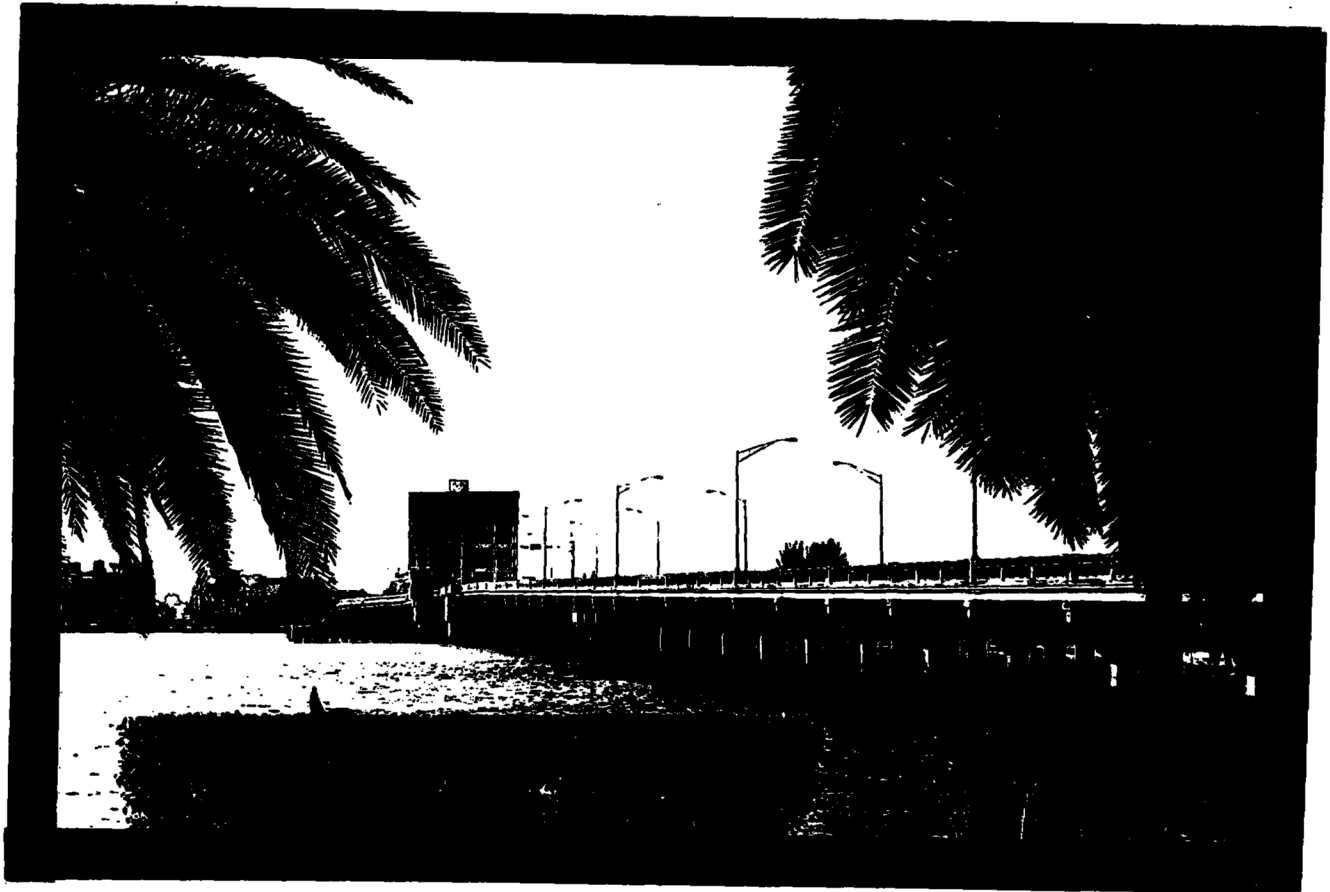


FLAGLER MEMORIAL BRIDGE

HISTORIC DISTRICT



Designation Report

December 21, 1988

LANDMARK PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Palm Beach, Florida



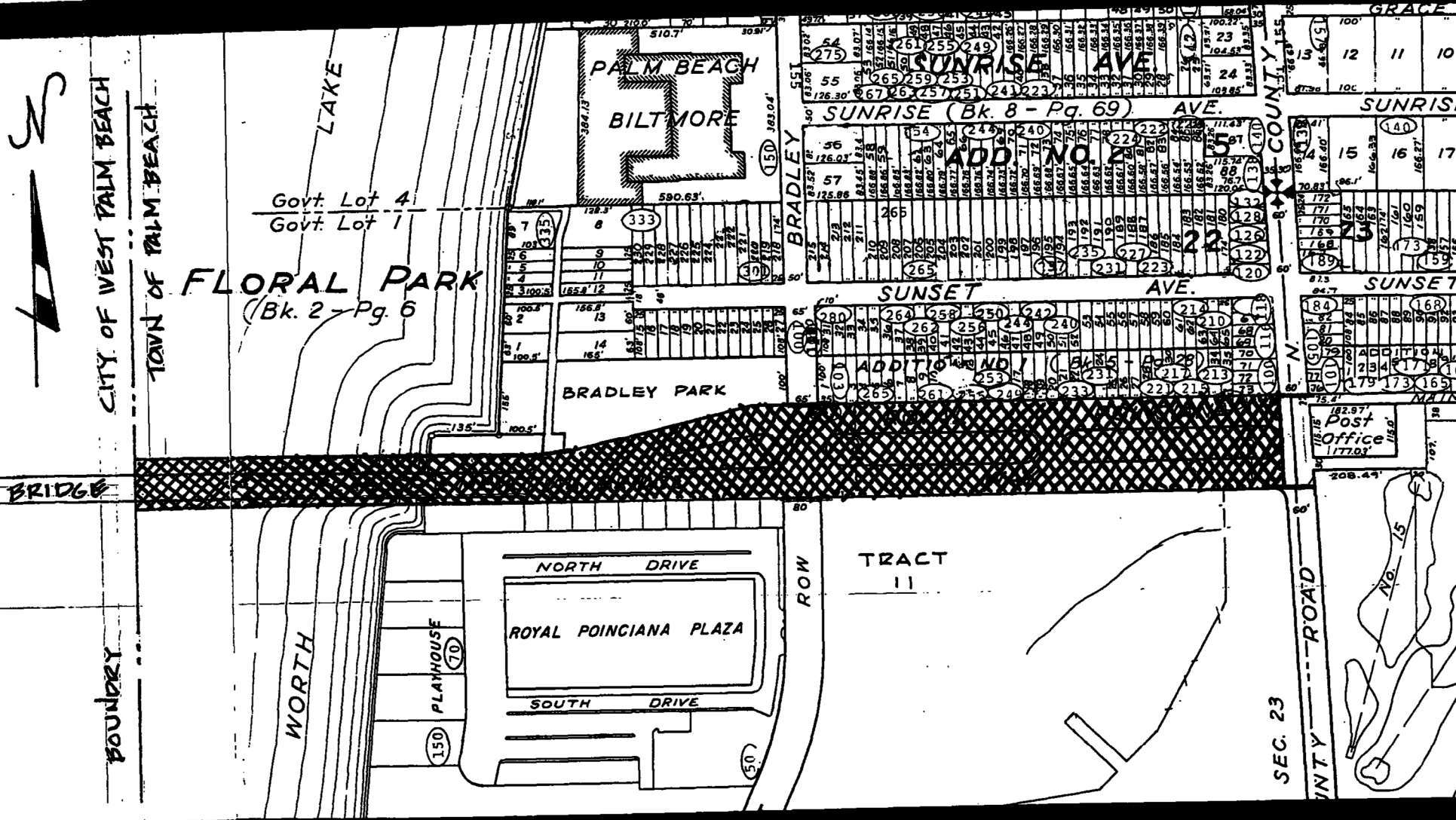


DESIGNATION REPORT: FLAGLER MEMORIAL BRIDGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

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Report prepared December 1988 by Timothy M. Frank, AICP,
Planner/Projects Coordinator



Flagler Memorial Bridge Historic District

III. Architectural Information - Background

Protection of the Town's natural resources and vistas is a goal identified in the Town of Palm Beach Comprehensive Plan. The district and the Flagler Memorial Bridge under consideration for designation constitutes a "gateway" to the Town. The beautiful, landscaped mall of Royal Poinciana Way is lined with specimen Palm Trees and colorful flower beds. The mall, bridge approaches and the bridge structure presently blend well together in scale and design. This vista is featured on many post cards, book covers and magazines as a recognizable feature of the palm Beach area. It is the intention of this designation to preserve the integrity and beauty of this most visable landmark.

The Flagler Memorial Bridge includes, beside the bridge structure itself, the Loftin Street and Royal Poinciana Way roadways which join Poinsettia Avenue (North Dixie Highway) in West Palm Beach with the North County Road in Palm Beach.

The original work was let under three separate unit price contracts by the County Commission and the P.W.A., as follows: Lake Trail to County Road in Palm Beach, Power and Archibald, Contractors - time January 27, 1937, to August 31, 1937. Final contract amount \$37,355. Bridge across Lake Worth, E.H. Latham, Contractor - Time - May 18, 1937 to May 31, 1938. Final Contract amount \$559,820. Bridge approaches, and Roadway, Poinsettia to Olive Street, R.L. Parhams, Inc. time - February 14, 1938 to June 28, 1938. Amount of Contract \$26,877 - Total Construction cost of project \$624,053 - Total cost of project including right of way, Legal Expense, Bond Election, Engineering and Interest during Construction \$725,000 of which 45% was furnished as a grant by the Federal Government through the P.W.A.

The floor of the bridge is made up of 58 reinforced concrete spans having a 40 ft. (or four lane) roadway flanked by two 5 ft. sidewalks. Twenty-five spans west of the draw are carried on pile bents each of which are made up of a concrete cap on ten 18" X 18" precast reinforced concrete piles ranging in length up to 60 ft. The 46 ft. skew span over Flagler Drive is carried by two reinforced concrete piers resting on 23 steel piles each. Of the thirty spans east of the draw, 14 are carried on precast reinforced pile bents as described above and 16 on reinforced concrete piers with steel foundation piles. The difference in type of substructure being due to underwater conditions encountered, the rock stratum being closer to the surface next to the Palm Beach Shore of the Lake, making pier construction economical, whereas the drop off of this stratum to thirty or

I. General Information

Location: SR A1A over the Intercoastal Waterway
Bridge approach and scenic vistas along Royal
Poinciana Way and Lake Worth
Town of Palm Beach and City of West Palm Beach

Date of Construction: 1937-1938

Architect/Engineer: J.M. Boyd, County Engineer,
M.M. Powell, Superintendent for E.H.
Lathan Co.

Present Owner: State of Florida
Town of Palm Beach

Present Use: Public - Transportation/road related
Urban Arterial (vehicular and pedestrian)
Recreational Waterway
Scenic Vista

Present Zoning: Not Applicable

Legal Description: ALL THE TR OF LAND BOUNDED ON N BY FLORAL
PARK, E BY BRADLEY PL, S BY ROYAL
POINCIANA WAY, W BY WATERS OF LAKE
WORTH

AND; ALL OF THE RIGHT OF WAY, 200 FT
WIDE, KNOWN AS ROYAL POINCIANA WAY,
TOWN OF PALM BEACH, STARTING AT THE
STATE OF FLORIDA RIGHT OF WAY KNOWN AS
THE FLAGLER MEMORIAL BRIDGE AND ENDING
AT NORTH COUNTY ROAD, INCLUDING ALL
IMPROVEMENTS AND APPURTENANCES IN SAID
RIGHT OF WAY.

AND; ALL OF THE RIGHT OF WAY, 100 FT
WIDE, MORE OR LESS, KNOWN AS THE
FLAGLER MEMORIAL BRIDGE, WITHIN THE
JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES OF THE TOWN
OF PALM BEACH, OWNED BY THE STATE OF
FLORIDA, INCLUDING ALL IMPROVEMENTS AND
APPURTENANCES IN SAID RIGHT OF WAY.

Palm Beach County Tax Folio Number: 50-43-43-22-00-000-1010

Classification in the "Historic Building Survey of Palm Beach": NA

forty feet below water, being overlaid with sand and shell, for the remainder of the lake made the pile construction economical.

As a double leaf rolling bascule draw spans the 80 ft. channel, each leaf of the bascule is carried on concrete piers which in turn rest on 127 wood foundation piles. The concrete foundation in the bascule piers extends 22 ft. below mean water level and the roadway at this point is at elevation + 24.0 giving a clearance of 17 ft. for navigation. Two 36 ft. anchor spans carried on steel connect the bascule with adjacent spans. Moving parts of each leaf weigh 560,000 lbs. or 280 tons.

The main bridge structure is 2301 ft. or .432 mi. from end to end, with approaches and roadways from Dixie Highway in West Palm Beach to County Road in Palm Beach the entire length of the original project is 5020 ft. or 0.94 mi.

IV. Historical Information

The Flagler Memorial Bridge commemorates the name of the single most significant person in the history of southeast Florida and Palm Beach County. Henry Morrison Flagler (1830-1913) chose to build a resort on the east shore of Lake Worth in 1893. He built the first wood-pile railway bridge across the lake in 1895. In 1901, for his third wife, Flagler built his grand Beaux Arts Mansion, Whitehall, then he decided to improve his neighborhood by replacing and removing the 1895 railway bridge with a new one 600 yards to the north which is the current site of the Flagler Memorial Bridge. This second Flagler Railroad Bridge opened in 1902 and lasted until 1937 when it was razed to allow construction of the current structure.

A considerable effort was made to build a bridge worthy of Henry Flagler in 1937-1938. The approach on the Palm Beach side, which was part of the P.W.A. contract, included a grand double boulevard with landscaped median and four rows of the royal palm trees about four times the width of the original main street. The Town of Palm Beach purchased land from the FEC and demolished the old railroad warehouses and depot to make possible the grand esplanade concept. At the east end of Royal Poinciana Way is the U.S. Post Office of 1939, Colonel Edward R. Bradley, the proprietor of The Beach Club, donated the gateway pylons with wrought iron lanterns and masonry balustrades which flank the eastern beginning of the concrete spans. A decade later when the Club closed, the land was given as a public park to the town and

a historic pavilion there is now a locally designated landmark. The most recent addition to this site is the golden eagle sculpture honoring the Nation's Bicentennial. All of these elements add to the whole visual effect, but the greatest element is the half century old Flagler Memorial Bridge itself.

The July 1, 1938 dedication of the current bridge was an occasion of civic pride which included all of the local politicians and U.S. Senator C.O. Andrews and former Senator Scott M. Loftin whose name was given to the approach street in West Palm Beach for his efforts in securing 45% Federal funding. In terms of the 1930's it was a major, modern, state-of-the art design and the only four lane bridge in the county. Today it is the third oldest bridge over the Intercoastal Waterway and the most completely intact in terms of the original design.

V. Statement of Significance and Criteria for Designation

Statement of Significance

As described above the Flagler Memorial Bridge and the Royal Poinciana approach and surrounding Vistas are a specific area of beauty and recognition of the Town. It is a most important site which everyone who knows Palm Beach is familiar with. The State of Florida Department of Transportation has recently threatened the scale and integrity of this area by asking a consultant to study and evaluate a larger scale bridge structure to replace the existing bridge. To ensure that this area is afforded protections from future alterations which may affect the integrity of this distinctive "gateway" to our Town, it is proposed that it be designated as an Historic District under the provisions of Town of Palm Beach Ordinance No. 2-84.

Criteria for Designation

Section 16-38 B of the Town of Palm Beach Landmarks Preservation Ordinance 2-84 specifies that, "a Historic District may be designated for any geographic area of particular historic, architectural or cultural significance to the Town." It further identifies criteria necessary to justify the designation. Listed below are designation criteria which relate to the proposed Flagler Memorial Bridge Historic District and justification for designation:

(a) "exemplifies or reflects the broad cultural, political, economic or social history of the nation, state, county, or town";

The Flagler Memorial Bridge Historic District is a significant part of both the cultural and social history of the Town of Palm Beach and Palm Beach County. The bridge structures and scenic vistas are synonymous with the name Palm Beach. The low profile, "causeway" type of approaches into the Town of Palm Beach compliments the surrounding architecture and palm tree lined garden mall which greets the arrival of motorists and pedestrians who have crossed Lake Worth from the mainland. The transformation in scale and style provides a buffer and departure from the faster paced, high rise urban setting of West Palm Beach. This "buffer" or "departure" serves to transform the environment and link the setting to Palm Beach's social and cultural character.

As described here and in previous sections of this report, the existence and scale of the physical structures in this proposed

district has contributed in many ways to the social and cultural development, as well as appearance, of Palm Beach. The Flagler Memorial Bridge Historic District is worthy of the special protection it would gain by becoming a historic district.

(e) "constitutes a unique area of architecture, landscape and planning."

This report provides information which demonstrates that the proposed "Flagler Memorial Bridge Historic District" is indeed a unique area of landscaping and planning. This particular area is world famous for the beauty and character of the setting. The existence of the existing conditions need to be maintained so that the great distinction which is widely recognized will be assured over time through the designation of this area as a historic district in the Town.

VI. Selected Bibliography

National Register of Historic Places - Registration Form
Palm Beach Preservation Foundation - Fred Eckel, 1988

Landmark Architecture of Palm Beach

Historic Building Survey of Palm Beach
Landmarks Planning, Incorporated, 1981



