

PH0150525

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED APR 30 1975  
DATE ENTERED JUN 10 1975

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Casa de Josefina

AND/OR COMMON

La Casa Condominium (current); Yarnell, I.A., House.

**2 LOCATION** 2 mi SE of Lake Wales off U.S. 27

Located to the east of U.S. Alt. 27, at Highland Park,  
@ three miles south of the junction with HWY 60.

CITY, TOWN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VICINITY OF	CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT	
Lake Wales		Sixth	
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Florida	12	Polk	105

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
Blount Development Corporation

STREET & NUMBER  
P.O. Box 368

CITY, TOWN	VICINITY OF	STATE
Lake Wales		Florida

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Polk County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER  
Main Street

CITY, TOWN	STATE
Bartow	Florida

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
N/A

DATE  
 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN	STATE
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# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE _____

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built in 1923, the Casa de Josefina is a twenty-five room mansion sitting atop a slight prominence to the east of, and overlooking Lake Amoret. While much of its lavish landscaping has disappeared, the building and the surrounding terrain have been little altered since the original construction. The style can best be characterized as Florida Boom, combining Italian, Spanish, Gothic and nondescript elements in an eclectic and theatrical display. In plan it resembles a vast inverted "E", 215 feet across its main facade with three wings reaching some 70 feet to the rear; the central entrance grouping is fronted by a wide terrace, and the two areas within the arms of the "E" are developed as courtyards. The predominant building material is tan-painted stucco over wood frame and metal lath, however, a great deal of cut cochina is utilized as well as occasional details of marble, granite, fieldstone, terra-cotta, wrought iron and wood. The building is set up on masonry foundation walls approximately 2½ feet in height, and while most of it is one story, some second and third story spaces are utilized, but primarily for effect. The rambling wings of the house are tied together by a combination of flat, hipped and pent roofs, however most are masked by crenellated parapets; visible roof areas were covered in red barrel tile in the original.

The long wing on the south (main) facade was intended as the living area of the house. Its focal point was its large entry hall with fieldstone paving and two-story groined vaulting. The rest of the wing was occupied by living rooms, dining and billiard rooms, and studies. Each room opened to a wide, windowed corridor on the rear providing both view and access to the two courtyards. The wing on the west included kitchen, utility spaces, servants quarters and four-car garage; both the middle and east arms of the "E" were used for bedrooms. The courtyard on the west is paved and provided access to the garage and service areas, while the one on the east was landscaped as an interior garden with pools, fountains and statuary.

There are rich and unexpected decorative details everywhere, but architectural interest is concentrated at the central entrance grouping. A large terrace fronts the entrance; it has a low parapet wall of cochina, and where it joins the south wall of the house, it is clasped between two castellated towers. A two-story, central block rises above the main mass of the house and connects to the towers by rampart walks. The first floor is pierced by a series of semi-circular arches which carry around three sides of the towers and down the main facade; most windows at the second story are flat-topped. The main entrance door is located on the right side of the central block and recessed under a segmental arch; it has rusticated masonry surrounds topped off by a cartouche and scrolls. To the west of the door a pair of casement windows are set in a common surround with a pent hood above. Three elaborate stained-glass windows pierce

(con't)

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1923

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Edward B. Stratton

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Casa de Josefina was the home of Irwin Arthur Yarnell (1876-1936), a Polk County banker and real estate developer important in the early growth of the Lake Wales area. Mr. Yarnell was born in Francesville, Indiana, and began his career in banking and real estate first in South Dakota and later in Minnesota. He first came to Florida as a visitor in 1907, and later returned to invest in, and develop, extensive properties at Crooked Lake, now Babson Park. One of his first concerted campaigns in building the Lake Wales region came when he interested members of the University of Minnesota faculty in buying a large tract of land for a botanical garden. The garden never materialized, but others began to hear of the Yarnell developments, and they became the object of increasing real estate speculation in the late teen's and early twenties. Yarnell was also responsible for establishing a French Canadian colony at what is now known as St. Anne's Shrine, located a few miles southeast of Lake Wales. His last and most ambitious development was Highland Park, originally a tract of some 3,000 acres organized in 1919. The community was structured as a private club with membership fees of \$500 per person. A ten acre citrus grove cost \$10,000 and the average price for a house site was \$1,000. Despite the inflated values, Yarnell's promotions attracted buyers. Until his death, Irwin Yarnell remained an important booster of the area and its burgeoning citrus industry. He was active in community affairs and noted for his acts of philanthropy.

The Casa de Josefina was built for, and named in honor of Yarnell's wife, Josephine. According to family tradition, conception of its design came primarily from Mrs. Yarnell. It was designed by Edward B. Stratton (1870 - ?), a Boston architect and former student of F.E. Kidder, and the contractor was L.S. Acuff, builder of most of the homes at Highland Park. The Casa de Josefina was the most elaborate of the several homes built at Highland Park and served as the unofficial community center. An undated description of an evening spent at the Casa gives a glimpse of the atmosphere that the Yarnell's were trying to create:

On a summery, moonlit night the Yarnells invited guests to a reading of Romeo and Juliet by an eminent professor from the University of Chicago. The Casa never looked more fairylike. Guitars played soft music, the fountains splashed in the moonlight,

(con't)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

American Institute of Architects. Baldwin Memorial Archive of American Architects, report dated February 16, 1972. Washington, D.C.

(con't)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY ~~less than ten~~  
UTM REFERENCES

*UF*  
No UTM references available.

A 


  
C 


B 


  
D 


## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

USGS Babson Park Quadrangle, 1952, 7.5, 1:24000  
Latitude: 27 51' 53"  
Longitude: 81 34' 18"

## LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Greer, Diane, Historic Sites Specialist  
Little, J. Rodney, Historic Sites Specialist

ORGANIZATION Div. of Archives, History & Records Mgmt. DATE February 26, 1975  
STREET & NUMBER Department of State, The Capitol TELEPHONE (904) 488-7365  
CITY OR TOWN Tallahassee STATE Florida

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ LOCAL x

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE *[Signature]*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE *April 25, 1975*

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
*[Signature]* DATE *6/10/75*  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
ATTEST: *[Signature]* DATE JUN 9 1975  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Casa de Josefina

CONTINUATION SHEET

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Present and original physical appearance. (con't)

the second story. The central window has a semicircular arch springing from two engaged spiral columns; it is fronted by a decorative balcony with a curved, wrought iron railing, and the window mullions rise to pointed arches. Each of the flanking windows have two rectangular plates separated by an engaged spiral column, tile surrounds, and a projecting lintel. The crenellated parapet atop the central block projects slightly on corbels to give the appearance of machicolation. The towers to either side of the central block are similar in proportion, but the one on the east is more complex than its rectangular counterpart on the west. The east tower is square in plan with chamfered corners. The arcaded porch at its first floor gives access to a spiral staircase leading to its second and third story levels. Each side of the second story is pierced by three loop windows. The chamfered corner stops short of the top of the second story and flares outward in a series of steps; the parapet above has machicolation, and the tower is crowned by a small octagonal turret with arched openings and a crenellated parapet.

There are pavilions, tower projections, arcaded porches and other devices at various points throughout the building, however, all are relatively plain when compared to the central entrance grouping. This rambling melange is given some cohesion by the continuous battlements and the unifying effect of the plain stuccoed walls. Windows are of many varying sizes, shapes and types, and stained glass is used in abundance. The interiors in the bedroom wings are restrained, but those in the living wing (south) are highly textured and decorated in stone, wood and metal. European art objects, including Italian frescoes, Byzantine mosaics and statuary, were built into the house as were quite a few "antiques" of recent manufacture.

A small office and nursery house similar in styling, stood in the grove to the rear of the house, however these are slated for demolition. The only substantial alteration of the house was made in 1925 when the central entrance hall was opened up into a full two story height, eliminating the upstairs drawing room. The building is currently being renovated for use as a clubhouse and recreation center for an adjacent condominium development. Many landscape features are being restored and only minor alterations to the interior are planned.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 1

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Statement of Significance. (con't)

Japanese lanterns cast their bewitching light on the paths as tall, majestic trees swayed gently in the evening air.

It was the world of young lovers in Verona beneath an Italian night sky of centuries long gone. (Kaucher, p. 163).

Florida's history is speckled with grandiose schemes and plans, and none was more flamboyant than the dreams of the capitalists and developers of the 1920's. While there are certainly better examples of "Boom" architecture in Florida, the Casa de Josefina must rank with the more exuberant. The naivete of its styling reflects a period that sought elegance in the architectural cliches of an imagined past, and its opulence is a testament to what was done before the Bust, the Depression, and income tax.

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Casa de Josefina

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES: (con't)

Bress, Mrs. Josephine Y. (daughter of I.A. Yarnell), Canoga Park, California. Personal communication, January 28, 1974.

Crews, Michael W. Personal communication, January 15, 1974. Lake Wales, Florida. (Attorney for Blount Development Corporation.)

Downs, Winfield Scott, ed. Encyclopedia of American Biography. New York: The American Historical Company, Inc., 1939, pp. 327-29.

Kaucher, Dorothy. They Built a City. Lake Wales: Dorothy Kaucher, 1970 pp. 163-65.

Morgan, Mike. "The Couple in the Castle", The Miami Herald, June 7, 1959, pp. 3-4.

Swartwood, Don. Personal interview (by J. Rodney Little), February 20, 1974. Highland Park, Florida. (Sales Director, La Casa Condominium.)

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

**NAME**

HISTORIC Casa de Josefina

AND/OR COMMON

La Casa Condominium (current); Yarnell, I.A., House

**2 LOCATION**

CITY, TOWN

Lake Wales

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Polk

STATE

Florida

**3 MAP REFERENCE**

SOURCE Blount Development Corp.  
Lake Wales, Florida

SCALE

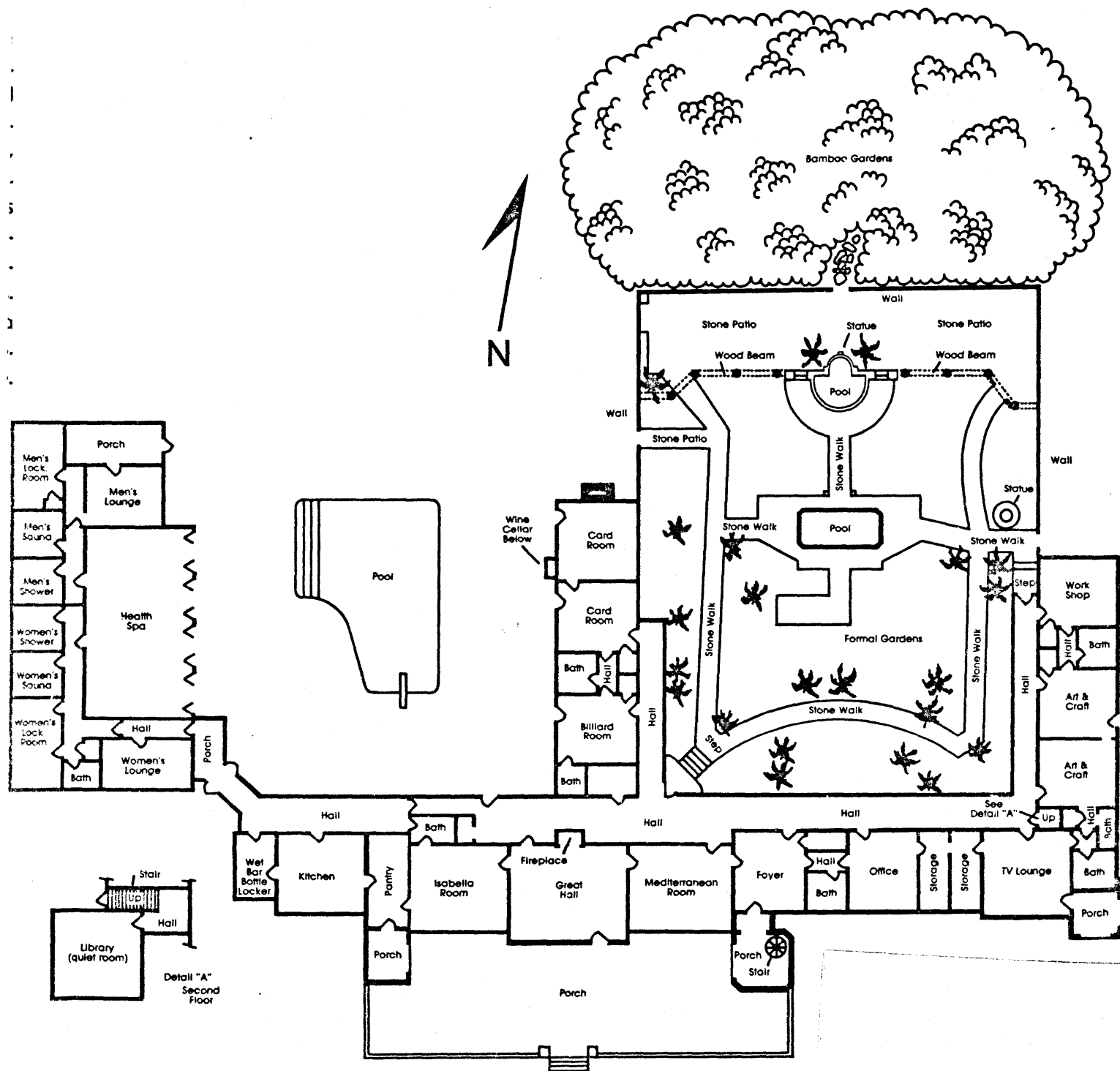
DATE 1974

**REQUIREMENTS**

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES





FLOOR PLAN OF THE CASA DE JOSEFINA AS IT PRESENTLY EXISTS SHOWING THE INTENDED USE OF EACH ROOM ONCE THE BUILDING IS ADAPTED FOR USE AS A CLUBHOUSE.

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**2 LOCATION**

CITY, TOWN

Lake Wales

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Polk

STATE

Florida

**3 MAP REFERENCE**

SOURCE Blount Development Corp.  
Lake Wales, Florida

SCALE

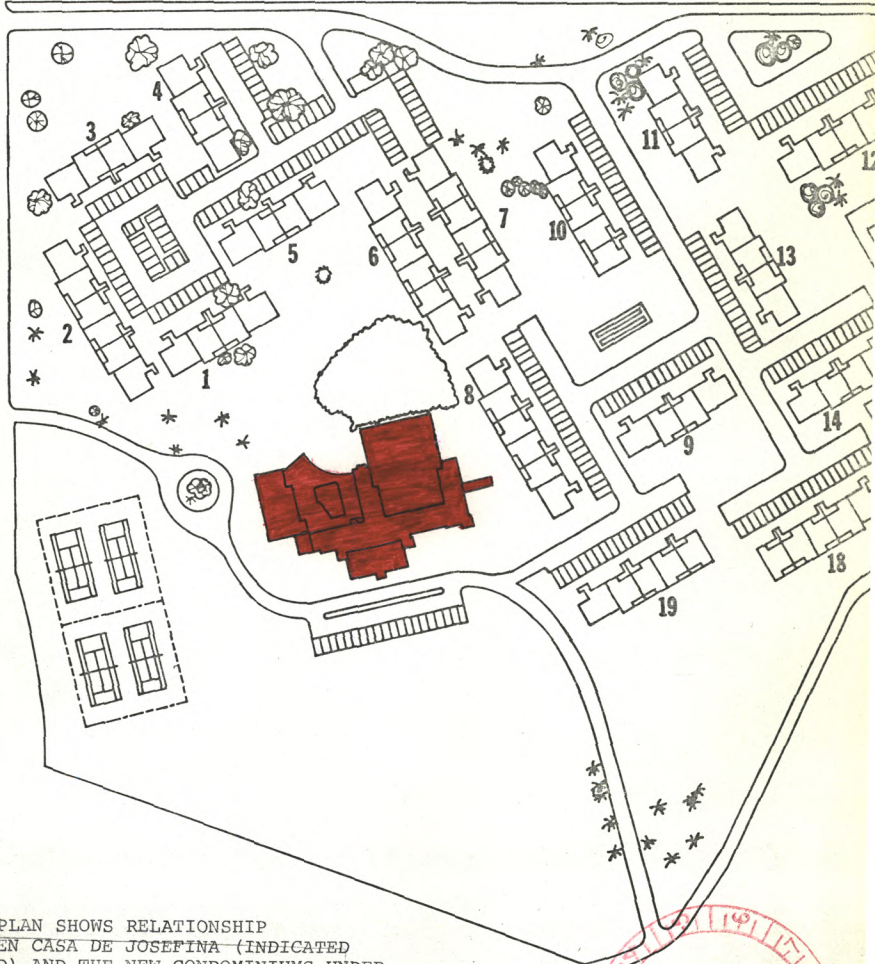
DATE 1974

**REQUIREMENTS**

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES

N



SITE PLAN SHOWS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CASA DE JOSEFINA (INDICATED IN RED) AND THE NEW CONDOMINIUMS UNDER CONSTRUCTION (NUMBERED ITEMS).

