

The Palm Worth **2850 South Ocean Boulevard**



DESIGNATION REPORT
November 20, 2024
Landmark Preservation Commission
Palm Beach, Florida

DESIGNATION REPORT

The Palm Worth

2850 South Ocean Boulevard

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I. General Information

Location: 2850 South Ocean Boulevard
Palm Beach, Florida

Date of Construction: 1961-1962

Architect: Edgar S. Wortman

Developer: New Era, Inc.

Builder: Stephens Construction Company

Original Owner: Palm Worth Cooperative Apartment, Inc.

Current Owners: Multiple Owners (See Attached List)

Present Use: Residential Cooperative Building

Legal Description: North 182 Feet of the South 682 Feet of Tracts 1
and 2 East of AIA, Section 23, Township 44,
Range 43E

Unit Numbers, Owners and Parcel Control Numbers

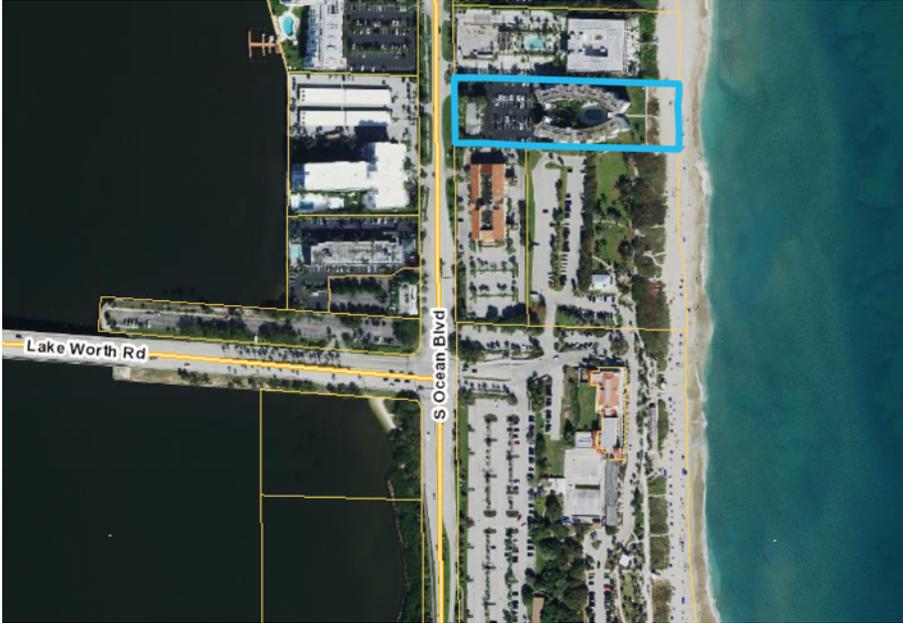
| | | |
|-----|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 000 | Palm Worth #113 Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-0000 |
| 100 | Richard F. Sammons & Anne F. Ellett | 50-43-44-23-14-000-1000 |
| 101 | Curtis Family Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-1010 |
| 102 | Juanita Rose Leary & JRL Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-1020 |
| 103 | Junita E. & Brian M. Leary | 50-43-44-23-14-000-1030 |
| 104 | Mary A. Obryan | 50-43-44-23-14-000-1040 |
| 105 | Gary C. & Barbara E. Ashe | 50-43-44-23-14-000-1050 |
| 106 | Gary & Rosemary Tiplick | 50-43-44-23-14-000-1060 |
| 107 | David A. & Edythe A. Hubson | 50-43-44-23-14-000-1070 |
| 108 | Newton Family Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-1080 |
| 109 | Kwgn Sui Ho & Suk Chun Tam | 50-43-44-23-14-000-1090 |
| 110 | Robert T. Tiplick | 50-43-44-23-14-000-1100 |
| 111 | Robert T. Tiplick | 50-43-44-23-14-000-1110 |
| 112 | Margaret Morris & Helen Obrien | 50-43-44-23-14-000-1120 |
| 113 | Carol Marie & Leonard P. Lilyholm | 50-43-44-23-14-000-1130 |
| 114 | Rika 114 Revocable Land Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-1140 |
| 201 | Curtis Family Trust 201 | 50-43-44-23-14-000-2010 |
| 202 | Henry E. & Sandra A. Moran Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-2020 |
| 203 | Elaine Bartholomew | 50-43-44-23-14-000-2030 |

| | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 204 | Cheryl L. Chase Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-2040 |
| 206 | George R. Jr. & Sharyls Overhiser | 50-43-44-23-14-000-2060 |
| 207 | Grace B. Madsen | 50-43-44-23-14-000-2070 |
| 208 | Donna Marie & Stephen Friedman Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-2080 |
| 209 | Susanne & James Apostolico Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-2090 |
| 210 | William A. Bohn Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-2100 |
| 211 | Glenn W. & Sue A. Keller | 50-43-44-23-14-000-2110 |
| 212 | Peter & Maria Likourentzos | 50-43-44-23-14-000-2120 |
| 214 | Mark H. & Eileen Eggen | 50-43-44-23-14-000-2140 |
| 301 | Daniel Patrick Schrage Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-3010 |
| 302 | Scot Northrup & Lynda Ackerman | 50-43-44-23-14-000-3020 |
| 303 | Mary Susan Stinson Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-3030 |
| 304 | Donald T. & Linda B. Auld | 50-43-44-23-14-000-3040 |
| 305 | Linda Sullivan | 50-43-44-23-14-000-3050 |
| 306 | Barbara J. Altenburg & Rose Dudley Hill | 50-43-44-23-14-000-3060 |
| 307 | Valerie & Samuel Nemirow | 50-43-44-23-14-000-3070 |
| 308 | Richard & Jeanette Duffy | 50-43-44-23-14-000-3080 |
| 309 | Richard & Jeanette Duffy | 50-43-44-23-14-000-3090 |
| 310 | Kenneth E. & Linda M. Johnson | 50-43-44-23-14-000-3100 |

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|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 311 | 311 Palm Worth Rev. Land Trust & Robert Murphy Trustee | 50-43-44-23-14-000-3110 |
| 312 | Tracy & Tamara Luther | 50-43-44-23-14-000-3120 |
| 313 | Tracy & Tamara Luther | 50-43-44-23-14-000-3130 |
| 314 | Deborah S. Breeback Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-3140 |
| 401 | Palm Worth 401 Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-4010 |
| 402 | Shirley McKinney Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-4020 |
| 403 | Shirley McKinney & Shirley McKinney Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-4030 |
| 404 | Adam Love | 50-43-44-23-14-000-4040 |
| 405 | Glenn E. & Corinne E. Watson Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-4050 |
| 406 | Louis and Alicia Lessard Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-4060 |
| 407 | Debra Sergeant | 50-43-44-23-14-000-4070 |
| 408 | Thomas W. Wallis Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-4080 |
| 409 | Jeanne G. & Thomas W. Wallis | 50-43-44-23-14-000-4090 |
| 410 | Karen Durkin & David O. Twaddell | 50-43-44-23-14-000-4100 |
| 411 | David L. Roth Trust & Kathy H. Trovecke Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-4110 |
| 412 | David A. Brooks | 50-43-44-23-14-000-4120 |
| 413 | David A. Brooks | 50-43-44-23-14-000-4130 |
| 414 | 414 Palm Worth Land Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-4140 |

| | | |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 501 | Donna R. Whitlock QPRT Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-5010 |
| 502 | Bruce R. & Barbara A. Whitely Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-5020 |
| 504 | Heather A. Chase Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-5040 |
| 505 | David G. Vicki I. Gerwig | 50-43-44-23-14-000-5050 |
| 506 | Jeffrey D. Graves Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-5060 |
| 507 | Donald C. Graves Pers Resident Trust & Nellie J. Graves Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-5070 |
| 508 | Eileen P. Woodley | 50-43-44-23-14-000-5080 |
| 509 | Robert W. & Karen B. Wallis Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-5090 |
| 511 | Photios & Panayiota Georgiou | 50-43-44-23-14-000-5110 |
| 512 | William R. Block Trust | 50-43-44-23-14-000-5120 |
| 513 | Joseph B. Faga | 50-43-44-23-14-000-5130 |
| 514 | Marylou H. & James E. Grinnell, Jr. | 50-43-44-23-14-000-5140 |

II. Location Map



III. Architectural Information

The Palm Worth cooperative is a notable Mid-Century Modern oceanfront property located at 2850 South Ocean Boulevard just north of the Lake Worth Bridge, Lake Worth Casino Building, and R.G. Kreusler Park. The Palm Worth was developed by New Era, Inc. as one of the earliest mid-rise residential projects built in the south end of Palm Beach during the area's development boom of the 1960s-70s.



In the years following World War II Modern architecture styles were becoming more popular throughout the country and Palm Beach was no exception. A by-product of post-war optimism, architects and designers moved away from period architectural styles and were adapting various modernist movements to create new designs, including what would become known as the Mid-Century Modern style. A further development of Frank Lloyd Wright's principles of organic architecture combined with elements reflected in the International and Bauhaus movements, Mid-Century Modern architecture used modern materials and building techniques and was defined by clean lines, functionality, simplicity in details, and a relationship to the environment. Mid-Century Modern architecture generally features geometric forms, flat or low-pitched roofs, facades surfaced with smooth stucco, large amounts of

glass, concrete eyebrows or cantilevers running the length of the building, asymmetrical compositions, decorative grilles or ornamental masonry elements known as screen block or breeze block, angular details, and minimal ornamentation.



West Facades

The Palm Worth property features two Mid-Century Modern style crescent shaped buildings, designed by Edward Wortman in 1961, which face each other and frame a tropical courtyard and pool area. The two five-story residential structures were constructed of concrete block finished with smooth stucco and have flat roofs. Located on the eastern portion of the property, the dual facing crescent design creates an oval internal courtyard with a wider opening at the western end of the buildings which provides access into the community and an exterior staircase at the eastern end which attaches the two buildings.



East Facades

Wortman designed the central courtyard to be a tropical oasis featuring a series of interconnected waterfalls and pools, tropical plantings, and ramped walkways that lead to a swimming pool and gathering area. The design provides a picturesque private sanctuary for the residents which acts as an outdoor living room for the community. The ramped walkways are due to the site's topography which also allowed for basement areas at the western ends of the two buildings. Original advertising for the community included that an air-raid and fallout shelter was provided for the residents in the basement area.



View of the Courtyard, Looking East

The entrance into the buildings is framed by the west exterior staircases which feature one the Palm Worth's Mid-Century Modern character defining features, geometric screen blocks. Screen blocks are also used for basement areas and the cantilevered covered concrete balconies that run the full length of the buildings' interior curves. The balconies provide access to the units and overlook the central courtyard. Screen block, also known as breeze block, is a cast concrete block with a geometric or organic pattern that creates an architectural decorative screen wall. While screen blocks date back to the 1930's, it was during the Mid-Century Modern

era of the 1950's and 1960's that they became fashionable. They were especially popular in warm climates as they provided shade and privacy while allowing breezes to flow through.



West Facades



Western end of the North Building



View of the Courtyard looking Southeast

Additional Mid-Century Modern character defining features of the property include the use of concrete eyebrow overhangs located at the staircase entrances on the west facades, simple stucco window banding, and jalousie windows and doors. While a few of the jalousies have been replaced, the Palm Worth residents have made a

concerted effort to retain and restore the jalousie windows and doors due to their desire to preserve the original Mid-Century Modern characteristics of the building.

The north and south facing exterior façades of the buildings feature enclosed balconies that project outward from the units. Many of these balconies, which were originally open with aluminum framing and screens, were enclosed over the years. In 2001, a comprehensive plan was carried out to enclose and harmonize the balconies with stucco bases and headers, and single-light casement and fixed windows.



South and East Facades, Looking Northwest



Palm Worth Under Construction
Courtesy of the Palm Worth

The western portion of the property includes the vehicular entrance with signage, a parking area, and a one-story structure that was designed by Herman Fernau in 1960. The one-story structure runs parallel to South Ocean Boulevard and was originally designed as a model unit for the sale of the soon to be built cooperative and a lounge area which likely originally acted as the sales office. Also designed in the Mid-Century Modern style, this building was constructed of concrete block surfaced with stucco and features a flat roof with deep overhangs that are supported with angled beams. Over the years there have been modifications to the building including some changes to the fenestration and the removal of a screen block wall that sheltered the area under the overhang on the west façade. The building currently includes one residential unit, a community meeting room, and an office.



West Façade



East Façade at Community Meeting Room

The Palm Worth's Board and residents greatly value Wortman's stylish Mid-Century Modern design and have been excellent stewards of the property. Renovations and restorations have been undertaken to preserve the property's significant architectural features. Over the years there have been very minimal alterations to the exteriors of the structures and the overall design has been maintained and the property's historic and architectural integrity has been preserved.



Courtesy of the Palm Worth

IV. Historical Information

The history of Palm Beach started long ago when Native Americans inhabited the island, with the Jaega people arriving at least 3,000 years ago. White settlers began arriving in modern-day Palm Beach by 1872 with Hiram F. Hammon making the first homestead claim in 1873 in present day Palm Beach. Along the coast of Palm Beach, the *Providencia* wrecked in 1878 with a cargo of 20,000 coconuts, which were quickly planted and later was the inspiration for the town's name Palm Beach. Not long after, the Star Route, also known as the Barefoot Mailman Route, began serving the area for mail service along the southeastern coast and the first

schoolhouse in southeast Florida, known as the Little Red Schoolhouse, opened in 1886 to educate the children of early pioneer families. However, the area did not grow significantly until Standard Oil tycoon Henry Flagler became instrumental in transforming the island of jungles and swamps into a preeminent winter resort by extending his Florida East Coast Railway southward to the area and opening the Royal Poinciana Hotel in 1894 and the Breakers Hotel in 1896.

Prior to World War I most of the seasonal residents resided in the hotels but following the war there was a 1920s land and housing boom where grand estates were built by some of the richest people in America and upper middle class neighborhoods, attractive commercial corridors and luxury hotels were built to accommodate the arrival of new residents and tourists. Palm Beach did experience effects of the late 1920s land and housing bust and the following Great Depression, however, following World War II Palm Beach flourished and grew exponentially. Part of this substantial growth was the result of a zoning law passed by Town Council in 1947 which raised the housing density in midtown as well as in the stretch of land starting at Sloan's Curve and running south to Palm Beach's southern border, which included the land where the Palm Worth building was constructed.¹ In addition, prior to the devastating hurricane of 1947, State Road A1A (South Ocean Boulevard) was located along the ocean. However, the hurricane washed out the road so from Manalapan's Vanderbilt Curve to Palm Beach's Sloan's Curve, A1A was relocated west of the ocean, resulting in a windfall for South End developers.²

The Ambassador Hotel, built in 1947, was the first major building constructed in Palm Beach south of Sloan's Curve following the Town's rezoning law. The hotel was a success and became a popular destination for tourists and new residents following the War³. Despite the hotel's success, there was little development in the South End during the 1950s except for a few smaller projects and the Bessemer Property's initial development of Ibis Isle.⁴

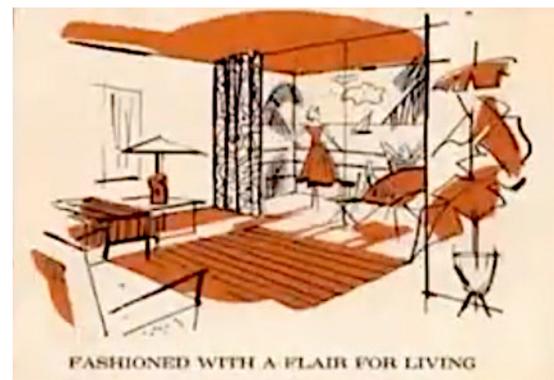
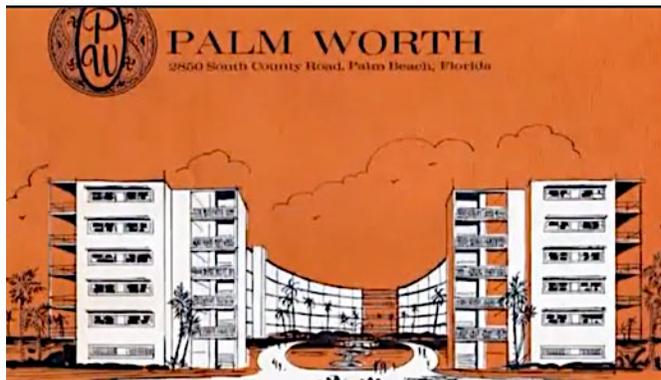
¹ It was a controversial zoning law the created a building boom that endured for decades.

² Brinson Construction Company started construction of the new road between the Sloan Estate and the Lake Worth Casino in June of 1950.

³ According to a January 1950 article in *Palm Beach Life*, "The exquisitely beautiful hotel rises like a Taj Mahal on the golden strands of Lake Worth and the blue Atlantic. Today it has become the mecca for a discriminating clientele."

⁴ In the early 1950s, the Phipps family owned Bessemer Property began filling in Penner Island which was located in Lake Worth just west of Palm Beach. In 1952 they built a bridge to connect Penner Island to the mainland and in 1953 they platted a subdivision and renamed the island Ibis Isle. The Phipps family owned much land in the south end of Palm Beach, including the property they donated that became Phipps Ocean Park.

Beginning in 1960, more developers became attracted to the stretch of Palm Beach south of Sloan's Curve to the Town of South Palm Beach as it was mostly undeveloped ocean and lakefront land. By 1960, New Era, Inc. bought property and in 1961 took the opportunity to build the Palm Worth cooperative apartment building on the ocean just north of the Lake Worth Casino and Causeway.⁵ As the developers, New Era, Inc. hired architect Edgar S. Wortman to design the building and Stephens Construction Company to build it. The first permit for the apartment house was No. 21461 dated May 4, 1961, and specified that it would be an 82,160 square foot 70-unit, 5-story cooperative apartment building with an estimated cost of \$750,000.



Original Marketing Material
Courtesy of the Palm Worth Cooperative

The Palm Worth's uniquely open oval shaped structure with a garden and waterfall at the entry was developed as a residential cooperative building with one- and two-bedroom units. New Era's sale brochure *Fashioned with a Flair for Living* section promoted the buildings amenities and enticing Florida lifestyle:

“There is a home planned for you in the new Palm Worth designed for a pleasant leisurely life uncluttered with the annoyances and responsibilities of home maintenance. In laying out the plan experts and specialists combined their talents to give every apartment the spaciousness and convenience so necessary to comfortable relaxed living. A modern, well-planned electric kitchen with custom cabinets and the tile bathrooms have the latest design, color and the finest quality fixtures that are available. Take your choice of 1- or 2-bedroom apartments, either offers a magnificent view of the wide blue Atlantic Ocean and the famed Intracoastal Waterway. For swimming and sunning take your choice of our own sun-drenched private beach or our

⁵ In October 1960 New Era, Inc. hired architect Herman Fernau and builder Glenn R. Campbell to build a one-story duplex at the west side of the property. This became the model apartment and New Era, Inc. sales office. Today it is a separate apartment and the Palm Worth meeting room and manager's office.

freshwater pool, set like a gem amid lush tropical landscaping. Each apartment has its own private screened-in balcony, bringing the soft warmth and tropical enchantment of Florida.”

The brochure also touted Palm Worth’s excellent location “conveniently located within easy walking distance from the magnificent new fishing pier and several fine restaurants, and just a moments up the beach from the superb new golf course located on the ocean at A1A.”

Being completed in 1962, the Palm Worth building was one of the first buildings constructed in Palm Beach south of Sloan’s curve to the southern border of Palm Beach. However, between 1963 and 1970 there was a fervor of building in Palm Beach’s south end when nineteen condominiums were constructed between Sloan’s Curve and the Town of South Palm Beach.⁶

The intensity of condominium development, however, did not please everyone in Palm Beach as the Palm Beach establishment saw the town as an enclave for the few while developers saw Palm Beach as a metropolis for the many. With a change in its members, the 1970 Town Council tightened building codes and zoning restrictions to reduce the town’s population density.⁷ By March 1970, the town had curbed high rises, setting a five-story limit on apartments and a three-story limit on commercial usage.⁸ Despite the new building codes and zoning restrictions, demand for condominium development in the south end of Town continued to surge with twenty-one more condominiums constructed between Sloan’s Curve and the Town of South Palm Beach in the 1970s and fourteen more in the 1980s. In just three decades more than fifty condominiums were constructed along this three-and-one-half mile ocean to lake narrow strip, ever changing the south end Palm Beach landscape.⁹

During its sixty-two-year history, the Palm Worth cooperative has been a popular building with many long-term owners who enjoy the unique modern

⁶ In 1963, the State of Florida passed the Condominium Act, which allowed for the construction of condominiums and the conversion of apartment buildings to condominiums. Nine of these condominiums were built on Ibis Isle in the late 1960s. They are low-rise condominiums developed as the French Villas each with a French name.

⁷ Augustus Mayhew, “High-Rise Palm Beach: Changes in Altitude.” Palm Beach Daily News, January 20, 2019.

⁸ Ibid. In response to the decades of high-rise residential and commercial development, the Town’s 1969 and 1970 council elections proved revolutionary. In 1969, George Matthews won a council seat opposing nine-time Councilman John Cushman and the following year, Robert Grace and “Deedy” Matrix were elected. Their incumbent opponents had appeared lax in protecting the town against over development. Matthews, Grace and Matrix kept their pledge to scale Palm Beach back to sea level.

⁹ Murphy Stillings, LLC. The Reef Condominium Landmark Designation Report, November 2019.

architecture and the amenities offered. Its location on the Atlantic Ocean in close proximity to the Lake Worth Beach Casino and the convenience of the Lake Worth Bridge are further reasons residents choose the Palm Worth building.¹⁰ In addition, the sustained commitment from the owners to preserve the architectural design and features of the Palm Worth makes it a building that will continue to be properly maintained and be recognized as an important modern design in the Town of Palm Beach.

V. Architect Biography

Edgar Symonds Wortman

Edgar S. Wortman was born July 22, 1906, in Bellefontaine, Ohio. After graduating high school he went to Ohio State University and later completed his architectural degree at Chicago Technical College (University of Chicago). He moved to West Palm Beach ca. 1935 and from his residence at 223 Vallowe Court in West Palm Beach, he applied for state architectural licensure and was granted Certificate #AR0001047 on December 7, 1935.¹¹ At this time, Edgar had an office in the Guaranty Building in West Palm Beach where he was briefly associated with colleague William Manly King. By 1937, Wortman was associated with L. Phillips Clarke and together they designed the Clewiston Inn in 1938. In 1941, Wortman was awarded the contract to design the Lake Worth Public Library, which he did in the Mediterranean Revival style to complement other buildings in downtown Lake Worth. Through his ROTC training in college, Wortman was a Reserve Officer in the U. S. Army Engineers and during World War II he was called-up to duty in the Army Corps of Engineers where he served as Captain and managed the construction of military buildings and bridges throughout Europe.¹² At the end of the war, having reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, he was put in charge of a town in Germany as Provost Marshall to keep order and direct the clean-up and the beginning of restoration of bombing devastation. Rather than pursue a military career, he returned to Florida and established his own practice in Lake Worth in 1945.

In Wortman's post-war career, he specialized in bank and school architecture from his office at 1122 North Dixie Highway in Lake Worth. Some of his banks included Bank of Palm Beach and Trust Company, Commerce Bank of Lake Worth and First

¹⁰ The Lake Worth Bascule Bridge spans the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) on FL 802 in Lake Worth at ICW Mile Marker 1028.8.

¹¹ At this time he was also admitted to practice in Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Mississippi.

¹² United States Department of the Interior. National Park Service. National Register of Historic Places. Clewiston Inn, Clewiston, Hendry County, Florida, 1991.

Federal Savings and Loan Association of Lake Worth. From 1946-1962, Wortman served as the Chief Architect for the Palm Beach County Board of Public Education. While serving in this position, Palm Beach County witnessed a post-World War II population boom which created the need for many new and enlarged schools. In this position he designed numerous new school buildings as well as additions and alterations to many more.¹³ Also during his post-war career, Wortman designed many noteworthy residential buildings including two distinguished nautical Moderne houses at 810 and 812 South Lakeside Drive, and an important Lake Worth public building, the Lake Worth Casino (1948) which was constructed after the original casino building was badly damaged by the 1947 hurricane.¹⁴

Edgar S. Wortman had an active civic life. Wortman served as president of the West Palm Beach Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and president of the State of Florida AIA. In Lake Worth, he served as a City Commissioner (1947-1949), member of the Zoning Board and the Board of Examiners and Appeals, and Director of the Chamber of Commerce. He was married to Kathryn J. Wortman but had no children and passed away January 15, 1969, at the age of 62.

VI. Statement of Significance

The Palm Worth cooperative is an excellent example of the Mid-Century Modern architectural style and the modern architectural movement in Palm Beach. Modernism became Palm Beach's paradigm of style during the post-World War II period, found among South End and Midtown's co-ops and condominiums, as well as commercial buildings along Worth Avenue, County Road and Royal Palm Way.¹⁵ Designed by noted architect Edgar S. Wortman in 1961, the Palm Worth was one of the earliest mid-rise communities developed south of Sloan's Curve during a time of significant growth in the south end of the Town, and the Palm Worth's design helped to advance the style's prominence in Palm Beach's south end.

¹³ Some of the schools he designed or designed additions to include Forest Hill High, South Olive Elementary, Seacrest High, Osborne, Jefferson Davis Junior High, Barton Elementary, Lake Worth High, Poinciana Elementary, Carver High, South Bay Elementary, Lake Shore, Riviera Beach High, Boca Raton High, Delray Junior High, Palm Beach Junior College, Meadow Park Elementary, Palm Springs Elementary, Conniston Junior High, Seventh Avenue Elementary and East Lake Elementary.

¹⁴ Some of Wortman's residential designs in Lake Worth Beach include 237 Princeton Drive, 428 North Palmway, 722 North Lakeside Drive, 1001 North Lakeside Drive, 731 North J Street, 419 North Ocean Breeze, 230 North Palmway, 212 Vanderbilt Drive, 1516 South Palmway, 501 South M Street, and the Carolyn Apartments at 23 South Lakeside Drive. Some of his Palm Beach designs include 301 Brazilian Avenue, 215 South County Road, 425 Seaspray Avenue, and 200 La Puerta Way.

¹⁵ Augustus Mayhew, "Unforgettable Palm Beach: Modernist Buildings Among Town's Most Endangered Cultural Resources." Palm Beach Daily News, 6 March 2011

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, 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 Palm Worth cooperative building reflects the broad cultural, economic, and social history of the nation, state, and town. Built in 1961-1962, the Palm Worth reflects the beginning of significant growth in Palm Beach’s south end as one of the first large apartment buildings constructed between Sloan’s Curve and the Lake Worth Casino. This significant growth was fueled by relaxed Palm Beach zoning restrictions, State Road A1A shifting west after the 1947 hurricane, and the continued popularity of south Florida with nonstop arrival of new residents attracted to the area. In addition, the Palm Worth building was designed in the Mid-Century Modern style during the time when Modernism was one of the most popular Post World War II styles for multi-family and commercial architecture throughout the United States, Florida and in Palm Beach. Furthermore, the Palm Worth’s unique architectural and landscape design along with its preserved historic features make it a distinct and special building.

(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 Palm Worth cooperative is an excellent representation of Mid-Century Modern architecture and embodies distinguishing characteristics of the style. The Palm Worth’s mirrored crescent design with a central tropical courtyard highlights the style’s characteristics of clean lines, functionality, simplicity in details, and a relationship to the environment, while the stucco facades, flat roofs, screen block railings, staircases and walls, window banding, overhangs, and jalousie windows and doors represent distinctive character defining features of the Mid-Century Modern style.

(4) “Is representative of the notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual ability has been recognized or has influenced his age.”

Edgar S. Wortman was a talented architect who practiced in Palm Beach County from the mid-1930s until 1969, with time spent as a Captain in the Army Corps of Engineers during WWII. Wortman designed buildings in multiple styles but is best known for his modern designs as most of his career was during the post-WW II era when many architects moved away from period architectural styles and were adapting various modernist movements to create new designs. While he designed a number of distinguished commercial and residential buildings, his years as Chief Architect for the Palm Beach County Board of Public Education were his most prolific and provided a lasting legacy. Wortman also had an important civic life serving the City of Lake Worth as well as leadership roles with the local and state chapters of the American Institute of Architects. His design of the Palm Worth building was exceptional for its time and remains an exceptional building today.

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