NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name PALM BEACH HOTEL

other names/site number Palm Beach Hotel Condominium

2. Location

street & number 235-251 Sunrise Avenue n/a ☐ not for publication

city or town Palm Beach n/a ☐ vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Palm Beach code 099 zip code 33480

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☒ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Barbara E. Mattick/DSHPO 3/2/2010
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☒ entered in the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain) _____

for Edson De. Beall — Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action 4.21.10

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
- ☐ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ buildings
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	total

Name of related multiple property listings
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Hotel

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Multiple Dwelling
COMMERCE: Restaurant
RELIGION: Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:
Mediterranean Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STUCCO
walls STUCCO
roof Tar & Gravel
other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☒ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
RECREATION

Period of Significance

1925-1935

Significant Dates

1925

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Arch: Metcalfe, Mortimer Dickinson
Bldr: Clarke, Thomas A.

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
  #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of Repository

#

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References
(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	595580	2955620
2			
3			
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sherry Simmons; Andrew Waber, Hist. Site Specialist; Michael Zimny, Hist. Site Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date March 2010

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items
(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Richard Spilberg, President, et al.

street & number 235 Sunrise Avenue telephone (561) 659-7794

city or town Palm Beach state Florida zip code 33480

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

The Palm Beach Hotel is a four-story, 1925 Mediterranean Revival style building located at 235-251 Sunrise Avenue, in the Town of Palm Beach, Florida. The building's footprint was an H-plan before the installation of a one-story ballroom at the west end of the building. The building is masonry, constructed of steel-reinforced concrete with the exterior walls surfaced with smooth stucco. A north/south oriented central block connects the two wings of the building. Street level loggias extend east and west from the central bay of the main facade. The loggias feature round arches that spring from the capitals of alternating twisted and smooth Composite columns. Above the loggias are balustrades that extend the entire length of the east and west sections of the south facade. There is a large multi-colored tiled floor used as a dance hall located in the loggia. The main fenestration is 1/1-light double- and single-hung wood sash windows. Although the main roof is largely flat and surfaced with tar and gravel, portions of the parapet and some areas jutting out from the facade have been decorated with barrel tile. The hotel's monumental central frontispiece advances slightly from the main facade and features two metal-domed hexagonal towers that frame the main central bay. The interior floors of the hotel on the first floor and mezzanine level are made of cypress wood. The interior is divided up into residential and commercial units. The building contains a swimming pool located at the eastern end of the hotel, an enclosed patio on the west end, and a canvas awning covering the main entrance of the building. The former penthouse now houses a synagogue that serves the Jewish residents of the hotel condominium as well as other members of the community.

SETTING

The Town of Palm Beach is located on the island of Palm Beach, which is a narrow, 16-mile long barrier island located between the eastern shores of the Lake Worth Lagoon and the Atlantic Ocean, just east of the city of West Palm Beach, which is on the mainland. Palm Beach is an up-scale community with a fluctuating seasonal population consisting primarily of wealthy residents. The economy of Palm Beach is built almost entirely around tourism and recreation, with hotels, restaurants, recreational facilities and shopping establishments drawing the majority of their income from seasonal residents and visitors.

The Palm Beach Hotel, which itself serves both as residential and commercial facility, is situated in a largely mixed commercial and residential area, with single family dwellings, banks, commercial offices, retail stores and some institutional buildings nearby. The area is distinguished by other local historic landmarks. The hotel is located next to St. Edward's Catholic Church (a Town of Palm Beach Landmark), and stands a half block from the Paramount Building (NR 1973). The Biltmore Hotel, (another Town of Palm Beach Landmark) is a half block west at the end of Sunrise Avenue. The Breakers Hotel (NR 1973), and the US Post Office (NR 1983) are three and two blocks away.

DESCRIPTION

Exterior

Main (South) Elevation

Main Entrance/Central Massing

The main (south) facade of the building overlooks Sunshine Avenue. The most prominent architectural feature of the Palm Beach Hotel is its main entrance (Photos 1-2). The entrance was built to be entirely handicapped accessible, an unusual feature for public buildings from the 1920s. Centrally located on the main facade, the inset main entrance has access from three sides and is sheltered by an awning at the south side of the entrance. Flanking the main entrance on the ground level are two trefoil arched wall openings and four Composite pilasters that extend up to the second story. Directly above the main entrance on the second story is a round-arched balcony with a decorative molding that frames glazed double doors and sidelights.

Fenestration on the central portion of the hotel features 1/1-light single-hung sash windows that flank the arched opening on the second story. These windows rest on 12-light glass blocks. Above the windows are 8-light fixed fanlights. On each side of the windows are small narrow 1/1-light single-hung sash arched windows with 1-light fixed fanlights. On the third story of the central massing, the windows on the tower are simple 1/1-light single-hung sash windows. In the central portion of the third story is a paired, 1/1-light, single hung sash window with transom lights with an applied trefoil arch molding above. On each side of this window are small, narrow 1/1-light, single-hung sash windows with pointed arches (Photos 1-2).

Between the third and fourth stories of the central frontispiece of the hotel is a secondary barrel-tiled cantilevered roof interrupted by four decorative brackets and a Mission style parapet aligned directly over the main entrance. The fenestration of the fourth story consists of paired, 1/1-light, single-hung sash windows with 3-light fanlights separated by decorative brackets flanking the corners of the towers. The central bay exhibits simple paired, 1/1-light, single-hung sash windows flanked by single 1/1-light single-hung sash windows (Photo 2).

The most significant features of the main facade are the twin domed hexagonal towers, which flank the main entrance. The towers house brass bells and have arched openings on four sides. Contrasting with the barrel tile roof of the rest of the hotel, the domes of the towers are covered with metal. On the corners of the towers at the juncture with the fourth story are small cantilevered barrel tile roof extensions. Extending forward from the parapet between the towers is a small cantilevered section of barrel tiled roof (Photo 2).

Loggia

The main facade of the building features a pair of loggias supported by alternating twisted and plain Composite columns (Photo 3). The capitals of the columns are adorned with animal heads, acanthus leaves, crowns and fleurs-de-lis (Photo 4). The one-story loggia supports two second-story balconies flanking the main central massing of the hotel (Photos 5-6). The loggia also features decorative brackets aligned directly over each column under the first and second story juncture. On both ends of the loggias and at the junction with the central massing are quatrefoil openings located above smaller arched openings. The colonnades of the loggias have freestanding columns except at the ends where engaged columns abut the arched openings.

The main facades of the second and third stories of both the east and west sections of the south facade are nearly identical. The primary difference is the second story side entrances into the central pavilion. On the east side, the entrance is covered with an awning, while the west side has no protective cover. The second story cast concrete balconies have balustrades that extend the whole width of the loggias, have rounded ends. Double-leaf doorways with transom lights flanked by 1/1-light single-hung sash windows open onto the balconies. The fenestration of the third story consists primarily of a series of 1/1-light, single-hung sash windows. A single 1/1-light, single-hung sash arched window accented by a cantilevered, barrel-tiled shed roof on each wing near the central pavilion. Each wing also has two sets of three glazed double doors with two-light fixed transoms and metal balconets. The roofline has coping running the entire length of the facade and two sets of decorative urns located on both sides of the central massing above the 2½-story window tops (Photos 5-6).

Southeast and Southwest Wings

On the far ends of the main facade are the southeast and southwest wings of the hotel (Photos 7-8). The first story of the south facade of these wings features a smooth stucco finish that contrasts with the rough stucco finish of the rest of the hotel. Four square composite pilasters and fabric awnings cover three six-light bay storefront windows located between the pilasters. Fenestration on the second and third stories feature paired 1/1-light single hung sash windows flanking three 1/1-light single hung sash windows. The middle set of windows on the third story is decorated with molded arches and finials above the windows and twisted pilasters separating the windows. On the southwest wing, there are three sets of three one-light fixed windows between the pilasters. Just below the roofline is a canted barrel tiled roof with decorative brackets interrupted by the molded finials decorating the third story windows. The roofline features a Baroque crest that rises above the center of the otherwise plain parapet.

The southwest addition contains a patio extension that closes off direct access to the west side of the building (Photo 8). The addition is architecturally similar to the rest of the building, with fabric awnings over three entrances located between four pilasters. These pilasters are identical to the pilasters found on the southwest and southeast additions, except the capitals are freestanding, extending above the roofline.

East Elevation

Southeast Wing

The east elevation of the southeast wing features an external staircase with stuccoed wall that leads to a side entrance. The fenestration includes paired 1/1-light single-hung sash on the south side of the second and third stories, individual 1/1 single hung sash on the north side and smaller 1/1-light single-hung sash windows in the center, with a decorative molded arch above the third story window. Just below the roofline is a canted, barrel tiled, bracketed roof interrupted by a Mission parapet with decorative molding. The roofline features coping and castellation right before the parapet (Photo 9).

East Courtyard

The east courtyard dominates the east elevation of the hotel. It contains a noncontributing swimming pool with brick flooring and vegetation concentrated primarily along the main wing of the hotel. The north side of the southeast addition contains a loggia supported by square columns. Decorative elements include moldings, roofline castellation, decorative urns, brackets, and barrel tiled canted roofs. The fenestration consists of paired and individual 1/1-light single-hung sash windows, with decorative molded arches above some fourth and fifth story windows (Photos 10-11).

Northeast Wing

The east facade of the northeast wing is almost identical to the east facade of the southeast wing. The primary difference between the two wings is the external staircases. The staircase on the northeast wing is a metal staircase with railings. The decorative elements and fenestration pattern are the same with both wings (Photo 12).

North Elevation

The north elevation of the hotel lacks the ornamentation found in other parts of the building. Separated from a line of buildings fronting Park Avenue by a cement walkway, the exterior fabric of the north facade is rough stucco like most of the hotel. Fenestration consists of individual and paired 1/1-light single hung sash windows with molded sills underneath. On the north facade of the northwest wing, there are five four-light Palladian windows with two-light sidelights and three-light fanlights located on the first story. Also on the north facade of the northwest wing is an exterior metal staircase that leads to a second story entrance. (Photos 13-14)

West Elevation

The west elevation of the hotel is enclosed by patio extensions on the north and south. The west courtyard has also been enclosed and filled with a single story ballroom. Fenestration of the west façade of the southwest wing features paired and individual 1/1-light single-hung sash windows, with one raised 1/1-light single-hung sash window with a bracketed sill and bracketed barrel tile shed roof. The first floor of this wing displays a smooth stucco finish, 6-light bay windows on the second story, and composite pilasters. The west facade of the southwest wing also features a canted bracketed barrel tile secondary roof that is interrupted by the Mission style parapet. The roofline consists of coping and castellation as well as a Mission Style parapet located in the center (Photo 8).

Roof Level

The Palm Beach Hotel features a penthouse (Photos 15-18) located above the third story of the hotel. It extends from the middle portion of the hotel along the west side of north wing. The penthouse was originally used as a ballroom and meeting hall, but now houses a synagogue. Access between the penthouse and the hotel is gained by a stairwell and an elevator. It features a foyer that stretches along the east side of the south wing. At far end of the penthouse is a door that accesses the roof (Photo 15). The fenestration of the penthouse consists of fixed 3-light windows that extend the entire length of the north and south elevations (Photos 15-16). There are roof access doors located on both the north and south side of the penthouse. On the south side, an awning protects the windows on that side. The penthouse is covered by a flat roof surrounded by a plain masonry parapet.

Interior

First Floor

The Palm Beach Hotel is laid out in an H form, with two long wings connected by a smaller central wing, which serves as the main corridor between the wings and as the primary entrance to the courtyards to the east and west. On the first floor, the primary interior feature is the lobby, which extends from the main entrance to the north wing through the central portion of the hotel. Two elevators, which provide access to all levels of the hotel, are located along the east wall of the center portion. The interior walls and ceiling of the lobby are made of cypress and are supported by faux cypress beams and square pilasters and columns. The hallways on both the north and south wings are relatively unadorned and carpeted (Photos 19-20).

The rooms located on the first floor of the south wing are used for commercial purposes. East of the main entrance, set within the south wing loggia, is a large patio that was built in 1930 to hold tea dances (Photo 21). The patio flooring is made of patterned brick, with decorative moldings adorning the walls, and square and hexagonal columns supporting the roof. The patio features a faux fireplace supported by several small twisted

columns with decorative molding along the pediment. The patio also has a view of the east courtyard and the mezzanine. To make up for the lack of residential spaces, there is a mezzanine level located a half-floor above the first floor, which holds both commercial and residential spaces. To the far west side of the building are two patios accessed from the exterior through both the north and south wings of the hotel.

Ballroom

One of the most prominent interior features of the Palm Beach Hotel is the first floor ballroom located between the northwest and southwest sections of the building. The H-shaped building originally was open on both the east and west sides of the center section. The west side of this portion was enclosed for the purpose of constructing the ballroom. The ballroom features cypress ceilings with glass-covered trellises providing light into the room. The roof is supported by a colonnade of octagonal columns with decorative metal moldings. Part of this room has been converted into a bar (Photos 22-23).

Mezzanine Level

The mezzanine level contains a combination of commercial and residential spaces, including a former restaurant. The stepped elevations of the interior create a complex visual effect. The mezzanine level has residential units only on the north side of the hallway. Residential units on the mezzanine level retain original pecky cypress ceilings and faux cypress beams. They also retain original fireplaces (Photo 24). The east side of the mezzanine level is accessed through a connecting hallway that overlooks the east courtyard and the south wing patio (Photo 21).

Second and Third Floor

The second and third floors feature carpeted hallways extending the entire length of both the north and south wings of the hotel (Photos 25-26). On both sides of the hallways are residential units, with larger rooms located in the middle of the south wing and balcony access on the southwest section of the building. Second floor units on the south side open onto the terraces above the arcades. Both floors also feature several stairwell access points located along the sides and at the ends of both the north and south wings. The primary access point to the second and third floor is the elevator lobby located at the center of the building. The elevator lobbies are simple and unadorned, with faux wood panel double elevator doors (Photo 27).

Fourth Floor/Roof Level

Penthouse

The penthouse currently houses a synagogue and residential units. The synagogue extends primarily over the central portion of the hotel, with five units extending over the southeast section of the building. The main hallways and elevator lobby are similar to the hallways and lobbies located on the second and third floor (Photo 28). A narrow hallway extends through the southeast section before opening to the third floor roof, with rooms located just on the north side of the hallway (Photo 29). Survey sheets SS-26 and SS-27 show a different configuration for the twelve penthouse units. Interior hallways have dropped ceilings, which were necessary to accommodate equipment installed in the modern era.

The synagogue has three separate sections: the sanctuary, which is situated on the north side of central portion of the hotel; the dining area, which is located along the west side of the north wing, connecting the sactuary to a stairwell access at the far west end of the north wing; and the kitchen, located adjacent to the stairwell on the far west end. On the east end of the ballroom is a raised platform, originally used for performances but now used for the Torah Ark (Photo 30). The sanctuary features a wooden divider with an unusual pattern, which separates the two seating areas, in accordance with the Jewish Orthodox practice of separate seating areas for men and women (Photo 31). Other decorative elements include wood beams with decorative brackets and decorative moldings between the windows (Photo 32). The dining area is a narrower room, accessed from the ballroom via a set of steps that lead to double doors. It is flanked by windows on both sides, with decorative molded brackets between the windows. There are several rows of wood beams with light fixtures in the center adorning the ceiling. At the west end of the room are two doors that provide access to the staircase and the adjoining kitchen (Photo 33).

Alterations

Although windows and doors have changed in the Palm Beach Hotel, the exterior retains much of its original appearance. The most noticeable changes include the enclosing of the west end of the "H" to create the first floor ballroom and the construction of the c. 1981 modern swimming pool. In 1930, five of the shops fronting on Sunrise Avenue were removed and replaced by the loggia and a courtyard patio. The loggia retains the multi-colored, unglazed ceramic tile floor (Photo 21). The purpose of those changes was to accommodate afternoon "tea dances,"[1] which were popular on the island at the time. Minor renovations were made to the building around 1946.[2] In 1969, the building was abandoned. There were several subsequent undocumented

[1] "Great Portico Improvement Resort Hotel" December 20, 1930. On file at the Historical Society of Palm Beach County.
[2] "Semi-Baroque Blended with Classic at Palm Beach Hotel" Palm Beach Daily News, 1946, referenced, Jane Day, Palm Beach Hotel Designation Report, February 20, 2008, 8.

interior renovations in the 1980s and early 1990s. Sash windows with single panes replaced the original multi-paned casement windows, which flank French doors. Fanlights in some instances have been occluded and air conditioning units protrude beneath windows. Two small balconies flanking the central bay balcony above the main entrance were removed, but the date of this alteration is unknown (Photo 34). Air conditioners are now in that space. (Photo 3).

At some point, interior configuration of the fourth floor penthouse was changed, but the exact details have been lost. The 1981 survey shows 12 residential penthouse (PH) units, but it is not thought that these were part of the original floor plan. When the hotel became a condominium in February 1981, it originally contained 360 condominium units; 22 commercial units, 284 residential single units with one bath, (eight ground floor, 10 mezzanine, 29 first floor, 109 second floor, 116 third floor, and 12 penthouse) 15 doubles with bath, (one first floor, eight second floor, and six third floor) one mezzanine suite with four bedrooms and four baths, and 38 storage units on various floors.

Non Contributing Resource

The swimming pool (Photo 10), adjacent to the loggia on the north, now occupies the courtyard between the two interposed (between the center block and north and south end wings) east wings of the "H" of the building, where the old patio and fountain were built in 1930 when the loggia was added.[3] The pool, built c. 1981, is accessed via a walkway that leads around the outside of the building and through the first floor loggia. It is a simple in-ground pool that does not affect the integrity of the building.

[3] Ibid.

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

The Palm Beach Hotel is significant at the local level under Criteria A for its association with the tourism industry in South Florida and C for Architecture. From the time of its construction in 1925 until the death of builder and original owner Thomas A. Clarke in 1935, this hotel was one of the more prominent luxury hotels in Palm Beach and was a distinguished social gathering place for many visitors and residents. It is an important example of the work of the New York architect Mortimer Dickinson Metcalfe, who also designed St. Edwards Catholic Church in Palm Beach. The Mediterranean Revival style of the hotel building is representative of the 1920s Florida Boom era in Palm Beach and shows how that style was adapted to a hotel structure. The building best reflects this style through its use of distinctive Mediterranean Revival details, such as the long arcaded loggias, the twin towers, decorative brackets, arched windows, barrel tile, stucco-covered exterior walls, and other features.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The settlement of the Palm Beach area did not begin until 1871, when George W. Lainhart and a group of 21 men arrived in the Lake Worth area to conduct a survey to determine the feasibility of settling the area. In 1873, the first formal homestead was established in Lake Worth region. Shortly afterwards, more families began to arrive to establish homesteads. The area remained primitive, however, and the settlers depended on the arrival of ocean-going ships for communication with the outside world. Between 1885 and 1893, mail was carried by 11 "barefoot" mailmen who carried the mail the 136 miles between Palm Beach and Cape Florida. It would not be until 1887 that the first official post office would be established.[4] In 1879, a schooner named Providencia wrecked off a sandbar inhabited by a few recent settlers, and a good portion of its cargo of coconuts floated ashore. The settlers lost no time claiming salvage and planting the coconuts, which were not native to South Florida, in an effort to launch tropical South Florida on a commercial coconut industry. It was the palm groves that attracted Henry Flagler to the area, and later became the namesake of the island, the town, and the county. The first hotel to open on Palm Beach was the Cocoanut Grove, founded by Captain Elisha Newton Dimick. Dimick, an early pioneer and entrepreneur, also owned the local drug stores in both Palm Beach and West Palm Beach. Charles J. Clarke purchased the property in 1892. When Henry Flagler made his first visit to Palm Beach in March 1893, he stayed at the Cocoanut Grove. Shortly afterwards, in October 1893, the hotel burned to the ground.[5]

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[4] Palm Beach County Timeline, http://www.co.palm-beach.fl.us/100/timeline.htm.
[5] Barbara Hoffstot, Landmark Architecture of Palm Beach. (Pittsburgh, PA: Ober Park Associates, Inc., 1974) p. 7-8; J. Wadsworth Travers, History of Beautiful Palm Beach (West Palm Beach, FL: The Palm Beach Press, 1929) 3rd edition, p. 4-8; Lake Worth Pioneer's Association, Inc., "Elisha Newton Dimick," http://www.lwpa.org/pioneer_elisha_newton_dimick.html.

Henry Flagler

Although the first hotel in Palm Beach was built prior to 1892, the emergence of Palm Beach as a luxury resort destination began in 1893, when Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway connected the east coast of South Florida to the rest of the eastern seaboard. He built several luxury hotels along the east coast of Florida, starting with the Hotel Ponce de Leon in St. Augustine. Among the hotels he built were the Breakers and the Royal Poinciana in Palm Beach. The Flagler-built hotels attracted some of the world's wealthiest and most powerful families, such as the Vanderbilts, Astors, and Rockefellers, to Palm Beach. He built a train depot at the east end of Palm Beach's north bridge from Palm Beach Island to the mainland for customers' private cars and conventional passenger trains.

Henry Morrison Flagler (1830-1913) was born on January 2, 1830 in Hopewell, New York. After moving to Bellevue, Ohio, Flagler became a partner in the newly organized D. M. Harkness and Company with his half-brother, Dan Harkness in 1852. It was then that Flagler became acquainted with John D. Rockefeller, who worked as a commission agent with Hewitt and Tuttle for the Harkness Grain Company. By the mid 1860s, Cleveland became the center of the oil refining industry in America and Rockefeller left the grain business to start his own oil refinery. In 1867, Rockefeller, needing capital for his new venture, approached Flagler. Flagler obtained $100,000 from a relative on the condition that Flagler be made one of Rockefeller's partners. A Rockefeller, Samuel Andrews and Flagler partnership was formed with Flagler in control of Harkness' interest. On January 10, 1870, the Rockefeller, Andrews and Flagler partnership emerged as a joint-stock corporation named Standard Oil and by 1872, Standard Oil led the American oil refining industry, producing 10,000 barrels per day.[6]

By 1878, Flagler's wife Mary Harkness Flagler, who had always struggled with health problems, was very ill. On advice from Mary's physician, she and Flagler visited Jacksonville, Florida, for the winter. Mary's illness grew worse, however, and she died on May 18, 1881, at age 47. Two years after Mary's death, Flagler married Ida Alice Shourds. Soon after their wedding, the couple traveled to St. Augustine, Florida, where they found the city charming, but the hotel facilities and transportation systems inadequate. Flagler recognized Florida's potential to attract out-of-state visitors. Though Flagler remained on the Board of Directors of Standard Oil, he gave up his day-to-day involvement in the corporation in order to pursue his interests in Florida. He returned to St. Augustine in 1885 and began construction on the 540-room Hotel Ponce de Leon, which was completed in 1888. Realizing the need for a sound transportation system to support his hotel ventures, Flagler purchased the Jacksonville, St. Augustine & Halifax Railroad, the first railroad in what would eventually become the Florida East Coast Railway.[7]

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[6] Henry Morrison Flagler Museum, "Henry Morrison Flagler Biography," http://flaglermuseum.us/html/flagler_biography.html.
[7] Ibid.

Development of Tourism Industry

The Town of Palm Beach, formally incorporated in 1911, was built around tourism and recreation. Most of the residents of Palm Beach either initially came there as visitors or were one of the many support personnel of the resorts. By this time, the population was largely seasonal and fluctuated between the winter and summer months, much like today. E. R. Bradley and his brother John, along with Flagler and Sidney Maddock of Brooklyn, platted the subdivisions, which included the island's early resort district. An 1895 photo in the Florida Photographic Collection shows the site of what was then the new Palm Beach Hotel as a dirt lane lined with wooden shacks, part of the Styx, the area where African American support staff lived. In the 1913 Floral Park Plat, Maddock had already built the original Palm Beach Hotel. Floral Park and the 1916 Floral Park Addition Number Two became Palm Beach's downtown/main street area. Maddock's Sunrise Avenue Addition to the Town of Palm Beach Subdivision was adjacent on the north to the Bradleys' Addition Number Two to Floral Park. Maddock had also owned the property platted as the Sunrise Avenue Addition Number Two to the Town of Palm Beach.[8]

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The original Palm Beach Hotel, constructed of wood, was built on the shores of Lake Worth, near the location of the modern-day Biltmore Hotel. When it burned to the ground in May 1925, Thomas A. Clarke asked his friend Maddock if he could use the name for a project he had been contemplating on Sunrise Avenue. Clarke's daughter, Geraldine, recounted the day of the tragic fire:

> A careless smoker tossed a cigarette out the window of the Breakers Hotel. The frame building was soon blazing merrily away. The sparks were carried by the ocean breeze to the old Palm Beach Hotel and within a short time both wooden structures were smouldering ash heaps. Fortunately, it was mid-afternoon. Mother grabbed her sable cape, jewel box, Papa's papers and she and Lee ran outside with the other guests. When Papa returned from his daily drive in the Everglades with the chauffeur driven Cadillac touring car, the smoking ruins were sad to see.[9]

New Palm Beach Hotel

When the 1925 fire destroyed the Breakers and the old Palm Beach Hotel, Clarke announced plans for a new hotel to replace the old Palm Beach Hotel in the New York Times less than a week later. He hurried to complete the new hotel by the next year's season. Using a crew of experienced New York steelworkers, Clarke

[8] Palm Beach Town Hall National Register Nomination.
[9] Day, p. 6; Geraldine Clarke Kravis, "Papa," Unpublished manuscript, http://www.gilmartinusa.net/oldsitexxxxxxx/papaclark.htm; "Loss is $7,000,000 in Palm Beach Fire; All Guests Escaped," New York Times, March 20, 1925.

completed the new Palm Beach Hotel before Christmas, but the opening was not held until early January. The destruction of the Breakers and the old Palm Beach Hotel was a blow to the local economy. The completion of the new Palm Beach Hotel, followed by the construction of the Alba Hotel and the re-construction of the Breakers shortly afterwards, compensated for the loss. With prices ranging from $3.50 to $7 a night, the new Palm Beach Hotel targeted those who were well to do but not super rich.[10]

The gala opening of the new hotel was on January 9, 1926. Clarke's three daughters, Eleanor, Geraldine, and Leanor raised the American flag over the entrance and the band played the Star Spangled Banner. That evening the festivities were held up at the roof garden. The Palm Beach Post noted that over one thousand people showed up to take in the view from the ocean to Lake Worth and dance to the Strauss Orchestra of New York. Among those in attendance at the opening was Mengo Lazarus Morgenthau, a candy manufacturer and brother of Henry Morganthau, Sr., the diplomat to Turkey during World War I.[11]

While the Palm Beach Hotel never attracted the extremely wealthy clientele of other luxury hotels on the island, such as the Breakers, it did draw some notable people into its doors. The humorist Will Rogers gave a performance in the Palm Beach Hotel in 1927, where he noted that his performance was "so clean it was uninteresting."[12] The comedian W. C. Fields and songwriter Arthur Hammerstein also paid a visit to the hotel in 1927. The noted artist Kyra Markham and intellectuals such as the Princeton historian William Starr Myers and the dietician Robert Mandel were also guests at the Palm Beach Hotel. The hotel also served as a social gathering place, with a roof garden dining room and Tea Dances held in east portico. Its strategic location near the Paramount Theater and the Beach Club put it in the middle of Palm Beach social life.[13]

The peak of the boom times continued for only a few months after the opening of the hotel. The Alba Hotel, completed in February 1926, was in voluntary receivership by May 1926. There was also a constriction in the flow of construction materials in 1926 due to rail strikes and a shipping disruption in Miami. The 1926 hurricane struck Miami and caused great destruction. Banks failed. The building of large hotels on the island was at a standstill by the end of the 1920s. The Flagler-built Royal Poinciana was no longer operating by 1935. Despite this, Palm Beach remained a popular tourist destination. Articles in the New York Times demonstrate that the Palm Beach Hotel also continued to host important social gatherings and generate jobs and revenue at a time when poverty and joblessness was widespread across the country.

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[10] Ibid.
[11] Day, p. 8; "New Palm Beach Hotel," Palm Beach Post, 10 Jan 1926; Frederick Converse Beach, The Americana: A Universal Reference Library (New York: The Americana Company, 1911), 117-118.
[12] "Palm Beach Scene of Many Parties," New York Times, 11 Feb 1927; "Will Rogers in Palm Beach: So Moral He was Uninteresting," New York Times, 11 Feb 1927.
[13] "Comedy Star Visits Beach," New York Times, 17 Jan 1927; "Society Meets at New Hotel for Tea Hour," New York Times, 25 Feb 1926; "The New Palm Beach Hotel," Palm Beach Post, 30 Jan 1926.

Following the death of Clarke, the hotel continued to operate under different ownership until 1969, when it became vacant. After a short period as a retirement hotel, further attempts by later owners to manage the property as a hotel proved fruitless. In 1981, the Declaration of Condominium was filed with Palm Beach County, turning the former hotel into the first condominium hotel project approved by the Town of Palm Beach.[14]

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Mediterranean Revival

Buildings of Spanish precedent built before about 1920 are generally free adaptations in the Mission style. It was not until the Panama-California Exposition, held in San Diego in 1915, that precise imitation of more elaborate Spanish prototypes received wide attention. Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue designed the exposition. Inspired by the wide publicity given the exposition, other architects soon began to look directly to Spain and other areas along the Mediterranean for source material. There they found a still longer and richer sequence of architectural traditions, which became melded into a style that came to be known as Mediterranean Revival. The style, which was most popular in areas formerly under the control of Spain, such as the American Southwest and Florida, reached its apex during the 1920s and early 1930s and passed rapidly from favor during the 1940s.[15]

In the period starting from the end of World War I to the early years of the 1920s, many of the grand Mediterranean Revival estates that have come to characterize early Palm Beach were built. The style first found its way into Palm Beach through the Everglades Club, a collaboration between architect Addison Mizner and sewing machine heir Paris Singer, completed in 1918. Mizner also completed the shopping "Vias" on Worth Avenue and homes for many of Palm Beach's elite. Maurice Fatio, John Volk, Marion Sims Wyeth and Mortimer Dickinson Metcalfe were also busy, working with similar Mediterranean Revival forms. Even the institutional architecture of the new Palm Beach Public School that was designed by R. H. Tremble and completed in 1921 was built in this popular style. The Palm Beach Hotel was the first large Mediterranean Revival style hotel completed on the island.[16]

Thomas Aloysius Clarke

Born in Morris Run, Pennsylvania, in 1878, the son of an Irish-born mineworker, Thomas Aloysius Clarke (1878-1935) spent much of his professional life as a builder in Brooklyn, New York. He was the largest

[14] Day, p. 8-9.
[15] McAlester, Virginia and Lee, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005) p. 418.
[16] Hoffstot, 8-13; Palm Beach Town Hall NR nomination, section 8, p. 2.

contractor for school construction in New York City, and built the Schubert, Teller and DeKalb Theaters. Clarke made his first trip to Palm Beach in 1916, where he bought several acres of land when it became available. It was in New York that he met Mortimer Dickinson Metcalfe, who was working at the time as the associate architect of the City of New York. Besides the Palm Beach Hotel, the two also collaborated on the construction of St. Edwards Church built next door. Clarke invested heavily in the real estate market, and the crash of the land boom followed by the onset of the Great Depression severely affected him. In order to retain the hotel, Clarke had to sell all his other Florida properties at auction in February 1935, only three months before he died.[17]

Mortimer Dickinson Metcalfe

Mortimer Dickinson Metcalfe (1880-1957) was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1880. He obtained his early education in public schools, including Boys' High School and the Pratt Institute, where he graduated from the School of Architecture. He then took five years of postgraduate work at Columbia University and the Beaux Arts Institute. His first practical experience in the architectural world was in the offices of Hines and Lafarge, and on the construction of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. In the offices of Carrere and Hastings, he worked on a city planning layout for the City of Cleveland, including its library and other public buildings. He also worked in the offices of Warren and Wetmore, helping in designing the Grand Central Station in New York City and many hotels, including the Ritz-Carlton, Belmont, and Biltmore.[18]

In 1908, Metcalfe became Deputy State Architect of the State of New York, and held this position until 1914. In 1911, he joined the New York chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and in 1926 was bestowed the high honor of membership in the National Institute in Washington. Until 1922, Metcalfe was a member of the partnership Snelling and Metcalfe, with prestigious contracts that included Vanderbilt University, the John E. Berwind Memorial Hospital in New York City and St. John's Church in Jacksonville, Florida. Upon Snelling's death, Metcalfe was appointed associate architect for the city of New York to handle the school building program for the board of education. During his tenure, 150 elementary and high schools were built in the city. Metcalfe's first commission in Palm Beach was in 1925 when Clarke hired him to design the new Palm Beach Hotel on Sunrise Avenue. Later he also designed the Park Inn, the Annex and the Palm Beach Post Office, although his design was never executed. His crowning achievement in Palm Beach was the plan for St. Edward's Catholic Church.[19]

The Palm Beach Hotel displays several signature Metcalfe features that stray from the usual details of the Mediterranean Revival style. Metcalfe, like many architects of his time trained in the Beaux Arts style,

[17] Day, p. 6-7; Edward Gilmartin, "Gilmartin Family USA: Chapter 15 Thomas A. Clarke," http://www.gilmartinusa.net/chapter15-08.html.
[18] Day, p. 11.
[19] Ibid.

incorporated classical elements into a variety of different styles. With the Palm Beach Hotel, the influence of Metcalfe's Beaux Arts schooling can be seen through the symmetrical facade, freestanding decorative urns and acanthus leaves on the brackets. The interior of the building also exhibits some classical-inspired design characteristics with pediments and shields over the fireplaces.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Palm Beach Hotel is significant as an outstanding example of a commercial Mediterranean Style building constructed in Palm Beach, Florida. The Spanish tile roof, stucco siding and second story balustrade is indicative of the Mediterranean style. The loggia, with its long colonnade of alternating smooth and twisted Corinthian columns and tiled covered walkway, is an elaborate feature of the style. An unusual element of the building is the twin dome-roofed bell towers flanking the main entrance. Bell towers are another aspect of Spanish-inspired designs such as Mediterranean Revival.

Engineering/Construction

An unusual aspect of this building was the fact that Clarke had the Palm Beach Hotel built fully handicapped-accessible. Clarke had handicapped ramps as well as elevators installed to give handicapped people complete access to the hotel. This was long before the Americans with Disabilities Act made this a requirement for public buildings. According to his daughter Geraldine, Clarke was good friends with a man by the name of Billy Finley, who was paralyzed from polio, which perhaps explains his sensitivity to issues of accessibility.[20]

[20] Kravis.

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Verbal Boundary Description

235 Sunrise Avenue 1001 et al, PALM BEACH HOTEL COND DECL 2-12-81 et al' Parcel #50-43-43-15-28-000-0000 et al.

Boundary Justification

The legal description describes the property, which contains all of the historic resources associated with the Palm Beach Hotel Condominium, Inc. resort hotel as constructed as the Palm Beach Hotel in 1925.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Palm Beach Hotel
2. Palm Beach County, Florida
3. Jack Blanchard
4. August 2008
5. S. A. Simmons, Inc.
6. South facade, center bay, entrance and second floor balcony, facing north
7. Photo 1 of 34

Items 1-5 are the same for photographs 2-3

6. Center bay facade, third and fourth (penthouse) floors and bell towers, facing north
7. Photo 2 of 34

6. East side of loggia on south wing, facing north
7. Photo 3 of 34

Items 1-2 are the same for photographs 4-5

3. Jane S. Day
4. February, 2007
5. Palm Beach Hotel Condominium
6. Corinthian capital, arcade column, facing northwest
7. Photo 4 of 34

3. Jack Blanchard
4. August 2008
5. S. A. Simmons, Inc
6. South facade, west center and west bays, facing northwest
7. Photo 5 of 34

Items 1-5 are the same for photographs 6-7

6. South facade, three center bays, facing northwest
7. Photo 6 of 34

6. South facade, east bay, ground floor (commercial shop) through third floor, facing northwest
7. Photo 7 of 34

Items 1-2 are the same for photograph 8

3. Jane S. Day
4. 2009
5. Research Atlantica, Inc.
6. West facade, facing northeast
7. Photo 8 of 34

Items 1-5 are the same for the photographs 9-14

6. East facade of south wing, facing northwest
7. Photo 9 of 34

6. East courtyard, facing west
7. Photo 10 of 34

6. South side of north wing next to east courtyard, facing north
7. Photo 11 of 34

6. East facade of north wing, facing northwest
7. Photo 12 of 34

6. East side of north elevation of north wing, facing southeast
7. Photo 13 of 34

6. West side of north elevation of north wing, facing southeast
7. Photo 14 of 34

Items 1-2 are the same for photograph 15

3. Randy Inman
4. January 2010
5. Palm Beach Hotel Condominium, Inc.
6. Penthouse, facing southwest
7. Photo 15 of 34

Items 1-5 are the same for photographs 16-19

6. Penthouse, facing southeast
7. Photo 16 of 34

6. Roof garden, facing northwest
7. Photo 17 of 34

6. Roof garden, facing southwest
7. Photo 18 of 34

6. Main lobby, facing south
7. Photo 19 of 34

6. Main lobby, facing north
7. Photo 20 of 34

Items 1-2 are the same for photographs 21-22

3. Jack Blanchard
4. August 2008
5. S. A. Simmons, Inc.
6. View of loggia from mezzanine, facing southwest
7. Photo 21 of 34

3. Randy Inman
4. January 2010
5. Palm Beach Hotel Condominium, Inc.
6. View of first floor ballroom, facing west
7. Photo 22 of 34

Items 1-5 are the same for photograph 23

6. View of first floor ballroom bar, facing east
7. Photo 23 of 34

Items 1-2 are the same for photographs 24-25

3. Jack Blanchard
4. August 2008
5. S. A. Simmons, Inc.
6. Mezzanine pecky cypress ceiling, facing southwest
7. Photo 24 of 34

3. Randy Inman
4. January 2010
5. Palm Beach Hotel Condominium, Inc
6. North wing second floor hallway, facing east
7. Photo 25 of 34

Items 1-5 are the same for photographs 26-29

6. North wing third floor hallway, facing west
7. Photo 26 of 34

6. Third floor elevator lobby, facing northeast
7. Photo 27 of 34

6. Penthouse lobby, facing south
7. Photo 28 of 34

6. Penthouse southeast extension hallway, facing east
7. Photo 29 of 34

Items 1-2 are the same for photographs 30-31

3. Photographer unknown
4. Date unknown
5. New Synagogue of Palm Beach
6. View of roof garden synagogue, facing east
7. Photo 30 of 34

3. Randy Inman
4. January 2010
5. Palm Beach Hotel Condominium, Inc
6. Roof garden ballroom, facing northwest
7. Photo 31 of 34

Items 1-5 are the same for photographs 32-33

6. Roof garden ballroom ceiling beams, facing northwest
7. Photo 32 of 34

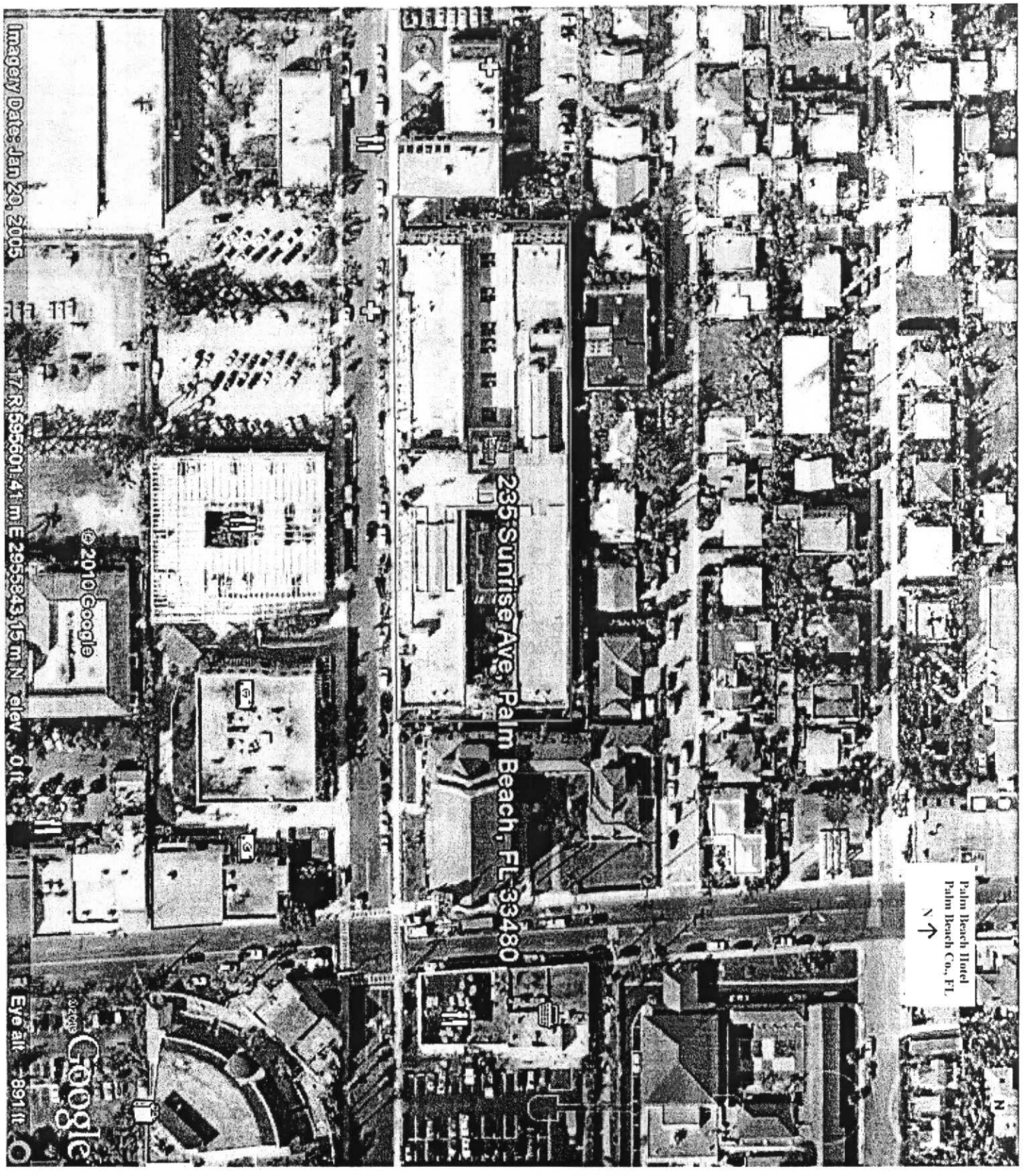
6. Roof garden dining area, facing west
7. Photo 33 of 34

Items 1-2 are the same for photograph 34

3. Photographer unknown
4. Date unknown
5. Palm Beach Historical Society
6. Historic photo of main (south) facade, facing north
7. Photo 34 of 34

Palm Beach Hotel
Palm Beach Co. FL
N
Seminole Ave
Oleander Ave
Park Ave
Sunrise Ave
Sunset Ave
Royal Poinciana Way
Bradley Pl
N County Rd
Root Trl
Grace Trl
N Breakers Row
Cocoanut Row

Palm Beach Hotel, Palm Beach Co., FL



EXIT

PHOTO BY MORT KAYE