historic Places.

As a Certified Local Government, the property owners, the chief local elected official, and the local historic preservation board were all notified of the proposed Florida National Register Nomination for the Green Gables property regarding its eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Attached for your review and consideration is:

- 1) Resolution 3532, whereby the Melbourne City Council expresses support for the proposed nomination of the Green Gables property to the National Register of Historic Places; and
- 2) A PowerPoint presentation prepared by the Historic Preservation Office, and presented at the January 19, 2016 regular public meeting of the Historic Preservation Board in support for, and affirmation of, the eligibility of Green Gables as a proposed nominee for the National Register of Historic Places; and
- 3) The Historic Preservation Board's minutes from their regular public meeting on January 19, 2016 in support of and affirmation for the eligibility of Green Gables as a proposed nominee for the National Register of Historic Places.

By your request, we are submitting this report within 60-days of initial notification receipt as an eligible recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Officer. If you should need anything mailed to your agency or if there are any questions regarding the information submitted, please contact me directly at (321) 608-7513.

Sincerely,



Sandy Ramseth, AICP  
Planner  
sandy.ramseth@mlbfl.org

cc: Michael McNees, City Manager  
Cindy Dittmer, AICP, Community Development Director  
Pat Tyjeski, AICP, Historic Preservation Officer  
Desiree Estabrook, Historic Preservation Supervisor, Survey & Registration

Attachments: City Council Resolution 3532  
Historic Preservation Officer's PowerPoint w/recommendation  
January 19, 2016 Minutes of the Historic Preservation Board

RESOLUTION NO. 3532

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA, EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES OF THE HISTORIC GREEN GABLES HOME LOCATED AT 1501 SOUTH HARBOR CITY BOULEVARD; AUTHORIZING TRANSMITTAL TO THE STATE; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND PROVIDING FOR ADOPTION.

WHEREAS, the history of a community is a valued cultural aspect to its citizens, especially early, historic structures that provide a connection to the evolution of the community; and

WHEREAS, the City of Melbourne was incorporated in 1888 and the City's earliest residential neighborhood, Historic Riverview Village, is located along the Indian River Lagoon; and

WHEREAS, Green Gables, the winter home of William Twining and Nora Wells and their family, who were pioneer settlers of the City, is an early representation of vernacular Queen Anne architecture; and

WHEREAS, the Green Gables home was a center of cultural life in the City for many years and currently sits at the north end of Riverview Drive addressed 1501 South Harbor City Boulevard (herein, the "Property"); and

WHEREAS, the contributions to the City by the Wells Family and the history of the Green Gables home on the Property were recognized by the City of Melbourne Historic Preservation Board, which invested in documented research for a Preliminary Historic Designation Report presented to the public on June 19, 2014; and

WHEREAS, in Resolution No. 3493, City Council expressed support for Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc. in its efforts to purchase, restore and ultimately save the Green Gables home; and

WHEREAS, as owners of the Property, the following people agreed to allow Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc., to "submit the historic home known as 'Green Gables' for inclusion on the National Historic Register": (1) Charles McClung on behalf of the McClung Family (2) David Fletcher representing the owners of the Property (3) Lyman Fletcher and (4) Juanita DeLoach; and

WHEREAS, John Daly, Vice President of Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc., a local non-profit organization prepared and submitted to the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources a proposal of the Property for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, which proposal is attached hereto and is scheduled for consideration by the Florida National Register Review Board in February 2016; and

WHEREAS, the State Historic Preservation Officer requested comment from the City Council and from the City of Melbourne Historic Preservation Board for purposes of the Florida National Register Review Board's consideration of the Green Gables proposal for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF MELBOURNE, FLORIDA:

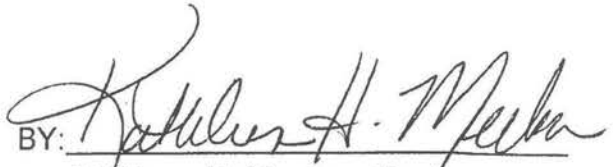
SECTION 1. That based upon the information set forth in the proposal attached hereto, the Melbourne City Council hereby supports the attached Proposal for Nomination of the Green Gables property located at 1501 South Harbor City Boulevard to the National Register of Historic Places.

SECTION 2. That this resolution shall be transmitted to the State Historic Preservation Officer.

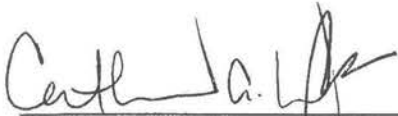
SECTION 3. That this resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption in accordance with the Charter of the City of Melbourne.

SECTION 4. That this resolution was duly adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council

on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2015.

BY:   
Kathleen H. Meehan, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Cathleen A. Wysor, City Clerk

Attachment: Proposal of the property for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places  
Resolution No. 3532



Community Development

900 E. Strawbridge Avenue ● Melbourne, FL 32901

Phone (321) 608-7500 ● Fax (321) 608-7519 ● E-Mail: [p&z@melbourneflorida.org](mailto:p&z@melbourneflorida.org)

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD

### Regular Meeting

Melbourne City Hall Council Chamber

January 19, 2015 ♦ 5:30 p.m.

1. A regular meeting for the Historic Preservation Board was held in the City Hall Council Chamber, 900 East Strawbridge Avenue, and was called to order at 5:47 p.m. by Vice-Chairman David Godwin.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call for attendance verification

Present: David Godwin, Vice-Chairman  
Nerissa Ramsey, Member  
Nilda Stellpflug, Alternate Member  
Andrew Roman, Alternate Member

Absent: Diane Barile, Member

Also Present: Sandy Ramseth, Planner  
Adam Conley, Assistant City Attorney  
Samantha Farley, Recording Secretary

Vice-Chairman Godwin reminded the Board and staff to silence their electronic communication devices, as these devices may not be used during the meeting.

#### 4. **Approval of Minutes**

Moved by Roman/Stellpflug to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2015 regular meeting as presented.

Motion carried unanimously

#### 5. **Certificate of Appropriateness for 105 E. Avenue B.**

Ms. Ramseth confirmed that after last month's meeting, staff received a communication from the applicant confirming that they would like to withdraw their application to install guttering and downpipes on their property. The applicant is



currently out of the country for an extended period of time and has decided to resubmit their application when they return and are able to be present during the application process.

## **6. Project & Program Updates**

Ms. Ramseth reported that John Daly, Vice President of Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc., submitted the Green Gables National Register nomination to the State in June 2015. On December 8, 2015, City Council adopted a resolution supporting this nomination. The Historic Preservation Board now needs to review the nomination and submit a recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Ms. Ramseth gave a brief overview of the function of the National Register, the criteria for evaluation and the application process. She reminded the Board that even if this application were successful, Green Gables would still not be on the local register. This status will not change unless the owners request the listing.

Ms. Ramseth gave a brief presentation showing the location of the property, a history of the Wells family who were the original owners, and the many significant contributions that family made to Melbourne. Her presentation also showed historical photographs of the property highlighting many of the external and internal architectural features on the property, which are still present today.

Ms. Ramseth summed up the findings of the City's Historic Preservation Officer, who concluded that the property is associated with important persons, and has distinctive physical characteristics of design, construction, or form. The Historic Preservation Officer's determination is that the proposed nomination meets the eligibility criteria and recommends approval of eligibility for nomination to the National Register.

Ms. Ramseth introduced John Daly, the applicant and co-founder of Green Gables Historic Riverview Village, Inc., who was available to answer any questions.

Mr. Daly explained that he became interested in Green Gables and its history while researching the property as a graduate student in historic preservation at Savannah College of Art and Design. While surveying the property, it became obvious to him that this was one structure in South Brevard that was worthy of preservation, as it retained a lot of integrity and historical features.

There were no questions from the Board or the members of the audience.

Mr. Godwin said he and the Board appreciates the efforts made by John Daly, Carol Andren from South Brevard Historical Society, and Coy Clarke in trying to preserve this historically significant property. He noted that the Mayor and City Council recently signed a resolution approving the nomination for the National Register and the

recommendation made tonight by the City's Historic Preservation Officer that this property should be added to the National Register.

He sought a recommendation from Board, and clarified that their options were as follows:

- To make a finding and recommendation that the Green Gables property is eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, or
- To make a finding and recommendation that the Green Gables is not eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Moved (Stellpflug/Ramsey) that the Board make a finding and recommendation that Green Gables is eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Motion carried unanimously

Ms. Ramseth confirmed that the Board's recommendation will be sent to the State Historic Preservation Officer, along with City Council's recommendation, and the findings from the City's Historic Preservation Officer. The State will be reviewing all applications in February 2016. Ms. Ramseth will update the Board when a decision is made.

## **7. Additional Discussion**

Ms. Ramseth asked the Board to discuss whether they would like to elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman today, or postpone the item until next month's meeting.

Mr. Godwin felt that the Board should move forward with the vote due to the small number Board members and difficulty in getting a quorum at meetings. He asked for staff's guidance on how to proceed and whether members are able to nominate a fellow Board member in their absence.

Ms. Ramseth sought Mr. Conley's advice and confirmed eligible Board members must have participated in a Board Training session provided by the City. The only two eligible members are Mr. Godwin and Ms. Barile. Staff hope that the Board merger will take place soon, so she envisages that the duties would only be for a month or two.

Mr. Godwin asked for a motion from the Board.

Moved Godwin/Roman to nominate Ms. Barile for the position of Vice-Chairman.

Motion carried unanimously

Moved Roman/Ramsey to nominate Mr. Godwin for the position of Chairman.

Motion carried unanimously

Ms. Ramseth explained that the merger between the Historic Preservation Board and Architectural Review Board is making progress. Staff are currently reviewing the new section of code and hopes to bring this before the Board at the next meeting.

**8. Adjournment**

Mr. Godwin adjourned the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



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Samantha Farley, Recording Secretary

# Green Gables National Register Nomination



1501 SOUTH HARBOR CITY BOULEVARD

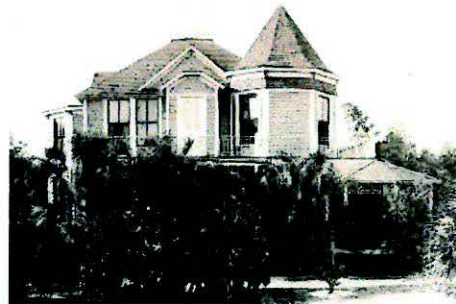


LITTLEJOHN ENGINEERING ASSOCIATES

## Nomination



- John Daly, Vice President of *Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.*, submitted the Green Gables National Register nomination to the State in June 2015.
- The City Council adopted a resolution on December 8, 2015 supporting the nomination.
- The HPB has to review the nomination and submit a recommendation to the State HPO.



## National Register



Official **list** of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture.

National Register properties have significance to the history of their community state, **or** the nation.

Private individuals/organizations and local governments may initiate the process and prepare the documentation. A professional review board in each state considers each nomination and makes a recommendation on eligibility.

National Register properties are **not** the same as National Historic Landmarks (NHLs)

NHLs are **nationally significant** historic places designated by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States.

Green Gables is not in the **Local Register** and the listing in the National Register will **not** change that status, unless the owners request the listing.



## National Register



### Criteria for Evaluation.

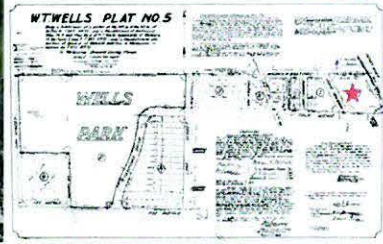
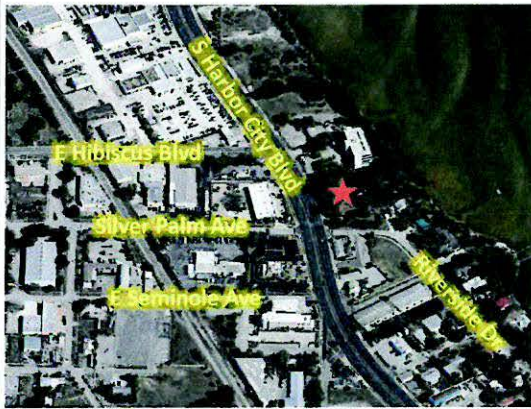
- **Age and Integrity.** Is the property old enough to be considered historic (generally at least 50 years old) and does it still look much the way it did in the past?
- **Significance.** Is the property associated with events, activities, or developments that were important in the past? With the lives of people who were important in the past? With significant architectural history, landscape history, or engineering achievements? Does it have the potential to yield information through archeological investigation about our past?



## Location



1501 S Harbor City Boulevard (Riverview Village)



## Ownership



### Original Owners



- 1893 – Property purchased by W. T. Wells
- 1896 – Dwelling constructed on the north end of the bluff along the Indian River

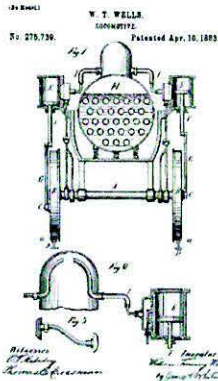
William Twining & Nora Stanford Wells



## Ownership



### Well's Patents



Locomotive Engine & Rustless Iron



FOOT TENTH STREET, EAST RIVER, NEW YORK.

"RUSTLESS" IRON WATER PIPE.

RUSTLESS HOLLOW WARE and CASTINGS. RUSTLESS

The WELLS RUSTLESS IRON COMPANY,

7 and 9 CHURCH STREET, New York.  
BRAMAN, DOW & CO., BOSTON, MASS., Agents for New England.

HANIKKA IRON FENCE CO. 111 Ferry Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

As a  
part of  
the  
THE W  
ATI.

## Ownership



### Well's Contributions to Melbourne

- Built auditorium and library
- Provided land for public park (Wells Park)
- Surveyed and graded roads
- Planted shade trees along local roadways
- Established the high school and hired first teacher
- Organized Chatauqua group and was Vice-President/President
- Assisted in bringing railroad to Melbourne
- Moved Holy Trinity Church



## Architecture



- Exterior Features
  - Queen Anne style
  - 2-story house
  - Post-supported balcony over porch with Chippendale style trim
  - 2/2 double-hung sash windows
  - Conical tower
  - Gable roof with decorative wood shingle siding



## Architecture

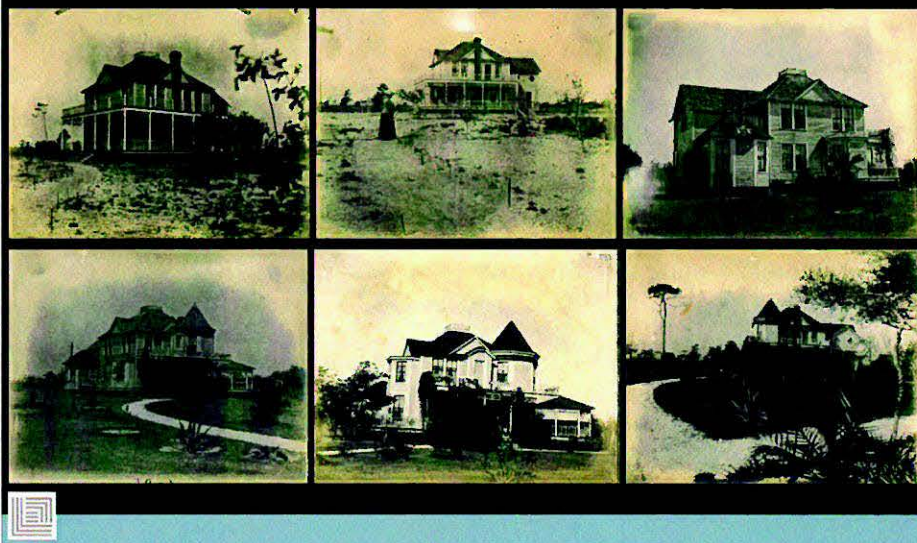


- Exterior Features
  - Decorative brackets on tower cornice
  - Diamond shaped windows
  - Brick chimney
  - Gate column of Coquina stone

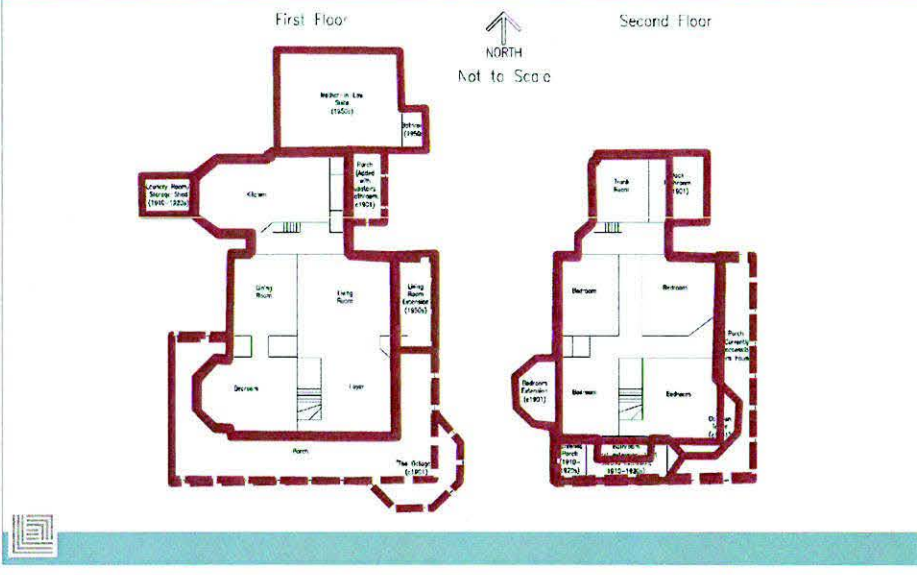




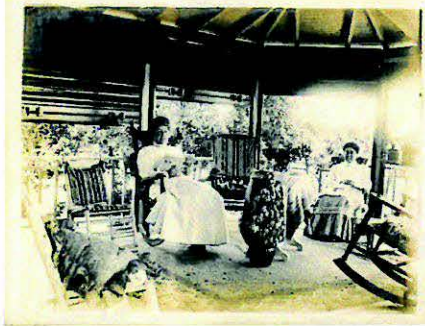
# Architecture



# Architecture



## Property Features

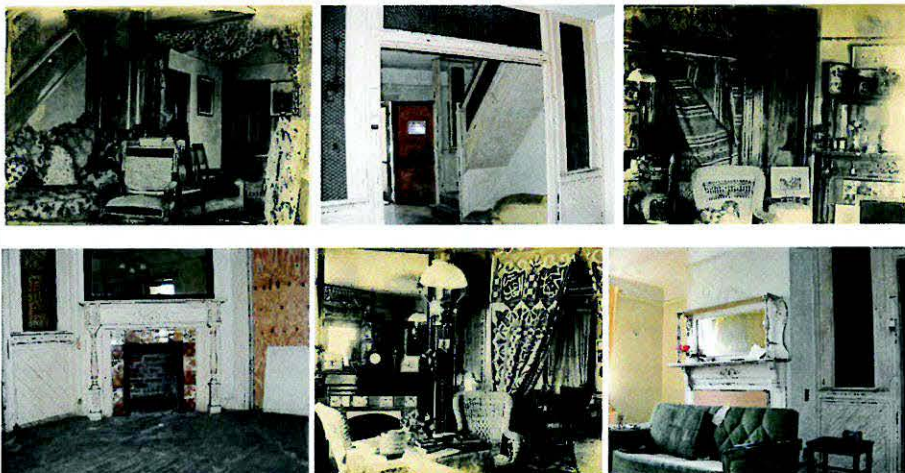


Octagon porch on southeast corner  
Hurricane Shutters

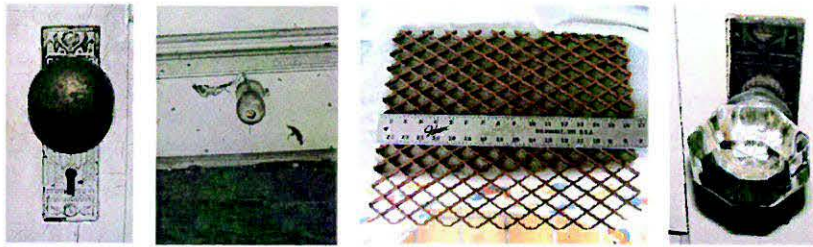
Hurricane Shutters



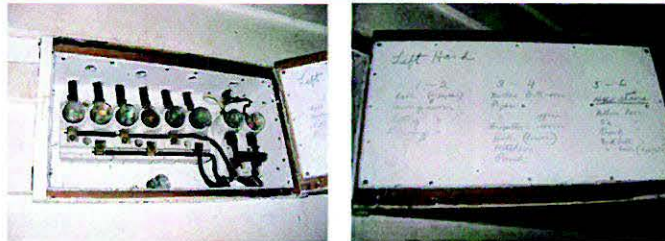
## Architecture



# Architecture



# Architecture



## Significance/Recommendation



- Association with events, activities, or patterns
- Association with important persons
- Distinctive physical characteristics of design, construction, or form
- Potential to yield important information



- Determine that the proposed nomination meets the criteria and recommend approval of the nomination to the National Register.



## Green Gables National Register Nomination



QUESTIONS



RESOLUTION NO. 3532

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA, EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES OF THE HISTORIC GREEN GABLES HOME LOCATED AT 1501 SOUTH HARBOR CITY BOULEVARD; AUTHORIZING TRANSMITTAL TO THE STATE; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND PROVIDING FOR ADOPTION.

WHEREAS, the history of a community is a valued cultural aspect to its citizens, especially early, historic structures that provide a connection to the evolution of the community; and

WHEREAS, the City of Melbourne was incorporated in 1888 and the City's earliest residential neighborhood, Historic Riverview Village, is located along the Indian River Lagoon; and

WHEREAS, Green Gables, the winter home of William Twining and Nora Wells and their family, who were pioneer settlers of the City, is an early representation of vernacular Queen Anne architecture; and

WHEREAS, the Green Gables home was a center of cultural life in the City for many years and currently sits at the north end of Riverview Drive addressed 1501 South Harbor City Boulevard (herein, the "Property"); and

WHEREAS, the contributions to the City by the Wells Family and the history of the Green Gables home on the Property were recognized by the City of Melbourne Historic Preservation Board, which invested in documented research for a Preliminary Historic Designation Report presented to the public on June 19, 2014; and

WHEREAS, in Resolution No. 3493, City Council expressed support for Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc. in its efforts to purchase, restore and ultimately save the Green Gables home; and

WHEREAS, as owners of the Property, the following people agreed to allow Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc., to "submit the historic home known as 'Green Gables' for inclusion on the National Historic Register": (1) Charles McClung on behalf of the McClung Family (2) David Fletcher representing the owners of the Property (3) Lyman Fletcher and (4) Juanita DeLoach; and

WHEREAS, John Daly, Vice President of Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc., a local non-profit organization prepared and submitted to the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources a proposal of the Property for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, which proposal is attached hereto and is scheduled for consideration by the Florida National Register Review Board in February 2016; and

WHEREAS, the State Historic Preservation Officer requested comment from the City Council and from the City of Melbourne Historic Preservation Board for purposes of the Florida National Register Review Board's consideration of the Green Gables proposal for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF MELBOURNE, FLORIDA:

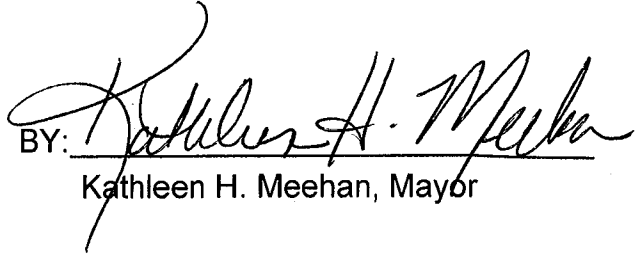
SECTION 1. That based upon the information set forth in the proposal attached hereto, the Melbourne City Council hereby supports the attached Proposal for Nomination of the Green Gables property located at 1501 South Harbor City Boulevard to the National Register of Historic Places.

SECTION 2. That this resolution shall be transmitted to the State Historic Preservation Officer.

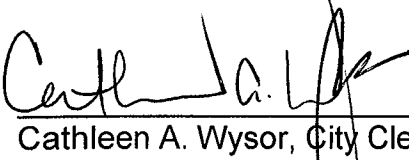
SECTION 3. That this resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption in accordance with the Charter of the City of Melbourne.

SECTION 4. That this resolution was duly adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council

on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2015.

BY:   
Kathleen H. Meehan, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Cathleen A. Wysor, City Clerk

Attachment: Proposal of the property for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places

Resolution No. 3532



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

Adapted for the  
**PROPOSAL**  
of Properties in Florida for  
Nomination to the National Register  
of Historic Places

Grayed Areas for Use by Staff

**1. Name of Property**

historic name GREEN GABLES/WELLS HOUSE

other names Green Gables

FMSF Number BR1454

**2. Location**

street & number 1501 South Harbor City Boulevard N/A  not for publication

city or town Melbourne N/A  vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Brevard code 009 zip code 32935

**3. Owner Awareness Statement**

As the owner, or official representative of the owner, of the property identified above, I am aware of this proposal for its nomination for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. I have been advised of the procedures for review of the proposal by the State Historic Preservation Office and the Florida National Register Review Board, and for the formal nomination of the property at the discretion of the State Historic Preservation Officer. I understand that I will be notified of the date and place of the public meeting at which the proposal will be considered by the Florida National Register Review Board, and that I will be given an opportunity to submit written comments and to appear in person in support of or opposition to the nomination of the property.

At this time I  support  oppose  reserve opinion on this proposal.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of property owner or representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**4. Legal Description of Property** (according to county property appraiser's office)

Please also provide:

Name of USGS Quadrangle: Melbourne East

Township, Section and Range: T 28S S 37E R 3

Tax Parcel #: 28-37-03-FG-00003.0-0003.01

Attach continuation sheet if necessary

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

Name of related multiple property listings

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Family

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Queen Anne

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation

walls

roof

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuations sheets.)

8. Statement of significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction of represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Agriculture
Architecture
Archaeology
Community Planning
Commerce
Education
Early Settlement
Health/Medicine
Industry
Maritime History
Military
Politics/Government
Recreation
Social History
Transportation
Other:

Period of Significance

1896

Significant Dates

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Arch:

Blder:

Name of Property \_\_\_\_\_

County and State \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 1.15

**UTM References**

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	Zone	Easting	Northing	3	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	Zone	Easting	Northing	4	Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title John B. Daly

organization N/A date June 2015

street & number P.O. Box 500856 telephone (321) 482-6818

city or town Malabar state Florida zip code 32950

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets** (All information on continuation sheets must be typed.)

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) Do not write upon or attach labels to this map.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **digital color or black and white photographs** of the property. See Guidelines.  
(Do not write upon or attach permanent labels to the photographs.)

**Additional items**

(check with the area Historic Sites Specialist at [904] 487-2333 for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

name David Fletcher, Lyman Fletcher et al c/o Coy A. Clark

street & number 330 N. Babcock Street, Suite 103 telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Melbourne state Florida zip code 32935

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1 GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
DESCRIPTION

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**SUMMARY**

The two-story Queen Anne style house known as "Green Gables" is located at 1501 South Harbor Boulevard in Melbourne, Florida on the northeast corner of the intersection of Harbor City Boulevard/U.S. Highway 1 and Riverview Drive. Named for the green color of the shingle siding within the gables, the property is also known as the William Twining (W.T.) Wells House after its original owner. This 3,140 square foot single family home has six bedrooms and 2 bathrooms. When originally recorded in the Florida Master Site File, Green Gables (FMSF #BR01454) was listed as 1501 Riverview Drive, as its main façade faced that road. Currently, the house is accessed via South Harbor Boulevard. The house was built in 1896 by builders Baker and Bell just eight years after the City of Melbourne was incorporated in 1888. Green Gables started as a large Frame Vernacular house which was modified over the years. The original house was characterized by a simple rectangular floor plan, pitched hipped roof, and symmetrical façade (Photos 1, 2). The most significant change was the addition of the hexagonal tower (by 1899) and porch on the southeast corner of the house, ca. 1901 (Photos 3, 4). Green Gables is one of the earliest Queen Anne style residences in Melbourne and is one of the few remaining buildings in Melbourne that date prior to 1900.

**SETTING**

Melbourne is a city in Brevard County, Florida. As of the 2010 census, the population was 76,068 with a total area of 39.6 square miles.<sup>1</sup> The municipal area is the second largest by size and by population in the county. Melbourne is a principal city of the Palm Bay – Melbourne – Titusville, Florida Metropolitan Statistical Area. In 1969 the city was expanded by merging with nearby Eau Gallie. Melbourne is located approximately 60 miles southeast of Orlando on the Space Coast, along Interstate Highway 95. It is approximately midway between Jacksonville and Miami. The east-west street named Brevard Drive was historically the "center" of town; with addresses called "north" and "south" of this street. The north-south Babcock Street provided the same centerline for "east" and "west" directions. Melbourne Beachside has a small presence on the South Beaches barrier island. It is often confused with Melbourne Beach, a separate political entity. Tropical flora typical of more southerly locations may be grown in the Melbourne area such as coconut palms, royal palms, Christmas palms, and bananas; although these are highly susceptible to freezing temperatures.

The Green Gables property is setback approximately 140 feet from South Harbor City Boulevard and 130 feet from Riverview Drive (Figures 1, 2). The main entrance is located on South Harbor City Boulevard; however, the primary facade of the building is oriented towards Riverview Drive. When built in 1896, Green Gables sat isolated almost a mile north of downtown Melbourne (Figure 3). The original owner, W.T. Wells, laid out roads running north, west, and south from his home. The northern road became part of the Dixie Highway (now U.S. ), and the western road extension was known as Palm Avenue, now Silver Palm Avenue. This avenue crosses

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Factfinder. Retrieved January 30, 2012.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 2

GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
DESCRIPTION

the highway and directly connects with Riverview Drive that runs south. It was formerly known as Indian River Drive, as it paralleled the Indian River to the east.

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

**Exterior**

Green Gables is a two-story wood frame Queen Anne style home with a one-story L-shaped front porch (Photo 5), that evolved considerably in the midcentury from its ca. 1900s appearance (Photo 6). The porch includes a hexagonal gazebo section at its southeast corner (Photo 7). The section of the porch fronting the main (south) facade has five irregular bays with square wooden posts that support a shed roof, whereas the gazebo addition has a roof that matches its angles and is supported by thin wood posts. The main porch features a decorative Shippendale style wooden band attached to the soffit (Photo 8). The decorative band is in poor condition with parts of it missing. The edge of the front porch has a brick wall that extends part way around the west elevation (Photos 9-11). The main facade features 2/2-light double-hung wood sash windows, a hexagonal tower which has a complex steeply pitched roof, wood patterned shingles, decorative brackets on the tower cornice. The octagonal gazebo features some hurricane blinds from the early 1900s, and although portions of the balustrade are missing, it still retains many of the elements of original design (Photos 12-15).

The house rests on piers of mixed masonry materials, comprising of 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. The original steps, wraparound porch, and handrails were constructed in wood. The current steps and porch are concrete with brick lattice between masonry posts (Photo 16). A sleeping porch which was added in the 1920s is found at the southwest corner of the second story. The main roof is a complex hip on gable type that was altered as the house was enlarged. The faceted bay extension for the bedroom on the west elevation was originally one-story in height but was made two stories in height as the house grew in size (Photo 17). Most of the house has exterior walls covered in clapboard, but the east elevation has a one-story extension with a shed roof whose wood walls are surfaced in smooth stucco (Photo 18). Its east wall exhibits a pair of 2/2-light double-hung wood sash windows, and its north wall which abuts the steps to a concrete stoop that provides entrance to a hallway that give access to the living room, dining room, kitchen and the "mother-in-law suite" located at the rear of the house (Photo 19). The hall also runs by the pantry whose walls support the upstairs bathroom. The one-story rear addition to the house added in the 1950s, known as the "mother-in-law suite," has concrete walls. It is a single bedroom with an attached bathroom (Photo 20). It has a pair of windows on its east elevation and two windows on its north elevation. The west wall has a single window and an entrance stoop. The kitchen ell was originally a one-story faceted extension to which a one-story shed roofed storage room was added (Photos 21, 22).

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 3

GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
DESCRIPTION

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**Interior**

First Floor

The main entrance to the residence opens onto a foyer next to the stairs that provides access to the second floor (Photos 23, 24). The foyer is fairly large and contains a fireplace that suggests that the room was used as a parlor during the winter (Photo 25, 26). An open passageway without doors but having sidelights leads to the living room, which is next to the dining room at the east side of the house (Photos 27, 28). Immediately south of the dining room is a large bedroom that has a faceted bay at the west side. The bedroom has two closets but not bathroom which must have been inconvenient; however plumbing was not installed in this house until the 1920s. A doorway connects the front bedroom with the foyer where one finds the stairway to the second floor. A doorway on the north side of the living room opens onto a hallway that provides access to the east and west secondary entrances and secondary stairs leading to the second floor (Photo 29). The hall also connects to the kitchen and intersects with a hall running north to the "mother-in-law" suite, which was added in the 1950. The "mother-in-law" is connected to the interior hall by a doorway; the exterior stoop and doorway is found on the west elevation of the addition.

Second Floor

The main stairs to the second floor rise from the front foyer to the upstairs hallway (Photo 30). There are four principal bedrooms upstairs and a sleeping porch located over the front porch. The main bedroom located at the front of the house is found in the two-story faceted bay on the west elevation of the house (Photo 31). The upstairs living room is the tower room found at the southeast corner of the house. There is also a small "guest" bedroom located next to the sleeping porch. The transverse hall upstairs gives access to two more large bedrooms. These bedrooms are separated by a hallway running north that leads to another small transverse hallway that connect to an upstairs bathroom, a back bedroom and a trunk room (Photo 32).

Condition of the Interior of the House

The interior of the house retains the original plaster walls and ceiling. The house includes unique fretwork between the foyer and the living room. The living room has suffered 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. The interior of the structure has remained largely unchanged as many of the original details remain, such as doorknobs, hinges, and light fixtures, other than where vandalized (Photos 33-35). The electrical system was installed within 10 years of the original construction (Photo 36). The name of the rooms in 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). It appears that the house was originally wired for electricity at

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 4

GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
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DESCRIPTION

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 and fuse box configuration is most likely from the early 1900's. W. T. Wells installed one of the first bathtubs in Melbourne.

The entry foyer features a staircase on the west side and a fireplace on the east side (Photos 24, 26). The original picture rail can also be seen in 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. 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 (Photo 25). 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 upstairs living room are served by a single chimney. The original mantelpieces have survived on both fireplaces, 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.

The Wells family were well-traveled and their home included furnishings from various exotic destinations. In the mirror of the living room 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 historic photo of the foyer (Photo 37). 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.

The bathrooms feature many of the original fixtures. It was rumored that Green Gables had one of the first bathtubs in Melbourne (Photos 38, 39).

The kitchen (downstairs) and trunk room (upstairs) were built as a separate wing which is connected to the main house by a passageway (Photo 40). 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. 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.



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ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS

According to the Indian River Advocate, the house was built in 1896 by Baker and Bell for W.T. Wells.<sup>2</sup> This was just 8 years after the City of Melbourne was incorporated in 1888. The original design was a basic Frame Vernacular style dwelling, which was a popular building style between 1880 and 1900. Newspaper clippings from the East Coast Advocate indicates that major additions were completed in 1901, 1902, and 1910.<sup>3</sup> These initial improvements transitioned the house from the Frame Vernacular style to a Queen Anne style house. The most significant change was the addition of the hexagonal tower and the projecting "Octagon" porch on the southeast corner of the house. In comparing historic images, the straight front porch of 1899 was extended and opened into a hexagonal sitting area, much enjoyed by the occupants (Photos 41, 14). 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.

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 elevation 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 elevation was removed. While many renovations were made during 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, 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 3,140 square feet.

The hexagonal tower on the second story and the hexagonal gazebo porch on the southeast corner house are 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 on the 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.

The house remains in a severely deteriorated but stable condition as reflected in the provided photographs.

<sup>2</sup> Indian River Advocate, October 9, 1896.

<sup>3</sup> East Coast Advocate, November 18, 1910.

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Vacant for some time, this building will require upgrades to mechanical systems, as well as structural and cosmetic repairs to replace lost historic fabric, such as the Chippendale trim along the porch. The roof in one section has sustained hurricane damage, and 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 sub-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.

**SETTING AND LANDSCAPE**

When examining historic photographs of the Well's garden, it is clear that this family placed great pride on their landscaping and planned gardens. Their landscape palette provides insight into the types of plants that were popular in the late 1800's and early 1900's, both in ornamental and food crop varieties. Planning started in 1897 as the family staked out the land surrounding the house. By 1899, native flowering ground cover lines the pathways and grass is starting to cover the sandy soil, per historic photographs. Within three short years the lawn became established and the paths were been improved with the addition of gravel. According to the Well's grandchildren, the gravel paths were still in use up until the 1950's. As for specific plantings, exotic oleander, palm, bamboo, date palms, rubber trees and century plants are interspersed with native live oaks and pine trees. The landscape on the west side of the home was dominated by pineapple plants and citrus trees. Green Gables had a small dock on the Indian River Lagoon. 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 was approximately 25' below the ground level of the house.

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 date palm shown to the right of the octagonal porch is still growing on the property. Several clumps of the Bamboo remain on the property as well. 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. Any improvement on the grounds should include the removal of invasive species of plants such as brazilian pepper, schefflera, and camphor trees. The removal of a large dead oak tree is recommended to prevent damage to the property.

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SIGNIFICANCE

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**SUMMARY**

Green Gables, also known as the William Twining (W.T.) Wells House, is significant at the local level under Criterion C in the Area of Architecture. Constructed in 1897 as a large two-story Frame Vernacular style dwelling, it was redesigned around 1901 to conform to the popular Queen Ann style (1890-1910) by the construction of a hexagonal two-story tower that was integrated into a hexagonal one-story porch. The house was built by W.T. Wells, who came to Melbourne in 1896 from New Jersey where he was owner of the Wells Rustless Iron Company, manufacturers of oxidized iron. Due to his wife's susceptibility to pneumonia, he sought a winter home in Florida. After traveling over the state looking for a location, Melbourne was chosen as being the most desirable.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT**

The city of Melbourne, Florida, is located on the banks of the Indian River Lagoon some 85 miles south of Daytona Beach and 60 miles east Orlando. The present city limits encompass several historic settlements, including the former town of Eau Gallie, which consolidated with Melbourne in 1969. With nearly 60,000 residents, Melbourne is the most populous city in Brevard County. The city is located in an area that has one of the most extended periods of prehistoric and historic development in the United States. The history of the region ranges from the glacial period to the events associated with the establishment of the space industry at Cape Canaveral in the 1950s. Substantive development did not begin, however, until the late nineteenth century, when steamboats and railroads made the previously isolated southern peninsula accessible. 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 all freedmen who came in 1867.<sup>4</sup> The first concerted attempt to settle the Melbourne area was initiated by William H. Gleason, who purchased a large tract of land along the Indian River in 1869. Gleason was born in Tioga County, New York, in 1829. At the age of fifteen he moved with his family to Wisconsin, where he studied to become a civil engineer. Gleason's business pursuits ultimately encompassed a number of fields, including land speculation, lumbering, banking, and law. During the Civil War, Gleason served in the Union army as an engineer. In 1865, he was sent to Florida by the War Department to tour the southern portion of the state to determine the feasibility of establishing a colony for former slaves there. Accompanied by Freedmen's Bureau agent Colonel George F. Thompson, Gleason traveled extensively throughout the peninsula, logging some 1,500 miles on the expedition. Although he reported that the area was unsuited for the proposed colony, Gleason recognized the potential the area held for agricultural development. He was granted concessions by the Florida Internal Improvement Board to drain

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<sup>4</sup> Diane Barile, "The Elizabeth Eaton Residence Designation Report, October 2007.

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swamplands east of Lake Okeechobee. For every 50,000 cubic feet of canal dug, Gleason was permitted to purchase 640 acres of land for a discounted price of forty dollars.<sup>5</sup>

With a reputation for shrewdness and a vision for the developmental potential of Florida, Gleason won election to the post of lieutenant governor under Harrison Reed in 1868. Resigning his office in 1870, Gleason turned his attention to developing a town on the tract of land he had purchased in 1869, some 16,000 acres along the Indian River. The area chosen by Gleason for the community was originally known as Arlington. He renamed the place Eau Gallie, which presumably translates from the French as "bitter water," a reference to the high saline content of the Indian River. Gleason was initially successful in advancing the growth of the nascent community. In 1884, William Gleason filed the Eau Gallie Village Plat, and in 1886 William Camp filed the first plat of Melbourne the development of which was guided by a group of settlers of diverse backgrounds.<sup>6</sup> The Town of Melbourne was incorporated on December 22, 1888, adopting a corporate seal that included a pineapple plant, a crane and a palmetto tree.<sup>7</sup> The town was named in honor of its first postmaster, Cornthwaite John Hector, an Englishman who was said to have come from Melbourne, Australia.<sup>8</sup>

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 by 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 first half of the 1890s. The financial profit in the citrus grove industry attracted a number of settlers to Melbourne. During this time, 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 from serious devastating freezes during the winters of 1894 and 1895, which killed citrus groves and other crops throughout Florida.

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<sup>5</sup> East Coast Advocate, obituary of W.H. Gleason, November 14, 1902; William W. Davis, The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida (Gainesville, 1964) 523; Florida, Its Climate, Soil, and Productions... (Jacksonville, 1868) 64; Jerrel H. Shofner, Nor is it Over Yet: Florida in the Era of Reconstruction, 1863-1877 (Gainesville, 1974) 118.

<sup>6</sup> Olausen, Stephen, Page 9

<sup>7</sup> [www.melbourneflorida.org/info/history](http://www.melbourneflorida.org/info/history)

<sup>8</sup> Other sources say that Hector was actually from New Zealand.

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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. 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 also provided Melbourne's first electricity, which encouraged the opening of a hospital and moving picture house.

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 land 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, sixty million members 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.<sup>9</sup>

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.

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<sup>9</sup> Charles Donald Fox, The Truth about Florida, pp. 10-11.

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Florida's vacationers and early 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 the greater Melbourne area. A group of these tourists met in Desoto Park, Tampa and formed an organization known as the Tin Can Tourists in 1919. They pioneered camper travel for the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and although interest in this organization subsided in the 1980s, nostalgic revival has brought the group's return.<sup>10</sup> The Tin Can Tourists 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 bountiful 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 Revival and Frame Vernacular were the dominant building styles. Several new subdivisions were platted in areas north and west of Melbourne's commercial district. 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."<sup>11</sup>

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

### **The "Green Gables" Residence**

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 (U.S. Highway 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), known as the town's finest hotel, was once located at the

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.tincantourists.com>

<sup>11</sup> Olausen, p. 19.

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southern end of Riverview Village near the present-day Melbourne Causeway constructed in 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 family 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. 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 a shell midden which continued along the bluff. The stairs were later replaced with concrete steps. The Bluff Walk, 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 were not too bad. Both the Trysting Steps and the Bluff walk are no longer extant. The steps and shell midden were also 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 Carleton Hotel reopened a year later only to burn again in 1925.

The Green Gables residence appears on the historic maps produced by Sanborn Map Company in 1926, 1944, and 1959. Sanborn maps also indicate four additional structures on the property. None of the other buildings still exist, although remains of an outbuilding can still be seen in the northwest corner of the property. Over the years, many of the historic homes in the Historic Riverview Village have been razed due to development pressure or damaged from hurricanes. Green Gables is one of fewer than 25 pre-1900 structures remaining in Melbourne.

**William Twining (W.T.) Wells**

William Twining Wells was born in Brooklyn, New York on August 6, 1854. He was educated at the city schools until he prepared for college, when he entered the School of Mines at Columbia University, showing a talent for metallurgy and graduating as a metallurgical engineer. He married Miss Nora Stanford, eldest daughter of Senator Charles Stanford of Schenectady, New York, and niece of the Honorable Leland Stanford, Civil War governor of California, U.S. senator and builder of the Central Pacific Railway and donor of the Stanford University at Palo Alto, California. Wells resided in Hackensack, New Jersey for a number of years, and their three children were born there. He soon became well known as the inventor and developer of the Wells process of rustless iron, with furnaces at Little Ferry New Jersey, and business offices in New York. As owner of the Wells Rustless Iron Company, most of his fortune came from his 1888 patent for the process of coating iron and steel with rustless oxide, an improvement on the method for producing "Rustless Iron". W.T. Wells also secured a patent for a part of a locomotive engine.

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Due to his wife's susceptibility to pneumonia, he sought a winter home in Florida. After traveling over the state looking for a location, Melbourne was chosen as being the most desirable.<sup>12</sup> The Wells family purchased the Strobah property in 1896, which encompassed 150 acres all within the city limits, and constructed Green Gables for the family on October, 1897. It seemed very remote to the townspeople, as all life centered around the Carleton Hotel and Congregational Church at that time. There were no streets, simply a block or two by the hotel. Mr. Wells soon remedied the situation, as he enjoyed surveying and had the necessary instruments. He laid out streets in each direction from the house, bought horses and plows, put men in and grubbed them, then shelled them at his own expense and gave them to the town. He owned at that time 154 acres in the city and 2,000 acres south of town between Malabar and Palm Bay.

According to the East Coast Advocate, William T. Wells and his family generally spent the months of November through May at Green Gables from 1896 until 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 occupied a family home in New York and spent much time traveling around the world. Elements within Green Gables, as reflected in historic photographs, show materials that may have been brought back from their travels. The fret work between the foyer and the living room was rumored to be from India.

Contribution to Melbourne

W.T. Wells had a significant role in developing 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, Wells built an auditorium and library within Melbourne and also provided land to the city for a public park (hence 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 Chatauqua group for the community. The Chatauqua Institute was founded in 1874 near Chatauqua Lake in southwestern New York State and provided adult education events with speakers, teachers, musicians, entertainers, preachers, and specialists. Wells also served as the Vice-President of Chatauqua, and President of the Chatauqua in 1907. He also helped to bring the railroad to Melbourne. William Twining Wells, pioneer settler of Melbourne, passed away at Green Gables at 10 o'clock Sunday evening, July 6, 1930. He was 75 years of age and his health had been failing for some time. His wife Nora, would pass shortly after in 1933. William and Nora are buried at the Bolton Cemetery in the town of Bolton, in Warren County, New York. His son, Stanford Wells, lived at Green Gables until his death in September 1971, at the age of 90. Subsequent owners of the property included Gladys L. McClung (1972), Charles Roy McClung, Trustee (1982), Lois L. Fletcher and David R. Fletcher (1997), and David R. Fletcher and Lyman T. Fletcher (2000).

<sup>12</sup> Melbourne Times, April 4, 1896.



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**ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT**

Queen Anne was a popular residential building style in the United States from 1880 until around 1910, hence why 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 the style became synonymous with excessive ornamentation and fading aesthetic taste, many Queen Anne buildings were razed to create space for modern buildings as towns grew. Examples of the style are now relatively scarce in Melbourne. Identifying features of the Queen Anne style include: steeply pitched roof lines with intersecting extensions; an 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.

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Although today Green Gables has some distinctive Queen Anne style characteristics, when constructed in 1896, the residence was a large two-story Frame Vernacular building. It had a hip-on-gable main roof with small gable ends covered with fish scale shingles. The exterior walls were clapboard siding and 2/2-light double-hung wood sash windows. The house featured a one-story L-shaped porch with a flat roof with a balustrade located at the edge of the eaves. The south of the porch has five bays with square wooden posts and the east elevation also had five bays. The porch featured a Chippendale balustrade and Chippendale running trim under the soffit. The only "Queen Anne" details at this time were the two one-story faceted window bays found on the west elevation of the house. The major Queen Anne characteristics were added between 1901 and 1910. These details included the construction of second story tower room on the second story, the addition of the gazebo section of the front porch, and the addition of the French doors that opened onto the porch deck (no longer extant).

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 facade 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 elevation 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. The front porch was extended westward to curve around the west elevation of the house

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There is a standing seam metal roof on the main section of the house and pressed metal roof over the tower. The original roof material was wood shingles. The house rests on raised 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 that replaced the wooden ones.

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.

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National Park Service**

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GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
GEOGRAPHIC DATA

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**Verbal 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.

The site is approximately 1.15 acres in size. The parcel identification number of the property is 28-37-03-FG-3-3.01.

**Boundary Justification**

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

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**LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS**

1. Green Gables/Wells House
2. 1501 South City Boulevard, Melbourne (Brevard County), Florida
3. Unknown
4. 1897
5. Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.
6. Main (South) Facade, Looking Northwest
7. Photo 1 of 24

**Numbers 1-3 and 5 are the same for the remaining historic photos are the same unless otherwise noted.**

4. 1899
6. West Elevation, Looking East
7. Photo 2 of 24

4. 1901
6. South Elevation, Looking Northeast
7. Photo 3 of 24

4. 1901
6. Main (South) Facade, Looking North
7. Photo 4 of 24

**Current Photographs**

3. Unknown
4. 2014
5. Green Gables at Historic Riverview Village, Inc.
6. Main (South) Facade, Looking North
7. Photo 5 of 24

**Numbers 3 through 5 are the same for the remaining photos unless otherwise noted.**

6. Main (South) Facade and West Elevation, Looking Northeast
7. Photo 6 of 24

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

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- 6. View of the Main (South) Facade and East Elevation, Looking Northwest
- 7. Photo 7 of 24
  
- 6. East Elevation, Looking Southwest
- 7. Photo 8 of 24
  
- 6. Rear of 24House, Looking South
- 7. Photo 9 of 24
  
- 6. East Elevation, Bathroom Extension, Looking West
- 7. Photo 10 of 24
  
- 6. East Elevation, Mother-in-Law Suite with Downstairs Bathroom, Looking Southwest
- 7. Photo 11 of 24
  
- 6. West Elevation, Looking East
- 7. Photo 12 of 24
  
- 6. Kitchen Extension on West Elevation, Looking East
- 7. Photo 13 of 24
  
- 6. Octagonal Porch, Looking West
- 7. Photo 14 of 24
  
- 6. View from Octagonal Porch, Looking East
- 7. Photo 15 of 24
  
- 6. Front Porch, Looking West from Near Main Entrance
- 7. Photo 16 of
  
- 6. Entrance to Front Porch from West, Looking Southeast
- 7. Photo 17 of
  
- 6. Front Porch Ell, Looking North
- 7. Photo 18 of 24
  
- 6. Interior, First Floor, Foyer, Looking Southeast
- 7. Photo 19 of 24

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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GREEN GABLES//WELLS HOUSE  
MELBOURNE, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

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6. Interior, First Floor, Foyer Fireplace, Looking Northeast

7. Photo 20 of 24

6. Interior, First Floor, Foyer, Main Staircase, Looking Southwest

7. Photo 21 of 24

6. Interior, Kitchen, Looking West

7. Photo 22 of 24

6. Interior, 2nd Floor Bathroom, Looking Northeast

7. Photo 23 of 24

6. Interior, 2nd Floor Bathroom No. 2, Looking West?

7. Photo 24 of 24





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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of STATE

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

RICK SCOTT  
Governor

KEN DETZNER  
Secretary of State

March 31, 2016

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief  
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs  
Department of the Interior  
1201 Eye Street, N.W., 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington DC 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **Green Gables (FMSF #8BR1454), in Brevard County**, to the National Register of Historic Places. The related materials (digital images, maps, and site plan) are included.

Please do not hesitate to contact Bob Jones at [Robert.Jones@DOS.myflorida.com](mailto:Robert.Jones@DOS.myflorida.com) or (850) 245.6333, if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Alissa Slade Lotane  
Chief, Bureau of Historic Preservation  
& Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

R. A. Gray Building • 500 South Bronough Street • Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250  
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*Commemorating 500 years of Florida history* [www.vivaflorida.org](http://www.vivaflorida.org)



The Jackson Family  
1382 Knollwood RD NE  
Palm Bay FL 32907  
4/21/2016



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Cultural Resources  
National Register of Historic Places  
Mail Stop 2280  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington DC 20240

Re-Green Gables  
1501 S Harbor City Boulevard  
Melbourne Florida

Dear Keeper of the National Register:

I have admired Green Gables since I moved to the area many years ago.  
Built in 1897, it is still in amazing shape, and it is so wonderful to be able to see the past come alive again at the property!

Please take the time to consider placing it on the National Historical Register!  
It would greatly benefit our community to keep this historic home in place, and being on the National Registry would help the community to preserve this wonderful structure!

Respectfully,  
Jane Jackson



Mrs. Jane Jackson  
1382 Krollwood Rd. NE  
Palm Bay, FL 32907



OKLAHOMA FL 238

27 APR 2015 4PM 7.1



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