

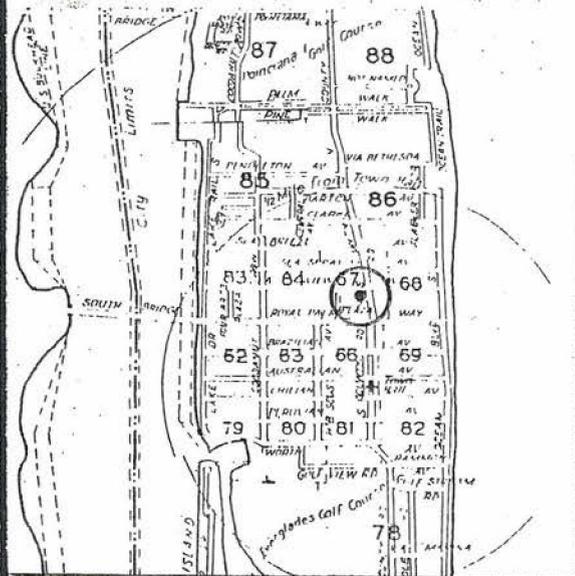
Dr. Carl Feiss Reports

For Properties In

"Phipps Plaza Historic District"



# PLAZA BUILDING





# GENERAL INFORMATION

## NAME OF STRUCTURE

Plaza Building

## ADDRESS OF STRUCTURE

240-246 South County Road  
Palm Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida  
33480

## LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Plat of the Phipps Plaza  
Lot A, less W. 3.8 ft.

## PRESENT OWNER

*Not owner?*  
Broadham Equities, Inc.  
11 East 36th street  
New York, New York, 10016

*Pevari-Marix  
% Mrs Nigel T. Marix  
247 So County Rd  
P.B. 33480*

## ARCHITECT

Addison Mizner

## DATE OF CONSTRUCTION

1924

## FUNCTION

Commercial

## ZONING

C-A Commercial

## PREVIOUS SURVEYS

NRHP Inventory 1972

## Plaza Building

### Architectural Description

This commercial structure fronting on South County Road incorporates a variety of architectural stylistic tendencies. The entrance is classical in form with engaged Doric columns and a projecting pediment, entirely executed in cut coral stone. The arched opening beyond is also of cut coral.

The structure varies between two and three stories in height and is defined by several roof planes which allow the building to be expressed as several smaller scale masses. The entire composition, however, is at the street scale relating well to both south county road at the east and the Phipps Plaza side at the west. A one story arcade at the at the central portion of the east facade has been removed but the ground floor arcade at the Phipps Plaza facade is still existing. The Phipps Plaza facade of the Plaza Building is architecturally consistent with the adjacent structures of the plaza thus creating a unified composition between separate structures. This concept produces a very pleasant streetscape.

The exterior fabric of the building is white stucco which contrasts with the barrel tile hipped and gabled roofs. The exposed roof rafters and soffits are of pecky cypress, typical of much of the Spanish/Mediterranean style in Palm Beach.

The straight forward expression is highlighted by arched window forms located at various locations on the facade and also by ornamental detailing at the second level balconies. Several of the balcony railings are wrought iron grillework while others have stucco end piers with a clay tile infill in a diamond pattern.

A major design device is the spiral staircase to the second

## Plaza Building

### Architectural Description

level located at the exterior of the structure on the south facade. The concrete stair replaces the original stair which was a straight run down the side of the building. The stair as it is today lends a new focal point of interest to the street and Phipps Plaza.

Fenestration varies from wood casement and french doors at the second level to storefront glazing at the first level. The general pattern seems to be close to the original design, although the expression of individual units today is not as ornate.

## Plaza Building

### Architectural Analysis

The Plaza Building, 240-246 South County Road, by architect Addison Mizner was constructed in 1924 as a commercial structure and exists today serving the same function. Although the exterior fabric of the building has remained substantially unchanged over the years, there have been two significant alterations to the facade. A covered arcade at the center of the building along South County Road has been removed, thus eliminating the focal element which not only reinforced the street facade but also denoted entry to the via leading through the structure to Phipps Plaza beyond. Also, the stairway at the south facade has been altered from the original straight run to a spiral stair. Unlike the first alteration, this new stair actually adds a focal element to the south facade.

The architectural expression of this structure is straight forward but the massing and detailing add enough variety to create a composition of interest. This structure can be compared to another commercial structure by Addison Mizner, at 240 Worth Avenue, which is also a straight forward architectural expression but with very understated detailing. The Plaza Building is interesting in both concept and execution.

The siting of the Plaza Building is also an important consideration because it, along with the structure at 266 South County Road, form the architectural entry to Phipps Plaza. For this reason, and due to the fact that the Plaza Building reacts successfully to both South County Road and Phipps Plaza, two distinctly different architectural environments, it takes on additional importance. Its architectural merits combined with its siting make it very significant to the Town of Palm Beach.

## Plaza Building

### Architectural Analysis - memo to the Landmarks Commission

Phipps Plaza is an architectural unity with the exception of numbers 224 and 228. All other structures, both commercial and residential or mixed in use are consistently Medeterranean in character and with the exception of number 222 all have similar tile roofs and stucco walls. They all fit together.

However, none of the individual buildings is better than the total ensemble which adds up to a large architectural expression which would be seriously damaged by the removal of any of the Medeterranean type structures. Individually these structures vary in design quality if they can be judged individually. In attempting to do so, in this case, comparing several of these buildings with others of similar type in Palm Beach, some of them would score down the scale. For instance, individual Phipps Plaza commercial buildings do not compare favorably with Mizners 325-353 Worth Avenue. However much of the Plaza as a whole, except for the quality of its landscaping, compares most favorably with Via Mizner or Via Parigi.

Therefore, the Plaza as a whole, as described in the 1971 State of Florida Master Site File is recommended for Landmark listing with all the property numbers grouped accordingly as part of a landmark. This should add materially to the strenght of the nomination.

The Plaza Building on South County Road is the other side of the same coin. It should not be listed separately any more than the front and rear of the same building anywhere are listed separately as two buildings.

270 S COUNTY



# GENERAL INFORMATION

## NAME OF STRUCTURE

270 South County Road

## ADDRESS OF STRUCTURE

270 South County Road  
Palm Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida  
33480

## LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Plat of Phipps Plaza addition to the Town of Palm  
Beach as in Plat Book 20, page 72, 22-43-43 Lot K

## PRESENT OWNER

270 South County Trust  
Paul L. Maddock Jr. Trs.  
c/o 250 South County Road  
Palm Beach, Florida, 33480

## ARCHITECT

not known

## DATE OF CONSTRUCTION

1920's

## FUNCTION

Commercial

## ZONING

C-A Commercial

## PREVIOUS SURVEYS

## Architectural Description

270 South County Road

This structure at 270 South County Road stands free between two much more richly articulated commercial structures in one of the most consistent and architecturally important areas of Palm Beach. This building is extremely simple in its outward appearance, being expressed as a stucco mass with two projecting hipped dormers at the roof level which is in turn a gable with spanish barrel tile as a finish surface.

The street facade of the structure, at the ground level, has two commercial entry ways, one rectangular in form and the other arched. Between these two entry elements is a fixed glass storefront display window. Each entry door is defined by articulated quoins with the arched opening having a keystone central element. The second level fenestration consists of symmetrical rectangular windows with the same type of decorative treatments as on the first level.

The highlight of decoration on the structure is a carved wood roof above the display window at the first level street facade. Surrounding the display window is decorative tile, which is repeated in use at a built-in bench also at the front facade.

Applied decoration is more prominent on the north facade which opens off of a small alley which acts as an entry to an adjacent property. This facade has at the ground level a series of arched window openings forming an arcade which gives a rhythm to the structure which is not found on the County Road facade. Also, this facade has its central bay defined by decorative columns at the base of the arched openings. It is at this elevation that the dormers are also most prominent as defining elements at the edges of the building extending up past the cast stone cornice line.

It is quite possible that at one time the north facade of this structure was the primary facade of the building with the main entry being located within the more articulated central bay.

In many ways detailing on this structure is almost nonexistent, but the simplicity of expression should not detract from the role this building plays as an architectural element along this section of South County Road.

## Architectural Analysis

270 South County Road

This commercial building of the 1920's is an element of one of the architecturally most unified areas of streetfront on South County Road. The very simple gable end of the structure that fronts South County Road is fit between two much more prominent structures and therefore reads as an infill element rather than a separately articulated building. The building is, however, separated from the adjacent structures by small scale alley-ways which break up the streetfront into related architectural elements.

Architecturally, this structure is very plain and can not compete with the more expressive buildings that surround it. Visual interest is derived wholly from the cantilevered, wood bracketed, roof over part of the street level facade. The ornate carvings on this element, in conjunction with decorative tiles at the window surrounds and at a near-by built-in bench, represent the only visual interest at the street facade.

The mass of this structure fits very well with the fabric of the immediate area and the detailing of consistent materials lends a strong sense of continuity to the streetscape.

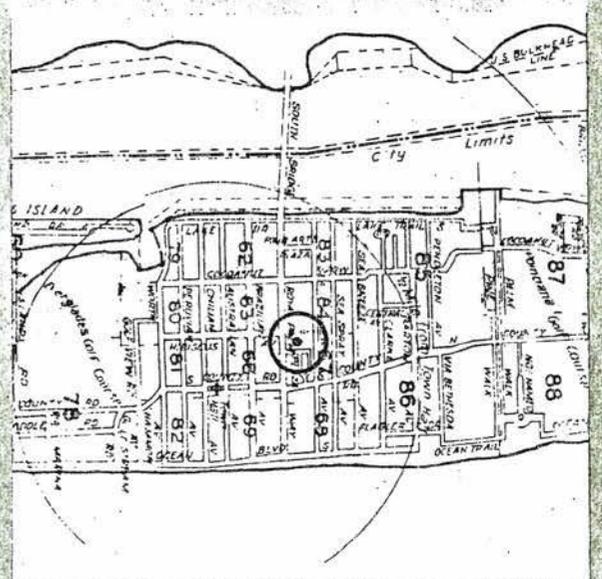
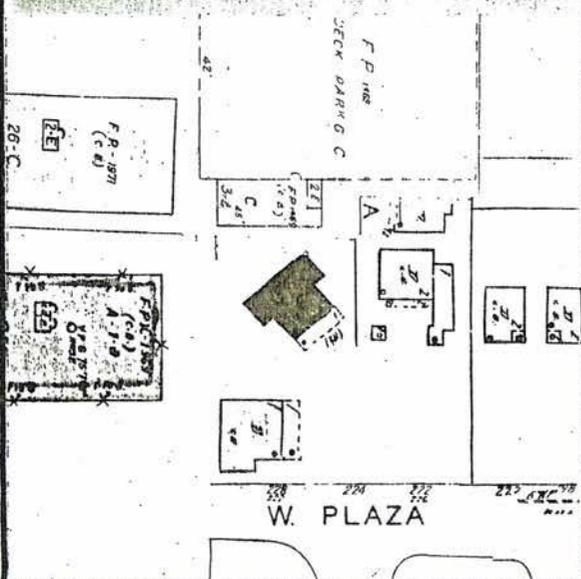
By far the most interesting facade of this structure faces north, onto a small entry alley to no. 264 South County Road. This elevation is characterized by arched window openings at the ground level with rectangular fenestration above. The center section of the facade has ornamented columns defining a small area within an otherwise simple composition. Adding to the symmetry of this facade are dormers at both ends of the building rising up above the roof level at the cornice line.

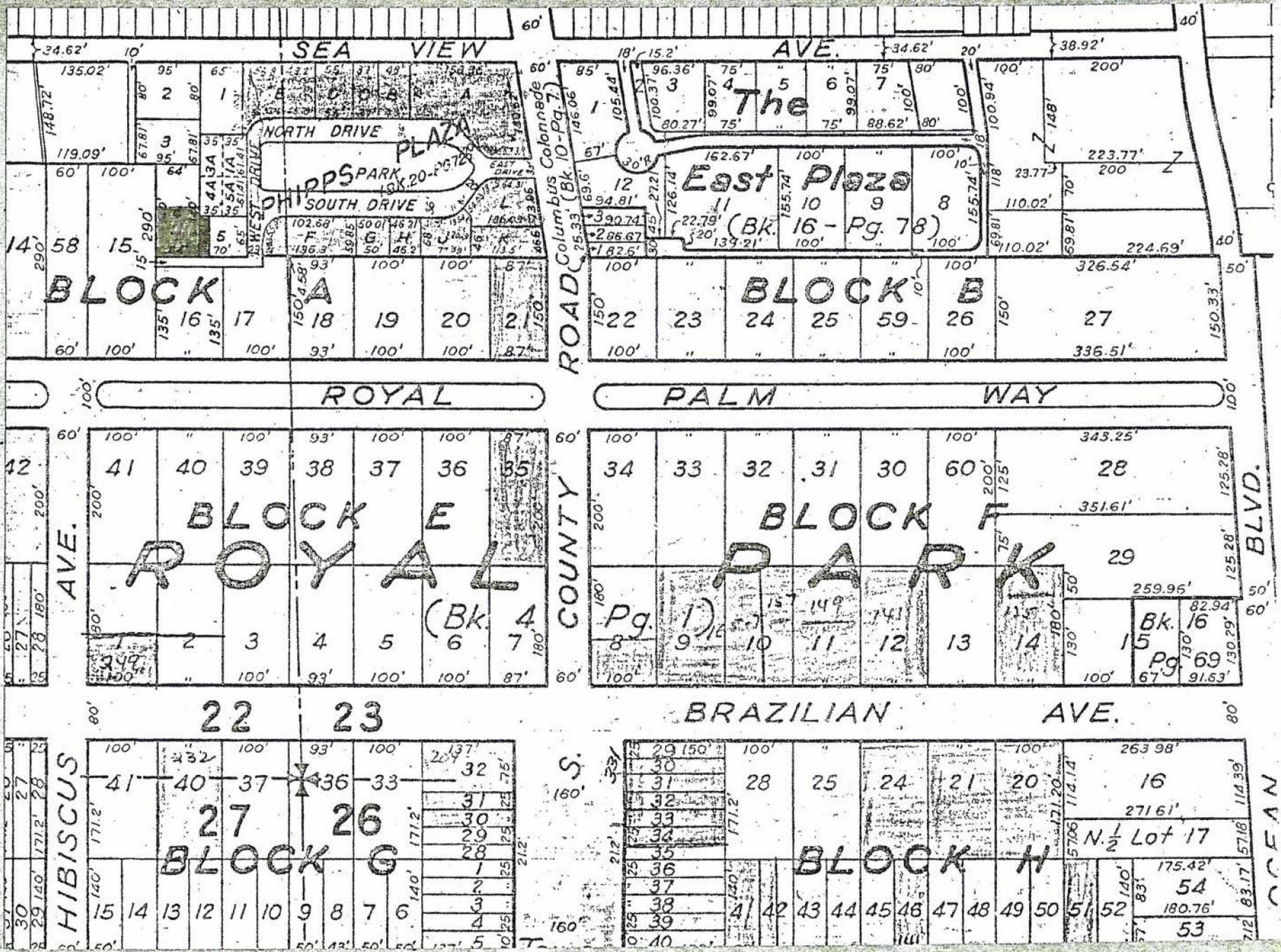
It would appear that at one time this elevation may have been the primary elevation of the structure with the main entry defined in the more elaborate center section.

The structure today, although crowded on its site and very undistinguished in appearance, is a strong element as part of the scene in a very important architectural neighborhood of Palm Beach.



# 224 PHIPPS PLAZA





# GENERAL INFORMATION

## NAME OF STRUCTURE

224 Phipps Plaza

## ADDRESS OF STRUCTURE

224 Phipps Plaza  
Palm Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida  
33480

## LEGAL DESCRIPTION

The Plaza Addition to Palm Beach as in Plat Book 18, p. 62  
22 and 23-43-43 S. 75 ft. Lot 4 and W. 10 ft. Lot 5 and  
W. 74 ft. of pvt. rd. less triangular strip of NW corner.

## PRESENT OWNER

Byron L. Ramsing  
224 Phipps Plaza  
Palm Beach, Florida, 33480

## ARCHITECT

Howard Major

## DATE OF CONSTRUCTION

1939

## FUNCTION

Private Residence

## ZONING

C-A Commercial

## PREVIOUS SURVEYS

224 Phipps Plaza

### Architectural Description

This structure at 224 Phipps Plaza is a one story wood frame building raised off the ground with horizontal clapboard siding and an asphalt shingle hipped roof which extends over a screened veranda. In effect this is simply a tropical cottage reacting to the climatic influences of south Florida.

Fenestration is extremely simple and totally functional with no applied ornament. The screened veranda at the front of the structure is, in effect, an outdoor room which enlarges the usable space by a significant amount. Decorative detailing is found only at the screened veranda, and is in the form of a wooden lintel above the entry door and wood railing at the perimeter of the veranda. A slight Chinese flavor may be seen in these details but the link is not strong and certainly no conclusions of Chinese influence should be drawn.

### Architectural Analysis

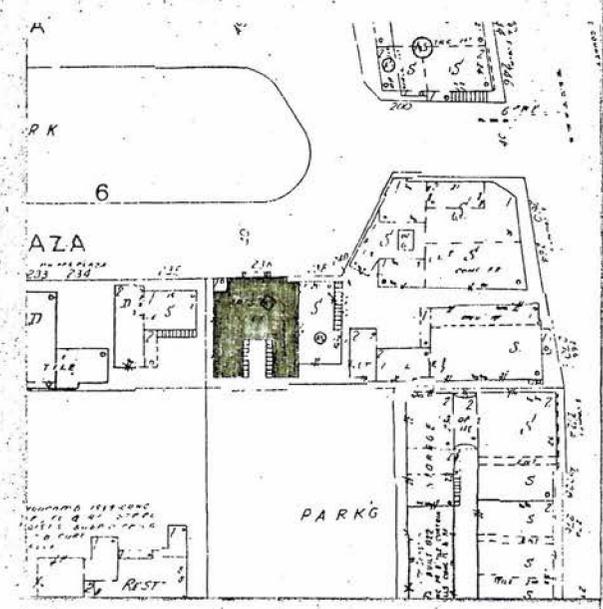
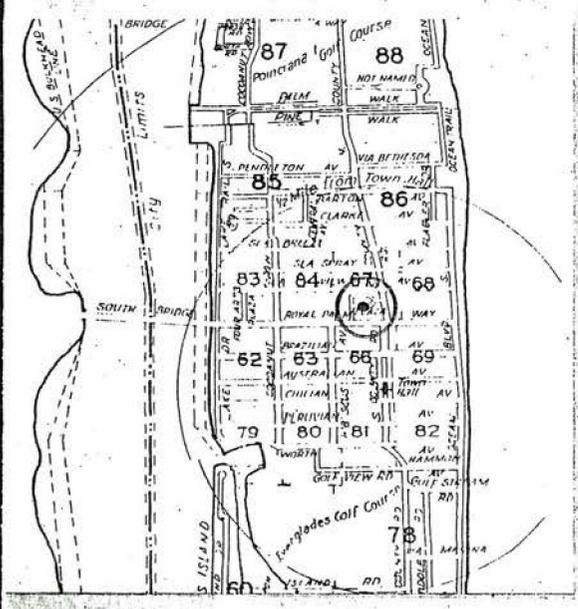
This one story wood frame structure sits well back off on Phipps Plaza and, in a sense, does not really belong to the Plaza. At the north and south boundaries of the Plaza the buildings meet the street and focus toward the landscaped park at the center. The buildings at the west end of the Plaza, however, are detached single units and are buffered from the plaza by a densely planted greenspace.

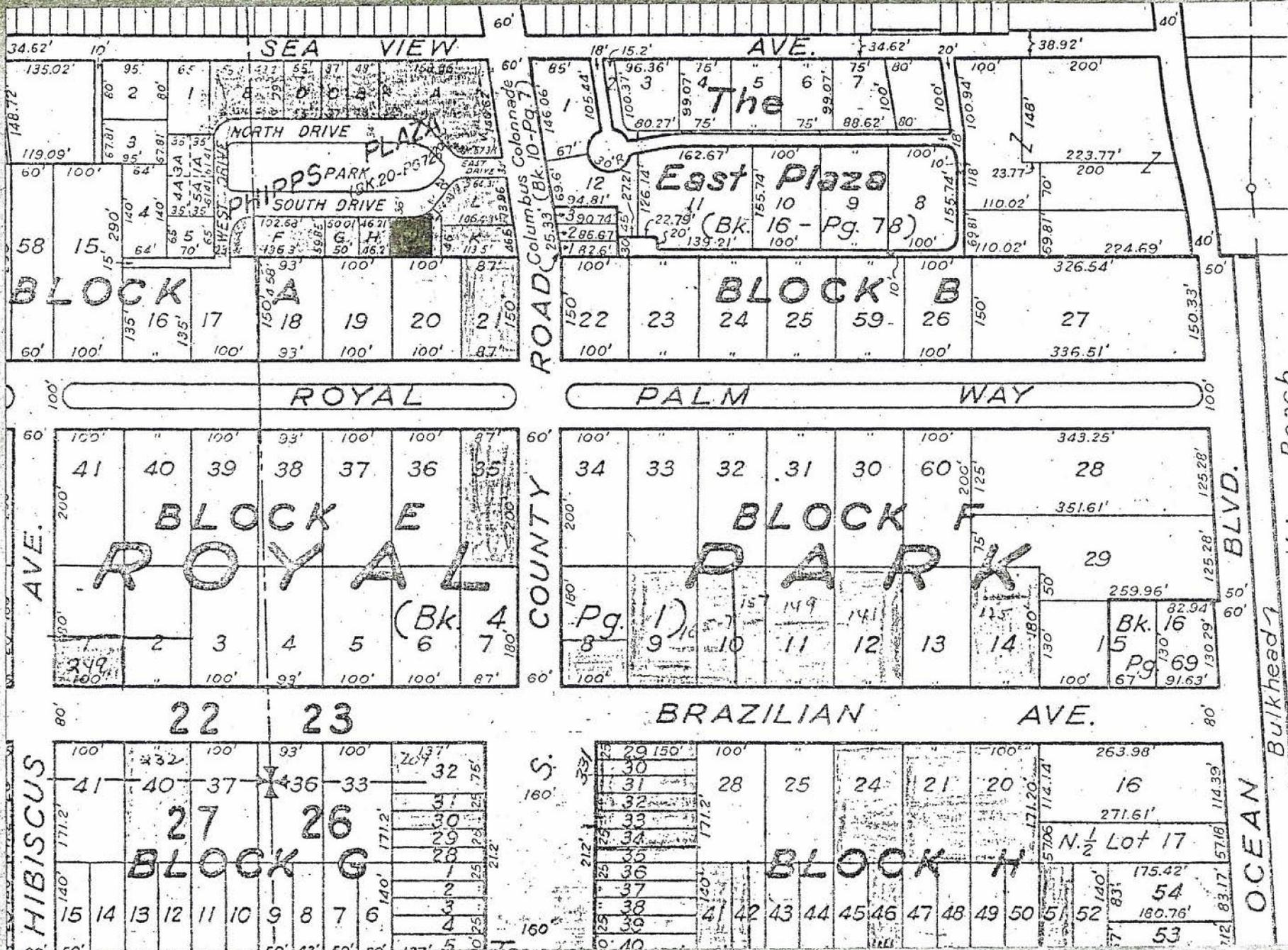
The building is simple and functional, relating somewhat to the first wood frame structures on the island. Its architectural expression is straightforward, and the only hint of decorative detailing is at the lintel of the door to the screen porch and on the wood railing at the same location.

The buildings mass, organization, expression and detailing do not appear to be significant in themselves. Thus, it seems that the most important element of this structure is its recognition of the south Florida environment and its indigenous character.

Architecturally this building and its similar neighbors do not relate to Phipps Plaza in materials, scale or design. They add very little to the quality of the Plaza and in fact detract from the sense of unity of the rest of the Plaza by failing to provide a continuity of building character connecting the north and south sides of the Plaza on its west. A building such as this is now out of context and were it worth the expense, could be moved to a more appropriate setting to allow for a better architectural closing of the Plaza.

# 236 PHIPPS PLAZA





# GENERAL INFORMATION

## NAME OF STRUCTURE

236 Phipps Plaza

## ADDRESS OF STRUCTURE

236 Phipps Plaza  
Palm Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida 33480

## LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Plat of Phipps Plaza, W. 50.86 feet of Lot J  
Addition to Palm Beach as in PB 20, P. 72 22-43-43

## PRESENT OWNER

Ms. Irene Brooks  
150 E. 61st Street  
New York, N.Y. 10021

## ARCHITECT

Wyeth, King & Johnson

## DATE OF CONSTRUCTION

1920's

## FUNCTION

Multi-family residence (townhouse)

## ZONING

C-A Commercial

## PREVIOUS SURVEYS

NRMP 1971, Grunke-Hoffstot

236 Phipps Plaza

### Architectural Description

Mediterranean in style, this townhouse residence is a straightforward architectural statement by architects Wyeth, King and Johnson. The structure is part of an attached series of structures which, although built at the same time in similar styles, are quite different in their architectural composition. It must be emphasized that each unit acts as an integral part of the whole and this reinforces the concept that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

236 Phipps Plaza is located at the southeast corner of the plaza with its principle elevation facing north. Entry to the two story H-shaped stucco structure is through a simple arch and a pair of wrought iron gates. From the partially enclosed and covered court are the entries to the 1st level residences and stairs to the second level.

The structure is divided into three bays with the center bay being slightly recessed. Within the center bay, at the first level is the arched entry opening and at the second level is a balcony supported on brackets with a simple wood rail. Windows are rectangular casements with very simple functional detailing and no ornament.

Clay barrel tile hipped roofs reflect the slight changes of the massing of the structure below. Exposed pecky cypress roof rafters and soffits are typical.

Because the structure is set directly on the street, emphasis is shifted away from open expanses of lawn and planting that are associated with structures in Palm Beach and devoted totally to the interior courtyard. The space however does not seem quite adequate for expected uses - perhaps due to changes of surrounding structures.

The extreme simplicity and lack of ornament of this structure give it a character of its own, and although visually it does not thrill the eye as many Palm Beach structures do, as part of the Phipps Plaza complex it is an important element.

236 Phipps Plaza

### Architectural Analysis

This townhouse residence at the southern perimeter of Phipps Plaza is a prime example of a structure that is of immeasurable importance in terms of being "part of the scene". Architecturally this structure has several features which make it quite special. The enclosed entry arcade and open court, the second level balcony and the simple massing with reserved detailing all contribute to the overall character of the building. Still, the structure as a singular element would not retain a high level of importance, based on its architectural expression, in a town where the expression of similiar concepts has been brought much further.

The importance of this structure is seen when the total surrounding environment is considered as a unified whole. In its place, this building defines a specific space, reinforces an architectural consistency, and stands as an intergral part of the larger composition of Phipps Plaza. To replace this structure with a new element, maintaining the integrity of the streetscape as it now exists, would be a complex project to undertake.

This structure by Wyeth, King and Johnson should be valued as singular element adding to an overall architectural fabric. A case of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts.