

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91001044

Date Listed: 8/12/91

Edison, Thomas, Winter Estate
Property Name

Lee
County

FLORIDA
State

Multiple Name

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.

for Patrick Andrus
Signature of the Keeper

8/12/91
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section No. 3

This nomination was amended to show a count of 7 contributing buildings. The main house consists of two originally separate structures later joined together.

This amendment was confirmed by phone with the Florida SHPO (8/9/91)

DISTRIBUTION:

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

1047

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Edison, Thomas, Winter Estate
other names/site number Edison Winter Home Museum, Seminole Lodge/8LL98

2. Location

street & number 2350 McGregor Boulevard N/A not for publication
city, town Fort Myers N/A vicinity
state Florida code FL county Lee code 071 zip code 33901

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		<u>1</u>
			Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.
Suzanne P. Walker (deputy) 7/3/91
Signature of certifying official State Historic Preservation Officer Date
Florida Dept. of State, Division of Historical Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. Patricia Andrews 8/12/91
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:) _____

for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/residence
Education/research facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture/museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Other: frame vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick
walls weatherboard

roof asphalt
other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Please see continuation sheet.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Edison Winter Estate

DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

The Edison Winter Estate is a fourteen acre property located at 2350 McGregor Boulevard in Fort Myers, Florida. Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931) purchased the property in 1885 when Fort Myers was still a small, isolated settlement of cattlemen and their families. Already world famous for the invention of the incandescent light bulb, Edison developed the property as a seasonal residence and secondary research facility. During the late 1920s, the estate became the base of operations for his research to develop a domestic source of rubber. The property is now the Edison Winter Home Museum, which is owned and operated by the City of Fort Myers.

The Edison Winter Estate contains a total of eight contributing historical resources, six buildings and two structures. Seminole Lodge, the main residence and focal point of the estate, is actually a complex comprised of two frame vernacular houses connected by a breezeway. The larger wing contains the Edisons' living quarters while the smaller wing houses the dining area, kitchen, guest house, and servants' quarters.

Non-contributing resources include seven buildings, one structure, and one site which were constructed between 1950 and 1990.

SETTING

Fort Myers is located on the southern bank of the Caloosahatchee River, eighteen miles inland from the Gulf of Mexico. In 1885, when Thomas Edison first visited southwest Florida, Fort Myers was an isolated settlement of 349 people. The village, a commercial center for local cattle ranchers, was reached primarily by boat from Cedar Keys or other ports along the coast. Southwest Florida's population was growing, if slowly, due to the appeal of cheap land for farming and cattle grazing. Wealthy northerners were also becoming interested in the region for its sub-tropical beauty, warm winters and good sport fishing.

Edison's winter residence was built in 1886 in an undeveloped, sparsely populated area southwest of Fort Myers. Comprised of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2 Edison Winter Estate

fourteen acres of riverfront land, the property was divided in two by Riverside Drive (now McGregor Boulevard), an old, unpaved cattle trail. In 1916, automobile manufacturer Henry Ford, a close friend of Edison's, bought the house next door.

Today, Fort Myers is a fast growing urban area with over 40,000 residents, and Edison's fourteen acre property is the Edison Winter Home Museum, a local landmark visited by thousands of tourists each year. Owned and operated by the City of Fort Myers, it is surrounded by residential development. McGregor Boulevard, which divides the property, is one of the city's busier thoroughfares, famous for the royal palm trees which line it. Edison is credited with planting the first royal palms along the street. The Henry Ford property (NR 1988), also owned by the city, is maintained as a museum in conjunction with the Edison Winter Home.

CONTRIBUTING HISTORICAL RESOURCES

As the former winter estate of a wealthy businessman and inventor, the Edison Winter Estate reflects a distinct organization. The fourteen acre property is divided into two parcels by McGregor Boulevard, a public street. The riverfront parcel contains the main residence and other buildings used by the family and their guests. Originally, it was also the site of Edison's electrical research laboratory, which was replaced in 1929 with a small office. The land across McGregor Boulevard was used by Edison as a botanical garden, and in the late 1920s became the base of research for his rubber experiments.

Seminole Lodge incorporates two buildings constructed in 1886 as separate residences. In 1901, the buildings were connected by a colonnaded breezeway and remodeled to function as an integrated unit. The larger (east) building then served as the Edison family living and sleeping quarters, and the smaller (west) building housed the kitchen and dining area, guest house and servant's quarters. (Site plan, page 1)

The two buildings are similar in basic design, consisting of a square, two story, frame vernacular main block with broad porches wrapping around three sides. Each has a semi detached, two story wing connected by an enclosed room on the first floor and an open breezeway on the second floor level. (Photos 1, 2, and 6)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3 Edison Winter Estate

Siding is clapboard with plain board trim. Porches are adorned with stick style bracketing and balustrades on champhored columns. Hipped roofs with protruding brick chimneys are found on each of the main blocks and wings, the main block chimneys being elaborately corbelled.

The main block of each building has no windows on the first floor: air circulates through French doors opening onto the wide, one story wraparound porches. Otherwise, fenestration is regular, with double hung 2/2 sash flanked by shutters. Joined together by a central breezeway, the two buildings form a roughly symmetrical unit.

The ground floor in the main block of the east building is divided into two open rooms, which were used by the Edisons as the main living room and sitting room. (Photos 4 and 5) The second floor, accessed by a stair from the living room or one on the porch, is divided into three bedrooms, a bathroom, and sitting room and was used by the Edison children. Mr. and Mrs. Edison occupied the attached east wing, each floor of which contains a bedroom, a bathroom, and closet spaces.

The first floor of the smaller west building contains the dining room on one side and a living room for guests on the other. (Photo 7) The upstairs, reached by an interior stair, is also divided into three bedrooms, a sitting room, and a bathroom. (Photo 8) The attached west wing contains the kitchen on the first floor and the servants' quarters on the second floor.

Seminole Lodge was given intact with furnishings to the City of Fort Myers in 1947. The residence is not air conditioned and the original furnishings are maintained to reflect the period it was occupied by the Edison family. Carbon filament lightbulbs, installed by Edison, are still in use in light fixtures throughout the residence. Not surprisingly, Seminole Lodge was the first residence in Fort Myers to have electric lights, which were first turned on in March of 1887.

The Honeymoon Cottage, a frame vernacular building with clapboard siding, is located to the east of the main residence. Built from native pine c. 1885, it was originally L-shaped. A garage with overhead living quarters was added by Edison at a later date. (Photo 9)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 4 Edison Winter Estate

The swimming pool, bath house, and cistern were built c. 1900 to entertain Edison's guests. The swimming pool is reinforced with steel and is still functioning. It is filled with water from an artesian well 1,100 feet deep. The accompanying bathhouse is rectangular in shape and fronted by an open latticework porch which is Italianate in style. (Photo 10)

Between the pool and McGregor Boulevard is the site of the original electrical laboratory, which, like Seminole Lodge, was prefabricated in Maine and assembled on the estate c. 1886. In 1928, Edison donated the building and its contents to Henry Ford's museum, Greenfield Village, in Dearborn, Michigan. The site is currently occupied by a small office Mrs. Edison gave to her husband as a birthday present in 1929. The office building is a one room, single story frame vernacular structure, rectangular in plan. (Photo 11)

Across McGregor Boulevard sits Edison's chemical research laboratory, where he conducted his rubber experiments. The lab is a one story, frame vernacular building with an open interior. (Photo 12) Built in 1928, it remains without air-conditioning, as it was historically, and contains Edison's original research apparatus. Next to the lab building is a small concrete storage building, constructed c. 1900. Square in shape it is made of concrete block. (Photo 13) Near the lab entrance is the giant banyon tree planted by Edison c. 1900.

A white picket fence borders the property on both sides of McGregor Boulevard.

ALTERATIONS

The contributing historical resources on the property have undergone little if any alteration since the period of historical significance, 1885-1931. The Edison Winter Home Museum maintains the property as it was deeded to the City of Fort Myers in 1947 for the purpose of reflecting how the property was used by Edison and his family. The historic buildings remain without air-conditioning as they were when the Edisons lived there. Edison cultivated numerous tropical plants on the estate. Some of these have been maintained around Seminole Lodge, though the other gardens Edison used for his rubber research are no longer extant.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5 Edison Winter Estate

NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

There are nine non-contributing resources on the property, seven buildings, one structure, and one site. Only the dock and c. 1988 one story frame shed are located on the river side of the estate.

The current dock which extends out into the river was built in 1986-1987. Located on the site of Edison's original dock, it is constructed of pine planks. (Photo 14)

A one story, frame shed, built in 1983 and located between the cistern and the Honeymoon Cottage, is used for storage. (Photo 15)

A memorial garden, dedicated to Mrs. Edison during the 1950s, is located behind the 1929 office building.

The visitor pavillion is a one story, frame building. Built in 1980, it contains rest rooms and a snack machine area for museum visitors. (Photo 16)

The gift shop, originally Edison's carriage house, is a one story, frame vernacular building that was constructed in 1925. In 1968, a ticket office was added onto the building. (Photo 17) The ticket office/gift shop building is attached to the 1966 museum building, which was altered and expanded in 1969 and 1987. The museum building is a one story, concrete block building which houses various items from Edison's career, such as the Model T Ford given to him by his neighbor, Henry Ford. (Photo 18)

The frame greenhouse is rectangular in plan and one story high. It was built in 1987 and is located between the chemical lab and the museum nursery. (Photo 19) Next to the greenhouse is a frame vernacular, one story maintenance building built c. 1987. (Photo 21) A one story, concrete block storage building, constructed in 1965, is located south of the frame maintenance building. (Photo 20)

The other major change to the property has been the museum's addition of parking lots and paved walkways for visitors to the estate.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Exploration/Settlement

Invention

Architecture

Period of Significance

1885-1931

Significant Dates

1885, 1886,

1928

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Edison, Thomas Alva

Architect/Builder

unknown/Nye, Phillip

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Please see continuation sheet.

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1 Edison Winter Estate

SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The Edison Winter Estate is significant under Criterion A in the area of exploration/settlement as one of the first winter estates established in Fort Myers during the late 19th century. It is also significant under Criterion A in the area of invention for its use by Thomas Alva Edison as a research facility. The property is significant under Criterion B for its association with Edison, one of Fort Myers first and most well-known winter residents. It is significant under Criterion C as a good local example of frame vernacular architecture with various stylistic influences.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Located on the Caloosahatchee River in southwest Florida, Fort Myers was originally an outpost of the U.S. Army during the Second Seminole War (1835-1842). The small fort, eighteen miles upriver from the Gulf of Mexico, was reactivated periodically until the end of the Civil War when it was abandoned permanently by federal troops. White settlers were drawn to the area's vast grasslands to raise cattle, and a small settlement was started on the site of the old fort in 1866. The following year the International Ocean Telegraph Company set up a telegraph relay station in Punta Rassa. Nestled at the mouth of the Caloosahatchee River, Punta Rassa was the Gulf shipping point for the region's cattle. In addition to establishing communication with the rest of Florida, the relay station was the northern terminus of the underseas telegraph line to Havana, Cuba, a prime market for southwest Florida cattle.

More settlers began to homestead in the area after the government survey of the Caloosahatchee region was completed in 1872. Under the Homestead Act of 1862, settlers were allowed to claim 160 acres of surveyed land as long as they occupied and developed it for five years. Overland travel was still difficult in southwest Florida throughout the 1870s, though Fort Myers continued to grow slowly. The river provided the village with access to other parts of the state and Fort Myers became a commercial center for

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2 Edison Winter Estate

the increasing number of homesteaders, most of whom grazed cattle for income.

By 1885, Fort Myers had 349 citizens, which made it the largest mainland community in Florida south of Tampa. That same year the town was incorporated, although incorporation was not officially recognized by the state until 1911. In addition, a wharf was built on the river and steamboat service was established to railroad shipping points in Cedar Keys and elsewhere. The newly incorporated town lobbied for the extension of Henry Plant's Atlantic Coast Line Rail Road to Fort Myers. However, Plant stopped his rail line in Punta Gorda on the Peace River in 1886, which made it the railroad shipping point for all of southwest Florida.

In the 1880s, despite the lack of a railroad, Fort Myers began attracting seasonal residents during the winter. Most of them came because of the warm climate and the sub-tropical beauty of the frontier town. Perhaps the most famous winter resident in Fort Myers was inventor Thomas Alva Edison. Edison visited the area in 1885 and the following year built a winter estate in the small town for his family. Over the next three decades other prominent people, Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone among them, developed winter estates in Fort Myers.

The Atlantic Coast Line Rail Road reached Fort Myers in 1904. The railroad opened up new markets for local products such as vegetables, citrus, and cattle. The town's prosperity continued to grow in 1909 when Governor Napoleon Bonaparte Broward authorized the dredging of the Everglades to drain the rich muck for farmland. By 1910, Fort Myers' population had grown to over 2000 people. No longer a frontier village, the town had an ice plant, telephone service, and electricity. The Everglades land boom went bust in 1913-1914 due in part to the economic effects of the war in Europe and the fact that much of the farmland remained underwater. Many of the disappointed land owners settled permanently in Fort Myers.

Like other areas of the state, Fort Myers expanded dramatically during the Florida Land Boom of the 1920s. Cattle, citrus, winter vegetables, and tourism generated income for the area. In 1925, the city's population reached 6,500 people. The Florida Land Boom ended in 1926 and Fort Myers, along with the rest of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3 Edison Winter Estate

Florida, experienced an economic depression from which it did not fully recover until after World War II. Today, Fort Myers is an expanding urban area of over 40,000 residents with a metropolitan population of approximately 320,000 people. Its economy continues to be based on tourism and agriculture as well as some manufacturing.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

In 1885, Thomas Alva Edison was vacationing in St. Augustine with friends when he decided to visit the southwest coast of Florida. Originally trained as a telegraph operator, the 38 year old Edison was already world famous for his inventions, particularly the phonograph and the incandescent light bulb. He and his party of friends traveled across Florida by train to the Gulf Coast town of Cedar Keys, where they took passage on a sailing ship bound for the settlement of Punta Rassa. Located at the mouth of the Caloosahatchee River, Punta Rassa was well known for sport fishing and as the northern terminus of the underseas telegraph cable to Cuba.

During their stay in Punta Rassa, Edison and his friends traveled upriver to the village of Fort Myers. Edison was impressed by the small settlement with its sub-tropical beauty and tall bamboo. At the time, he was experimenting with different varieties of bamboo for use as filament in his incandescent light bulbs. Before returning to Punta Rassa, Edison and his business partner Ezra Gilliland obtained an option to purchase fourteen acres of riverfront property, which they bought the following September.

Widowed in 1884, Edison married Mina Miller of Akron, Ohio in February of 1886. They spent their honeymoon in Fort Myers with a party of family and friends. A small frame vernacular house was all that had been constructed on Edison's property before the honeymoon party arrived. Three prefabricated buildings had been ordered from Phillip Nye in Fairfield, Maine, two for residences and one for a research laboratory, but the ship they were sent on had sunk and they had to be ordered again. Most of Edison's group stayed at the local hotel. Only one of the houses was completed before April when they returned to Glenmont, the Edison estate in West Orange, New Jersey. In 1887, well after both of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 4 Edison Winter Estate

the houses were completed, Fort Myers' first electric lights were turned on at the property.

The Edisons did not begin to winter regularly in Fort Myers until 1901. By that time Edison had bought out Gilliland's portion of the property, which made him the sole owner of approximately fourteen acres of land. Fort Myers was now a booming town and Edison began to develop his riverside estate, in part to accomodate guests. The two prefabricated houses, built side by side for Edison and Gilliland, were connected by a colonnaded breezeway and henceforth referred to as "Seminole Lodge". A long dock was built out over the river and an electric launch and a boat with a gasoline engine were bought. In the gardens, an irrigation system was installed for the tropical plants Edison cultivated. On a corner of the property between the river and the main house, a concrete swimming pool was installed, although Edison, who did not believe in physical exercise, refused to use it.

Edison notified the Fort Myers City Council in 1907 that he would be willing to plant royal palms along Riverside Drive (now McGregor Boulevard) and care for them for a year if the city would take care of them thereafter. The Council accepted his offer, but Edison's palms, imported from Cuba, did not survive. The City later replaced them with local palms, which are now a well-known feature of the area.

During the winter of 1914, Henry Ford and his wife were guests of the Edisons in Fort Myers. Fascinated by nature, Ford and Edison invited naturalist John Burroughs to guide them through the Everglades. The three men toured the vast, undeveloped wilderness, bird watching and examining exotic flowers. In 1916, Ford bought the property next to Edison's for a winter retreat. The friendship between the two men remained strong, and Ford wintered annually in Fort Myers until Edison's death in 1931.

Edison continued to experiment and develop new inventions throughout his life. His main research laboratory, fully staffed, was located in West Orange, New Jersey. At Seminole Lodge in 1887, Edison built a small laboratory to carry on his electrical research in Fort Myers during the winter months. There he continued his work on perfecting the phonograph and other projects. In 1928, Edison donated the entire electrical

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5 Edison Winter Estate

lab, including some of the underlying earth, to Henry Ford's Greenfield Village museum in Michigan. The next year, Mrs. Edison erected a small office on the site for her husband.

Following World War I, Edison began to talk about the possibility of developing a domestic source of rubber, essential in the manufacture of automobile tires and other goods. At that time most rubber was imported from the tropics. A stable supply of rubber, Edison felt, was crucial to the survival of the United States if another war broke out. By 1927, Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone, the tire manufacturer, had offered to finance a project to develop a domestic source of rubber. Using Fort Myers as his base of operations, Edison agreed to take on the project and set the goal of finding "a plant prolific enough to produce a crop of rubber in 18 months in time of war".

The three men set up the Edison Botanic Research Corporation in 1928. Field personnel were sent all over the world to find plant specimens to ship to Fort Myers. There Edison and his staff of six botanists and one chemist planted the specimens and examined them for their rubber content. After testing approximately 14,000 plants, Edison began cross-breeding domestic varieties of goldenrod. The result was the development of a goldenrod plant twelve feet tall which produced approximately twelve per cent latex rubber. Unfortunately, the goldenrod rubber was inferior in quality and more expensive to produce than the rubber imported from the tropics. In his eighties at the time, Edison was plagued by fatigue and periodic illnesses, and the goldenrod research was set aside. His staff continued the research, however, until 1934 when it was discontinued.

Interestingly, in the early 1920s the Germans had begun experimenting with a synthetic rubber made from a chemical process using coal or petroleum derivatives. Edison and Ford had known of the German chemical process by the end of 1925 but did not pursue it because it required building a costly chemical plant. During World War II, U.S. scientists investigated Edison's goldenrod research for producing rubber. It was abandoned, however, in favor of the German's chemical process, from which the U.S. eventually developed a usable product.

The year 1929 marked the 50th anniversary of Edison's invention of the incandescent light bulb, and the occasion was celebrated

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6 Edison Winter Estate

all over the world. President-elect Herbert Hoover drove across the Tamiami Trail to Fort Myers from Miami to wish Edison a happy birthday on February 11. That same day, the City of Fort Myers officially dedicated a memorial to Edison, commemorating the invention of the light bulb with what is now an annual event, the Festival of Light. After the ceremony, Edison met with reporters in his study at Seminole Lodge and answered questions on a variety of subjects. Before returning to New Jersey the following June, he gave the commencement address at the graduation ceremonies for Fort Myers High School.

Edison's health was failing when he returned to Fort Myers in December of 1930. On February 11, 1931, his 83rd birthday, he was the guest of honor at the opening of the Edison Bridge, a concrete and steel structure spanning the Caloosahatchee River. The last public event Edison attended in Fort Myers that spring was the Philadelphia Athletics game at the end of March. Shortly thereafter, he returned to New Jersey where, at the age of 83 with over 1,000 patents registered in his name, he died in October.

Seminole Lodge continued to be used as a winter estate by Mrs. Edison and her family until 1947, when she deeded the property to the city of Fort Myers. Edison's original fourteen acre property is now a museum operated by the city of Fort Myers. The Henry Ford home, next door to Seminole Lodge, is now owned by the city also and is part of the Edison museum complex.

The Edison Winter Estate is significant as an intact example of one of the first winter estates established in Fort Myers by wealthy northerners. It is also significant as a seasonal residence of one of the United States' most prolific inventors. Edison was fascinated by Fort Myers when it was still a small settlement isolated from other parts of Florida. As the city grew and became popular with other wealthy northerners, he developed his estate and participated in city functions as a prominent resident. At his lab in Fort Myers he experimented with his various inventions and began his rubber research. Today the Edison Winter Estate is a museum which continues to reflect its historic use as a seasonal home for Thomas Edison, one of Fort Myers first winter residents and perhaps its most famous.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 7 Edison Winter Estate

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Seminole Lodge, the Edison residence and guesthouse in Fort Myers, is significant as a fine example of local vernacular architecture with modest stylistic influences. It is actually two separate houses which were prefabricated in Maine and assembled on site in Fort Myers in 1886. The two story, frame vernacular buildings are now joined together by a breezeway and are flanked by two story frame vernacular outbuildings. Each house has a hip roof and, on the first floor, French doors which open onto one story wrap around porches. The basic form of the buildings is reminiscent of Georgian architecture, while the wide wraparound porches have some stick style detail and are characteristic of houses built during the same period in south Florida. One of the few surviving 19th century buildings in Fort Myers, Seminole Lodge remains remarkably intact and unaltered. It continues to reflect, in its physical appearance and character, the architectural tastes of one of the area's most notable winter residents.

The other historic buildings on the property--the Honeymoon Cottage, bath house, office building, concrete storage building, and chemical laboratory--are vernacular in style and are not considered individually significant. However, the architectural forms of the buildings and their relationship to Seminole Lodge reflect the use of the property as the winter estate and research facility of one of America's most important inventors.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) 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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 14 (approximately)

UTM References

A	<u>17</u>	<u>41220</u>	<u>2946000</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>17</u>	<u>412680</u>	<u>2945805</u>

B	<u>17</u>	<u>412300</u>	<u>2946120</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	<u>17</u>	<u>412620</u>	<u>2945780</u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See attached legal description.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes those lots that have historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Tulie W. Taylor-Historic Sites Specialist
 organization Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation date 6-10-1991
 street & number 500 S. Bronough St. telephone (904) 487-2333
 city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1 Edison Winter Estate

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bryan, George S. Edison: The Man and His Work. Garden City Publishing, New York, 1926.

Conot, Robert. A Streak of Luck. Seaview Books, Miami, 1979.

Fritz, Florence. Bamboo and Sailing Ships. Published by Florence Fritz, USA, 1949.

Godown, Marian and Alberta Rawchuck. Yesterday's Fort Myers. E.A. Seemann Publishing, Inc., Miami, 1975.

Grismer, Karl H. The Story of Fort Myers. Island Press Publishers, Fort Myers, 1982.

Josephson, Matthew. Edison. McGraw-Hill, New York, 1959.

Peters, Mary Anne. "Historical and Architectural Evaluation of Fort Myers, Florida." Florida Department of Transportation, Tallahassee, January 1984.

Polk, R.L. & Co. Florida State Gazetteer and Business Directory. R.L. Polk & Co. Publishers, Jacksonville, 1918.

Polk, R.L. & Co. Florida State Gazetteer and Business Directory. R.L. Polk & Co. Publishers, Jacksonville, 1925.

Sanborn Map Company. City of Fort Myers. New York, 1922.

Sanborn Map Company. City of Fort Myers. New York, 1926.

Sanborn Map Company. City of Fort Myers. New York, 1930.

Sanborn Map Company. City of Fort Myers. New York, 1930, revised 1948.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 1 Edison Winter Estate

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Edison Winter Estate
2. Fort Myers, Lee County, Florida
3. Robert Halgrim
4. April 1991
5. Edison Winter Home Museum
6. Seminole Lodge, Edison family living quarters (northeast wing), camera facing northwest
7. Photo 1

Items 1-5 are the same for photos 1-2.

6. Seminole Lodge, Edison family living quarters (northeast wing), camera facing south
7. Photo 2

1. Edison Winter Estate
2. Fort Myers, Lee County, Florida
3. Robert Halgrim
4. November 1990
5. Edison Winter Home Museum
6. Seminole Lodge, porch of Edison living quarters (northeast wing), camera facing southwest
7. Photo 3

Items 1-5 are the same for photos 3-5.

6. Seminole Lodge, first floor of Edison living quarters (northeast wing), camera facing northeast
7. Photo 4

6. Seminole Lodge, first floor of Edison living quarters (northeast wing), camera facing northwest
7. Photo 5

1. Edison Winter Estate
2. Fort Myers, Lee County, Florida
3. Robert Halgrim
4. April 1991
5. Edison Winter Home Museum

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photo Page 2 Edison Winter Estate

6. Seminole Lodge, guest house and servants quarters with colonnade leading to northeast wing, camera facing northwest
7. Photo 6

1. Edison Winter Estate
2. Fort Myers, Lee County, Florida
3. Robert Halgrim
4. November 1991
5. Edison Winter Home Museum
6. Seminole Lodge, first floor interior of guest house, camera facing northwest
7. Photo 7

Items 1-5 are the same for photos 7-8.

6. Seminole Lodge, upstairs bedroom in guest house, camera northwest
7. Photo 8

1. Edison Winter Estate
2. Fort Myers, Lee County, Florida
3. Robert Halgrim
4. April 1991
5. Edison Winter Home Museum
6. Honeymoon Cottage, camera facing north
7. Photo 9

1. Edison Winter Estate
2. Fort Myers, Lee County, Florida
3. Robert Halgrim
4. November 1990
5. Edison Winter Home Museum
6. Swimming Pool and Bath House, camera facing south
7. Photo 10

Items 1-5 are the same for photos 10-11.

6. 1929 Office Building (on site of original electrical laboratory), camera facing east
7. Photo 11

1. Edison Winter Estate
2. Fort Myers, Lee County, Florida

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number Photos Page 3 Edison Winter Estate

- 3. Robert Halgrim
- 4. April 1991
- 5. Edison Winter Home Museum
- 6. Chemical Research Laboratory, camera facing east
- 7. Photo 12

Items 1-5 are the same for photos 12-20.

- 6. 1900 Block Storage Building (Chemical Lab in background), camera facing north
- 7. Photo 13

- 6. Dock on Caloosahatchee River, camera facing northwest
- 7. Photo 14

- 6. Maintenance Shop, camera facing north
- 7. Photo 15

- 6. Visitors' Center, camera facing north
- 7. Photo 16

- 6. Ticket Office and Gift Shop, camera facing east
- 7. Photo 17

- 6. Entrance to 1966 Museum Building, camera facing northeast
- 7. Photo 18

- 6. Greenhouse, camera facing southwest
- 7. Photo 19

- 6. 1965 Block Storage Building, camera facing east
- 7. Photo 20

- 6. Frame Maintenance Building (built c. 1987), camera facing southwest
- 7. Photo 21

Thomas Edison Winter Estate
Ft. Myers, Florida

JOHNSON ENGINEERING, INC.

CIVIL ENGINEERS AND LAND SURVEYORS

5122 JOHNSON STREET
TELEPHONE (813) 334-0040
POST OFFICE BOX 1280
FORT MYERS, FLORIDA
33902

October 7, 1976

LEGAL DESCRIPTION/
VERBAL BOUNDARY
DESCRIPTION

DESCRIPTION

PARCEL IN

G.L. 2, SECTION 23, T. 44 S., R. 24 E.
CITY OF FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
FOR PROPOSED QUIT CLAIM TO
THE CITY OF FORT MYERS, FLORIDA

CARL E. JOHNSON
1911-1988

A strip of land lying between the northwesterly line of McGregor Boulevard (State Road No. 867) and the Caloosahatchee River in Government Lot 2, Section 23, Township 44 South, Range 24 East, City of Fort Myers, Lee County, Florida which strip of land is described as follows:

From the concrete monument marking the intersection of said northwesterly line of McGregor Boulevard (60 feet wide) with the northeasterly line of lands conveyed by deeds recorded in Deed Book A at page 484 and Deed Book 176 at page 394 of the public records of Lee County, Florida run S 36° 37' W along said northwesterly line of McGregor Boulevard (and the northwesterly side of a concrete sidewalk 6 feet wide) and the southeasterly line of the "First Parcel", as described in said deed recorded in Deed Book 176 at page 394 of said public records, for 592.5 feet to the southwesterly corner of said First Parcel and the Point of Beginning.

From said Point of Beginning continue S 36° 37' W along said northwesterly line of McGregor Boulevard for 6.45 feet; thence run N 55° 18' 30" W, parallel with said northeasterly line of said First Parcel, for 365 feet more or less to the waters of the Caloosahatchee River; thence run northeasterly along said waters for 6.5 feet more or less to an intersection with a line bearing N 55° 18' 30" W and passing through the Point of Beginning, said line being the southwesterly line of said First Parcel; thence run S 55° 18' 30" E along said southwesterly line for 365 feet more or less to the Point of Beginning.

Bearings hereinabove mentioned are True from the 1948 right-of-way survey for State Road No. 867 made by the Florida State Road Department.

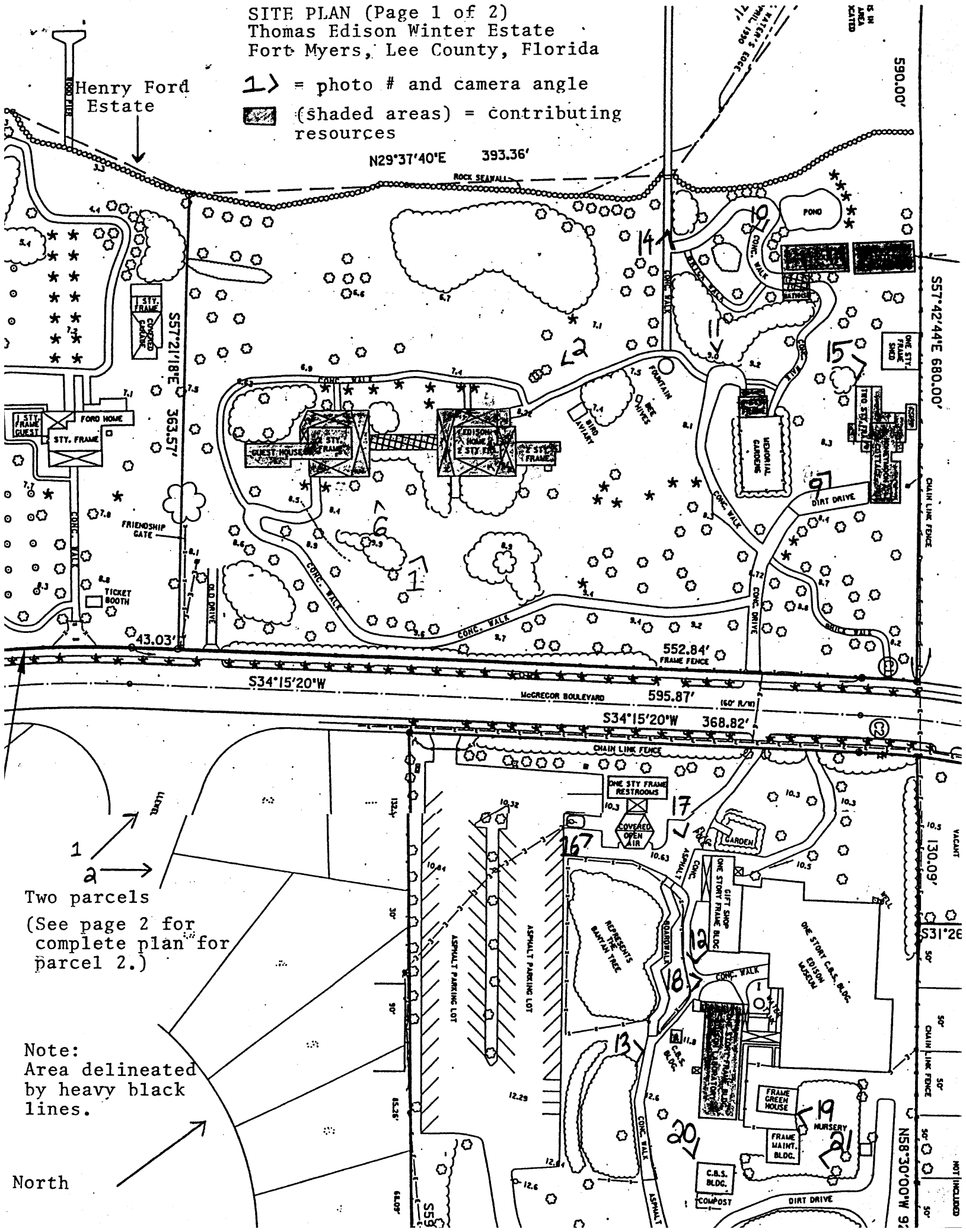
PRESIDENT
ARCHIE T. GRANT, JR.
VICE-PRESIDENT
FORREST H. BANKS
SECRETARY-TREASURER
LEIF E. JOHNSON
ASSOCIATES
LESTER L. BULSON
ROBERT S. O'BRIEN
DAN W. DICKEY
DEAN C. THOMAS
JOSEPH W. KENER

LEJ/ds

7527

SITE PLAN (Page 1 of 2)
 Thomas Edison Winter Estate
 Fort Myers, Lee County, Florida

1 > = photo # and camera angle
 (shaded areas) = contributing resources



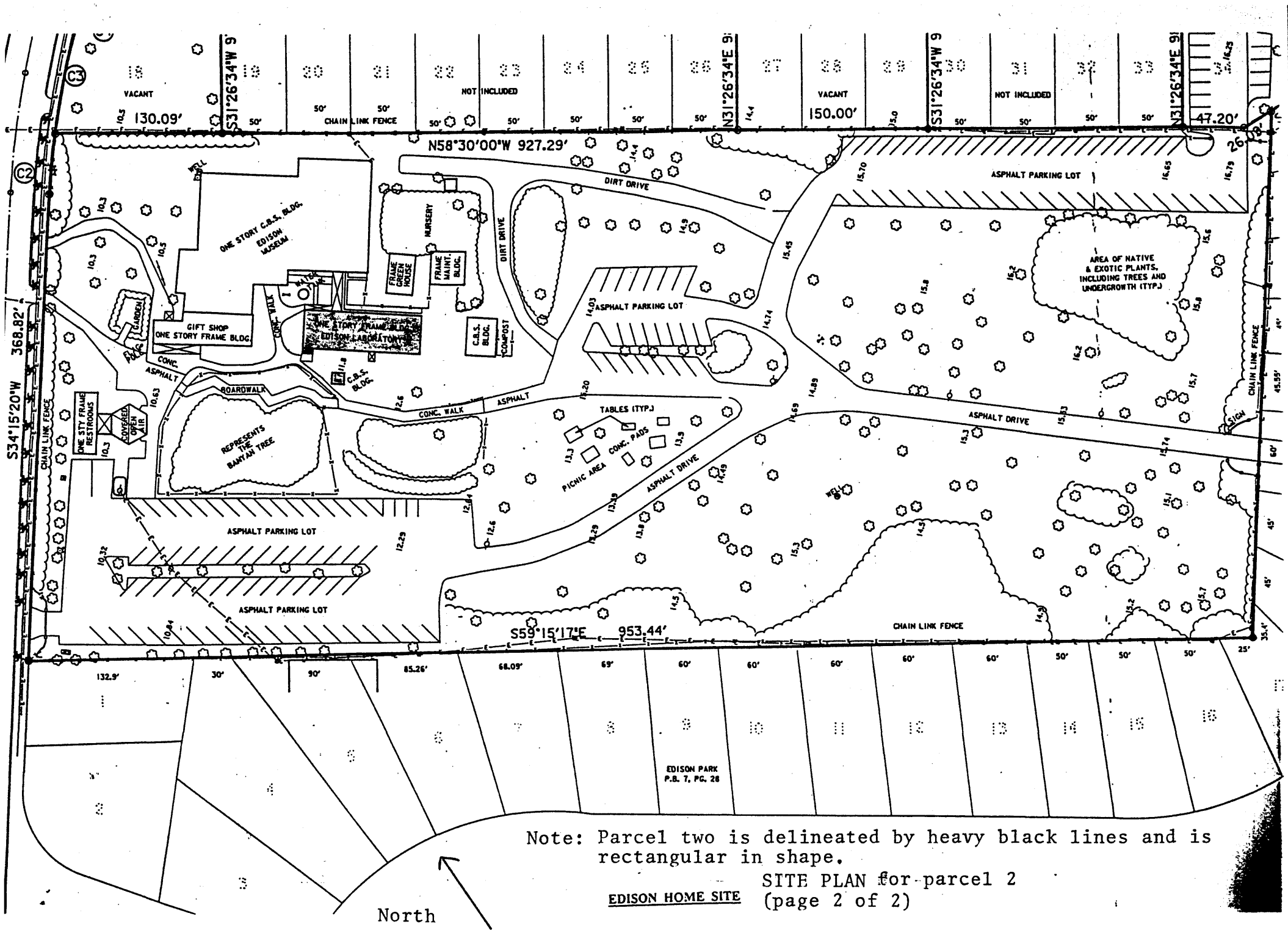
Henry Ford Estate

Two parcels
 (See page 2 for complete plan for parcel 2.)

Note:
 Area delineated by heavy black lines.

North

NOT INCLUDED



Note: Parcel two is delineated by heavy black lines and is rectangular in shape.

EDISON HOME SITE SITE PLAN for parcel 2
(page 2 of 2)