

334 Australian Avenue



DESIGNATION REPORT

November 20, 2019

Landmark Preservation Commission

Palm Beach, Florida

DESIGNATION REPORT

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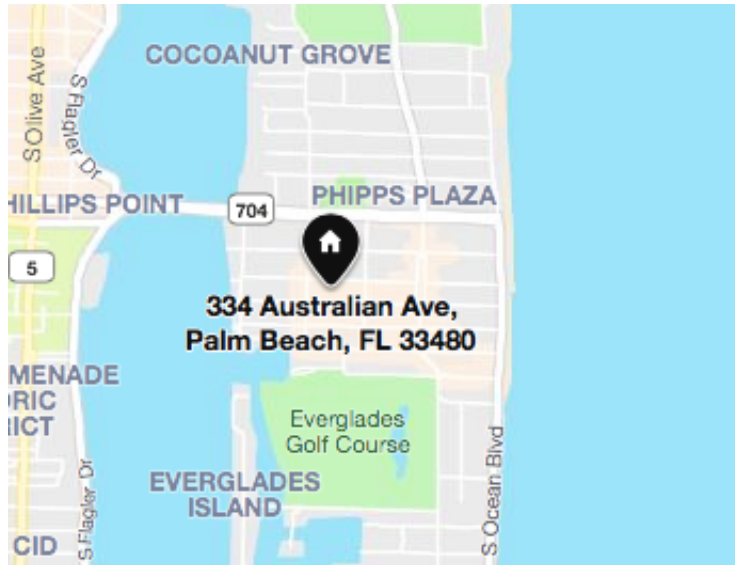
Report produced by Murphy Stillings, LLC

I. General Information

Location:	334 Australian Avenue Palm Beach, Florida
Date of Construction:	1925
First Owner:	George B. Ogle
Builder/Contractor:	Victor Kubu
Present Owner:	Sandy Bottoms Trust & Craig Tessler Trust
Present Use:	Residential
Present Zoning:	R-C
Palm Beach County Tax Folio Number:	50-43-43-23-05-006-0110
Current Legal Description:	Royal Park Addition Lots 11 & 12 Block 6

II. Location Map

334 Australian Avenue



III. Architectural Information

334 Australian Avenue is a unique Frame Vernacular style house with a western False Front built by Lake Worth builder Victor Kubu in 1925.¹ This interesting dwelling is located on the south side of Australian Avenue between Hibiscus Street and Cocoanut Row in the Royal Park subdivision. The dwelling can be accessed from the driveway on the west side of the property or through the center wood gate adjacent to the sidewalk. A tall fichus hedge stands in front of the property so the dwelling is currently mostly hidden from the street view.



Frame Vernacular refers to a simple wood frame building, which is the product of the builder's experience, available resources and response to the environment. These buildings are typically rectangular, one or two stories in height, with one-story front porches and gabled or hipped roofs with overhanging eaves. Horizontal clapboard and drop siding are the most common exterior wall materials and wood double-hung sash windows are most typical. Ornamentation is sparse, but often includes shingles, porch columns, brackets and rafter tails. The False Front was popular in the West after the California Gold Rush of 1849 as a way to make town buildings look more like impressive buildings of the East. In this style, the front façade of the building rises to form a parapet that hides the roof behind it.

¹ Town of Palm Beach Building Permit #509 dated October 13, 1925. The estimated cost of the building was \$4000.

False Fronts were most commonly used for commercial buildings with the goal for the architecture to project an image of stability and success.²



Photo from Real Estate Advertisement by Martha A. Gottfried, Inc.
Provided by The Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach

334 Australia Avenue is an interesting False Front Frame Vernacular dwelling, a style not found often in Palm Beach. The one-story dwelling is taller than most with 12-foot high ceilings throughout all the interior rooms. The house is constructed of horizontal clapboard on a continuous concrete foundation. The low front gable roof is accented with a character-defining parapet where the wall transitions from a flat roof to hide the gable behind creating the tall False Front.³ The attractive front-entry sequence consists of a pair of wood panel doors flanked by two sets of fifteen-light sidelights with divided-light transom windows above. A prominent front porch covers this entrance with two center square posts supporting a broad and deep flat-roof with over-hanging eaves and carved rafter tails. The porch also includes a wood rail with narrow, decorative spindles. West of the entry on the front façade are paired nine-light casement windows with a divided-light transom window above, and east of the entry are a set of fifteen-light French doors

² Although the building permit states that 334 Australian Avenue was built as a residence, its initial use was as a commercial real estate office.

³ Correspondence with Daniel Alberto Clavijo, SKA Architect and Planner.

with a divided-light transom window above.⁴ All of the transom windows provide extra light into the dwelling and were used cleverly to offset the tall height of the one-story façade.



Front Porch

The east elevation of 334 Australian Avenue features jalousie and awning windows on the first floor with fixed wood eight-light windows placed horizontally in the upper portion of the wall to provide additional light into the rear bedroom. The west elevation has jalousie and awning windows and a wood fence runs closely along the property line. Most of the windows include impact Bahama shutters for hurricane protection. The rear of the dwelling features a wood deck surrounded by a wood rail with decorative spindles running the full length of the house. There is a large porch with three square posts supporting a flat wood roof in the center of the deck and from this elevation the front gable roof can be seen. Overall, the house has a very charming and unique design.



Rear Façade

⁴ Although the interior of the dwelling is not part of the Landmark Preservation Report, the interior features pecky cyprus wood paneling and ceilings, beamed ceilings and interesting arched interior windows.



Interior

Throughout the history of 334 Australian Avenue there have been additions, alterations and repairs to the property. In 1971, the roof was replaced and in 1976 the foundation was rebuilt, the air conditioning was replaced and a new swimming pool and fence were added. After 1976, the awning windows on the front façade west of the entry were replaced with nine-light casement windows. In August of 2003, hurricane impact resistant Bahama shutters were installed to match existing Bahama shutters. And in 2007, a large awning covering the middle section of the wood deck in the rear was replaced with a 300 square-foot flat roof porch with square posts and a low rail with decorative spindles. All of these changes were in keeping with the house's original design and thus the dwelling retains its historic architectural integrity.

IV. Historical Information

The residence at 334 Australian Avenue was built in 1925 during Palm Beach's boom time era. By the mid-1920s, Palm Beach had become the winter resort for many of America's most influential families. Although a number of prominent Palm Beach architects designed large estates mostly in the Mediterranean Revival style for their very wealthy clients, demand for smaller residences grew as the Town was attracting upper and middle class residents and tourists seeking the Palm Beach climate and lifestyle. Residences such as 334 Australian Avenue were constructed in the heart of Cap Elisha Newton "E. N." Dimick and Harvey Geer's Royal Park development.

Cap E. N. Dimick, the first mayor of Palm Beach, and Harvey Geer, an early Palm Beach pioneer, formed the Palm Beach Improvement Company in 1908. Their Royal Park subdivision included 160 acres of land that contained jungle, sand and muck. The area included present-day land from approximately Royal Palm Way south to Worth Avenue, and from the Atlantic Ocean to Lake Worth. In 1912, the company decided that the area was to be developed in its entirety at one time. A sea wall was built, areas of the land were filled in and graded, the streets were constructed, lighting, water mains, electricity and telephone lines were installed and a bridge was constructed to connect Royal Park to West Palm Beach at Royal Palm Way.

Like much of Palm Beach, Royal Park was booming in the 1920s with both residential and commercial construction. In 1925, a new multi-million dollar resort opened on the west side of Hibiscus Street between Australian Avenue and Brazilian Avenue just east of where this residence at 334 Australian Avenue would be built within the year.⁵ The new resort designed by well-known architect Rosario Candela was the Brazilian Court Hotel. The hotel became an instant hit, attracting many celebrities and wealthy tourists as regular clients and boosting the prestige of the neighborhood.⁶

The residence at 334 Australian Avenue was built by Victor Kubu for the first owner George B. Ogle.⁷ Although the original October 1925 building permit for 334 Australian Avenue states that the building was constructed as a residence, the building was initially used as a real estate sales office for George Ogle's brother Arthur J. Ogle. Arthur J. Ogle was a Palm Beach realtor but his primary real estate dealings in 1925 and 1926 was promoting and selling town sites in the Stuart Shores proposed \$15 million dollar land and building development in Martin County.

In November of 1927, as the building boom was becoming more of a bust around the state, owner George Ogle spent \$1000 to change 334 Australian Avenue from a real estate office to a residence. It served as a

⁵ The Brazilian Court Hotel is just east and across the street from 334 Australian Avenue.

⁶ Town of Palm Beach Historic Designation Report, The Brazilian Court, 401 Australian Avenue, 16 February 1994.

⁷ Victor Kubu came to Palm Beach County in 1923 from Cleveland, Ohio to work for Carr & Carr real estate and insurance company. In 1925 he went into business for himself, incorporating the company Victor J. Kubu, Inc. specializing in home building but also working in real estate. He built 10 houses in the newly developed Bowers Park in Boynton Beach along with others in Lake Worth and Palm Beach.

residence following its use as a real estate office from 1927 to the present time. There were a number of owners during the buildings ninety-four year history, mostly seasonal residents who occupied the house during Palm Beach's winter high season. The last owners were Peter and Lorraine Buckland of London who purchased the house in 1994 after staying at the nearby Brazilian Court hotel on many visits to Palm Beach.⁸

According to an interview in the Palm Beach Daily News, the Buckland's made few changes over the years because the dwelling fit their needs and they liked the vintage style. They further noted that they tried to maintain the house the way it was to capture the feeling of what Palm Beach was like when the house was built in the 1920's.⁹ The current owners have plans to renovate and make additions to the dwelling that will come under the purview of the Town of Palm Beach Landmark Preservation Commission.

V. Statement of Significance

334 Australian Avenue is a unique False Front Frame Vernacular style house built during the height of the Palm Beach land and building boom. There are no other known dwellings of this design found in Palm Beach, which makes it an important historic building.

VI. 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 the criteria which 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.”**

334 Australian Avenue reflects the broad cultural and economic history of the Town of Palm Beach's real estate boom in of the mid-1920s. The Royal Park subdivision was one of the earliest

⁸ “Old Style Palm Beach.” Palm Beach Daily News, 23 August 2018.

⁹ Ibid

platted and developed subdivisions in Palm Beach, and like the rest of the Town, it was thriving with new construction when this residence was built. It's original use as a real estate office reflects the land and building boom that was taking place in town and throughout south Florida. The builder, Victor Kubu, was a successful realtor and accomplished builder, reflecting the demand for both real estate and construction businesses during the 1920's land and building boom.

(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 residence at 334 Australian Avenue, designed and constructed in 1925, is a distinctive False Front Frame Vernacular style dwelling. The front façade has multi-light windows and doors with transoms above to provide additional light to the interior and to also offset the tall one-story façade. The distinguishing characteristics of this dwelling make it a specimen inherently valuable for the study of the period and styles.

VII. Selected Bibliography

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

The Historical Society of Palm Beach County. Royal Park Information.

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., 2013.

Old House Web. False Front, 1860-1905.

The Palm Beach Daily News and Palm Beach Post. Archived Articles.

Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach. 334 Australian Avenue file.

Research Atlantica, Inc. Brazilian Court Hotel Historic Designation Report. February 16, 1994.

Town of Palm Beach. Building Permits, 1925– 2019.

West Palm Beach City Directories. Asheville, NC: Florida-Piedmont Directory Company, 1925 -1989.

Western False Front Architecture. Wikipedia.

VIII. Florida Master Site File Form



HISTORICAL STRUCTURE FORM

Electronic Version 1.1.0

Site # PB04098

Recorder # Jane S. Day

Field Date 8/1/2010

Form Date 10/3/2010

Form No 201008

Form No = Field Date (YYYYMM)

First Site Form Recorded for this Site? NO

GENERAL INFORMATION

Site Name (address if none) Peter Buckland, 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>334</u>		<u>Australian</u>	<u>Avenue</u>	

Cross Streets (nearest/ between) Cocoanut Row & Hibiscus Ave.
 City / Town (within 3 miles) Town of Palm Beach In Current City Limits? YES
 County Palm Beach Tax Parcel #(s) 50-43-43-23-05-006-0110
 Subdivision Name Royal Park Addition Block 6 Lot 11,12
 Ownership Private Individual
 Name of Public Tract (e.g., park) _____
 Route to (especially if no street address) On the south side of Australian Ave. between Cocoanut Row and Hibiscus Avenue

MAPPING

USGS 7.5' Map Name _____ Publication Date _____ >> PALM BEACH, 1946
 Township: _____ Range: _____ Section: _____ 1/4 section: _____ >> 43S ; 43E ; 23 ; UNSP
 Irregular Section Name: _____
 Landgrant _____
 UTM: Zone _____ Easting _____ Northing _____
 Plat or Other Map (map's name, location) _____

DESCRIPTION

Style Frame Vernacular Other Style _____
 Exterior Plan Irregular Other Exterior Plan _____
 Number of Stories 1
 Structural System(s) _____ >> Wood frame
 Other Structural System(s) _____
 Foundation Type(s) _____ >> Continuous
 Other Foundation Types _____
 Foundation Material(s) _____ >> Concrete Block
 Other Foundation Material(s) _____
 Exterior Fabric(s) _____ >> Clapboard
 Other Exterior Fabric(s) _____
 Roof Type(s) _____ >> Gable
 Other Roof Type(s) _____
 Roof Material(s) _____ >> Composition roll
 Other Roof Material(s) _____
 Roof Secondary Structure(s) (dormers etc) _____ >> _____
 Other Roof Secondary Structure(s) _____
 Number of Chimneys _____
 Chimney Material _____
 Other Chimney Material(s) _____
 Chimney Location(s) _____

HISTORICAL STRUCTURE FORM

8PB04098

DESCRIPTION (continued)

Window Descriptions: jalousie, fixed, aluminum awning, French doors

Main Entrance Description (stylistic details): Centered in the north facade, flanked by pairs of French doors and topped with a fixed transom

Porches: #open 1 #closed #incised Location(s) entry - n

Porch Roof Types(s): Flat

Exterior Ornament: Wood Parapet at roofline

Interior Plan: Unknown

Other Interior Plan:

Condition: Good

Structure Surroundings

Commercial: 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): The high hedge in the front yard makes this impossible to evaluate. Details were taken from old Master Site File form.

HISTORY

Construction year: 1925

Architect (last name first): unknown

Builder (last name first): unknown

Changes in Locations or Conditions

Type of Change	Year of Change	Date Change Noted	Description of Changes
>>			

Structure Use History

Use Year Use Started Year Use Ended >> Private residence; 1925;

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? NO

Name of Local Register if Eligible: Town of Palm Beach Landmark

Individually Eligible for National Register? NO

Potential Contributor to NR District? NO

Area(s) of historical significance:

>> Community planning & development

Other Historical Associations:

Explanation of Evaluation (required): Although this building dates from the 1920s Boom period, little is known about its builder or architect. The structure is unique in Palm Beach.

HISTORICAL STRUCTURE FORM

8PB04098

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 Drive, 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>8110</u> Form Type Code: <u>NORM</u> Form Quality Ranking: <u>NEW</u> Form Status Code: <u>SCAT</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>6/5/2004</u>
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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"