

1343

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 an 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 Adderley, George, House

other names/site number Bahamian House/8MO1256b

2. Location

street & number 5550 Overseas Highway N/A not for publication

city or town Marathon N/A vicinity

state Florida code FL county Monroe code 087 zip code 33050

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.)

Suzanne P. Walker, Deputy SHPO 8/6/92
 Signature of certifying official/Title SHPO Date

Florida Dept. of State, Division of Historical Resources
 State of 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.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Entered in the **National Register** Date of Action
Alonzo Byers 9/10/92
 Signature of the Keeper

George Adderley House
Name of Property

Monroe County, Florida
County and State

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)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture:
museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style: masonry vernacular

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone
walls Stucco

roof Metal
other _____

Narrative Description

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

Please see 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)

Exploration/Settlement
Architecture

Period of Significance

c. 1906 - 1910

Significant Dates

c. 1906

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

George Adderley (builder)

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 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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Bureau of Historic Preservation

George Adderley House
Name of Property

Monroe County, Florida
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 5 acres ±

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	7	4	92	4	00	27	33	7	7	0
Zone	Easting		Northing							

3

Zone	Easting		Northing							

4

Zone	Easting		Northing							

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Tulie W. Taylor, Historic Sites Specialist Jane Day, Consultant

organization Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation date 8-5-92

street & number 500 S. Bronough St. telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399

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 Florida Keys Land and Sea Trust

street & number 5550 Overseas Hwy./P.O. Box 536 telephone (305) 743-3900

city or town Marathon state Florida zip code 33050

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 to amend existing 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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DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

The George Adderley House is a one story, rectangular masonry vernacular building located at Crane Point on Key Vaca in the middle Florida Keys. Constructed circa 1906 by George Adderley, a black Bahamian, the house has a hip roof covered in pressed metal. It is the only extant building left from a small settlement of black Bahamians that lived at Crane Point and on nearby Old Rachel Key during the early 20th century.

SETTING

Crane Point consists of two narrow upland peninsulas separated by a mangrove baylet and a small island, Old Rachel Key, that was connected to Key Vaca with fill in the 1950s. (Another island, identified as Rachel Key on the 1971 USGS map, was known as Little Rachel Key prior to the 1950s.) Before World War II, Key Vaca was a sparsely settled island except for the years 1908-1912, when it served as the base of operations for the building of Henry Flagler's railroad to Key West. During the first decade of the 20th century, Crane Point and Old Rachel Key were occupied by approximately two dozen black settlers, most of whom were from the Bahamas and earned income from sponging and from the production of buttonwood charcoal.

Today, Crane Point is part of a sixty-three acre nature preserve owned by the Florida Keys Land and Sea Trust, a non-profit organization. The preserve is located in the town of Marathon, population 12,000, and is bordered by U.S. Highway #1 on the south, Florida Bay on the north, a shopping plaza on the east and a residential area called Crane Subdivision on the west.

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

George Adderley House

Built c. 1906, the Adderley House is a one story, rectangular masonry building with a hip roof. (Photos 1-4) It appears to be made of tabby, a building material that consists of lime and water mixed with gravel or shell. A simple test conducted with hydrochloric acid on a small sample of the wall material indicated that no cement was present. However, further chemical testing will have to be performed to confirm the total absence of

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cement in the walls of the building. The exterior walls of the structure are covered in a stucco finish.

The hip roof of the Adderley House has a central ridge and features a normal pitch and exposed rafters. It is covered in strips of tin roofing that are stamped with a decorative pattern. (Photo 5) The building's front and back elevations, symmetrical in design, each have a central door flanked by jalousie windows with wooden frames and wooden shutters. Although these windows are not original, they were added prior to 1950 when Francis and Mary W. Crane bought the property from George Adderley. Each end of the building has two windows, which are also set in a symmetrical configuration. Built with the environment in mind, occupants could open windows and doors, creating a cross ventilation that would cool the small interior space with the slightest breeze from any direction.

On the interior of the house, rafters extend from the eaves to the ridge board and are tied together and given strength by the tie beams. (Photo 6) All of this structure is visible from below, giving height to the ceiling of the room. Although the flooring was made of wood when the Cranes bought the property, a cement floor was added in 1953. The floor was probably dirt when the house was built. Originally an open plan, partitions were added to the interior during the 1950s to construct a small bathroom and bedroom. Today, a half wall separates the kitchen from the living area. Traditionally, houses of this type would have had one or two rooms, with cooking and bathroom facilities outside in the yard.

Despite the minor changes mentioned above, the Adderley House maintains its historic integrity of design, materials, setting, location, workmanship, feeling, and association.

PRELIMINARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

It should be noted that Crane Point and Old Rachel Key have high potential for yielding archaeological data on the community of black Bahamians that occupied the area during the first decade of the 20th century. Florida East Coast Railroad records and federal census data from the period indicate that, in addition to Adderley and his family, other black Bahamians lived at Crane Point and on Old Rachel Key. Preliminary archaeological investigations conducted by the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy (AHC), Inc. of Miami have identified the remains of a barrel well and several buildings east of the Adderley House, and

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a buttonwood charcoal mound and trash pit on the western side of Old Rachel Key. All of this data should be taken into consideration when further investigations are undertaken to document the archaeological resources of Key Vaca's black Bahamian settlers.

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SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The George Adderley House is significant at the local level under Criterion A for its association with the early 20th century settlement of black Bahamians on Key Vaca in the middle Florida Keys. It is also significant at the local level under Criterion C as an unusual example in the Florida Keys of the masonry vernacular architecture that is found more typically in the Bahamas.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Key Vaca, Florida Keys

The Florida Keys were discovered and claimed by the Spanish in 1513. Little is known about early European occupants of the middle Keys, where Key Vaca is located. First recorded as Cayo Baca, the island was an ideal spot for pirates, wreckers, and journeying seamen because of its position in the sea lanes between Key West, the Bahamas, and the Florida mainland. Title of Key Vaca and several surrounding islands was first granted to Francisco Ferreira of St. Augustine in 1814 by the Spanish governor of Florida. In 1818, a small fishing village was established on the island.

Ownership of Key Vaca changed hands several times during the ensuing decades. In 1824, Ferreira sold the island to Issac Newton Cox who resold it to Charles Howe in 1827. Although Bahamians used the island as a temporary base for wrecking, sponging and turtling, they were not permanent settlers and returned to the Bahamas when work permitted. In 1831, Howe leased parts of the island out to homesteaders.

Further changes in ownership resulted in the island being sold at public auction in 1844. The following year, Key Vaca and other parts of the Keys were taken over by the U.S. War Department to be surveyed for potential use by the military. In 1878, the War Department began proceedings to sell Key Vaca. Horatio Crain bought the island in 1890 at public auction. Upon his death ten years later, the property was inherited by his heir, Annie J. Crain, who sold off portions of the island.

By 1903, Key Vaca was home to a few whites and, on the north side of the island, a small settlement of blacks, most of whom were

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from the Bahamas. Key Vaca remained sparsely populated until the Florida East Coast (FEC) Railroad began its extension from Homestead, south of Miami, to Key West in 1905. Construction was begun at Homestead and, shortly thereafter, also at Knights Key, a small island at the west end of Key Vaca. In February of 1908, the two sections of track were joined and continuous rail service was made available on the Florida East Coast Railway from Jacksonville to the middle Florida Keys.

The dock at Knights Key was the main point of departure for barges and steamboats continuing on to Key West and Cuba. The headquarters for the Key West extension project was located at the western end of Key Vaca. By 1909, the settlement was a booming railroad town dubbed Marathon by the rail workers and their families. The town boasted a newly constructed tennis court and athletic club as well as a justice of the peace, telephone and electric service, and a small emergency hospital. A school opened the same year with twelve pupils.

The Key West extension reached Key West in January of 1912, at which time the railroad began reducing its work crews headquartered in Marathon. Key Vaca's population was so decreased by the end of the summer that there were not enough children left to justify opening the school. Although the railroad continued to maintain an office in Marathon, the town was reduced to a handful of railroad personnel.

Key Vaca continued to be sparsely populated throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The hurricane of 1935 destroyed much of the FEC railroad track and made ground transportation in and out of Key Vaca difficult until the Overseas Highway to Key West was completed in 1938. By 1940, the population of the Keys was at 1885 levels. A significant increase in population of Key Vaca began with the island's modern tourist industry in 1951 when Felix Sadowski, a Detroit businessman, began to develop waterfront lots and promote the area. Since that time, the town of Marathon has grown to encompass the whole island. Key Vaca now has a population of 12,000 and continues to support a thriving tourist economy.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

In 1903, George Adderley purchased thirty-two acres of land on Key Vaca in the area now known as Crane Point from Annie Crain. George Adderley was a black Bahamian who immigrated to Florida in 1890 at the age of twenty. According to United States census

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records, Adderley lived on Matacumbe Key, which is north of Key Vaca, in 1900 with his wife, Olivia, and a cousin, Virginia Rand. The 1900 federal census states that he worked as a farm laborer, rented his home, and was able to read but could not write.

It is not known precisely when Adderley began occupying his thirty-two acres of property at Crane Point, though it is likely that he moved there in 1903 or shortly thereafter. In 1906, a surveyor for the Florida East Coast Railroad mapped two buildings at Crane Point and nine on nearby Rachel Key, which is now referred to as Old Rachel Key. Carlton Corliss, an FEC employee, later wrote several articles about the railroad construction project at Key Vaca. He described the island as an isolated frontier in 1906 that was occupied by a handful of people and noted a small settlement of blacks on the north side of the key. According to Corliss, one of the black settlement's inhabitants was a Mr. Rigby, a boatman, who supported his family by cultivating tomatoes and producing charcoal from buttonwood.

George Adderley was the only member of the small black community to own the land where he resided. The rest were apparently squatters. It was probably after the arrival of the railroad on Key Vaca in 1906 that Adderley built the small masonry house on his property at Crane Point. The 1906 FEC survey map does not depict any buildings near the location of the house. Although the structure has been reported as being made of tabby, further testing will have to be conducted before this can be determined. The house may be constructed of limestone rubble held together by cement and finished in stucco. Cement was used extensively in the construction of the FEC's Key West extension. It is possible that Adderley obtained cement from the railroad construction project for his house. Piles of limestone rubble are still to be found on Adderley's property, gathered presumably to clear fields for cultivation and also to build animal pens and other structures.

In February, 1908, the FEC began regular passenger service to Knights Key, at the west end of Key Vaca. A timetable listed stops at Long Key, Grassy Key and Key Vaca. One additional stop known only as Vaca is listed in the Track Chart of the Main Line Southern Division. This station, a small platform, was located near Crane Point on part of the property George Adderley bought from Annie Crain in 1903. It appears that FEC officials agreed to provide the small platform for a stop if Adderley signed over the right-of-way for the railroad bed. Once a week, the Adderley Town residents could hang out a flag and the train would stop.

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The name of the station, Vaca, is unexplained in railroad records and there was no village by that name nearby.

The 1910 federal census provides the most information on the black community at Crane Point and Old Rachel Key. Aside from George and Olivia Adderley and their adopted daughter, Louisa Smith, the Curry family also lived on Key Vaca at Crane Point. The Curry family was made up of Joseph and Margaret Curry and their adopted son, Joseph Butler. Five black families, approximately eighteen people, occupied Old Rachel Key. One of the Old Rachel Key inhabitants was sixty year old Joseph Rigby, presumably the same Mr. Rigby mentioned in the writings of Carlton Corliss. The 1910 census also lists three black men living on a schooner off Old Rachel Key.

All of the adult blacks living at Crane Point were from the Bahamas except for David and Janet Freeman, residents of Old Rachel Key, who were from South Carolina. Most of the children had been born in Florida. Surprisingly, only one of the men was listed as an employee of the FEC railroad. The rest, Adderley included, were boatmen who gathered sponges and produced buttonwood charcoal for trade.

The remains of a buttonwood charcoal hearth and a small trash heap are located at the west end of Old Rachel Key. To some degree, the production of charcoal provided income for almost all of the black families at Crane Hammock. Charcoal making was a profitable business throughout south Florida and the Keys at the beginning of the century. According to Florida historian Charleton Tebeau it was hot and tiring work:

"Great cone-shaped heaps of neatly stacked wood were built up sometimes containing as much as ten cords for a single burning. This was then covered with grass and sand to make it airtight except for a vent at the top. Enough openings were made around the bottom to fire the wood and burn it so as to drive out the volatile gases and leave charcoal. A cord of wood produced ten bags of charcoal for which there was a ready market."

When the Key West Extension was completed in January, 1912, life on Key Vaca once again slowed down. A large portion of the working population left the area, but George Adderley and, perhaps some of the island's other black residents, remained. Although we do not know much about their lives in the following decades, these early pioneers did weather the great hurricane of

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1935 that wiped out the railroad. In 1950, Adderley sold his property to Mary and Frances Crane who built a new house on Old Rachel Key, infilled the wetlands to connect the island to the mainland and used the compound for a winter home. Shortly after the sale, George Adderley was reported as living in Key West in a home for the blind. His wife, Olivia, had died in 1950 and George died in 1958. Both of these Bahamian pioneers rest in unmarked graves in the Key West cemetery. Details of the fate of the rest of Key Vaca's black residents is unknown at this time.

The George Adderley House is significant as the only extant building that survives from the early 20th century settlement of black Bahamians on Key Vaca. Crane Point and Old Rachel Key are the only known sites in the Florida Keys to have been settled exclusively by blacks. George Adderley was the only landowner in the group and was probably better off economically than his peers. His house provides a unique source of information on how early 20th century settlers lived in the middle Florida Keys.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Vernacular Architecture in the Florida Keys

Vernacular buildings lack a particular architectural style and generally emphasize function over looks. Built of available materials, they reflect the builder's construction skills and the influence of the local environment rather than a popular or academic style.

Excluding Key West, architecture in the Keys prior to the 1935 hurricane was greatly influenced by a limited supply of construction materials and harsh weather conditions. Building materials continued to be limited in the Keys even after the completion of the Florida East Coast Railroad's Key West Extension in 1912. The built environment consisted largely of frame vernacular buildings constructed of lumber salvaged from wrecked ships. Most buildings were rectangular in plan and one or two stories high. Porches and gable roofs with roof overhangs provided refuge from the sun and rain. Although a Bahamian influence is evident in the architecture of Key West during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it is rarely seen in the buildings of the rest of the Keys during this period.

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ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The George Adderley House is a rare example of early 20th century masonry vernacular architecture in the Florida Keys outside of Key West. The building's tabby-like walls and hip roof are more typical of the architecture of the Bahamas, George Adderley's birthplace and childhood home. The house is significant for its Bahamian characteristics, which are unusual in the middle Keys, and as an example of how black Bahamian immigrants adapted to Key Vaca's isolated environment.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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1988 "An Assessment of the Archaeological and Historic Resources of the Florida Keys, Monroe County." Report on file, Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, Inc., Miami.

Carr, Robert S., Patricia Fay, and Jane S. Day

1991 "An Archaeological and Historical Survey of Crane Point Hammock, Marathon, Florida". Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, Inc., Miami.

Corliss, Carlton J.

1953 "Building the Overseas Railway to Key West". Tequesta: The Journal of the Historical Association of Southern Florida, No. XIII. Miami.

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No date "Recollections of an Extension". Manuscript on file at the Henry Morrison Flagler Museum, Palm Beach, Florida.

Florida East Coast Railroad

1906 Map of proposed railroad bed for Marathon. On file at Henry Flagler Museum in Palm Beach.

Florida Keys Keynoter

1953 "Find Bahamian Lore in Lost Village in Crane Estate". Newspaper article.

Tebeau, Charlton W.

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U.S. Bureau of the Census

1900 Manuscript Census Schedules, Monroe County, Florida.
Microfilm edition, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

U.S. Bureau of the Census

1910 Manuscript Census Schedules, Monroe County, Florida.
Microfilm edition, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the George Adderley House property is shown as the dotted line on the accompanying site plan.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries include the portion of the property that has historically been associated with George Adderley and that maintains its historic integrity.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

1. George Adderley House
2. Marathon, Florida
3. Jane S. Day
4. August 1990
5. Research Atlantica, Inc., Boca Raton, FL
6. Front, southeast facade, camera facing northwest
7. 1

Items 1-5 are the same for photos 1-6.

6. Northwest (rear) elevation, camera facing southeast
7. 2

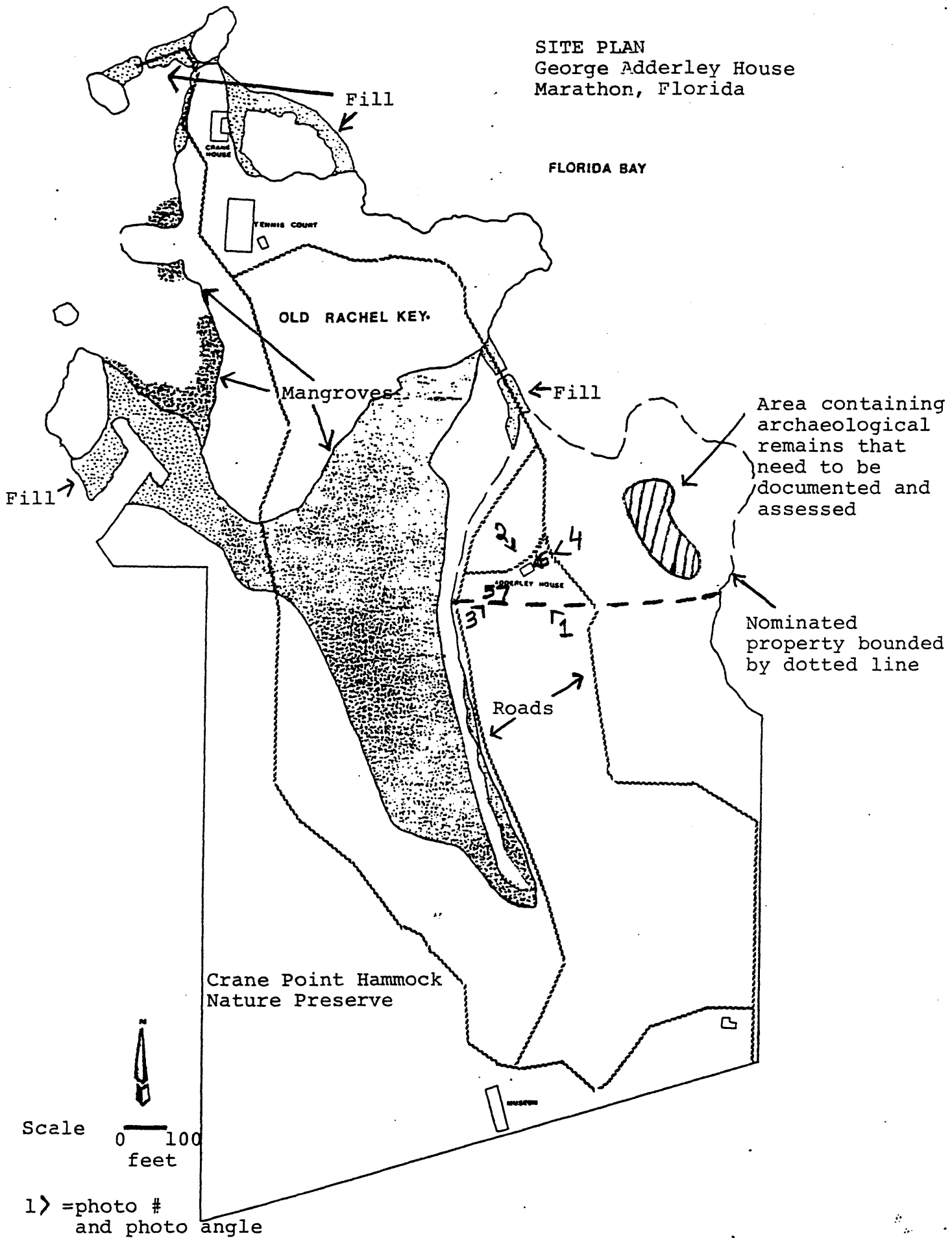
6. Southwest facade, camera facing northeast
7. 3

6. Northeast facade, camera facing southwest
7. 4

6. Roof detail, southwest facade, camera facing northeast
7. 5

6. Interior, camera facing southwest
7. 6

SITE PLAN
George Adderley House
Marathon, Florida



1) = photo #
and photo angle