167 Clarendon Avenue



DESIGNATION REPORT Wednesday, April 22, 2020 Landmark Preservation Commission Palm Beach, Florida

DESIGNATION REPORT

167 Clarendon Avenue

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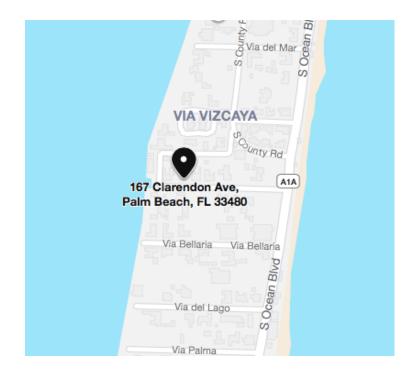
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Report produced by Murphy Stillings, LLC

I. General Information

Location:	167 Clarendon Avenue Palm Beach, Florida
Date of Construction:	1935
First Owner:	George C. Van Dusen
Architect:	Howard Major
Builder:	Charles J. Trevail
Current Owner:	Alfred N. and Barbara Marulli
Present Use:	Residential
Present Zoning:	RA
Palm Beach County Tax Folio Number:	50-43-43-35-03-00-0140
Legal Description:	Vita Serena Lot 14

II. Location Map





III. Architectural Information

The residence at 167 Clarendon Avenue is a two-story Georgian Revival style dwelling with Regency features designed by master architect Howard Major and built in 1935 by Charles J. Trevail. The well-designed and elegant south facing residence sits on a lot one house east of the intersection of Clarendon Avenue and Lake Park Drive just east of the Clarendon Avenue boat basin in the Vita Serena subdivision of Palm Beach's Estate Section.



The Georgian Revival style has the classic symmetrical Colonial shape and is one of the long-lived architectural styles in the United States. It dominated the English colonies of the 18th century and was popular throughout the country from 1880 to 1955. Based on Georgian and Adam prototypes from the northeastern states, variations on the style were popular throughout the Caribbean and were adapted in revival form in South Florida during the 1930s through the 1950s. Stylistic features include rigid symmetry in building mass as well as window and door placement, quoins, accentuated front entries, pediments or porches over the front entry and paired, triple or bay windows often flanked by decorative shutters. The Regency style often includes elements such as friezes, decorative horizontal banding near the

roofline, Greek columns, and balconies or bay windows that project beyond the surface of the primary wall.

The residence at 167 Clarendon Avenue, constructed of concrete block covered with smooth stucco, features a number of these Georgian Revival and Regency design elements. On the south facade the house is symmetrical in form and fenestration. The unique and character defining full-height projecting bays feature 6/9 double-hung sash windows on the first floor and 6/6 double-hung sash windows on the second floor. The top of these bays feature a cornice that projects out from the roofline and accentuates the tri-part shape of the projecting bays. Between the bays on the second floor is an 8/8 double-hung sash window centered over the front entry. Flanking this centered window on the second story are oval windows with interesting motifs that add to the unique design of the dwelling. Colonial shutters are found next to the first and second story bay windows as well as the central second story window.



The classic Georgian entryway is centered on the first floor of the south façade and features an entablature and pediment supported by classical Doric columns. Set

within this door surround is an arched wood paneled entry door flanked by pilasters. The dwelling is topped by a hipped roof covered with flat clay tiles and there are character-defining quoins at the southeast and southwest corners of the dwelling, creating a refined appearance to the main façade. A brick chimney with a stucco chimney cap is located on the east exterior façade while an additional brick chimney with a stucco chimney cap is located on the north facade, completing the houses main design features.

The dwelling sits on a deep lot that runs from Clarendon Avenue to Vita Serena, which are both accessed from South County Road. The Vita Serena entry from South County Road is marked with two stone columns indicating the entrance to the Vita Serena subdivision. The rear yard features a swimming pool, a one-story three-car garage and small one-story accessory building off of the garage. The driveway and motor court in the rear are accessed from Vita Serena, which essentially serves as an alleyway behind the house. There is a decorative metal driveway gate at this rear entrance to the property

Throughout the history of the 167 Clarendon Avenue there have been additions, alterations and repairs to the property. In 1951, a one-story room with a flat roof was added to the northeast corner of the dwelling. In 1977, there was an addition across the rear portion of the house including a breakfast room off the kitchen and in 1980 a swimming pool was added. Other additions include hurricane shutters and a hurricane impact front door. These additions and alterations had very minimal effect to the front façade and thus the house retains its significant historical architectural integrity.

IV. Historical Information

Clarendon Avenue is considered one of the most distinguished residential streets in Palm Beach, tucked between the Atlantic Ocean on the east and Lake Worth on the west. Clarendon Avenue and the Vita Serena subdivision were platted and developed by E. Clarence Jones in 1922. A picturesque historic boat basin with decorative urns and a stone lion sits at the foot of Clarendon Avenue on the lakeside and an avenue of palms completes the streetscape.¹

167 Clarendon Avenue was built in 1935 during the late Depression/New Deal Era. In Palm Beach, this was also the beginning of the third architectural era. A November 22, 1936 article in the <u>Palm Beach Post-Times</u> titled "Construction Enters Third Era of Design: Majority of Homes Now Being Erected Are of Moderate Sized Type – Showplaces Are Now Things of Former Years" describes the change in building trends:

"With nearly 60 new residences as a permanent addition to the winter colony, Palm Beach passes into the third season of its **third architectural era**.

For though a few spasmodic instances of the Colonial motif had been noted over a period of several years, it was not until the summer of 1934 that the definite trend away from the Spanish became an accepted fact. As construction has steadily mounted in 1934, 1935 and 1936, the white of the Colonial and the classic has replaced the pastels of the Spanish; simplicity of line and design has succeeded the elaborate.

In brief, Palm Beach houses are becoming homes rather than showplaces. The current cycle of architectural fashion has replaced the Spanish, just as after 1918, Addison Mizner's palatial designs took the place of early barn-like structures of the pioneer era."²

The design of 167 Clarendon Avenue reflects this historic and architectural change that took place in Palm Beach after the Great Depression. There were still large houses being constructed, but the styles were becoming more classical in design, as with this attractive Georgian Revival dwelling with Regency detailing.

Mrs. Frederick C. (Myra) Van Dusen was the first resident to live in 167 Clarendon Avenue.³ The Van Dusen family had been one of the early pioneer families to spend

¹ Clarendon Avenue Walking Tour Brochure. Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach. February 1, 2007.

² "Construction Enters Third Era of Design: Majority of Homes Now Being Erected Are of Moderate Sized Type – Showplaces Are Now Things of Former Years." <u>Palm Beach Post-Times</u>. 22 November 1936. The article also noted that some Spanish style houses were being converted into the new British Colonial style. ³ Palm Beach Building Permit #3035 dated April 4, 1935. The owner on the permit is George C. Van Dusen, the son of Mrs. Frederick C. Van Dusen, but City Directories have Mrs. Frederick C. Van Dusen as the sole resident from 1935 to

the winter season in Palm Beach, first staying at the Royal Poinciana Hotel, then at Whitehall and later purchasing houses in town. The father of Frederick C. Van Dusen, George W. Van Dusen, was one of the founders of the Minneapolis grain trade. He began with a small pioneer elevator operation, which he developed into a major, privately-held national firm that saw the entire evolutionary process in the country's economic life that created the milling industry and grain marketing system.

Frederick C. Van Dusen was raised in Rochester, Minnesota and entered the grain business with his father at the age of 16 and later served as president of the company. He married Myra Cross in 1884 and they had a daughter Mary and a son George C. Van Dusen who succeeded his father and grandfather in the firm.⁴ Frederick C. Van Dusen died unexpectedly at the age of 65, only two months after his firm's public stock offering in May of 1928. Mrs. Frederick C. (Myra) Van Dusen continued to spend the summers in Minnesota and the winters in Palm Beach.⁵

An article in the March 26, 1935 edition of the <u>Palm Beach Daily News</u> titled "English Tropical House Will Be Constructed in Vita Serena" describes the house to be built at 167 Clarendon Avenue:

"Contract was awarded Monday afternoon for construction of a new English tropical home for Mrs. Frederick C. Van Dusen of Minneapolis in Vita Serena, work to begin immediately. Charles J. Trevail will be the builder.

Howard Major is architect for this house, which is designed in the mode with which his name is most associated. He will also do the decorations. The house will be in the eighteenth century manner, featured by bay windows and a two-story verandah. A garden to the north will replace the usual patio used here.

^{1938.} George C. Van Dusen and his wife moved in after his mother passed away. The permit states that the house was constructed for \$29,000.

⁴ Frederick C. Van Dusen served on a great number of boards, most in related to the grain trade. He was president of the Minneapolis Foundation, a director of the Northwestern National Bank and Minnesota Loan and Trust Company, trustee of the Farmers and Mechanics Bank, and president of the Minneapolis Fire and Marine Insurance Company. He was also a member of many national committees in the grain trade. He was very active in civic affairs, and served as Director of the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce and chairman of the board of Westminster Presbyterian Church.

⁵ The Van Dusen's house in Rochester Minnesota is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The house in addition to the living room, dining room, and kitchen quarters, will include three master bedrooms, three baths, two dressing rooms and four servants' rooms.

Mrs. Van Dusen is living this winter at 130 Chilean Avenue and expects to occupy her new house next winter. It will be located on the north side of Clarendon Avenue"

Mrs. Frederick Van Dusen moved into the Clarendon Avenue house for the 1935 – 1936 winter season, often entertaining family and friends from Minnesota. Unfortunately she was only able to spend three winter seasons in the house, passing away in April of 1938. After his mother's passing, George C. Van Dusen and his wife Blanche moved into 167 Clarendon Avenue, having previously lived on Peruvian Avenue. George and his family owned the house for twenty-five years before selling it to Clifford C. Childress in 1961.

The Childress family who had previously lived a few streets north at 145 Kings Road lived at 167 Clarendon Avenue for eleven years, selling the house to Louise W. Thomson in 1972. The house changed owners five years later when Louise Thomson sold the house to Caldwell C. (Blitz) and Ann C. Robinson in 1977. Caldwell "Blitz" Robinson served as a Town of Palm Beach Council member from 1978-1982. In 1979, he was listed by <u>Town & Country</u> magazine as one of the top 50 Palm Beach residents who were representative of the best of Palm Beach – philanthropists, art patrons, civic leaders, landed gentry and glamorous presences. And in 1980, he proposed restructuring of the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance to establish historic districts. The Robinsons sold 167 Clarendon Avenue to the current owners Alfred and Barbara Marulli in 1983. Alfred Marulli is the founder and president of the commercial real estate firm David and Associates. He was awarded the prestigious South Florida Business Man of the Year in 2003, 2004 and 2005. The Marulli's have owned 167 Clarendon Avenue for 35 years and have been wonderful stewards of the property.

V. Architect's Biography

Howard Brougham Major (1882–1974) was born in New York, the grandson of a lithographer and the son of a printer's artist. Major studied at the Pratt Institute and the New York Atelier of Beaux-Arts. As the chief draftsman for architect Charles Alonzo Rich, he designed a building at Dartmouth College and country houses for Long Island socialites. He opened his own firm on Fifth Avenue and married

Katherine Clark (1899-1958) in 1920, with whom he traveled overseas during most of 1920 and 1921. In 1923 he joined Addison Mizner's firm and began his Palm Beach career by designing Spanish style houses for Nelson Odman and Richard Cowell in Palm Beach, and Howard Whitney in Gulfstream.

Although Major started his Florida career in the Spanish style he soon became disenchanted with the results and opened his own architectural office. In a 1926 article for <u>Architectural Forum</u> entitled "A Theory Relating to Spanish and Italian Houses in Florida." he suggested that other styles of architecture were more appropriate to the Florida climate and the "national character." Major also was the author of a book entitled <u>Domestic Architecture of the Early American Republic: The Greek Revival</u>. He favored the Greek Revival style and was also a proponent of the British Colonial style and all its variants, including the Monterey style.

In Palm Beach Howard Major is best known for designing "Major Alley," a small complex of six Bermuda style town homes constructed on Peruvian Avenue in 1925. These homes are currently listed as Landmarks of the Town of Palm Beach. He also completed a home for Charles Merrill called "Merrill's Landing" that has been demolished. After the Depression, Major's more subdued style became more popular when showplaces may have been considered in poor taste. Some examples of Major's residential work that are protected by the Palm Beach Landmarks Preservation Commission, include Major Alley at 417 Peruvian Away, 235 Banyan Road, 234 El Bravo Way, 124 Via Bethesda, 745 Hi-Mount Road, 270 Queens Lane, 135 El Vedado Road, 224 and 228 Phipps Plaza, and 421 Peruvian Avenue. In 1929, Major renovated one of the earliest Palm Beach houses to be landmarked, the Vicarage on North Lake Way built in 1897, and the Majors lived there for many years.

Besides his work in Palm Beach, Howard Major did projects in Hobe Sound and Gulfstream, Florida. In Naples he laid out the development of Port Royal and designed the "Church of Trinity-by-the-Sea." In Nassau, Bahamas, Major designed the Porcupine Club and residences for Arthur Vining Davis and Edward Lynch.

The following excerpt from Gene Pandula's "Architects on Architects Talk" provides additional insight into the architectural career of Howard Major:

"Like Addison Mizner, architect Howard Major designed country homes on Long Island, N.Y., in the early days of his career before opening shop in Palm Beach. Major began working for Mizner's Worth Avenue office in 1923 and moved to Palm Beach two years later. The two could not have been more different in their professional approach and preferences. Mizner learned architectural design through an apprenticeship; Major gained a formal education in architecture in New York. Mizner was known for having a pet monkey and a more freewheeling design process. Though Mizner's design of The Everglades Club and other projects made Mediterranean Revival style the dominant style in Palm Beach, Major carved out a successful career designing homes in the Greek Revival, Georgian and British Colonial styles.

Major was a cerebral person. He did research. He formed theses and opinion and his practice was rigorous in putting these ideas forward. Major's book, <u>The Domestic Architecture of the Early American Republic: The Greek Revival</u>, was published in 1926. He believed very strongly that America had a style of architecture. Major had two reasons for writing the book. One was to bring to light the fallacy of the impression that the 19th century was devoid of artistic expression. And the second was to place before the public irrefutable evidence that Greek Revival is America's national expression in architecture — the classic revival of the Greece and Rome styles perhaps more accurately called the federal style. Major didn't use the latter label because he didn't want to confuse people.

Though Major also designed Mediterranean Revival style houses in Palm Beach, he was the first to criticize it. The style became popular in Palm Beach but he believed it was not being refined for the United States from its origins. And he bases those comments on travels to Cuba, to Spain, to Portugal and other locales where he was very studious about crafting articles about essentially Spanish architecture. He claims it was not a simple matter for the Anglo-Saxon to assimilate to this form of architecture. Major even had a series of eight articles published in The Palm Beach Post dissecting Mediterranean Revival style that were designed to prod his cohorts into better design. He wanted architectural restraint.⁶

VI. Statement of Significance:

167 Clarendon Avenue is an excellent and unique example of the Georgian Revival style of architecture with Regency style details designed by prominent architect Howard Major. The two-story projecting bays are a distinctive and appealing feature rarely found in Palm Beach dwellings. The house was also commissioned by Mrs. Frederick C. (Myra) Van Dusen who was an early pioneer winter resident of Palm Beach and whose family owned the house for over 25 years.

⁶ Rogers, David. "Howard Major 'Rigorous' in Putting Idea Forward, Pandula says in Architect's Talk." Palm Beach Daily News. 22 January 2011.

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 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."

167 Clarendon Avenue was constructed during the Late Depression/New Deal Era. By the mid 1930s, Palm Beach started to experience a post Depression building boom that included buildings constructed with classic and innovative designs intended to stand the test of time. It was described as the third Palm Beach architectural era after the first Pioneer era of mostly large and small Bungalows and Vernacular styles and the second Mediterranean Revival era of the 1920s Land Boom. 167 Clarendon Avenue exemplifies this change with its classic Georgian Revival design with Regency features. The Van Dusen's were well-known and long-time winter residents of Palm Beach and were a very prestigious family from Minnesota. In addition, Caldwell "Blitz" Robinson lived in this dwelling while serving as a Town of Palm Beach Council member from 1978-1982.

(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 167 Clarendon Avenue is an excellent example of Howard Major's adept interpretation of the Georgian Revival style enhanced with Regency features. The front facade of the house is symmetrical in form and fenestration with unique and character defining full-height projecting bays with cornices that also project from the roofline. The Georgian entryway with its entablature and pediment supported by classical Doric columns and pilasters along with the character-defining quoins are additional features that complete the classic and interesting design of the dwelling.

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

Howard Major was one of the premier architects in Palm Beach beginning work on the Island in 1923 after a prosperous career designing country houses in New York. He was known for breaking away from the Mediterranean Revival style and promoting through both his writings and designs other styles such as the British Colonial, Georgian Revival, and Monterrey that he believed were more appropriate for the south Florida climate and his Palm Beach clientele. The house at 167 Clarendon Avenue is an excellent example of one of Major's classical designs so appropriate for Palm Beach's prominent Estate Section.

VIII. Selected Bibliography

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IX. Florida Master Site File Form

Master Site Site File File File File NO	TORICAL STRUCTURE FOR Electronic Version 1.1.0	Site #8 PB04142 Recorder # Jane S. Day Field Date 5/26/2010 Form Date 9/22/2010 FormNo 201005 FormNo - Field Date (YYYYMM)		
	GENERAL INFORMATION			
Site Name (address If none) Alfred & Barba	ra Marulli, House	Itiple Listing (DHR only)		
Other Names				
Survey or Project Name Palm Beach Historic Sites Survey, Phase V Survey#				
National Register Category Building (s)				
Laborar regions consigning (u)				
	LOCATION & IDENTIFICATION			
Address				
Street No. Direction Street Nam	e Street Type	Direction Suffix		
167 Claren	don hverve			
	don Avenue	<u> </u>		
Cross Streets (nearest/between) South Ocean	Blvd. & Lake Worth			
City / Town (within 3 miles) Town of Palm Be		? YES		
	Tax Parcel #(s) 50-43-43-35-03-000-0140			
Subdivision Name Vita Serena	Block Lot	14		
Ownership Private Individual				
Name of Public Tract (e.g., park)				
	e north side of Clarendon Avenue betwee	an South Ocean Blvd. and		
Lake Worth.				
	MAPPING			
USGS 7.5' Map Name	Publication Date >> PALM	BEACH / 1983		
		15 /43E /15/Irrelevant-irregular		
Irregular Section Name:				
Landgrant				
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HISTORICAL STRUCTURE FORM

	-			
81	вu	41	A 2	

DESCRIPTION (continued)		
Window Descriptions DHS 6/6, 8/8, 6/9, fixed, bay		
Main Entranse Description (stylistic details) pedimented front door with atoop		
Porches: #open 2 #closed #incised Location(s) front door, 2nd story open terrace Porch Roof Types(s) open		
Exterior Ornament quoins, iron, shutters, stucco piers		
Interior Plan Irregular Other Interior Plan		
Condition Good		
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 1935 Architect (last name first): Howard Major Builder (last name first): Charles Trevail		
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 : 1935 :		
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? YES Name of Local Register if Eligible		
Idividually Eligible for National Register? NO		
Potential Contributor to NR District? YES		
Area(s) of historical significance >> Architecture		
Other Historical Associations		
Explanation of Evaluation (required) This is a fine example of a Georgian Revival style residence with Regency features designed by a master architect, Howard Major during the Depression/New Deal Era.		

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HISTORICAL STRUCTURE FORM

8PB04142

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 8.

»> 🗌

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:	SHPO's Evaluation of Resource
Electronic Form Used: 8110	Date
Form Type Code: INCOM	
Form Quality Ranking: 1000	
Form Status Code: SCAC	
Supplement Information Status: NO SUPPLEMENT	FMSF Staffer:
Supplement File Status: NO SUPPLEMENT PTLE	Computer Entry Date: 7/13/2004
Form Comments:	

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

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