
THE WYATT/THOMAS HOUSE

3802 LITTLE AVENUE

COCONUT GROVE, FL. 33133

Designation Report



REPORT OF THE CITY OF MIAMI
PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT
TO THE HISTORIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION BOARD
ON THE POTENTIAL DESIGNATION OF
THE WYATT/THOMAS HOUSE
AS A HISTORICALLY DESIGNATED RESIDENCE

Prepared by: Joyce Landry, Owner

Date: 3/25/2011

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THE WYATT / THOMAS HOUSE
3802 LITTLE AVENUE
HISTORIC DESIGNATION REPORT

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Legal Description: Lot 20, Ye Little Wood Amended, recorded in Plat Book 4,
Page 158, of Miami-Dade County Public Records.

Original Use: Residence

Present Use: Residence

Present Owner: Joyce Landry
3900 Wood Avenue
Miami, FL 33133

Present Occupants: Gregory and Elizabeth Holt, tenants

Present Zoning District:: Residential Single-family

Tax Folio Number: 01-4129-13-0170

HC Zoning Overlay District:

Boundary Description of HC Zoning District:

HC Zoning Classification:

Dade County Historic Survey Rating:

Architectural Significance -

Historical Significance -

Contextual Significance

II. SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Significance: This residence, built nearly a century ago, is an excellent example of Mission architectural style adapted to the local climate, and dates from a transitional period in Coconut Grove's history as it developed into a distinctive and sophisticated residential area.

Relationship to Criteria for Designation:

Chapter 23 of the Miami City Code, entitled Historic Preservation, at Section 23-4 (a) requires that a subject property:

"have significance in the historical, cultural, archeological, paleontological, aesthetic, or architectural heritage of the city, state or nation." The subject property, nearly a century old, is an important part of the city's and the state's historical and architectural heritage.

"possess integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association." This house was well-built with design elements and materials consistent with the Mission style, and based on early photographs, it has undergone few exterior alterations. Its style evokes the feeling of exotic romance and association with Spanish mission architecture from California.

To be eligible for designation, a property must also meet at least one of eight specified criteria, of which the subject property at 3802 Little Avenue meets the following three:

3) Exemplifies the historical, cultural, political, economical, or social trends of the community

As a Mission style residence, built circa 1916 as one of the earliest buildings in the subdivision of Ye Little Wood, the subject house exemplifies the transition period of Coconut Grove from a hardy seafaring and agricultural community to a sophisticated residence for middle-class northerners arriving by train. This

architectural style, inspired by the Spanish missions of California, evoked a romantic and exotic atmosphere much in vogue at the time.

5) Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or method of construction

The Mission style, originating in California, was popular in South Florida from 1910 to the 1930s. Often not requiring the skills of a trained architect, the style is characterized by simplicity and lack of applied decoration. Distinguishing features seen in the subject structure are its plain stucco surface, flat roof, curved parapet with plain molding and mission bell, rustic fireplace, and exposed wooden rafters.



Molding and Mission Bell



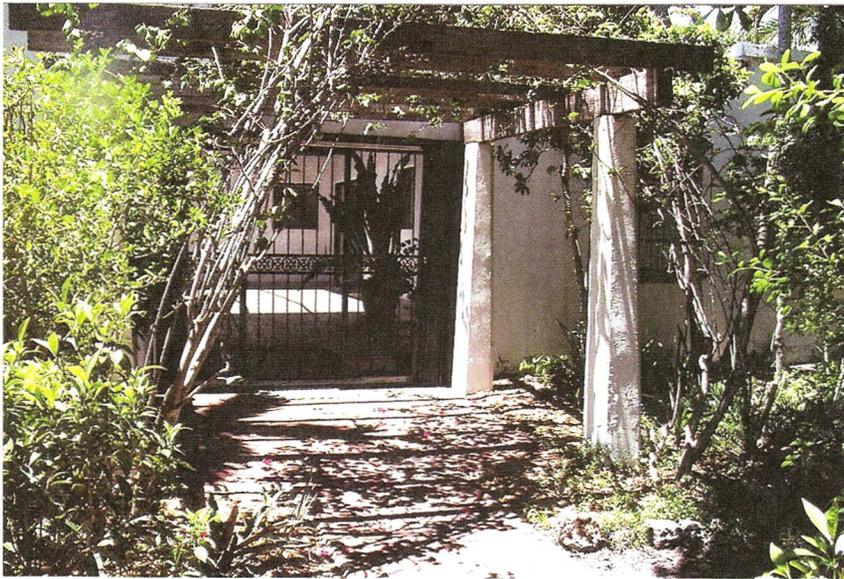
Wooden Rafters in Living Room



Rustic Fireplace w/Wooden Rafters

7) *Contains elements of design, details, materials, or craftsmanship of outstanding quality or which represent a significant innovation or adaptation to the South Florida environment*

The Mission style itself, with its masonry walls and smooth surfaces, was well adapted to the warm climate of California in the era before air-conditioning, and the style transplanted well to South Florida. Local adaptations seen here are the wooden pergola shading the front entrance with vegetation, and the original construction with screening of the open interior patio, allowing cross-ventilation of all the rooms and the enjoyment of outdoor living without the insects.



Wooden Pergola



Original Construction with Screening and Wooden Beams

III. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Date of Construction: circa 1916

Architect / Builder: Unknown

Architectural Style: Mission

Historical Context:

J. William Ewan of Charleston, South Carolina, filed for a homestead in the Coconut Grove area (then unincorporated Dade County) in 1876 that was granted in 1883. He developed part of his land along the bayfront as Ewanton Heights, where he sold one lot to John Webb Little of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, on March 26, 1901. Almost as a postscript to this transaction, the deed also conveyed to J.W.Little an additional ten acres of land on the west side of the County Road.¹ It was this land that would later become Ye Little Wood. The Littles built a house here in 1902, at what would become 3848 Little Avenue, that was designated as a historic site by the City of Miami's Historic and Environmental Preservation Board in 2007.

Part of this ten-acre parcel was surveyed in March 1915 as "Ye Little Wood -- W.V.Little's Allotment,"² referring to J.W.Little's son, William Vogelsson Little (1879-1970). The survey laid out twenty lots along a winding "private road" that later became Little Avenue. J.W.Little conveyed several of these lots to his son on November 1, 1915, including Lot 20, the site of the subject house, that is next door to the Little house.³ Five days later, on November 6, 1915, W.V.Little sold Lot 20 to Katherine Edwards Wyatt and her husband Thomas Hall Wyatt.⁴

¹ Dade County Deeds, Book 1, Page 73.

² Dade County Plat Book 3, Page 185.

³ Dade County Deeds, Book 143, Page 175.

⁴ Dade County Deeds, Book 146, Page 49.

Thomas Hall Wyatt (1879-1949) was a civil engineer from Massachusetts⁵ who came to Florida with his wife Katherine and two children in 1914.⁶ While no original building records survive, it was probably the Wyatts who built the subject house, because their deed is obviously for vacant land and states several requirements for any residence to be built there, including, among other things, that it must cost at least \$2,000 and have a 20-foot front setback and a septic tank. A construction date of 1916 in the County Property Appraiser's records is probably correct. City of Miami Building Department records give a date of 1914, but because Coconut Grove did not become part of Miami until 1925 these records are less reliable.

In 1919, Ye Little Wood expanded southward with the platting of fourteen additional lots along Wood Avenue. In 1921, the Wyatts built a new Mission Style residence for themselves in this new section, on Lot 21, next door to the subject house, that they sold on April 19, 1921, to Mrs. Ida A. Thomas.⁷ It would remain in her family for the next 60 years.

Mrs. Thomas was from Caribou, Maine, and the widow of Dr. Charles S. Thomas, a physician and former member of the Maine state legislature who had died at the end of 1920,⁸ a few months after their arrival in Coconut Grove. When Mrs. Thomas bought the house in 1921, she was joined there by two of her daughters, Bertha Mae Thomas, who was deaf, and Edna T. Day, who was blind. Edna was divorced and brought her three young daughters also: Helen, Frances, and Atlant, ages 8, 6, and 3. Family chronicles and photographs have been provided by Ms. Jennie Crooks, the daughter of Frances Day. She relates that the women and girls "traveled by train to Miami to start a new life,"⁹ with the help of Ida's son, Charles F. Thomas.

⁵ U.S. Census, 1910.

⁶ Obituary, *Miami Herald*, January 4, 1949.

⁷ Dade County Deeds, Book 260, Page 213.

⁸ Obituary, *Miami Herald*, January 1, 1921.

⁹ Correspondence from Jennie Crooks to Ute Vladimir, Jan. 19, 2002, in Ute Vladimir's records.

The elderly Mrs. Thomas was active in Coconut Grove social affairs, but died at her residence in 1925.¹⁰ Charles was given the house by the other heirs in 1926,¹¹ and the 1930 U.S. Census shows that Bertha, Edna, and her three daughters continued to live there. Both Frances and Atlant eventually became schoolteachers; Helen married airline pilot Jack Bible. Charles conveyed the house to his sister Bertha in 1938, and in 1942 she granted it to her niece Atlant, who by then had married Robert Kellar.¹² The house finally passed from the Thomas extended family in 1982 when Atlant Day Kellar sold it to Robert and Jeuelle Starr. They sold it the following year to Lincoln T. Potter, who is said to have remodeled the interior of the house.¹³ He sold it in 1988 to the late Andrew and Ute Vladimir, who lived in the house for twenty years.

An architect for the subject house has not been identified. A strong possibility is that it was built by contractor A.B.Wade, who lived in Ye Little Wood and is known to have built a coral rock bungalow here in 1916.¹⁴ His son Lee Wade, 20 at that time, was soon to become an architect. Or Thomas Wyatt, as a civil engineer, may have had a hand in the construction himself.

IV. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:

Description of Building:

The house is a simple, one-story concrete and stucco structure with a flat roof. The entrance is oriented eastward, facing the road. A curved section of the parapet over the entrance has simple stucco molding and an arched opening set with a cast-iron bell. A family photograph supplied by Jennie Crooks shows her mother and aunts as children under a wooden pergola in front of the house in 1921; the house still has a similar pergola, although the

¹⁰ Obituaries, *Miami Herald*, February 11 & 12, 1925.

¹¹ Dade County Deed Book 1037, Page 232.

¹² Dade County Deed Book 1888, Page 500; Book 2244, Page 506.

¹³ Personal papers of Ute Vladimir.

¹⁴ *Miami Daily News*, June 27, 1916.

wood is new. Windows seen in the photograph appear to be casements, but have been replaced in recent years with plate glass and awning-type windows.

The only building records found in the Miami Building Department are from the City Assessor dating back to 1938. These document the building's cloister-like U-shaped footprint around an open patio that then had a screened roof and "native rock floor" that still survive. The house had a living room, dining room, kitchen, three bedrooms, and one bath. Window frames and floors were of wood; present floors are red clay quarry tile.



Red Clay Quarry Tile



U-shaped Footprint around Open Patio

While much of the interior has been remodeled, the original coral-rock fireplace and exposed wood ceiling beams are still intact, and the exterior still remains typical of local architecture of the 1910s. The stucco exterior, flat roof, curved parapet with molding and bell, and absence of applied decoration are all characteristics of the Mission style of architecture, reminiscent of the Spanish missions in California, that was prevalent in South Florida from 1910 to the 1930s.¹⁵



Stucco Exterior

V. PLANNING CONTEXT

This will be the second designation of a historic home in this neighborhood, following the designation of the Little House at 3848 Little Avenue, next door to the subject property, on April 3, 2007.

¹⁵ Metro Dade County, From Wilderness to Metropolis, 1992, p. 182.

The subdivision of Ye Little Wood remains remarkably intact and cohesive, with a number of other homes and landscaping elements that are potentially eligible for historic designation. The possibility of creating either a historic district or neighborhood conservation district here has been under consideration since the designation of the Little House, and research on the entire area has begun. The subject property is the first to be encountered on entering Ye Little Wood, and its preservation is critical to neighborhood context. The present owner, who lives nearby in Ye Little Wood, currently has the subject property listed for sale and is requesting designation to ensure its preservation by future owners.

VI. HC ZONING ELEMENTS

Property is zoned 0001 Residential, Single Family. These conservation objectives can best be achieved by maintaining the present zoning of the property.

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Deeds and Platbook Records: Miami-Dade County Clerk Archives, Miami.

Metropolitan Dade County; From Wilderness to Metropolis, 2nd Edition, Office of Community Development, Historic Preservation Division, 1992.

Miami Daily News and *Miami Herald* archives, as cited: Miami Public Library, Florida Room.

Personal Correspondence of Ute Vladimir: private collection.

U.S. Census Records: *AncestryPlus* online.

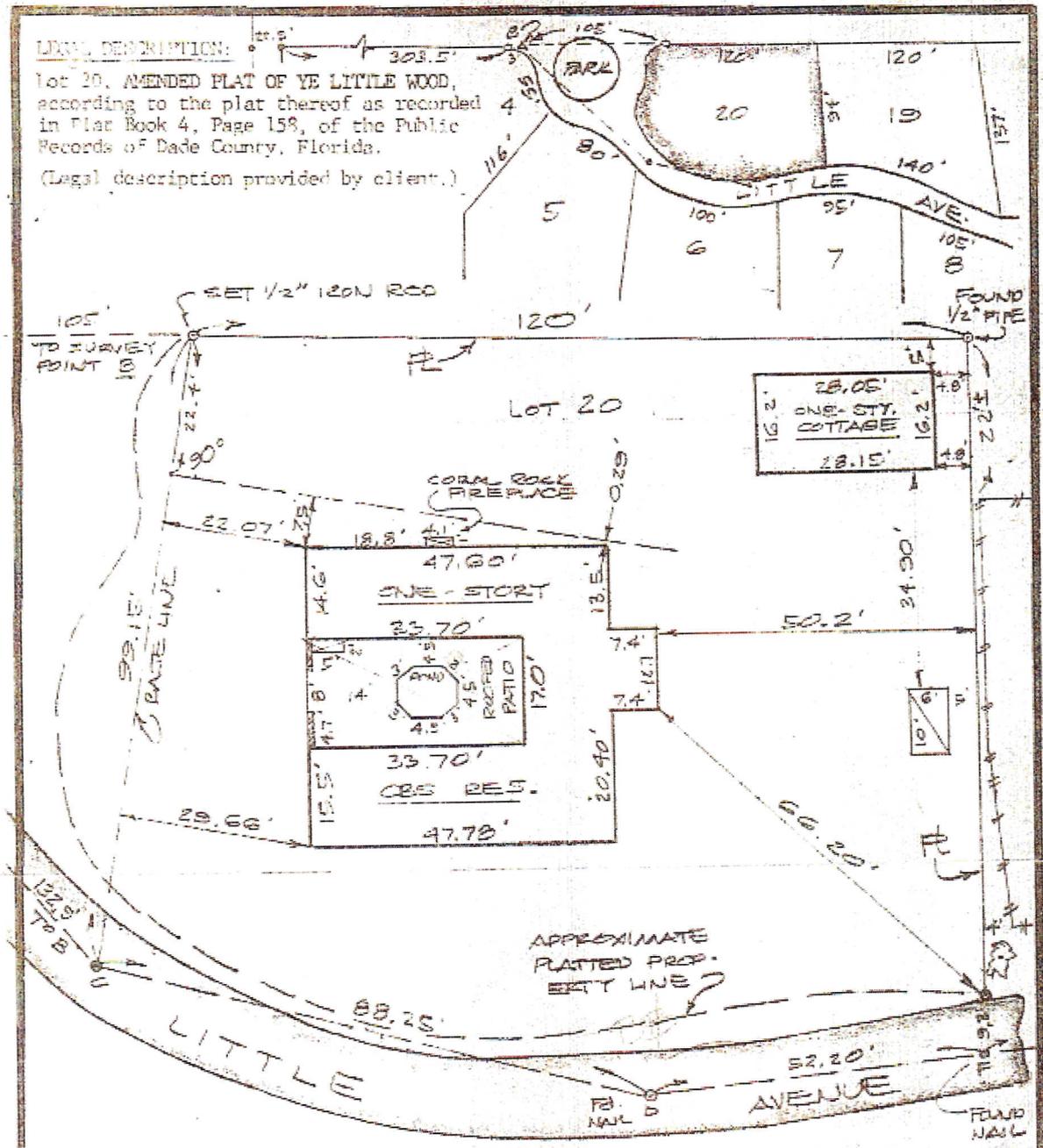
---Carolyn Klepser, researcher

August 16, 2010

Revised March 18, 2011

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Lot 20, AMENDED PLAT OF YE LITTLE WOOD, according to the plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 4, Page 158, of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida.
(Legal description provided by client.)



NOTE:
POINTS B, C, D, E, F FROM CITY OF MIAMI SURVEY INFORMATION.

Note: Lands shown hereon were not abstracted for easements and/or right-of-ways of record.
Elevations based on PCBM = N/A Elev. = NGV Datum.
Bearings if shown are based on assumed meridian and Plat of Record.

SURVEY FOR: VLADIMIR, Andrew, 3802 Little Avenue, Coconut Grove, FL, 33133

NOT VALID UNLESS EMBOSSED WITH SURVEYOR'S SEAL

BOUNDARY SURVEY
I HEREBY CERTIFY that the survey represented herein meets the minimum technical requirements specified by the State of Florida Board of Land Surveyors pursuant to Section 472.007 Florida Statutes. There are no encroachments, overlaps, omissions appearing on the plat or visible applicants other than those shown herein.

GARY B. CASTEL SURVEYING, INC.
LAND SURVEYORS
12016 S.W. 132nd COURT
MIAMI, FLORIDA 33186 (305) 253-6787

REVISED:

Gary B. Castel
GARY B. CASTEL
Registered Land Surveyor No. 4129
State of Florida

FLOOD ZONE:
DATE: 5-6-88 SCALE: 1" = 20' DWN. BY: GBC JOB No. 188-511

Survey 5/6/1988

My Home
Miami-Dade County, Florida



miamidade.gov

Property Information Map



Aerial Photography - 2009

0 115 ft

This map was created on 3/25/2011 9:31:30 AM for reference purposes only.

Web Site © 2002 Miami-Dade County. All rights reserved.



Close

Miami-Dade Property Info
and Map

Summary Details:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Folio No.: | 31-4129-013-3170 |
| Property: | 3802 LITTLE AVE |
| Mailing Address: | JOYCE L LANDRY 3900 WOOD AVE MIAMI FL 33133 |

Property Information:

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Primary Zone: | 0100 SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE |
| CLUC: | 0001 RESIDENTIAL - SINGLE FAMILY |
| Beds/Baths: | 3/1 |
| Floors: | 1 |
| Living Units: | 1 |
| Adj Sq Footage: | 2,204 |
| Lot Size: | 14,000 SQ FT |
| Year Built: | 1916 |
| Legal Description: | YE LITTLE WOOD AMND PLAT PB 4-158 LOT 20 AND PROP INT IN & TO COMMON ELEMENTS NOT DEDICATED TO PUBLIC LOT SIZE 14000 SQUARE FEET OR 13993-1014 0289 5 |

Assessment Information:

| Year: | 2010 | 2009 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Land Value: | \$322,000 | \$539,000 |
| Building Value: | \$186,521 | \$200,650 |
| Market Value: | \$508,521 | \$739,650 |
| Assessed Value: | \$508,521 | \$349,650 |

Exemption Information:

| Year: | 2010 | 2009 |
|----------------|------|----------|
| Homestead: | \$0 | \$25,000 |
| 2nd Homestead: | NO | YES |
| Widow: | \$0 | \$500 |

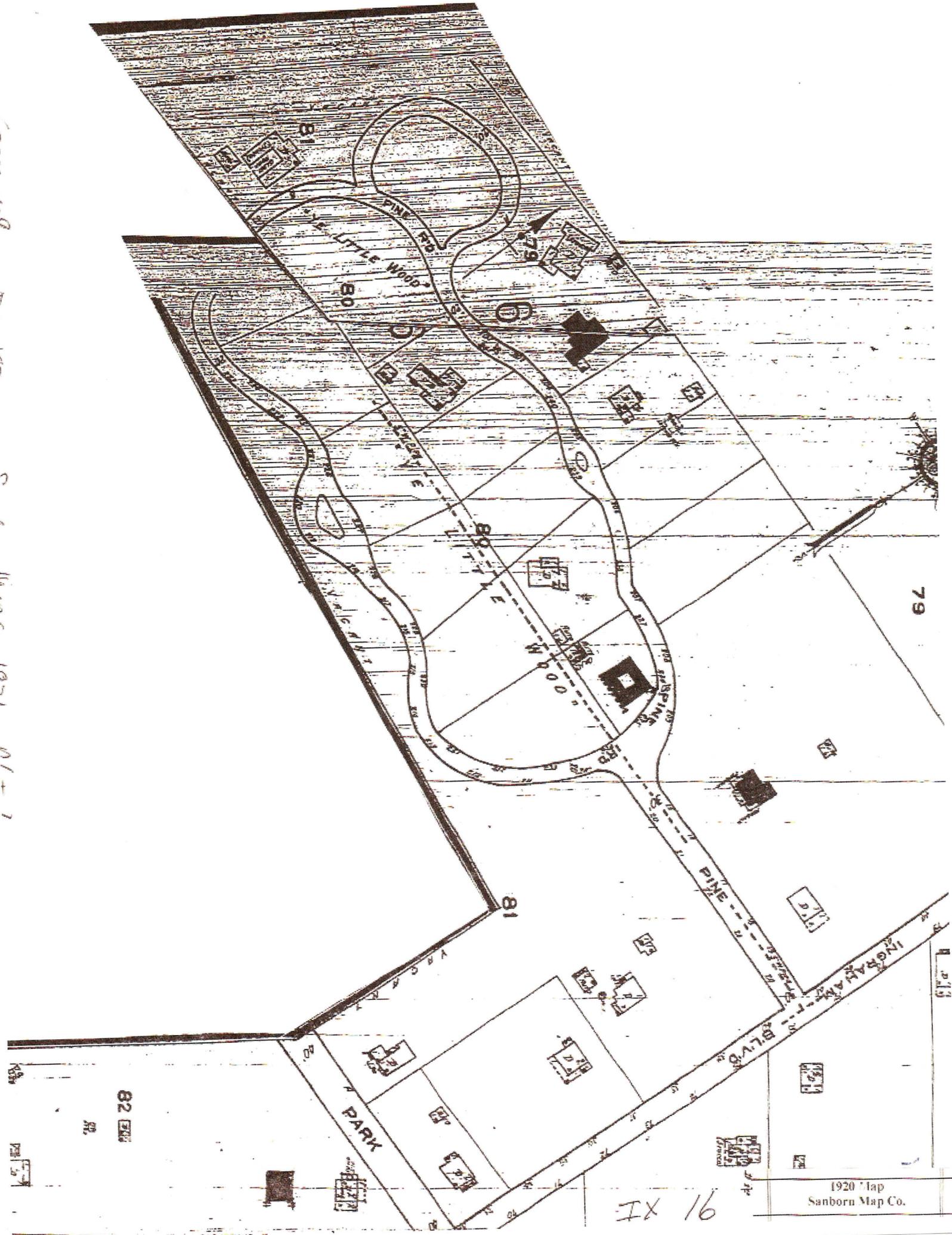
Taxable Value Information:

| Year: | 2010 | 2009 |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Taxing Authority: | Applied Exemption/ Taxable Value | Applied Exemption/ Taxable Value |
| Regional: | \$0/\$508,521 | \$50,500/ \$299,350 |
| County: | \$0/\$508,521 | \$50,500/ \$299,350 |
| City: | \$0/\$508,521 | \$50,500/ \$299,350 |
| School Board: | \$0/\$508,521 | \$25,500/ \$324,350 |

Sale Information:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Sale Date: | 5/2010 |
| Sale Amount: | \$650,000 |
| Sale O/R: | 27243-3647 |
| Sales Qualification Description: | Deeds to or executed by trustees in bankruptcy executors, guardians, or receivers |
| View Additional Sales | |

Account from Dec. 1920 - Sanborn Map Co. 10-1 01-1



IX 16

1920 Map
Sanborn Map Co.

