

# **242 Jungle Road**



## **DESIGNATION REPORT**

**April 22, 2020**

**Landmark Preservation Commission**

**Palm Beach, Florida**

# **DESIGNATION REPORT**

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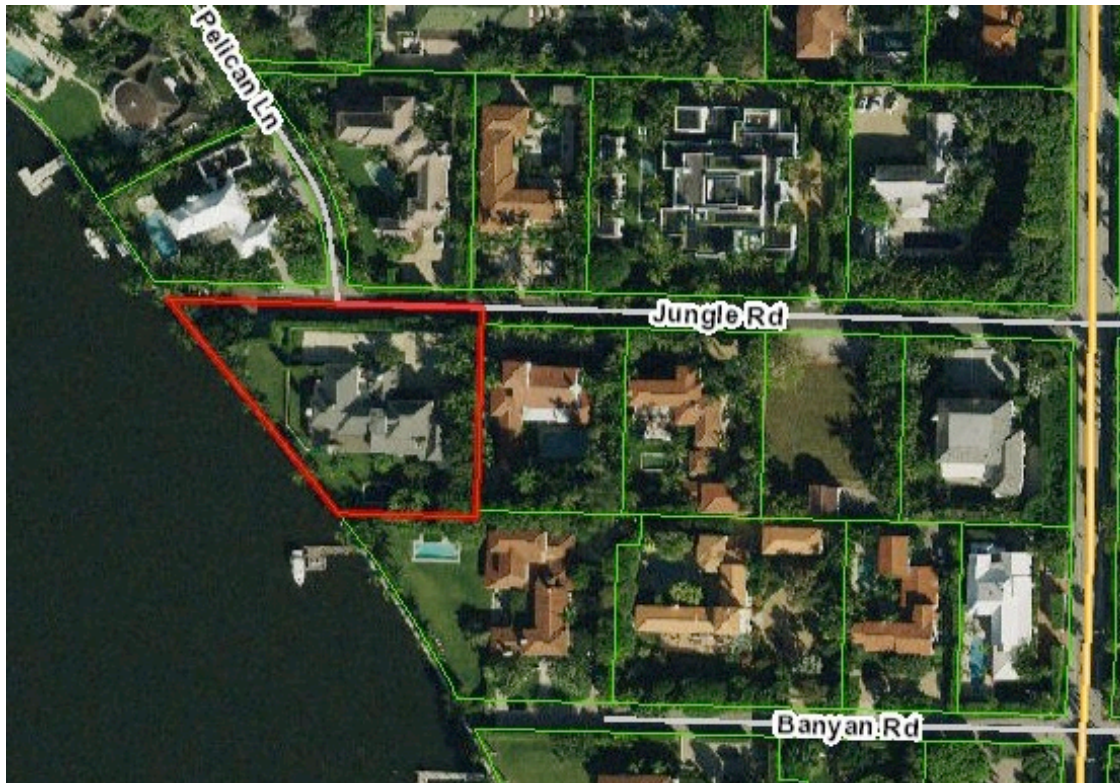
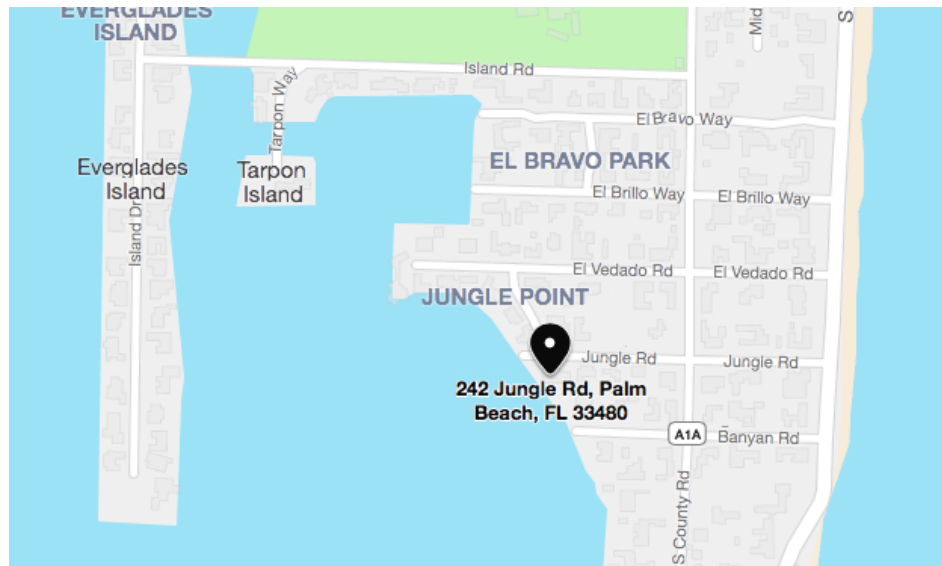
Report produced by Murphy Stillings, LLC

## **I. General Information**

Location:	242 Jungle Road Palm Beach, Florida
Date of Construction:	1936
First Owner:	William Watt Jr.
Architect:	Marion Sims Wyeth
Builder/Contractor:	William Watt Jr.
Present Owner:	K. Prescott Low and Susan Tucker Low
Present Use:	Residential
Present Zoning:	R-A
Palm Beach County Tax Folio Number:	50-43-43-26-00-002-0360
Current Legal Description:	26-42-42, SLY 175 FT OF NLY 752.5 FT OF WLY 268 FT OF S ½ OF GOV LT 2 LYG W OF COUNTY RD & TR IN OR453P418

## II. Location Map

### 242 Jungle Road





### III. Architectural Information

The residence at 242 Jungle Road is a very unique example of the Georgian Revival architectural style with French influences as interpreted by Marion Sims Wyeth in 1936. The residence is located on the south side of Jungle Road along the Intracoastal Waterway and was designed for William Watt Jr., whose construction firm Watt and Sinclair constructed the residence.<sup>1</sup>



242 Jungle Road is a distinctive example of the Georgian Revival as it exhibits French influences that are not often seen on Georgian Revival residences in Palm Beach. The Georgian Revival style was popular throughout the country from 1880 to 1955. Variations on the style were popular throughout the Caribbean and were adapted in revival form in South Florida during the 1930s through the 1950s. General stylistic features of Georgian Revival architecture include symmetry in building mass and window and door placement, quoins, accentuated front entries, pediments or porches over the front entry and windows often flanked by decorative shutters. The French influences seen in this residence include the characteristic of very steeply pitched hipped roofs with flared eaves and the massing of the residence. Masses of varying heights, each with their own roof, create a rambling effect as seen in many French country and farmhouses.

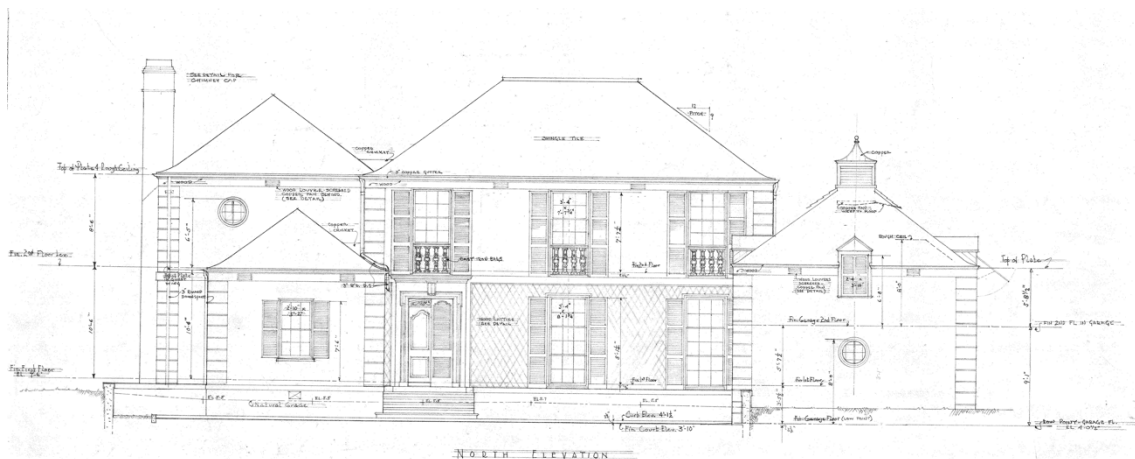
242 Jungle Road is a two-story residence that was constructed of wood frame and tile surfaced with stucco. The roof is one of the character-defining feature of the residence. The multiple steeply pitched hipped roofs

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<sup>1</sup> Building Permit # 17136, on file at the Town of Palm Beach, dated September 30, 1936.

with flared eaves are surfaced with slate tiles and exhibit the French influence to Wyeth's design. A simple cornice is located at the roofline. The roof of the garage contains a square cupola and several gabled roof wall dormers. Wall dormers are a dormer design that extends from the wall of a building, rather than punctuating the roof, and are not a design not often seen in Palm Beach.

The residence is comprised of multiple one and two-story masses. As originally designed, the main portion of the residence consists of a central three-bay section with wings on each side and a fore court leading into the property. The corners of the residence are highlighted with quoins and a simple cornice is located at the roofline. The entrance to the residence is located in the eastern bay of the central section and features a flat pediment door surround leading to a recessed pair of wood doors with an arched glass and decorative metal transom above. Each bay of the central section contains a very tall three-part sash window with a six-over-six-over-six (6/6/6) light configuration and colonial shutters on the first and second floors. The height of these windows is a focal point of the main façade. A stringcourse delineates the second floor and creates a base for the second floor windows.

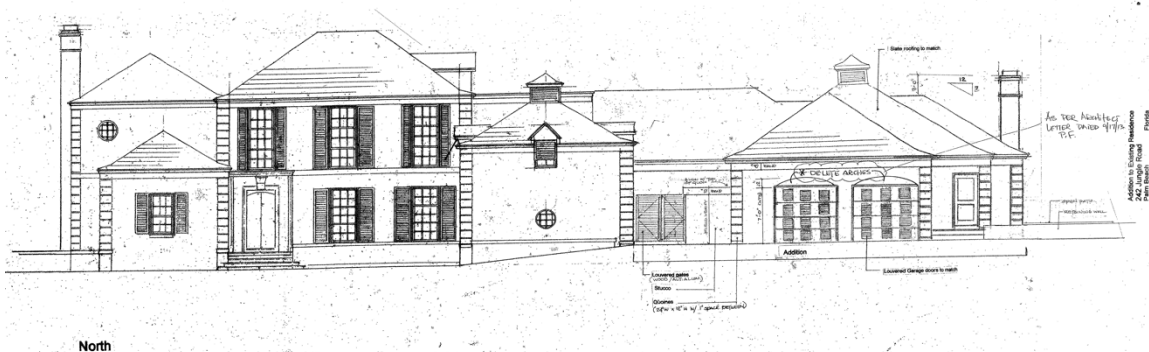


Drawing by Wyeth and King, 1936  
 Courtesy of the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach

The fore court is framed on the east and west by the two wings. To the east of the central section is a wing with a two-story section and a narrower one-story section in front. The one-story portion of this wing projects north of the central section of the residence. A chimney is located on the east façade of the two-story portion of this wing. To the west of the central section is a

wing that has a one-story section to the south and a two-story garage section which projects to the north. The two-car garage is accessed on the east façade and has two garage doors with a shutter design and recessed blind arches above.

Over the years there have been alterations and additions to the residence. Early alterations and additions include a second floor bedroom addition (designed by Wyeth, King and Johnson, 1948), installation of air-conditioning and a cooling tower (1958), addition of a pool, pool bathroom and interior renovations (designed by Wyeth, King and Johnson, 1967), as well as other interior renovations and re-roofing. More recent changes to the property include a two-story addition that was constructed in 2002 at the southeast corner of the residence and was designed by architect Robert L. Bell. In 2014, the property was unified with the property to the west and a one-story addition was constructed to the west of the original residence. The 2014 addition also designed by Robert L. Bell contains a second two-car garage and additional living space. It was designed in keeping with the design and character of the original residence and does not negatively impact the architectural integrity of Wyeth's 1936 design. This addition is also a good example of how a historic structure can change over time to meet the changing needs of homeowners while preserving the important characteristics of a residence's original design.



Drawing by Robert L. Bell of 2014 Addition

#### IV. Historical Information

The residence at 242 Jungle Road was built for William Watt Jr. during the late Depression/New Deal Era of the mid-1930s. William Watt Jr. had originally come to Palm Beach in 1927 from New York to construct Cielito

Lindo, James and Jessie Donahue's grand estate. Marion Sims Wyeth had designed Cielito Lindo for the Donahue's on a sprawling ocean-to-lake lot they had purchased a few years earlier. The Donahue's wished to occupy their house for the 1927-1928 winter season, so Watts and Sinclair, Inc. brought a "small army of workmen" to construct the house.<sup>2</sup> Just eleven months after the foundation was laid, Cielito Lindo was ready for occupancy.

After the construction of Cielito Lindo was complete, William Watt and his wife Florence Toop Watt continued to winter in Palm Beach and the firm of Watt and Sinclair moved to Palm Beach in 1929. In 1935, William Watt purchased the property at 242 Jungle Road as the site to construct his personal residence.<sup>3</sup> While Watt was associated with many architects in the area, it was Marion Sims Wyeth who he commissioned to design the home at 242 Jungle Road.

The 1930s was a period of transition in the Town of Palm Beach. The building boom of the 1920s had ended and the Island was experiencing a period of economic instability, including a building slowdown that lasted until after World War II. The architecture in Palm Beach was also transitioning during the 1930s and less elaborate styles of architecture were being explored. A November 22, 1936 *Palm Beach Post* article described these changing times in Palm Beach, "Majority of homes now being erected are of moderate sized type; showplaces are now things of former years." The design of 242 Jungle Road is an example of these changing architectural times as designed by Wyeth and constructed by Watt and Sinclair who only a few years earlier together designed and constructed one of the Island's most elaborate estates, Cielito Lindo.

The Watt's continued to live at 242 Jungle Road for over 30 years. Following the Watt's, the property was owned by Baron and Baroness De Gunzburg (1968-1972), Chester and Ritchey LaRoche (1972-1985), Lucy Panill Sale (1985-1993), and Mary Ellen Cabot (1993-2001). The current

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<sup>2</sup> "Donahue House on Boulevard Nearly Ready: Mr. and Mrs. Donahue, with Two Sons, Expected to Arrive December 22 for the Christmas Holidays." *Palm Beach Daily News*, 16 December 1927.

The palatial Palm Beach home on South Ocean Boulevard of James P. Donahue of No. 6 East 80<sup>th</sup> Street, New York City, will be complete and ready for occupancy on December 22, according to the announcement yesterday of Marion Sims Wyeth, architect in charge and designer of the Spanish type residence. With the last of the building work, supervised by Watt and Sinclair, Inc., New York contractors, drawing near, the small army of workmen who were employed on the grounds when the contract was let last February has now dwindled to about 50 men.

<sup>3</sup> *Palm Beach Post*, 9 March 1935, page 3.



owners, K. Prescott Low and Susan Low, purchased the property in 2001 and have been excellent stewards of the residence.



Historic Photo, date unknown

## **V. Architect & Builder Biographies**

### **Marion Sims Wyeth**

Marion Sims Wyeth was as one of Palm Beach's foremost architects in a career that spanned over fifty years. Wyeth was noted for his "quiet, subdued and rational" 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".

Wyeth was born in 1889 in New York, a son of Florence Nightingale Sims and Dr. John Allan Wyeth. Dr. Wyeth was a Civil War poet, surgical pioneer, and founder of New York's Polyclinic Hospital, the first postgraduate medical school in the United States. Marion's grandfather, Dr. James Marion Sims, founded the field of gynecology and the first woman's hospital in history. Marion Sims Wyeth began his architectural studies at Princeton University and completed his classic training at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1914. At the time, the École was considered the one of the finest schools in the world. It was a style of education based on studying the classics, mostly Roman architecture. After completing school, Wyeth served as secretary to the U.S. Ambassador in Rome. Upon his return to New York, Wyeth became associated with the architectural offices of Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue and later with Carrere and Hastings, the firm that designed Whitehall for Henry Flagler.

Arriving in Palm Beach at the age of 30, Wyeth met with immediate success. From 1920, Wyeth shared a New York office with Frederic Rhinelanders King, a friend from his student days in Paris, until 1934 when they formalized the relationship with the Wyeth and King partnership. William Royster Johnson joined Wyeth's Palm Beach office as a draftsman in 1924. In 1944 he became a partner and the firm name changed to Wyeth, King and Johnson. Over the years, the firm designed buildings ranging from Mediterranean Revival to classical Georgian, French, and Colonial styles.

The socially popular Wyeth was a prolific craftsman and more than 100 of his designs have graced the Island, including eight built on El Brillo Way. Some of his well-known Palm Beach designs include Qui Si Sana, Casa Juanita, Hogarcito, Casa de Los Arcos, Vita Serena, Southwood and the Bethesda by the Sea rectory. His largest and most impressive project was Cielito Lindo, a 45,000-square-foot Spanish Moorish-Revival-style mansion built for James Donohue and Jessie Woolworth Donohue in 1927. And while Joseph Urban is credited with Mar-a-Lago, Wyeth's association with the project was essential for its original design and completion. Wyeth also had an impressive list of prominent works outside of Palm Beach. Some of these include Good Samaritan Hospital and the Norton Gallery of Art in West Palm Beach, the Governor's Mansion in Tallahassee, and Doris Duke's Shangri La in Honolulu.

Wyeth served as a trustee of the Society of the Four Arts (1936-1969) and as its president (1956-1961). He became the first Palm Beach architect to be elected a fellow of the American Institute of Architecture in 1954, and received the Test of Time Award from its Palm Beach Chapter in 1981. Marion Sims Wyeth passed away in 1982 at the age of 93.

### **William Watt, Jr. – Watt and Sinclair Inc.**

William Watt, Jr. was a winter resident of Palm Beach since 1928. Mr. Watt was the founder of Watt & Sinclair of New York, a construction firm that built many buildings in Manhattan as well as numerous houses in Oyster Bay (NY), Red Bank (NJ) and Palm Beach.

William Watt first came to Palm Beach at the request of Jessie Woolworth Donohue in 1927 to supervise the construction of her Palm Beach villa, Cielito Lindo, designed by Marion Sims Wyeth. Watt was the builder for the Woolworth Building in New York City that Jessie's father F.W.

Woolworth commissioned in 1913. Cass Gilbert was the architect for the terra-cotta building that was dubbed “The Cathedral of Commerce” and at 792 feet was the tallest building in the world until 1930.

In 1929, the firm of Watt and Sinclair moved to Palm Beach and the Watt family became permanent winter residents of Palm Beach. Associated with leading architects of the area, Mr. Watt’s firm planned and built many residences in Palm Beach. One of Mr. Watt’s closest associates was Maurice Fatio, and together they designed and built a number of residential and commercial buildings.

Mr. Watt planned and supervised the building of the Morrison Field to serve as West Palm Beach’s Airport. When World War II was declared, he expanded the field to buildings for what was to become the ferrying base for the Air Transport Command. As a military base, Morrison Field became a port of embarkments for Army Air Force bomber crews headed for North Africa and England.

Mr. Watt was a successful developer and social member of the winter colonists with memberships to both the Everglades Club and the Bath and Tennis Club.

## **VI. Statement of Significance**

The residence at 242 Jungle Road is an excellent example of the Georgian Revival style of architecture with French influences designed and constructed during the late Depression/New Deal Era in Palm Beach. The design by prominent architect Marion Sims Wyeth and constructed by Watt and Sinclair Inc. is also representative of the architectural, cultural and social changes occurring in Palm Beach during the mid 1930s.

## **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 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.”**

242 Jungle Road reflects the broad cultural, economic and social history of the Town of Palm Beach. Designed and built in 1936, during the late Depression/New Deal Era for William Watt Jr., the residence is a very good example of the changing times in the Town. The end of the Boom Time Era in Palm Beach had signaled a change in development and construction of residences with many owners seeking mid-size residences with restrained designs.

Designed and built by the same team of architect, Marion Sims Wyeth, and construction firm, Watt and Sinclair, who were responsible only a few years earlier for the grand Donahue estate, Cielito Lindo, 242 Jungle Road is a good representation of the changing times and architectural preferences of the 1930s.

**(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 located at 242 Jungle Road, designed and constructed in 1936, is an excellent example of the Georgian Revival style of architecture with French influences as interpreted by Marion Sims Wyeth. This combination of Georgian Revival and French influences make this residence a unique example in Palm Beach. The residence embodies distinctive characteristics of the Georgian Revival style including symmetrical fenestration with shutters, quoins, an accentuated front entry with a flat pediment, and a simplified elegance. The multiple masses of varying heights and steeply pitched hipped roofs with flared eaves impart a French influence to the design, and the wall dormers enhance the residence’s distinctive design. Additions to the residence over the years were sensitive to the original design preserving its historic and architectural integrity.

**(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.”**

242 Jungle Road is a very good representation of the design work of architect Marion Sims Wyeth, one of Palm Beach’s most important

architects. Wyeth's influential career spanned more than fifty years and he is recognized as one of the creators of the Mediterranean Revival "Palm Beach" style. More than 100 of his notable designs were built for some of Palm Beach's most prominent patrons in a range of architectural styles from Mediterranean Revival to classical Georgian, French, and Colonial styles. 242 Jungle Road is a noteworthy example of Wyeth's masterful work.



## VIII. Selected Bibliography

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\_\_\_\_\_. Palm Beach County: An Illustrated History. Northridge, California: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1987.

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## IX. Florida Master Site File Form



### HISTORICAL STRUCTURE FORM

Electronic Version 1.1.0

Site # PB04235  
 Recorder # Jane S. Day  
 Field Date 7/17/2010  
 Form Date 9/23/2010  
 Form No 201007  
 Form No = Field Date (YYYYMM)

First Site Form Recorded for this Site? NO

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

Site Name (address if none) K. Prescott Low, House Multiple Listing (DHR only) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other Names \_\_\_\_\_ >> Low Key  
 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>242</u>		<u>Jungle</u>	<u>Road</u>	

Cross Streets (nearest/between) South County Road and Lake Worth  
 City / Town (within 3 miles) Town of Palm Beach In Current City Limits? YES  
 County Palm Beach Tax Parcel #(s) 50-43-43-26-00-002-0260  
 Subdivision Name \_\_\_\_\_ Block \_\_\_\_\_ Lot 25  
 Ownership Private Individual  
 Name of Public Tract (e.g., park) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Route to (especially if no street address) On the south side of Jungle road between South County and Lake Worth.

#### MAPPING

USGS 7.5' Map Name \_\_\_\_\_ Publication Date \_\_\_\_\_ >> PALM BEACH;1986  
 Township: \_\_\_\_\_ Range: \_\_\_\_\_ Section: \_\_\_\_\_ 1/4 section: \_\_\_\_\_ >> 438 / 438 / 26 / Irregular-irregular  
 Irregular Section Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Landgrant \_\_\_\_\_  
 UTM: Zone \_\_\_\_\_ Easting \_\_\_\_\_ Northing \_\_\_\_\_  
 Plat or Other Map (map's name, location) \_\_\_\_\_

#### DESCRIPTION

Style Georgian Revival Other Style \_\_\_\_\_  
 Exterior Plan Irregular Other Exterior Plan \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of Stories 2  
 Structural System(s) \_\_\_\_\_ >> Masonry - General  
 Other Structural System(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 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) gable  
 Roof Material(s) \_\_\_\_\_ >> Composition shingles  
 Other Roof Material(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Roof Secondary Structure(s) (dormers etc) \_\_\_\_\_ >> Gable dormer  
 Other Roof Secondary Structure(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of Chimneys 1  
 Chimney Material Brick  
 Other Chimney Material(s) stucco  
 Chimney Location(s) east

Page 1 of 3

# HISTORICAL STRUCTURE FORM

8PB04235

## DESCRIPTION (continued)

Window Descriptions 6/6/6 (3 tiered) and 6/6 DHS, fixed

Main Entrance Description (stylistic details) On the north facade with a classical surround

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

Porch Roof Type(s)       

Exterior Ornament belt course, shutters, quoins, cupola

Interior Plan Irregular

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 1936

Architect (last name first): unknown

Builder (last name first): Watt, William, Jr.

### 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; 1936;

Other Structure Uses       

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

## RESEARCH METHODS

Research Methods        >> Examine local property records

Other research methods windshield, tax records, historic files

## SURVEYOR'S EVALUATION OF SITE

Potentially Eligible for a Local Register? YES Name of Local Register if Eligible Palm Beach Landmarks

Individually Eligible for National Register? INSUFF. INFO

Potential Contributor to NR District? NO

Area(s) of historical significance        >> Architecture

Other Historical Associations       

Explanation of Evaluation (required) Although the architect of this house is not known, it remains a good example of the Regency style and is worthy of further study.

# HISTORICAL STRUCTURE FORM

8PB04235

## 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 1014 NW 6th Drive Boca Raton, Fl. 561-447-2956  
 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>S110</u> Form Type Code: <u>NCRM</u> Form Quality Ranking: <u>NEW</u> Form Status Code: <u>SCAT</u>	SHPO's Evaluation of Resource Date: _____
Supplement Information Status: <u>NO SUPPLEMENT</u> Supplement File Status: <u>NO SUPPLEMENT FILE</u>	FMSF Staffer: _____ Computer Entry Date: <u>11/15/2004</u>
Form Comments: _____ _____ _____	

## 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"