

228 Seaspray Avenue



DESIGNATION REPORT

January 18, 2017

Landmark Preservation Commission

Palm Beach, Florida

DESIGNATION REPORT

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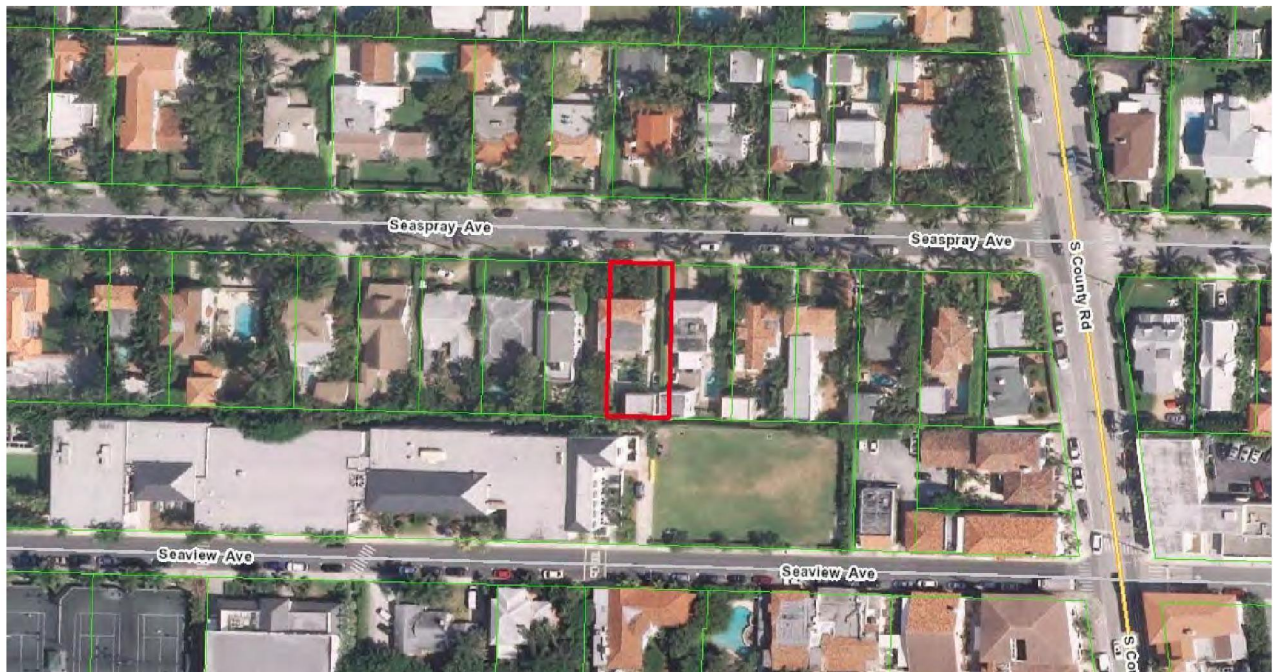
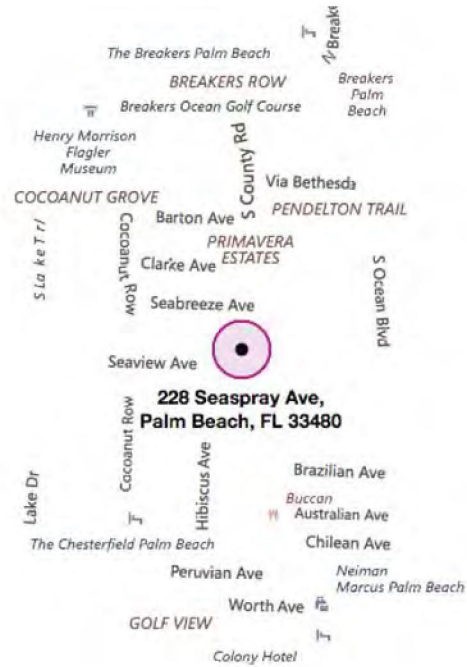
Report produced by Murphy Stillings, LLC

I. General Information

Location:	228 Seaspray Avenue Palm Beach, Florida
Date of Construction:	1925
First Owner:	Edward R. Tolfree
Current Owner:	Gergana and Zachary Shipley
Builder/Contractor:	City Builders Realty Company
Present Use:	Residential
Present Zoning:	RB
Palm Beach County Tax Folio Number:	50434322070004370
Current Legal Description:	Poinciana Park and Second Addition Lots 437 & 439

II. Location Map

228 Seaspray Avenue



III. Architectural Information

The single-family residence located at 228 Seaspray Avenue is an attractive example of the Mediterranean Revival style of architecture designed and built by City Builder's Realty Company. The house was constructed in 1926 during the height of Palm Beach's housing boom and sits on a lot on the south side of Seaspray Avenue in the heart of the Poinciana Park subdivision.

Mediterranean Revival style architecture is an eclectic design style that was inspired by the architecture of countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, particularly Spain, Italy, France and North Africa. Buildings of this style often have asymmetrical massing and fenestration, balconies, arched openings, ornate cast-stone elements, decorative ironwork and clay barrel tile roofs. The style was extremely popular throughout South Florida during the 1920's building boom.



North Facade

228 Seaspray Avenue is a three-bay wide, two-story dwelling constructed of wood and hollow clay tile covered with rough stucco. The roof has a slight eave overhang covered with red clay barrel tiles and carved wood brackets below. The focal point of the house is the very ornate stone door surround featuring Corinthian pilasters, classical carved designs and a cornice topped

with urns and a cartouche.¹ The substantial arched and paneled front door and the decorative metal sconces enhance the Mediterranean Revival composition of the front entryway. Flanking the center entryway are arched multi-light French doors with full-height louvered shutters. Large arched multi-light casement windows are featured on the first floor of the east and west facades. Other appealing features of the house include decorative metalwork, an exterior chimney on the east wall and an asymmetrical fenestration of six-over-one double hung sash windows throughout the house.²



Entrance

Centered along the sidewalk in front of the house is an ornamental metal front entry gate. Along the east side of the dwelling is a narrow driveway leading to a simple flat-roof, two-story, garage apartment that was constructed along with the main house in 1926.³ A swimming pool was added to the property in 2008.

¹ There is a similar carved motif around the living room's fireplace.

² Christine Davis, *Palm Beach Daily News*, 22 May 2008. Susan and Tom Turner renovated the house from 2007-2009. At that time the full-height louvered shutters were added, the double-hung sash windows were replaced with hurricane impact windows, the loggia on the rear was slightly altered and there were numerous interior alterations. A photo from 2007 also awning windows on the second story front façade, small metal balconies in front of the arched French doors and a very ornate wood screen door at the center entry.

³ The garage doors were originally tilt-up doors. They were replaced with overhead garage doors to match. Clay barrel tiles were added to the parapet of the garage apartment. The west bay of the garage was turned into a cabana after the pool was added.

IV. Historical Information

The house at 228 Seaspray Avenue is located in the Poinciana Park Subdivision. Poinciana Park was platted and largely developed by Oscar A. Jose and his City Builders Realty Company. Jose created Poinciana Park by purchasing tracts of land south of the Breakers and the Royal Poinciana Hotel from Lake Worth to the Atlantic Ocean. This area became the “Sea” streets with Sea Breeze platted in 1914 followed by Sea Spray in 1917 and the north side of Sea View in 1923.⁴ A brochure designed and distributed by City Builders Realty Company titled “Poinciana Park, The Preferred Location,” goes into great detail about the many advantages of wintering in Palm Beach and the benefits of owning a house in centrally located Poinciana Park, close to all of the town’s amenities but removed from the “rush and bustle of the hotel center.”⁵

Oscar Jose was one of the early developers to recognize the potential in Palm Beach for building something other than a grand estate or spending the season at a hotel. Poinciana Park was an attempt to make Palm Beach more family oriented and the Palm Beach life-style more accessible to the “upper-middle class.”⁶ In addition to building, selling and leasing properties, City Builders Realty Company sold many lots in Poinciana Park to individual buyers and other developers. Lot sales came with stipulations regarding the quality of houses to be built so that no “cheap” houses could be built in Poinciana Park.⁷

As early as 1919, City Builder’s had difficulty keeping up with the housing demand. Houses were selling quickly and there were not enough rental properties to keep up with all of the seasonal requests. Despite this demand,

⁴ Sea Breeze, Sea Spray and Sea View were the original spellings of the Poinciana Park Avenues. A January 28, 1917 City Builders Realty Company advertisement in the Palm Beach Post stated, “We have platted a new addition to Poinciana Park and we are advertising for a name for the new street. \$10.00 for an acceptable name.” The street was named Sea Spray Avenue.

⁵ “Poinciana Park, The Preferred Location,” Brochure distributed by City Builders Realty. No Date. Located in the Poinciana Park file at the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach. Ownership or seasonal rental of a house in Poinciana Park included a membership in the Sea Spray Beach Club. Located on the ocean side of South Ocean Boulevard and Seaspray Avenue, the fashionable club provided members with an Olympic-sized salt water pool, tennis courts, changing rooms, a solarium, and popular dining facilities. They had sports programs for children and Oscar Jose’s son, who had been a boxing champion, taught John F. Kennedy to box at the Sea Spray Beach Club.⁵ Beginning in 1929, Oscar Jose recognized that many residents of Poinciana Park were becoming year round residents rather than just seasonal occupants so they opened the Sea Spray Beach Club as the “Summer Bath Club” for their members who stayed in town during the summer months.⁵

⁶ “Preservationist’s Home Gets Landmarks’ OK,” Palm Beach Daily News, 22 January 1998.

⁷ Advertisement in Palm Beach Post.

City Builders did not construct cookie-cutter houses. Each house was unique and of high quality. An August 4, 1919 Palm Beach Post article stated,

“With six houses underway now, the City Builders Realty Company will at once start seven more houses in Poinciana Park. Each of the houses will vary in style of construction in order to avoid monotony. Some of the houses are for clients who have bought lots; others will be available for sale or rental.”

Many of the earlier houses were bungalows or a variation of the Colonial Revival style, including a number of Dutch Colonial Revival style houses. At the time, the houses were called “cottages” and residents were considered part of the “cottage colony.” In the 1920s, City Builders Realty Company began building more Mediterranean Revival style houses as the popularity of the style grew rapidly in Palm Beach.

The first owners of 228 Seaspray Avenue were Mr. and Mrs. Edward Rogers (E.R.) Tolfree. Newspaper articles indicate that Mr. E.R. Tolfree worked in New York and came to Palm Beach for long stays during the season. He was also one of the original stockholders of the Mizner Development Corporation in Boca Raton. Mrs. Tolfree stayed in Palm Beach during the season and was very involved with the Women’s Guild at Bethesda-by-the-Sea.⁸ They had other residences in New York City and Brookhaven, Long Island. Mrs. Tolfree’s obituary provides interesting information about the first owner of 228 Seaspray Avenue:

“Mrs. Edward Rogers Tolfree for many years a winter resident of Palm Beach died August 27, 1944. Under her maiden name of Aline Gorren, Mrs. Tolfree was a well-known writer at the turn of the century and one of her books “Anglo-Saxons and Others” was widely read and quoted. She was an editorial writer for Scribners and Century magazines. Educated abroad she spoke several languages and did a number of translations. Mrs. Tolfree was also an accomplished pianist and had studied in Rome under Sgambata. Mrs. Tolfree’s northern home was Tangier House at Brookhaven, Long Island, New York and her resort residence was at 228 Sea Spray Avenue. She was an active worker in the Church

⁸ Mrs. Tolfree was President of the Women’s Guild of Bethesda-By-The-Sea in the early 1930s. She was also involved in the Animal Rescue League and was a avid bridge player.

of Bethesda-by-the-Sea and was a member of the Cosmopolitan Club in New York. She is survived by her husband.”

In December of 1944, shortly after Mrs. Tolfree’s death, E.R. Tolfree sold 228 Seaspray Avenue to Mr. and Mrs. G. E. Johnson for \$19,050. The current owners, Gergana and Zachary Shipley, purchased 228 Seaspray Avenue in 2010 and have been excellent stewards of the historic property.

V. Builders Biography

City Builders Realty Company

One of the earliest companies to successfully construct and promote real estate development in the Town of Palm Beach was the Indianapolis based City Builders Realty Company headed by Oscar A. Jose. In 1914, City Builders Realty Company became part of a growing number of successful Midwestern firms who opened offices in South Florida prior to the 1920s Boom Time Era. Indiana contemporaries of Jose included City of Hollywood developer Joseph Young and Miami Beach developer Carl Fisher. These astute businessmen were instrumental in promoting South Florida as a desirable place to reside.

Beginning in 1914, City Builders Realty Company purchased tracts of land from Palm Beach pioneers including William Lanehart, Elisha Dimick, Frederick Robert, Henry Maddock, H.F. Hammon, E.M. Brelsford and Harvey Geer.⁹ These combined parcels, renamed Poinciana Park by Jose, extended from Lake Worth to the Atlantic Ocean south of the Royal Poinciana Hotel and the Breakers Hotel. The streets were named Sea Breeze Avenue, Sea Spray Avenue and Sea View Avenue, and included 820 lots, though most properties encompassed three or four of the twenty-five foot wide lots. The Company provided water, electric and sewer connections, sidewalks and lush landscaping. In the 1910s, houses were marketed as complete packages for families, fully furnished for a seasonal residence, however, by the 1920s they were being marketed for both seasonal and permanent residence. Additional amenities included the private Sea Spray Beach Club, nearby public and private schools, dockage for private yachts and attractive term financing for

⁹ Information found in the Poinciana Park file at the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach. The paper lists land title searches of properties in Poinciana Park.

those who desired to finance their house. Commercial buildings were prohibited from the Poinciana Park Subdivision.

City Builders Realty Company designed and constructed a number of the houses in Poinciana Park. The company also marketed lots to other Palm Beach builders and architects who maintained the size, scale and quality of residences as originally established within the subdivision. Designed to impress an upscale market of both the permanent homebuyers and those interested in leasing seasonal Palm Beach residences, City Builders Realty Company made a lasting impression on Palm Beach architecture and lifestyle.

IV. Statement of Significance

The residence located at 228 Seaspray Avenue was designed and constructed by City Builder's Realty Company at the height of the South Florida Land Boom. The elaborate entryway, multi-light arched openings and mixed fenestration are distinguishing Mediterranean Revival style features of this house.

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."

The house located at 228 Seaspray Avenue reflects the broad cultural and economic history of the Town of Palm Beach. Seaspray Avenue is part of the Poinciana Park subdivision that was one of the Island's first successful large residential developments. Poinciana Park was specifically aimed at the upper middle class family who desired either a Palm Beach winter residence or a permanent year round residence. While Palm Beach's reputation rested upon the individual grand estates and fashionable hotels, the success of Poinciana Park helped establish another dimension to the development of Palm Beach. The house is also important because it helps maintain the historic fabric of

Seaspray Avenue, the Sea Streets, and the development of the town during the 1920's. Therefore 228 Seaspray Avenue deserves protection under criterion (1) of the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance.

(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 located at 228 Seaspray Avenue is a very good example of the smaller-scale Mediterranean Revival style of architecture designed and constructed in 1926. The focal point of the house is the very ornate stone door surround featuring Corinthian pilasters, classical carved designs and a cornice topped with urns and a cartouche. The substantial arched and paneled front door and the decorative metal sconces enhance the Mediterranean Revival composition of the front entryway. Other appealing features of the house include arched multi-light French doors flanked by full-height louvered shutters, and exterior chimney on the east wall, a mixed fenestration of arched casement windows and six-over-one double hung sash windows and decorative metalwork. Therefore 228 Seaspray Avenue deserves protection under criterion (3) of the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance.

VIII. Selected Bibliography

Curl, Donald W. Palm Beach County: An Illustrated History. Northridge, California: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1987.

The Historical Society of Palm Beach County. Historical and Architectural Files; Palm Beach County History Online

The Palm Beach Daily News. Archived Articles Online

The Palm Beach Post. Archived Articles Online

The Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach. Files on Poinciana Park; 228 Seaspray Avenue file

Sanborn Insurance Map of Palm Beach. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1919 and 1926. City of West Palm Beach Public Library, Florida Room.

Town of Palm Beach. Building Permits, 1919– 2016.

West Palm Beach City Directories. Asheville, NC: Florida-Piedmont Directory Company, 1916 -1986. These city directories included Town of Palm Beach directories and information on Palm Beach residents.

IX. Florida Master Site File Form



HISTORICAL STRUCTURE FORM

Electronic Version 1.1.0

Site # PB06751
 Recorder # Jane S. Day
 Field Date 10/6/2010
 Form Date 10/19/2010
 Form No 201010
 Form No = Field Date (YYYYMM)

First Site Form Recorded for this Site? NO

GENERAL INFORMATION

Site Name (address if none) 228 Seaspray Land Trust, House Multiple Listing (DHR only) _____
 Other Names _____ >> _____
 Survey or Project Name Palm Beach Historic Sites Survey, Phase V Survey# _____
 National Register Category Building(s)

LOCATION & IDENTIFICATION

Address
 Street No. Direction Street Name Street Type Direction Suffix
228 _____ Seaspray Avenue _____

Cross Streets (nearest/ between) Cocoanut Row & S. County Rd.
 City / Town (within 3 miles) Town of Palm Beach In Current City Limits? YES
 County Palm Beach Tax Parcel#(s) 50-43-43-22-07-000-4370
 Subdivision Name Poinciana park, 2nd Add Block _____ Lot 437, 439
 Ownership Private-Corporate-for Profit
 Name of Public Tract (e.g., park) _____
 Route to (especially if no street address) On the south side of Seaspray Ave. between Cocoanut Row and S. County Rd.

MAPPING

USGS 7.5' Map Name _____ Publication Date _____ >> PAIM BEACH, 1983
 Township: _____ Range: _____ Section: _____ 1/4 section: _____ >> 438 ; 43E ; 22 ; UNSP
 Irregular Section Name: _____
 Landgrant _____
 UTM: Zone _____ Easting _____ Northing _____
 Plat or Other Map (map's name, location) _____

DESCRIPTION

Style Mediterranean Revival Other Style _____
 Exterior Plan Irregular Other Exterior Plan _____
 Number of Stories 2
 Structural System(s) _____ >> Wood frame
 Other Structural System(s) hollow clay tile
 Foundation Type(s) _____ >> Continuous
 Other Foundation Types _____
 Foundation Material(s) _____ >> Concrete Block
 Other Foundation Material(s) _____
 Exterior Fabric(s) _____ >> Stucco
 Other Exterior Fabric(s) _____
 Roof Type(s) _____ >> Flat
 Other Roof Type(s) hip
 Roof Material(s) _____ >> Tar & gravel
 Other Roof Material(s) spanish tile
 Roof Secondary Structure(s) (dormers etc) _____ >> _____
 Other Roof Secondary Structure(s) _____
 Number of Chimneys 1
 Chimney Material Brick
 Other Chimney Material(s) stucco on exterior
 Chimney Location(s) east exterior wall

Page 1 of 3

HISTORICAL STRUCTURE FORM

8FB06751

DESCRIPTION (continued)

Window Descriptions: 6/1 DHS, French Doors

Main Entrance Description (stylistic details) Centered on the north facade with an elaborate cast stone door surround

Porches: \$open 2 \$closed \$incised Location(s) (2) small terraces - n

Porch Roof Type(s)

Exterior Ornament cast stone, exposed rafters

Interior Plan Unknown

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 1925

Architect (last name first): unknown

Builder (last name first): City Builders Realty Co.

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; 1925;

Other Structure Uses

Ownership History (especially original owner, dates, profession, etc.)

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Methods >> Informal inspection

Other research methods

SURVEYOR'S EVALUATION OF SITE

Potentially Eligible for a Local Register? INSUFF. INFO Name of Local Register if Eligible: Palm Beach Landmarks

Individually Eligible for National Register? INSUFF. INFO

Potential Contributor to NR District? INSUFF. INFO

Area(s) of historical significance >> Architecture

Other Historical Associations

Explanation of Evaluation (required) The elaborate doorway distinguishes this Mediterranean Revival style house from others on the street. It was built by one of the early developers of the area and is worthy of further study.

HISTORICAL STRUCTURE FORM

8PB06751

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 B.
Recorder Address / Phone 728 Granada Dr., Boca Raton, FL 33432 561-362-4473
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: Electronic Form Used: Form Type Code: Form Quality Ranking: Form Status Code: Supplement Information Status: Supplement File Status: Form Comments: _____ _____ _____	SHPO's Evaluation of Resource Date _____ FMSF Staffer: Computer Entry Date:
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REQUIRED PAPER ATTACHMENTS

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