

4 Via Vizcaya



DESIGNATION REPORT

January 19, 2022

Landmark Preservation Commission

Palm Beach, Florida

DESIGNATION REPORT

4 Via Vizcaya

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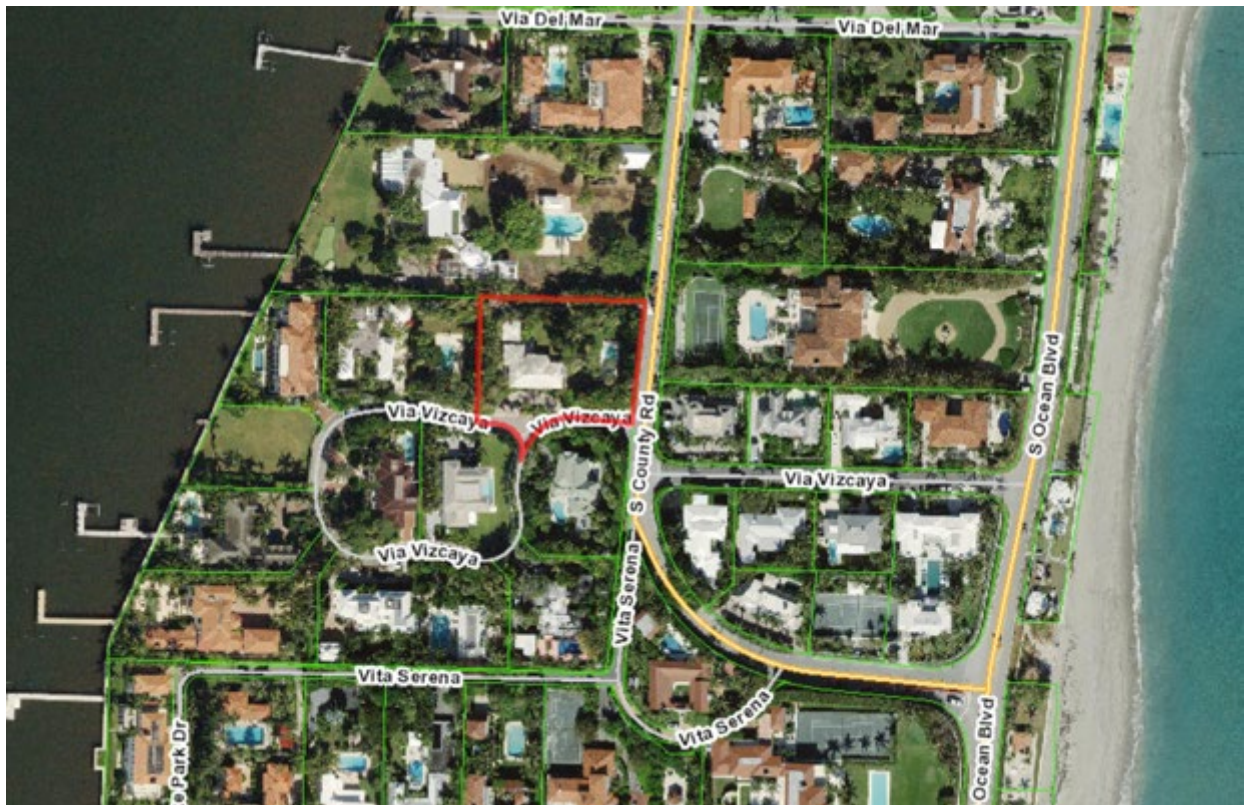
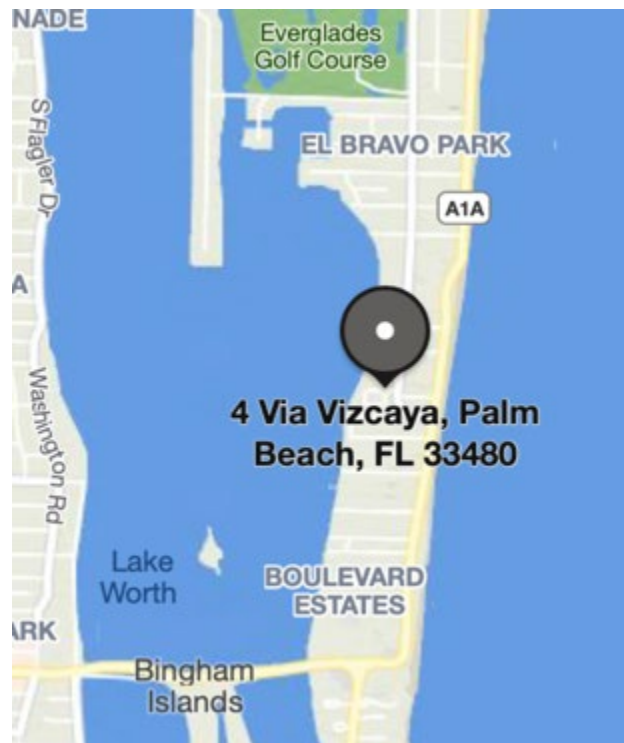
Report produced by Murphy Stillings, LLC

I. General Information

Location:	4 Via Vizcaya Palm Beach, Florida
Date of Construction:	1934
First Owner:	C. (Christian) Bai and Olga Lihme
Current Owner:	Thorne B. and Monnie B. Donnelley
Architect:	Treanor & Fatio
Builder:	C. G. Warner
Present Use:	Residential
Present Zoning:	RA
Palm Beach County Tax Folio Number:	50-43-43-35-01-000-0031
Current Legal Description:	Via Vizcaya E. 5.5 Feet of Lot 3 and Lots 4 and 5

II. Location Map

4 Via Vizcaya



III. Architectural Information

The two-story residence located at 4 Via Vizcaya in Palm Beach's estate section was designed in the Monterey style by one of Palm Beach's most prominent architects, Maurice Fatio of the architectural firm Treanor and Fatio. The home was commissioned in 1934 by C. (Christian) Bai Lihme and Olga Hegeler Lihme and was constructed by C.G. Warner for approximately \$40,000.¹



4 Via Vizcaya is a very good example of Maurice Fatio's interpretation of the Monterey style of architecture. The Monterey style originated in Monterey, California in the 1830s and was mostly a free interpretation of the Anglo-influenced Spanish Colonial houses of northern California. The style was revived in northern California in the 1920s and was mostly popular in the United States from 1925-1955. It was a fusion of revival styles including Spanish, British and French Colonial styles. The result was designs that were two-story residences with the main identifying feature being a second-floor open-air balcony covered by the principal roof which is characteristically low pitched and either gabled or hipped. The balconies were typically cantilevered with the decorative detailing of Monterey residences often confined to the balcony railing, which are typically styled in iron or wood. Exterior walls were constructed of brick, stucco or wood. Early examples of the Monterey style tend to feature more Spanish detailing, while later examples typically emphasized British and French details. In Palm Beach most of the early architects including Maurice Fatio, Howard Major, Marion Sims

¹ Town of Palm Beach Building Permit # 9334 dated July 2, 1934.

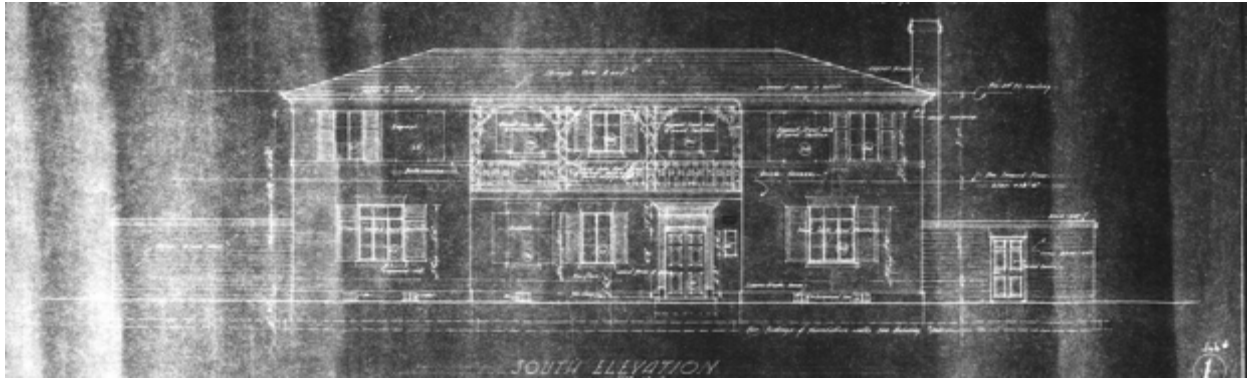
Wyeth, John Volk, Gustav Maass and Howard Chilton designed varying styles of Monterey houses.

The residence at 4 Via Vizcaya is located on the northwest corner of South County Road and Via Vizcaya with its main façade facing south onto Via Vizcaya. The home was constructed of tile surfaced with brick and features low-pitched hipped roofs with flat cement tiles.² The central section of the main façade is recessed and features the focal point of the residence and the main character defining element of the Monterey style, a cantilevered second floor balcony. The balcony is highlighted by a decorative lacy wrought iron railing and posts and exposed wood beams support the balcony. The entrance to the home is also located in the recessed central section. The entrance features a classical wood door surround with a wood paneled door and a decorative rectangular transom window with pointed arch details above.

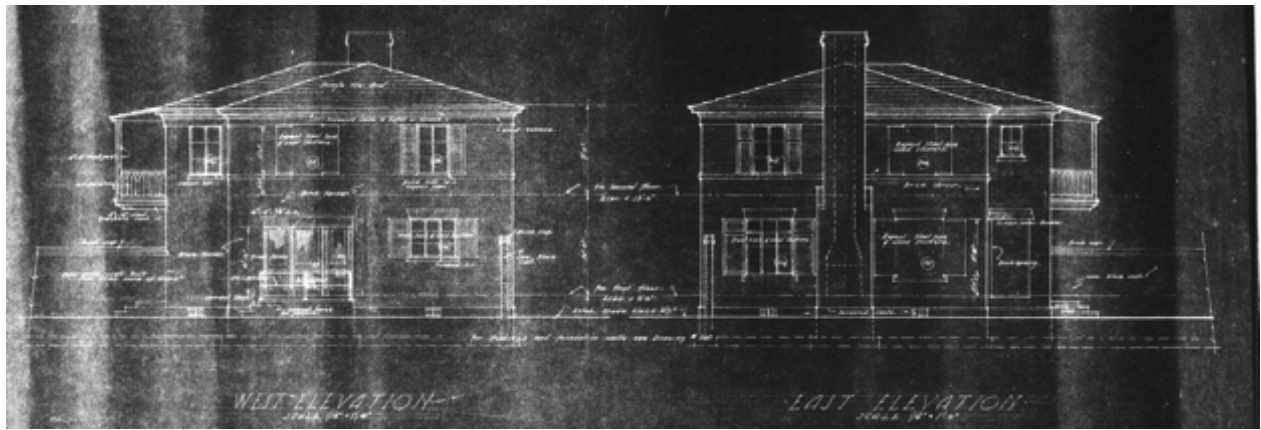


Additional architectural details of the residence include a wood cornice at the roofline and a brick chimney located on the east façade. The fenestration of the home is symmetrical and features single and paired windows with brick sills and louvered colonial shutters. The windows on the first floor feature shallow arched brick lintels above and a brick belt course highlights the base of the second-floor windows. A site wall, constructed of concrete block and surfaced with brick, extends to the east and west of the house along the main façade's front plane.

² Town of Palm Beach Building Permit # 9334 dated July 2, 1934.



Main Façade by Treanor & Fatio, 1934



East and West Facades by Treanor & Fatio, 1934

Fatio designed the rear of the residence with the center section projecting to the north and included a loggia on the first floor and another cantilevered balcony above. This balcony was designed with wood posts and a wrought iron railing.



Rear Façade from Google Earth

A two-story accessory structure, designed by Fatio and constructed at the same time as the residence, is located at the northwest corner of the property. It features a hip roof surfaced with flat tiles and includes a two-car garage with garage doors on the north façade. The garage is accessed from an alley on the north side of the property off South County Road.

In 1977, one-story additions were constructed on both the east and west façades behind the brick site wall. These additions feature glass doors and mansard style roofs surfaced with copper. In 1990, a two-story addition was constructed at the rear, northwest corner, of the residence. The designs of the 1977 and 1990 additions provided additional living space to meet the needs of the homeowners while retaining the historic architectural integrity of Maurice Fatio's 1934 design.



Main Façade Showing the Eastern One-Story Addition

Since the home's construction in 1934, in addition to the changes noted, there have been some alterations to the exterior of the residence. Alterations include the replacement of the roofing material, replacement of some of the windows and doors, replacement of the colonial shutters, and landscape and hardscape changes including the installation of a pool to the east of the residence. Despite these additions and alterations, the residence continues to retain its historic architectural integrity.

IV. Historical Information

The residence at 4 Via Vizcaya was designed by prominent Palm Beach architect Maurice Fatio for C. (Christian) Bai Lihme and his wife Olga Hegeler Lihme in

1934 during the late Depression/New Deal Era of the mid-1930s. The South Florida land and building boom of the 1920s had reached its height in late 1925, and by 1927, the “Boom Times” were ending for much of South Florida as speculation had pushed prices so high that speculators and developers could no longer find buyers and many banks in the state failed. Fortunately, for Palm Beach, the land bust did not drastically affect many of the seasonal residents and real estate development on the island slowed but did not halt.

The depression years were difficult for architects in Palm Beach. From 1931-1933, Fatio had so few commissions he considered closing the Palm Beach office of Treanor and Fatio. However, by the winter of 1934, business had picked up significantly and he remained very active and highly sought after until the start of the War. Building in Palm Beach was also on the rise and in a letter dated March 19, 1934, Fatio’s wife, Eleanor Chase Fatio explains,

“Looking back on this winter, it hardly seems possible that, in October (1933), Maurice was considering closing the Palm Beach office because there wasn’t enough work down here to warrant keeping it going. He has gotten an incredible number of jobs in the last two months. They are none of them mansions, but they are all moderate sized houses and he has, altogether ten contracts signed, with several more good prospects.”³

While a large amount of the new development in Palm Beach during the post-Depression/New Deal Era was occurring in the north end of the Island, there was also construction of new residences on both vacant lots in more established areas and within new subdivisions. Between the mid 1930s and the start of World War II, Fatio designed many houses throughout the Town of Palm Beach. Most of the houses were designed for specific clients, however, others were designed and built as spec homes for developers.

C. (Christian) Bai Lihme was a chemist, industrialist and an avid art collector. Originally from Denmark, he studied chemistry at the University of Copenhagen and came to the United States in 1888 and became the chief chemist at the Pennsylvania Lead Company until 1893. He then returned to Europe to study at the University of Heidelberg for two years before returning to become superintendent of the Illinois Zinc Company. In 1901, he married Olga Hegeler, who was the daughter of a pioneer zinc smelter and the president of the Matthissen and Hegeler Zinc Company. In 1910, C. Bai Lihme succeeded his father-in-law as president of the Hegeler Zinc Company until he retired in 1921. Through the years he also served as director of several banks and mining companies. After retiring

³ Alexandra Fatio. Maurice Fatio, Architect. Stuart, Florida: Southeastern Printing, 1992.

the Lihme's moved from Chicago to New York City. They lived in a large triplex apartment on 5th Avenue and had a summer residence, the grand estate "Norman Hall" in Watch Hill, Rhode Island. In 1925, the Lihme's commissioned Addison Mizner to construct a residence for them in Palm Beach, which was never constructed.⁴

Olga Lihme entered the Palm Beach development business with the creation of the Ohlea Corporation in 1925, where she served as president and their son, Harold Lihme, served as Secretary. The Ohlea Corporation developed the Via Vizcaya subdivision and the Lima Court Subdivision. In a letter dated October 11, 1934, Fatio references a home that he designed for Olga Lihme at 9 Via Vizcaya where he and his wife Eleanor would be staying while in Palm Beach, "We will stay in a villa there that I am building for Mrs. Lihme. She hopes to sell it, and if she succeeds, I will build her another one next year."⁵ The home at 9 Via Vizcaya was constructed at the same time as 4 Via Vizcaya in the new Via Vizcaya subdivision.

The end of the Boom Time Era and ensuing Depression in Palm Beach had signaled a change in the construction of residences. By the mid 1930s, Palm Beach started to experience a post-Depression building boom. The desire for changes in architectural design reflected the shifting economic times. Many owners were seeking mid-size residences with cleaner lines and greater symmetry in classic designs rather than the ornate Mediterranean Revival style estates built during the 1920s Land Boom. Fatio's design for 4 Via Vizcaya is an example of this change in the architectural development of Palm Beach.

A September 1935 article titled "Revolt in Palm Beach" in *House Beautiful* by Louis Capron described the changing architectural styles on the Island from the Spanish influenced to what Capron called "Tropical Colonial". In addition to describing these homes as being designed with the climate in mind and featuring the use of balconies and verandas, he also noted that the homes were built "to live in rather than for their theatrical qualities". Included in the article was a picture of the Monterey style residence Fatio designed for the Lihme's.⁶

4 Via Vizcaya was the Lihme's winter residence for thirteen years. Olga Lihme sold the residence shortly after her husband's death to William Church Merrill in

⁴ Donald W. Curl. Mizner's Florida: American Resort Architecture. American History Foundation and The MIT Press, 1996.

⁵ Alexandra Fatio. Maurice Fatio, Architect. Stuart, Florida: Southeastern Printing, 1992.

⁶ "'Revolt in Palm Beach' Seen in Architectural Evolution". *Palm Beach Post*, 3 September 1935.

1947.⁷ In 1950, the home was purchased by Clarence A. Olsen and Natalie Hill Olsen of Cleveland, Ohio, who had been wintering in Palm Beach for several years before purchasing 4 Via Vizcaya. While Natalie Olsen passed away in 1969 and Clarence Olsen died in 1971, the home remained in the Olsen family until 1974 when it was sold to H.V. Williams who owned it for twelve years.

The current owners are Thorne Barnes Donnelley and Monnie B. Donnelley. Mr. Donnelley purchased the property at the end of 1986. Mrs. Donnelley is the daughter of prolific Palm Beach architect Ames Bennett, who designed the two-story addition to the residence in 1990. The Donnelley's have been wonderful stewards of the residence for the last 34 years.

V. Architects Biography

Maurice Fatio

Maurice Fatio was one of Palm Beach's leading architects from the 1920s to the early 1940s. His firm, Treanor & Fatio was one of the largest architectural firms in Palm Beach and Fatio's distinctive designs can be seen throughout the Island.

Fatio was born in 1897 in Geneva, Switzerland. He studied architecture under Karl Moser at the Zurich Polytechnical. After graduation in 1920, Fatio came to America and apprenticed with Harrie T. Lindeberg, a prominent New York architect of Norman and English style country houses.

In 1921, Fatio formed a partnership with William A. Treanor, another architect in Lindeberg's firm. They quickly achieved a great deal of success, constructing numerous houses, primarily Colonial, on Long Island as well as buildings in Manhattan, including Beekman Tower on the East River. Fatio's association with Florida can be traced to his employment with Lindeberg, when he received the commission for eight small houses in New Smyrna, Florida. In October 1923, Treanor and Fatio were asked to be the architects for the Olympia Beach development, now Jupiter Island. The next year Fatio opened an office in Palm Beach.

Fatio's many commissions for houses and commercial buildings in Palm Beach were based on his reputation in New York as well as his charm, good looks, and European manner. During his career in Florida, Fatio designed in many diverse

⁷ C. Bai Lihme passed away in October 1946 at their home in New York City.

styles. Mediterranean Revival, more specifically, Italianate houses incorporating tower blocks, were designed for William McAneeny (195 Via Del Mar), the Coopers (801 South County Road), Mortimer Schiff (920 South Ocean Boulevard), and Daniel McCarthy (550 South Ocean Boulevard). More horizontal, symmetrical, and formal Florentine houses were designed for Otto Kahn (690 North County Road) and Joseph Widner (1500 South Ocean Boulevard). In 1928, he designed a French Normandy style house for his future mother-in-law Mrs. Charles Curry Chase (Via Del Mar). In the mid-30s, Fatio began designing in the Georgian, British Colonial and Monterey styles. Large commissions for Albert Worswick (1860 South Ocean Boulevard), E. F. Hutton (1768 South Ocean Boulevard), and Wolcott Blair (1960 South Ocean Boulevard) with their simple materials and uncluttered lines reflected the sober, economic climate and set the pace for the smaller Colonial and Regency commissions that followed them.

During this time, Fatio also worked in the modern style, producing such modern masterpieces as "The Reef" built for Mr. and Mrs. Vadim Makaroff. The design of this house won Fatio the Gold Medal at the 1936 French Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la vie Moderne as the "Best Modern House In America." Other modern houses were designed for Messmore Kendall, aviator pioneer Grover Loening, and Prince and Princess Zalstem-Zalessky (Evangeline Johnson Merrill).

World War II brought a halt to construction in Palm Beach. Fatio had many international connections and entered the Office of Strategic Services in Washington, D.C. in June of 1943. He sadly died of cancer later that same year, on December 2, 1943, at the young age of 46.

VI. Statement of Significance

The residence at 4 Via Vizcaya is significant as a very good example of the Monterey style of architecture as interpreted by prominent Palm Beach architect Maurice Fatio. It is also a very good example of the architectural, cultural and social changes occurring in Palm Beach during the post-Depression/New Deal Era of 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 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.”

4 Via Vizcaya reflects the broad cultural, economic and social history of the Town of Palm Beach. Designed and built in 1934 during the late Depression/New Deal Era for Christian Bai and Olga Lihme, the residence is a very good example of the changing times in the Town. Olga Lihme was involved in development on the island including developing the Via Vizcaya subdivision. Following the ending of the 1920s building boom, the late Depression/ New Deal Era in Palm Beach signaled a change in development and construction of residences in Palm Beach with large estates being subdivided and owners seeking mid-size residences with restrained and livable designs.

(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 house at 4 Via Vizcaya is a very good example of Maurice Fatio’s skillful interpretation of the Monterey style of architecture. The focal point of the residence, the second-floor cantilevered balcony with decorative iron posts and railing, is the main character defining feature of the style. Additional details, such as the brick façade, wood cornice, classical door surround with an interesting transom window above the wood door, colonial shutters, and brick belt course, sills and lintels all contribute to the architectural character of the residence.

(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.”

4 Via Vizcaya is a very good representation of the design work of the architect Maurice Fatio of the architectural firm Treanor and Fatio. Maurice Fatio was one of Palm Beach’s foremost and most sought-after architects from the 1920s to the early 1940s. He was an eclectic architect who took pride in his ability to work in different architectural styles. The Monterey style residence at 4 Via Vizcaya is a very good example of Fatio’s ability to adapt to the changes in Palm Beach’s economic climate and architectural styles during the mid-1930s.

VIII. Selected Bibliography

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X. Florida Master Site File Form

Page 1

☐ Original
☒ Update



HISTORICAL STRUCTURE FORM
FLORIDA MASTER SITE FILE
Version 5.0 3/19

Shaded Fields represent the minimum acceptable level of documentation.
Consult the Guide to Historical Structure Forms for detailed instructions.

Clear Form Values

Site# **PB04424**
Field Date **11-20-2019**
Form Date **9-29-2020**
Recorder # **MAS**

Site Name(s) (address if none) 4 Via Vizcaya N Multiple Listing (DHR only) _____

Survey Project Name Palm Beach Historical Site Survey Survey # (DHR only) _____

National Register Category (please check one) ☒ building ☐ structure ☐ district ☐ site ☐ object

Ownership: ☐ private-profit ☐ private-nonprofit ☒ private-individual ☐ private-nonspecific ☐ city ☐ county ☐ state ☐ federal ☐ Native American ☐ foreign ☐ unknown

LOCATION & MAPPING Clear Location Values

Address: 4 Via Vizcaya Street Name Street Type Suffix/Direction

Cross Streets (nearest / between) _____

USGS 7.5 Map Name PALM BEACH USGS Date 2012 Plot or Other Map _____

City / Town (within 3 miles) Palm Beach In City Limits? ☒ yes ☐ no ☐ unknown County Palm Beach

Township 43S Range 43E Section 35 1/4 section: ☐ NW ☐ SW ☐ SE ☐ NE Irregular-name: _____

Tax Parcel # 50434335010000031 Landgrant _____

Subdivision Name VIA VIZCAYA IN Block 000 Lot 0031

UTM Coordinates: Zone ☐ 16 ☐ 17 Easting Northing

Other Coordinates: X: _____ Y: _____ Coordinate System & Datum _____

Name of Public Tract (e.g., park) _____

HISTORY Clear History Values

Construction Year: 1934 ☐ approximately ☐ year listed or earlier ☐ year listed or later

Original Use Private Residence (House/Cottage/Ca From (year): 1934 To (year): 2020

Current Use Private Residence (House/Cottage/Ca From (year): 1934 To (year): 2020

Other Use _____ From (year): _____ To (year): _____

Moves: ☐ yes ☒ no ☐ unknown Date: _____ Original address _____

Alterations: ☒ yes ☐ no ☐ unknown Date: _____ Nature windows

Additions: ☒ yes ☐ no ☐ unknown Date: _____ Nature side addn

Architect (last name first): Treador & Patio Builder (last name first): _____

Ownership History (especially original owner, dates, profession, etc.)
DONNELLEY THORNE B &

Is the Resource Affected by a Local Preservation Ordinance? ☐ yes ☒ no ☐ unknown Describe _____

DESCRIPTION Clear Description Values

Style Monterey Exterior Plan Rectangular Number of Stories 2

Exterior Fabric(s) 1. Brick 2. _____ 3. _____

Roof Type(s) 1. Hip 2. _____ 3. _____

Roof Material(s) 1. Concrete tile 2. _____ 3. _____

Roof secondary strucs. (domes etc.) 1. _____ 2. _____

Windows (types, materials, etc.)
single & paired 4 light replacement awning, fixed 12 light, shutters, brick tops & sills

Distinguishing Architectural Features (exterior or interior ornaments)
low pitch hip w minimal overhang, center recess, balcony w decorative metal railing, painted brick

Ancillary Features / Outbuildings (record outbuildings, major landscape features; use continuation sheet if needed.)
corner lot, masonry semicircular drive, vegetation

DHR USE ONLY **OFFICIAL EVALUATION** **DHR USE ONLY**

NR List Date _____	SHPO - Appears to meet criteria for NR listing: <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> insufficient info Keeper - Determined eligible: <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> insufficient info NR Criteria for Evaluation: <input type="checkbox"/> a <input type="checkbox"/> b <input type="checkbox"/> c <input type="checkbox"/> d (see National Register Bulletin 15, p. 2)	Date _____ Init. _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Owner Objection		Date _____	

DESCRIPTION (continued)

Clear Description Values

Chimney: No. 1 Chimney Material(s): 1. Brick 2. _____Structural System(s): 1. Masonry - General 2. _____ 3. _____Foundation Type(s): 1. Slab 2. _____Foundation Material(s): 1. Poured Concrete Footing 2. _____

Note: you may use the last box in each field to type in an answer that does not appear in the list provided

Main Entrance (stylistic details)

wide 6 panel, transom w pointed arch detail, neoclassical surround, off center

Porch Descriptions (types, locations, roof types, etc.)

in center recess

Condition (overall resource condition): ☐ excellent ☒ good ☐ fair ☐ deteriorated ☐ ruinous

Narrative Description of Resource

This c1934 Monterey style building is in good condition. Property appraiser notes a 1950 build date

Archaeological Remains

☐ Check if Archaeological Form Completed

RESEARCH METHODS (select all that apply)

☒ FMSF record search (sites/surveys)☐ library research☐ building permits☒ Sanborn maps☐ FL State Archives/photo collection☐ city directory☐ occupant/owner interview☒ plat maps☒ property appraiser / tax records☐ newspaper files☐ neighbor interview☐ Public Lands Survey (DEP)☒ cultural resource survey (CRAS)☐ historic photos☐ interior inspection☐ HABS/HAER record search☒ other methods (describe) Town Staff

Bibliographic References (give FMSF manuscript # if relevant, use continuation sheet if needed)

OPINION OF RESOURCE SIGNIFICANCE

Clear Significance Values

Appears to meet the criteria for National Register listing individually?

☒ yes☐ no☐ insufficient information

Appears to meet the criteria for National Register listing as part of a district?

☒ yes☐ no☐ insufficient information

Explanation of Evaluation (required, whether significant or not; use separate sheet if needed)

This building was determined NRHP eligible 2006, and appears to meet criteria for listing within a district.

Area(s) of Historical Significance (see National Register Bulletin 15, p. 8 for categories: e.g. "architecture", "ethnic heritage", "community planning & development", etc.)

1. Community planning & development 3. _____ 5. _____2. Architecture 4. _____ 6. _____

DOCUMENTATION

Clear Documentation Values

Accessible Documentation Not Filed with the Site File - including field notes, analysis notes, photos, plans and other important documents

1) Document type _____ Maintaining organization _____

Document description _____ File or accession #s _____

2) Document type _____ Maintaining organization _____

Document description _____ File or accession #s _____

RECORDER INFORMATION

Recorder Name Patricia Davenport-Jacobs Affiliation Environmental Services, Inc.Recorder Contact Information 7220 Financial Way, Suite 100, Jacksonville, FL 32256/9044702200/pdavenport@
(address / phone / fax / e-mail)

Required Attachments

① USGS 7.5' MAP WITH STRUCTURE LOCATION CLEARLY INDICATED

② LARGE SCALE STREET, PLAT OR PARCEL MAP (available from most property appraiser web sites)

③ PHOTO OF MAIN FACADE, DIGITAL IMAGE FILE

When submitting an image, it must be included in digital AND hard copy format (plain paper grayscale acceptable). Digital image must be at least 1600 x 1200 pixels, 24-bit color, jpeg or tiff.