

CRANDON PARK

Historic Documentation

VISUAL EXHIBITS

VOL. 8



The Crandon Park: A Call for Change report is comprised of an *Executive Summary* and the following *Research Volumes*:

- Vol. 1 Introduction
- Vol. 2 Crandon Park Today | Part 1 - Site Analysis
Crandon Park Today | Part 2 - Specific Area Analysis
- Vol. 3 Relevant History
- Vol. 4 Master Plan Evolution
- Vol. 5 Park Governance & Funding
- Vol. 6 Recent Best Practices
- Vol. 7 Park Precedents
- Vol. 8 [Historic Documentation](#)

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Crandon Park: A Call for Change
Research & Analysis Report

Volume 8

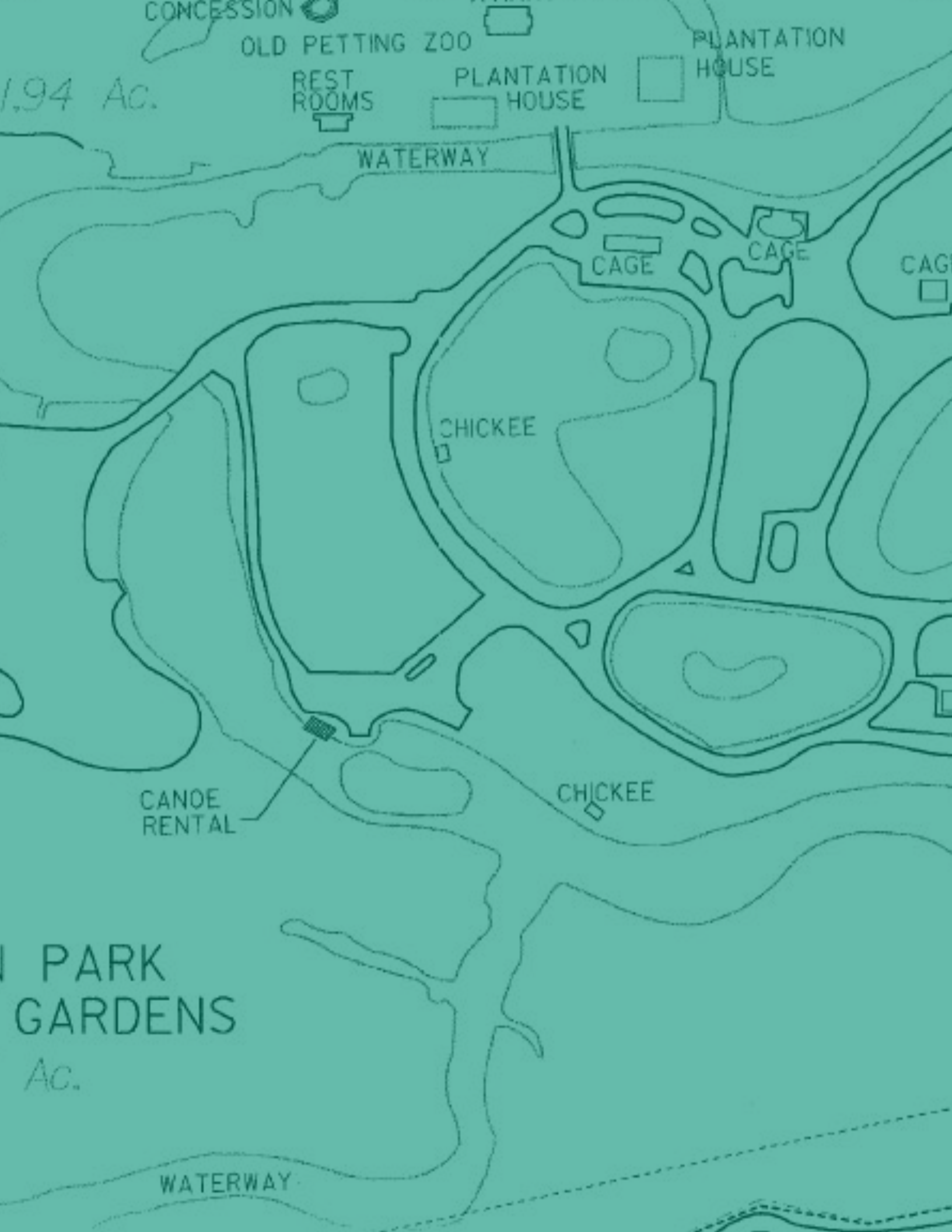
~

Prepared for
Citizens for Park Improvement (CPI)

Elaborated by
West 8 urban design and landscape architecture

CRANDON PARK

VOLUME 8 | HISTORIC DOCUMENTATION



1.94 Ac.

CONCESSION

OLD PETTING ZOO

PLANTATION HOUSE

REST ROOMS

PLANTATION HOUSE

WATERWAY

CAGE

CAGE

CAGE

CHICKEE

CANE RENTAL

CHICKEE

PARK GARDENS

Ac.

WATERWAY

8 Historic Documentation

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8

Historic Documentation

Visual Exhibits

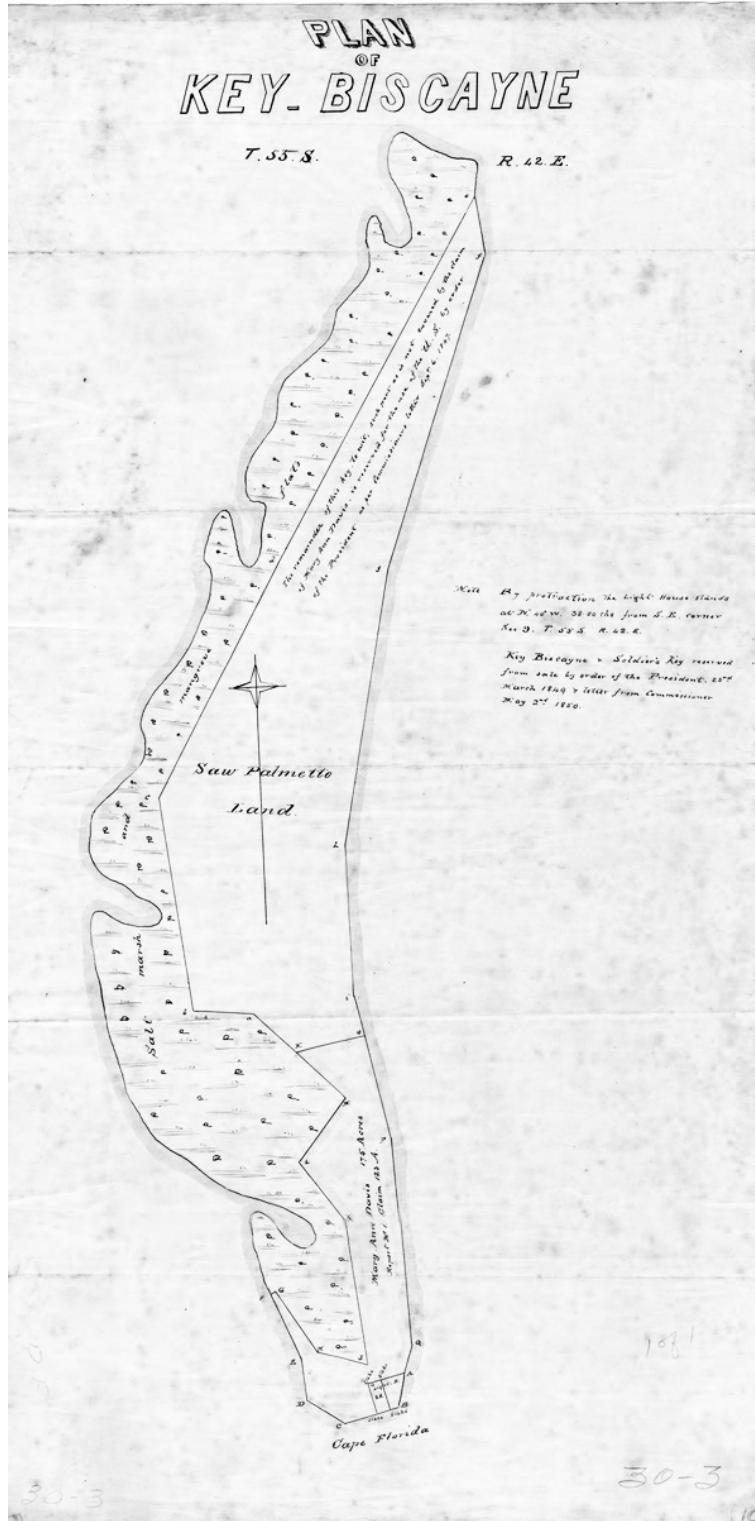
Crandon Park's history can be told through the visual documentation that records the visions of its master planners and surveys illustrating its built condition.

The following historic maps, surveys and master plans are arranged thematically in general chronological order.

- 1. Key Biscayne Plans*
- 2. Crandon Park Master Plans*
- 3. Crandon Park Surveys*
- 4. Crandon Zoo & Gardens*
- 5. Master Plan Zooms*

They illustrate the relevant visual narrative of Crandon Park, starting from the early 19th century until today.

1850 Key Biscayne



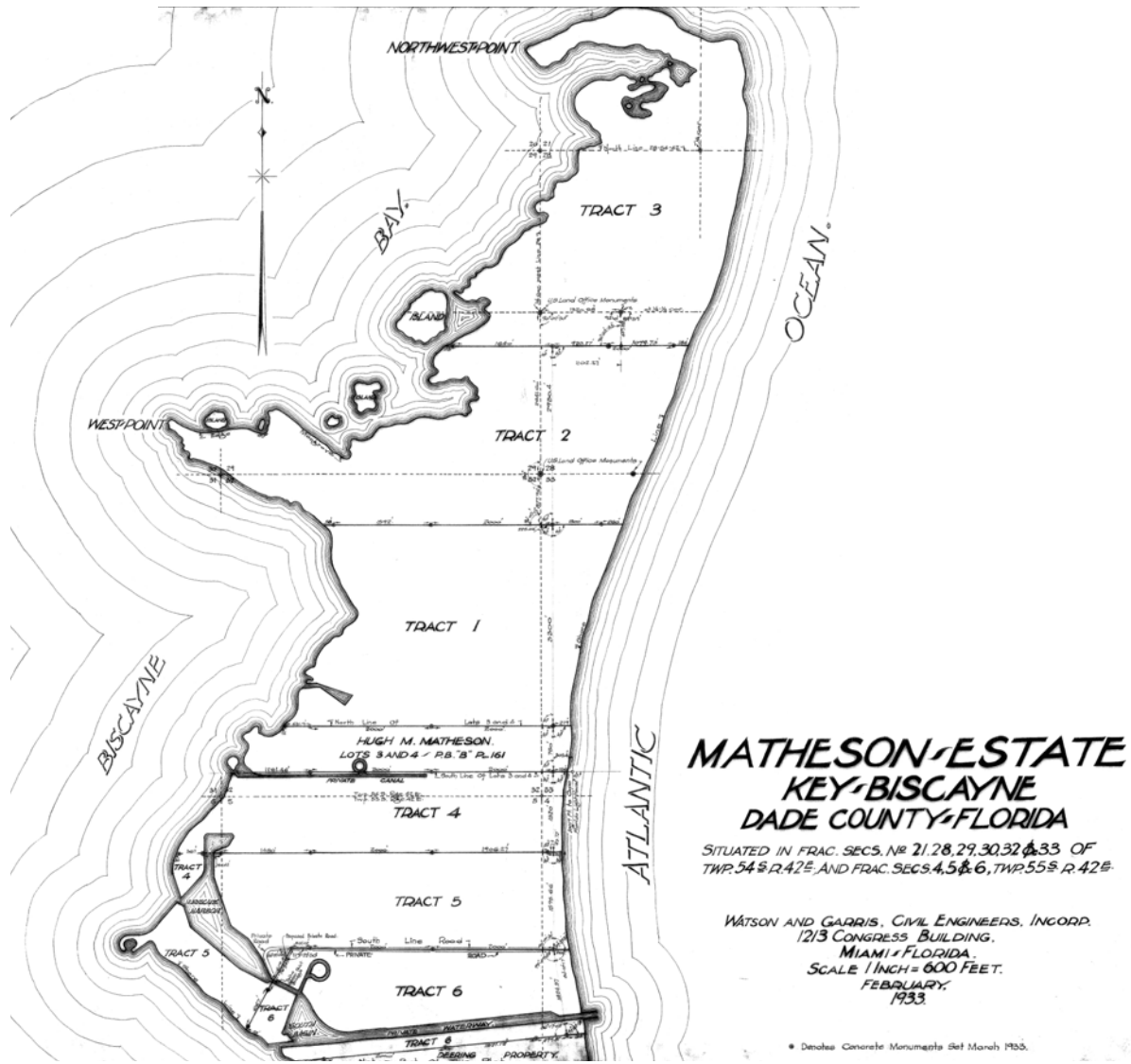
Source: State Archive of Florida/National Archives

Plan of Key Biscayne

During the mid-nineteenth century the barrier island Key Biscayne had few settlers. This plan illustrates the first American title holder Mary Ann Davis, who held 175 acres near the tip of Cape Florida (now known as Bill Baggs Florida State Park). For her and her husband, the Deputy Marshall of St. Augustine, William G. Davis, it became the stepping stone for the development of a port town and resort. Already equipped with a lighthouse, Key Biscayne was an ideal stop between Key West and St. Augustine.

The island's ecology at the time largely comprised of sand bars along the Atlantic ocean and saw palmettos further island. On the Biscayne Bay side, its serrated edge was full of salt marsh and mangrove flats.

1933 Key Biscayne



Source: ?

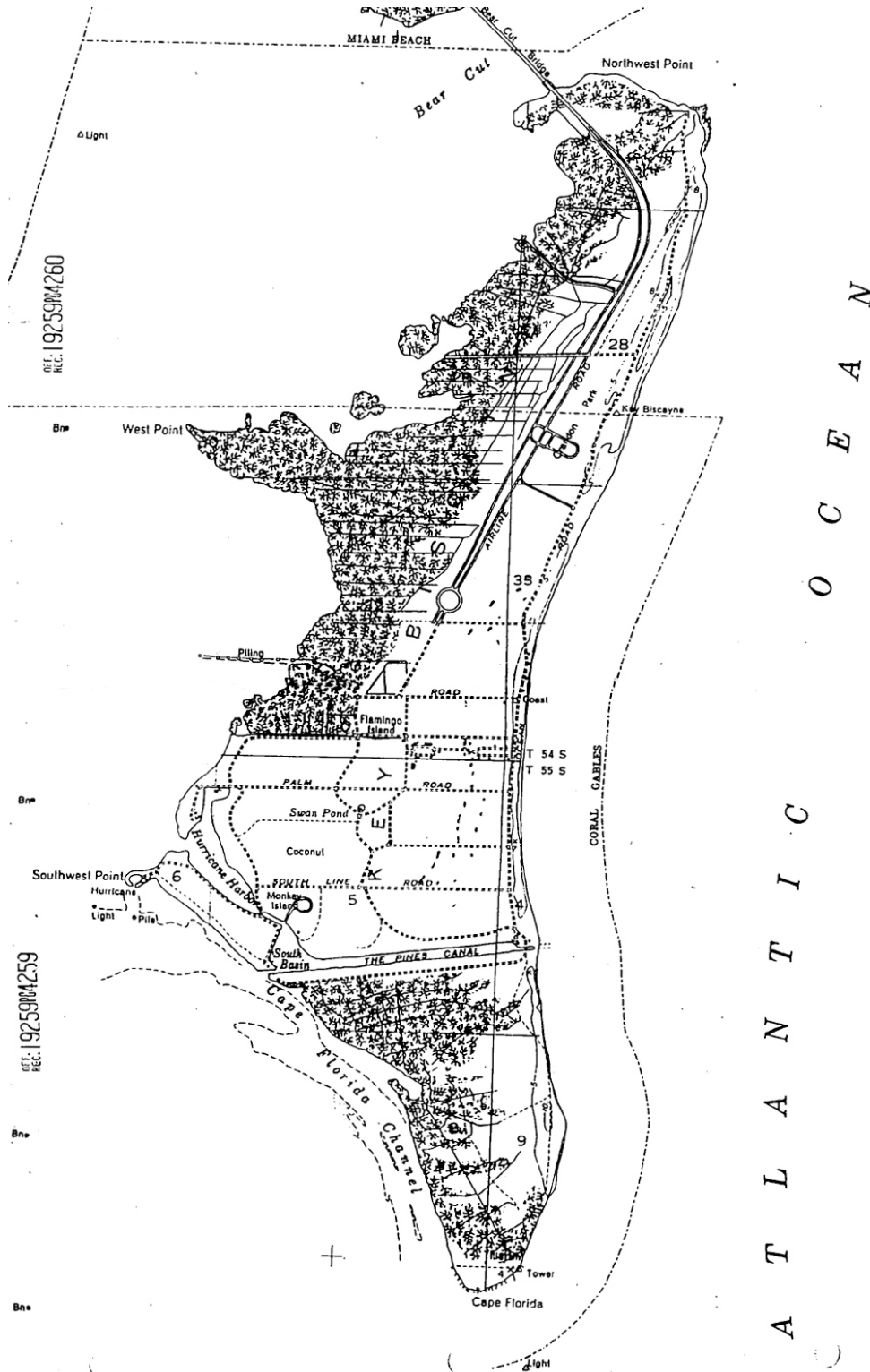
Plan of the Matheson Family Estate

By the early 20th century, Key Biscayne's landscape was transformed by the growing number of plantations, particularly of coconut palms. The industrialist and first patron of Crandon Park, William J. Matheson was one of the island's largest property owners, possessing the northern two-thirds of the island. To him, Key Biscayne held great promise as a future resort development and tropical retreat and sanctuary. His vision for a magnificent causeway that would link the mainland to the island was eventually realized posthumously as the Rickenbacker Causeway and Crandon Boulevard.

This map illustrates the extents of the Matheson Family property, which William left as a legacy to his heirs Hugh, Malcolm and Anna Woods. The northern lands Tracts 1, 2 and 3 would eventually be deeded to Dade County in 1940 in exchange for the construction of the causeway and public park now known as Crandon Park, designed by the famed landscape architect William L. Phillips. The remaining Tracts 4, 5 and 6 would later be sold to developers for commercial and residential development, setting the foundation for the future Village of Key Biscayne.

Although details of the Matheson Family's plantations are not illustrated, it is clear that even at this point interventions to the island's landform were beginning to take shape through the act of dredging various canals and construction of service and private roads.

1947 Key Biscayne



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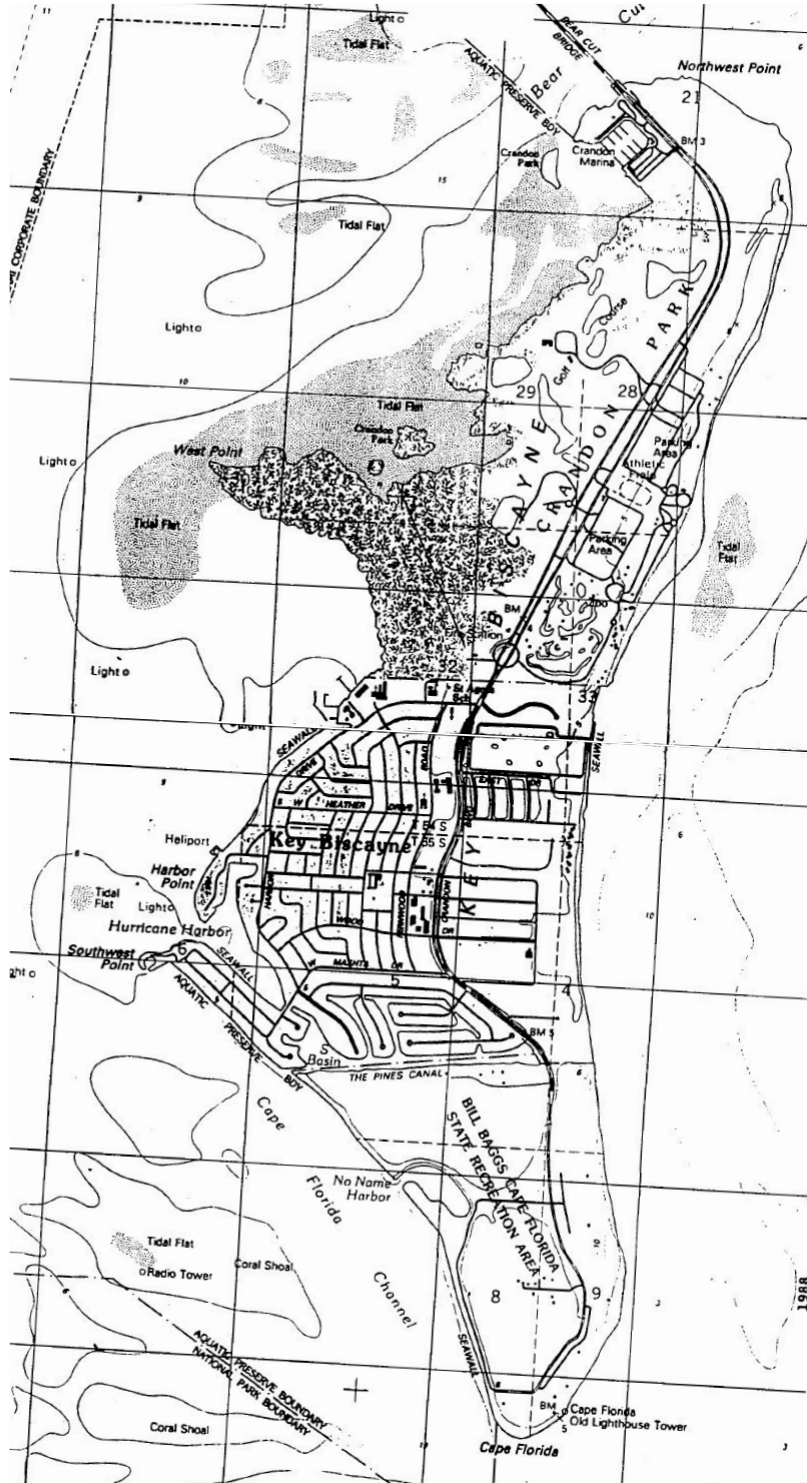
U.S. Topographical Survey

By 1947, Key Biscayne's developed landscape had changed drastically. At this point the first stage of Crandon Park and Rickenbacker Causeway, connecting the island to the mainland, had been constructed.

Roughly divided into three parts, the north and south were designated as parkland while the middle was still used for plantations and the Matheson family's estate Mashta House.

To see an enlargement of Crandon Park in this plan see, pages 24-5.

1988 Key Biscayne



Source: ?

U.S. Topographical Survey

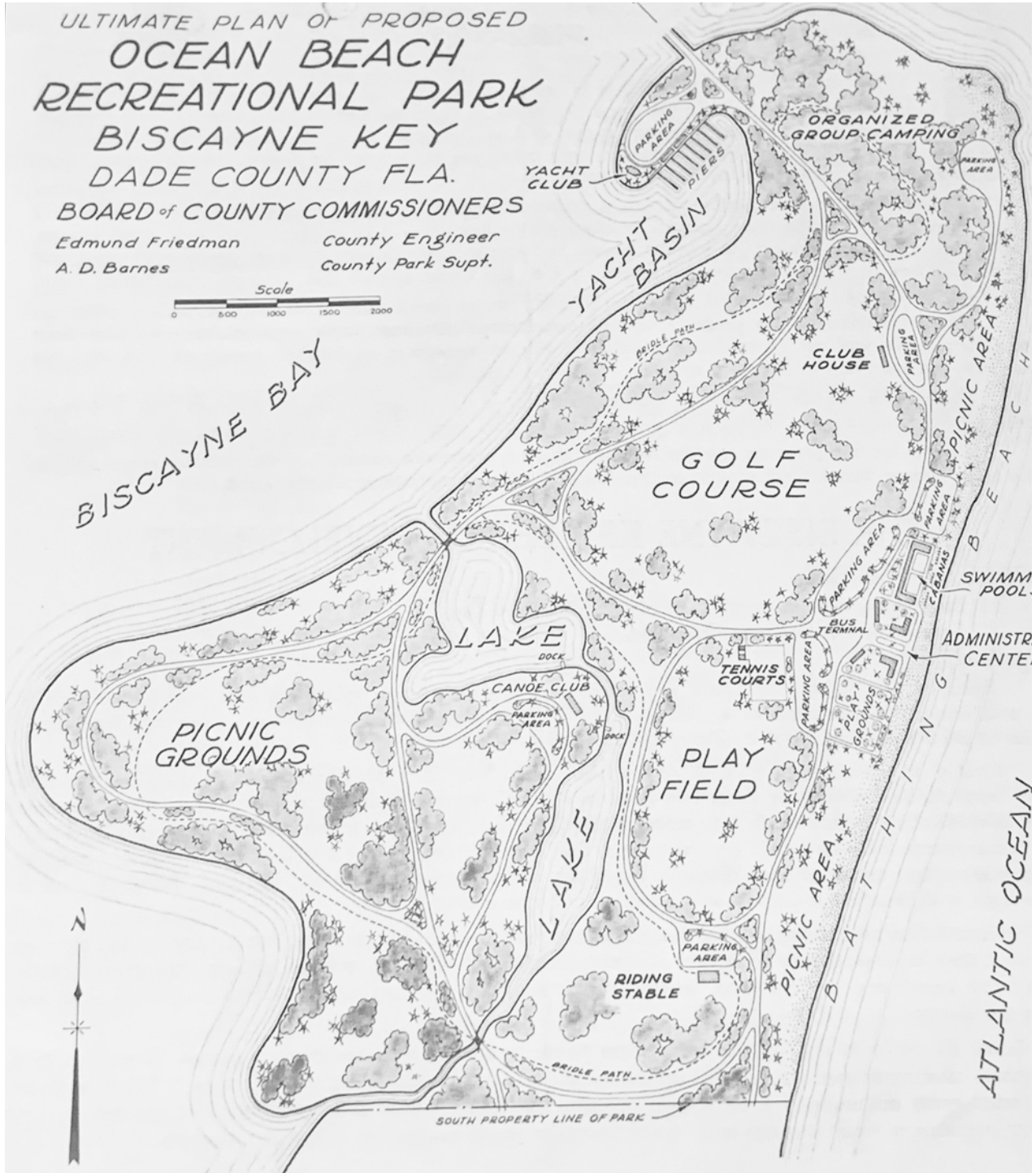
By the late 1980s, Key Biscayne had largely taken on the shape and layout of its current development. Crandon Park continued to expand its programmatic offerings and development.

The southern third of the island was designated as Bill Baggs State Park Recreation Area. Key Biscayne's plantations eventually gave way to a village of single-family homes and later to a booming development of condominiums and destination hotel resorts.

The island became particularly famous as a background for some well known Hollywood movies and as President Nixon's "Winter White House" in the 1960s.

To see an enlargement of Crandon Park in this plan see, pages 28-9.

1940 County Plan



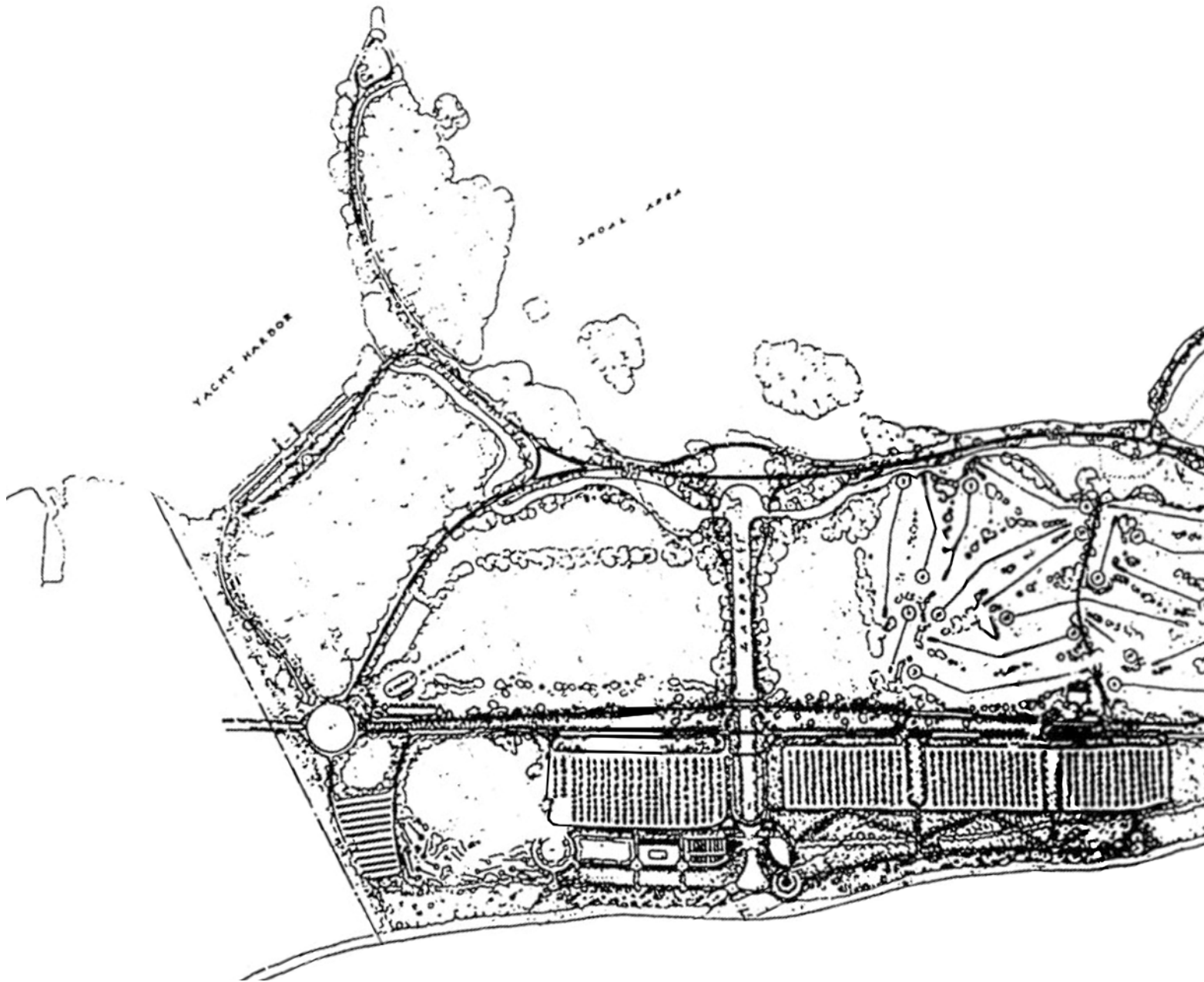
Source: Proposed Dade County Ocean Beach Development Program for Biscayne Key Beach for Biscayne Key Beach and Beach North of Baker's Haulover

Ocean Beach Recreational Park by Dade County

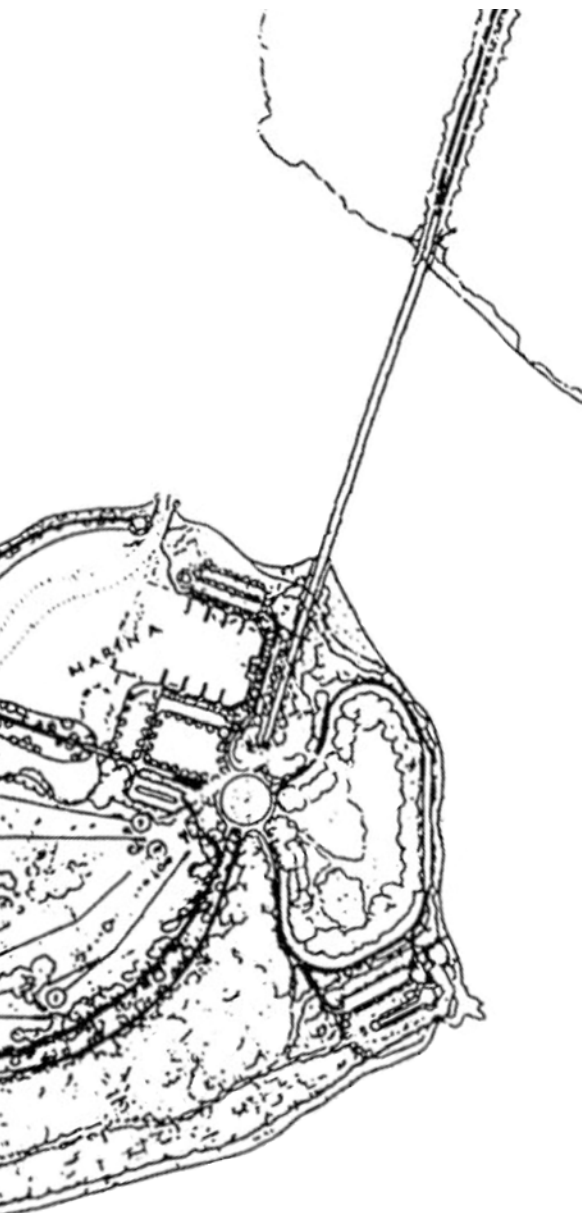
This plan portrays a picturesque recreational park proposed by Dade County's first Park Superintendent A.D. Barnes. Along with many looping routes and "bridle" paths for horseback riding, the conception features a bathing beach, picnic grounds, a yacht club and basin, two large lakes with docks and a canoe club, a play field and playground, riding stables, tennis courts, a golf course with clubhouse, swimming pools, a camping area, cabanas, an administrative center, and several parking lots.

Charles H. Crandon, Chair of the Board of County Commissioners and Park's namesake, noted that many of South Florida's beaches at that time were privately owned, while Miami Beach was facing overcrowding issues. He speculated that the development of Crandon Park and its beach would bring thousands to South Florida and would reap great benefit from the taxable properties.

1942 Vision Plan



Source: Proposed Dade County Ocean Beach Development Program for Biscayne Key Beach for Biscayne Key Beach and Beach North of Baker's Haulover



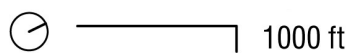
By William L. Phillips

This is one of three master plans proposed by the landscape architect and pioneer of Florida landscapes William L. Phillips. Working with A.D. Barnes of Dade County, Phillips began working on designing a master plan for Crandon Park in 1941.

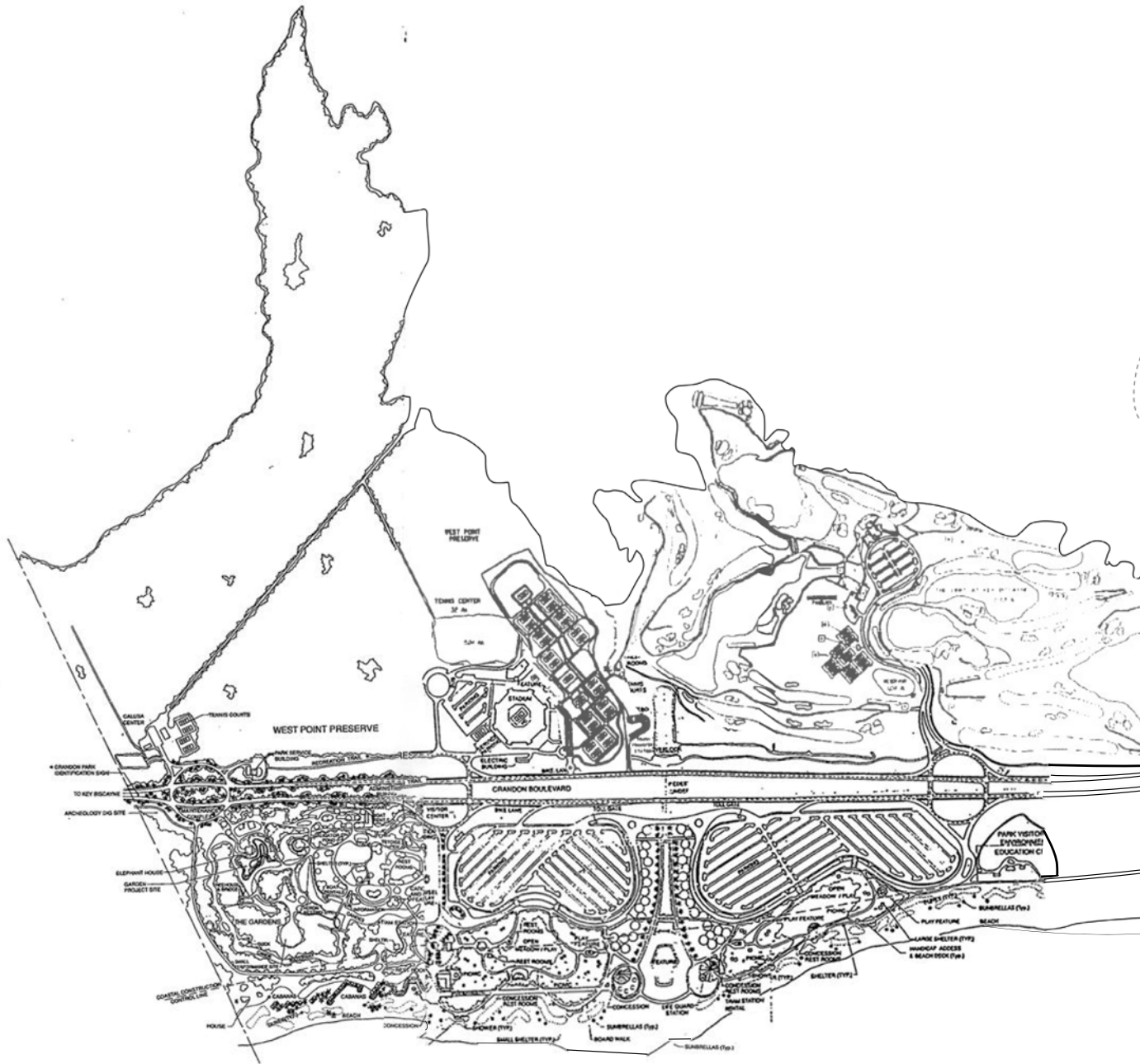
The park was designed around two axes, one running north-south, and one crossing east-west. The long north-south spine, which was (and remains today) Crandon Boulevard, essentially divided the park with a four-lane barrier. An east-west axis was designed to reconnect the two sides, open up views from Crandon Boulevard to the ocean and Biscayne Bay, and provide physical east-west access for park users.

Similar to the County's *Ocena Beach Recreational Park Plan*, the *Vision Plan* activated most 975 acres of the land, including acres of wetlands. The design included many recreational attractions: a beach with cabanas, a golf course, an archery range, a marina, a yacht harbor, stopping places for fishing and launching boats, and a children's park with a carousel and a miniature train that carried visitors through the natural hammock. Facilities were provided for picnics and barbeques, along with parking spaces for up to 5,000 cars.

The signature plant in the Park was the coconut palm, planted by the thousand in the dunes and beach area. Phillips's application of coconut palms and a wide range of other tropical plantings demonstrate how Crandon Park had been at the forefront of celebrating Caribbean and South Seas landscapes.



1993 Master Plan



Source: Crandon Park for the Twenty-first Century

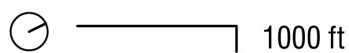
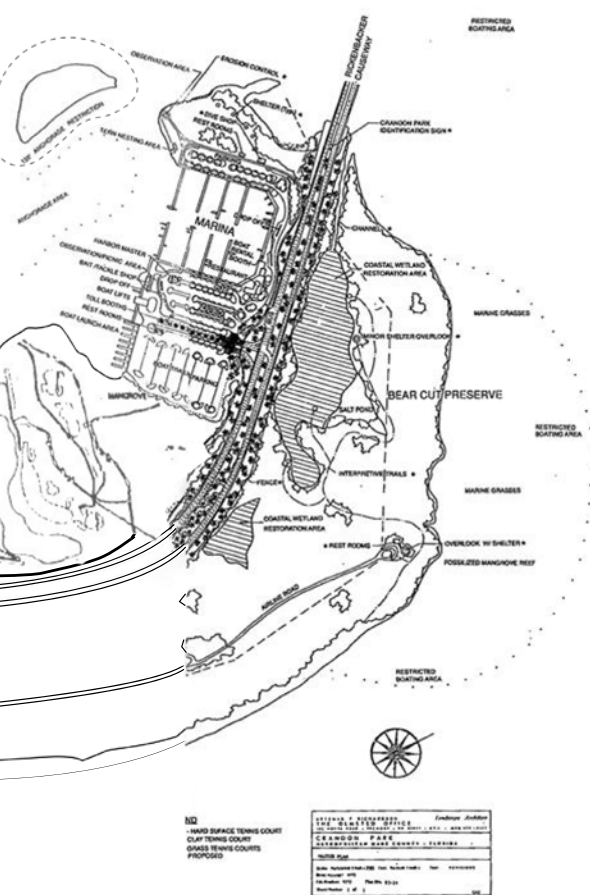
By Artemas P. Richardson

Almost fifty years following Crandon Park's first master plan proposed by Phillips, Artemas P. Richardson of the prestigious Olmsted Office was hired by Dade County to create a master plan for the ailing park, which had suffered destruction after Hurricane Andrew in 1992 and a slow decline in stewardship of its development and growth.

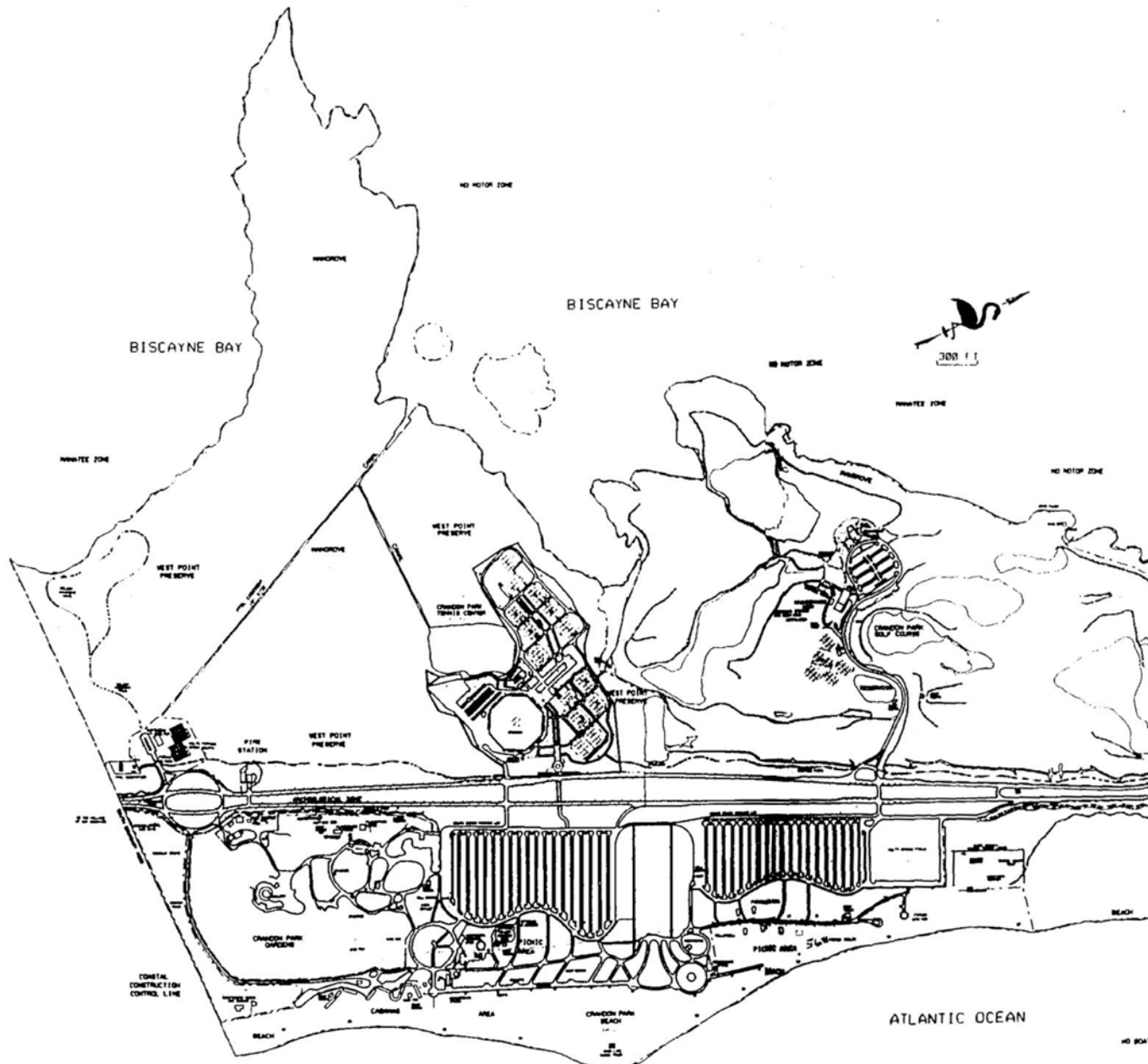
His first draft of the Crandon Park Master Plan along with an accompanying written document were published in 1993 in *Crandon Park for the Twenty-first Century*.

In this iteration, Richardson proposed a number of novel recommendations. These included:

1. Restoring the historic and landscape parkway character of **Crandon Boulevard** as per Phillips's Vision using coconut palms;
2. Adding **two roundabouts** at the entrances to the Golf Course and Tennis Center to streamline circulation, enhance safety, and slow traffic;
3. Adding a **pedestrian/bike path** along the west side of Crandon Boulevard near the utility easement that would connect the different program areas;
4. Creating **pedestrian and bicyclist access** under Crandon Boulevard that would connect the lagoon and Central Allée;
5. Reconfiguring the **Beach Parking Lots** to create natural, curvilinear edges that would mimic the curving shoreline also also accomodate open play fields;
6. Protecting and restoring the **natural preserve areas**, particularly in the Bear Cut Preserve;
7. Adding **nature and canoe trails** through West Point Preserve as well as a tram line through the Bear Cut Preserve's coastal hammocks;
8. Improving the **Marina** by improving circulation, protecting natural areas, and providing space and shelters for picnicking;
9. Creating a **unified graphic identity** through a consistent style of architecture and signage.
10. Adding restrictions to the location, size, and expansion of **building development and advertising restrictions**.



1995 Master Plan



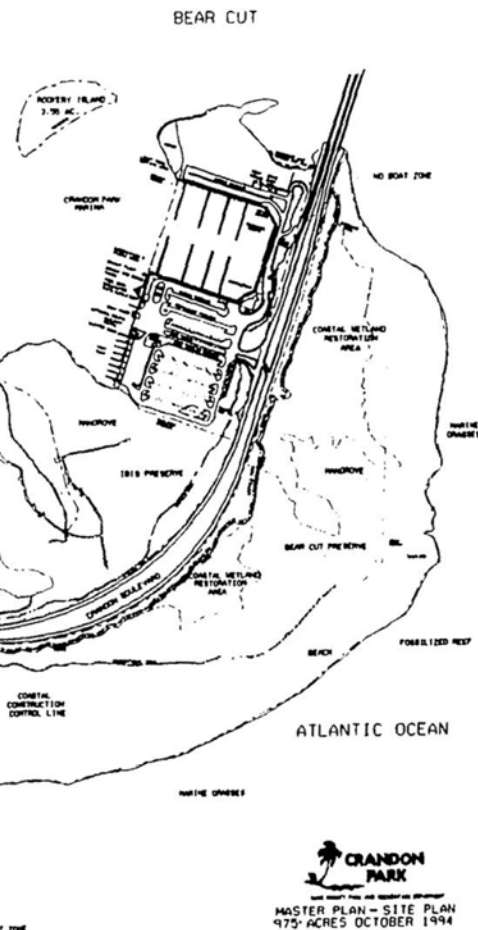
Source: Crandon Park Master Plan (1995)

Revised by Bruce C. Matheson

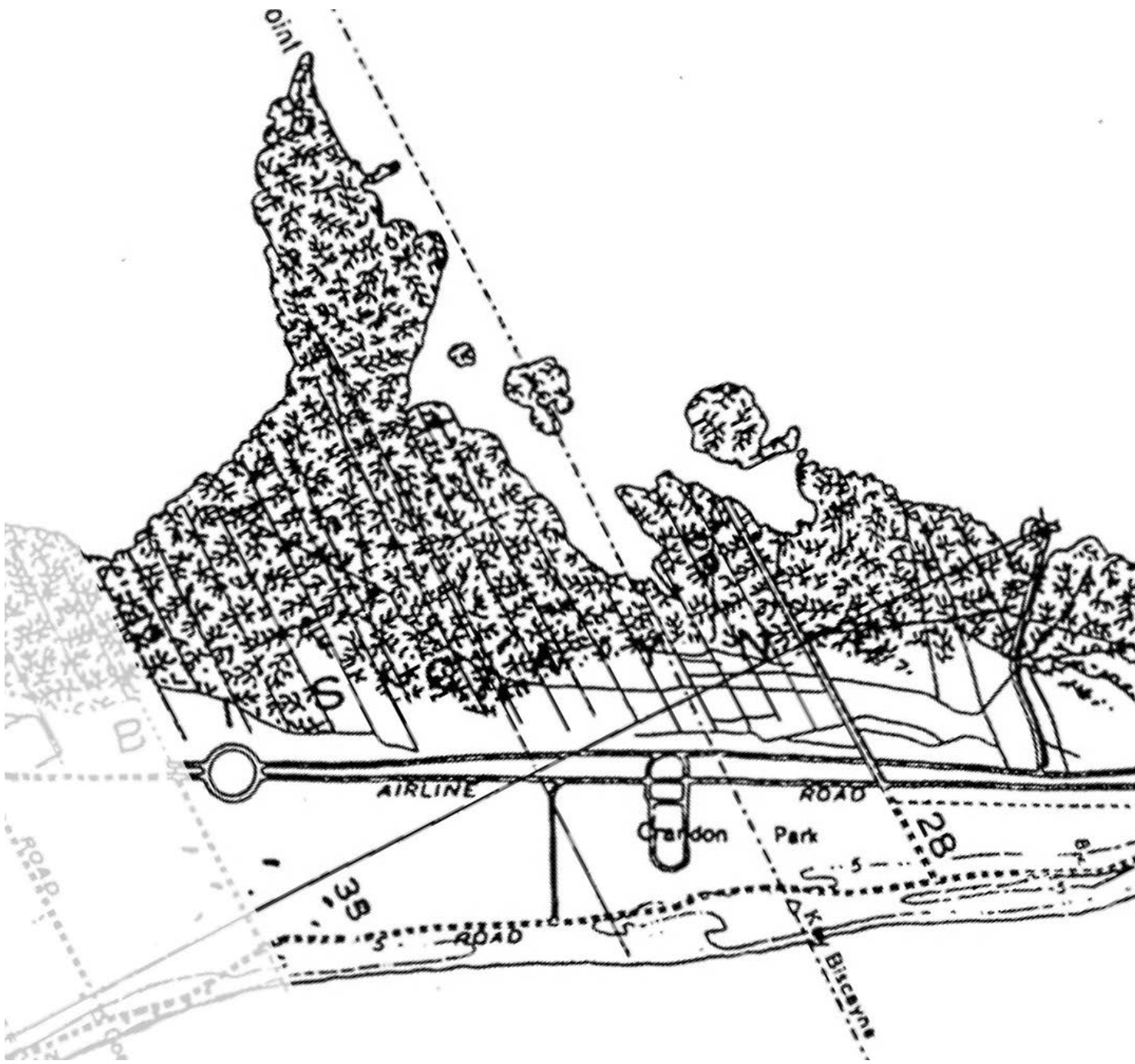
After several amendments to the 1993 Master Plan due to objections from the Matheson Family, this final current master plan was first published in 1995 in the *Crandon Park Master Plan* document. Between 1996 and 2000, the document underwent a further series of amendments based on feedback from Bruce C. Matheson of the Matheson Family. In 2000, the current masterplan was finally presented to Miami-Dade County.

In this iteration, similar recommendations are illustrated but with some modifications.

1. Restoring the historic and landscape character of **Crandon Boulevard** using coconut palms, but leaving it as a four-lane road;
2. Closing off two of the entrances to the **Tennis Center**;
3. Adding a **pedestrian/bike path** along the west side of Crandon Boulevard near the utility easement that would connect the different program areas;
4. Creating a **pedestrian and bicyclist tunnel** underneath Crandon Boulevard that would connect to the Tennis Center and South Parking Lot (a second tunnel could also occur at the entrance to the Golf Course);
5. Reconfiguring the **Beach Parking Lots** to create natural, curvilinear edges that would mimic the curving shoreline also also move north the existing multipurpose field;
6. Protecting and restoring the **natural preserve areas**, particularly in the Bear Cut Preserve;
7. Adding **nature and canoe trails** through West Point Preserve as well as trails and overlooks through the Bear Cut Preserve's coastal hammocks;
8. Improving the **Marina** by improving circulation, protecting natural areas, and providing space and shelters for picnicking;
9. Creating a **unified graphic identity** through a consistent style of architecture and signage.
10. Adding restrictions to the location, size, and expansion of **building development and advertising restrictions**.



1947 Site Survey



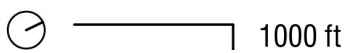
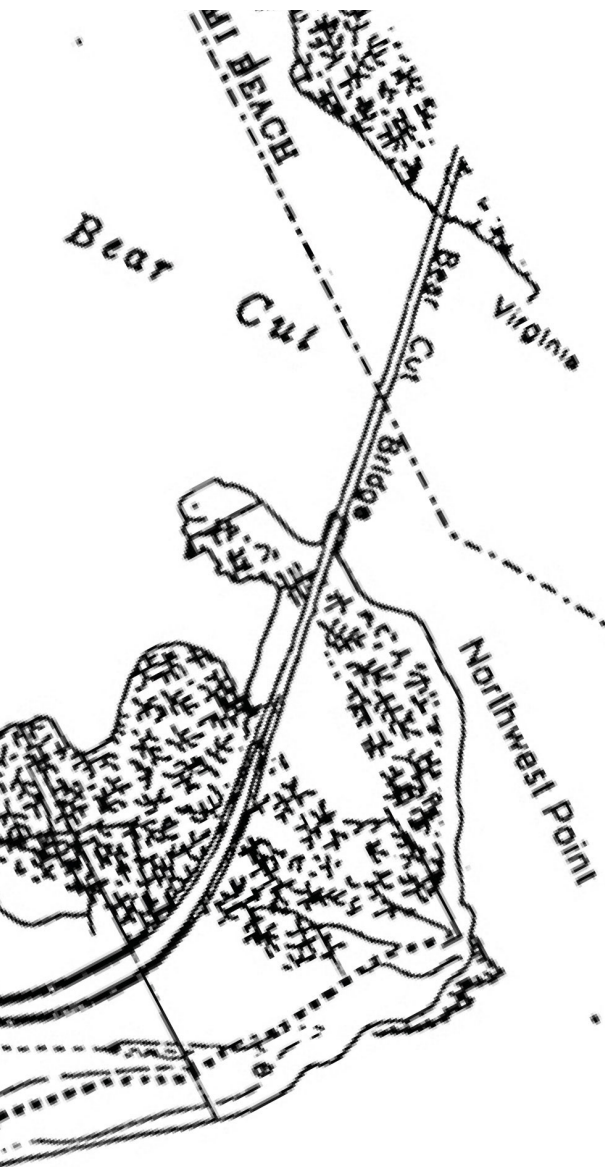
Source: Crandon Park Master Plan (Appendix R)

U.S. Topographical Survey

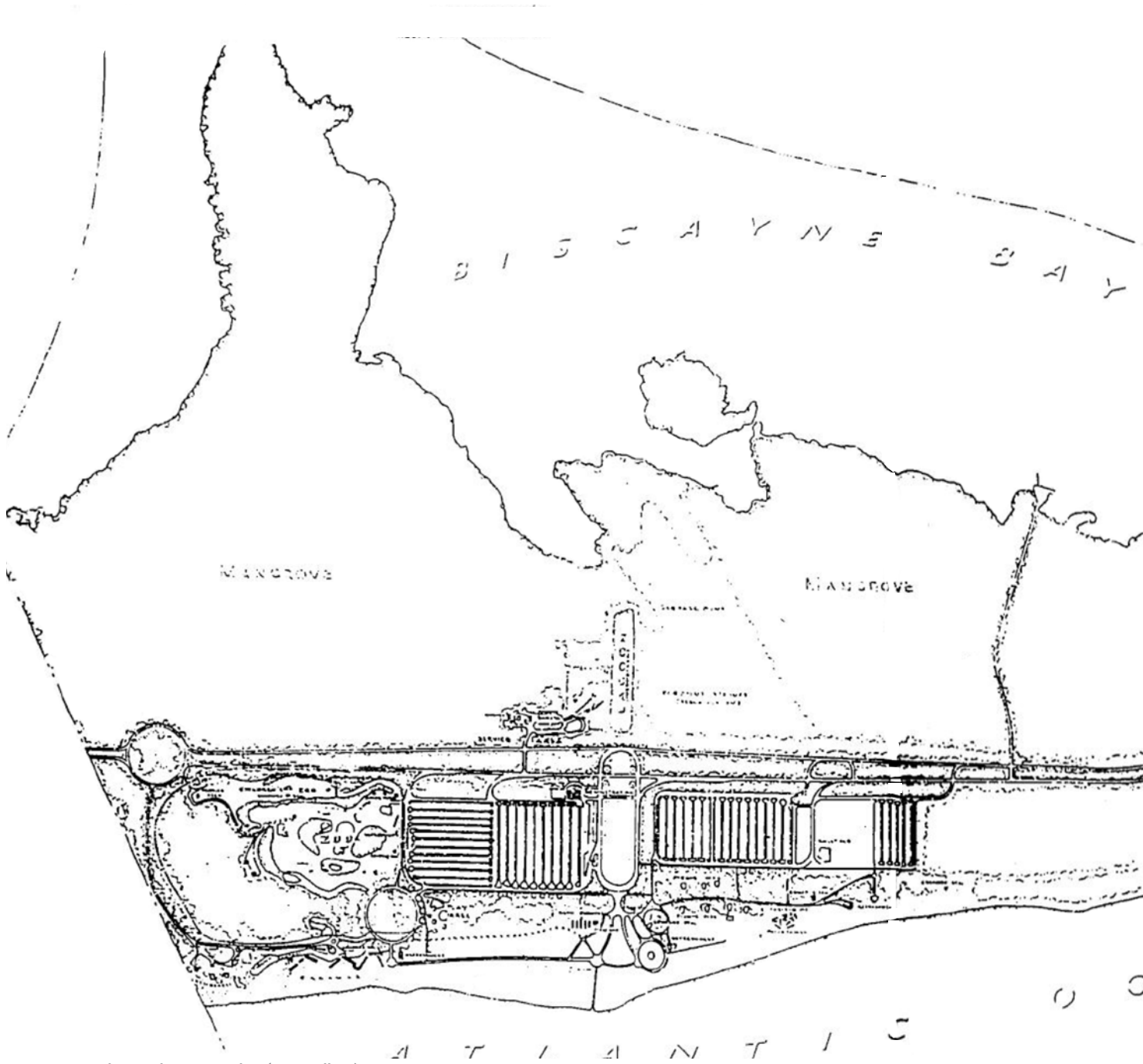
This map shows the first segment of Crandon Boulevard (here referred to as the Airline Road), running through the middle of Crandon Park and bisecting it in half.

In this first phase, most of the area to the east of the Boulevard was developed first while the western half remained wild mangroves, wetlands and salt marsh. The circular track of the Central Allée, Roundabout as well as the road through the future Golf Course were implemented from William L. Phillip's 1942 Vision Plan. In addition, a service road runs parallel to the Atlantic shoreline.

Although not illustrated in this plan, historic photographs also show the construction of the existing north and south parking lots as well as the Park's beach, cabanas and picnic grounds.



1959 Site Survey



Source: Crandon Park Master Plan (Appendix R)

Dade County Park Plan

This site survey was prepared by Dade County and shows further development of Crandon Park as it expanded west.

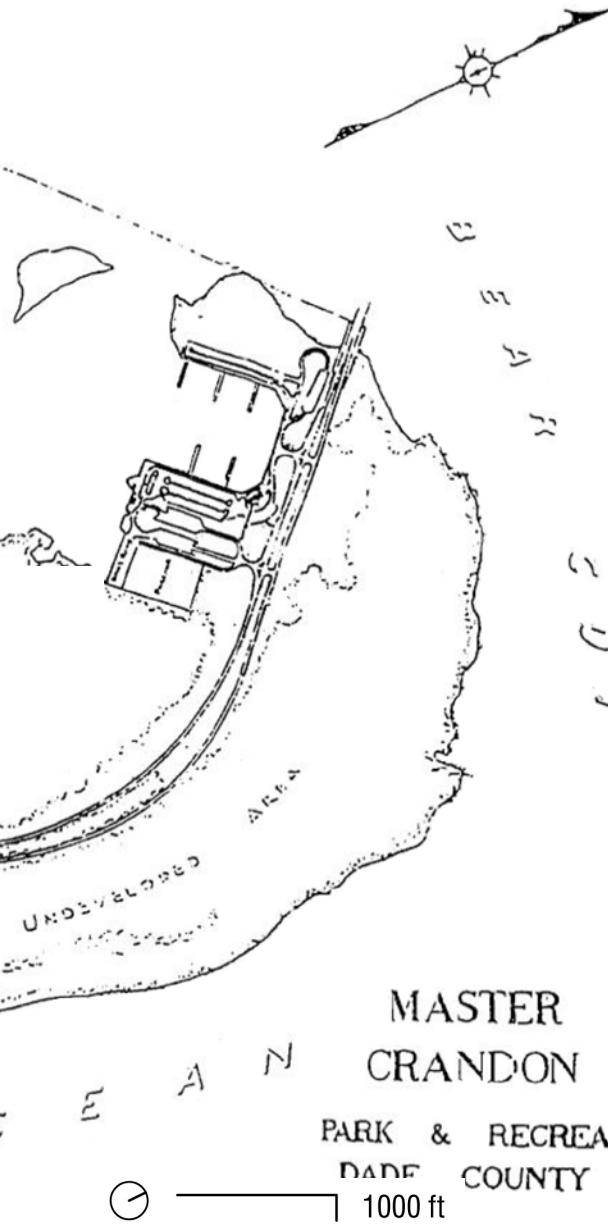
At this time the Crandon Marina was nearing completion and was equipped with docks for chartered and fishing boats, as well as parking.

As per Phillips's design, the Crandon Zoo with its winding canals and lakes was also constructed along with an Amusement Park area. In addition, a shortened version of Phillips's lagoon was constructed opposite the Central Allée

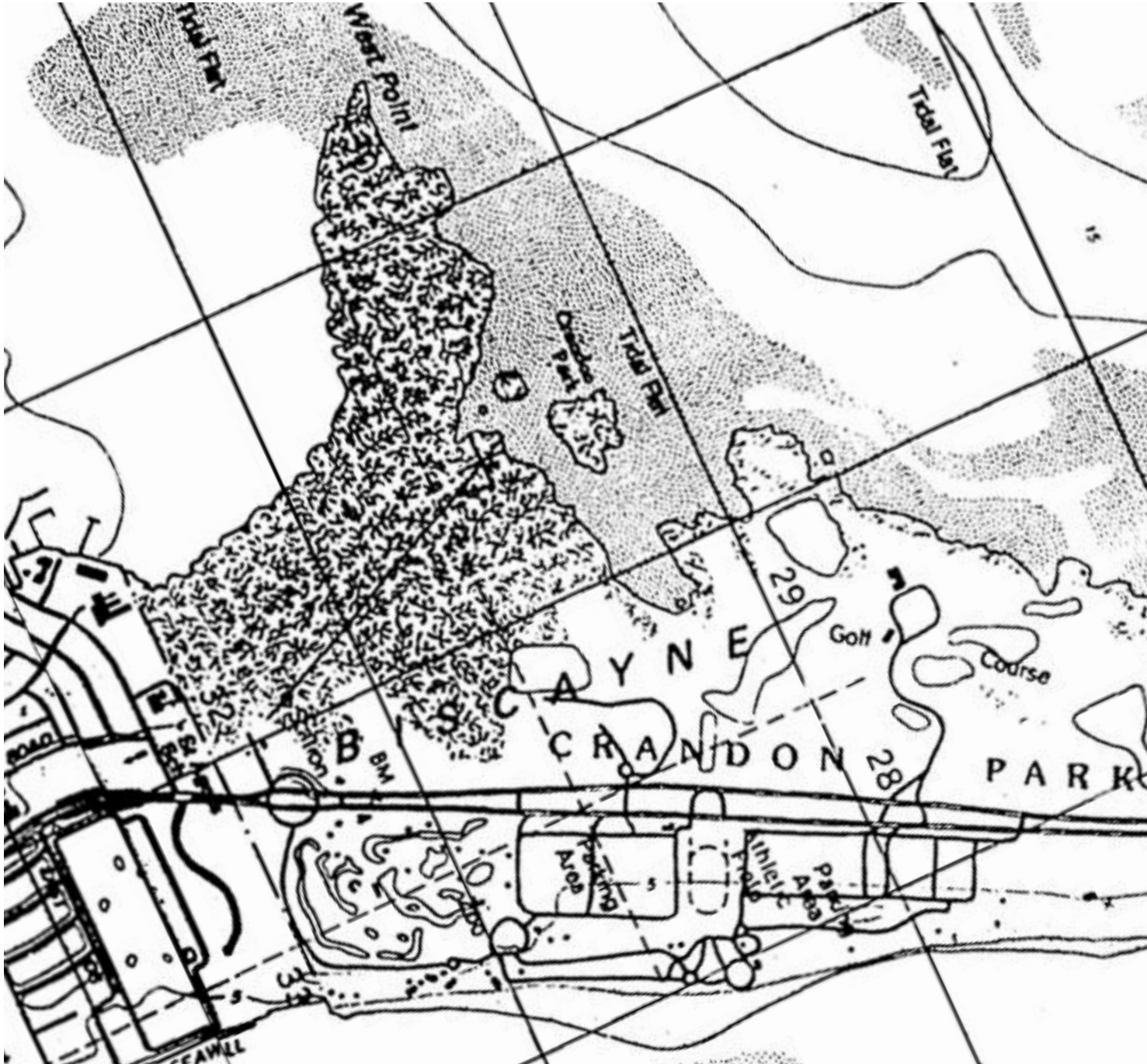
Similar to the 1947 Site Survey, an existing trail through the future Golf Course extending through a thicket of mangroves which populated the majority of the western half of the Park.

Although somewhat difficult to distinguish, the future footprint of the Tennis Center also seems to be demarcated. This area was used for a time as an illegal landfill.

In the North Parking Lot there is also evidence of a sports field, which exists today.



1988 Site Survey



Source: Crandon Park Master Plan (Appendix J)

U.S. Topographical Survey

By the late 1980s, Crandon Park had reached a state of development similar to today's layout.

This map shows the development of a number of features: the completed Crandon Park Marina as well as the Golf Course, Calusa Park, and athletic fields in the Central Allée.

By this point the grounds of the Crandon Zoo were converted to Crandon Gardens.

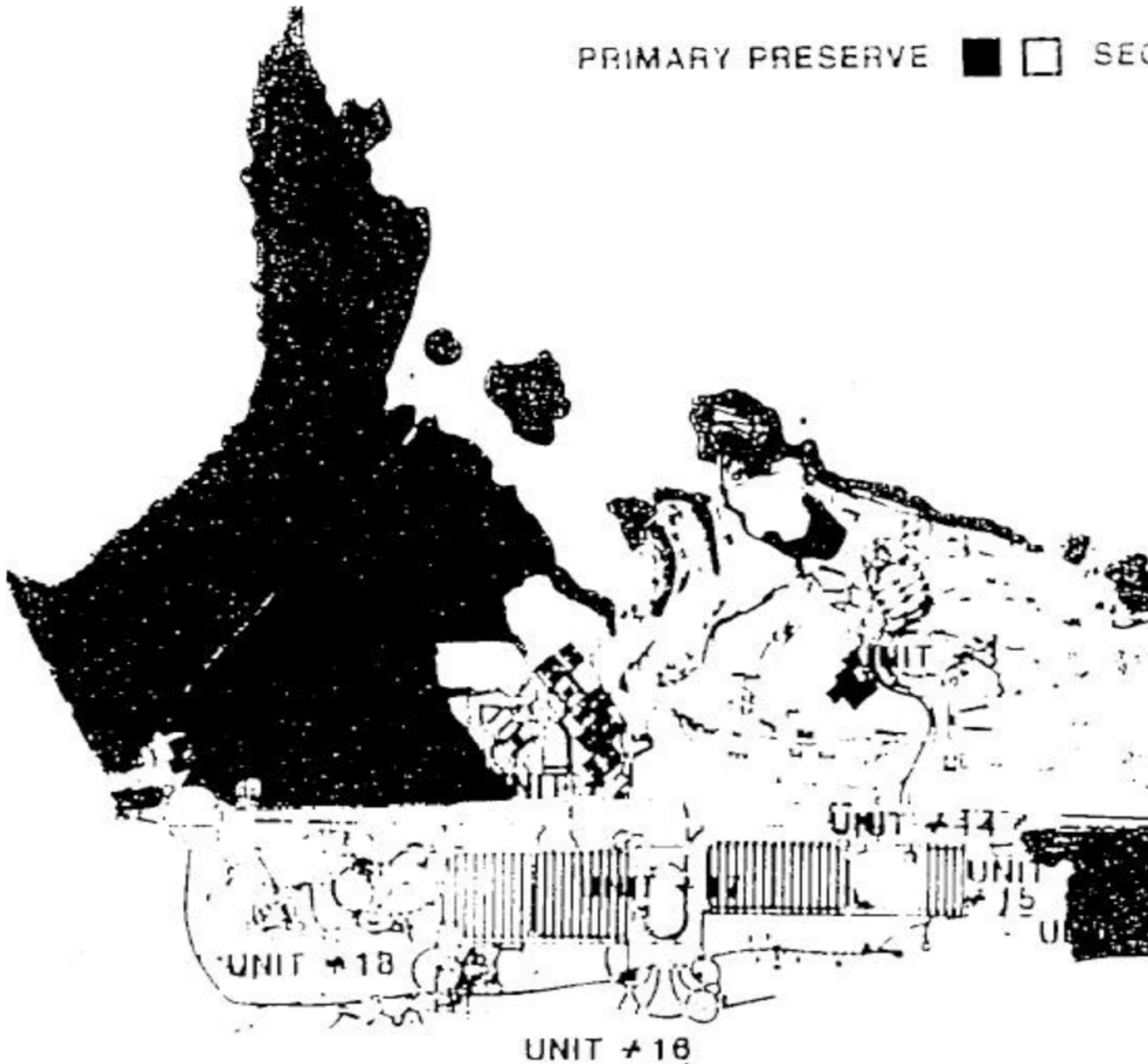
Straight mosquito ditches and an artificial lake in the mangrove wetland area called West Point also appeared.

Two lanes at the roundabout of the Rickenbacker Circle were also added going through the planted median.

Although it is not illustrated in this map, the Bear Cut Preserve was by this point designated as a protected natural area.



1990 Preserve Areas



Source: Crandon Park Master Plan (Appendix J)

Primary Preserve Plan

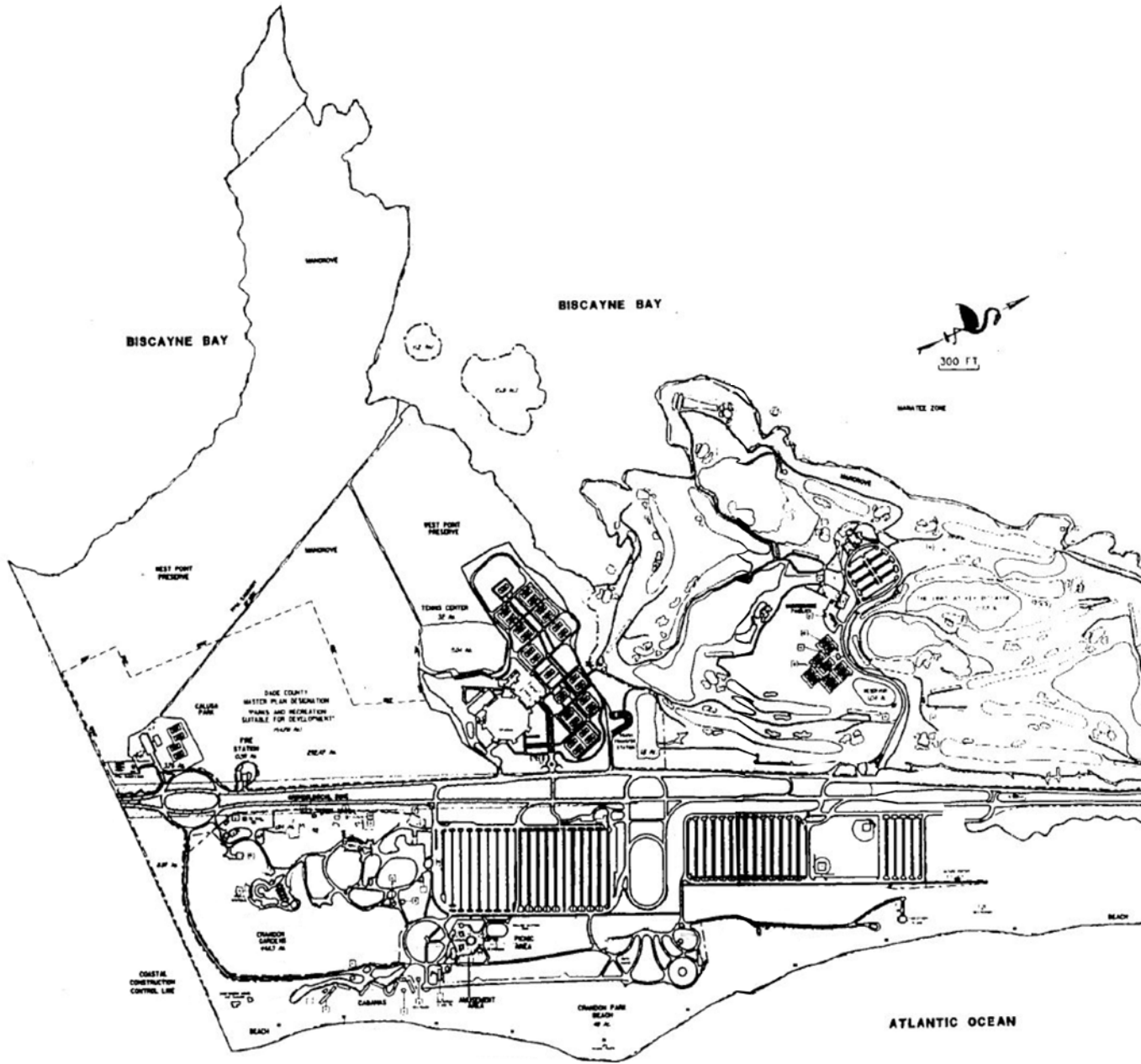
In 1991, Miami-Dade County, the Nature Conservancy and Fairchild Tropical Garden published the *Crandon Park Natural Areas Protection Plan*, which recorded the existing ecological conditions of Crandon Park and put forward a natural resource protection plan for the area, which this plan illustrates and which the 1995 *Crandon Park Master Plan* adopted.

The land of Crandon Park was divided by "primary preserve areas" and "secondary areas." The West Point and Mangrove Islands, the Mangrove Edge along the Golf Course, Rookery Island near the Marina, the Ibis Preserve and Bear Cut Preserves were also designated as "primary preserves" and remain protected areas to this day according to the current *Crandon Park Master Plan* (1995). All other areas were denoted as "secondary."

CONDARY AREA



1993 Site Map



Source: Crandon Park for the Twenty-first Century

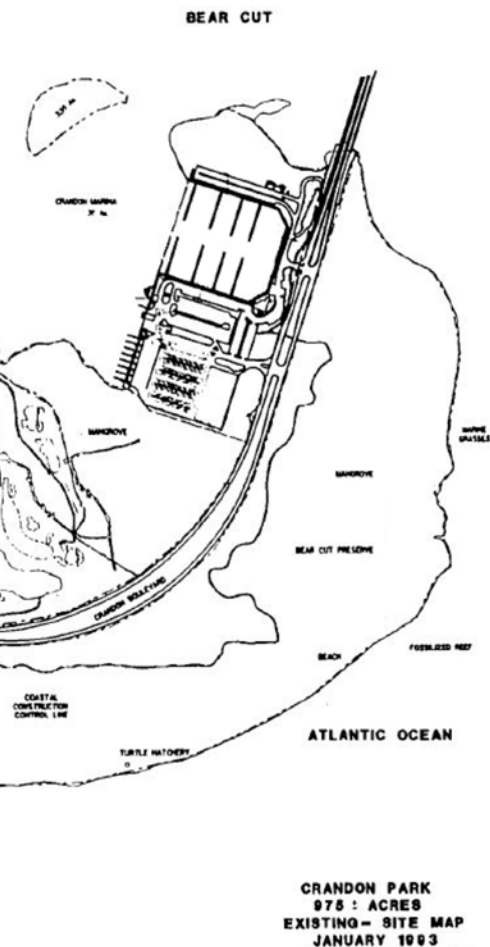
Site Map - Existing by Artemas P. Richardson

In 1993, Artemas P. Richardson of the Olmsted Office was invited by Dade County to draw up a master plan for Crandon Park. In the process, he also documented the site's existing condition at the time.

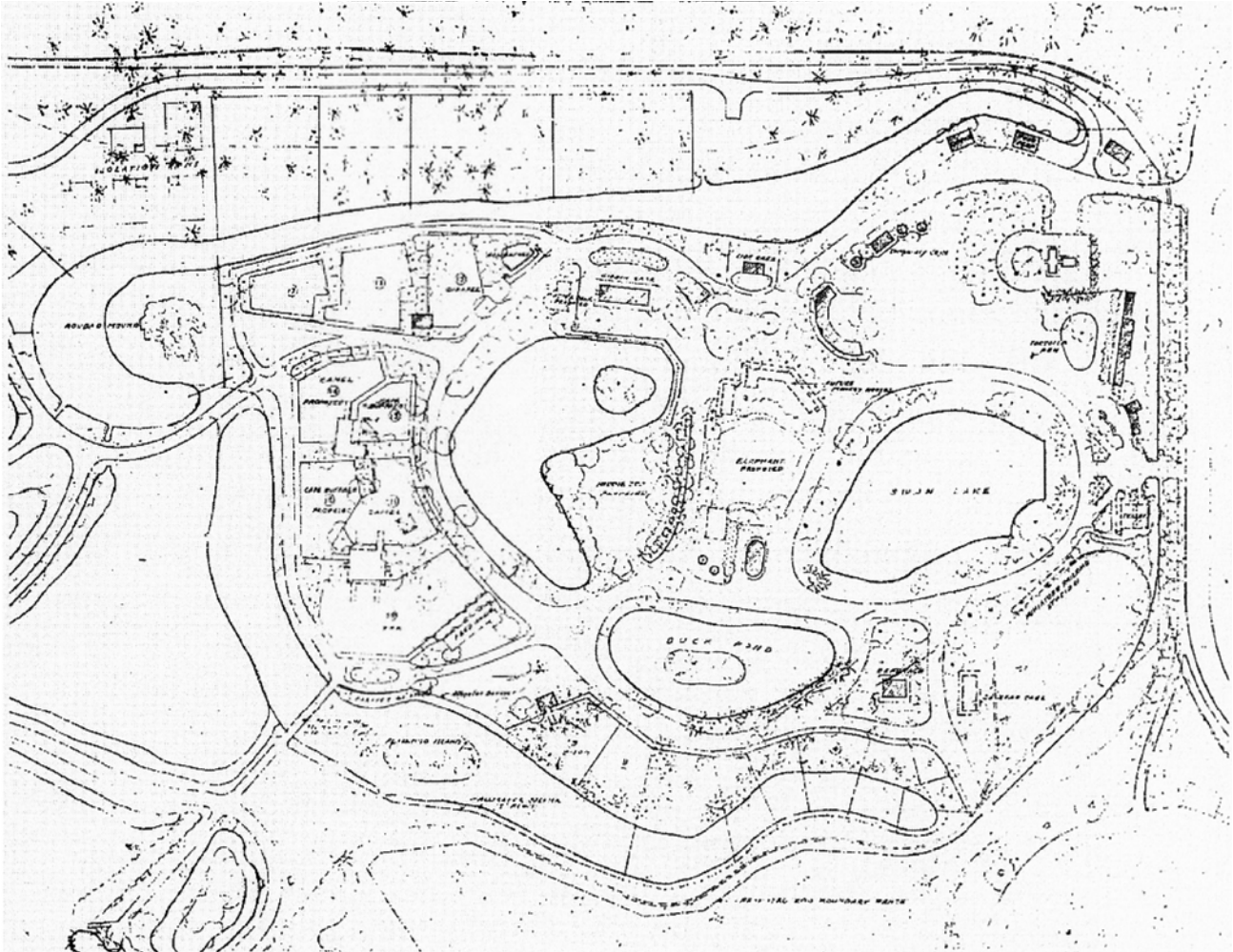
The largest shift from the 1993 and the 1988 site map was the addition of the Tennis Center, which consisted of tennis courts, a club house and a Stadium for tournaments.

This plan also illustrates the existing boundary of Calusa Park, which would be decreased and given over to the West Point Preserve.

Two entrances to the Marina, including one that connects directly to the docks are also clearly shown.



1950s Crandon Zoo



Source: Dade County Parks and Recreation Department, Landscape Architectural Section

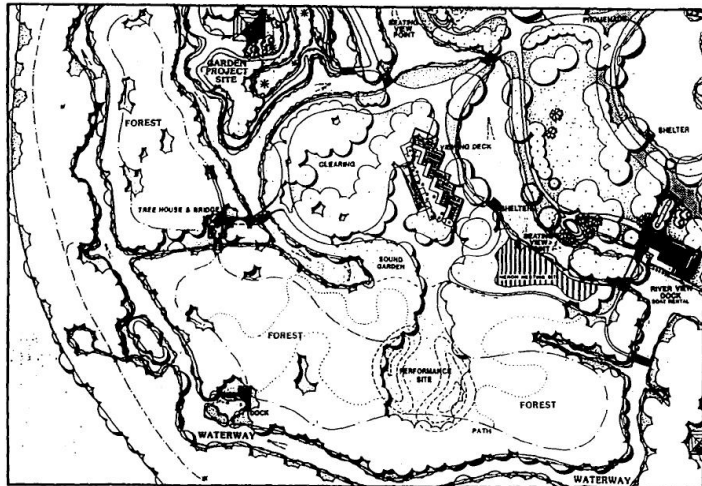
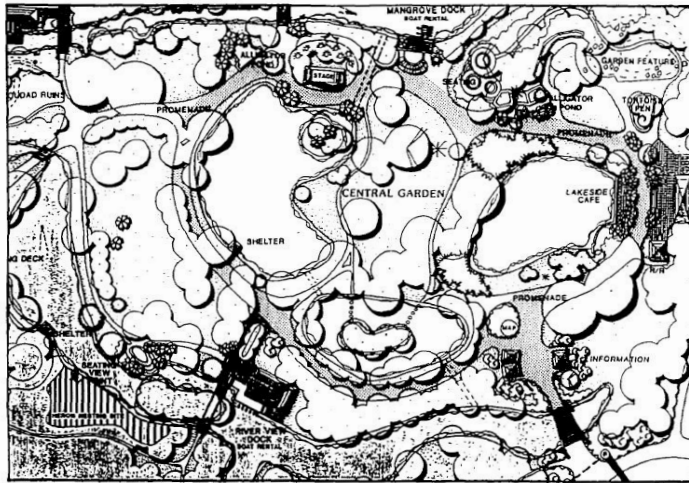
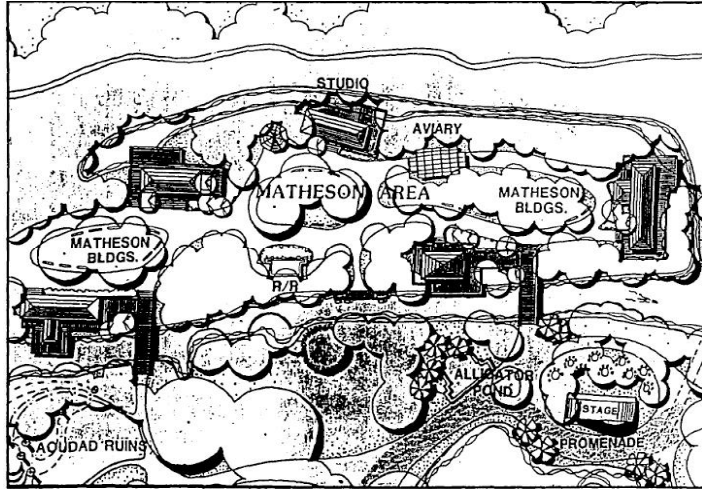
Crandon Zoo Master Plan by William L. Phillips

In the early 1950s, William L. Phillips and lion tamer Julia Allen Field, the Crandon Zoo's first director designed an addition to the existing Crandon Park, the famous Crandon Zoo, which has since been transformed into Crandon Gardens.

In his circular plan, Phillips designed the animal cages on the circumference surrounded by lakes and a park. He included lush tropical vegetation and open air habitats. The main entrance still exists today off of the South Parking Lot.

Up to the mid-1960s, Crandon Zoo was a major public attraction. However, in 1965 Hurricane Betsy struck Key Biscayne killing more than 200 zoo animals, and destroying many zoo structures.

1987 Crandon Gardens



Source: *The Gardens of Crandon Park (1987)*

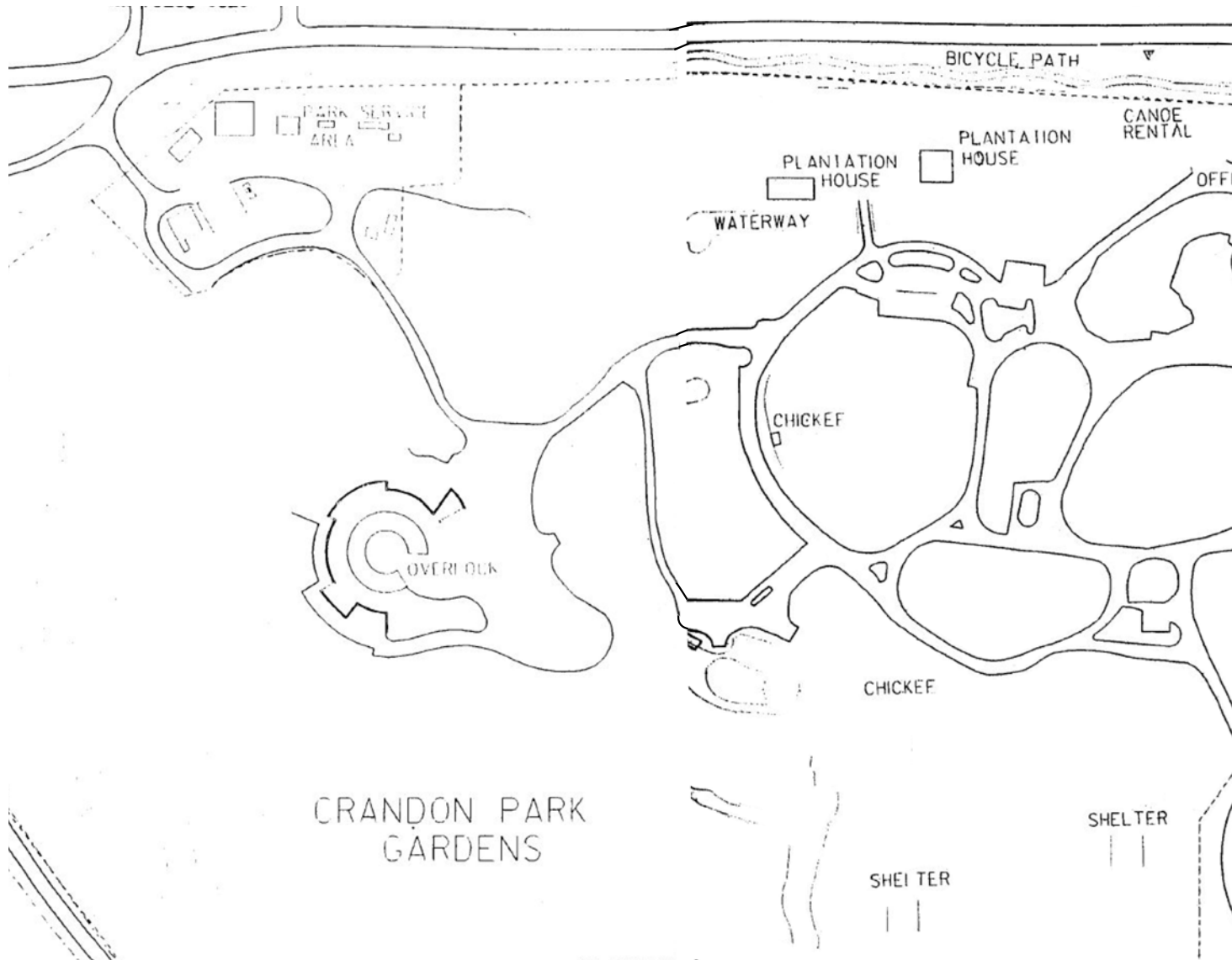
The Gardens at Crandon Park

After the formal closure of Crandon Zoo in 1980, a design team composed of artists, park planners and landscape architects under contract to Dade County and Art in Public Places proposed a master plan in *The Gardens at Crandon Park*, published in 1987. However, despite the efforts to get this master plan implemented, it was overrode by the 1995 *Crandon Park Master Plan*.

The master plan proposed improvements to three areas:

- **Central Garden** - a social and active zone with a prominent gateway to focus visitors' attention. Amenities included a Lakeside Seating Area, Riverview Dock and restored old zoo structures for functional capacity to be retained as historical reminders or used as art, cultural or botanical installation sites.
- **Forest** - a dense and sheltered vegetated zone with moments of changes in elevation and meandering paths and trails through which glimpses of activity could be seen. Amenities in this area included the Clearing, a Viewing Deck, a Gentle Sounds Garden. Possible activities could include poetry reading, dance events, nature tour observations, and modestly scaled performances.
- **Matheson Area** - a atelier and workshop area set by presence of four Matheson Plantation cottages, relocated and refurbished to the site. A studio building could accommodate artists for workshops and public demonstrations within the vestiges of this historic backdrop. Other amenities include various bridges crossing an alligator pond.

1995 Crandon Gardens



Source: Crandon Park Master Plan (1995)

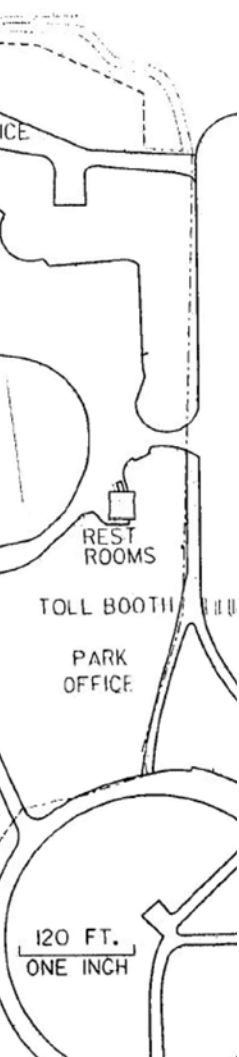
Crandon Park Master Plan

The 1995 Master Plan only adopted some of the recommendations of the 1987 *Gardens at Crandon Park* within his larger Park Master Plan. These included two of the three areas in the 1987 Master Plan: the Central Garden and Matheson Area. A third called the Waterway proposed a loop of canals that would be navigable by canoe.

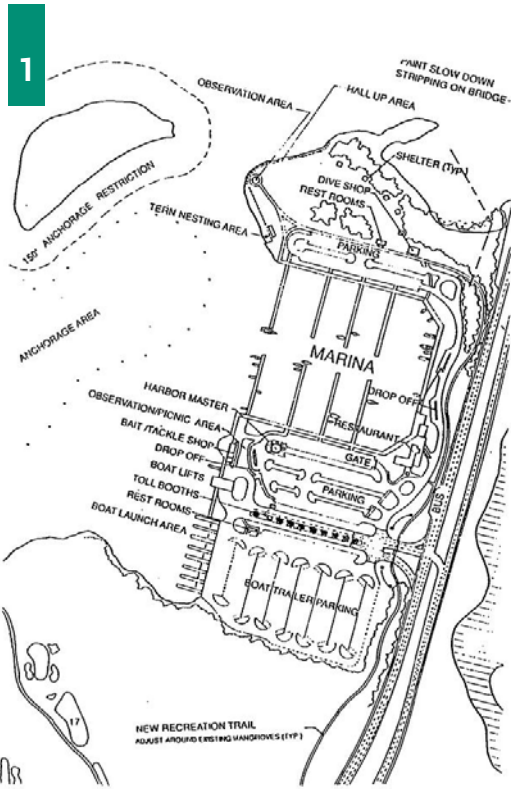
However, many of the programmatic functions such as the studio buildings and artistic and cultural events that could occur with the Gardens were prohibited or restricted. Even the aesthetic representation of any visual art or installations was limited to natural flora and fauna in the Park to be represented in realistic proportions.

Most of Richardson's improvements pertained to restoring and improving the landscape character of botanical plantings within the Garden as well as the addition of a few picnic shelters and a petting zoo.

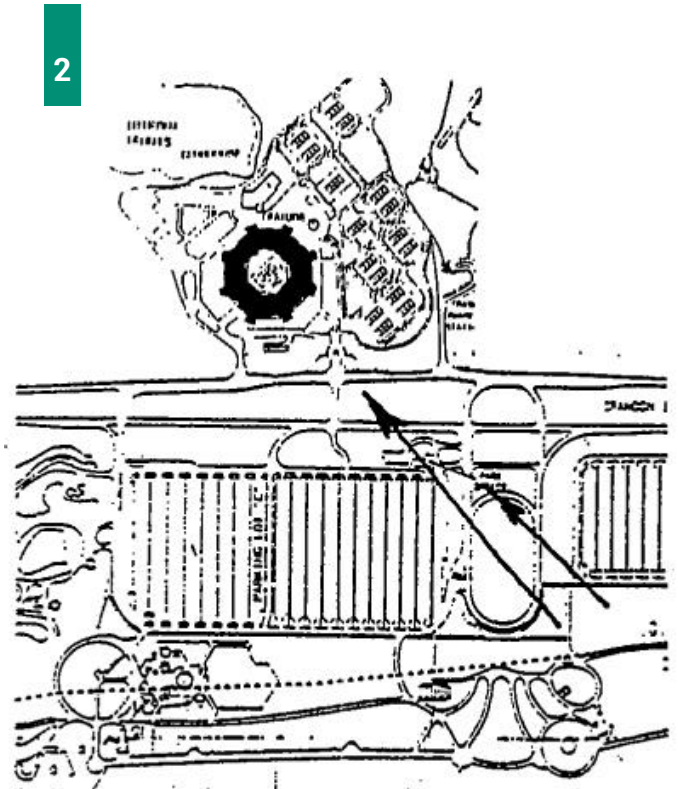
Today, only the Central Garden portion of the Gardens is accessible to the public. The Matheson Area with the plantation houses, petting zoo and canoe rental are off limits and many of the other existing structures and zoo relics are in a state of disrepair.



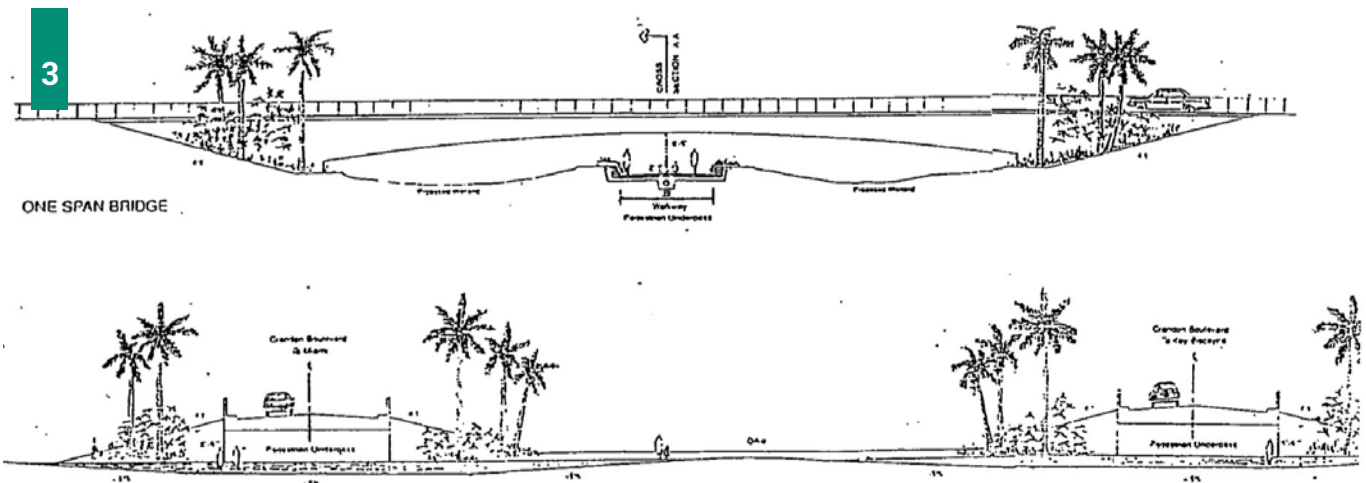
1993 Master Plan Zooms



Crandon Park Marina, which shows a closing of the first entrance and preservation of Pelican Point for Tern Nesting Grounds, a picnic area and mangroves to help preserve the shoreline.

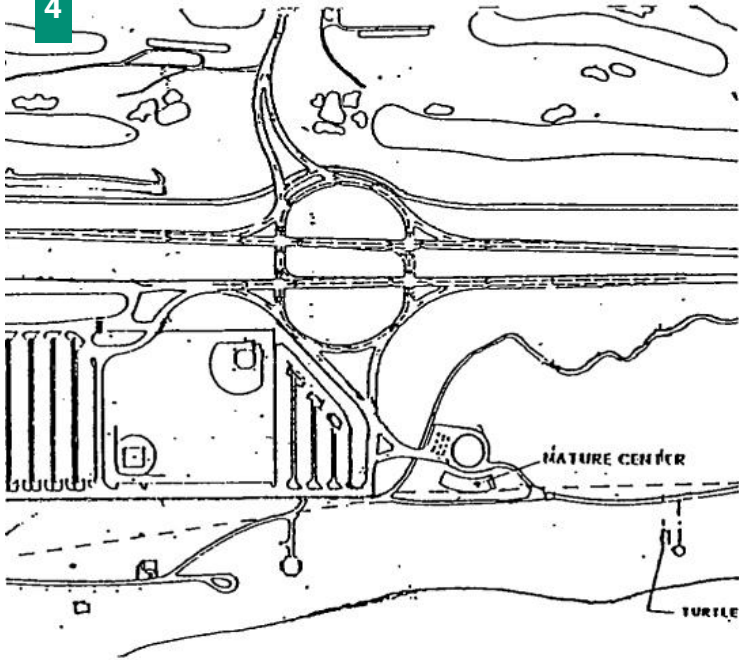


Existing Parking Lots and Tennis Stadium. Arrows show the sight lines to the Tennis Stadium.



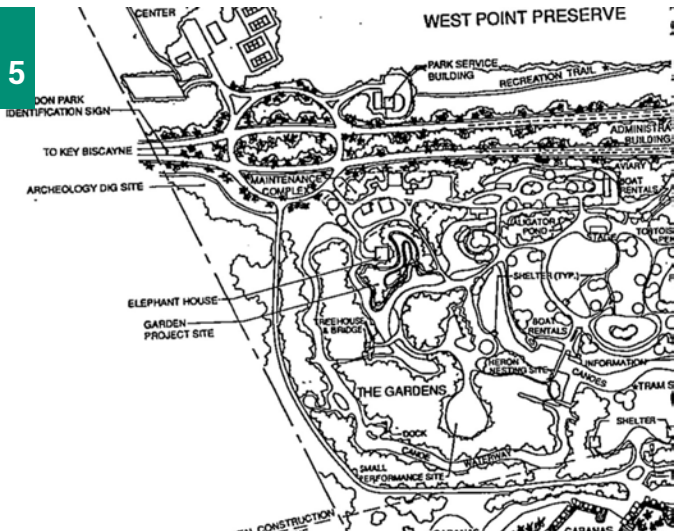
Proposed sections of Crandon Boulevard showing an open span bridge with a pedestrian/bicyclist underpass that would connect to the Central Allée and lagoon. The minimal ramping (3%) of the vehicular overpass and proposed plantings would make it seem like a natural development.

4



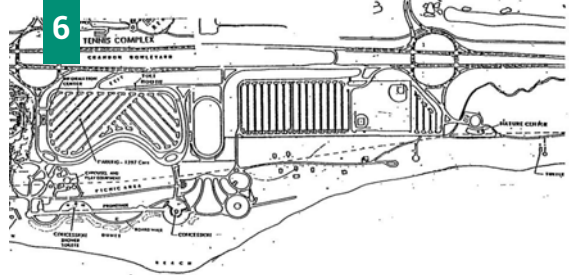
Roundabout node at the entrance to the Golf Center and Nature Center to establish a more fluid vehicular circulation and as a gateway moment to both program areas.

5

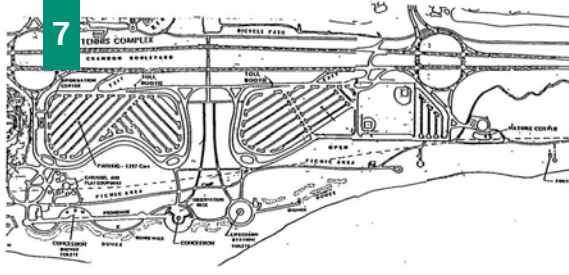


Enlargement shows a recreation trail along the west side of the Crandon Boulevard in the West Point Preserve.

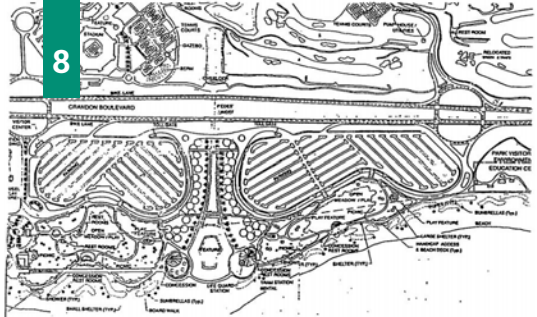
6



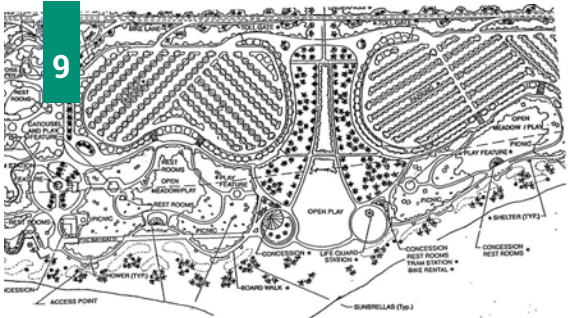
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8



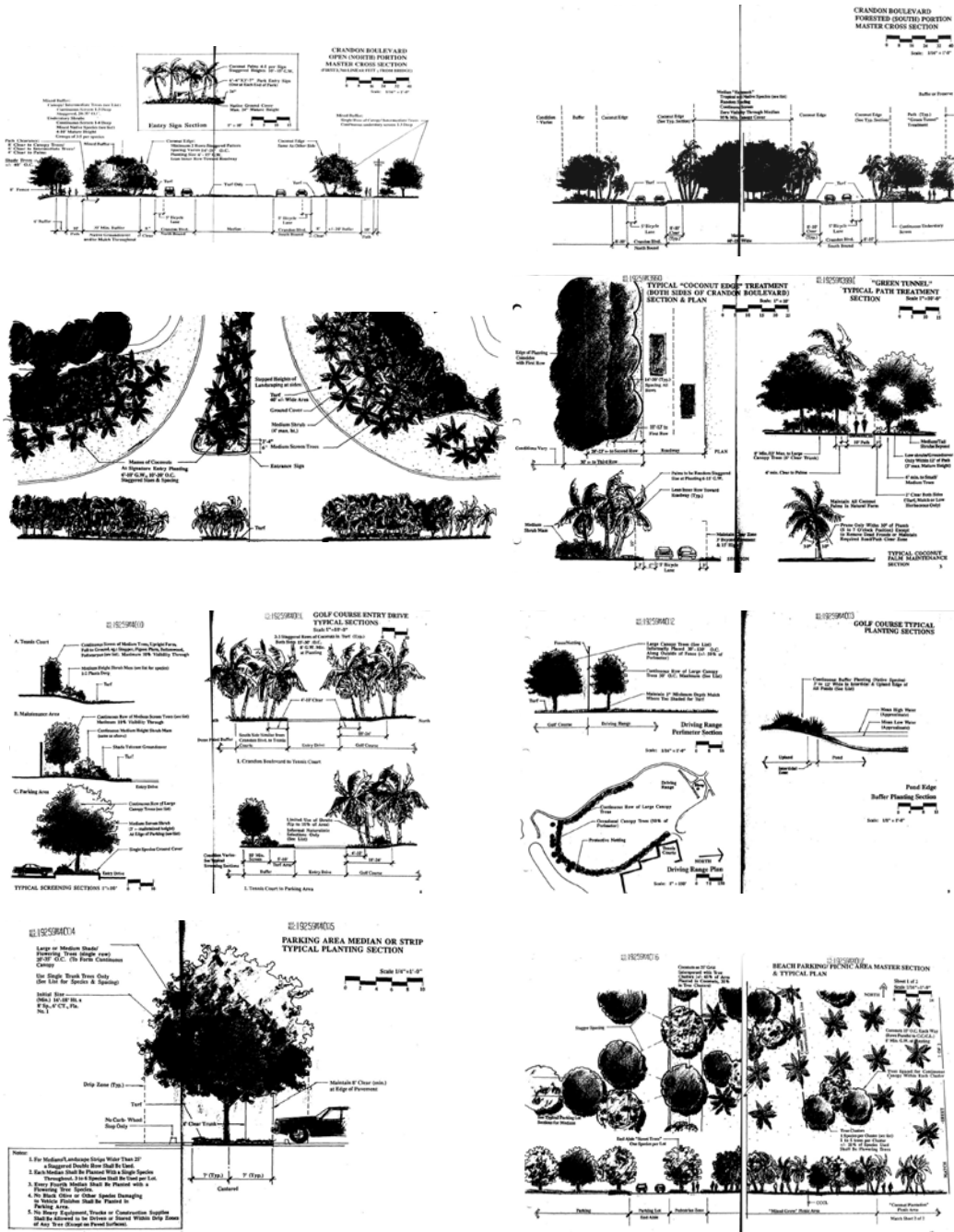
9



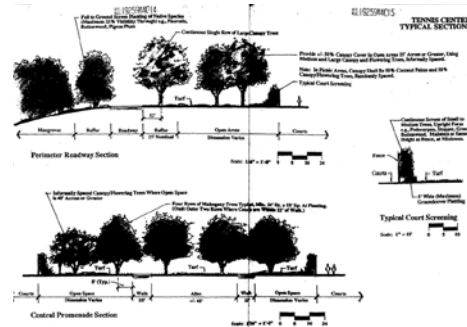
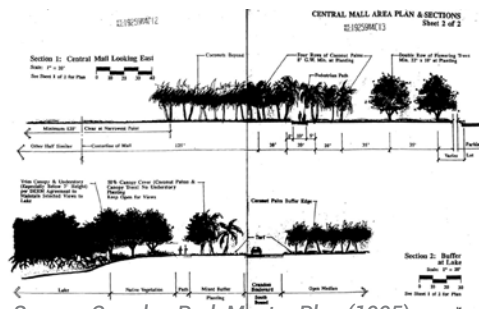
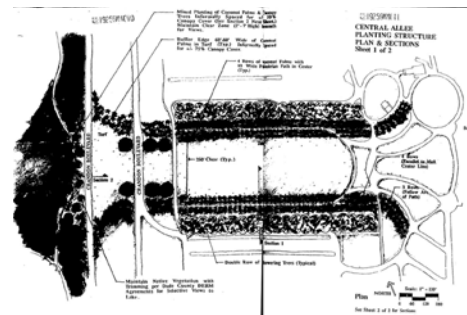
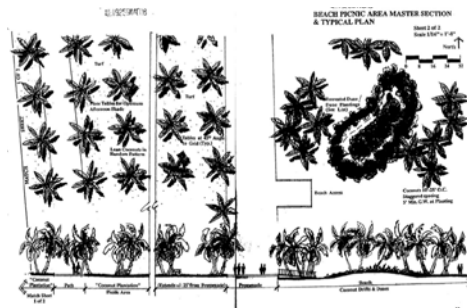
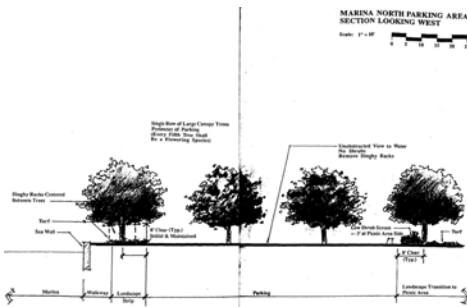
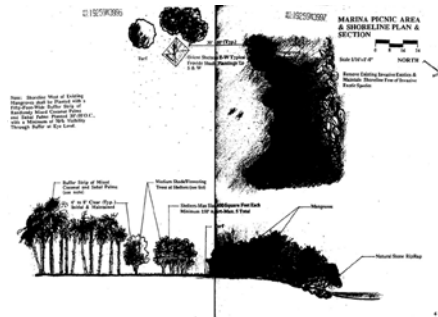
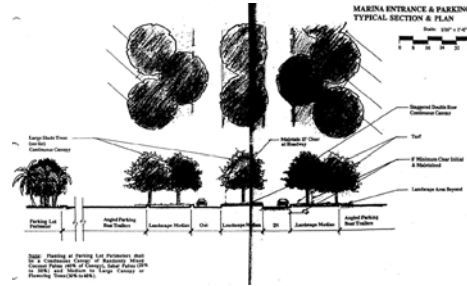
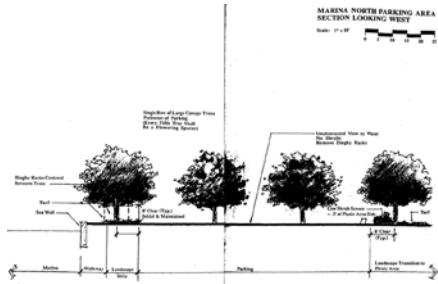
Phasing of the Parking Lots used to screen the Tennis Center and also accommodate the flexible play fields. The curvilinear forms were meant to mimic the beach shoreline.

Source: Crandon Park for the Twenty-first Century (1993)

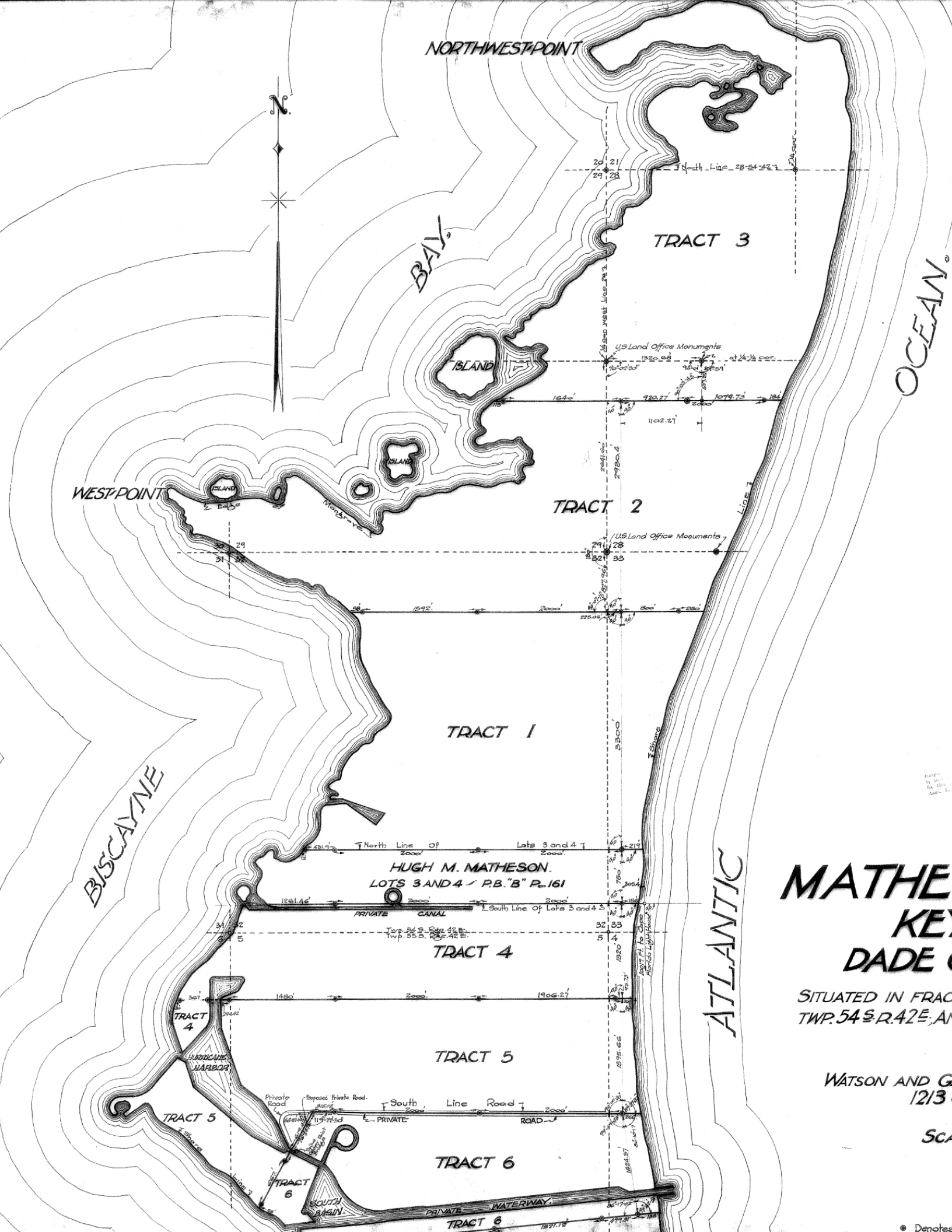
1995 Master Plan Zooms



Source: Crandon Park Master Plan (1995)



Source: Crandon Park Master Plan (1995)



NORTHWEST POINT

BAY

TRACT 3

WEST POINT

TRACT 1

TRACT 2

BISCAYNE

HUGH M. MATHESON.
LOTS 3 AND 4 / P.B. "B" P. 161

TRACT 4

TRACT 5

TRACT 6

ATLANTIC

**MATHE
KEY
DADE**

SITUATED IN FRAC
TWP. 54 S. R. 42 E. AN

WATSON AND G
1213

SCA

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