

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: 09000345

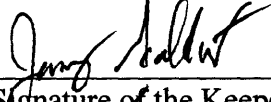
Date Listed: 1/25/2010

Property Name: Cummer Gardens

County: Duval

State: FL

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

1/25/2010
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

The summary paragraph on page 8-1 mistakenly cites the Criteria for the Cummer Gardens as A and C. The property is actually nominated under Criteria B and C for its association with Ninah Cummer and her role in the development of Florida's professional and avocational gardening and for the important aspects fo the designs of her home garden. The nomination is hereby amended to reflect the correct Criteria, B and C.

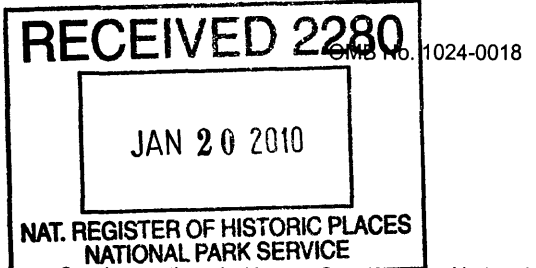
The Florida State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



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 CUMMER GARDENS

other names/site number FMSF#1402

2. Location

street & number 829 Riverside Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Jacksonville N/A vicinity

state Florida code FL county Duval code 031 zip code 32204

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.)

Bartara E. Mattie/DSHPO 1/15/2010
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) _____

James Walker
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action
1-25-2010

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	
0	0	buildings
1	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.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

"N/A"

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE: garden

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE: garden

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: formal gardens

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation n.a.
walls _____
roof _____
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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1903-1958

Significant Dates

1903

1931

Significant Person

Cummer, Ninah

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Simonds, Ossian Cole

Shipman, Ellen Biddle (continued in sec.#8)

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

Cummer Gardens
Name of Property

Duval Co., FL
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.45 acres

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 7	4 3 5 0 0 0	3 3 5 3 7 0 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

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 Alford, Janet M., Holly Keris/Robert O. Jones, Historic Preservationist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date January 2010

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

city or town Tallahassee state FL 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 The DeEtte Holden Cummer Museum Foundation, Inc. (Ms. Hope McMath, Dir.)

street & number 829 Riverside Avenue telephone 904-356-6857

city or town Jacksonville state FL zip code 32204

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.

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National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1 **CUMMER GARDENS,
JACKSONVILLE, DUVAL
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

SUMMARY

The Cummer Gardens are located on the grounds of the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens at 829 Riverside Avenue, Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida. The Cummer Gardens, The Cummer's historic gardens encompass 1.45 acre (63,300 square feet) between the west bank of the St. Johns River and the museum building. The gardens were originally adjacent to the homes belonging to two generations of the Cummer Family. There are three theme gardens and a designed tiered lawn. Initiated by Arthur and Ninah Cummer in 1903, the southernmost English Garden is organized in parterres planted with azaleas and roses. A wisteria arbor defines the eastern border. A tiered lawn is immediately north of the English Garden. North of it is the 1931 Italian Garden organized symmetrically defined by three pools. Two are rectangular reflecting pools and a third pool surrounds an Italian marble fountain. An arched "gloriette" defines the eastern border of the Italian garden. The 1931 Olmsted Garden, currently under restoration, is comprised of a curved stairway, a portico, and three distinct garden rooms that reflect the design philosophy of the firm's founder, especially with regard to rusticity and the careful placement of scenic vistas.

SETTING

The gardens are on the western shore of the St. Johns River, in the historic Riverside neighborhood of Jacksonville. The museum building is directly west of the gardens, and the Woman's Club (NR 1992), now known as the Edward W. Lane, Jr., Building, is directly to the south of the gardens. The property is separated from downtown Jacksonville by the north/south Interstate 95 and the Fuller Warren Bridge. The property is on the edge of downtown's commercial business sector, although it was once a purely residential suburb. Riverside Avenue, Post Street, and the St. Johns River bound the Cummer property. Two blocks to the south is the Memorial Park on the river. Three blocks to the west is the Riverside Park.

On the property but not included within the National Register boundary is the Cummer Museum of Art, and the Woman's Club of Jacksonville (NR 1992), currently known as the Edward W. Lane Jr. building. The Museum is the largest fine arts museum in northeast Florida. With more than 4,900 objects in its permanent collection, The Cummer offers art and artifacts from the ancient world as well as paintings and sculptures from the Middle

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Ages through the 20th century. The museum also owns The Ralph H. and Constance I. Wark Collection of Early Meissen Porcelain, one of the three finest and most comprehensive collections in the world. A number of distinguished architects are associated with the design of the various buildings on the museum's seven-acre campus. Harold Saxelbye (1885-1964) designed the original Cummer museum that opened in 1961. The symmetrical layout of the building is Palladian in inspiration, while the façade incorporates Art Deco elements. The *Art Connections* building, built in 1959 but not acquired by the museum until 1991, was designed in a neo-Colonial style integrating several design elements that are reminiscent of Independence Hall in Philadelphia. Last year, architects Thomas Hurst and Thomas Reynolds of Rink Design Partnership, Inc., designed the museum's Central Building in a reserved modern idiom.

In 2004, The Cummer Museum Foundation purchased the adjacent Woman's Club (and adjoining riverfront property in 2002) and will be restoring the two-acre property to host concerts, receptions, and public events. The Woman's Club was designed in 1927 by architect Melvin C. Greeley (1880-1981) in a Tudor Revival style that complimented Ninah Cummer's home.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The gardens consist of three separate "themed" garden spaces, and a large lawn. The garden spaces are described in order from the south, northward. The first garden was an 1903 English style garden (Photo #1). It is organized in parterres¹ with brick pathways, and an arbor defines the eastern border of the garden. The **English Garden** has four significant features. The Tea Garden located in the southwest corner was a site for parties for Mrs. Ninah Cummer and her friends, and features a mix of garden furnishings (Photo #2). A pink stone bench with winged lion pedestals, a pair of barrel chairs, and an embellished planter designed by William Mercer are original to that feature. William Mercer (1858-1939) was a major Arts & Crafts pioneer in cast concrete and mosaic. This portion of the garden is the gathering spot where the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs was formed in 1924. The second feature of this garden, located midway in the south wall, is a working fountain and basin of green, gold and white mosaic tiles with a peacock medallion (Photo #3). The location of this fountain was selected by architect J. Frederick Dawson from the Olmsted firm, and the fountain was installed in 1922. The third

¹ A parterre is a section of a garden divided into beds or plots, usually containing flowers.

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prominent feature is a pool in the center of the boxwood parterre, which features mosaics designed by Mercer and a copy of a sculpture by Pietrino de Vinci (the original is in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum) (Photo #4). The parterres are planted with azaleas, seasonal blooms and roses. The fourth, and primary, feature of the English garden is the large wisteria arbor at the east end of the garden (Photo #5), at the terminus of the central east-west pathway. The garden features an outstanding display of azaleas. Other plants in this garden include pear trees and camellias. The borders on the north are planted with cherries, and on the south with crepe myrtles. The garden was conceived by Ossian C. Simonds. The Simonds plan consisted mostly of plants he used in all his gardens, including crabapples, lilacs, honeysuckle, barberry, and sassafras. The varieties he selected could not survive in Florida, and the roses chosen were so vigorous that a thicket would have resulted in one growing season. Fortunately, he respected the existing oaks and used them to frame the views of the river. The major oaks remain today. Since Simonds' plan for the Cummers did not include specific varieties or quantities of plants, it is unknown if his responsibilities entailed more than simply providing the overall concept. Photographs of the grounds taken in the 1920s show mature plantings that follow the contours indicated on his plan. Simonds routinely designed with broad brushstrokes and was generally content to provide only a rough plan for the owner or other professional to execute.

Thomas Meehan was hired in 1910 to provide enhancements to Simonds' plan for the English Garden. Meehan's plant list of more than 280 specimens contained primarily annuals and perennials better suited for northern climates, and most would have died after their first year. As Ninah became obsessed with azaleas, Harold Hume assisted her in transforming these beds into a distinguished collection of azaleas. The same design was still recorded in 1931, and is in existence today.

The next space is the large **tiered lawn** and putting green begun in 1903 (Photo #6). The upper oval-shaped tier is adjacent to the eastern entrance for the museum, and features agapanthus, which Arthur Cummer gave as a gift to his wife. A sculpture overlooks the lower tier (Photo #7). The sculpture's artist, Mrs. Anna Hyatt Huntington (1876-1973), donated her 1922 creation "Diana of the Hunt" (recast 1960-61) to mark the museum's opening in 1961. A prominent feature of this space is the "Cummer Oak" (Photo #8), a giant oak with a spread of over 150 feet, estimated to be 175 to 200 years old. A curved and fanning set of stairs with metal hand rails descends to the lower lawn, and trimmed

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hedges mark the change in elevation (Photo #9). The lower tier adjacent to the river is a putting green Ninah Cummer had installed for her husband. Beds lining the north and south edges of the lawn and upper tier are planted with camellias, aspidistra, podocarpus and hydrangeas. The river view from this area offers a spectacular glimpse of the Jacksonville skyline.

The **Italian Garden**, developed in 1931, was inspired by the world-famous water gardens of the Villa Gamberaia² in Italy, which Arthur and Nina Cummer visited in 1930. Italian cypress, azaleas, antique roses, Japanese iris, and daylilies flank the pools (Photos #10 & 11). Other specimens in this garden include camellias, redbud, calamondins, and dogwoods. Roses climb a wall on the north side, which also features a wall niche and planter designed by William Mercer (Photo #12). The planter has lion's heads in each corner, a center shield, and Della Robbia swags. It is filled with seasonal blooms. Behind the planter is a center medallion of entwined flamingos against a mosaic background.

Other architectural features include a folly³ with a barrel-tile roof in the northeast corner. Eleven Verona marble lion-motif benches and two pink stone winged lion benches were imported in 1930 from Italy by the Cummers, and a winged gargoyle rescued from a demolished building in New York City was given to the museum in 1981. The most prominent feature of the Italian Garden is a vine-covered gloriette, an ornamental structure or small garden building that echoes the one at Villa Gamberaia (Photo #13). It visually frames a reproduction of a three-tier fountain that the Cummers acquired in Italy in 1930 (Photo #14). The garden as designed by noted landscape architect Ellen Biddle Shipman has been restored accurately, with all the original plant varieties that The Cummer could locate. Where exact selections could not be located, The Cummer chose a close "cousin" in the Azalea selections. Shipman was precise in the Azalea colors which were arranged by her artistic hand. The colors are pinks, white, and salmon, and were drifted in the groups as she designated. Specimen Cupressa, Cornus florida, Magnolia, Citrus, and roses have been planted. The records show that there was an exchange of ideas between Ninah Cummer and Shipman prior to the final installation. The existing plants reflect the original design as stipulated by Shipman.

² The Villa Gamberaia is famous for its spectacular long pools and semicircular arcade that overlooks the hills of Tuscany. Since its development in the early 1900s, it has served as the inspiration for many gardens.

³ A folly is a fanciful garden structure erected for aesthetics rather than function. They are usually incongruous to their setting, either because of cost, appearance, or lack of utility.

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The extant portion of the 1931 **Olmsted Garden** contains noteworthy architectural features including a pergola (Photo #15)⁴, a serpentine stair (Photo #16) and a grotto (Photo #17) set into a retaining stone wall (Photo #18).⁵ There are three distinct garden rooms that are presently overgrown and being restored. This garden was designed by William Lyman Phillips, an architect with the Olmsted firm. He included in his design a pre-existing Ada Cummer "Gazing Globe" garden room (Photo #19). The upper level of the Olmsted garden, which had been converted into a parking lot, has recently been restored to its large green space with mature oak trees (Photo #20).

The lower garden is currently overgrown (Photos 21 & 22). The Cummer is in the process of cleaning the spaces carefully so as not to endanger any of the original plants and features. During the time Barnett Bank owned the property, a shuffleboard court was added in the center of the garden for their employees, but it will be removed as part of the restoration. Because the Olmsted Firm did not provide a planting plan the garden will be restored accurately according to the original plans and photographs. Progressing from the entrance near the Italian Garden, the first area is mostly grass with the original palm trees. The next formal area is delineated by the brick walks, which will be restored. The remaining area contains the Grotto in good condition, and the circular stairs, which lead to the upper level. The only original plants in the area are specimen Podocarpus, and several palms. The design will be accurately restored to highlight these historic elements.

ALTERATIONS

In 1910, Ninah Cummer's property and gardens were enhanced by the receipt of a shipment from Meehan and Sons of more than 300 plants that were thought to be more suitable to the Lower South. In 1922 the wall fountain was placed in the English garden. In 1925 Ninah Cummer's interest in azaleas resulted in many being included in the English garden. In 1931 the definition of the tiered lawn was refined by its border plantings. To comply with city regulations regarding handicapped access, a section of wall and gate between the lawn and Italian Garden were recently removed.

⁴ A pergola is an open frame- roofed structure supported with columns or posts.

⁵ A grotto as a garden feature is an artificial recess that contains a water element or decorative items.

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After Wellington and Ada Cummer died, and their house was demolished in 1930, Waldo and Clara Cummer acquired most of his parent's property. Waldo and Clara developed the Olmsted garden in 1931. After the demolition of their home in 1958, the Olmsted garden fell into disrepair. This large portion of the garden was acquired by the Cummer Museum in 1991-1992 and is being restored using the original plans.

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Section number 8 Page 1 **CUMMER GARDENS,
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Architect/Builder

Phillips, William Lyman

SUMMARY

The Cummer Gardens are nominated to the National Register for local significance under Criteria A and C in the areas of Landscape Architecture and for their association with Ninah Cummer. The gardens are unique in Florida and the Southeast. Taken as an ensemble, the gardens represent a plumb line through the history of American landscape design in the first four decades of the twentieth century. The gardens have direct ties to four leading American landscape designers and firms – Michigan based Ossian Simonds, Philadelphia's Thomas Meehan & Sons, Ellen Biddle Shipman of New York, and the renowned Olmsted Brothers firm of Massachusetts. Arthur and Ninah Cummer's once private gardens are restored and accessible to the public. The extant fragment of Waldo and Clara Cummer's Olmsted Garden will soon be restored and open to the public. Ninah Cummer was an avid educator and promoter of gardening and horticulture through lectures, publications and consultations with the Glen St. Mary Nursery. She was instrumental in the establishment of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs which occurred in her English garden.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

In the late 1890s, the Wellington W. Cummer family moved to Jacksonville from Michigan to establish their lumber business. They owned a modern sawmill and vast timber tracts in Baker, Alachua and Levy Counties, as well as a phosphate plant at Newberry, Florida. These various properties were connected by the Jacksonville & Southwestern Railroad, a one hundred-mile railroad line built by the Cummers that later became part of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad. Pine, cypress, oak, and phosphate rock were brought by train to Jacksonville and shipped from the Cummer docks. Not only was the Cummer lumber company one of the largest employers in Jacksonville during the 1900s, the family was the largest private landowner in the state, with more than 500,000 acres. Their extensive holdings, which included the sawmill, a box factory and wood

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processing plant, were under the management of brothers Arthur and Waldo after the death of their father, Wellington W. Cummer, in 1909.¹

The original family residential property was part of the Riverside subdivision, which developed in 1868 from a larger land grant known as Dell's Bluff. A surge of residential construction occurred after 1887. This development was concentrated along the river and streetcar line until 1901, when the Great Fire of Jacksonville burned 146 city blocks and destroyed 2,386 buildings downtown. Following the fire, Riverside received an influx of residents. In 1902, Arthur and Ninah Cummer built their Tudor Revival Style home on fashionable Riverside Avenue, next door to Arthur's parents. Located on the St. Johns River, the property was dotted with majestic live oak trees. In 1907, Arthur's younger brother Waldo Cummer and his wife Clara built a stucco house on the other side of the senior Cummers. Their sister, Mabel Cummer Roe, and her family resided not far away on Stockton Street.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE CONTEXT

English Garden Characteristics

In England specifically, gardens became more focused on aesthetic value and pleasure than utilitarian function during the Tudor Period (1485 – 1558). Gardens were laid out in geometric patterns, much like their medieval and Renaissance predecessors. A particularly popular style was the *quincunx*, where the garden was divided into four quarters using gravel or paved pathways. The quarters would be outlined with hedge. At the center would be an ornamental feature such as a fountain or statue. In America, specifically at the time of the first centennial, there was a revival of the Tudor *quincunx* garden. Known as Colonial Revival in this country, these gardens emphasize straight lines, a central axis that connects the house with the garden, and decorative features such as fountains. Gardens are compartmentalized into boxwood-lined parterres (a French term for the geometric sections of a garden). Pergolas covered with wisteria became fashionable in these gardens in the early twentieth century. Significantly, Colonial Revival gardens were an important element

¹ Jacksonville Planning & Development Department Report, "Riverside-Avondale Historic District, Original Application as Historic District." 1997, 29 April 2008 <<http://www.riverside-avondale.com/historic%20district%20description.htm>>

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of large estates, suggesting that they served a more aesthetic than practical purpose and would have been maintained by hired gardeners.

Italian Garden Characteristics

Though The Cummer garden is unique, it does follow the basic characteristics of traditional Italian gardens. Italian gardens were first created during the Renaissance when castles were replaced by palaces and villas, and were surrounded with acres of land developed as gardens. Garden plans focused on maximizing space without overcrowding, the free circulation of sunlight, the abundance of water, easy access to dense shade and sheltered walks with different views, and the use of focal points often incorporating statues and special features. They also often involved the use of different levels and the breadth of composition. Italian gardens were known for their borders of tall, dark cypresses, clipped hedges, geometric flower beds, stone balustrades, and fountains and sculptures that conformed strictly to an overall plan. These gardens grew immensely popular and were soon seen all over Europe, not only in Italy, but also in France and Spain.

Olmsted Firm Characteristics

Frederick Law Olmsted Sr., the firm's founder, was heavily influenced by 18th century English traditions of landscape design. This "pastoral" or "picturesque" style relied on naturalistic sweeps of undulating grass-covered land. His and the firm's public and private spaces are known for broad green spaces, with drives, paths, turf, and trees, as well as spaces for outdoor living.

The Philadelphia-based firm of Thomas Meehan & Sons, nationally recognized for the design and installation of residential properties in 1910 infused the grounds and garden of Arthur and Nina Cummer with hundreds of trees, shrubs and perennials. The Meehan nurseries, which had been established in 1854, were a famous resource for native American trees. The founder of the company, Thomas Meehan (1826-1901), was considered one of the leading horticulturists of the day. He was also known for his work in saving Bartram's gardens in Philadelphia and design of numerous estate gardens, parks, golf courses, and two country clubs in Florida. He edited *The Gardeners's Monthly* (1859-

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1889) and *Meehan's Monthly* (1891-1902), both popular magazines for serious gardeners such as the Cummers.²

Photographer J. Horace McFarland (1859-1948) provided ample photographic documentation of the entire Cummer estate. He was a nationally recognized conservationist, rosarian, editor and author and was the longtime president (until 1924) of the American Civic Association, a board on which Ninah Cummer also served. As an outspoken advocate for environmental and scenic protection, he fought for the establishment of the National Park Service. McFarland also worked hand-in-hand with John Muir on the preservation of Yosemite and Yellowstone parks, Niagara Falls, and the Everglades, and promoted city planning and zoning to prevent sprawl. In a forward to *J. Horace McFarland- A Thorn for Beauty*, United States Department of the Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt writes "McFarland didn't believe in passing laws that made people change things, but rather in persuading them through education that they wanted the changes."³ McFarland's Mount Pleasant Press was the leading publisher of nursery catalogs in the first half of the twentieth century. He wrote more than 200 articles and journals as well as a dozen books on gardening. The J. Horace McFarland Collection at the Smithsonian Archives of American Gardens includes more than 3,200 black and white mounted photographs and nearly 500 glass lantern slides of many American gardens, including many photographs of the Cummer gardens.⁴

Another of Ninah Cummer's partners in Florida gardening was one of the South's leaders in horticulture, H. Harold Hume (1875-1965) who was involved for many years with the Glen Saint Mary Nurseries (NR 2003), located west of Jacksonville. Not only were they providers of plants, Hume also documented the gardens photographically in Glen Saint Mary's catalogs and in his own book, *Gardening in the Lower South* (1929). Glen Saint Mary Nurseries was one of the oldest and, at the time, one of the largest nurseries in the South. During his twenty-five year career with the nursery, Hume was also president of the E.O Painter Fertilizer Company of Jacksonville, dean of the College of Agriculture and Provost of Agriculture and Interim President of the University of Florida. Hume retired

² Charles E. Beveridge, "The Olmsted Firm and the Cummer Family: An Assessment," 2006, 2.

³ Bruce Babbitt, Forward, Horace McFarland – A Thorn for Beauty. Earnest, J. Morrison. (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Horticulture and Museum Commission, 1995) 1.

⁴ Tankard, The Gardens of Ellen Biddle Shipman 16.

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from the University of Florida in 1949 at the age of seventy-four, but during his retirement he came to be recognized as one of American's foremost horticulturists of the twentieth century. A 1925 lecture by Hume inspired Ninah to infuse her garden with azaleas.⁵ From that point on, azaleas would be Ninah's lifelong passion, which she enthusiastically shared in her numerous garden talks and articles.⁶

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE
Ninah Cummer (1875-1958)

Gardens were a passion for the Cummer family. In particular, Ninah Cummer was an enthusiastic horticulturist, a patron of the arts, a lover of all things Italian, and generous advocate of local civic causes, particularly the beatification of Jacksonville.⁷ Born in Michigan City, Indiana, Ninah met her future husband while attending the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. After graduation from the university in 1895, Ninah taught Greek and Latin at Michigan City High School for several years. Following their marriage in 1897, the newlyweds joined his parents in Jacksonville. Ninah enjoyed reading popular magazines for serious gardeners, and she sought specialized plants from regional nurseries, even encouraging local ones, such as the Glen Saint Mary Nurseries, to stock varieties suited to Northeast Florida's climate.

The Cummer's gardens appeared in Glen Saint Mary's catalogs and in books from noted Florida horticulturists.⁸ Ninah was an avid lecturer and wrote regularly for publications, sharing her enthusiasm for gardening. Her forethought in hiring the top people in the field to assist in the design of her gardens and her role in encouraging others to take up gardening makes Ninah an exceptional figure.⁹ She played a key role in the establishment of Jacksonville's Memorial Park in 1921, designed by the Olmsted firm. Her study and trial and error experience in her own gardens helped Ninah become the acknowledged leader in Southern gardening at that time. In 1924, she helped found and later presided over the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, bringing together four independent garden clubs - Winter Park Garden Club, Garden Club of Halifax County, Garden Club of

⁵ "H. Harold Hume Collection, 1898-1962" University of Florida Public Records Collection 28 April 2008
<<http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/spec/archome/MS66.htm>>

⁶ Tankard, The Gardens of Ellen Biddle Shipman 28.

⁷ Tankard, The History of the Gardens at the Cummer Museum of Art 3.

⁸ Tankard, The History of the Gardens at the Cummer Museum of Art. 16.

⁹ Tankard, The History of the Gardens at the Cummer Museum of Art. 3.

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Jacksonville, and Garden Club of Miami. The Florida Federation of Garden Clubs was first formed at a meeting in Ninah's English Garden.

The mission of the Florida Federation is:

To further the education of the members and the public in the fields of gardening, horticulture, botany, floral design, landscape design, environmental awareness through the conservation of natural resources, civic beautification, nature studies, and to instill in our youth the love of gardening and the respect for and protection of the environment.

During Ninah's final years, the plantings in the gardens were simplified, and after the death of her husband in 1943, Ninah focused her energy more and more on amassing an art collection. In her will, she would form the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, which would become Arthur and Ninah's most enduring bequest to Northeast Florida.

Ninah lived at her home at this site since the home's construction in 1902 until her death in 1958. It was here at Riverside Avenue that her major life's work and significant achievements were accomplished. She resided here, practiced her educational and gardening advocacy from this place, and the gardens directly express her taste, and horticultural interests. There is no other location that is so closely associated with her. The gardens represent the truest expression of Ninah Cummer's passion.

ARCHITECTURAL LANDSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE

The Cummer Gardens as an ensemble represent the work of five pioneers of American landscape design: O.C. Simonds, Ellen Biddle Shipman, William Lyman Phillips, Thomas Meehan & Sons, and J. Frederick Dawson.¹⁰

In 1903, the first landscape architect involved with the Cummer family was Ossian Cole Simonds (1855-1931). He prepared a landscape plan for the Wellington Cummer grounds and those of their son Arthur and wife Ninah, who lived next door. Simonds was an early icon in the relatively new field of landscape architecture and was one of eleven of the

¹⁰ Tankard, The History of the Gardens at the Cummer Museum of Art. 7.

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founding members of the American Society of Landscape Architects in 1899.¹¹ He was also an influential teacher, author, and founder of the landscape architecture program at the University of Michigan, the university that both Arthur and Ninah attended.¹² Simonds helped formulate the “prairie” style of design based on the use of native plants. He also urged young designers to study nature “as the great teacher” and suggested that the goal of landscape design should be to help people see and respect subtle natural beauties.¹³

His book *Landscape Gardening*, first published in 1920, presented his carefully conceived and still timely approach to landscape design, where nature is both partner and model. He was one of the national’s foremost authorities on “rural” cemetery design, and designed the Graceland Cemetery in Chicago. Simonds’ projects included parks, residences, college campuses, and cemeteries throughout the United States, particularly the Midwest. His conceptual plan for the Cummer family compound was drawn up in 1903, the same year he established his independent firm. The plantings did not acknowledge Florida’s special climate of plants, but served as groundwork for the Cummers to develop their horticultural knowledge and personal tastes.¹⁴

Ellen Biddle Shipman, another famous landscape architect, was commissioned to design the Italian Garden in May 1931. Shipman was friends with Villa Gamberaia owner Baroness Maud Ledyard Von Ketteler, and, like Arthur and Ninah, had visited Italy in 1930. Known in her lifetime as “The Dean of American Women Landscape Architects,” Shipman has been hailed as one of American’s greatest “flower-garden makers”. She was a pioneer in a field that had been dominated by men up to the turn of the century, training many successful designers in her all-woman practice.¹⁵ In lectures and interviews, she

¹¹ Robert E. Greene, Introduction, Introduction to Landscape Gardening by Ossian Cole Simonds (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000) 7.

¹² Charles A. Birnbaum & Robin Karson, Pioneers of American Landscape Design - A project of the National Park Service Historic Landscape Initiative, Library of American Landscape History, Catalog of Landscape Reports in the United States at Wave Hill, Cultural Landscape Foundation (New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2000) 365.

¹³ Tankard, The History of the Gardens at the Cummer Museum of Art 9.

¹⁴ Ulysses Prentiss Hedrick, A History of Horticulture in America to 1860 (Portland, OR: Timber Press, 1988) 1950.

¹⁵ “Biography of Ellen Biddle Shipman”, Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens 28 April 2008

<http://www.stanhywet.org/images/company_assets/512F1C7F-0D64-4A5E-9D91-785DC064755F/95cfd_Ellen_Biddle_Shipman.pdf>.

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articulated her belief that women practitioners were responsible for the gardening revival that enlivened the early twentieth century.

Her commissions spanned the United States, and her clients included the Fords, Astors, duPonts and other captains of industry and patrons of the arts, yet she held an emphatically democratic view of her profession, stating “Gardening opens a wider door than any other of the arts –all mankind can walk through, rich or poor, high or low, talented and untalented. It has no distinctions, all are welcome”.¹⁶ Of the more than 650 gardens that Shipman designed between 1914 and 1946, few remain intact. The garden at The Cummer is one of the only remaining historically accurate gardens by Ellen Biddle Shipman open to the public today. Others include Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens in Akron, Ohio, and the Sarah Duke Gardens in North Carolina. Her only other commissions in Florida were for Mina Edison in Fort Myers and Arthur West in Tallahassee.¹⁷ Shipman utilized Italian design characteristics such as water and focal points in the landscape within the Cummer garden. The long rectangular pools in large part structured the design, and the gloriette and fountain framed by the arcade gave focal points. Tubs were used to place small trees, clipped evergreens and flowers.

The nationally prominent Olmsted Brothers firm, based in Brookline, Massachusetts, was involved with several proposed improvements to the site. In 1922, J. Frederick Dawson of the firm advised Ninah Cummer on the placement of a wall fountain for the English Garden. Waldo and Clara Cummer engaged the firm to design their riverfront garden in 1931. The landscape architect was William Lyman Phillips (1885-1966), now known as “the Pioneer of Tropical Landscape Architecture.”¹⁸ From April to December 1931, Phillips led the project from the Olmsted firm’s Lake Wales office. Phillips would later design the world-famous Fairchild Tropical Garden in Miami, McKee Jungle Gardens (now known as McKee Botanical Garden) in Vero Beach, Historic Bok Sanctuary in Lake Wales (a National Historic Landmark) and his public parks at Crandon, Greynolds and Matheson Hammock in Miami, defined Florida for generations of residents and tourists.¹⁹

¹⁶ Judith B. Tankard, The Gardens of Ellen Biddle Shipman (Sagaponack: Sagapress, Inc, 1996) Inside cover.

¹⁷ Tankard, The Gardens of Ellen Biddle Shipman 189.

¹⁸ Faith Reyher Jackson, Pioneer of Tropical Landscape Architecture – William Lyman Phillips in Florida (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997) 119.

¹⁹ Dr. Joanna Lombard, “The Memorable Landscapes of William Lyman Phillips,” The Journal of Decorative & Propaganda Arts, 1998: 265.

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Phillips sharpened and defined the lawn between the two formal English and Italian gardens by adding plantings and a stone path.

Phillips created the Olmsted garden to include the pre-existing pergola and “Gazing Globe” garden room. He relied on a variety of contrasting characteristics; enclosed and open spaces, sunlit and shadowed, reflective and absorptive, textured and smooth. The serpentine stairs and pergola mark the shift in elevation and shift from broad lawn and oak trees, to garden rooms and paths in the lower ground. With these contrasts he achieved a picturesque harmony.²⁰

²⁰ Dr. Joanna Lombard, “The Memorable Landscapes of William Lyman Phillips,” The Journal of Decorative & Propaganda Arts, 1998: 265.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Cummer Gardens are a portion of the larger parcel of property described as Riverside Pt Lot 5 Recd O/R 8944-1354 blk 3 Lot 1 Blk 4, Closed Fisk St Lying Adjacent Thereof Recd ORD #U-183; parcel # 090139 0000.

The National Register boundary of the historic gardens runs from the Point of Beginning (POB) at the St. Johns River and the southeast corner of the English Garden. The southern boundary then runs roughly eastward along the southern boundary of the English Garden 150 feet, then turns 90° roughly northward to run 405 feet along the western boundary of the gardens excluding the museum buildings, and following the curve of the Tiered Lawn. At the northwest corner of the western lawn of the Olmsted Garden, the boundary turns 90° roughly eastward and runs 56 feet to exclude a parking area. The boundary then turns roughly north 90° and runs 55 feet along the eastern edge of the parking area and intersects with the northern boundary of the Olmsted Garden. The boundary turns 90° roughly eastward and runs 144 feet to the St. Johns River. From this point the boundary runs roughly southward along the river to the POB. The St. Johns River forms the eastern boundary of the Cummer Gardens. The National Register boundary is indicated on the enclosed map.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary encompasses gardens historically associated with property developed by the Arthur and Ninah Cummer, and the Waldo and Clara Cummer families.

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1. Cummer Gardens, 829 Riverside Avenue, Jacksonville
2. Duval County, Florida
3. Greg Lepera
4. May, 2008
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. English Garden, looking northeast
7. Photo #1 of 20

Items 1 and 2 are the same for the following photographs.

3. Greg Lepera
4. May, 2008
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. English Garden, "Tea Garden," looking east
7. Photo #2 of 20

3. O'Brien-KAH Photographs
4. c.1924
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. English Garden, wall fountain, looking southeast
7. Photo #3 of 20

3. Greg Lepera
4. May, 2008
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. English Garden, center of partierre, looking north
7. Photo #4 of 20

3. Mick Hales
4. April, 2004
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. English Garden, central walk and arbor, looking east
7. Photo #5 of 20

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**CUMMER GARDENS,
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3. Greg Lepera
4. May, 2008
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. Tiered lawn, looking west
7. Photo #6 of 20

3. Greg Lepera
4. May, 2008
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. Upper tier with stairs and Diana sculptor, looking west
7. Photo #7 of 20

3. Greg Lepera
4. May, 2008
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. Cummer Oak from upper tier, looking north
7. Photo #8 of 20

3. Greg Lepera
4. May, 2008
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. Upper and lower tier transition, looking south
7. Photo #9 of 20

3. Unknown
4. 1937
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. Italian Garden, looking east
7. Photo #10 of 20

3. Greg Lepera
4. May, 2008
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. Italian Garden axis, looking east
7. Photo #11 of 20

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Section number _____ Photo _____ Page 3 **CUMMER GARDENS,
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3. Greg Lepera
4. May, 2008
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. Italian Garden wall niche, looking north
7. Photo #12 of 20

3. Unknown
4. 1940
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. Italian Garden gloriette (arcade) and tiered fountain, looking southeast
7. Photo #13 of 20

3. Greg Lepra
4. May, 2008
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. Italian Garden, tiered fountain, looking northwest
7. Photo #14 of 20

3. Greg Lepra
4. May, 2008
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. Olmsted Garden, pergola and remnant of Italian fountain, looking north
7. Photo #15 of 20

3. Greg Lepra
4. May, 2008
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. Olmsted Garden, serpentine stairs, looking west
7. Photo #16 of 20

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3. Greg Lepra
4. May, 2008
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. Olmsted Garden, overgrown garden rooms, looking south
7. Photo #17 of 20

3. Vance Shrum
4. 2009
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. West wall, looking south
7. Photo #18 of 22

3. Photographer unknown
4. Ca.1941
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens Archives.
6. Ada Cummer's pre-Olmsted Gazing Globe garden room, looking southwest
7. Photo #19 of 22

3. Vance Shrum
4. May, 2008
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. Olmsted Garden, restored lawn, looking south
7. Photo #20 of 20

3. Vance Shrum
4. 2009
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. Olmsted Garden, lower level, looking south
7. Photo #21 of 22

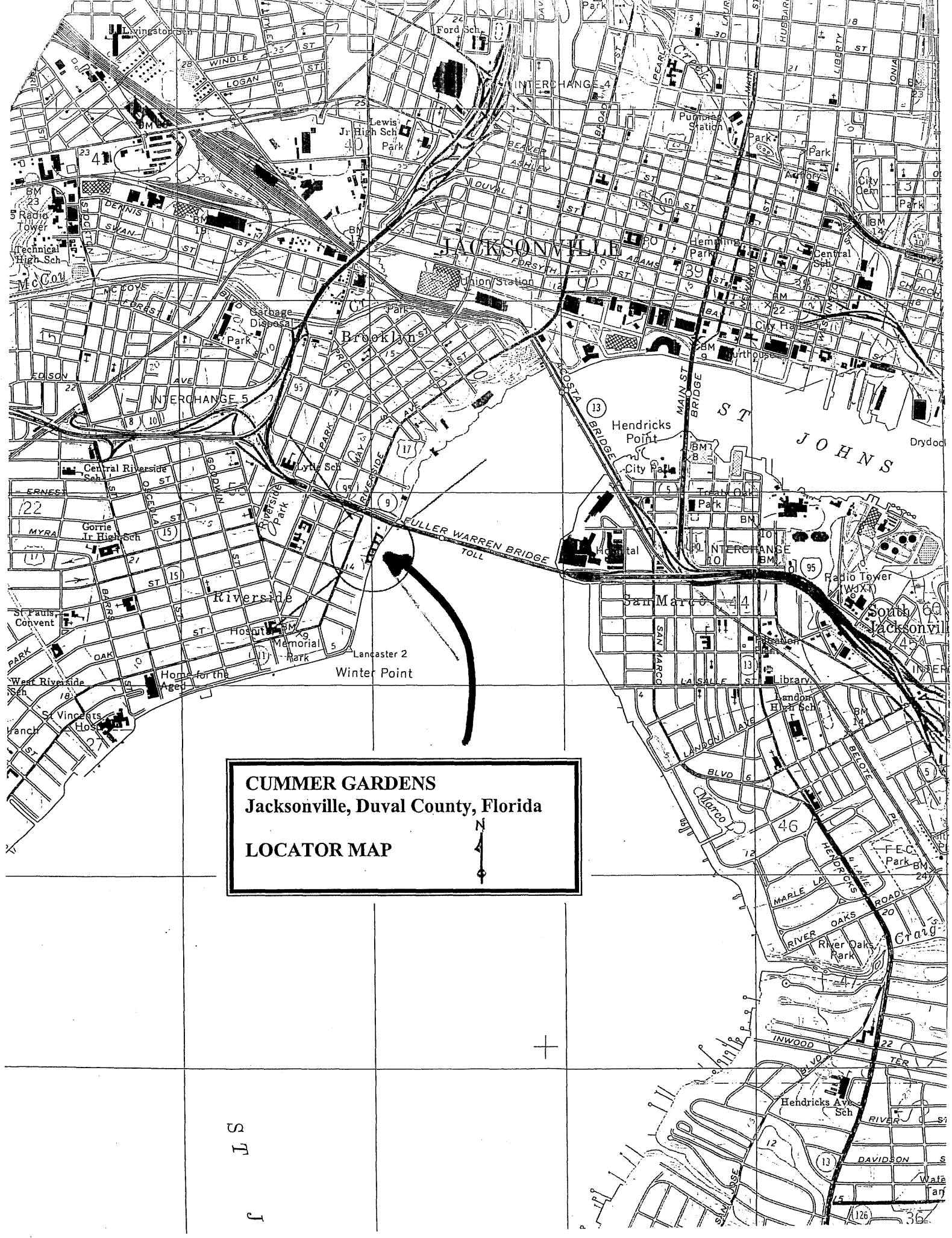
3. Vance Shrum
4. 2009
5. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens
6. Olmsted Garden, lower level, looking north
7. Photo #22 of 22



Figures 1 & 2, Mrs. Ninah Cummer in her wedding dress, 1898, and in the garden in 1927.



Figure 3, Arthur and Ninah Cummer's house, 1958.

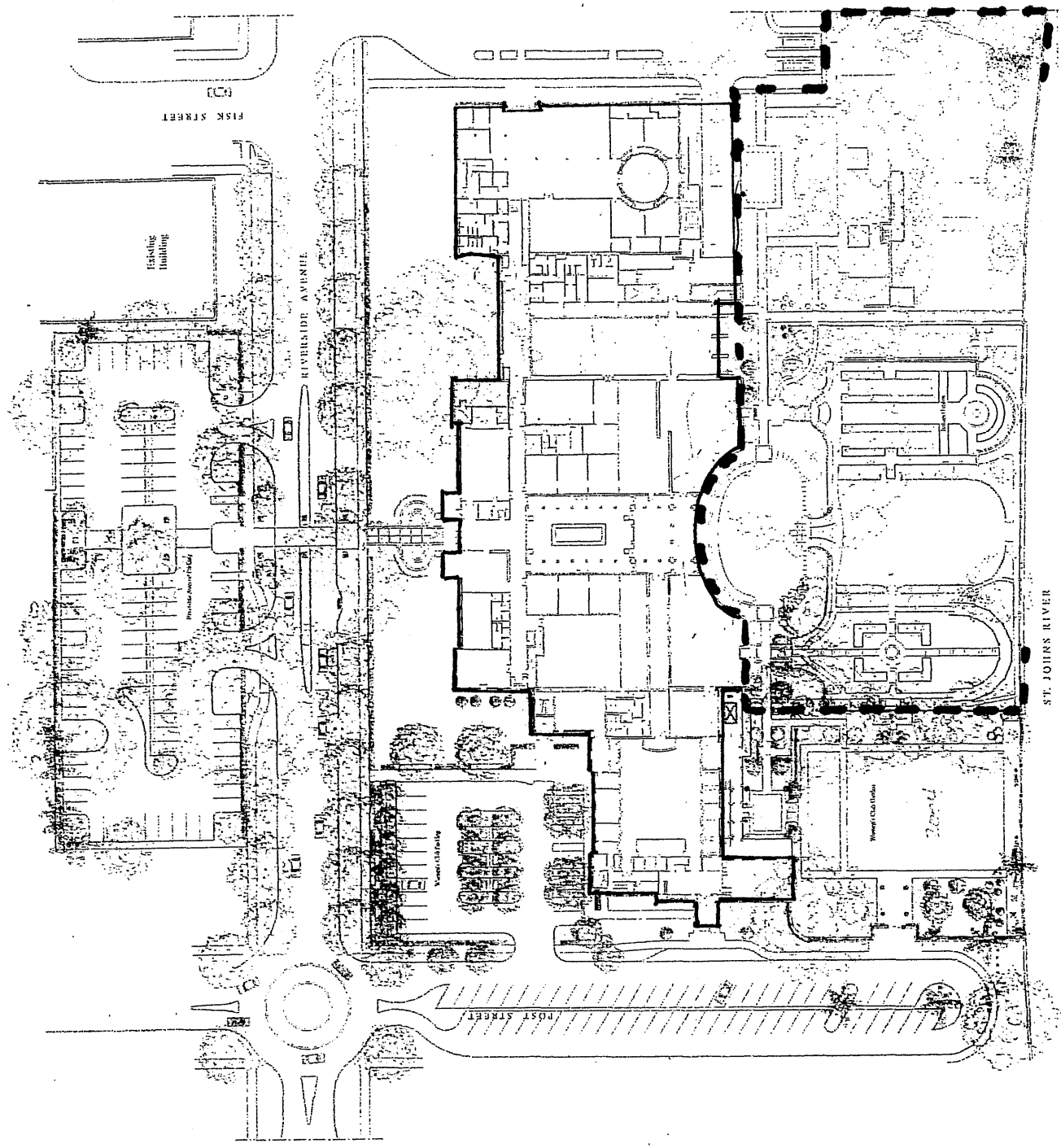


CUMMER GARDENS
Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida
LOCATOR MAP



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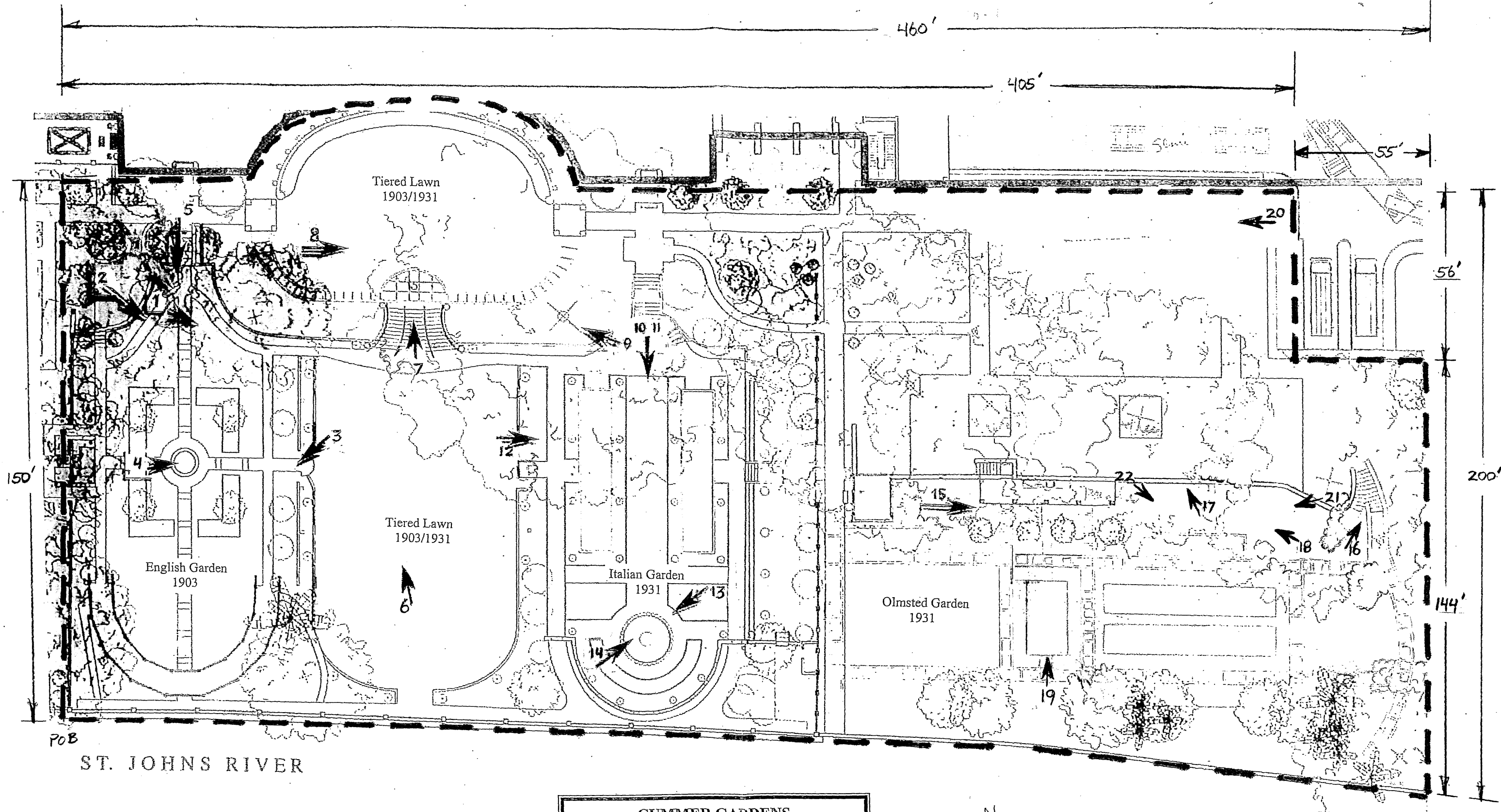
(126)



CUMMER MUSEUM & GARDENS
Cummer owned property and
Boundary Of National Register Gardens



NTS



CUMMER GARDENS
 Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida
 Site Map, National Register Boundary,
 Photo Diagram

NTS