

1149 Houston Street Melbourne, Florida

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Designation Report



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1149 Houston Street

Local Historic Designation Report

I. Location

The property is located at the 1149 Houston Street, east of US 1 and south of west Eau Gallie Boulevard (CR 518) in the City of Melbourne. The property fronts the Eau Gallie River. Figure 1 shows the location of the property.

Figure 1: Location Map



Source: City of Melbourne GIS Data and Land Design Innovations, Inc., 2008.

II. General Information

The general information related to the 1149 Houston Street property is as follows:

A. Name of the Property

1. Historic Names

The property was originally built as the Eau Gallie Yacht Club (1911-1960).

2. Current Name

The property is currently known as the Whitehead Residence.

B. Brevard County Property Appraiser Information

1. Property Address

1149 Houston Street, Melbourne, FL 32935.

2. Present Owner

The present owners of the property are Allan P. Whitehead and Maria G. Whitehead.

3. Present Use

The present use of the property is a Single-Family Residence.

4. Zoning District

The property is located on R1AA zoning district.

5. Parcel Identification Number

The Parcel ID of the property is 27-37-21-01-00000.0-0013.0.

6. Boundary Description

Part of Lot 13, PLAT OF HOUSTON'S ADDITION TO EAU GALLIE, according to the Plat recorded in Plat Book 1, Page 48, Public Records of Brevard County, Florida, being more particularly described as follows:

Beginning as a point 130 feet South of the Southwest corner of Lot 14, Houston's Addition to Eau Gallie, and on the East side of Houston Street, run thence East, parallel with the South line of said Lot 14, 100 feet; thence South 120 feet, more or less, to the Eau Gallie Creek; thence along the shore of said creek in a Westerly direction to Houston Street; thence along the East side of Houston Street to the Point of Beginning.

Excepting therefrom property described in Deed recorded in Deed Book 374, Page 394, Public Records of Brevard County, Florida, and being more particularly described as follows:

Commence at a point 130 feet South of the Northwest corner of Lot 1 of Duncan's Subdivision of Lots 12 and 13 of Houston's Additions to Eau Gallie according to Plat recorded in Plat Book 2, Page 13, Brevard County Public Record, said point being on the East side of Houston Street; run East 100 feet; thence South 75.24 feet for a Point of Beginning; thence go South 20 degrees 31' West, 74 feet, more or less, to Eau Gallie

River; thence along the shore of the Eau Gallie River in a Southeasterly direction to a point due South of the Point of Beginning; thence North to the Point of Beginning.

III. Significance

A. Construction History

1. Specific Dates

Date of Construction: 1907-1911

Additions and alterations include indoor plumbing, upstairs bathrooms, a kitchen upgrade, and the addition of a pool with screen enclosure. The date of additions and alterations is unknown.

2. Construction Materials

The building is constructed from wood with cypress siding, heart pine flooring and metal roof.

B. Statement of Significance

The 1149 Houston Street property was built in 1911 as the Eau Gallie Yacht Club. The owner of the East Cost Lumber originally owned the land and dedicated it to the Yacht Club. The building is one of the several buildings associated with the development of Eau Gallie's sports fishing and boating industry around the 20th century. One of the oldest yacht clubs in the State of Florida, the Eau Gallie Yacht Club served as a social center for the local elites and winter visitors. The building consisted of a men's smoking room, a women's bridge room, a reception hall and a large ballroom. The building is a wooden-frame vernacular building that features a cross-gable metal roof, a tiered end porch, metal roof, large sash windows (modified Palladian windows) and French doors. The building has undergone some alteration/additions throughout its long history. The building was occupied as Eau Gallie Yacht Club until 1960 and then was converted into a private residence. The building is also listed on the Brevard Register of Historic Buildings maintained by the Brevard Heritage Council. The building is a rare surviving example that reflects national trends in architecture during the period in which it was constructed, and is associated with the development of the Eau Gallie's sports fishing and boating industry around the turn of the century¹.

IV. Contextual History²

The 1149 Houston Street property was built in 1911 along the Eau Gallie River in the town what was known as the Town of Eau Gallie. Eau Gallie was founded by William H. Gleason, who acquired some 16,000 acres extending from the Indian River to Lake Washington in 1870. Gleason named the town Eau Gallie (translated as "Rocky Water") for the abundant coquina rock that lined the shore³. Eau Gallie was the site of a harbor where a freshwater tributary flowed into the Indian River Lagoon.

Melbourne located on a natural harbor on the Indian River Lagoon was originally named "Crane Creek". The "Village of Melbourne" was incorporated on December 22, 1888, adopting a corporate seal that included a pineapple plant, a crane, and a palmetto tree⁴. Before its incorporation, the name

¹ Olausen 1990, 127

² Barile, Diane. "The Elizabeth Eaton Residence Designation Report", October 2007

³ Raley, Karen and Flotte, 14

⁴ www.melbourneflorida.org/info/history

of Melbourne had been selected for the town. The town was named for its first postmaster, Cornthwaite John Hector, an Englishman who was said to have come from Melbourne, Australia⁵.

As in many other Florida cities, the growth of Melbourne and neighboring Eau Gallie would not begin in earnest until the arrival of the railroad. Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway arrived in Eau Gallie in 1893, and just months later were extended to Melbourne. Flagler's tracks would continue their march down the east coast, arriving in Miami in 1896, and the famed Overseas Railroad to Key West in 1912. The railroad brought tourists, settlers, and an inestimable boost to the region's economy, as produce and timber could now be shipped to out-of-state markets.

From the Village to a City

Both Eau Gallie and Melbourne developed steadily during the 1880s and first half of the 1990s. The Eau Gallie Village was laid by William H. Gleason in an orthogonal grid pattern fronting along the Indian River Lagoon and Elbow Creek. In 1884, William Gleason filed the Eau Gallie Plat.⁶

The coming of Florida East Coast railway brought a period of significant development within Eau Gallie. The financial profit in citrus grove industry attracted number of settlers in Eau Gallie. In 1890s, a solid collection of wood frame residential buildings stood in Eau Gallie along Houston Street, Young Street and Elbow Creek. Among the buildings were a store, post office, saw mill, church, school, and a three-story hotel with accommodations for fifty guests⁷. The local economy, however, suffered serious devastating freezes during the winter of 1894 -1895 which killed citrus groves and other crops in the area.

During 1896-1920, the area recovered from the devastating effects of the freezes of the mid 1890s. The replanting of orange groves along with the development of other industries, such as commercial fishing, lumbering, naval stores production, and ranching helped the local economic recovery. Commercial and sporting fishing also played an important role in the recovery of the local economy. The Eau Gallie Yacht Club was formed in 1907 to cater to boating and sports fishing and operated in 1149 Houston Street from 1911 to 1960.

The Town of Eau Gallie was growing at a higher pace than Melbourne during the first decade of the twentieth century. Between 1895 and 1915, a small commercial district took form along Highland Avenue in Eau Gallie along with the surrounding residential areas. The end of World War I brought a wave of new settlers to Florida, and by 1920, the state was poised for the phenomenon dubbed as the "Florida Real Estate Boom". In a 1925 book, "The Truth about Florida", author Charles Donald Fox explains that the Boom in Florida eclipsed all other mass migrations, including the California Gold Rush in 1849,

"There is reflected in the great migration to Florida the natural result of the knowledge, that here, within thirty-six to forty hours' train travel of sixty million of our population. Lies a land of upwards of thirty million acres. Two-thirds of this immense area is capable of agricultural development, and because Nature has cast her favoring smile upon it above practically all other sections of our country, it is capable of producing scores of varieties to satisfy the demands and needs of half the population of the United States."⁸

By 1923, both Melbourne and Eau Gallie had made significant strides toward civic improvement, including the construction of paved roads, concrete sidewalks, electric street lamps and improved

⁵ Other sources say Hector was actually from New Zealand

⁶ Olansen 1991, 9

⁷ Idbi, 11

⁸ Fox, Charles Donald. The Truth about Florida, 10-11

water and sewer systems. The tremendous increase in tourism and record breaking citrus crop attracted lots of people to the Melbourne/Eau Gallie area. Due to the increase in the population along with the increasing demands for expansion, the Town of Melbourne reincorporated as a city in 1923 and Eau Gallie in 1925.

After World War II, Melbourne experienced dramatic growth with the development of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) facilities in Cape Canaveral. In 1969, Eau Gallie merged with Melbourne and formed the largest planning district in Brevard County.

Yacht Club History

The Eau Gallie Yacht Club, a U.S. boating organization, was organized in 1907 by a local group of residents. George F. Paddison, owner of the East Coast Lumber, was the first commodore of the Eau Gallie Yacht Club. Other founding members were the Gleasons, the Rossetters, the Castlemans, and Alexander Hodgson⁹. George Paddison donated the property on the east side of the Houston Street in Eau Gallie, for the construction of the Yacht Club.

An interesting historical narrative is quoted here in connection with the property deeded to the Club by Mr. and Mrs. Paddison - an excerpt from the abstract covering the original tract of eighty acres, of which the Club site was a part:

"TO ALL WHOM THESE PRESENTS MAY COME"

“Whereas in pursuance of the Act of Congress approved March 3, 1855, granting bounty land to certain officers and soldiers who have been engaged in the military service of the United States, there has been deposited in the General Land Office, Warrant Number 31948 for eighty acres in favor of George Stone having assigned said warrant to John C. Houston in whose favor the tract has been located.

Given under my hand at the City of Washington on the first day of July in the year of the Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-one by the sixteenth President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln.”¹⁰

The club building was completed in 1911. For a period of time the club was operated by a holding company. The club building consisted of a men’s smoking room, a women’s bridge room, a reception hall and a large ballroom¹¹.

The club conducted several local, state, national, and international regattas. In 1936, the Eau Gallie Yacht Club conducted an outstanding international regatta yachting even. The event was called International Moth Class Regatta and was sponsored by the Florida Sailing Association¹².

In 1959, the club members voted to sell the old club house property and built a new clubhouse on a 3-acre site property in Indian Harbor Beach. The original club property was converted into a residence in 1960. The property had some additions and alterations and is currently owned by Allan P. Whitehead as his private residence.

⁹ Raley, Karen and Flotte, 47

¹⁰ Eau Gallie Yacht Club. "[Club History](#)", *Eau Gallie Yacht Club website*, 2008. Accessed February 28, 2008.

¹¹ Raley, Karen and Flotte, 47

¹² Eau Gallie Yacht Club. "[Club History](#)", *Eau Gallie Yacht Club website*, 2008. Accessed February 28, 2008.

V. Architectural Significance

A. Property Features

The architectural and site features of the property include:

- A 2-story main house
- 2 brick fireplaces
- A wraparound porch
- Swimming pool with screen enclosure
- A wooden deck along the waterfront

B. Building Placement/Orientation

The building is setback approximately 10 feet from the public street. Typically, the main entrance and the primary façade of a building are oriented toward the public right-of-way. Due to the location of the property fronting the Eau Gallie River, the building was oriented toward the river (south) rather than orienting it toward the street on the west side. The river facing orientation demonstrated the desire to take advantage of the views, breeze and boating activities. Moreover, the building was originally designed for a club house that carried activities like fishing and boating. To enjoy the water activities, the main porch and the entrance were designed to face the Eau Gallie River.

C. Building Form and Architecture

The homes constructed with the Florida Vernacular style feature simple entrance or end porches with wooden columns, railings and trim, ornamental wood work, exterior wood or vinyl horizontal drop siding, weatherboard exterior, pastel shades, metal gable or hip roofs, double hung sash windows with multi-pane glazing and recessed wooden panels doors.

The Houston Street property has a 2-story building that exhibits the following features, such as:

- Cross-gable roof with metal finish
- Cypress horizontal drop siding
- Rectangular double hung sash windows, 6/1 lights
- French doors
- 2-story end porch with a gable roof supported by posts/3 bay
- Blue pastel color finish on the exterior siding

The building has a wooden balloon structural system and brick pier foundation that is screened with lattice.

The exterior is rectangular in shape with a porch projecting out approximately 10' facing the Eau Gallie River. The 2-story porch covers more than 50% of the building façade width and has an appearance of light framed wood columns.

Figure 2: South side of the building with a porch facing the Eau Gallie River



Source: City of Melbourne, January 2008.

According to the current owner, the interior of the building exhibits bead board ceiling and walls, heart pine wood flooring and two brick fireplaces located on the west side and east side of the building.

Figure 3: Interior of the house (Left) and heart pine wooden flooring (right)



Source: Florida Master Site File, 2008.

The west side of the building faces the street and also has a gable end facing the street that characterizes the building as a front gable house. Even though the west side faces the street, the façade was designed as a side façade with no entrance doors. The rectangular sash windows, ventilated louvers, cypress siding and a vertical brick chimney characterize the west side of the building.

Figure 4: West side of the building facing the Houston Street



Source: City of Melbourne, January 2008.

The north side of the building is the rear façade. It is constructed with French doors and sash windows. A swimming pool was added on this side which is covered by a screen enclosure.

Figure 5 North side of the building opposite to the Eau Gallie River



Source: The City of Melbourne, January 2008.

The east of the building is a replica of the west side. Like the west façade, the east façade consists of windows and a vertical brick chimney.

Figure 6 Southeast side of the building facing the Eau Gallie River



Source: City of Melbourne, January 2008.

VI. Eligibility Criteria

Article XI. Melbourne City Code: “Preservation of Historic Resources and Districts, Archaeological Sites and Zones”

Criteria (Excerpt) Section 10-229

...the historic preservation board shall recommend for designation as historic resources [those resources] that are significant in Melbourne's history, architecture, archeology, and culture and possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or association...

A. Integrity Issue

Before applying the criteria for significance, a property nominated to the Melbourne Register of Historic Places must be reviewed for "integrity", that is, the property must demonstrate maintain its original character despite any alterations that may have occurred over time.

In the case of the 1149 Houston Street property, it is clear that additions and alterations have been made over the course of time. The following are considerations that can be objectively evaluated:

- Has the general form (plan shape) been maintained?
- Have the alterations/additions been made during a period of significance, whereby those alterations have been a part of the evolving history of the house?
- Do the windows openings maintain their original dimensions, even though the window-type may be different from the original configuration?
- Are the original roof slopes maintained?
- Are the original construction materials still evident?
- Is the original character of the resource, dating from its initial construction periods, still apparent even though additions and alterations may have occurred?
- Do the major alterations/additions affect a major elevation?

The major addition that was added to the exterior was the addition of a swimming pool on the north side of the property with a screen enclosure. This addition has no significant effect on the north façade of the building. The building has maintained its general form and the original materials including the exterior cypress siding, are still evident. Some of the interior additions and alterations include the indoor plumbing, bathroom repairs and kitchen upgrade.

Despite the alterations/additions, the residence still maintains its Florida vernacular style, including its construction materials, basic roof-form and plan, window apertures and verticality.

Therefore, the 1149 Houston Street property meets the "test" for the retention of sufficient integrity.

B. Designation Criteria

The 1149 Houston Street property meets the following criteria contained in Section 10-229 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance:

- Is associated with events that have made significant contributions to the pattern of history in the community;
- Recognizes the quality of design and construction, and embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architecture type, period, style and method of construction.

C. Recommendation

LDI/Staff recommends that the City of Melbourne's Historic Preservation Board recommend to the City Council, the listing of the 1149 Houston Street property in the Melbourne Register of Historic Places.

VII. Planning Context

Many of the historic structures that have made significant contribution to the history of the community have been destroyed. The historic designation is a tool for a community to retain its physical integrity.

The designation of the 1149 Houston Street property will provide protection into the future from its subsequent owners from inaccurate or unsympathetic alterations and unnecessary demolition to assure the preservation of the character and uniqueness of the property. The designation may also serve as an “object lesson” to others who may consider the designation of their historic properties.

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