

134 EL VEDADO ROAD



DESIGNATION REPORT

Landmarks Preservation Commission
Palm Beach, Florida

DESIGNATION REPORT: 134 EL VEDADO ROAD

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I. General Information

Location: 134 El Vedado Road,
Palm Beach, Florida.

Date of Construction: 1935

Principal Architect: John Volk

Present Owner: Fred Brunner

Present Use: Residential

Present Zoning: R-B

Tax Folio Number: 50-43-43-26-00-002-0060

Classification in the "Historic Building Survey of
Palm Beach", 1988:

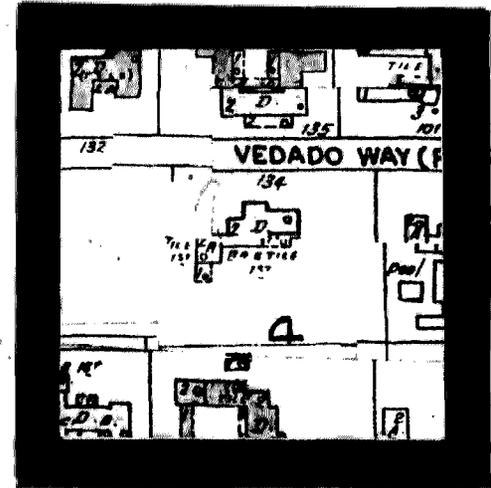
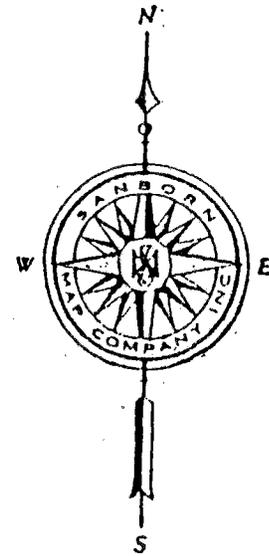
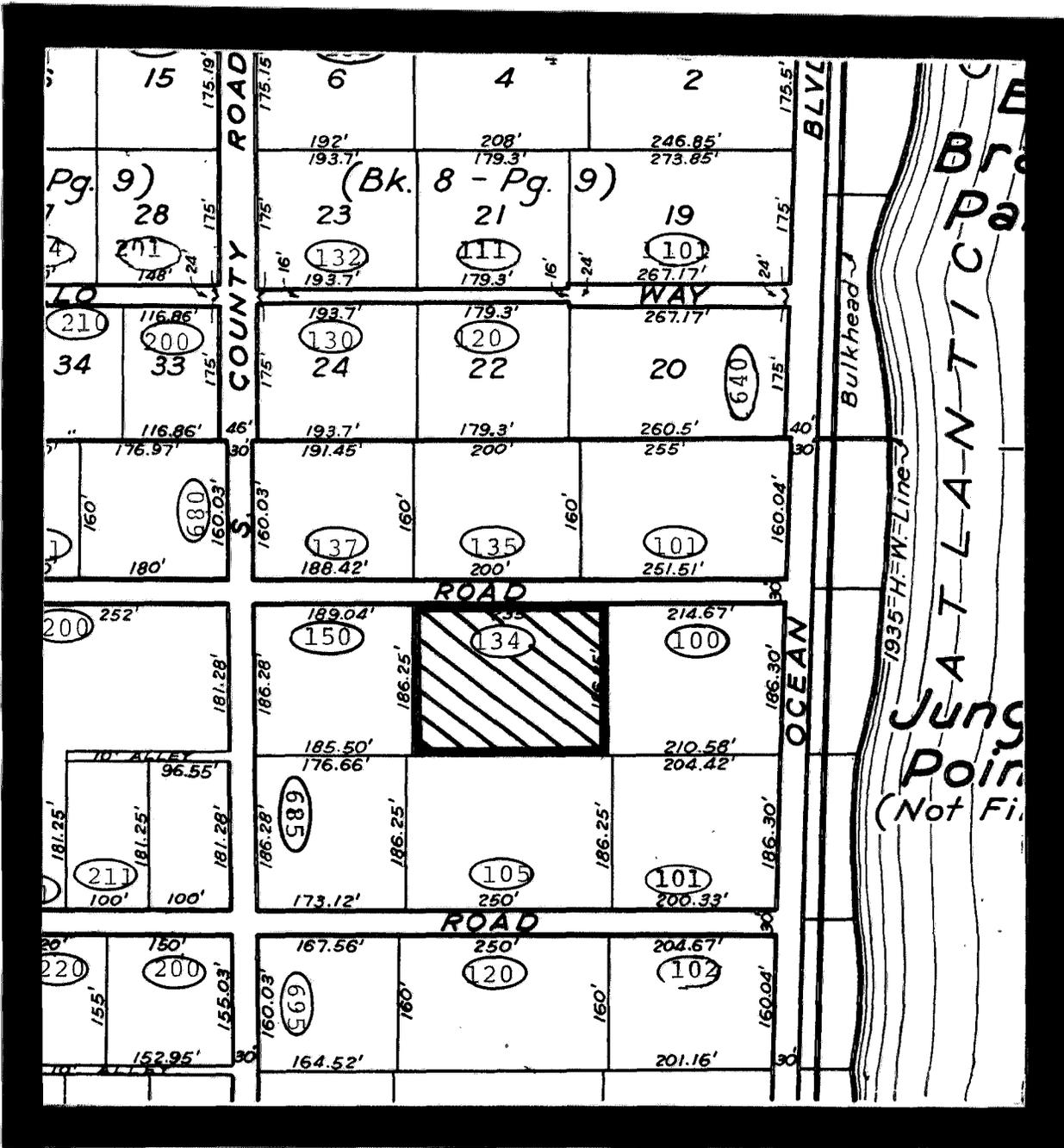
"A good example of the French Eclectic style, with good integrity that was designed by a master architect that is eligible for local designation."

EXHIBIT "A" TO THAT CERTAIN WARRANTY DEED BY AND BETWEEN BRIAN C. DEUSCHLE, AS TRUSTEE UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF A TRUST AGREEMENT DATED APRIL 11, 1980, AS GRANTOR, AND FRED MICHAEL BRUNNER, AS GRANTEE, DATED THE 7th DAY OF January, 1988:

Commencing at a point in the center line of Ocean Boulevard as now laid out and in use, 175 feet South of and measured at right angles to the South line of El Bravo Park, according to the plat thereof on file in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court in and for Palm Beach County, Florida, in Book 8 of Plats, at page 9. Thence run westerly parallel to the said South line of El Bravo Park, a distance of 230 feet to the point of beginning; from the aforesaid point of beginning run southerly at right angles to the preceding course a distance of 201.25 feet to a point; from the aforesaid point thence run westerly parallel to the said South line of El Bravo Park a distance of 285.48 feet; thence run northerly on a line parallel to the center line of South County Road, as now laid out and in use, a distance of 201.26 feet, more or less, to a point 1/5 feet south of and measured at right angles to said South line of El Bravo Park (this preceding northerly course is contiguous with the Eastern Boundary line of that certain property conveyed to Alfons Landa by deed recorded in Official Records Book 891, page 322, of the Palm Beach County records) thence run easterly parallel to the said South line of said El Bravo Park, a distance of 289.02 feet, more or less, to the point of beginning.

TOGETHER WITH all rights and appurtenances thereunto appertaining or belonging to the referenced property.

RECORD VERIFIED
PALM BEACH COUNTY FLA.
JOHN B. DUNKLE
CLERK CIRCUIT COURT



LOCATION MAP: 134 ED VEDADO

III. Architectural Information

134 El Vedado Road is described in the records of the architect, John L. Volk, to be "styled in the character of a French Farm House. This style I selected due to the property being densely wooded with native growth, including live oaks." (Volk, Personal Architectural Files for 134 El Vedado Road). The residence faces north onto El Vedado Road, is two stories high, and has asymmetrically arranged bays. The main section of the house is square in shape, but there is an addition to the west, not a part of the original design, that gives it an irregular plan. The addition and the second story exterior of the main section of the house are half timbered in the French Norman and English Tudor tradition. Presently, the half timbering is painted over and seen only under careful inspection. The first story exterior of the house is of brick.

134 El Vedado Road is unique to its neighborhood, and is a rare style for Palm Beach. While this building takes its roots from the French Norman building tradition, surrounding houses are in the Mediterranean Revival style. It is of the same scale as the neighboring houses, though it has its own distinctive character. There is a recently added, "ballast stone" paver driveway that leads to the front of the house. A large, wood framed carport, with corrugated siding material, is located immediately to the west of the residence. There is a pool on the southeast side of the building. The east yard is enclosed by a chain link fence.

There is a small, enclosed, one story building behind the pool. It is covered with stucco, and has a gabled roof with flat clay tiles. There is one interior masonry chimney.

The main house has a concrete foundation. The walls are constructed of wood frame, masonry clay tile and brick. The first floor of the main house is brick, laid in Flemish bond. The second story and the one story west additions are half timbered. There are pecky cypress brackets beneath the second story roofline of the main block.

Two chimney stacks are visible from El Vedado Road. There is an exterior end brick chimney on the east, and a masonry chimney with a square chimneyhead in the center of the residence.

The north entryway is inset. The front door is wood, and has a small square window within it. There is another wood door on the west elevation first floor of the main house which is covered by an aluminum canopy. There is also a garage door on the west elevation.

The roof of the residence is of a steeply pitched hipped configuration covered with flat clay tiles. The west addition has a steeply pitched gabled roof. There are pecky cypress brackets around the roofline.

IV. Historical Information

134 El Vedado Road was designed in 1935 for Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Noble, who called their home "Reflections". Mr. Noble was one of the early presidents of General Motors (Oral history, L. Jane Volk). The residence was designed by the architect John L. Volk and constructed by the Arnold Construction Company (Building Permit No. 6435, 25 May 1935).

Period photographs show that the house was constructed on a heavily wooded lot of native vegetation. These photographs also clearly show the original, decorative, half timbering which has since been painted over. An article from Palm Beach Life Magazine from 1947 entitled "Reflections: Palm Beach Residence of Mr. and Mrs. John H. Noble" paints a portrait of the original design: "Craftsmanship, the equal of fine French work, is manifest in the dark shingle tile roof, shading to almost black at the eaves, in the weathered beams and braces of the half timbered walls and in the adroit use of floor materials, tile, wood blocks and planking." ("Reflections", p. 60).

Building permits indicate that a swimming pool was planned for 1936 (Building Permit No. 8436, 14 May 1936) and, according to the architect, John Volk: "The swimming pool that I built for them was the first free-form type of pool in Palm Beach, planned in the form of a natural lagoon, rather than the usual rectangular shape." (Volk, Personal Architectural Files for 134 El Vedado). This lagoon shaped pool was balanced, at the time of its construction, by a small pond at the front of the house. The small pond no longer exists.

Volk also designed an addition to the residence in 1965 for owners Mr. and Mrs. Gustave Toth. Mrs. Toth was the daughter of Col. Robert Morse (L. J. Volk, oral history). A new room with a closet and bath were added on the west side of the building (Volk, Original Planned Drawings, 2 July 1965).

According to the City Directories of Palm Beach, other owners of the house were: Mrs. John Perry, whose husband John owned the Palm Beach Post and Times, and Perry Oceanographics (Donovan, np); Terrance F. McCabe; Paul Zimmer; and James Kimberly. Kimberly was tied to the Kimberly-Clarke Company Inc,

owner of the Kleenex Corporation. King Hussein of Jordan visited the Kimberly home occasionally in the late 1970's. Close friends, King Hussein appointed Kimberly Honorary Consul to Jordan. (Flor, "The Ups and Downs..."). Kimberly sold 134 El Vedado Road in 1980 for \$1,088,750 (Quigley, 1 May 1980).

V. Statement of Significance

134 El Vedado Road reveals a great deal about the history of Palm Beach. This is one of only two known French Norman style houses on Palm Beach, and according to the architect's wife, was the first of its style in Palm Beach. 134 El Vedado Road is indicative of the great diversity in taste and style in Palm Beach in the 1930's. The residence is an excellent example of the French Norman style, and is the work of a master architect, John Volk.

VI. Criteria for Designation

Section 16-38A of the Town of Palm Beach Landmarks Preservation Ordinance #2-84 outlines the criteria for designation of a landmark or landmark site and suggests that at least one criterion must be met to justify the designation. Listed below are criteria which relate to this property and justification for designation:

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

134 El Vedado Road is unique for the area, as many of the Palm Beach mansions of this period were designed in the Mediterranean Revival style. However, many residents of Palm Beach came from the north and brought their stylistic ideas from there. The high rooflines and prominent features associated with the French Norman style were preferred by some winter residents coming from the north. These winter residents also found the French Norman style to be appropriate and acceptable in Palm Beach, as an alternative to the Mediterranean Revival style. 134 El Vedado Road was built as the community was coming out of a period of economic recovery from the Depression, yet it is an excellent example of 1930's Palm Beach architecture.

(c) "Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or is a specimen inherently valuable for the study of a period, style, method of construction or use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship."

French Norman style houses in America borrow motifs from a variety of styles of Medieval England. These buildings are characterized essentially by building in the English half timber tradition with exposed wood framing members engaged in the exterior walls with an infill of stucco between members. Noteworthy characteristics include a number of building materials and textures, varied rooflines, high pitched roofs, and doors in-antis. 134 El Vedado Road is an excellent example of the French Norman style as it has all of the aforementioned characteristics.

(d) "Is representative of the notable works of one or more master builders, designers or architects whose individual ability has been recognized to have influenced their age."

PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED JOHN VOLK BIOGRAPHY.

John Volk Biography

John Volk has been called the last of the "original" Palm Beach architects. He was one of an elite group of early 1920's architects which included Addison Mizner, Maurice Fatio, and Marion Sims Wyeth who developed the architectural styles of the island that came to be known as the "Palm Beach Style". His designs include the Royal Poinciana Playhouse, conversion of the Four Arts Gallery, the Florida Capital Building on Royal Palm Way and several shops on Worth Avenue including the Everglades Colonnade.

Volk designed more than 1000 houses, theaters, clubs, shops, and other buildings and lived in Palm Beach from 1925 to 1984. He designed homes for some of the wealthiest and most powerful people in America over his 58 year career in Palm Beach including Colonel Robert McCormack, William Paley, George Vanderbilt, Nicholas DuPont, Henry Ford II, Herbert Pulitzer, Matthew Mellon, George Storer, Horace Dodge II, and John S. Phipps.

Included in the designs of John Volk are some of the most prominent buildings in the Palm Beach area including the First National Bank, the Royal Poinciana Plaza, the center section of the Town Hall, the Beach Club, Good Samaritan Hospital, the golf terrace and orange gardens of the Everglades Club, and extensively modified and rebuilt the Bath and Tennis Club after a major hurricane.

Numerous other buildings are the result of Mr. Volk's labor and it must be noted that no particular style can be exclusively associated with Mr. Volk. Unlike other talented architects who developed or refined specific styles, John Volk understood and perfected many varying architectural styles from the popular Mediterranean Revival to Contemporary Design.

VII. Selected Bibliography

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