

2690

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

RECEIVED

OCT 28 1988

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Alderman House
other names/site number Royal Palm Antiques
8LL612

2. Location

street & number 2572 First Street
city, town Fort Myers
state Florida code FL county Lee code FL071 zip code 33901

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private (checked)
Category of Property: building(s) (checked)
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 2, Noncontributing 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 (checked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official: [Signature]
Date: 10/17/88
Florida Department of State, Bureau of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau: State Historic Preservation Officer

In my opinion, the property meets (checked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official:
Date:
State or Federal agency and bureau:

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
Entered in the National Register. (checked)
determined eligible for the National Register.
determined not eligible for the National Register.
removed from the National Register.
other, (explain):

Entered in the National Register 12/1/88
[Signature]

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

SPANISH COLONIAL REVIVAL

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls hollow clay tile

stucco

roof clay tile

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY

The Alderman House, located at 2572 First Street, Fort Myers, is locally significant under Criteria C as an excellent example of the Mediterranean Revival style architecture in Fort Myers during the Florida Land Boom of the 1920s. The stuccoed masonry structure was constructed in 1925 as the residence of Frank Alderman, Sr., President of the First National Bank of Fort Myers. Outstanding features of the structure include a front patio of Italian blue and white tile, an arcaded loggia with twisted columns, decorated coved friezes, and vertical doors that are raised upwards into the walls.

ORIGINAL SETTING

The Alderman House was built in 1925 on First Street, one of the main streets in Fort Myers at that time. It was surrounded by residential structures that varied in style from frame vernacular, to Queen Anne, to Colonial Revival, to Mediterranean Revival. The house was one of the most elaborate residences constructed in the latter style in Fort Myers and contained many ornamental details associated with Addison Mizner's interpretation of Northern Italian architecture.

PRESENT SETTING

Today, 2572 First Street is surrounded by many of the same residential structures as in 1925. The majority of the structures have been adapted for use as house museums, offices and small businesses. The Alderman House, itself, houses Royal Palm Antiques, allowing the structure to be shown to its best advantage with numerous pieces of furniture and antiques from its historic period.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Alderman House is a stuccoed masonry, Mediterranean Revival style structure with an irregular U-shape plan. The main (west) facade contains a central patio with arcaded loggia flanked by a two story projecting tower to the north, and a one story projecting bay to the south. (SEE PHOTO #1) A small pentave is covered with red clay barrel tile as is the hip roofed of the

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Architecture

Period of Significance
1925-1928

Significant Dates
1925

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

SUMMARY

The Alderman House is locally significant under Criteria C as an excellent example of the Mediterranean Revival style residences constructed in Florida during the 1920s Florida Land Boom Period. It is significant in the Fort Myers area as the residence of Frank Alderman, a prominent businessman and President of the local bank. Constructed in 1925, it was recognized the following year as one of the most outstanding Spanish Colonial Revival style residences in the country in The Spanish House for America, Its Design, Furnishings and Garden.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The onset of the First World War forced the American public to curtail their overseas travel and look to domestic lands for travel and vacation destinations. Florida tourist trade prospered as many of those who would have traveled to Europe, headed to Florida for summer vacations and winter residences.

After the War, reports of large profits in real estate brought thousand of speculators to Florida. Huge tracks of land were bought and sold overnight at enormous profits. Adding to the furor for new land was the staggering undertaking of draining the Everglades to produce marketable lands for cities, towns, cattle ranches, citrus groves, and agricultural farmland.

The State was soon inundated with speculators, winter residents and retirement communities. Between 1920 and 1925, the population of Florida increased four times faster than any other state in the nation. As real estate demands increased, so did demands upon the State. Lumber was a precious commodity, particularly in South Florida; because Florida had very few manufacturing centers in the 1920s, the majority of all building materials had to be imported from other parts of the nation or other nations. Railroad, land and water transportation networks were unable to keep up with the enormous demands on the systems. By 1926, the City of Miami was so pressed to control the flow of ships in their bay, they limited ships' cargoes to agricultural materials and food supplies.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) 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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	7
---	---

4	1	4	1	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

2	9	4	7	5	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description A parcel of land in Section 13, Township 44 South, Range 24 East, described as follows: beginning at a point on the Southerly side of First Street 127 feet easterly from the point of intersection of the east side of Park Avenue with the south side of First Street;thence easterly along the southerly side of First Street 150 feet; thence southerly and parallel with Park Avenue, 210 feet; thence westerly and parallel with First Street; 150 feet; thence northerly and parallel with Park Avenue 210 feet to the Point of Beginning

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary follows the legal description for the property, being the historic boundary as described on the deed of ownership.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Vicki L. Welcher Historic Sites Specialist
 organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date August 18, 1988
 street & number 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (904) 487-233
 city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Alderman House

tower. The roofs of both the center section and the south wing are flat roofed with false fronts.

The front patio is slightly raised and is approached by three centered, shallow steps. The low walls surrounding the patio have upper and lower portions. The lower half is exposed oolitic limestone rocks while the upper half contains alternating sections of turned masonry posts and stuccoed oolitic limestone rocks. The stuccoing has been deleted in several areas to reveal the underlying stone, a technique copied from Addison Mizner in Palm Beach, Florida.(SEE PHOTO #2) The patio itself is covered in blue and white Italian tile in a herringbone configuration. An arcaded loggia with twisted columns is found in the center of the patio leading to the main entrance. (SEE PHOTO #3)

Outstanding features of the two story square tower include a coved frieze and full length vertical windows with arched openings and wrought iron balconettes on the second story. The coved frieze is decorated in colored stucco in an elaborate design. All fenestration are wood sash and original. (SEE PHOTO #4)

The one story ell on the south side of the main facade contains one of the most unusual design features of the structure. As in the north tower, the fenestration is full length and provides access to the interior as well as providing adequate cross ventilation. They are exceptional because they open upwards, acting as vertical recessed doors. Because of their weight, the doors are no longer opened except on rare occasions, but retain all weights and pulleys. The three bays on the front facade are arched with twisted columns as dividers. Arched panels are recessed and in bas relief. Two elevations are covered by modern curved awnings. (SEE PHOTO #5)

The south elevation contains a triple set of the vertical doors with arched lintels in bas relief. A centered entrance is decorated with a pedimented door hood with clay barrel tile roofing and wrought iron supports. A small window on the other side of the door has replace aluminum sash with the arched lintel in bas relief. (SEE PHOTO #6)

The east elevation is stepped in height going from a one story section on the south side, to a one and a half story central section, to a two story north section. The south and central sections are flat roofed with flat parapet and smooth frieze band. The north section has a low pitched hip roof in clay barrel tile roofing. An exterior chimney is centrally located between vertical fenestration with arched lintels in bas relief. The chimney itself

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Alderman House

contains a false entrance to provide symmetry. Located on axis to the chimney is a above ground cistern with a copper domed cover. (SEE PHOTO #7)

The north elevation repeats the stepped appearance of the east elevation using different elements. A rear entranceway with gabled door hood with corbelled masonry supports has a three vertical light door. To the center of the elevation is a flat roofed oriel window. To the west and front of the elevation is the tower with coved frieze. Fenestration is replacement aluminum sash. (SEE PHOTO #8)

At the northeast corner of the lot is a garage/servants quarters. A stuccoed masonry wall with arched entry connects the main house to the arcaded loggia of the outbuilding. Bas relief plates ornament the elevation. (SEE PHOTO #9) A shed roof has replaced rolled asphalt roofing. The central section of the building contains the small apartment and is reached by an exterior stairwell and is covered by a hip roof with clay barrel tile roofing. The rear portion of the building repeats the front elevation with an arcaded loggia, and stuccoed wall with arched entry. (SEE PHOTO #10)

INTERIOR

The interior of the structure reflects the detailed design rendered by the architect (unknown) to provide a showcase both inside and out. The central room is dominated by a large central fireplace with stone mantel. To the right of the central room is the one story wing containing two plain rooms, the front room dominated by the vertical windows/doors. The rear half of the wing contains a large room originally used as a bedroom, with walkin closet and bathroom.

The north wing, located to the left of the central room, is a series of cantilevered rooms with irregular entranceways placed strategically to provide the maximum amount of space with a limited square footage. The front room, which opens onto the patio, is sunken and reached by a miniature hallway. From this front room, the floor plan follows around to the butler's pantry, pantry, and kitchen areas. Built-in closets and cupboards provide more than adequate storage space.

To reach the upper story, a small combination stairwell was designed using an arcaded opening onto the central room, and providing openspace for the stairway landing. A small window seat at the landing provides light for the rest of the stairwell. Two bedrooms connected by a two room powder/bath room are large and well lit.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

Alderman House

The Alderman House is an excellent example of a designed Mediterranean Revival house that used arcades, loggias, and covered fenestration to produce a structure both comfortable to live in and elaborate enough to be a showcase in Fort Myers.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1 Alderman House

Adding to these transportation problems were national economical and financial difficulties caused by a sluggish stock market and bad press. The practice of buying on margin, causing financial problems across the nation, was rampant in Florida. Reports of overspeculation in Florida land were reported in the press in graphic detail. The Florida Land Boom was having serious financial problems. In 1926, the sinking of a cargo ship in the Biscayne Bay forced the closing of the port to all water traffic. The resulting blow to Miami's economy heralded the beginning of the end of the Florida Land Boom in South Florida.

Two devastating hurricanes in 1926 and 1928 added further problems to the already financially strained State. The mid-September, 1926 hurricane swept across the state destroying houses, businesses and in some cases, entire communities. The second hurricane in September of 1928 killed 1800 people and left the same number injured. Damage estimates were in the hundreds of thousands. Unable to recover, many communities went bankrupt, and the Florida Land Boom came to an end.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE
CRITERIA C

New styles and techniques in architecture were seen throughout Florida during the 1920s Land Boom Period as planned communities and developments sought to create tropical paradises in exotic locales. Moorish, Spanish, Northern Italian, Pueblo Indian, California Mission, Mid-Eastern and Chinese style elements were used with sometimes surprising results. The most successful of these styles was the Mediterranean Revival style. One architect in particular can be credited with the Mediterranean Revival style, Addison Mizner.

Addison Mizner came to Palm Beach, Florida in 1918 with his friend, Paris Singer. Both Singer and Mizner came to Florida to recover their health and, once recovered, were soon bored. As a lark, they redesigned Singer's cottage with Spanish style architecture, and an era began. Mizner's next project was the Everglades Club. Here, he returned to the Moorish/Spanish style of the Flagler's Hotel Ponce de Leon in St. Augustine and Plant's Tampa Bay Hotel. Because of the lack of experienced carpenters and adequate timber, Mizner used hollow clay tile with stuccoed finishings as building materials. Clay was imported from Georgia and fired on site. This form of architectural engineering was not only innovative for its time, it more accurately reflected the architecture found in Northern Italy and the South of Spain.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 2 Alderman House

Mizner, familiar with the classic elements of both the Spanish and Italian architecture, used these elements to create residences in Palm Beach and West Palm Beach that would take advantage of the tropical breezes while sheltering the house from the heat of the sun. The most prominent of these features was the arcaded loggia. A central courtyard was combined with covered loggias, small upper story windows with covered balconies, low pitched hip roofs (for less heat absorption) and thick stuccoed walls to create a style imminently suitable for comfort in the hot climate. Mizner also employed the clay barrel tiles of Spain, surfaces painted cool off-white colors to reflect heat, and wrought iron rails, balconies and doors to add style and grace to his residences and small estates.

The resulting style was aesthetically appealing to a wide variety of individuals and was soon employed throughout the State. The style was seized upon by the growing number of year-around and winter residents to the West Coast. In Fort Myers, the presence of the three famous inventors - Thomas Edison, Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone - had already established the City as a fashionable winter resort by the early 1900s. Mediterranean Revival style architecture was seen as the way to create a "Palm Beach" on the West Coast.

The Alderman House is one of the most elaborate of the structures in this style to have been constructed in Fort Myers during the Land Boom Period of the 1920s. Constructed for Frank Alderman in the early 1920s, it was one of the first residences in Fort Myers constructed in the Mediterranean Revival style. It is also notable that the structure was not built as a winter residence for the seasonal visitor; rather, it was constructed to be the home of the President of the First National Bank of Fort Myers. As such, it was designed to be a showplace in which the elite of Fort Myers' Society could gather and socialize.

Alerman is credited with averting a total collapse of the economy of Fort Myers following the devastating hurricane of September 16, 1926. Sluggish markets had already slowed the real estate market when the hurricane hit. Tourist trade, already under heavy competition with other areas, was all but destroyed. Alderman extended loans and provided new loans to area businesses and residences. As a result, the economy stablized, and Fort Myers was able to ride out the years following the hurricane and the stock market crash with relative ease.

The house was quickly recognized as an outstanding residence not only in Fort Myers, but throughout the country. The building was listed in "The Fort

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 3Alderman House

Myers Plan," a study prepared by Herbert S. Swan of New York City in 1925. The following year, the residence was cited in The Spanish House for America, Its Design, Furnishings and Garden by Rexford Newcomb. Newcomb's book encompassed the United States, dealing most specifically with California and Florida.

The Northern Italian style influence of this structure lends itself well to its original use as a residence, as well as its current use as an antique shop. Although the vertical windows (surprisingly similar to those found at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello) are rarely raised because of their excessive weight, the Alderman House still reflects the elegance of its original use.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1 Alderman House

BIBLIOGRAPHY

City of Fort Myers. Historic Fort Myers. Fort Myers, Florida, 1981.

Davis, Bernese. Oral Interview. Conducted at 1141 Wales Drive, April 7, 1988 by Vicki L. Welcher. Bureau of Historic Preservation, Florida Department of State.

Florida Revival and "Theme-Town" Architecture 1880-1929.
University Art Gallery, Fine Arts Building, Florida State University, 1977.

Godown, Marion Bailey and Alberta Colcord Rawchuck. Yesterday's Fort Myers. Miami: E. A. Seeman Publishing, Inc., 1975.

Hatton, Hab. Tropical Splendor , An Architectural History of Florida. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987.

Newcomb, Rexford. The Spanish House for America, Its Design Furnishing and Garden. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippencott, 1926.

Swan, Herbert S. The Fort Myers Plan. Fort Myers, Florida: The Planning Board of Fort Myers, 1982. Reprint of 1949 edition.

Ritz, Florence. Unknown Florida. Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1926.

Grismer, Karl H. The Story of Fort Myers. Fort Myers Beach, Florida: The Island Press Publishers, 1982. Reproduction of 1949 edition.

The WPA Guide to Florida. The Federal Writers' Project Guide to 1930s Florida. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984. Reproduction of 1939 edition.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Photographs 1 Alderman House
Page _____

PHOTOGRAPHS-ALDERMAN HOUSE

1. Alderman House
2. Fort Myers, Florida
3. Gladys Cook
4. August, 1988
5. Bureau of Historic Preservation
6. Front elevation facing east
7. Photo #1 of 11

Items 1-5 remain constant for all photographs

6. 3/4 shot of front and side elevation facing north
7. Photo #2 of 11

6. Detail of front patio and arcade facing south
7. Photo #3 of 11

6. Detail showing freize work on front elevation facing north
7. Photo #4 of 11

6. Detail of front elevation and "pocket" windows facing south
7. Photo #5 of 11

6. Side elevation facing north
7. Photo #6 of 11

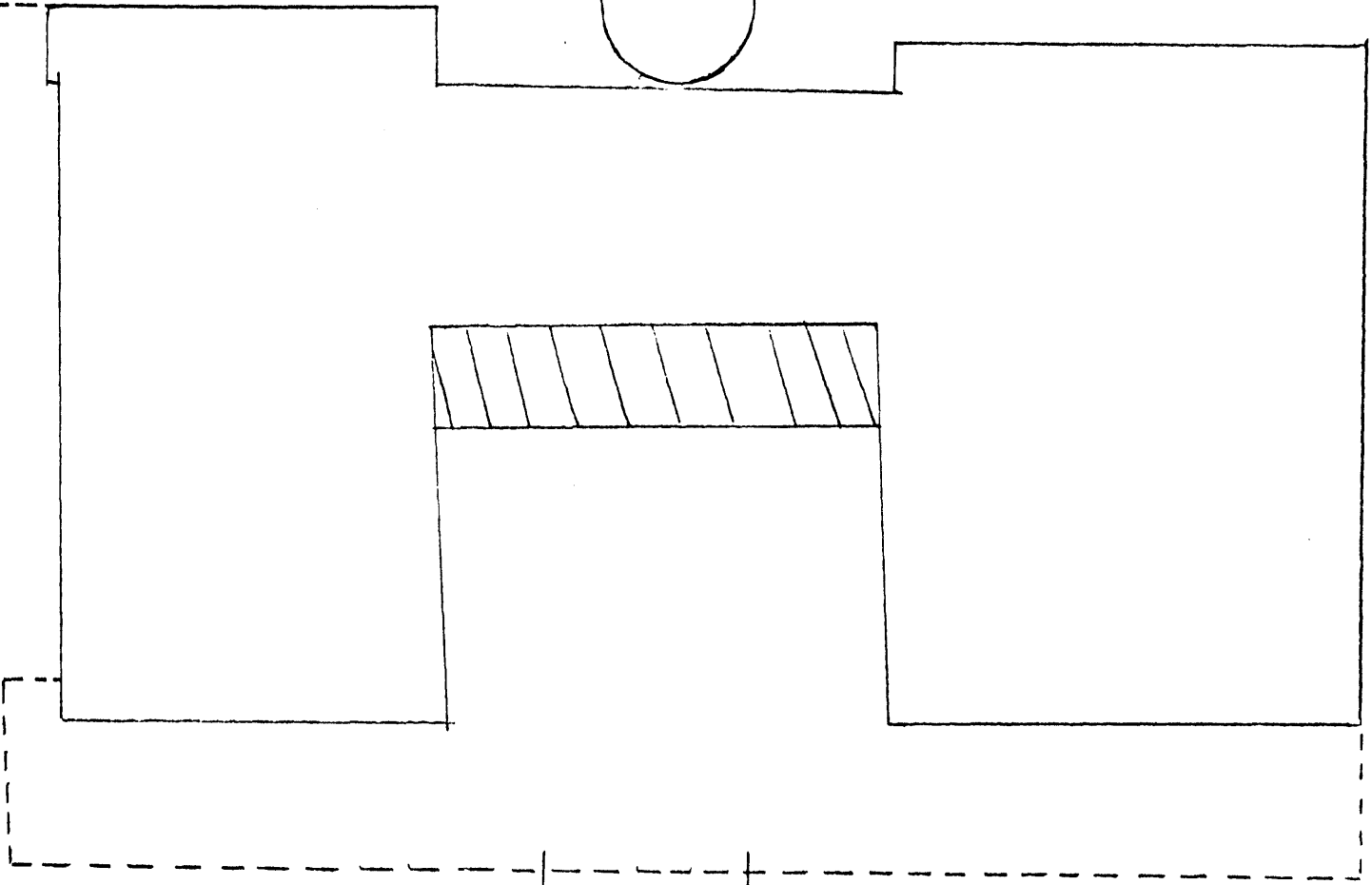
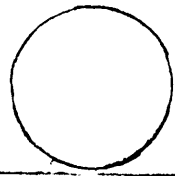
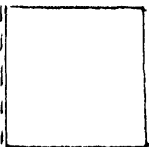
6. Rear elevation facing northwest
7. Photo #7 of 11

6. Side elevation facing south
7. Photo #8 of 11

6. Side elevation of detached garage facing east
7. Photo #9 of 11

6. Side elevation of detached garage facing northwest
7. Photo #10 of 11

6. Detail of front elevation facing east
7. Photo #11 of 11



NOT TO SCALE "ALDERMAN HOUSE" 2572 FIRST STREET FT. MYERS, FL