

145 Seaspray Avenue



DESIGNATION REPORT

January 16, 2019

Landmark Preservation Commission

Palm Beach, Florida

DESIGNATION REPORT

145 Seaspray Avenue

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Report produced by Murphy Stillings, LLC

I. General Information

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| Location: | 145 Seaspray Avenue Palm Beach, Florida |
| Date of Construction: | 1919 |
| First Owner: | J. Frederick Pierson, Jr. |
| Historic Name: | Villa Vinca |
| Current Owner: | R. Michael & Sue A. Strickland |
| Architect/Builder: | City Builders Realty Company |
| Present Use: | Residential |
| Present Zoning: | RB |
| Palm Beach County Tax Folio Number: | 50-43-43-22-07-000-4840 |
| Current Legal Description: | Poinciana Park Second Addition Lots 484, 486, 488, 490, 492, 494, 496 & West 10 Feet of Lot 498 |

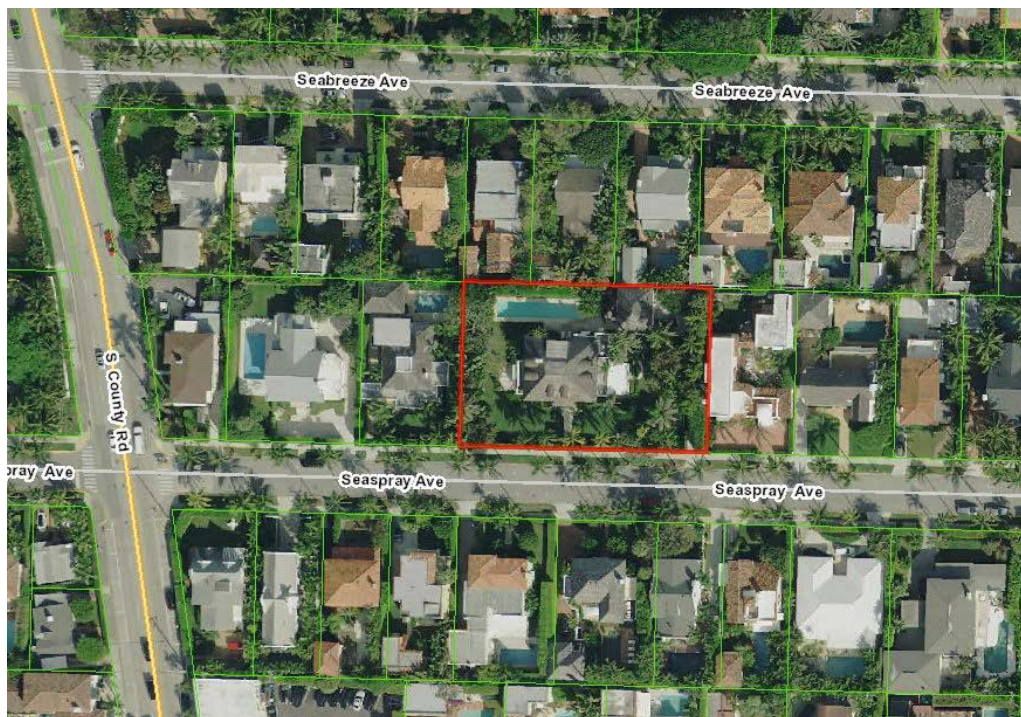
II. Location Map

145 Seaspray Avenue



III. Architectural Information

The residence located at 145 Seaspray Avenue is a 2-½-story frame and clay tile structure covered with smooth stucco constructed in 1919 in the Colonial Revival style. The Colonial Revival style of architecture was popular throughout the United States from the 1880s to the 1950s. The 1876 Philadelphia Centennial sparked a new interest in the colonial past, and the Colonial Revival style was based on Georgian and Federal styles of the 18th century, with the modern revivals taking elements from the original colonial forms and incorporating them into contemporary structures. Domestic construction during the first half of the 20th century was dominated by Colonial Revival examples in a multitude of various sub-types. Typical features of the Colonial Revival style include symmetrical front facades with a center door and aligned windows, double-hung sash windows with multi-light glazing often in pairs, dormers, fanlights and sidelights and one-story wings usually with a flat roof. Wide overhanging eaves were rarely found on colonial houses but some Colonial Revival examples have Craftsman influence with overhanging eaves and square porch supports.





An important focal point on the front façade of 145 Seaspray Avenue is the center entry with sidelights that is covered by a hipped-roof entry porch with boxed and classical columns. Flanking this central entry are pairs of nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows. Also on the first story are one-story wings extending from the east and west of the principal block. These wings have pairs of multi-light casement windows and flat roofs with low parapets. On the second story directly above the entry is a pair of multi-light casement windows slightly recessed from the front plane of the house. Pairs of nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows matching those on the first story flank this center feature.

The principal block of the house is covered with a wood-shingled hipped roof with exaggerated overhanging eaves and carved brackets. The south, east and west slopes of the roof feature paired eyebrow dormers, while the north slope features a shed roof dormer. All of the dormers have multi-light windows covered with shutters. The dwelling has two brick chimneys covered with stucco, one on the west elevation and the other on the north elevation.

The front façade is the only elevation that can be seen from the street, however aerial photographs of the dwelling indicate that the east, west and north elevations feature numerous multi-light double-hung sash and casement windows as well as a number of multi-light French doors leading to patios. Several of these French doors are covered with awnings. There is also two-story garage/apartment on the northeast

corner of the property that was designed by Treanor and Fatio and constructed by C.G. Warner in 1929.¹ This building is accessed by a narrow driveway on the east side of the property.

Over the one hundred years since the construction of 145 Seaspray Avenue, there have been some additions and alterations to the exterior of the structure. In 1997, the roof was re-surfaced with wood shingles, and in 2000, twenty-four Colonial shutters were installed along with twenty storm panels. Despite these changes, the house retains its historical architectural integrity.

IV. Historical Information

The house at 145 Seaspray Avenue is located in the second addition of the Poinciana Park Subdivision. Poinciana Park was platted and largely developed by Oscar A. Jose and his City Builders Realty Company. Jose created Poinciana Park by purchasing tracts of land south of the Breakers and the Royal Poinciana Hotel from Lake Worth to the Atlantic Ocean. This area became the “Sea” streets with Sea Breeze platted in 1914 followed by Sea Spray in 1917 and the north side of Sea View in 1923.² The land for the second addition where 145 Seaspray Avenue is located was purchased from James and Charles Stillman.³ A brochure designed and distributed by City Builders Realty Company titled “Poinciana Park, The Preferred Location,” goes into great detail about the many advantages of wintering in Palm Beach and the benefits of owning a house in centrally located Poinciana Park, close to all of the town’s amenities but removed from the “rush and bustle of the hotel center.”⁴ Oscar Jose was one of the early developers to recognize the potential in

¹ The permit and a Palm Beach Post article dated October 26, 1929 state that the Treanor and Fatio designed garage and servant’s quarters cost \$8000.

² Sea Breeze, Sea Spray and Sea View were the original spellings of the Poinciana Park Avenues. A January 28, 1917 City Builders Realty Company advertisement in the Palm Beach Post stated, “We have platted a new addition to Poinciana Park and we are advertising for a name for the new street. \$10.00 for an acceptable name.” The street was named Sea Spray Avenue.

³ James Stillman was an American businessman who invested in land, banking and railroads in New York, Texas and Mexico and was president and later chairman of the National City Bank. At the time of his death in 1918 he was one of the wealthiest people in the United States. His son, Charles Stillman, took over his land in Palm Beach after his death.

⁴ “Poinciana Park, The Preferred Location,” Brochure distributed by City Builders Realty. No Date. Located in the Poinciana Park file at the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach. Ownership or seasonal rental of a house in Poinciana Park included a membership in the Sea Spray Beach Club. Located on the ocean side of South Ocean Boulevard and Seaspray Avenue, the fashionable club provided members with an Olympic-sized salt water pool, tennis courts, changing rooms, a solarium, and popular dining facilities. They had sports programs for children and Oscar Jose’s son, who had been a boxing champion, taught John F. Kennedy to box at the Sea Spray Beach Club. Beginning in 1929, Oscar Jose recognized that many residents of Poinciana Park were becoming year round residents rather than just seasonal occupants so they opened the Sea Spray Beach Club as the “Summer Bath Club” for their members who stayed in town during the summer months.

Palm Beach for building something other than a grand estate or spending the season at a hotel. Poinciana Park was an attempt to make Palm Beach more family oriented and the Palm Beach life-style more accessible to the “upper-middle class.”⁵

As early as 1919, City Builder’s had difficulty keeping up with the housing demand. Houses were selling quickly and there were not enough rental properties to keep up with all of the seasonal requests. Despite this demand, City Builders did not construct cookie-cutter houses. Each house was unique and of high quality. An August 4, 1919 Palm Beach Post article stated,

“With six houses underway now, the City Builders Realty Company will at once start seven more houses in Poinciana Park. Each of the houses will vary in style of construction in order to avoid monotony. Some of the houses are for clients who have bought lots; others will be available for sale or rental.”

Many of the earlier houses were bungalows or a variation of the Colonial Revival style, including a number of Dutch Colonial Revival style houses. At the time, the houses were called “cottages” and residents were considered part of the “cottage colony.” Many people named their cottages as a way to personalize their homes.

J. Frederick Pierson and his wife Suzanne Pierson purchased 145 Seaspray Avenue from City Builders in February of 1919 and named it Villa Vinca.⁶ Prior to purchasing this house, the Pierson’s had lived on Seabreeze Avenue. J. Frederick Pierson was one of the early members of the Everglades Club’s Board of Governors, joining the board in 1919 when it had just opened as a private club. The Pierson’s were often in society news noted as popular in Palm Beach’s winter society smart set.

Frederick Foster Carey of Tuxedo Park, New York purchased 145 Seaspray Avenue in 1926. F. F. Carey took great interest in the cultural development and beautification of Palm Beach. His family had been coming to Palm Beach since the time it first became known as a resort and were members of the early Royal Poinciana colony. Shortly after moving to Palm Beach, he joined a group of gentleman farmers, where he purchased and developed Tranquility Farms. F.F. Carey was a member of the Everglades Club and the conservative Tuxedo circle in Palm Beach.⁷

⁵ “Preservationist’s Home Gets Landmarks’ OK,” Palm Beach Daily News, 22 January 1998.

⁶ Vinca is a type of Periwinkle flower.

⁷ Palm Beach Post, “Frederic F. Carey Dies At Resort Home.” 5 May 1933.

Mr. & Mrs. Nathan D. Bill of Springfield, Massachusetts purchased Villa Vinca in January of 1934. Nathan Bill, a paper manufacturer, started coming to Palm Beach in 1894 during the Flagler era and for many seasons he and Mrs. Bill stayed at the Royal Poinciana, Breakers and Whitehall hotels. In Palm Beach, Mr. Bill was a member of the Old Guard Society, Everglades and Bath & Tennis clubs, and his interest in golf led him to become one of the leaders in a movement whereby he and four other Palm Beachers gave the City of West Palm Beach its municipal golf course.⁸ Nathan Bill passed away in 1947 and Mrs. Bill sold 145 Seaspray Avenue to A. Parker Bryant in the spring of 1950.

A. Parker Bryant, a prominent Realtor and longtime esteemed and philanthropic resident of Palm Beach, owned 145 Seaspray Avenue with his wife Elizabeth Dixon Bryant or over forty years.⁹

The current owners, Michael and Sue Strickland, purchased the house in 1999 and have been excellent stewards of their historic dwelling.

V. Architect/Builders Biography

City Builders Realty Company

One of the earliest companies to successfully construct and promote real estate development in the Town of Palm Beach was the Indianapolis based City Builders Realty Company headed by Oscar A. Jose. In 1914, City Builders Realty Company became part of a growing number of successful midwestern firms who opened offices in South Florida prior to the 1920s Boom Time Era. Indiana contemporaries of Jose included City of Hollywood developer Joseph Young and Miami Beach developer Carl Fisher. These astute businessmen were instrumental in promoting South Florida as a desirable place to reside.

Beginning in 1914, City Builders Realty Company purchased tracts of land from Palm Beach pioneers including William Lanehart, Elisha Dimick, Frederick Robert,

⁸ In 1930, Nathan D. Bill, John Shepard, Jr., B.H. Kroger, Wiley R. Reynolds and Colonel E.R. Bradley donated the West Palm Beach Country Club Golf course to the City of West Palm Beach. The golf course was later taken over by Morrison Field during WWII.

⁹ A. Parker Bryant first visited Palm Beach in 1913 (80 years before his death in 1993) and regularly vacationed in Palm Beach before moving to the area in 1933. He was related to the Bryant family that helped to found Lake Worth and created Bryant Park

Henry Maddock, H.F. Hammon, E.M. Brelsford and Harvey Geer.¹⁰ These combined parcels, renamed Poinciana Park by Jose, extended from Lake Worth to the Atlantic Ocean south of the Royal Poinciana Hotel and the Breakers Hotel. The streets were named Sea Breeze Avenue, Sea Spray Avenue and Sea View Avenue, and included 820 lots, though most properties encompassed several of the twenty-five foot wide lots. The Company provided water, electric and sewer connections, sidewalks and lush landscaping. In the 1910s, houses were marketed as complete packages for families, fully furnished for a seasonal residence, however, by the 1920s they were being marketed for both seasonal and permanent residence. Additional amenities included the private Sea Spray Beach Club, nearby public and private schools, dockage for private yachts and attractive term financing for those who desired to finance their house. Commercial buildings were prohibited from the Poinciana Park Subdivision.

City Builders Realty Company designed and constructed a number of the houses in Poinciana Park. The company also marketed lots to other Palm Beach builders and architects who maintained the size, scale and quality of residences as originally established within the subdivision. Designed to impress an upscale market of both the permanent homebuyers and those interested in leasing seasonal Palm Beach residences, City Builders Realty Company made a lasting impression on Palm Beach architecture and lifestyle.

VI. Statement of Significance

145 Seaspray Avenue is an excellent example of a Colonial Revival style house constructed in 1919 just before the Palm Beach building boom and the popularization of the Mediterranean Revival style. It's original style, mass and setting make it an important historic dwelling to the Seaspray Avenue ocean block streetscape.

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

¹⁰ Information found in the Poinciana Park file at the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach. The paper lists land title searches of properties in Poinciana Park.

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.”

The house located at 145 Seaspray Avenue reflects the broad cultural and economic history of the Town of Palm Beach. Seaspray Avenue is part of the Poinciana Park subdivision that was one of the Island’s first successful large residential developments. Poinciana Park was specifically aimed at the upper middle class family who desired either a Palm Beach winter residence or a permanent year round residence in a premier in-town location with numerous amenities. City Builders Realty Company promoted it as a “home site park” with broad avenues prevailing in beautiful homes where many of the country’s best-known people spend their time filled with contentment. While prior to 1919, Palm Beach’s reputation had mostly rested on the fashionable hotels, the success of Poinciana Park helped establish another dimension to the development of Palm Beach. The house is also very important because it helps maintain the historic fabric of Seaspray Avenue, the Sea Streets, and the development of the town.

(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.”

Interest in the colonial past sparked a revival of buildings with features from America’s early beginnings. 145 Seaspray Avenue is a very good example of a Colonial Revival style single-family dwelling that grew from this movement. The house’s symmetrical front facade with a center door and aligned windows, double-hung sash windows with multi-light glazing, dormers, sidelights and one-story wings with flat roofs are all representative features of Colonial Revival style dwellings and presented here in excellent form.

VIII. Selected Bibliography

Curl, Donald W. Palm Beach County: An Illustrated History. Northridge, California: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1987.

The Historical Society of Palm Beach County. Historical and Architectural Files; Palm Beach County History Online

Marconi, Richard A. and Murray, Debi. Images of America: Palm Beach. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2009.

McAlester, Virginia Savage. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2015. Revised and expanded from the original edition written by Virginia and Lee McAlester.

Palm Beach County Official Records Books, Poinciana Park Second Addition 1917 – 1950.

The Palm Beach Daily News. Archived Articles Online

The Palm Beach Post. Archived Articles Online

The Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach. Files on Poinciana Park; 145 Seaspray Avenue file

Sanborn Insurance Map of Palm Beach. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1919 and 1926. City of West Palm Beach Public Library, Florida Room.

Town of Palm Beach. Building Permits, 1929– 2018.

Trulia Website: Photos of 145 Seaspray Avenue.

West Palm Beach City Directories. Asheville, NC: Florida-Piedmont Directory Company, 1916 -1986. These city directories included Town of Palm Beach directories and information on Palm Beach residents.

IX. Florida Master Site File Form



HISTORICAL STRUCTURE FORM

Electronic Version 1.1.0

Site # PB06736
Recorder # Jane S. Day
Field Date 10/6/2010
Form Date 10/19/2010
Form No 201010
Form No = Field Date (YYYYMM)

First Site Form Recorded for this Site? NO

GENERAL INFORMATION

Site Name (address if none) Michael & Sue Strickland, House Multiple Listing (DHR only) _____
Other Names _____ >> _____
Survey or Project Name Palm Beach Historic Sites Survey, Phase V Survey# _____
National Register Category Building(s)

LOCATION & IDENTIFICATION

Address

| Street No. | Direction | Street Name | Street Type | Direction Suffix |
|------------|-----------|-----------------|---------------|------------------|
| <u>145</u> | | <u>Seaspray</u> | <u>Avenue</u> | |

Cross Streets (nearest/ between) South Ocean Blvd. & S. County Rd.
City / Town (within 3 miles) Town of Palm Beach In Current City Limits? YES
County Palm Beach Tax Parcel #(s) 50-43-43-22-07-000-4840
Subdivision Name Poinciana park Block _____ Lot 484-496
Ownership Private Individual
Name of Public Tract (e.g., park) _____
Route to (especially if no street address) On the north side of Seaspray Ave. between S. Ocean Blvd. and S. County Rd.

MAPPING

USGS 7.5' Map Name _____ Publication Date _____ >> PAIM BEACH;1983
Township: _____ Range: _____ Section: _____ 1/4 section: _____ >> 43S ; 43E ; 22; UNSP
Irregular Section Name: _____
Landgrant _____
UTM: Zone _____ Easting _____ Northing _____
Plat or Other Map (map's name, location) _____

DESCRIPTION

Style American Foursquare Other Style _____
Exterior Plan Irregular Other Exterior Plan _____
Number of Stories 2.5
Structural System(s) _____ >> Wood frame
Other Structural System(s) hollow clay tile
Foundation Type(s) _____ >> Continuous
Other Foundation Types _____
Foundation Material(s) _____ >> Concrete Block
Other Foundation Material(s) _____
Exterior Fabric(s) _____ >> Stucco
Other Exterior Fabric(s) _____
Roof Type(s) _____ >> Hip
Other Roof Type(s) _____
Roof Material(s) _____ >> Wood shingles
Other Roof Material(s) _____
Roof Secondary Structure(s) (dormers etc) _____ >> eyebrow dormer
Other Roof Secondary Structure(s) _____
Number of Chimneys 1
Chimney Material Brick
Other Chimney Material(s) stucco on exterior
Chimney Location(s) west exterior

Page 1 of 3

HISTORICAL STRUCTURE FORM

8PB06736

DESCRIPTION (continued)

Window Descriptions 9/9 DBS, casement, fixed

Main Entrance Description (stylistic details) centered on the main block of the south facade with boxed and classical columns, sidelights

Porch: #open 3 #closed 0 #incised 0 Location(s) entry - s, 2nd floor open - w, covered - e

Porch Roof Type(s) hip roof over front porch

Exterior Ornament shutters, wide overhang, columns

Interior Plan Unknown

Other Interior Plan

Condition Excellent

Structure Surroundings

Commercial: NONE of this category

Residential: ALL this category

Institutional: NONE of this category

Undeveloped: NONE of this category

Ancillary Features (Number / type of outbuildings, major landscape features)

Archaeological Remains (describe): none observed

If archaeological remains are present, was an Archaeological Site Form completed?

Narrative Description (optional)

HISTORY

Construction year 1915

Architect (last name first): unknown

Builder (last name first): Warner, C. G.

Changes in Locations or Conditions

| Type of Change | Year of Change | Date Change Noted | Description of Changes |
|---|----------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| >> <u>Altered-not to standards;1929;10/1/2004;Treanor and Fatio</u> | | | |

Structure Use History

Use Year Use Started Year Use Ended >> Private residence;1915;

Other Structure Uses

Ownership History (especially original owner, dates, profession, etc.)

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Methods >> Examine local property records

Other research methods

SURVEYOR'S EVALUATION OF SITE

Potentially Eligible for a Local Register? INSUFF. INFO Name of Local Register if Eligible Palm Beach Landmarks

Individually Eligible for National Register? INSUFF. INFO

Potential Contributor to NR District? INSUFF. INFO

Area(s) of historical significance >> Architecture

Other Historical Associations

Explanation of Evaluation (required) This house dates from the early years of Palm Beach development. It was altered by Treanor and Fatio in 1929 and is worthy of further study.

HISTORICAL STRUCTURE FORM

8PB06736

DOCUMENTATION (Photos, Plans, etc.)

Photographic Negatives or Other Collections Not Filed with FMSF, including Field Notes, Plans, other Important Documents.

Document type: _____ Maintaining Organization: _____
 File or Accession #: _____ Descriptive Information: _____
 >> _____

RECORDER INFORMATION

Recorder Name (Last, First) Day, Jane S.
 Recorder Address / Phone 728 Granada Dr., Boca Raton, FL 33432 561-362-4473
 Recorder Affiliation Research Atlantica Other Affiliation Town of Palm Beach
 Is a Text-Only Supplement File Attached (Surveyor Only)? _____

***** MASTER SITE FILE USE ONLY *****

| | |
|--|--|
| Cultural Resource Type: <u>SS</u> Electronic Form Used: <u>SI10</u> Form Type Code: <u>NRHM</u> Form Quality Ranking: <u>NEW</u> Form Status Code: <u>SCAN</u> Supplement Information Status: <u>NO SUPPLEMENT</u> Supplement File Status: <u>NO SUPPLEMENT FILE</u> Form Comments: _____ _____ _____ | SHPO's Evaluation of Resource Date: _____ FMSF Staffer: _____ Computer Entry Date: <u>11/15/2004</u> |
|--|--|

| | |
|---|---|
| REQUIRED PAPER ATTACHMENTS | (1) USGS 7.5" MAP WITH STRUCTURE PINPOINTED IN RED (2) LARGE SCALE STREET OR PLAT MAP (3) PHOTO OF MAIN FACADE, B&W, AT LEAST 3"X5" |
|---|---|