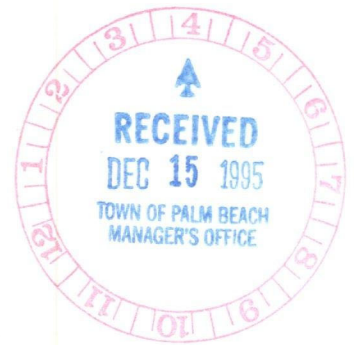
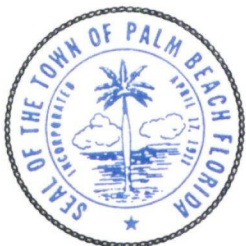


WELLS ROAD SCENIC VISTA



DESIGNATION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1995



**Landmarks Preservation Commission
Palm Beach, Florida**

DESIGNATION REPORT

WELLS ROAD SCENIC VISTA

Table of Contents

- I. GENERAL INFORMATION**
- II. LOCATION MAP**
- III. SITE DESCRIPTION**
- IV. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**
- V. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**
- VI. CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION**
- VII. ARCHITECT'S BIOGRAPHY**
- VIII. PHOTOGRAPHY**
- IX. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Report produced by Research Atlantica, Inc.

Report edited by Timothy M. Frank, AICP, Planner/Projects Coordinator, Town of Palm Beach.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Location: Wells Road, Atlantic Ocean to Lake Worth

Date of Construction: Unknown

Principal Architect: Unknown

Present Owner: Town of Palm Beach

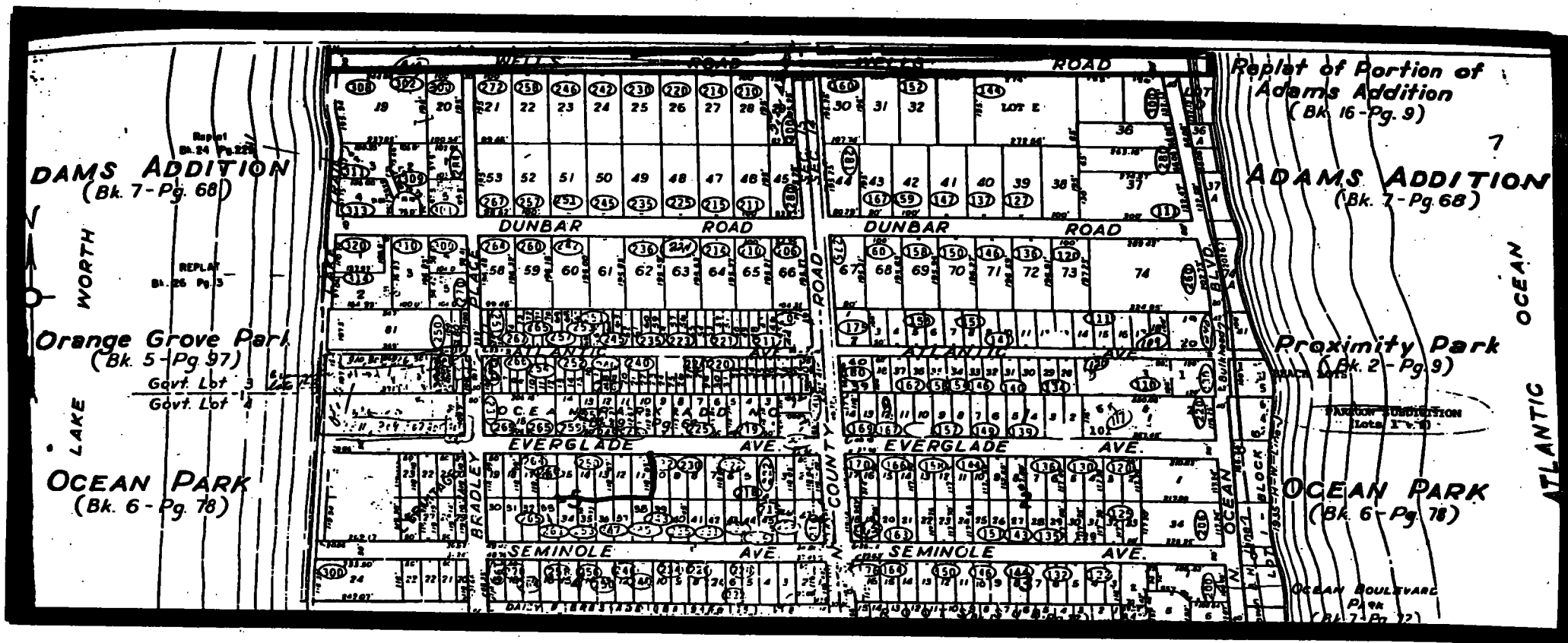
Present Use: Public Street

Present Zoning: R-B

**Palm Beach County
Tax Folio Number:** 50-43-43-23-05-020-0030

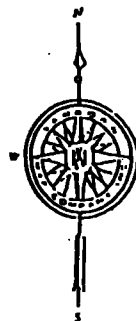
**Current Legal
Description:** Town of Palm Beach, Right of Way

**Classification in the "Historic Building Survey of Palm Beach,
1981":** Not listed.



LOCATION MAP

WELLS ROAD SCENIC VISTA

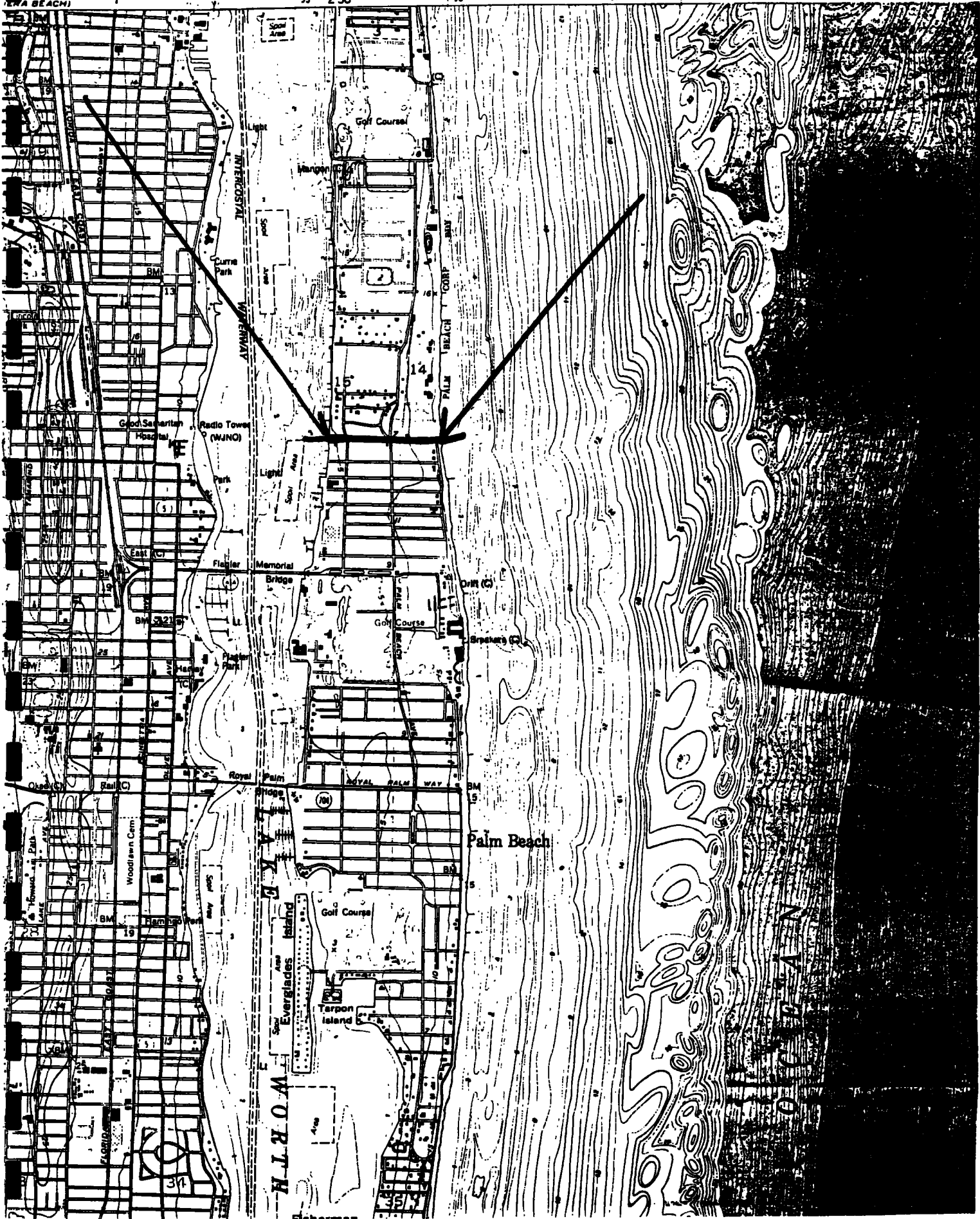


UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY
Palm Beach

Wells Road Scenic Vista

PALM BEACH QUADRANGLE
FLORIDA-PALM BEACH CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC-BATHYMETRIC)

95 2'30" 96 97 820 000 FEET 98 99 80°00'



III. SITE DESCRIPTION

The Wells Road Scenic Vista is a two lane residential street in the heart of Palm Beach. It run east and west across the island and is perpendicular to County Road. Wells Road goes from the Atlantic Ocean to Lake Worth and is flanked by an alley of manicured Australian pine trees (*Casuarina equisetifolia*). These pines, stretching from one side of the island to the other give a sense of continuity to the street, while stylistically they represent a unity of design. The pines are the most important feature of this landscape architecture and an identifying aspect of the Wells Road Scenic Vista.

Under criteria set down by the Department of the Interior, the Wells Road Scenic Vista qualifies as a "Designed Historic Landscape" - one type of landscape within the broader category of historic landscape.¹ This type of landscape is defined as being "consciously designed and laid out by a master gardener, landscape architect, architect, or horticulturist to a design principle, or an owner or other amateur using a recognized style or tradition."² It is further described under the following Department of the Interior subtypes: (1) City Planning or Civic Design and (2) Parkways, drives and trails.³ At this time the landscape architect is unknown.

IV. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Although the exact date of its construction is not known, Wells Road is one of the older streets in the Town of Palm Beach. It appears on both the 1919 and 1924 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of the town. It is south of the original E.T. Stotesbury estate and in 1924 sparsely populated with only one house on the street.⁴

In 1929, the Garden Club of Palm Beach hired a Chicago firm, Bennett, Parson & Frost, to act as consulting architects to document the Plan of Palm Beach. This document was approved by the Palm Beach Town Council on December 19, 1929 and published in book form in 1930.⁵

¹J. Timothy Keller, ASLA, and Genevieve P. Keller, "How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscape," National Register Bulletin # 18. p.2.

² Ibid.

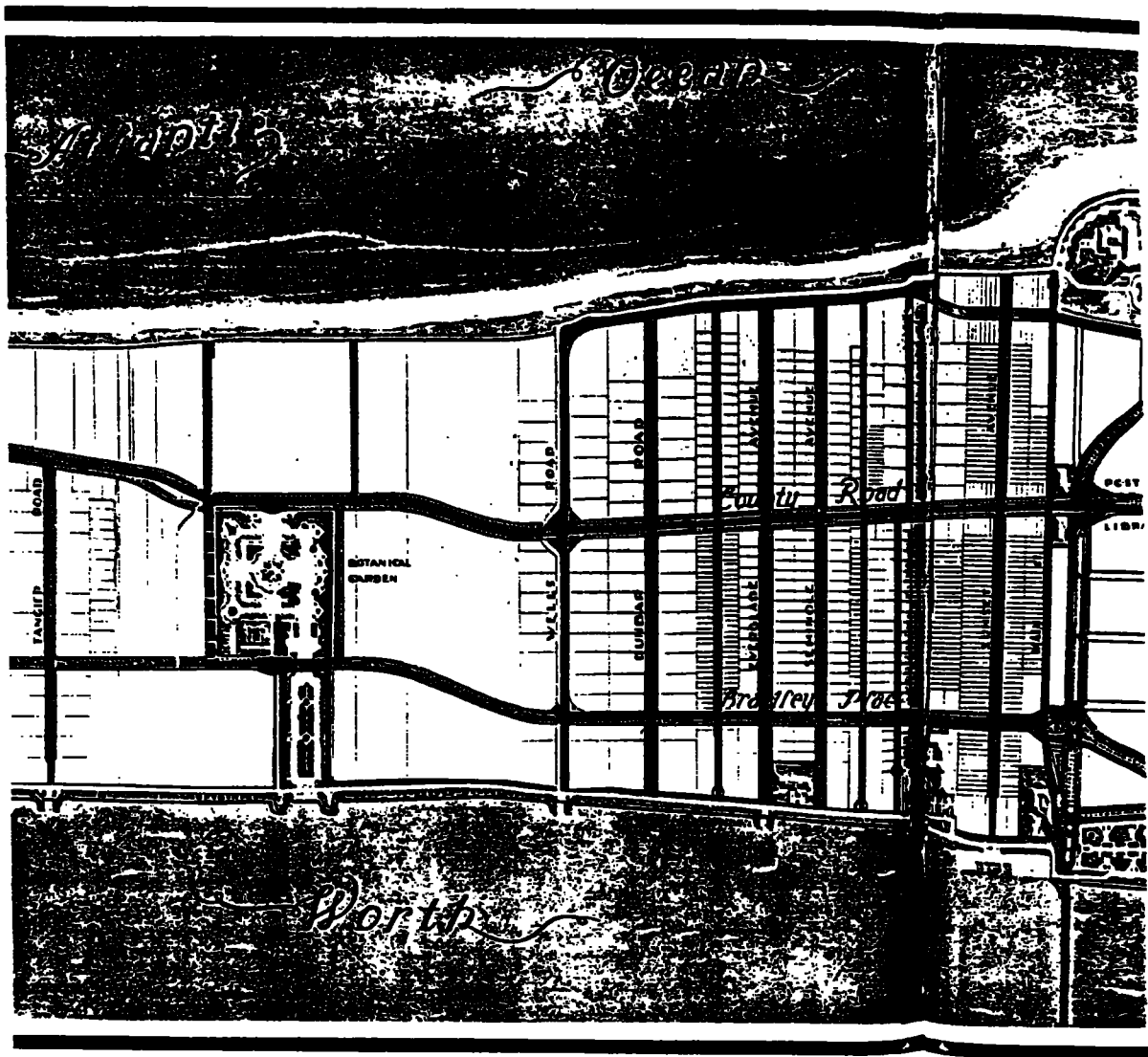
³ Ibid.

⁴ Sanborn Insurance Maps, "Palm Beach," 1924.

⁵ Bennett, Parson & Frost, The Plan of Palm Beach. Chicago: The Garden Club of Palm Beach, 1930, p. 1.

"The growth of Palm Beach from its earliest settlement to the present time has been fostered almost entirely by its alluring climate," states the Plan.⁶ Plants were to be subtropical and 15% of the landscape was to be xeroscape.

The author also noted that, "The automobile is now working toward new changes in the physical character of Palm Beach."⁷ It was suggested that the street system stay simple in arrangement. County Road was to be the main artery of the Town and Wells Road was listed as important dividing point.⁸



⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid. p.7.

⁸ Ibid. p. 14.

Map showing Wells Road from the Plan of Palm Beach, 1930.

The use of the Australian pine, a non native tree, to landscape Wells Road was not unusual. This popular tree was planted all over south Florida throughout the Boom years of the 1920s. Post cards from the period indicate the popularity of the trees that were known for their large canopies of green foliage. The Australian pine is also used "all over the tropical and subtropical world for wind protection, soil erosion control, land reclamation, and sand dune stabilization."⁹ Although as recently as the 1970s the planting of Australian pines was still being encouraged by the state, a DOT eradication program is now underway. Many experts, however, feel that this program is unwarranted.¹⁰ While the debate continues it is important to preserve the Wells Road Scenic Vista. This street is an important transportation artery, shown on the earliest City Plan. It is also representative of the history landscaping in the Town of Palm Beach.

V. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Wells Road Scenic Vista is significant as a "Designed Historic Landscape" in the overall plan of the Town of Palm Beach. The street dates from the early development of the Town and was recognized as an important artery in the Garden Club of Palm Beach's Plan of Palm Beach. This Plan was then approved by the Town Council in 1929.

VI. CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

Section 16-381 of the Town of Palm Beach Landmarks Preservation Ordinance #2-84 outlines the criteria for creation of an historic district. At least one criterion must be met to justify the designation. Listed below are criteria which relate to this property and justification for designation:

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

The Wells Road Scenic Vista reflects the early planning of the Town of Palm Beach. It is an example of the cooperation between professionals, a local civic group and Town government. The trees also represent one of the preferred types of landscaping used in parkways, drives and trails throughout south Florida.

⁹ The Gulf Stream Historic Highway Committee, "Report on Research and Justification for Proposed Local Bill to Permit the Replanting of Casuarina Equisetifolia Along State Road A1A in the Town of Gulf Stream," 18 November, 1993, p. 1.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 1-12.

(e) "Constitutes a unique area of architecture, landscaping and planning. (Ord. No. 2-84, 1, 3-1-84)"

The Wells Road Scenic Vista is a unique area of Palm Beach landscaping and planning. In an era when the Australian Pine is being eradicated (some experts feel without cause), this street represents the preferred plant material of the Boom years at the early part of this century.

VII. ARCHITECT'S BIOGRAPHY

The landscape architect, if any, of this scenic vista is unknown at this time.

IX. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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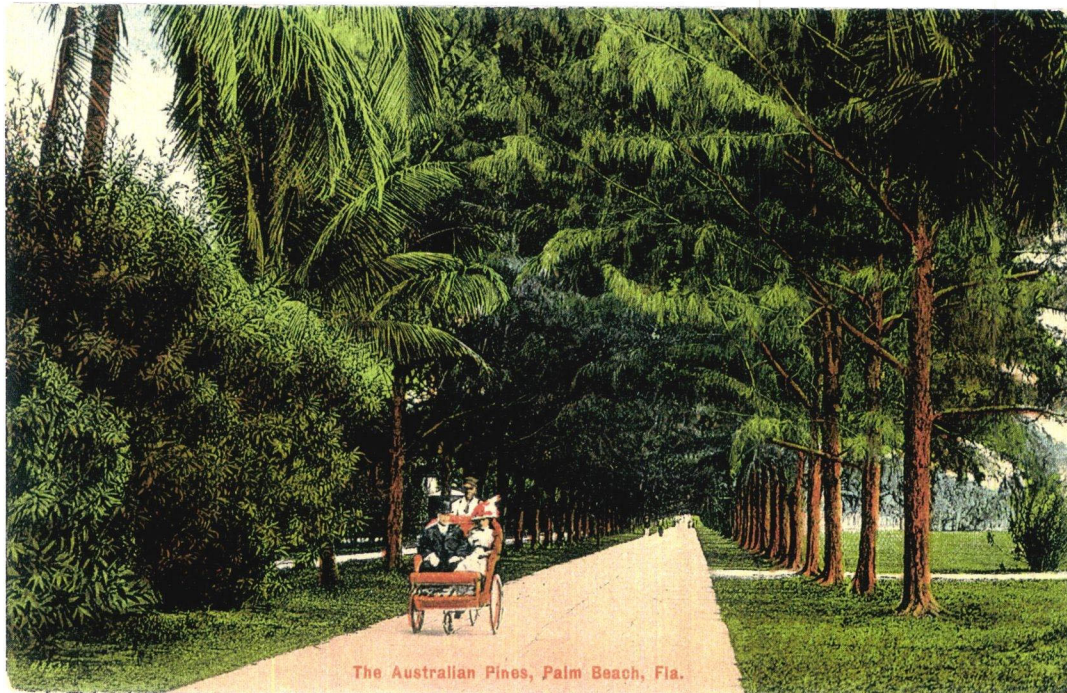
Meier, Lauren, ASLA, and Betsy Chittenden. Preserving Historic Landscapes. An Annotated Bibliography. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1990.

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Historic Postcards

Postcards were first sold in the United States at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. In 1898 the Postal Service authorized the commercial manufacture of the cards which could be mailed for one cent. These early cards are often helpful in documenting the historic buildings and landscape of an area.



Until the beginning of World War I the finest cards were hand tinted lithographs produced in Germany. This pre 1914 example clearly shows the use of Australian Pines throughout Palm Beach.



This pre 1930 "white border" type postcard shows the Wells Road Scenic Vista. Note that the pines are shaped and bordered with hibiscus.

PALM BEACH, FLA. VOL 1

PALM BEACH

SCALE 100 FT. TO AN INCH

