

Casa Del Lago

325 South Lake Drive



DESIGNATION REPORT

December 18, 2024

Landmark Preservation Commission

Palm Beach, Florida

DESIGNATION REPORT

Casa Del Lago 325 South Lake Drive

Table of Contents

| | | |
|-------|---------------------------|----|
| I. | GENERAL INFORMATION | 2 |
| II. | LOCATION MAP | 4 |
| III. | ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION | 5 |
| IV. | HISTORICAL INFORMATION | 11 |
| V. | ARCHITECT BIOGRAPHY | 16 |
| VI. | STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE | 17 |
| VII. | CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION | 18 |
| VIII. | SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY | 20 |

Report produced by Murphy Stillings, LLC

I. General Information

Location: 325 South Lake Drive
Palm Beach, Florida

Date of Construction: c.1945, 1946-1947 & 1951-1952

Historic Name: Casa Del Lago

Architect: Belford Shoumate

Builder/Contractor: F. Ruth, 1946
James and J.Q. Henry Contractors, 1951-1952

Current Owners: Multiple Owners (See list below)

Present Use: Residential Condominium Building

PBC Tax Folio Number: 50-43-43-27-75-000-1010
50-43-43-27-75-000-1030
50-43-43-27-75-000-2010
50-43-43-27-75-000-2030
50-43-43-27-75-000-2040
50-43-43-27-75-000-0030
50-43-43-27-75-000-0040
50-43-43-27-75-000-0060
50-43-43-27-75-000-0070
50-43-43-27-75-000-3010

Current Legal Description:

Casa Del Lago, a Condominium, according to the Declaration of Condominium recorded in Official Record Book 1648, Page 1201, and all exhibits and amendments thereof, Public Records of Palm Beach County, Florida.

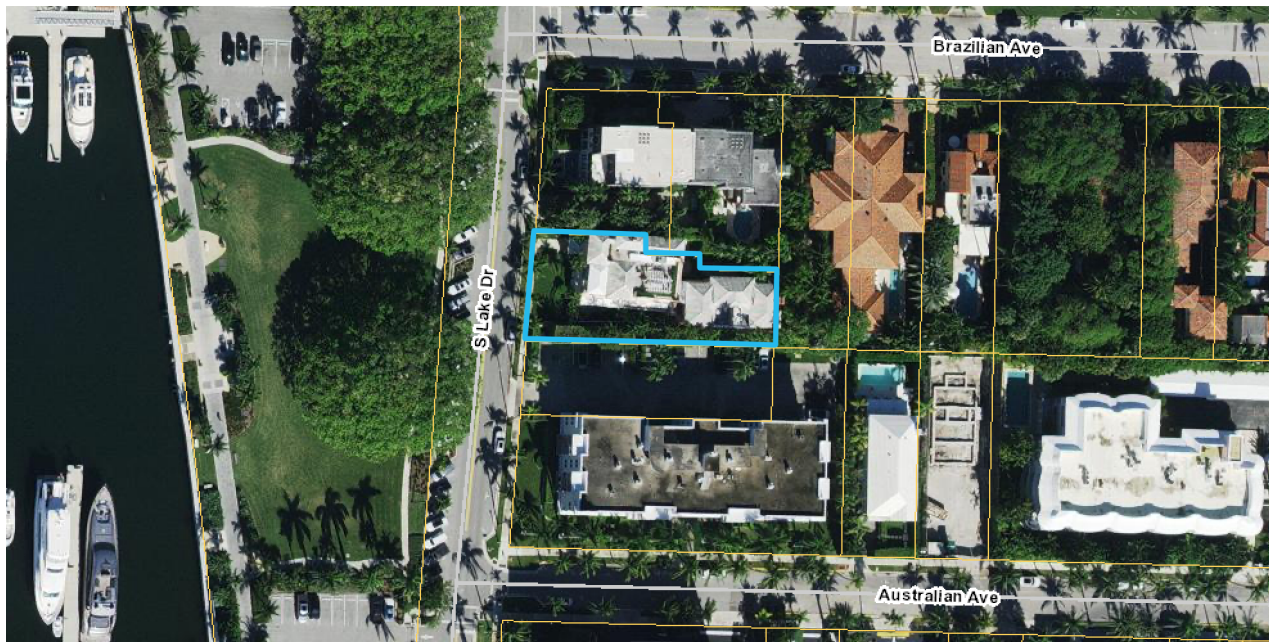
Described as the following lands lying in Palm Beach County, Florida: Beginning at the southwest corner of Lot 3, Block 4, according to the Plat of the REVISED MAP OF ROYAL PARK ADDITION to Palm Beach, Florida, as recorded in Plat Book 4, Page 1, in and for the Public Records of Palm Beach County, Florida; thence N 4° 23' 30" E, along the West line of said Lot 3, a distance of 50.15 feet to the northwest corner of said Lot 3; thence 0° 58' 25" E, along the West line of Lot 2 of said Block 4, a distance of 23.10 feet to a point on a line parallel with and 88.10 feet south of, when measured at right angles, the south right of way line of Brazilian Avenue as shown on the said plat of the revised map of Royal Park Addition to Palm Beach, Florida; thence

East, along the said parallel line, a distance of 72.51 feet to a point; thence S 0° 58' 25" W, a distance of 12.50 feet to a point; thence East, a distance of 37.51 feet to a point; thence south a distance of 9.12 feet to a point; thence East, a distance of 52.60 feet to a point on the East line of the West 2.00 feet of Lot 56 of said Block 4; thence south, along the said East line, a distance of 51.48 feet to a point on the South line of said Lot 56; thence West, along the South line of said Lot 56 and 3, a distance of 166.64 feet to the Point of Beginning.

List of Owners and Parcel Control Numbers:

| <u>OWNER</u> | <u>PARCEL CONTROL NUMBER</u> |
|---|------------------------------|
| MCG 2022 Trust, Applegren Trust, & Michael C. Graham Trust | 50-43-43-27-75-000-1010 |
| MCG 2022 Trust, Applegren Trust, & Michael C. Graham Trust | 50-43-43-27-75-000-1030 |
| Robert W. Pommer, III Trust | 50-43-43-27-75-000-2010 |
| John N. Gooch | 50-43-43-27-75-000-2030 |
| John N. Gooch | 50-43-43-27-75-000-2040 |
| Landon & Mary M. Hilliard | 50-43-43-27-75-000- 0030 |
| Fred Mitzner | 50-43-43-27-75-000-0040 |
| John E. Corey & Page Evans | 50-43-43-27-75-000-0060 |
| Mini Coastal LLC | 50-43-43-27-75-000-0070 |
| Landon & Mary M. Hilliard | 50-43-43-27-75-000-3010 |

II. Location Map



III. Architectural Information

The Casa Del Lago condominium, located at 325 South Lake Drive, was designed in the British Colonial style by renowned Palm Beach architect Belford Shoumate in phases between 1945 and 1951. The multi-family building is situated on the east side of South Lake Drive, between Brazilian and Australian Avenues, facing Lake Drive Park and the Town of Palm Beach Marina.



Main (West) Façade

The British Colonial style of architecture, a sub-type of the Colonial Revival style, is a West Indian adaptation of Georgian architecture. It was inspired by the traditions of the English colonists' architectural heritage and adapted to the local environments and building materials. Ornamental details were kept to a minimum in response to the characteristics of the local building materials. The British Colonial style was introduced to Palm Beach in 1925 by Howard Major with the design of Major Alley on Peruvian Avenue. During the 1930s John Volk expanded on the theme designing a number of British Colonial style residences, and the style continued to gain popularity through the middle part of the century with many well-known architects including Marion Sims Wyeth, Maurice Fatio, Gustav Maass, Henry Harding, Howard Chilton, and Belford Shoumate designing in the British Colonial style throughout Palm Beach. The style is characterized by multiple steeply pitched roofs,

symmetrical fenestration and stucco surfaced walls with verandas, small porches, and balconies. Porticos, pediments, shutters, and quoins are sometimes included design elements.



The property at 325 South Lake Drive was once a part of a larger parcel that included the land to the north, at the corner of South Lake Trail and Brazilian Avenue. In early 1945, Belford Shoumate was commissioned by Mr. and Mrs. Bassett Mitchell to design a two-unit apartment building for the site.¹ The apartments were added to an existing free-standing two-car garage on the property, with one apartment constructed on each of the east and west sides of the garage.² By the end of 1945, Shoumate was asked to add a second floor to the design for three additional apartments which were constructed in 1946-1947.³ This 5-unit two-story structure was setback considerably from South Lake Drive and faced toward the north. In 1951, Shoumate was commissioned by Mr. Robert Harriss to design a three-story addition for additional apartment units.⁴ This addition, located to the west side of the two-story building, is what is currently seen from South Lake Drive and was the beginning of the property being known as Casa Del Lago.

¹ Town of Palm Beach Building Permit No. 20045, dated November 28, 1945.

² The date of the garage is unknown but was noted on Shoumate's drawings in the Town of Palm Beach Building Permit Records as "existing garage".

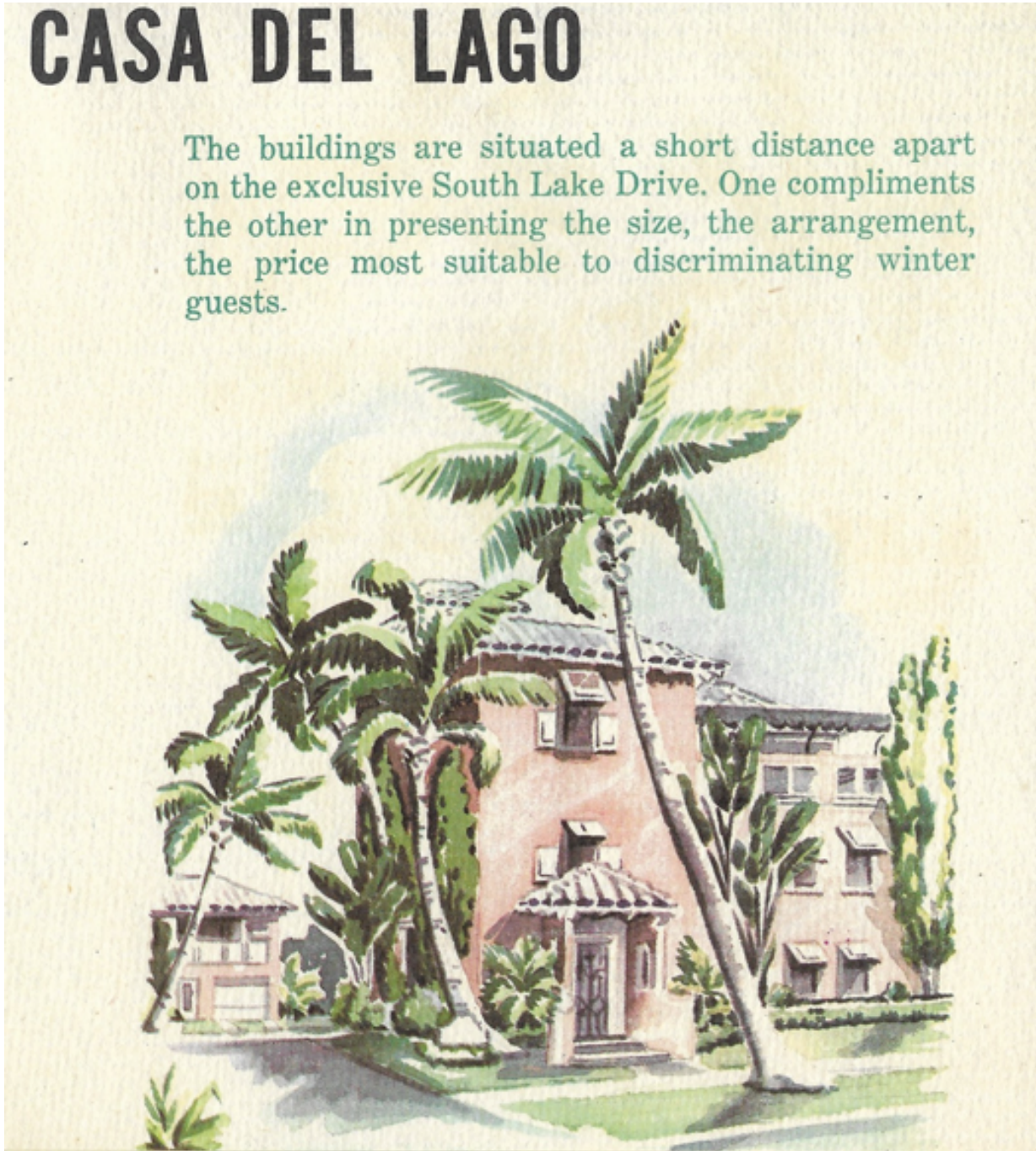
³ Town of Palm Beach Building Permit No. 22946, dated November 29, 1946.

⁴ Town of Palm Beach Building Permit No. 40451, dated September 7, 1951.

Casa Del Lago's development resulted in a charming, multi-massed, informal, meandering design with courtyards, verandas and patios overlooking the property's tropical setting. The structures were constructed of concrete blocks surfaced with smooth stucco and feature multiple hipped roofs at various heights with exposed rafter tails and surfaced with white barrel tiles.

CASA DEL LAGO

The buildings are situated a short distance apart on the exclusive South Lake Drive. One compliments the other in presenting the size, the arrangement, the price most suitable to discriminating winter guests.



Historic Advertisement
Provided by the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach

The west façade, facing South Lake Drive, contains three-story and two-story elements. The northern side is three stories in height and features a hipped roof entrance portico. Curving welcoming arms lead to the portico and a decorative metal entrance gate, set within a molded door surround, provides access to an open-air walkaway that leads east through the building. The southern side is two-stories high with a large patio on the roof. The patio features wall openings with jalousie louvers and is covered with a canvas awning. The windows of the main façade are a combination of single-light sash and casements flanked by half-height colonial shutters and topped with Bahama shutters.



Southwest Corner
Looking Northeast from South Lake Drive

Decorative metalwork is located in openings at the south end of the west façade along with a decorative metal gate leading to a walkway along the southern property line. The units in this western portion of the building feature verandas and patios on the south façade. The verandas on the second floor feature a unique angled railing design with wood louvers that are visible from South Lake Drive and the third-floor penthouse unit features a large roof top patio which is accessed by a tower element with a chimney on the north facade. The open-air walkway that leads from the main entrance through the three-story portion of the building provides access to the two-story portion at the rear of the property.



Ariel Photograph
Showing Three-Story Portion (Built 1951) &
Two-Story Portion (Built 1945-1946)



Open-Air Walkway
Looking West,
Toward South Lake Drive

The two-story portion of the building, at the rear of the property, is the section that was built in 1945-1946 by creating additions to a garage structure. The residential units in this portion feature courtyards to the north of the building. Shoumate designed the main (north) façade with variations in the wall planes. This included cantilevering the central portion of the second story and projecting forward portions of the first floor in the east and west bays which creates an interesting play in the building's massing.



North Elevation
Belford Shoumate, 1945

Shoumate's 1945-1946 design for the rear portion of the building changed the garage door openings of the original one-story garage structure into bay windows with multi-light sash windows. The design also features a centrally located staircase with an arched opening leading to the second floor, balconies on the projecting one-story elements that are accessed by French doors, and symmetrically placed sets of three large single-light sash windows.



Central Section of the Rear, Two-Story Portion of Building
North Façade

Over the years alterations to Casa Del Lago have been primarily interior renovations, including the combining of some units, and there has also been some window and door changes and re-roofing. The structure retains the historic and architectural integrity of Shoumate's design.

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.⁵ However, the area did not grow significantly until Standard Oil business magnate 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. In the early 1900's prior to World War I most of the seasonal residents resided in the hotels though several early businessmen saw the need to create residential developments to house the growing number of seasonal residents.

Elisha N. Dimick settled in the area that became Palm Beach in 1876 and was one of the most influential people in the history of the Town. In addition to establishing the first hotel, serving in the Florida House of Representatives and the Florida Senate, and co-founding the area's first bank, Dimick was instrumental in developing Royal Park and founding the Town of Palm Beach. As winter residents arrived in increasing number each year, Dimick and his nephew Harvey Geer began buying up property from Lake Worth to the Atlantic Ocean between what is today Royal Palm Way and Worth Avenue in the early 1900s. Dimick and Geer began developing the area in 1908 and joined with business partners George Jonas and Otto Kubin to form the Palm Beach Improvement Company. The development of the approximately 150 acre Royal Park subdivision was a tremendous undertaking because at the time the area was mostly jungle, marsh and swamp infested with mosquitos, alligators and snakes. After dredging much of the area, the Palm Beach Improvement Company hired contractors to pave streets and sidewalks and install water mains, sewers, electric systems and telephone lines in order to create what would be the first substantial real estate development in Palm Beach outside of the Flagler Hotel properties. To provide much needed automobile access to the Island

⁵ Hiram Hammon filed the first homestead claim in what would later be named Palm Beach taking advantage of the Homestead Act that Congress had passed in 1862 that enabled any U.S. citizen to claim up to 160 acres of surveyed government land as long as the person agreed to live on it and improve it for five years. Hammon's homestead amounted to 169 acres, according to Florida homestead records, and it included present-day Worth Avenue and Hammon Avenue and stretched the entire width of the island, from the ocean to the lake. He settled on the land in 1873 and built a thatched palmetto shack he shared with friend and fellow pioneer William Lanehart, who took an adjoining homestead.

and help ensure success of the development, in 1910 Dimick formed the Lake Worth Bridge Company and hired a construction company to build a bridge between West Palm Beach and the Island at Royal Palm Way. This wooden toll bridge was completed in 1911, the same year the Town of Palm Beach was incorporated and Dimick was elected mayor. The Royal Park Bridge was of key importance to the success of Royal Park because it provided greater access to the subdivision to sustain construction needs, bring customers to their property, and redirect attention south of the Royal Poinciana Hotel which up to that time was the center of activity.⁶ Unfortunately, even after the bridge was constructed, Royal Park failed to interest many buyers. However, in 1913, Dimick and his partners took a cue from Edward “E.R.” Bradley and his brother Jack who had success selling out the lots in their Floral Park subdivision with the help Lewis Henry Green. Green was a shrewd businessman who used newspaper advertisements and auctions to promote the area and sell home sites.⁷ The public eagerly responded to Green’s promotions in Royal Park with the first auction attracting between 600-800 people.⁸ Dimick, Geer and others involved in the Palm Beach Improvement Company continued to make vast improvements to the area and by 1916 almost all of the lots in Royal Park had been sold. The plat of Royal Park specified areas exclusively for commercial use, and after Royal Park was completed and settled following WWI, the town unconsciously shifted its center in a southerly direction from the original Main Street area to Royal Park due to Royal Park’s growing prominence.⁹ Like much of Palm Beach, Royal Park was booming in the 1920s with both residential and commercial construction. After completion of the new Palm Beach Town Hall and Fire Station along Royal Park’s South County Road at the end of 1925, the area became the town’s new governmental center and surrounding businesses and neighborhoods thrived.¹⁰

Palm Beach did experience effects of the late 1920s land and housing bust and the Great Depression, however, during the post-Depression/New Deal Era of the 1930s

⁶ Susan J. Oldfather. Elisha Newton Dimick and His Influence on the Development of Palm Beach. Thesis, Florida Atlantic University, December 1989. Dimick and Geer thought it was especially important to provide automobile access in order to attract northern buyers who were accustomed to driving their automobiles most places.

⁷ The Bradley’s announced plans to develop the Floral Park subdivision in 1910 just north of the Royal Poinciana Hotel, Main Street and their Beach Club in an area that at the time was the center of activity. In order to gain interest in their subdivision, the Bradley’s’ hired Lewis Henry Green, a wealthy Mexican born realtor from California who often stayed at the Royal Poinciana Hotel. He published newspaper advertisements, had private auctions and then reported the buying spree in the newspaper. To further entice potential but hesitant buyers, Green offered expensive prizes and souvenirs. This tactic worked as the final February 1912 auction took place, the remaining Floral Park lots sold out in under two hours.

⁸ Beginning in January of 1913, Green splashed advertisements for Royal Park all over local newspapers and offered \$2000 in daily prizes.

⁹ Susan J. Oldfather. Elisha Newton Dimick and His Influence on the Development of Palm Beach. Thesis, Florida Atlantic University, December 1989.

¹⁰ At the time, South County Road was named Palm Beach Avenue.

and 1940s, the Town saw significant development of residential neighborhoods while also continuing to host many wealthy people both as residents and tourists. Being a waterfront community, yachts were a mainstay in Palm Beach with numerous people using their yachts for pleasure, travel and lodging. The large frontage on Lake Worth was an important part of the Royal Park development and a Yacht Harbor was built originally for exclusive use by owners and residents of Royal Park. As the Town grew so did the yachting community, which instigated the expansion of the docks at the terminus of Brazilian and Australian Avenues. The Yacht Harbor or Yacht Basin, as it was referred to, was built to accommodate large yachts with slips that could be rented for the season by residents or shorter terms by tourists. As demand grew, additional docks were built to the north closer to the Royal Park Bridge. Smaller properties and apartments close to the Yacht Harbor in Royal Park were often rented to residents and tourists whose yachts were moored at the docks.

With the conclusion of World War II, Palm Beach flourished and grew exponentially. An era of prosperity that had emerged in the 1920s became considerably larger and more mobile, with the population nearly doubling in the 1950s. In addition to the increase in the population and boost in tourism, the lifting of wartime restrictions and an increasing supply of materials helped to accelerate Palm Beach's post-World War II economy with new construction throughout the town.¹¹

As noted previously, in 1945, Belford Shoumate was commissioned by Mr. and Mrs. Bassett Mitchell to design a two-unit apartment building for the property and shortly thereafter he designed a second floor to the structure for three additional apartments. At the time Shoumate was designing the building, the Mitchell's were residing just north of the property at their house at 438 Brazilian Avenue. Bassett and Mary Mitchell were longtime Palm Beach winter residents with their original Royal Park house constructed in 1923.¹² Bassett Mitchell became interested in Palm Beach real estate both as a broker and a developer when he came to town prior to the 1920s land and housing boom. His initial holdings included mostly oceanfront properties in Palm Beach and further south. Bassett Mitchell's sister, Neville Mitchell Smith, and brother-in-law, Stephen "S" Fahs Smith, were also early Palm Beach residents and involved in developing investment property in Royal Park, including the commercial

¹¹ Augustus Mayhew. Palm Beach: A Greater Grandeur.

¹² In 1923, Bassett Mitchell commissioned Theodore Eissfeldt to build a frame and stucco residence on Brazilian Avenue. The following year 1924, Bassett Mitchell built a hollow tile and stucco one story garage and apartment on the lot.

building at 304-306 South County Road in 1929 and the Smith Shops at 296-302 South County Road in 1931.¹³

On September 7, 1951, architect Belford Shoumate filed a building permit and design plans on behalf of owner Robert M. Harriss and builders James and J.Q. Henry to build an apartment house at 325 South Lake Drive in the Royal Park subdivision.¹⁴ The three story building was designed to face west overlooking the lake and contain nine apartments of various size and design just to the west of the existing five-unit apartment building on the property. The construction of this building in the early 1950s was a time in Palm Beach when the north end of the island was growing significantly with new residential subdivisions and Royal Park was experiencing an escalation in apartment buildings particularly after the Town's 1947 zoning law changed much of Royal Park's exclusive residential zone "A" classification to zone "C" classification allowing more hotels and apartments.

Robert M. Harriss was a cotton dealer and partner in the Wall Street Cotton Exchange firm Harriss & Vose. Originally from Dallas, Texas, Harriss moved to Long Island, NY and also started to spend much of the winter season in Palm Beach by 1940.¹⁵ After the completion of 325 S. Lake Drive, the ownership was listed as Harodon, Inc., with Robert M. Harriss as President and Thomas O'Donnell as Vice-President. At this time, Casa Del Lago and Nassau Square, the apartment building at 381 S. Lake Drive, were both owned by Harodon, Inc. and were often advertised together promoting their location in the "most desirable Palm Beach Apartment Area – on the Lake between the Royal Park Bridge and Worth Avenue - and within walking distance of smart shops, restaurants and the Everglades Club." The apartment's superb views overlooking Lake Worth and the yacht anchorages were also touted in the advertisements.¹⁶ Both buildings were managed by L. V. Raymond with rentals available by the week, month or season. Robert Harriss, along with his yacht Majubob II, continued to spend the winter season in Palm Beach, sometimes

¹³ Bassett W. Mitchell, who claimed to be the grandnephew of George Washington, was born in London in 1868. In addition to being involved in real estate, he aided in the development of many activities, including the Gulf Stream Polo Field and Gulf Stream Country Club. S. Fahs Smith had been a winter resident of Palm Beach since 1911 and was a member of the prominent Smith family from York, PA. In Palm Beach he and his wife Neville resided at 147 Seabreeze Avenue. Both 304-306 South County Road and 296-302 South County Road are Town of Palm Beach Landmark Buildings. Bassett Mitchell passed away in September of 1946 and Mary Mitchell took control of the property.

¹⁴ There is not too much known about the builders James and J.Q. Henry, but they were early Palm Beach County residents having moved to the area with their parents in the 1920s.

¹⁵ At the time of the permit in 1951, Robert Mallory Harriss was living at the Everglades Club for the season with his children. His wife Abeline had passed away.

¹⁶ Brochure Advertising Casa Del Lago and Nassau Apartments provided by the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach.

residing at Casa Del Lago, and in 1962 he bought the famous Lido Pool at the east end of Royal Park.¹⁷



Historic Photograph, unknown date
Provided by the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach

Casa Del Lago was a popular apartment building in high demand throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s. The Florida Condominium Act was enacted in 1963 to allow new and existing multi-unit apartment and co-operative buildings to become condominiums. Casa Del Lago became a registered condominium in 1968, and Casa Inc. of Palm Beach began selling the various units to owners. Some of the early owners including David Ayers, Martin Horn, Richard Deems, Helen Rich and Leone King were well-known Palm Beach seasonal residents who helped establish the building's prestigious address.¹⁸

¹⁷ Lido Pool was formerly Gus's Bath located on the west side of Ocean Boulevard opposite of the Palm Beach Pier.

¹⁸ David Ayers, who purchased the penthouse and lived there until his passing in 1980, was an esteemed architectural and interior designer who also had a shop with his partner Martin Horn on Worth Avenue. In 1970, Ayers help a party in his penthouse for 200 people that was covered in the Shiny Sheet. After Ayers' passing, Martin Horn lived in the penthouse and was also president of the Casa Del Lago Condominium Board for a number of years. Richard Deems was Chairman of Hearst Magazines, Helen Rich was a philanthropist and founder of the Friends of the Ann Norton Sculpture Garden, which David Ayers was also involved with. Leone King was a well-known Palm Beach Daily News correspondent and longtime Palm Beach resident.

Since its construction over seventy years ago, Casa Del Lago has remained a charming mid-size residential building in a prime location along South Lake Drive overlooking the picturesque landscape of Lake Drive Park and the waters of Lake Worth. Although the building is now set amidst a number of larger condominium and co-operative buildings, due to its setback within the property, attractive landscaping and scale along the street it is not overwhelmed by its neighbors. In addition, Casa Del Lago is a very well managed condominium building with an active board of directors who take pride in the building and work hard to preserve its historic architectural character.

V. Architect Biography

Belford Shoumate

Belford Shoumate was born in Aberdeen, Ohio in 1903, and was raised in Mobile, Alabama. After receiving a degree in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania in 1929, Shoumate worked for four years with architect Joseph Urban in New York City. In 1936, he moved to Miami and worked with architect Carlos B. Schoeppl for a year before coming to Palm Beach.

In 1937, Shoumate married Beatrice Owen, moved to Palm Beach to start his own architectural practice, and received his architectural license. While designed prior to starting his own firm, Shoumate's first Palm Beach commission was the 1937 Art Moderne style "Boat House" on North Lake Way, which was rumored to have won the award for "House of the Future" at the 1939 World's Fair.

In 1940, Shoumate designed a British Colonial style residence with a studio for his architectural firm in Phipps Plaza (known as Architect's Row) where he lived and worked until his death in 1991. From the late 1930s, Belford Shoumate has left his architectural imprint, in either design or restoration, on more than 1,500 buildings of many styles in South Florida. While he designed in many styles, including Bermuda and Colonial, he is best known for his Modern designs, especially those in the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles.

Belford Shoumate was listed in *Who's Who in America* and was active in the National Committee for the Preservation of Historical Buildings, representing the local chapter of the A.I.A. Shoumate is quoted as saying, "Our American Heritage is being challenged in many ways. It's time to wake up and realize we have a wonderful history for such a young country, and we should preserve its form of government as well as its representative buildings for prosperity!"

An interview Belford Shoumate did with Dorothy Finn Scott for the Palm Beach Daily News in 1981 reveals additional information about the architect:

“In terms of offices in Palm Beach, the award for the most incredible goes to architect raconteur and preservationist Belford Washington Wren Shoumate. It is located in the bottom half of a series of two-story wooden houses he designed in Phipps Plaza some 40 years ago. The Shoumate office reveals much of the man himself: slightly disorganized aesthetic, eclectic and simply unable to throw anything out. A stalwart and vocal member of the Landmarks Commission, Shoumate always is trying to save what developers want to tear down. Parts of some 25 old Palm Beach mansions are scattered around his office, his home and many of the homes he designed for clients. He was also chairman of the American Institute of Architects’ Preservation of Historical Buildings from 1954-1964. If you don’t trip trying to look, you can find original plans for homes in the 30s and 40s in Palm Beach, including an addition to Mar-A- Lago from 1958, first edition Mizner books, a pre-World War II Remington portable typewriter, and parts of “Playa Riente” and “Casa Del Lago” estates – all in the tiny one-room office of Belford Shoumate. ‘They should write the Landmark’s Ordinance over.’ he says now and has said before the Commission. ‘People should be happy that their homes are designated landmarks.’ The fabulous pencil drawings in his office are done by son Tom, an architect living in Gainesville. His other son William is in the building business. Shoumate was born in Mobile and perhaps learned his love of old historic buildings in that Southern town settled by the French. He did most of his formal training at the University of Pennsylvania with French architect Paul Phillip Cret. He worked in Mobile for four years with a builder, learning the trade by doing it. Descended from a Shoumate line of Kentucky farmers and mechanics, young Belford seems to have survived by always learning how to build or rebuild something. Since he began shingling roofs at 14, Shoumate’s motto always has been to save rather than destroy.”¹⁹

VI. Statement of Significance

Casa Del Lago at 325 South Lake Drive is significant as a very good example of Belford Shoumate’s interpretation of the British Colonial Revival style for a multi-family structure built during the Post-WWII Era in Palm Beach. When it was constructed between 1945-1952, Palm Beach was flourishing with an influx of new

¹⁹ Dorey Finn Scott. “Build, Rebuild and Preserve – Architect Longs to Save Town.” Palm Beach Daily News. 28 December 1981.

residents and tourists and this building helped to fill the growing need for multi-unit developments, especially for those seeking a mid-size building. In addition, its charming design and location in centrally located Royal Park overlooking Lake Worth has made it an appealing building attracting exceptional residents for over seventy years.

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.”

Casa Del Lago exemplifies the cultural, economic and social history of the Town of Palm Beach. The apartment building was designed and constructed in phases beginning at the conclusion of World War II in 1945-1947 and concluding in 1951-1952 when the demand for apartment housing in Palm Beach was increasing exponentially and developers were building to meet the need for the increasing influx of new residents and tourists. The superb location in the centrally located historic Royal Park subdivision situated along South Lake Drive overlooking the picturesque Lake Drive Park, Yacht Harbor and Lake Worth made it an ideal site to construct an apartment building with a classically inspired but contemporary design by noted architect Belford Shoumate.

(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 Casa Del Lago Condominium located at 325 South Lake Drive is a very good example of Belford Shoumate’s interpretation of the British Colonial Revival style for a multi-family structure built during the Post-WWII Era in Palm Beach. The building’s multi-massed meandering design featuring multiple hipped roofs with exposed rafter tails, stucco exteriors, large windows, porticos, verandas and patios are character-defining features of the British Colonial Revival style that Shoumate employed to create a welcoming residential community.

- (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.”**

Casa Del Lago is a very good example of Belford Shoumate’s notable work in Palm Beach. Shoumate was one of Palm Beach’s most influential and noteworthy architects. During the course of his fifty-four-year career, Shoumate designed hundreds of architectural projects and is one of the Town’s famous architects. Shoumate is credited with promoting additional architectural styles in Palm Beach, such as variations on the Colonial Revival style and more modern styles such as Art Deco and Art Moderne.

VIII. Selected Bibliography

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

Drake, Lynn Lasseter and Richard A. Marconi with the Historical Society of Palm Beach County. Images of America: West Palm Beach 1893 – 1950. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2006.

Geer, Harvey “Royal Park Palm Beach Florida: The Millionaire’s Playground” 1913, revised 1914.

Historical Society of Palm Beach County. Archives and PBC History Online.

Marconi, Richard and the Historical Society of Palm Beach County. Palm Beach Then & Now. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2013.

Marconi, Richard A. and Debi Murray with the Historical Society of Palm Beach County. Images of America: Palm Beach. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2009.

Mayhew, Augustus. Lost in Wonderland: Reflections on Palm Beach. West Palm Beach, FL: Palm Beach Editorial Services, 2012.

Mayhew, Augustus. New York Social Diary.

Mayhew, Augustus. Palm Beach: A Greater Grandeur. East Side Press, 2016.

Murphy Stillings, LLC. Town of Palm Beach Landmark Designation Reports. 296-302 South County Road and 304-306 South County Road. January 18, 2023.

O’Sullivan, Maureen. Palm Beach: Then and Now. West Palm Beach, FL: Lickle Publishing Inc. in association with the Historical Society of Palm Beach County, 2004.

Oldfather, Susan J. Elisha Newton Dimick and His Influence on the Development of Palm Beach. Thesis: Florida Atlantic University, December 1989.

Palm Beach Daily News and Palm Beach Post. Archived Articles 1940 – 2017.

The Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach. 325 S. Lake Drive, Casa Del Lago File and the Belford Shoumate Archives.

Sanborn Insurance Map of Palm Beach. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1924 updated to 1952. City of West Palm Beach Public Library, Florida Room.

Town of Palm Beach. Building Permits and Microfiche Records, 1923– 2024.

West Palm Beach City Directories. Asheville, NC: Florida-Piedmont Directory Company, 1923-1986. These city directories included Town of Palm Beach directories and information on Palm Beach residents.