

284 Monterey Road



DESIGNATION REPORT

Wednesday, November 20, 2013

Landmark Preservation Commission

Palm Beach, Florida

DESIGNATION REPORT

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Report produced by Murphy Stillings, LLC

I. General Information

Location: 284 Monterey Road
Palm Beach, Florida

Date of Construction: 1941

First Owner: E.B. Walton, Inc.

Architect: Wyeth and King

Builder/Contractor: E.B. Walton, Inc.

Present Owner: Mary L. Magee

Present Use: Residential

Present Zoning: R-B

**Palm Beach County
Tax Folio Number:** 50-43-43-03-13-000-0251-001

Current Legal Description: Gregory Addition & repl. of Lots 27 to 30 inc.
Gregory Addition W 5 feet of Lot 25 & Lots 27 &
27A

II. Location Map

284 Monterey Road



III. Architectural Information

The residence at 284 Monterey Road is a good example of the Bermuda style of architecture dating from the pre World War II era. The Bermuda style, also known as the British Colonial style, is the commonly used name for the West Indian adaption of Georgian architecture. It was inspired by the traditions of the English colonists' architectural heritage. Ornamental details were kept to a minimum in response to the characteristics of the local building materials. Residences designed in this style are usually one or two stories in height. They are symmetrical in fenestration and have white tile roofs and stucco exteriors. Although introduced to Palm Beach in 1925, the Bermuda style did not become popular until the 1930s and 1940s.

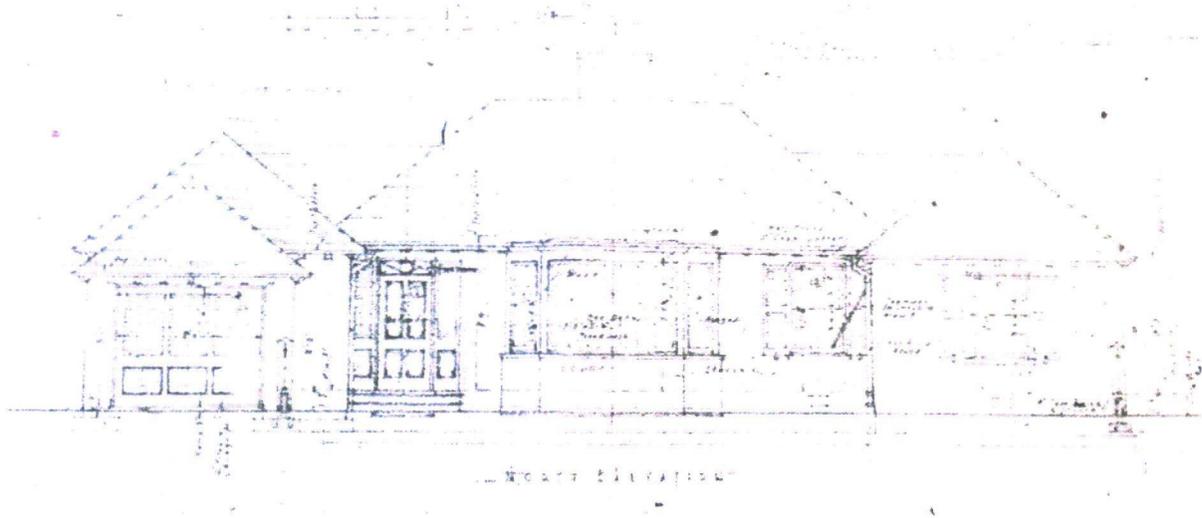
Symmetrical in form and fenestration, 284 Monterey Road has a one story central block with wings extending to the east and west. The exterior walls are covered with stucco. The main feature on the front façade is a large projecting bay with fixed and casement windows. The remainder of the windows are traditional Georgian 6/6 double hung sash windows. The windows are flanked by side-hinged shutters, which are common to Bermuda style structures. The central block of the residence has a truncated hip roof. Lower height hip roofs are located on each wing of the residence. The roofs are steeply pitched and covered with white flat tiles, both character defining details of the Bermuda style. A chimney with a geometric windcap is centrally located. Exposed rafters create a transition between the roof and the wall junctions. A single car garage wing extends to the north of the front façade.



Since construction in 1941 only minor alterations have been done to the property, including roof repairs, interior remodeling, and the installation of a pool, hurricane panels and air conditioning.¹

IV. Historical Information

The house at 284 Monterey Road was designed by Marion Sims Wyeth and built by and for E. B. Walton, Inc. most likely as a speculative investment. E. B. Walton signed building permit #2941 on February 28, 1941. The original price on the residence was listed as \$10,000.² The residence is located on the southeast corner of Monterey Road and North Lake Way in the Gregory Addition, which was platted in 1935 in the northern end of Palm Beach.



Drawing of 284 Monterey Road by Wyeth and King, 1941

Howard Major introduced the Bermuda style of architecture in Palm Beach in 1925 with the design of Major Alley on Peruvian Avenue. Major proposed that the Bermuda style, lighter and simpler in design than the Mediterranean Revival style, was better suited to the South Florida climate.³ The Bermuda style was not commonly used, however, until the 1930s when John L. Volk expanded on the theme and constructed a number of Bermuda style residences including White Gables on South County Road.⁴

¹ Town of Palm Beach Building Permits.

² Ibid.

³ Shirley Johnston, *Palm Beach Houses*, (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1991), p. 19.

⁴ Donald W. Curl, *Palm Beach County, An Illustrated History*, (Northridge, California: Windsor Publications, 1986), p. 98.

Wyeth's version of the Bermuda style at 284 Monterey Road was built immediately before residential construction slowed for World War II. Housing and entertainment were on a smaller scale than during the Boom Times of the 1920s and this residence reflects that change.

V. Architects Biography

Marion Sims Wyeth

Marion Sims Wyeth, whose career spanned 60 years, was one of Palm Beach's earliest and most successful architects. Wyeth was noted for his "quiet, subdued and rational"⁵ interpretations of both the Spanish and Italian styles. With Addison Mizner, Maurice Fatio, Joseph Urban and John Volk, he is credited with creating the "Palm Beach Style".⁶

Wyeth, a member of a well-known family of artists, was born in New York City in 1889. He began architectural studies at Princeton in 1910 and completed his classic training at L'Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. He started his career in New York with the firm Carrere and Hastings before relocating to Palm Beach in 1919 where he met with immediate success. He was a founding partner in Wyeth and King, later becoming Wyeth, King and Johnson with offices in New York and Palm Beach.

The socially popular Wyeth was a prolific craftsman whose designs are found throughout Palm Beach. More than 100 of his residential designs have graced the Island, including Qui Si Sana (101 El Brillo Way), Casa Juanita (80 Middle Road) and Hogarcito (17 Golfview Road). His impressive list of contributing works includes many prominent structures including Good Samaritan Hospital, Seminole Golf Club, Bethesda by the Sea rectory, the Norton Gallery and the Governor's Mansion in Tallahassee.

Wyeth's contemporaries recognized his genius. He was known to help Addison Mizner bring reality into some of his more complex ideas. While Joseph Urban is credited with Mar-a-Lago, Wyeth's association with the project was essential for its completion.⁷

⁵ Palm Beach Daily News, March 6, 1981.

⁶ Palm Beach Daily News, February 17, 1982.

⁷ Palm Beach Daily News, March 16, 1981.

Later in his career Wyeth designed homes in a Southern Colonial style. He always remained faithful to his classic training. Refined and graceful designs were his trademark. Wyeth, who died in 1982, was the first Palm Beach architect to be elected to a fellow of the American Institute of Architecture.⁸

Ernest Benjamin Walton, Sr.

Ernest Benjamin Walton was born in Genoa, Nebraska on December 7, 1881. The Walton's, whose American origins date back to the mid 1650s, had a family home "Mosswood" in Harford County, Maryland. When President Ulysses S. Grant appointed Walton's father, William, an Agent to the Indian Bureau in 1869, he and his wife moved to Nebraska.

In 1893, the Walton family returned to Maryland where Ernest and his five siblings continued their education. Walton's youth in Nebraska and summer vacations on family farms in Maine left him with a life long love of the outdoors. In his senior year at college Walton convinced his father to invest in 260 acres of land on Lake George in New York. Upon receiving a degree in Civil Engineering from Lehigh University in 1901, Walton returned to Lake George to begin surveying the area and planning the future development of Glenburnie. Walton and his father constructed a cottage colony and hotel, The Glenburnie Inn. He spent winters in New York City with various building firms and returned to Glenburnie each spring.

Walton and his wife, Julia, made their first trip to Florida in 1916-1917. A side trip to Fort Lauderdale from Sanibel convinced Walton of the possibilities of Florida's east coast. Eventually Walton decided upon the Palm Beach area as a source of winter work. World War I and a First Lieutenant's commission postponed the family's move until after the war.

By the 1920s Walton began his long and successful career in South Florida with the construction of some small houses in the El Cid area of West Palm Beach and the construction of four apartment buildings in West Palm Beach and Palm Beach. Demand for Walton's company continued from the Boom Times into the Depression Era. The company successfully developed numerous streets throughout the northern section of Palm Beach, which include North Shore Addition, Monterey Road, Colonial Lane, and Sanford Avenue. Walton also constructed large estates designed by Palm Beach's prominent architects.

⁸ Shirley Johnston, Palm Beach Houses. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1991, p. 285.

In the 1940s Walton again served in the United States Army. During World War II he served as Assistant Post Engineer. His classified work included sketches of old military buildings north of Cape Canaveral. These sketches were included in the start of the Cape Canaveral Space Center.

Walton's success was not limited to residential construction. His company built numerous Mount Vernon and Howard Johnson Motor Lodges throughout the southeastern United States. Local commercial buildings include the West Palm Beach Women's Club, Palm Beach Town Hall additions (1960s), Seminole Building, U.S. Trust Office Building, and the Heart of Palm Beach Hotel. In the 1950s, Walton's two sons, Ben and Bill, joined him in the family business.

VI. Statement of Significance

The residence at 284 Monterey Road is a good example of the Bermuda style of architecture as interpreted in the Town of Palm Beach during the early 1940s just prior to the Second World War. The residence was designed by noted architect Marion Sims Wyeth and constructed by master builder E.B. Walton.

VII. Criteria For Designation

Section 54-161 of the Town of Palm Beach Landmarks Preservation Ordinance 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 that relate to this property and justification for designation:

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

Most domestic building in the United States ceased during World War II. The residence at 284 Monterey Road, built in 1941, reflects the end of the pre-war era and represents the development of the north end of Palm Beach by the contracting firm of E.B. Walton, Inc.

(3) "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."

The Bermuda style of architecture popularized in the Town of Palm Beach exhibits the adaptations of Georgian architecture to the landscape and climate of southeast Florida. The residence at 284 Monterey Road is a good example of the Bermuda style as designed by Marion Sims Wyeth in 1941 for the architectural firm of Wyeth and King.

(4) “Is representative of the notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual ability has been recognized or who influenced his age.”

Marion Sims Wyeth, one of Palm Beach’s master architects, and E.B. Walton, one of Palm Beach’s master builders, collaborated on the construction of 284 Monterey Road. This partnership created an excellent example of the Bermuda style of architecture that was built in Palm Beach just prior to World War II.

VIII. Selected Bibliography

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