

TOWN OF PALM BEACH

Information for Town Council Meeting on: February 10, 2021

To: Mayor and Town Council

From: Wayne Bergman, Director of Planning, Zoning & Building

Cc: Kirk Blouin, Town Manager & James Murphy, Asst. Director of PZB

Re: Demolitions - Continued

Date: January 27, 2021

GENERAL INFORMATION

During your meeting of October 14, 2020, Architectural Review Commission (ARCOM) Chairman Michael Small made a presentation in which he asked the Council to consider an earlier ARCOM unanimous-approved motion to allow ARCOM to refer a request for demolition of a structure, of which ARCOM considered to be architecturally or historically significant, to the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) for their review, and to defer the demolition application for up to 60 days to allow LPC to consider Landmarking the subject structure. The goal of this request would be to allow the Landmarks Preservation Commission to evaluate each building slated for demolition on whether it should be Landmarked, and if so, to proceed with the Landmark designation process, which would preserve the historic building. ARCOM's request was supported by the LPC Chairman and by the Executive Director of the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach.

Prior to the October 14, 2020 Town Council meeting, Skip Randolph provided the Council with backup from similar discussions held in 2008, 2014 and 2017. At each of those past meetings, no action was taken by the Council to revise the code or mandate the historic review of buildings slated for demolition.

The Council voted at the October, 2020 meeting to defer the discussion to their December 9, 2020 meeting. During that meeting, staff recommended, and the Town Council voted, to defer the discussion to the February, 2021 meeting. This deferral would allow the Town to receive the Ten-Year Historic Site Survey, which at the time was substantially complete but in a draft form. The purpose of this deferral was to review the results of the final survey and to understand the potential number of new buildings that could be considered for possible Landmark designation.

The final version of the survey was received in early January, 2021. This new survey, which includes a comprehensive report, states that the survey included 2,240 potential historic resources, of which 1,721 resources were recorded as part of the survey. This record list includes 819 new

historic resources never surveyed before. The list further details 120 resources that may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or which may qualify as a future Town Landmarked resource. Please keep in mind, this list is one firm's opinion of the potential, and the number of actual buildings worthy of Landmark designation could be different.

Staff understands that the Town Council is concerned with the request of Arcom, to automatically review buildings that are proposed to be demolished. Currently, all buildings that are requested to be demolished by their owners must be approved by Arcom. This possible LPC review would be a diminishment of a property right currently enjoyed by Town property owners. However, with the new survey information, and knowing that 120 possible new Landmarked buildings are available to review, a suggestion is to increase the number of buildings that are reviewed annually over the next several years by the Landmarks Preservation Commission for possible designation as Landmarked buildings. This would assist in the historic preservation of Town assets and partially meet with the proposed intent of Arcom's request – an increased review of possible Landmark candidates.

With the Town Council's support and approval, the annual budget for the study of the possible buildings to receive Landmark designation (now set at about \$50,000 per year, which allows the study of about 10 buildings per year) could be increased to permit more homes and buildings to be reviewed.

Attached – Executive Summary from the Town of Palm Beach Historic Site Survey, Dec. 2020

Town of Palm Beach Historic Site Survey



Town of Palm Beach

Historic Site Survey

Prepared for
the Town of Palm Beach

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HK197107
December 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Environmental Services Inc., A Terracon Company (ESI), of Jacksonville, Florida, conducted a comprehensive pedestrian survey of historic structures in the Town of Palm Beach, Florida from November 2019 – June 2020. Funding for this survey and subsequent reporting was provided by the Town. The purpose of this survey was to provide Palm Beach with a comprehensive recordation of all structures in the town constructed in or prior to 1979 and a survey report detailing the findings. Data gathered during the survey will support a better preservation plan and identify geographic areas of interest that have retained integrity and possess significance for potential National Register districts, along with eligible local Landmark designations and districts, and aid in planning for future development.

The objectives of the survey were to conduct a comprehensive pedestrian survey and record the architectural resources for the Florida Master Site File (FMSF) utilizing the Historic Structure Form and assess their eligibility for listing in the *National Register of Historic Places* (NRHP) or locally, either individually and/or as part of a district. The architectural survey consisted of pedestrian investigation to field verify all architectural resources within the project area constructed up to 1979. Data from the Palm Beach County Property Appraiser and the Florida Master Site File (FMSF) was collected and cross referenced to ensure the accuracy of information and the correlation with respective buildings and developments. Research conducted at local and state repositories focused on historical context and developmental progression of the Town.

Initially, ESI determined that an approximate 2,134 parcels had the potential to contain historic structures in the Town of Palm Beach. Of those parcels, 128 were constructed between 1971-1979, and were also observed as part of the initial research phase and windshield survey per the Town of Palm Beach's project scope. A total of 2,240 historic resources were surveyed and 1,721 recorded during the survey; of those resources, 902 had been previously recorded and 819 had never before been recorded. The architectural survey resulted in the identification and evaluation of three (3) National Register Districts and nine (9) individually listed resources in the NRHP. Additionally, ESI recommends further investigation into nine (9) other geographical areas of interest with potential for local or National Register historic district designations, and approximately 120 resources that may be eligible for individual listing in the NRHP. ESI has also identified additional structures that have the potential to be locally designated.

This survey did not include exhaustive research on every resource, and as such the Florida Master Site File (FMSF) form does not represent the totality of information about each recorded resource. Additionally, it should be noted that the recorded FMSF forms and associated data are the consultant's opinion based upon field inspection and use of the respective National Register and local-level criteria for determining a structure's integrity and significance. For each form recorded with this survey, further research could yield more information on its architectural style, historical significance, and eligibility.

All work was intended to comply with Section 106 of the *National Historic Preservation Act* (NHPA) of 1966 (as amended) as implemented by 36 CFR 800 (Protection of Historic Properties), Chapter 267 F.S. and the minimum field methods, data analysis, and reporting standards embodied in the Florida Division of Historic Resources' (FDHR) *Historic Compliance Review Program* (Chapter 1A-46 *Florida Administrative Code*). All work also conformed to the professional guidelines set forth in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation* (48 FR 4416).

An electronic copy of project GIS data layers showing all surveyed resources is included with the final deliverables to the Town of Palm Beach and the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources. Final deliverables include both new and updated FMSF forms, maps, images, and all other associated data; a hardcopy and digital copy of this report, including a resource inventory and Survey Log Sheet.

An inventory of resources can be found in **Appendix A** of this report; and the Survey Log Sheet can be found in **Appendix B**. A list of demolished and overbuilt structures is included in **Appendix C**. A map of the survey area showing all associated data can be found in **Appendix D**, and a list of the Town of Palm Beach's locally designated Landmarks is in **Appendix E**. The recently Local Historic Conservation District Ordinance is included in **Appendix F**. Appendix F includes details related to historic conservation districts and *historically significant buildings*. Included in **Appendix G** are resources that have been identified as eligible for listing in the NRHP, as determined by State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication has been financed, in whole, with funds provided by the Town of Palm Beach. This survey and subsequent report would not have been possible without essential feedback from Town staff concerning the historic context as well as oversight on the recordation of historic resources with the FMSF. The consultant and authors would like to thank Wayne Bergman, Acting Director of the Town; former Planning Manager John Lindgren; former Director of the Planning, Zoning, and Building Department Josh Martin; Historic Preservation Planner Laura Groves van Onna; the Palm Beach Landmarks Preservation Commission; the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach and Director of Education, Aimee Sunny; Town of Palm Beach consultants Murphey Stillings, LLC; and the Palm Beach County Historical Society. The team would also like to thank Virginia Savage McAlester, author of *A Field Guide to American Houses*, and Barbara Hoffstot, author of *Landmark Architecture of Palm Beach*, preservationist extraordinaire.

Lastly, ESI would like to express our warm gratitude to the residents of the Town of Palm Beach that were a part of this survey. They permitted photographs and answered questions to the best of their knowledge. ESI hopes this survey will continue to provide helpful information for future historic preservation and survey work in Palm Beach.