

Historically Significant Building Designation Form

854 South County Road



Historic Conservation District:	Estate Conservation District
Address:	854 S. County Road, Palm Beach, Florida
Date of Construction:	1936
Current Owner:	Joel and Darcie Kasewitz
Architect:	Howard Major
Builder:	Smith-Yetter, Inc.
Present Use:	Residential
Present Zoning:	RA
Palm Beach County Tax Folio Number:	50-43-43-35-00-001-0210
Current Legal Description:	35-43-43, S 200 FT of N 1291.52 FT of GOV LT 1 W OF COUNTY ROAD

Town of Palm Beach Historic Conservation District Ordinance No. 02-2020 outlines the criteria for designation of a historically significant building and states that the building must be at least 50 years old and meet at least one criterion to justify the designation. Listed below are criteria that relate to this property and the justification for designation:

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

The house at 854 S. County Road was built in 1936 during the Late Depression/New Deal Era. The end of the 1920s Boom Time Era signaled a change in development and construction of residences in Palm Beach. Although Palm Beach remained a haven for the wealthy during the Depression and New Deal Era, the British Colonial style residence at 854 S. County Road exemplifies the trend of moving away from the large, ornate Mediterranean Revival style estates to more traditional styles of architecture. At the time it was termed the third era of design in Palm Beach, following the Pioneer Era and the Spanish Era. The dwelling was built for William Thomas (W.T.) Grant the founder of a chain of United States mass-merchandise stores bearing his name W. T. Grant that had almost \$100 million in annual sales by 1936. W. T. Grant was a client of Howard Major, as Major had designed a house for him in Pelham, New York in 1918.

(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 at 854 S. County Road is a very good example of the British Colonial style of architecture. A subtype of the Colonial Revival style, British Colonial structures represent a modification of British architecture to the warmer climates of Bermuda and India. In Palm Beach, where the style typically draws from the Bermuda iteration, buildings usually feature the signature multiple steeply pitched roofs with concrete tiles. Other features incorporated from the Colonial and Georgian Revival styles include pedimented entry porches, classical columns, fanlights, double-hung sash windows with shutters, and quoins. The principal two-story residence at 854 S. County Road has a main entrance that faces northeast where two wings of the dwelling intersect. This entrance has a pedimented entry porch with Doric columns, pilasters, and a decorative fanlight above the wood paneled door. The house has multiple steeply pitched hip and gable roofs covered with concrete tiles. Other features of the dwelling include a bay window on the east façade, multi-light double-hung sash windows with flanking shutters or Bahama shutters, quoins, a chimney, an attached garage on the north and additions to the south. The property also includes a two-story garage apartment on the northeast corner of the property, a pool pavilion and decorative entry gates at S. County Road.

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

Howard Major was one of the premier architects in Palm Beach beginning work on the Island in 1923 after a prosperous career designing country houses in New York. He was known for breaking away from the Mediterranean Revival style through both his designs and writings. Major helped to introduce the British Colonial style to Palm Beach in 1925 with his design of Major Alley in the 400 block of Peruvian Avenue. 854 S. County Road is very good example of Major's British Colonial designs so fitting for its large lakefront lot in Palm Beach's Estate Section.