

St. Johns County Landmark and National Register of Historic Places Designations

Certain sites, structures, objects, or districts may be considered to have a particularly unique or special significance related to the cultural, architectural, archaeological and historical heritage of St. Johns County. Such Cultural Resources may be designated as Landmarks or Landmark Districts. Criteria for and effects of such designations can be found in Article 3, Part 3.01 of the County’s Land Development Code: <https://www.sjcfcl.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Article-III.pdf>.

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's [National Register of Historic Places](#) is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate and protect America's historic and archaeological resources.

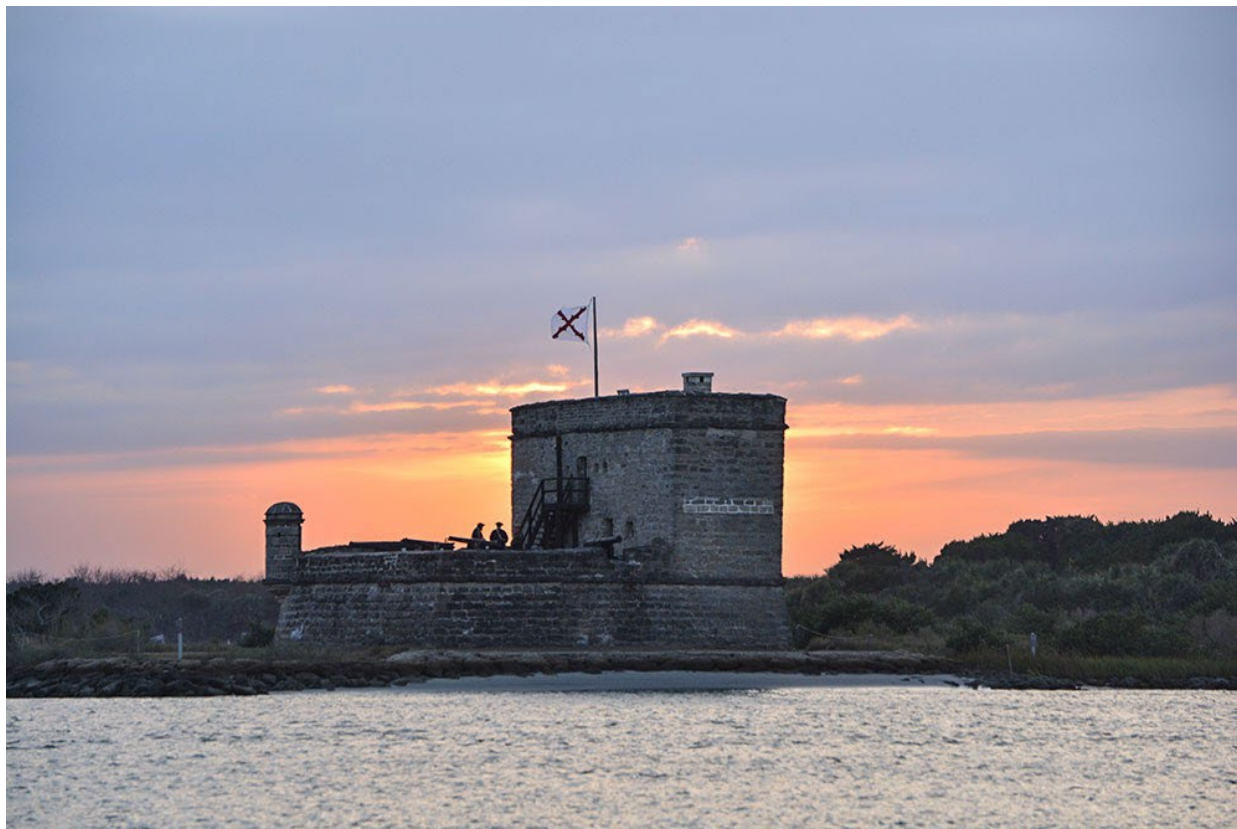
Historic Property Designations					
ID	Name	Year Built	County Landmark	NRHP	Year Designated
1	Fort Matanzas National Monument	1737-1742	No	Yes	1966
2	Sunnyside Demps House	1876	Yes	No	2001
3	Moultrie Church	1877/1880	Yes	Yes	2014
4	Sanchez Homestead	1883/1900	No	Yes	2001
5	Henry S. O'Brien Estate	1885	No	Yes	2024
6	Alpine Groves Park	1886	Yes	No	2015
7	Lodge and Hut	1897/1892	No	Yes	2024
8	Hastings Jail	1911	Yes	No	2020
9	Dixie Highway	1916	Yes	Yes	2019
10	Hastings High School	1924	No	Yes	2006
11	Hartley Store	1930	Yes	No	2015
12	Fort Matanzas Headquarters and Visitor Center	1936	No	Yes	2008
13	The Inn at Marywood on the River	1939	Yes	No	2014
14	Allen D. Nease House	1951	Yes	No	2015
15	Barrancotto's Roma Restaurant	1958	Yes	No	2024
16	Arthur Milam House	1962	No	Yes	2016
17	W. Stetson Kennedy House	1975	Yes	No	2015

1. Fort Matanzas National Monument

Built around 1742 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1966, Fort Matanzas National Monument is the oldest recorded structure in St. Johns County outside of the City of St. Augustine. The now 300-acre park surrounding the fort was the landscape for the 1565 Ribault Massacre and further sequences of events whereby Spain eliminated the French competition for dominance in Northern Florida and gave the area its name of Matanzas, the Spanish word for slaughter or massacre. Previous wooden lookout towers were built and became dilapidated before the Fort Matanzas National Monument we see today, which was constructed of masonry and coquina, a tremendous example of Colonial Spanish engineering and construction skills. The Fort's structure split vertically into three separate segments and became a ruin in the 19th century. The United States War Department stabilized the structure by pulling the segments back together between 1916 and 1924.

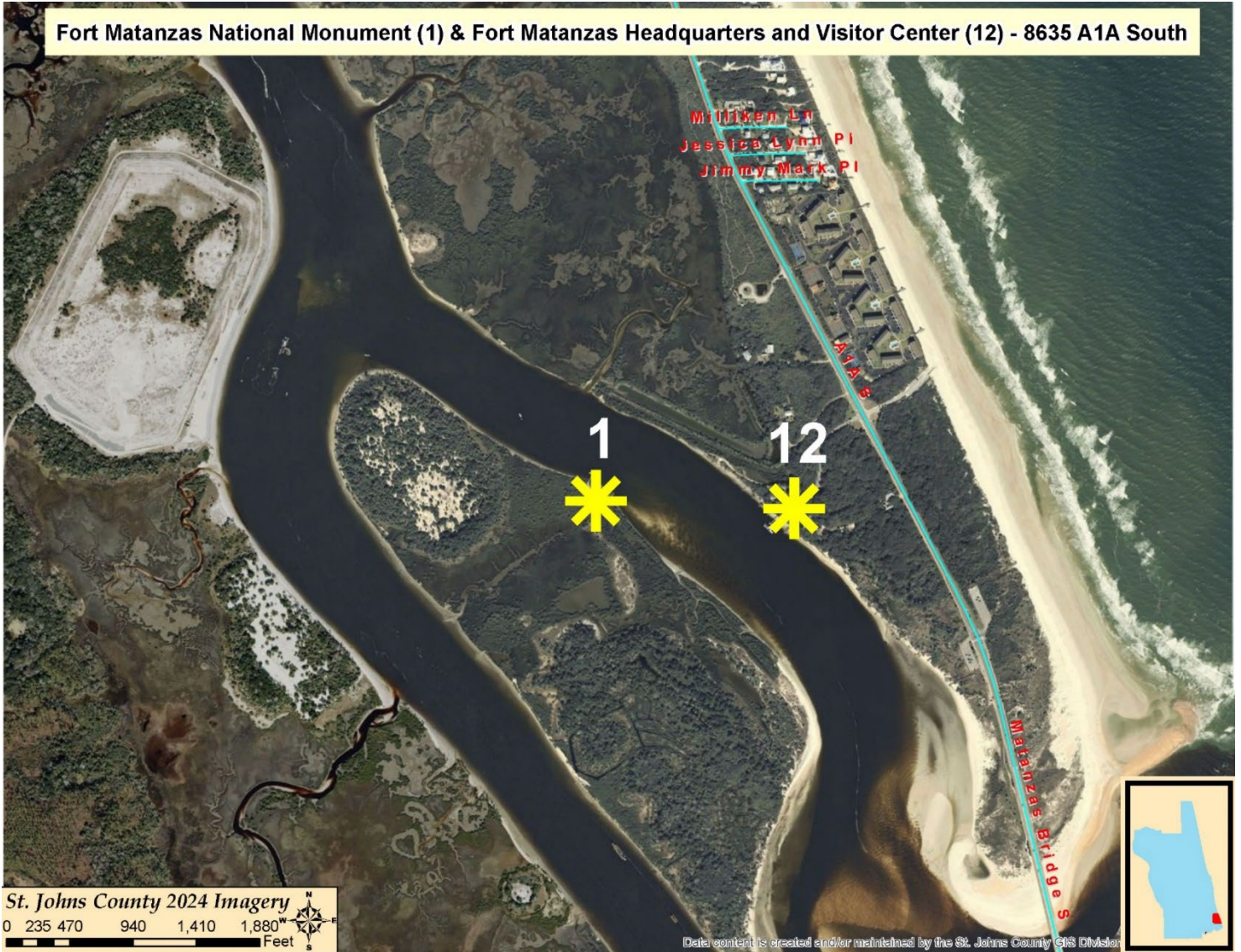
The reversed "L"-shaped tower contains a gun deck, cistern, guard and officer of the guard quarters, a fireplace, powder storage compartment and ladder up to the observation deck. Several of the original features disappeared with time, but certain utilitarian components were rebuilt to restore the function of the site, such as a roof-floor between the stories, a stairway from the gun deck to the second story and ladder to the roof. The fort is open to the public during set scheduled tour times. <https://www.nps.gov/places/visitor-center-fort-matanzas.htm>

Fort Matanzas



Aerial View of the Resource

Fort Matanzas National Monument (1) & Fort Matanzas Headquarters and Visitor Center (12) - 8635 A1A South



2. Sunnyside Demps House

The Sunnyside Demps House was built in 1876 on the corner of King Street and Cordova Street by a prominent St. Augustine builder named Thomas F. House, who contributed to the construction of many other buildings and hotels that have since been destroyed. A quadrant of the house was relocated from its original location to make room for the Ponce De Leon Hotel. The house is now located on West King Street where the Demps family resided for many years.

West King Street was along the main route for tourists arriving in the area and the Sunnyside Demps House contributed to the overall streetscape with its overhanging second story balcony. The house is the last surviving piece of the pre-Flagler era Sunnyside Hotel and remains in fair condition with only the concrete block first floor porch no longer remaining of the original structure that was moved to West King Street. The house was designated as a County Landmark in 2001 and has been used as office space for the St. Johns Housing Partnership since then. The more weathered features of the structure have been renovated while maintaining the historic essence of the structure.

Sunnyside Demps House on West King Street



Aerial View of the Resource



3. Moultrie Church

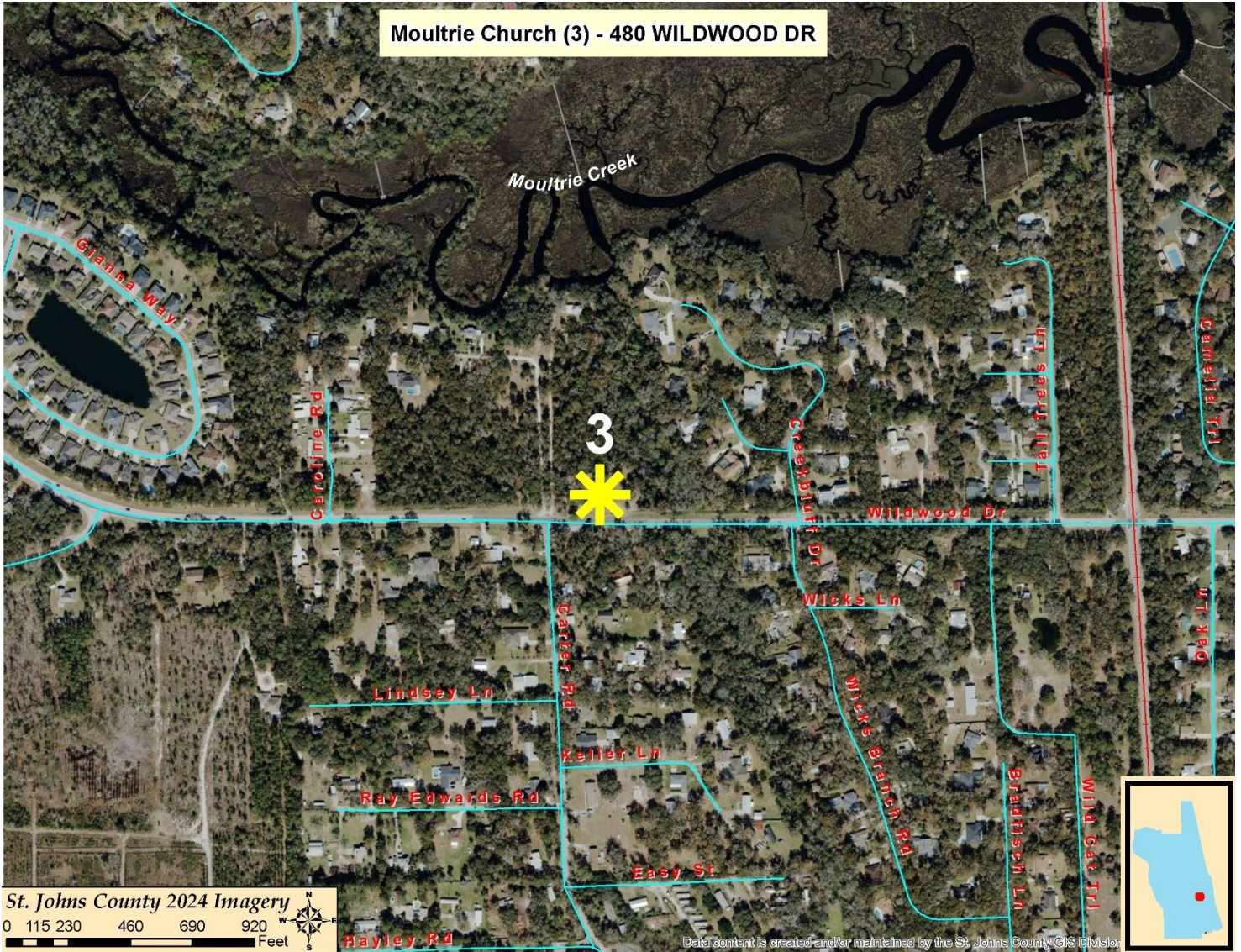
Moultrie Church, c.1877, is an excellent example of a rural one-room church. A gable-roofed portico with a pediment marks the main entry. A rectangular, enclosed belfry topped with a four-sided steeple is located at the peak of the roof near the western entry. These features identify the frame vernacular building as a church like other small, historic rural churches throughout Florida. This church was built as a meeting house in keeping with early Methodist traditions. While there is no longer a permanent congregation, the property is still used as a meeting house for events such as weddings. The Moultrie Church is a County Landmark on Wildwood Drive and is believed to be the oldest public building in the surrounding community (Hagan and Jones 2014).

The church's historic setting is within the one-acre Wildwood Cemetery which predates the church and is located on Wildwood Drive (Hagan and Jones 2014). Portions of the cemetery have gated off areas delineating family plots. Some prominent local last names represented in the cemetery include Hagan, Armstrong, Barnes, Cubbedge, Genung and O'Steen. The church and cemetery were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2014 and as a St. Johns County Landmark in 2015.

Moultrie Church



Aerial View of the Resource



4. Sanchez Homestead

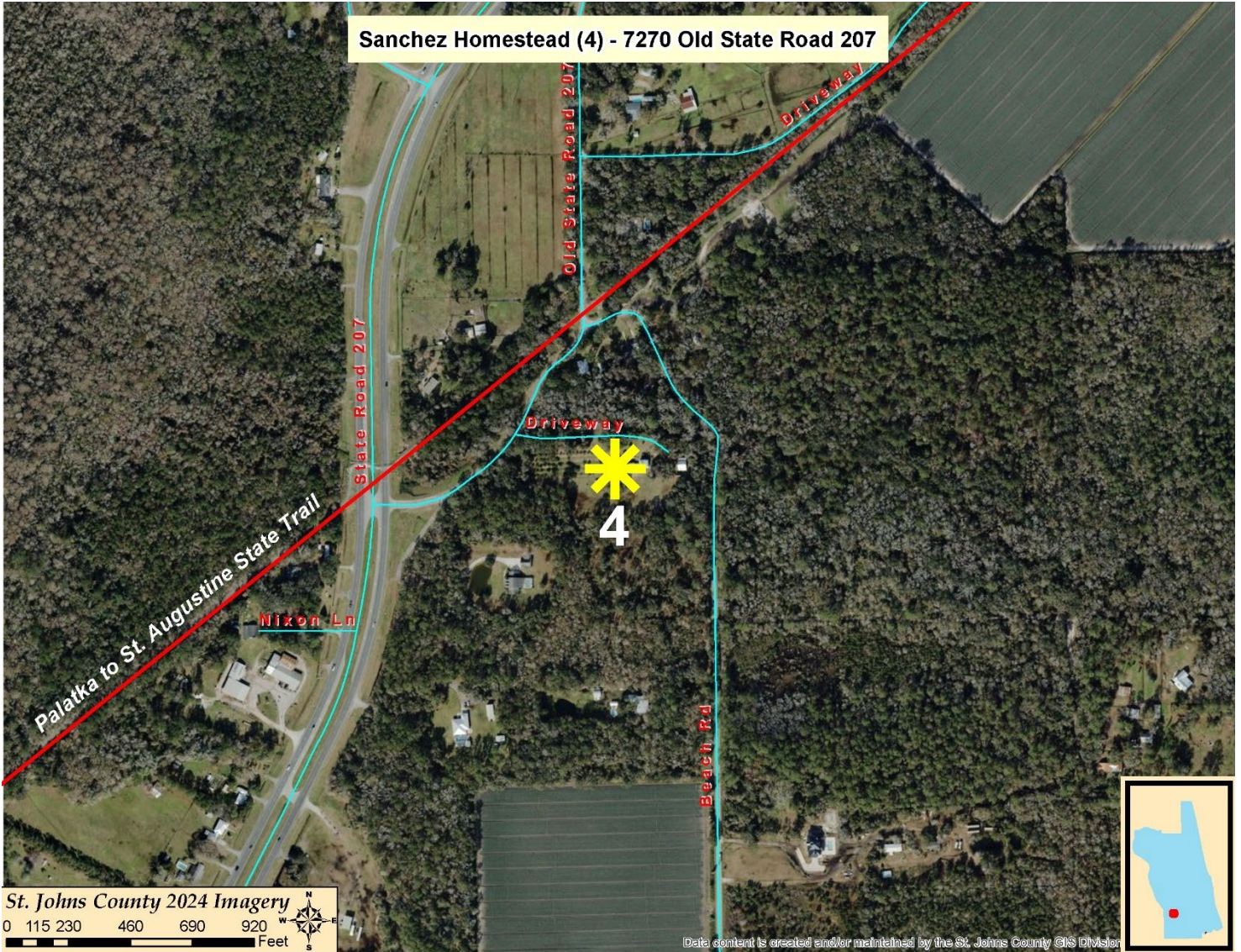
The Sanchez Homestead was listed on the National Register of Historic places in 2001 due to its association with commercial agriculture in the Spuds area along State Road 207, just east of Hastings in southwestern St. Johns County. John Henry Sanchez purchased the property in 1879 and began constructing the residence around 1883. Sanchez quickly became a pioneer farmer in the area, cultivating oranges until the devastating freezes in mid-1890, when he then started producing over 175 different products from his farm.

The farmstead is a great example of the economic activity in St. Johns County in the early twentieth century and the Sanchez property is one of the few remaining farmsteads of its type in Florida. It retains a high level of integrity, built in a traditional four-square form with a central stair hall. Much of the historic doors, windows, hardware and coquina piers have been preserved.

Historic photo of Sanchez Homestead



Aerial View of the Resource



5. Henry S. O'Brien Estate

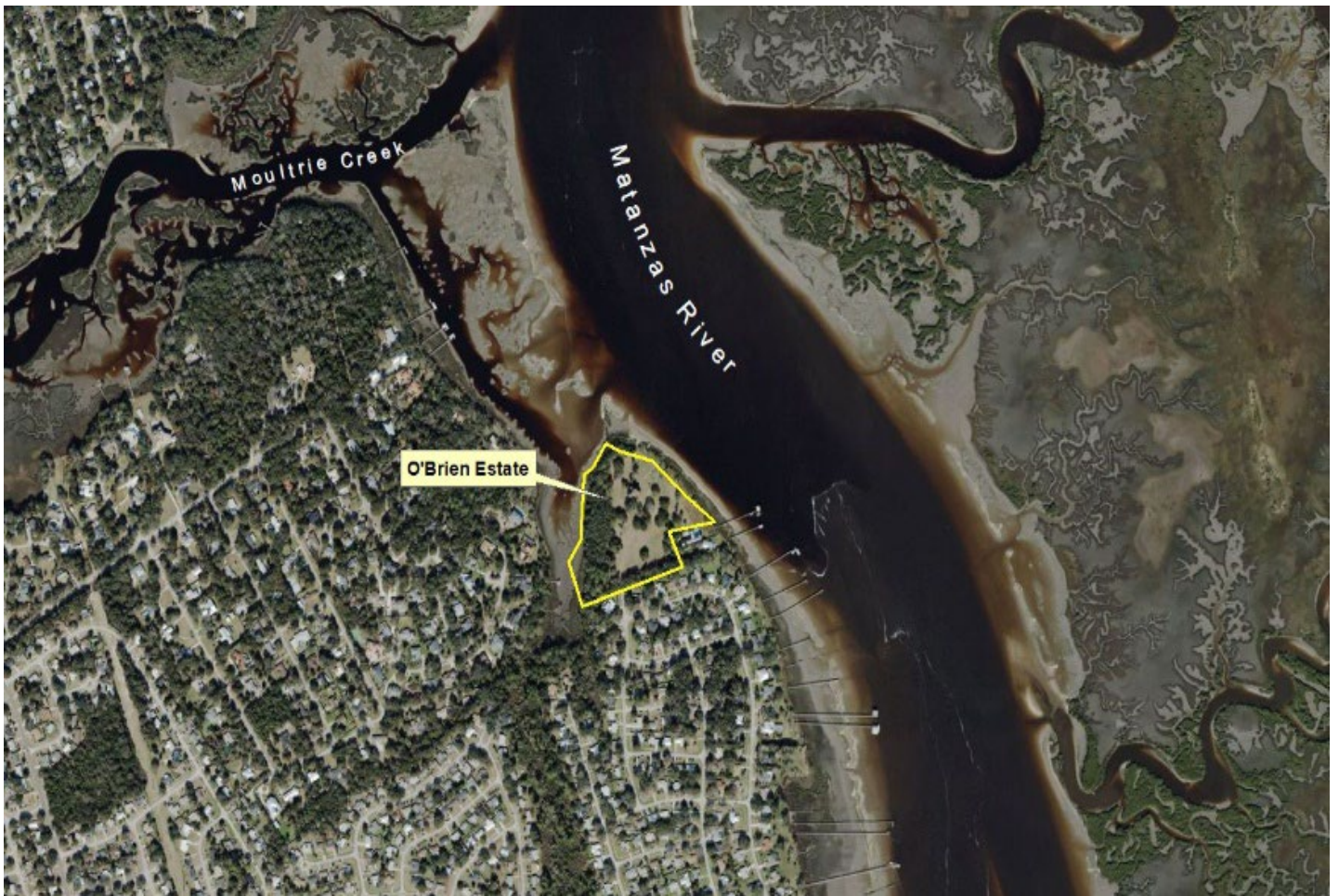
In 1885, Henry S. O'Brien came to St. Augustine and built one of the most significant preserved residential structures located outside of the City of St. Augustine along the mouth of Moultrie Creek, where it enters the Matanzas River. The site of the home encompasses 12 acres on a partially cleared peninsula with scattered live oaks. It is within the northern section of the St. Augustine Shores Community, in what was formerly called the town of Moultrie in southeastern St. Johns County. The site is also likely the location of the Purisima Concepcion de Casapullas Franciscan Mission (c. 1737) and the improved portion of a Second Spanish Period (1784-1821) land grant to Matias Pons. It was deforested and cultivated as far back as 1809.

This resource is unique in many ways and has maintained its historical appearance through three different owners and purposes. It is architecturally significant due to the distinction of featuring the Queen Anne-Eastlake Style and a poured concrete foundation with a coquina aggregate, both components being very rare for the period of its construction. O'Brien's family used this home as a winter vacation spot and had orange groves on the premises. From 1931-1945, the house was "The Dixie Home for the Aged & Infirm Deaf," founded by passionate deaf donors. The home featured rooms named after various US states to attract deaf tourists and students to stay. The structure was accepted into the National Register of Historic Places in October of 2024.

O'Brien Estate



Aerial View of the Resource



6. Alpine Groves Park

St. Johns County Alpine Groves Park is a resource group located in south Fruit Cove at 2060 State Road 13 consisting of a farmhouse, stables, orange packing barn, well, gardens and wharf. Built in 1886 adjacent to orange grove lands by Robert Willis, the two-story farmhouse was used by Mr. Willis as a seasonal home which was typical in the area. The property had different owners throughout the years, all of whom utilized the agricultural productivity of the land. The resources on the property tell the story of the importance of the 19th Century citrus industry in Northern Florida, before devastating freezes shifted the industry farther south.

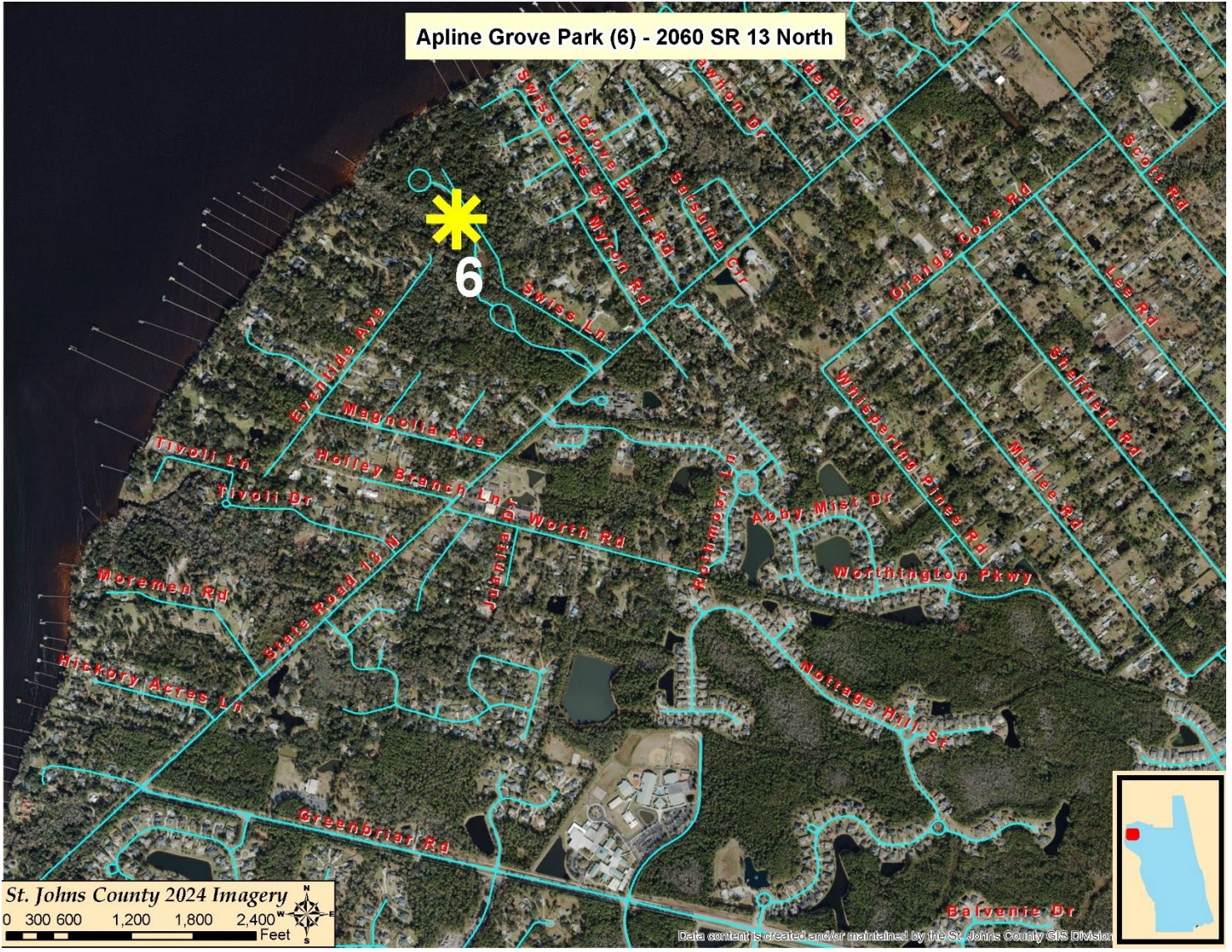
When the property was designated as a County Landmark in 2015, the farmhouse was converted into a museum. Interpretive signage is placed throughout the park to tell the story of the historic agricultural practices of the land.

Bennett House at Alpine Groves Park



Aerial View of the Resource Group

Apline Grove Park (6) - 2060 SR 13 North



St. Johns County 2024 Imagery
0 300 600 1,200 1,800 2,400 Feet

Data content is created and/or maintained by the St. Johns County GIS Division



7. Lodge and Hut

Located in the Summer Haven area, in extreme southeastern, coastal St. Johns County, this set of two structures are some of the oldest still standing on Old A1A highway. Summer Haven is located along the Matanzas River which is a saltwater estuary immediately south of the Matanzas Inlet. The Lodge (c.1897) and Hut (c.1892) were built as parts of a seasonal beach residence for Thomas A. Mellon, Jr. The two resources are significant for their association with the Settlement Era (1892-1927) of coastal St. Johns County. Both were seasonal residences for the prominent Mellon family of Pittsburgh, who owned the Lodge from 1897 and the Hut from 1923. The Mellons and other seasonal residents were attracted to Summer Haven not only for the warm climate and beach environment but also for the abundant fishing and hunting opportunities which the area provided.

The Lodge retains its integrity, with replacement of the original wooden shingles being the only major alteration to the structure. The Lodge remains in excellent condition and includes most of its historic exterior and interior features. These include character defining features such as a pyramidal-hip roof, a four-sided wraparound porch, a great room and coquina fireplace. The retention of original wooden foundation piers and wooden windows with original glass is particularly noteworthy.

The Hut was associated with Summer Haven developer Jesse Burton and other pioneer settlers of the community. It is the last known surviving property associated with the earliest period of Summer Haven's late 19th century development. It was also the only beachfront property to survive a major hurricane that destroyed most of the community in the 1890s. Although the Hut was damaged by Hurricane Matthew in October 2016, it has new windows on its north facade, but still retains its architectural integrity.

Lodge (9177 Old A1A)



Hut (9179 Old A1A)



Aerial View of the Resource



8. Hastings Jail

When the former wooden jail was destroyed after a prisoner set the building on fire to escape, the current Hastings Jail structure was built (c1911) on East Cochran Avenue in Hastings and was used to house prisoners until 1929. A Single-story building with a gable metal roof on a concrete foundation, the structure was built in hopes to avoid future destruction from inmates. The main St. Johns County Jail was in St. Augustine, about nineteen miles away from the town of Hastings, so lesser offenders were housed in the Hastings Jail, or until transport could be organized.

The jail is associated with Charles E. Greene, a Hastings native and the first Hastings Constable. The structure and its use represented the growing Hastings community at the time of its construction and a growing need for rural law enforcement in the early 20th Century. The Hastings Jail was listed as a St. Johns County Landmark in 2020.

Hastings Jail



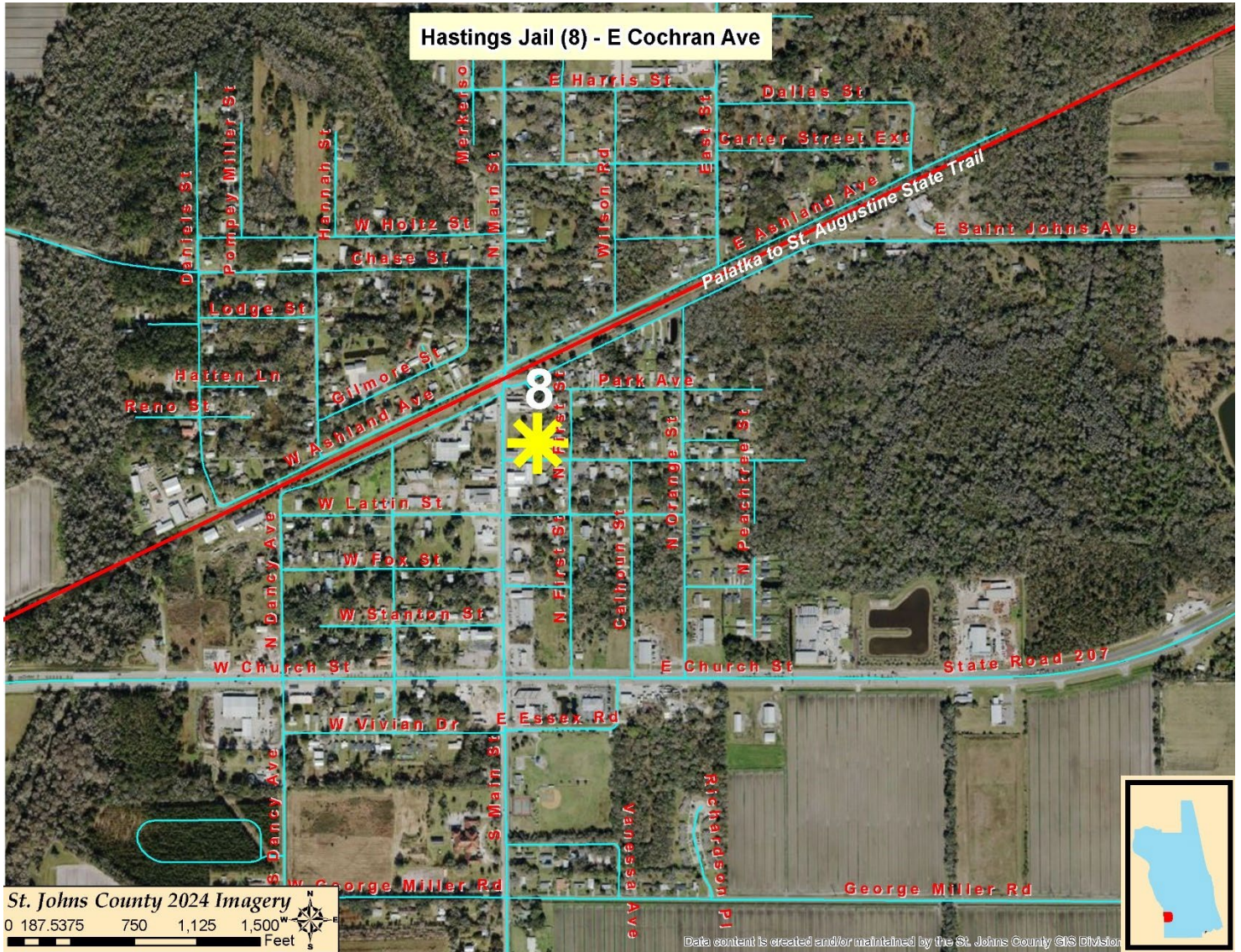
Rear of Structure



Side of Structure



Aerial View of the Resource



9. Dixie Highway

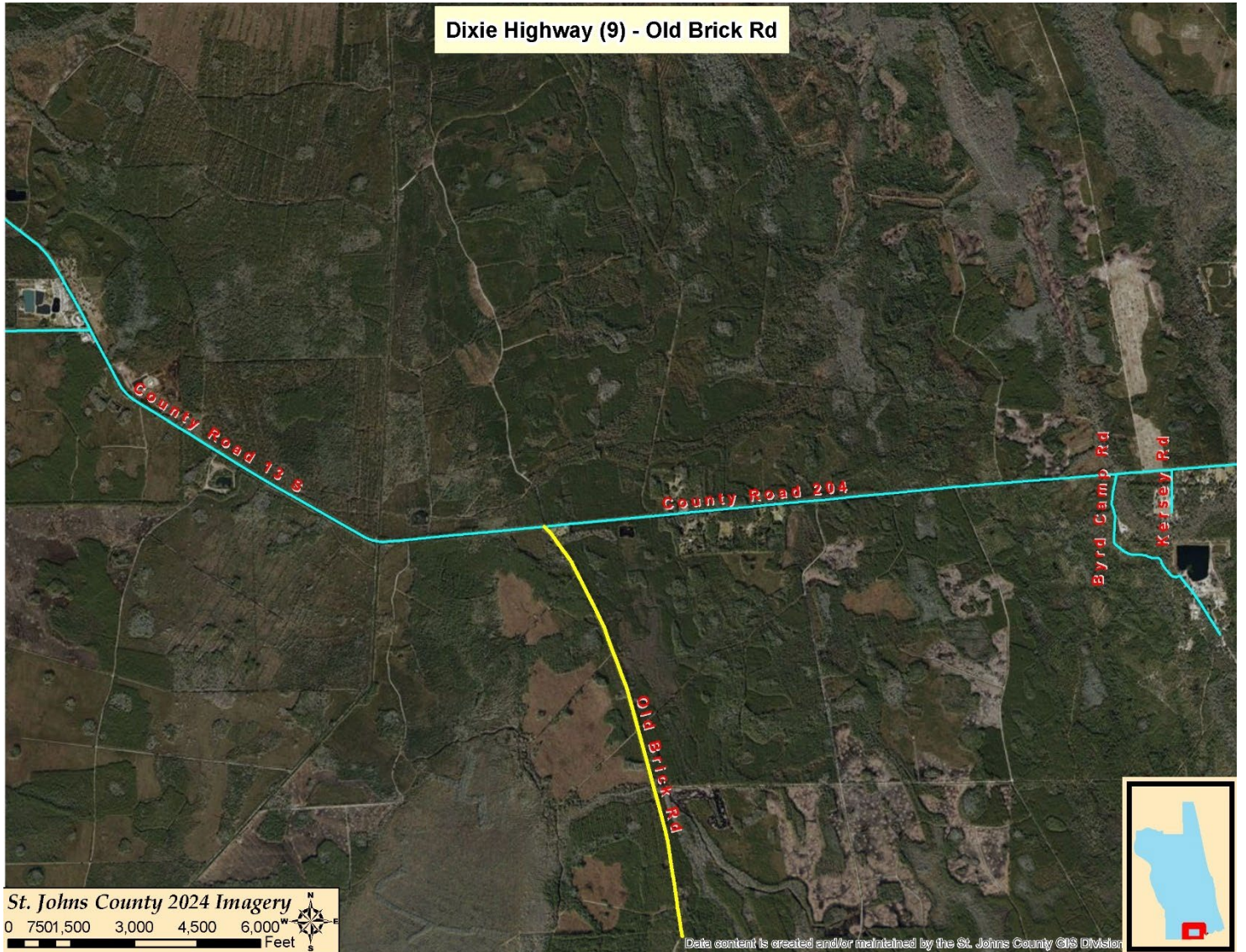
The Old Dixie Highway was once a vital transportation artery in northeastern Florida and beyond, connecting towns and communities in the early 20th century. This two-lane road, which predates US Highway 1, played an important role in Florida's development. It facilitated transportation in an era when automobiles were just beginning to revolutionize travel. The Highway synergized industry and government to create a network of roads from northern Michigan to South Florida.

This section of the Dixie Highway was part of the larger highway system that paralleled the railroad in this region. In the early 1900s, the County used oyster shells to pave roads and in 1914, railroad cars filled with oyster shells arrived from Melbourne, Florida to begin the portion of the roadway within St. Johns County. The Wilson Company began laying the curb and brick for the Dixie Highway at Durbin in the northern part of the County and near Hastings in the southern part. The company completed the project in 1916. The Dixie Highway was also referred to as the Hastings, Espanola and Bunnell Road and is an excellent example of a rural brick highway. It maintains a high level of integrity and is still maintained as a historic road section in a rural setting. The ten-mile brick road section running from southern St. Johns County into northern Flagler County is the longest contiguous remaining example of this type of rural highway in Florida. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005 and as a St. Johns County Landmark in 2019.

Dixie Highway (Old Brick Road)



Aerial View of Linear Resource



10. Hastings High School

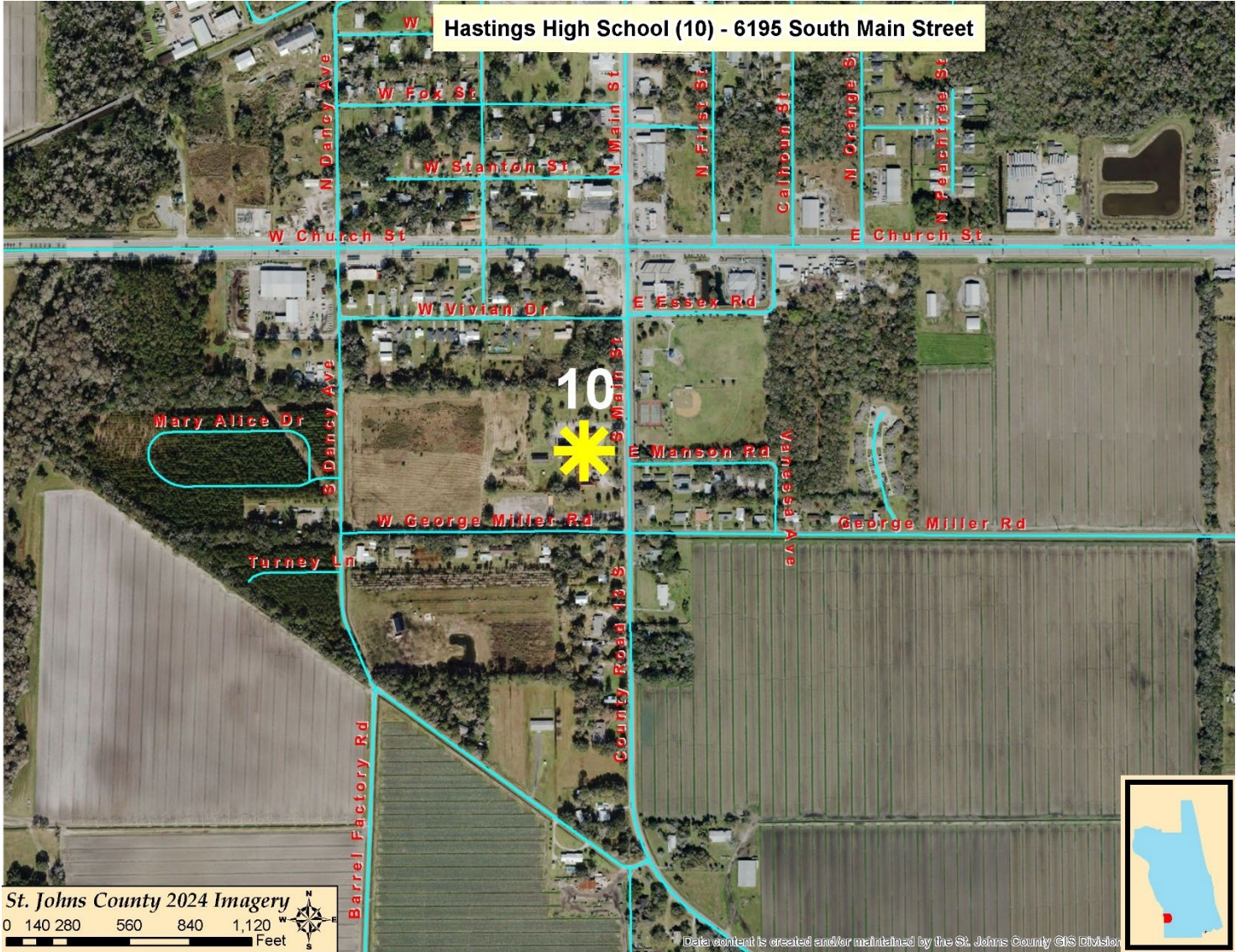
Located on historic Main Street, the former Hastings High School was designed by Frederick A. Henderich in a Mediterranean Revival style and built in 1924 to replace an aging two-story wood frame schoolhouse that previously served the town. Following state and national trends in schools and approval from Dr. Fletcher Dresslar, the school was built with features such as coquina shell stucco, ceramic roof tiles and wrought iron and maintains much of these historic elements today, qualifying it for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 2006.

Hastings High School served the students of not only its namesake, but also the community of Elkton. School hours were adjusted to accommodate the agricultural needs of residents, such as an early start to summer break to help with the agricultural harvest. The school began accepting younger students and experienced overcrowding, and additions such as a cafeteria were completed in 1928. Hastings High School was often used for various political activities such as lectures and speeches, until 1985 when students were transferred to St. Augustine High School and other local schools. In 1993, the Hastings High School Alumni Foundation rescued the building from a proposed demolition, and it is currently being used as a local government office. It is now being considered for renovation and restoration for continued educational uses as of 2025.

Former Hastings High School Building



Aerial View of Resource



11. Hartley Store

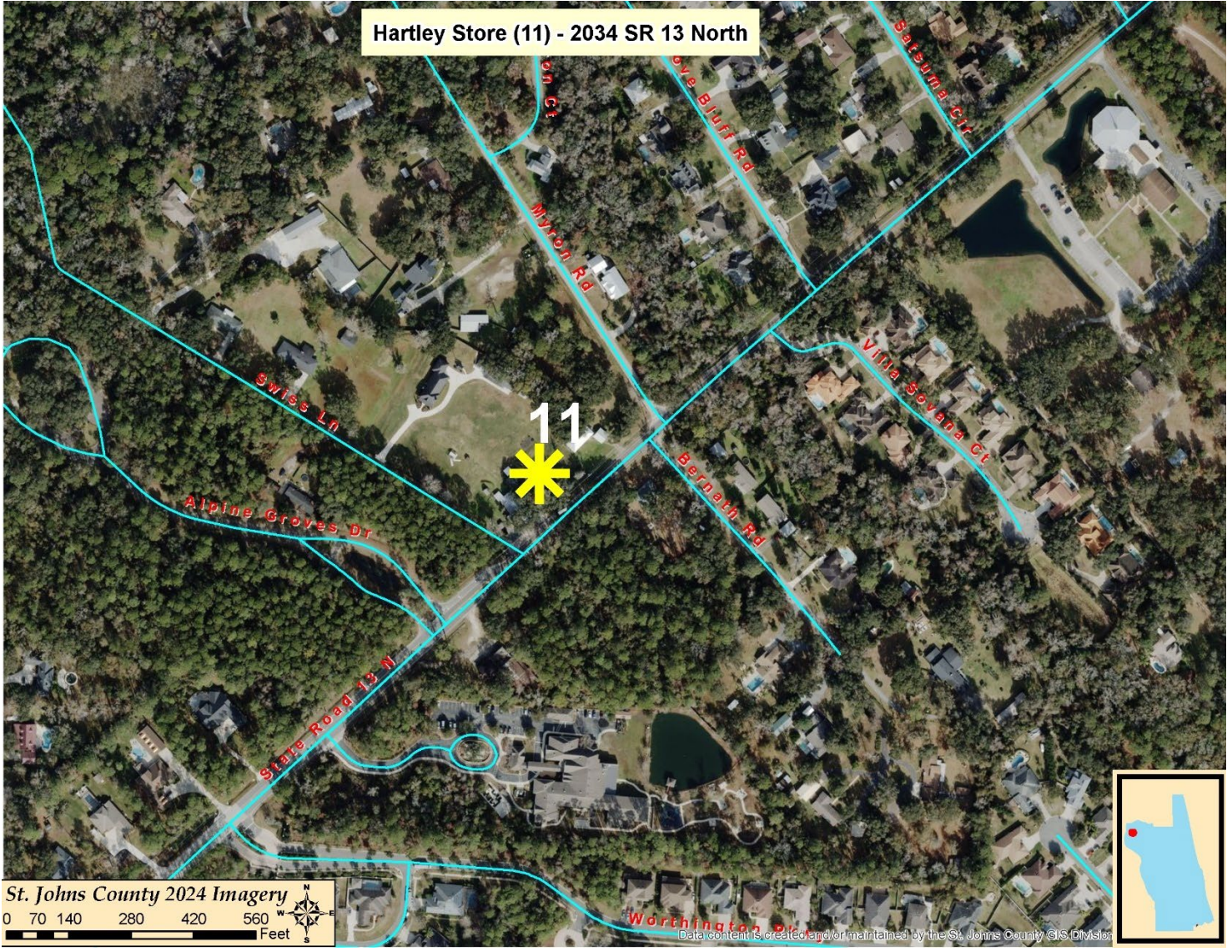
Country stores like the Hartley Store (c1930) located in the Switzerland area and listed in 2015, reflect the South's historic rural economy, commerce, politics and ways of life. In St. Johns County, Switzerland is a great example of a historically rural area that incorporated a country store. Originally built as a general store by Robert and Julia Brooker, the building was subsequently leased and known as Ward's store by the 1940's, although the Brookers retained ownership (Hartley Sisters Interview, 2008).

In 1950, the Brookers sold the business to Leonard Hartley, who moved south to Switzerland from Mandarin in Duval County. Lynn Wilemon and her two sisters, Barbara Jean Hartley Holley and Evelyn Annette Hartley Holley, inherited the store from their parents and currently rent the structure out as a residence. The store was a meeting place for residents of the area for decades until it closed in the 1990s. The building retains its historic interior including the bead board ceiling and walls, historic shelving, and historic objects including credit ledgers and historic register.

Hartley Store



Aerial View of the Resource



12. Fort Matanzas NM Headquarters and Visitor Center

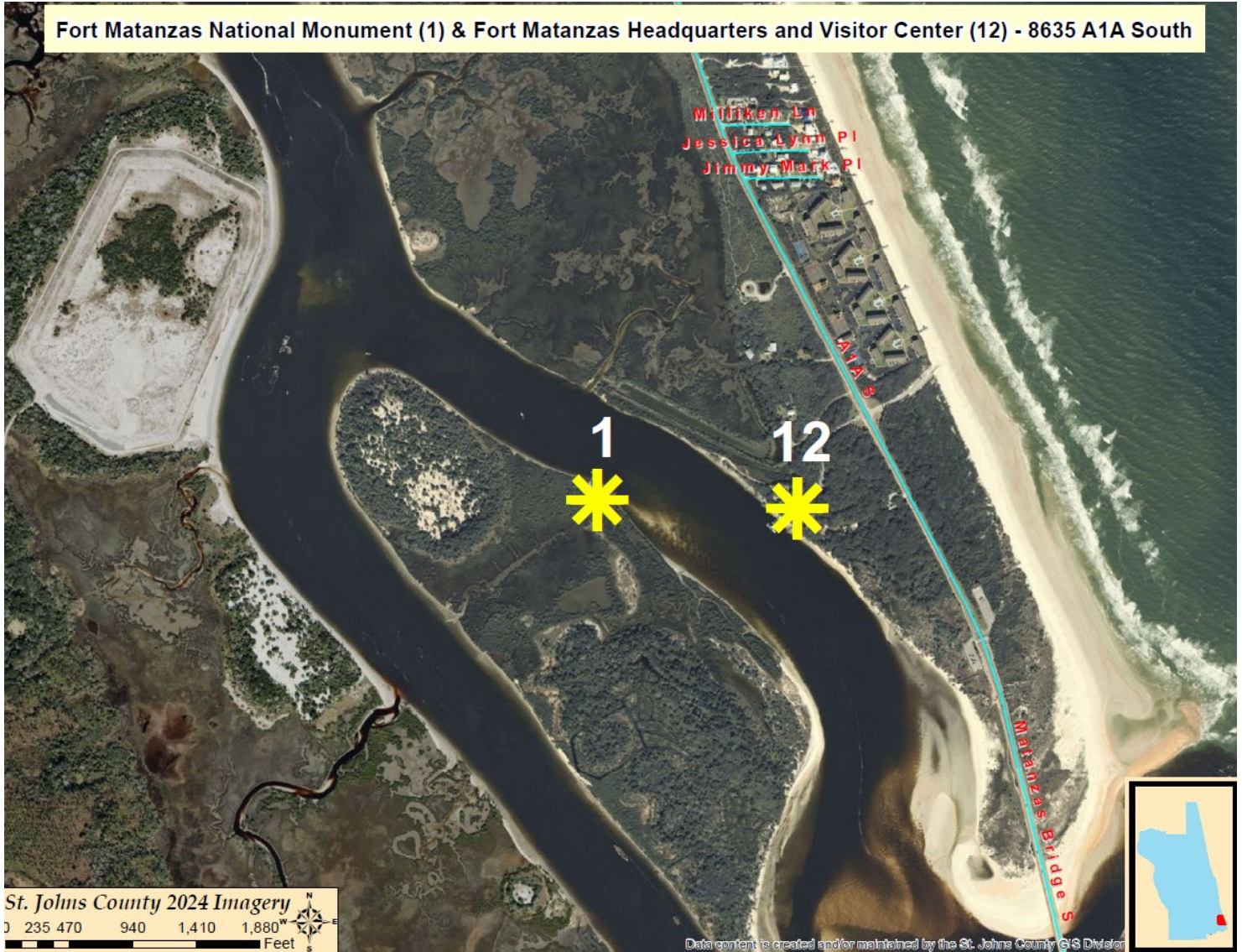
The Fort Matanzas National Monument Headquarters and Visitor Center was designed by the National Park Service and constructed with funds provided by the federal government and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2008. Built in the 1936, the resource illustrates early National Park Service design philosophy and rustic architecture. The two buildings that make up the resource are a multi-use two-story building that serves as a visitor contact point for the Fort Matanzas National Monument and a ranger residence, and a utility building that now serves as a ranger office. These buildings maintain features such as coquina block masonry and the grounds include an exterior staircase, retaining wall and other visitor features.

The Fort Matanzas Headquarters and Visitor Center represents the efforts by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to provide economic relief during the Great Depression and is a product of the New Deal. The two buildings have been in continual use since originally constructed and have undergone only modest alterations. In addition, the surrounding landscape remains largely unchanged since its initial development in the 1930s. Both the Headquarters and Visitor's Center and the designed setting continue to reflect the intentions of the original development plans and retain their original character to a high degree.

Fort Matanzas Headquarters and Visitor's Center



Aerial View of Ft. Matanzas National Monument (1) Headquarters and Visitor's Center (12)



13. The Inn at Marywood on the River

This c1939 Mediterranean Revival style residence, located in the Fruit Cove area on State Road 13 North near San Juan del Rio Catholic Church, was designated as a County Landmark in 2014 due to its distinguishing architectural style and association with people of significance. The local Hodges family, who contributed to over 2,000 miles of roadway in Northeast Florida, built and lived in the home for 20 years. In 1958, the property was conveyed to the Catholic Diocese of St. Augustine, where the home and surrounding property were used and expanded as a Catholic retreat and summer camp for many years.

The house remains in excellent condition has much of its original historic characteristics, including coquina block walls, decorative limestone elements and grand entryway. The porch has colonial revival elements, including a broken pediment over a keystone lintel and interior features such as a circular staircase, multiple fireplaces and a chapel room. The design elements of the home are connected to Harold F. Saxelbye, a well-established architect in the area at the time the Inn was constructed.

The Inn at Marywood on the River



Aerial View of the Resource



14. Allen D. Nease House

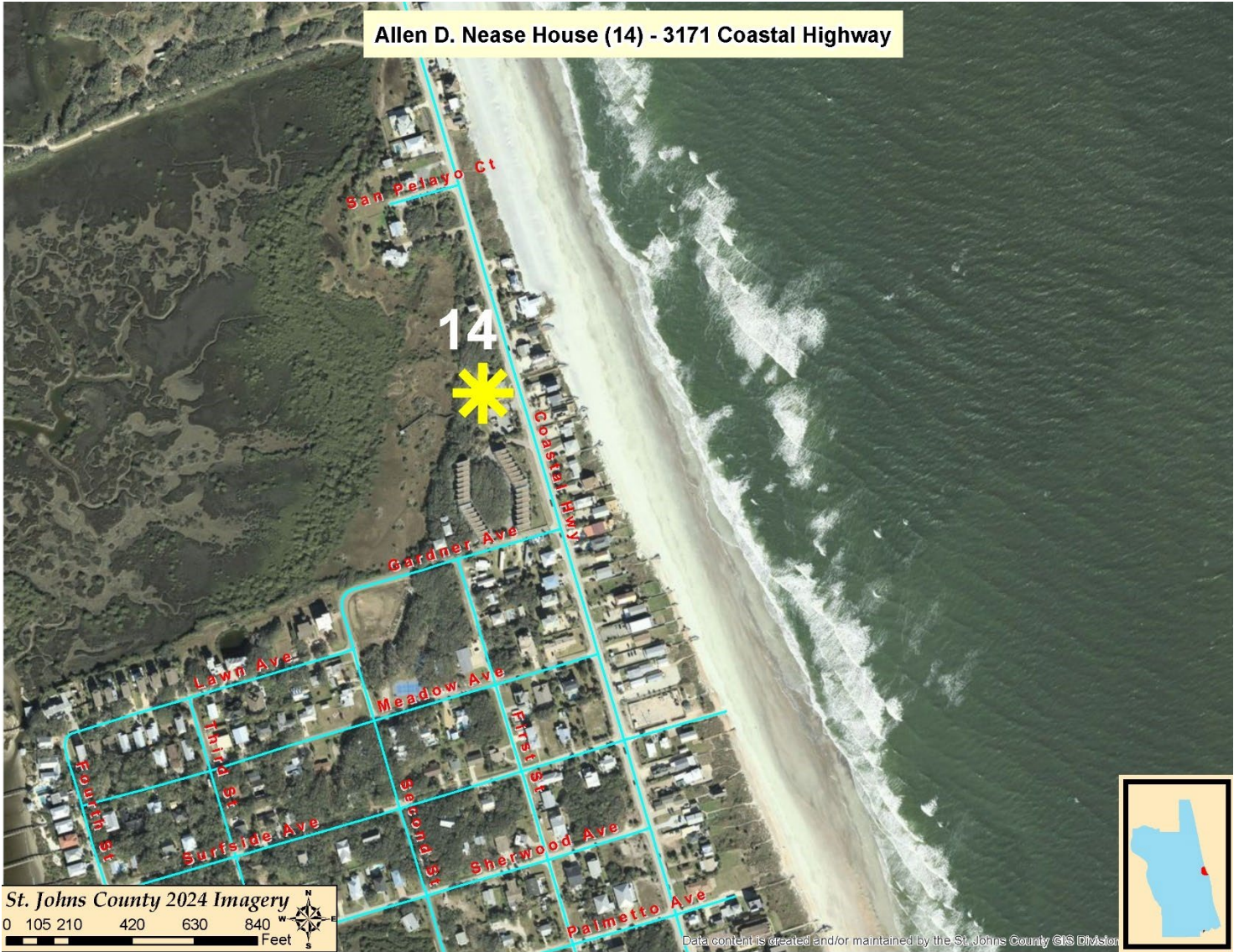
Allen Dowling Nease was a pioneer of Florida's reforestation efforts in the mid-20th century and quickly became one of St. Johns County's most influential civil servants. In his early career, Nease became Florida's first county forester and planted over 55 million pine trees throughout northern Florida, becoming affectionately known as "Johnny Pine Nut" (instead of Johnny Appleseed). He sat on the St. Johns County School Board for 24 years and 17 of those years, he served as Chairman, where his passion for education and forestry conservation had long lasting effects in the community, including development of the First Coast Technical Institute. Due to these achievements, Allen D. Nease High School, located in northern St. Johns County, was named after him.

Built c1951 at 3171 Coastal Highway in Vilano Beach, the unique interior of his home reflects Nease's long affiliation with Florida's forests. The wood selected to be used for the house was chosen for its longevity in Florida's coastal environment. Nease designed the house to include frames of heart pine, wall planking of 12-inch bald cypress, ceiling planking of indigenous hardwoods and solid bald cypress ceiling beams in the living room. The exterior of the house is rough cut, board and batten cypress. The cypress is over 70 years old and has never been touched by sealer, stain, or paint. The resource was designated as a County Landmark in 2015.

Allen Nease House and Beachfront Park



Aerial View of the Resource



15. Barrancotto's Roma Restaurant

The structure located at 165 Vilano Road in Vilano Beach was built in 1958 as a commercial Streamline Moderne architectural style restaurant, most notably, "Barrancotto's Roma Restaurant," which operated for 43 years as the first Italian restaurant in St. Augustine. The structure represents the post-World War II growth of the area with the development of motor courts, leading to increased tourism and incorporation of the architectural uniqueness of the Streamline Moderne, Art Deco and other similar architectural variations that became popular during the 1950s and 1960s.

The single-story, concrete block building with an irregular plan rests on a continuous concrete foundation. A flat roof and broad, unadorned eaves top the building. The front façade features a curved projecting wing with glass block windows on the angles. Years of exposure to the coastal climate and storms have deteriorated the building, however along with the County Landmark designation in 2024, the structure will undergo a rehabilitation to return and expand the restaurant back to its former use as a restaurant.

Barrancotto's Restaurant



Aerial View of the Resource



16. Arthur Milam House

Designed by Paul Rudolph and owned by Arthur Milam, an attorney from Jacksonville, this home was built on the coast in Ponte Vedra Beach in 1961. Mr. Rudolph was given full creative freedom in the design of the home for the Milam's and the last residence Rudolph would design in Florida. Some of Rudolph's other work in Florida includes the Sarasota High School addition and the Deering House on Casey Key near Sarasota (Nokomis, FL). The creative freedom granted allowed Rudolph to experiment with concepts and this became the first house where he did not use a structural system of regular bays. Other characteristics like more use of concrete block, large glass panes and a modular floor plan were also attempted and successful. Such characteristics can be seen in Rudolph's later designs, like the Art and Architecture Building at Yale University.

Published in the Architectural Record multiple times during the 1960s, the Milam residence is known for its large windows facing the ocean, concrete blocks that would influence Rudolph's later works, and purposeful separation between exterior and interior space. Inside the home, one would find a series of levels that drop down to a conversation pit and back up to a dining platform. The home also features a second floor, pool, multiple patios and a guesthouse. The house has had a few alterations as it remains a private residence, however much of its historical character has been maintained. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2016.

Arthur Milam House



Aerial View of the Resource



17. William Stetson Kennedy Cabin

Located in the Fruit Cove area at 1533 State Road 13 North, the W. Stetson Kennedy cabin was designated as a County Landmark in 2015, due to Kennedy's meaningful impact in the community. Born in 1916, Mr. Kennedy was an author, environmentalist and human rights activist who accomplished many groundbreaking things in his lifetime, including publishing "The Jim Crow Guide" (1956) and "The Klan Unmasked" (1990). He also marched alongside Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in St. Augustine and oversaw Zora Neale Hurston's work on the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Project Administration (WPA) in Florida. These writings present a variety of subject matter, from folk stories and nature writings to scientific research and Florida history, in mostly short pieces intended for use in Florida classrooms.

Stetson Kennedy built the cabin in 1975, in a quiet rural setting with a view of Lake Beluthahatchee as a central focus. The two-story resource was built with a deck and second story balcony offering a view of the lake. The structure was designed from the Lindal Cedar Home Chalet Vail plan, which Mr. Kennedy adjusted to his taste, such as altering the kitchen design to create a cozier living area. This home is where famous folk singer Woodrow Wilson "Woody" Guthrie, a close friend of Kennedy's, visited often and wrote songs about the lake and Mr. Kennedy.

W. Stetson Kennedy Cabin



Aerial View of the Resource

W. Stetson Kennedy Cabin (17) - 1533 State Road 13 North

