

# 363 COCOANUT ROW



## DESIGNATION REPORT NOVEMBER 16, 1990

Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Palm Beach, Florida

LANDMARKS DESIGNATION  
REPORT:

363 Cocoanut Row  
Chesterfield Hotel

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Designation report prepared July 1990 by Paul Douglas Martins,  
M.A.H. 1989, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.

Report edited by Timothy M. Frank, AICP, Planner/Projects  
Coordinator, Town of Palm Beach, and James Edward Sved, AIA,  
Preservation Consultant.

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Location:** 363 Cocoanut Row

**Date of Construction:** 1925

**Principal Architects:** Unknown  
Alterations: Renovations by John L. Volk, 1937. East Addition by Ray Plockelman, 1960

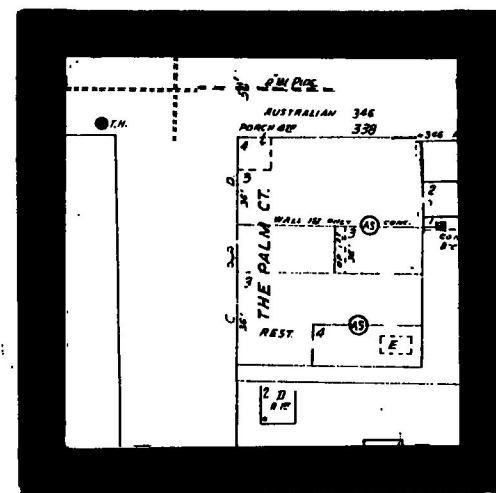
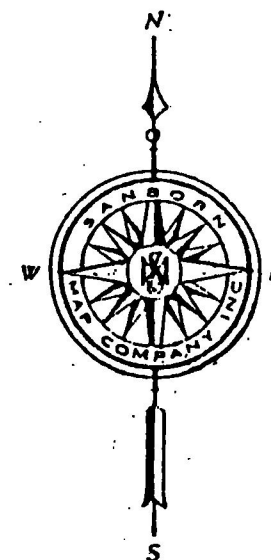
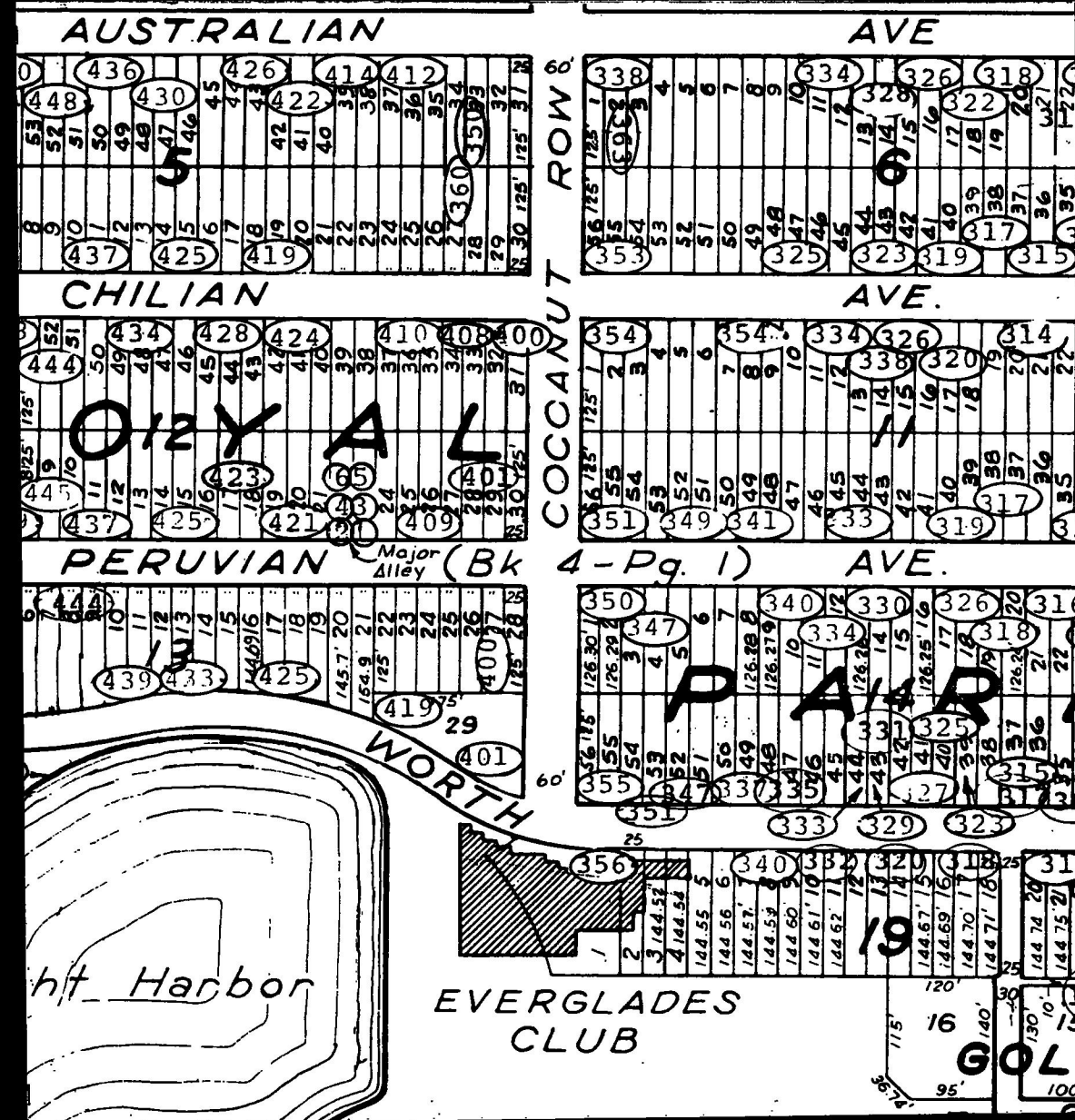
**Present Occupant:** Tollman-Huntley Hotels

**Present Use:** Hotel

**Present Zoning:** R-C

**Legal Description:** Lots 1-6 Inclusive, Block 6, Royal Park Addition.

**Palm Beach County Tax Folio Number:**  
50-43-43-23-05-006-0010



# LOCATION MAP 363 COCOANUT ROW



### III. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The Chesterfield Hotel at 363 Cocoanut Row is an excellent example of the Mediterranean Revival style in the commercial architecture of Palm Beach. The structure has changed ownership, and has been renovated and added to a number of times throughout its history. The structure is currently occupied as a hotel. The wood, masonry and stucco building is "U-shaped" in plan, arranged around a central court or "patio". Major public spaces are confined to the first level of the hotel, with the second and third levels arranged in cellular units feeding off an internal corridor. The central court is quite small and is separated from the street by a wall roughly ten feet in height.

The hotel sits at the corner of Cocoanut Row and Australian Avenue with the main entrance front facing west onto Cocoanut Row. The overall arrangement is three stories in height capped by a high parapet wall. The two front projecting wings of the hotel separated by the central court are equally balanced in every aspect of the west elevation, with the exception of a tower block located at the northwest corner of the building. Each face of the tower block consists of a triple arched loggia and a wrought iron balustrade. The northwest tower block is topped with a barrel clay tile roof.

Except for the corner tower, symmetry dominates the overall design of the west elevation. On the first level of each block, entry is denoted in the center with an aedicular opening flanked by a pair of festive Corinthian columns. This arrangement is followed on the second level by a two story arched opening housing an exterior stair. Above the third level, a simple entablature frames the overall arrangement and is capped by a decorative parapet wall.

Unlike the formal display of the west elevation of the hotel, treatment of the north, south and east elevations is for the most part simple and irregular, responding to the needs of the cellular units within. Banding continues around the outer walls of the hotel, at the base of the structure, in between the first and second levels, and above the third story in the form of a simple and unadorned entablature. Within the parapet wall of the west elevation, an ornamental swag and crest appears, framed by a decorative gable. Wall surfaces are finished in stucco painted in an apricot color. Door and window surrounds are painted white.

#### IV. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Building permits granted by the Town of Palm Beach in 1925 indicate that the Lido-Venice Corporation of New York City was granted approval to build a hotel structure at the intersection of Cocoanut Row and Australian Avenue in Palm Beach. In 1926 the \$150,000 hotel opened as the "Lido-Venice". The 1926, Palm Beach Post claimed that the Lido-Venice was to be "one of the popular places for society...and a beautiful new addition to Palm Beach's list of restaurants and cabarets..." ("Opening of the Lido-Venice," Palm Beach Post. 13 February 1926). According to the Post, the hotel's interior was decorated in the Venetian style and included one of the finest restaurants in Palm Beach. In 1928, a change in name, not ownership, occurred. For the next fifty-one years, the hotel was known as the "Venita".

Early in the 1930's, additions were made to the hotel to increase guest accommodations. Although these additions were considered necessary by the owners, the financial risk taken by the Lido-Venice Corporation was costly. By 1932, suit was brought forth against the corporation for failure to reimburse contractors and workmen employed to build the addition.

In financial debt, the hotel was purchased in 1934 by Atwater Kent. Kent hired the prolific Palm Beach architect John L. Volk in 1937 for alterations and renovations.

R.C. Boyce of North Carolina purchased the hotel in 1940. Boyce, who owned the hotel for twenty-six years, made a number of changes including a \$32,000 addition to the east side of the hotel designed by Ray Plockleman in 1960. The 45' X 30' addition was built to accommodate a lounge and three additional hotel rooms.

In 1965, upon inspection of the hotel by the Town of Palm Beach, the owners were informed that fire and structural hazards existed. In order to keep an occupancy permit, the owners were ordered to complete repairs. One year later, the Town ordered the owners of the hotel to shut down, after the required repairs were not made.

The hotel was once again sold in 1967, this time to Arthur J. Kreizel under the operation of Sun and Surf Properties Inc. Ownership under A. J. Kreizel continued until 1977, when Leslie Paul and Francesca Eszterhazy purchased the hotel and named it the "Royal Park". Natives of Budapest, the Eszterhazy's added a touch of Hungarian flavor to the hotel, featuring Hungarian decor and cuisine.

The hotel was purchased in 1980 by Jeno and Anna Flohr, who converted the hotel units into condominiums, and in 1985 to Lanny A. Horwitz and Carl A. Sax of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. Horwitz and Sax renamed the hotel/condominium the "Palm Court" and hired the well known interior designer Melanie Kahane of New York. The Palm Court closed in 1987 after a lawsuit from condominium owners, but reopened in November of 1988 under the "Hotels of Distinction" Management Company. Presently, the hotel is owned by the Tollman-Hunley Hotel Group under the name "Chesterfield". The Palm Beach hotel is a member of a renowned chain of Chesterfield Hotels in Europe based in England.

## V. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

363 Cocoanut Row, the Chesterfield Hotel, is an important example of a Mediterranean Revival styled hotel structure. The hotel played an important role in the social scene in Palm Beach, serving as a vacation and seasonal residence for many of Palm Beach's socially elite. The restaurant and lounge of the Chesterfield Hotel continue to be popular night spots on the island.

## VI. CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

Section 16-38A of the Town of Palm Beach Landmarks Preservation Ordinance #2-84 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:

(a) "Exemplifies or reflects the broad cultural, political, economic or social history of the nation, state, county or town."

363 Cocoanut Row, the Chesterfield Hotel, has been an important part of the cultural, economic and social history of Palm Beach as a facet of Palm Beach society. From the 1920's on, the hotel became an increasingly popular destination for travellers looking for a small European style hotel linked to the local social scene. "Throughout the 1930's and 1940's, the hotel became a favorite of the "snowbirds" who flocked to Palm Beach for the sun and the chance to mingle with society superstars." ("Former Bag Lady Takes On a New Look," The Miami Herald. 25 May 1986.) Palm Beachers were drawn to the hotel by its elegance and intimate grace. Important social events were often held in the hotel's restaurant.

(c) "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 Chesterfield Hotel is an important example of a commercial structure designed in the Mediterranean Revival style in the 1920's. Reports claim the hotel was designed by Addison Mizner, but these claims have no foundation, and the structure is not included in scholarly listings of the architect's work. However, the Chesterfield Hotel is a reflection of the stylistic preference toward the Mediterranean Revival style in Palm Beach's commercial, civic, and domestic design in the early twentieth century.

## VII. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- "Chesterfield To Undergo Restoration," Palm Beach Daily News. 27 June 1990.
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- Hoffstot, Barbara D. Landmark Architecture of Palm Beach. Pittsburgh: Ober Park Associates, 1980.
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- "PB's Royal Park Hotel Sold," Palm Beach Daily News. 10 August 1980.
- Sanford, John "Palm Court Hotel Features 'New Picture In Old Frame,'" Palm Beach Daily News. 2 March 1986.
- Stenberg, Alan "Vineta Hotel Has New Owners," Palm Beach Daily News. 3 November 1977.
- Sugg, John "Deal Falls Through for Palm Court Hotel," Palm Beach Review. 12 July 1989.
- "Vineta Opens Formally Today," Palm Beach Daily News. 1 January 1941.
- "Vineta To Open With New Decor and Additions," Palm Beach Daily News. 20 December 1960.

#### VIII. SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archives of the Historical Society of Palm Beach County for access to various files and publications in its collection.

Palm Beach Preservation Foundation for access to various files and publications in its collection.

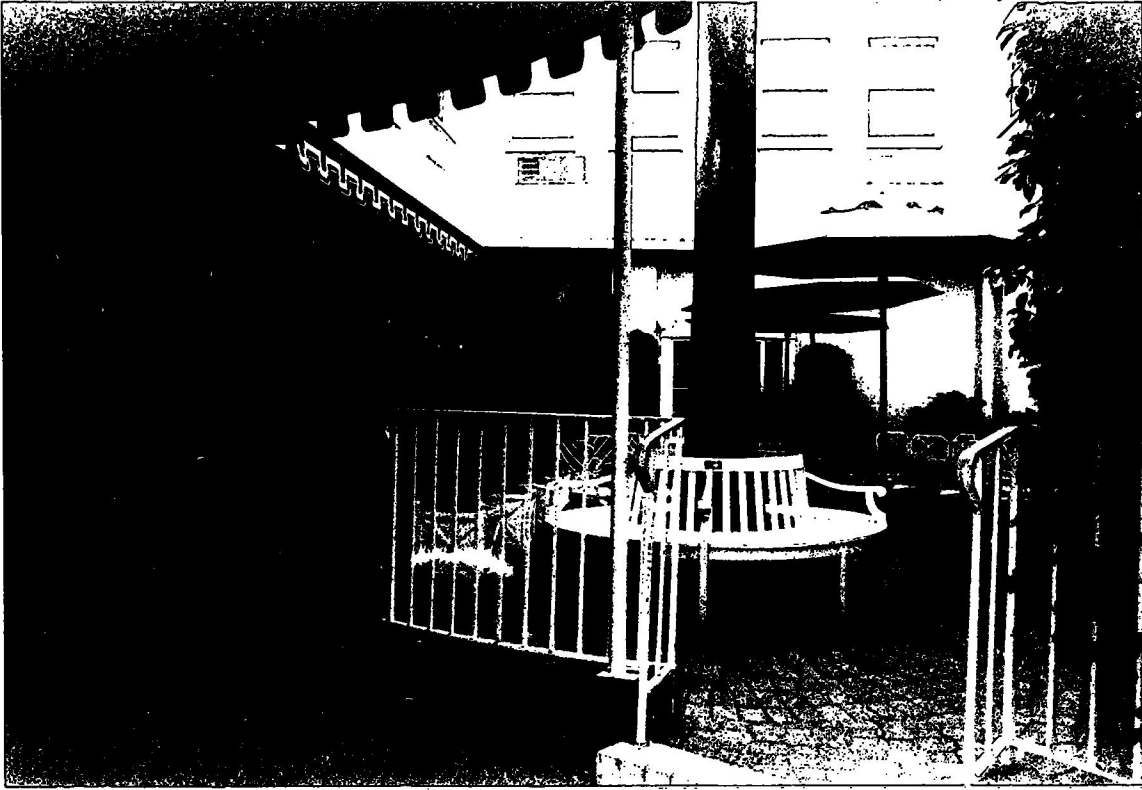
Town of Palm Beach Building and Zoning Department Records Office.

#### IX. LEGAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 1 through 6, inclusive, Block 6, of ROYAL PARK ADDITION TO THE TOWN OF PALM BEACH, FLORIDA, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 4, at Page 1, of the Public Records of Palm Beach County, Florida (ORB #6285, p. 1268).









RETURN TO:

APR-15-1991 12:30PM

363 Cocoanut  
91-100941

MOTHY M. FRANK

TOWN OF PALM BEACH  
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
P.O. BOX 2029  
PALM BEACH, FLORIDA 33480

ORB 6787 Pg 1351

CERTIFICATE OF NOTIFICATION OF DESIGNATION  
OF CERTAIN PROPERTIES AS LANDMARKS

Pursuant to the provisions of Ordinance No. 2-84 of the Town of Palm Beach, duly adopted on March 1, 1984, the Landmarks Preservation Commission of the Town of Palm Beach does hereby ratify and confirm that the properties or portions of properties in the Town of Palm Beach described herein, have been designated as Landmarks pursuant to the provisions of Ordinance 2-84 and are therefore subject to the provisions of said Ordinance. This Certificate ratifies the actions of the Town Council of the Town of Palm Beach at a meeting held January 8, 1991 at which the Town Council approved the designation of the properties described herein as Landmarks pursuant to the provisions of the Ordinance above-referenced.

The properties, or portions thereof, which have been designated as Landmarks are described as follows:

1. 300 El Brillo Way, Palm Beach, Florida 33480

Property Owner: R.D. Huntington

Tax Folio Number: 50-43-43-27-07-000-0010

Legal Description: (As below)

LOTS A & B, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT OF SURVEY ENTITLED "RESUBDIVISION OF LOTS 30 AND 31, EL BRAVO PARK, IN SECTIONS 26 AND 27, TOWNSHIP 43 SOUTH, RANGE 43 EAST, IN PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA", THE PLAT OF SAID RESUBDIVISION HAVING BEEN FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT IN AND FOR PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA, ON THE 31ST DAY OF DECEMBER, 1935, IN

Note to File: Property designated  
@ 11/16/90 LPC Mtg., excluding  
courtyard & entryway.

But Resolution & County document  
filed for entire property, as per  
TC action. This is correct per  
TMF.