

# **304-306 South County Road**



## **DESIGNATION REPORT**

**January 18, 2023**

**Landmark Preservation Commission**

**Palm Beach, Florida**

**DESIGNATION REPORT**  
**304-306 South County Road**

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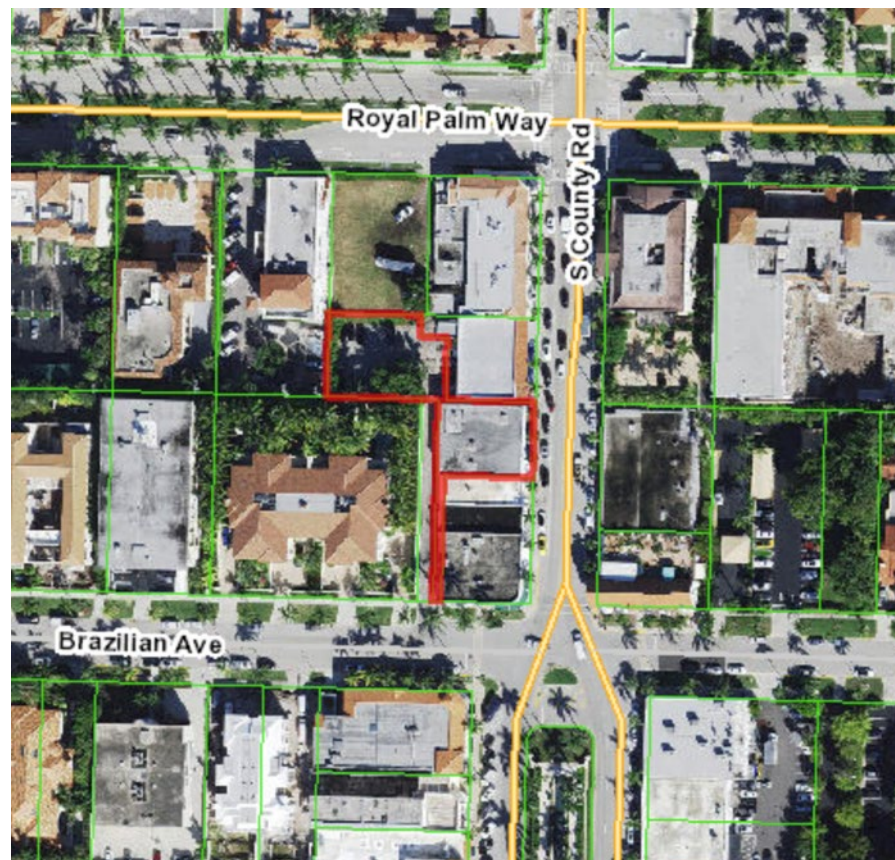
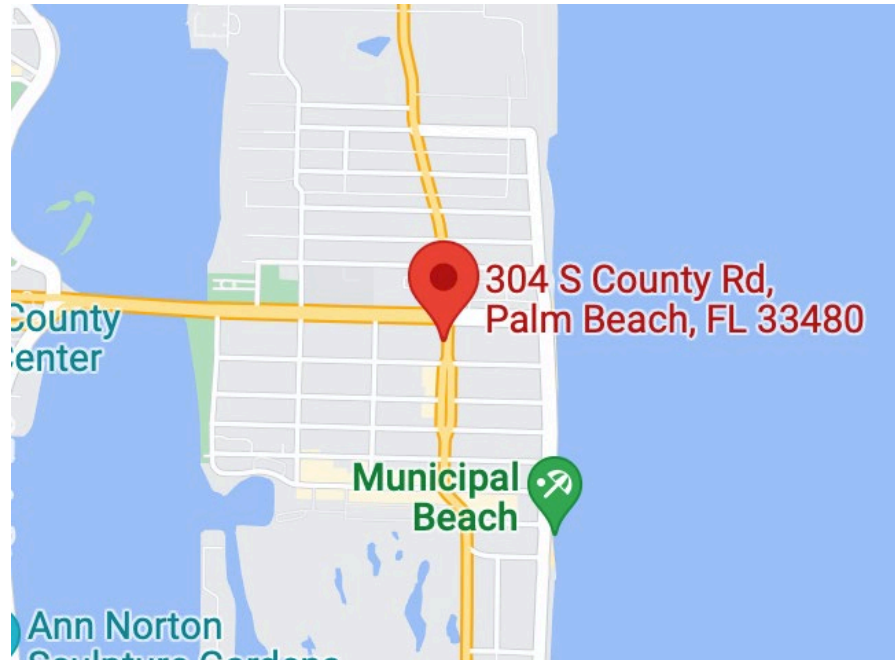
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## **I. General Information**

Location:	304-306 South County Road Palm Beach, Florida
Date of Construction:	1929
Original Owner:	Stephen "S" Fahs Smith
Original Tenants:	Piggly Wiggly and The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company (A&P)
Current Owner:	Thomas Campaniello
Architect:	Henry Stephen Harvey Office of Carlos Schoeppel
Builder/Contractor:	T. T. Dempsey Company
Present Use:	Commercial
Present Zoning:	C-TS Commercial Town Serving
Palm Beach County Tax Folio Number:	50-43-43-23-05-025-0071
Current Legal Description:	Royal Park Add W 7 FT of S 112.5 FT of Lot 7, N 67.5 FT of LT 7, W 7 FT of S 55.88 FT of LT 35 & S 75 FT of LT 36/Less E16.7 FT of N 19.12 FT/ In DB747P564 BLK E

## II. Location Map

### 304-306 South County Road





### III. Architectural Information

Designed by architect Henry Stephen Harvey in 1929 while working in the office of Carlos B. Schoeppl, the building at 304-306 South County Road is a one-story commercial structure designed with Art Deco detailing along a business thoroughfare in Palm Beach's early Royal Park subdivision. Although this is one building, the front facades of 304 and 306 South County Road are dissimilar and were not designed to match.



The term 'Art Deco' refers to a design period that was popular from the 1920s to the early 1940s. The Art Deco style was seen throughout Paris in the early 1920s but made its first official appearance in 1925 at the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes*. The movement influenced fashion, art, homewares, and building styles throughout the Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression and thus there was a balance between opulence and practicality with buildings being streamlined but not minimal. The architects of the time were inventive in their approach to design and sought to create structures that were fresh, modern, and unlike previous revivalist styles, though some motifs take a creative license from Indigenous, Egyptian, and Classical art forms. Some common Art Deco motifs include chevrons, pyramids, sunbursts, florals, zigzags, and other stylized geometric shapes.

The main focal point of most retail commercial buildings are the storefronts. Storefronts are the front porches of retail commercial buildings and are designed to be attractive, inviting, and functional in order to play an important role in defining individual businesses and commercial districts. Fortunately, by the twentieth century, the structural system virtually disappeared as part of the storefront design with the beneficiary being the display window, which

grew larger because of merchandising demands and technological advances in glassmaking. In this building, the display windows allow the individual stores to showcase merchandise directly behind the windows and allow a clear view into the store. The stucco front facade of 304 South County Road currently features a metal and glazed storefront with six tall, fixed-light display windows with double glazed doors in the center and transoms above. The fascia above is stucco scored to eight panels each with two sets of four square floral-designed tiles. Above the squares is a molded cornice that projects slightly from the front plane of the facade.



304 South County Road

306 South County Road has retained more of the Art Deco features than its neighbor at 304 South County Road. The facade of 306 South County Road features two separate storefronts housing separate businesses with a recessed covered entry between. The north metal and glazed storefront features three full-height fixed display windows with a metal and glazed entry door facing south. The south storefront features two fixed display windows with a reeded bulkhead below and an angled fixed window next to the adjacent glazed and metal entry door that faces north. Surrounding both of the storefronts is a character defining decorative frame of Art Deco repetitive stylized geometric border panels surrounded by a stucco chevron band. Set within this decorative surround is simple signage for each store and above is a plain rough stucco



fascia topped by a decorative geometric stylized cornice completing the Art Deco design.<sup>1</sup> Both storefronts of this multi-retail building feature awnings which provide sun and rain protection as well as decoration.



306 South County Road

The Art Jury, precursor to today's Architectural Review Commission (ARCOM) was established in 1928 in order to protect the beauty of Palm Beach and property owners from "unartistic building erections." Any new project required approval, and the Jury had the right to modify plans as it saw fit. According to an October 1929 Palm Beach Post article, this grocery store building was to cost about \$9000 and "have a handsome front in keeping with the standard of beauty maintained in Palm Beach as the result of the efforts of the art jury and will not resemble the usual grocery store."<sup>2</sup> The jurors that reviewed the plans of this building included architects Addison Mizner serving as chairman, Marion Sims Wyeth, Maurice Fatio, and landscape architect Charles Perrochet, all highly distinguished local architects.

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<sup>1</sup> It is likely that Carlos Schoeppl had influence on this Henry Stephen Harvey design as he was an early proponent of the Art Deco style.

<sup>2</sup> Palm Beach Post. Store to Occupy Building Next Month: Grocery Concerns to Open for Business in Handsome New Structure." 24 October 1929. An earlier Palm Beach Post article from October 1, 1929, stated, "The art jury is withholding a permit for the new Piggly-Wiggly-Atlantic & Pacific building on Palm Beach Avenue, pending architectural changes in the front.

Storefronts are frequently altered to fit new business identities and changing architectural trends. In 1953, large black tile squares were added as a veneer to the front facade of 304 South County Road covering the original design though the angled and recessed storefront remained. The tiles have since been removed however the storefront was altered to be flush with the front facade. The angled recessed entry at 306 South County Road also changed to accommodate two separate shops.

#### **IV. Historical Information**

In 1929, contractor T. T. Dempsey applied for a Palm Beach Building Permit # 18429 to build a one-story, masonry structure with two commercial stores along Palm Beach Avenue in the Royal Park subdivision. Distinguished architect Henry Stephen Harvey, while working in the offices of architect Carlos B. Schoeppl, designed the building for owner Stephen "S." Fahs Smith.<sup>3</sup> Harvey had designed the prominent Mediterranean Revival Palmway Building on the corner of Royal Palm Way and Palm Beach Avenue in 1924 when he was partner in the esteemed architectural office Harvey & Clarke, which had also designed the striking Mediterranean Revival Palm Beach Town Hall and Fire Station in the center of Palm Beach Avenue in the heart of the Royal Park subdivision.

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 to develop the Royal Park subdivision. This subdivision which was mostly jungle, sand and muck included 160 acres of land from present-day Royal Palm Way south to Worth Avenue, and from the Atlantic Ocean to Lake Worth. In 1912, it was 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, and the streets 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. After completion of the new Palm Beach Town Hall and Fire Station at the end of 1925, the area became the new governmental center which created the need for additional retail and office space.

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<sup>3</sup> Town of Palm Beach Building Permit #18429, September 23, 1929. At the time, Carlos B. Schoeppl's main office was in Jacksonville, Florida but Henry Stephen Harvey was working for him in an office based in West Palm Beach.



304 - 306 South County Road was developed as an investment property by businessman Stephen "S." Fahs Smith who had been a winter resident of Palm Beach since 1911. S. Fahs Smith was a member of the prominent Smith family from York, Pennsylvania and was president of the turbine manufacturers S. Morgan Smith Company, based in York. In Palm Beach he resided at 147 Seabreeze Avenue and was a member of the Old Guard Society, the Bath and Tennis Club and the Everglades Club along with being involved with Bethesda-by-the-Sea. Mrs. S. Fahs Smith was very active in Palm Beach society and served as president of the Women's Guild of Bethesda-by-the-Sea, as well as the National Society of Americans of Royal Descent.<sup>4</sup>

Although the Florida land and building boom had ended by 1929, Palm Beach continued to experience substantial growth. A December 1929 Palm Beach Post article titled "Construction Work During Summer Runs to Enormous Figure" stated, "Returning winter residents to Palm Beach will find themselves faced by the remarkable growth that has transformed the resort city during the summer months." Several of the new commercial buildings were located in the Palm Beach Avenue commercial corridor between Royal Palm Way and Worth Avenue, which housed a large variety of enterprises including clothing shops, restaurants, realtors, antique shops, an automobile showroom, and other town-serving businesses. The Mizner designed Memorial Fountain on the plaza in the center of Palm Beach Avenue just north of Town Hall and the Fire Station was also completed in 1929 and drew residents and visitors to the area. 304-306 Palm Beach Avenue was constructed to further meet the retail needs of both Palm Beach residents and guests at the nearby hotels. The two original stores were interestingly both grocery stores, with the Piggly Wiggly on the south and the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company (A & P) on the north.<sup>5</sup>

In 1936, there was much debate about changing the main commercial north-south throughfare's name from Palm Beach Avenue back to the earlier name County Road. According to a March 1, 1936, Palm Beach Post article titled "Why Not County Road? It stated,

"A movement in Palm Beach seeks to change the name of Palm Beach Avenue back to the old designation, County Road. Well, why not? Everyone calls it County Road still. You might change the name of Arkansas, but in the public

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<sup>4</sup> During World War II, Mrs. Fahs Smith was very philanthropic and provided much wartime relief to Great Britain for which she was awarded the King's Medal by King George V.

<sup>5</sup> The current shops are Shoes and More at 304 South County Road and Keller Palm Beach and Well Made Home at 306 South County Road.

mind it still would remain Arkansas. And so, in a smaller way, it still remains County Road to the people of the Palm Beaches. ...If the people of Palm Beach want the name of their main thoroughfare to be County Road, then County Road it should be. Palm Beach Avenue? It is a good enough name, as names go, but no more. It has no charm. It is no rugged individualist. It is only Palm Beach Avenue. But County Road? Homely, rustic, friendly County Road running through the middle of smart, modern Palm Beach, as if it had been there since the beginning of time and would remain to the end. County Road it is and County Road it will remain in the minds of the people.”

With support from many of Palm Beach’s prominent businessmen and politicians, the name was officially changed back to County Road by the Palm Beach Town Council in 1936.

From the 1920s to the present day, the South County Road business district has been a bustling commercial, professional and governmental center with one-, two- and three-story buildings of varied architectural styles that still recall the Town’s early, pedestrian-oriented days.<sup>6</sup> Included in the quaint character of the area is the building at 304-306 South County Road as it has good proportions, some interesting architectural design, and a strong sense of scale to the pedestrian atmosphere.

## **V. Architects Biographies**

### **Henry Stephen Harvey:**

Henry Stephen Harvey was born in Mississippi in 1889, and grew up in Birmingham, Alabama. Showing a talent for design early in life, he went to the University of Pennsylvania for architectural training. He married his wife, Claire in 1914, when he was 24-years old. During World War I he served in the Air Service branch as a second lieutenant of civil life, a position in which he planned and constructed aviation buildings at various camps throughout the United States.

Sensing a future in the tourist development of Florida, on April 1, 1921, he applied for a Florida license as an architect, and was granted registration (licensure) with Certificate AR0000179 on June 1, 1921. In Palm Beach, he partnered with his friend from the University of Pennsylvania Louis Phillips

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<sup>6</sup> Town Hall Square Historic District. March 16, 1990. Report prepared by Eric Egan, Preservation Consultant and James Edward Sved, AIA, Preservation Consultant. The proposed boundaries of the historic district were South County Road from Royal Palm Way to Worth Avenue, but the boundaries were reduced to the buildings along South County Road between Brazilian Avenue and Chilean Avenue.

Clarke (AR0000224) to form the architectural firm Harvey & Clarke. Clarke's family were one of the early Palm Beach pioneer families, and although Clarke did not receive his architectural license until almost two years later, on January 11, 1923, the partnership of their mutual talents was able to flourish. The firm was commissioned to design many of the Seaboard Coast Line Railway system's depot buildings, many which still exist and of those numerous are locally or nationally designated. Other prominent designated buildings designed by Harvey & Clarke in Palm Beach include the Palm Beach Town Hall, the Palm Beach Daily News Building, and the Palmway Building. In West Palm Beach, some of their locally or nationally designated designs include the Pine Ridge Hospital, the American National Bank Building, the Guaranty Building, Holy Trinity Church, and the Comeau Building.

Mr. Harvey was personable and popular, and served as Mayor of West Palm Beach from 1924 to 1927. His design talent was coupled with a keen interest in door and window hardware, and he patented the "HAR-VEY" top-hung sliding door roller device. The Harvey & Clarke partnership was dissolved in 1929, but he continued practicing architecture, and began an association with Miami-based architect Carlos B. Schoeppl. He also started a hardware business in Phipps Plaza, the epicenter of Palm Beach architectural firms, and later, on South County Road where he also had the town's first picture-framing shop. He co-authored a book, Taking the Mystery out of Builder's Hardware and he was a charter member of the Palm Beach Rotary Club. Harvey was a familiar sight in Palm Beach, wearing an ascot instead of a tie, leisurely strolling along County Road, going to and from his client's offices. He retired in 1983, and died in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania in 1987 at age 97.

### **Carlos B. Schoeppl:**

Carlos B. Schoeppl, a highly respected architect, born in 1898, studied architecture at UCLA, and worked in San Antonio and Houston, Texas before moving to Jacksonville in 1926 at the height of the Florida land boom.<sup>7</sup> He established an architectural practice in both Jacksonville and St. Augustine from 1927-1929. While in Jacksonville, Schoeppl designed some of the earliest Art Deco buildings in the city.<sup>8</sup> Already a well-established architect, in 1929, Schoeppl left Jacksonville for Miami where "Shep" became well known for his

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<sup>7</sup> One of his most prestigious early houses is the Johnelle Bryan house, a 1925 Italian Renaissance style house at 15 Courtland Place in the Houston Courtland Place National Register Historic District.

<sup>8</sup> Some of these buildings included the downtown Chevrolet Building at 1100 North Main Street (1928-1929), the Grace the Florist Building at 1612 Cherry Street in Riverside (1928) and the Thomas M. Palmer residence at 3790 Ortega Boulevard (1927).

luxurious mansions, many in the Mediterranean Revival style and built for wealthy clients along the “Gold Coast.” The story goes that he had a grand outgoing personality, a great interest in aviation and was friends with Howard Hughes and Eddie Rickenbacker. In 1932, he partnered with Arnold Southwell and during their partnership, Schoeppl and Southwell produced “A Florida Brochure” highlighting their numerous commissions in the South Florida area.<sup>9</sup>

During World War II, Schoeppl did his part for the war effort by designing military hospitals for North Africa and the Pacific Theater. In the 1940s he also established the Craftsmen’s Village, an artisans’ commune located in the Brownsville community near Miami International Airport. There he engaged wood carvers and old-world craftsmen to produce beautiful custom-made furniture and ironwork.

After the war, Schoeppl created the “American Plan Service,” to mass-market “modern” homes employing the latest technologies and design theories-- many of these were constructed in Miami and Fort Lauderdale. He did a booming business in South Florida constructing commercial buildings in the then popular Art Moderne style. By 1955, Schoeppl and Associates had offices in Miami, New York, Dallas, and Los Angeles. The firm became known for its hotel and “motor lodge” designs throughout the United States. Schoeppl also became associated with the style now termed “Post War Modern” or “Mid Century Modern.” Carlos Schoeppl continued his career into the 1980s and passed away in April of 1990. He was a prolific architect whose work helped shape the “look” of South Florida in the twentieth century.

## **VI. Statement of Significance**

The commercial building at 304-306 South County Road was designed in the Art Deco style which was an imaginative style that was popular from the 1920s to the early 1940s during a transitional period between traditional and modern approaches to building design. The building was originally constructed to house two popular grocery stores which served the growing Royal Park neighborhood, the South County Road commercial and governmental area and tourists at the nearby hotels.

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<sup>9</sup> Many of Carlos Schoeppl designed homes were built along the ocean, though many have since been replaced by high-rise buildings. However, throughout Miami Beach and along the bay front many of his homes still exist.



## **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.”**

The multi-retail building at 304-306 South County Road reflects the broad cultural, economic, and social history of the Town of Palm Beach. After the construction of the Palm Beach Town Hall and Fire Station on South County Road in 1925 and Memorial Fountain in 1929 the businesses along South County Road increased to accommodate the growing pedestrian traffic from residents, staff, and visitors to the Town’s new governmental center. And although the Florida land and housing boom was over by 1929 and the market had crashed in October of 1929, Palm Beach continued to develop substantially in the late 1920’s so the addition of two grocery stores helped to supply provisions for the growing population and the multitude of tourists. Resident and investor S. Fahs Smith had confidence in this commercial area along South County Road as two years later he developed the building adjacent to the north to house four new shops.

**(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 building at 304-306 South County Road is a one-story, multi-retail commercial structure designed in the Art Deco style. Art Deco features of 306 South County Road include the character defining decorative frame of angled repetitive geometric border panels surrounded by a stucco chevron band. The reeded bulkhead and the decorative stylized geometric cornice are also important Art Deco features that cap this building. The facade of 304 South County Road does not retain many Art Deco features but it does have tiles with floral designs and a streamlined facade. Henry Stephen Harvey was a talented architect who had designed the nearby Palmway Building and Palm Beach Town Hall during his partnership with Louis Phillips Clarke as the Harvey & Clarke architectural firm. While designing this building, Harvey was working in the office of architect Carlos B. Schoeppl and this likely influenced his use of the Art Deco design.

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