UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Maitland Art Center

AND/OR COMMON

The Research Studio

LOCATION

CITY, TOWN	. Packwood Ave pue		N/A_NOT FOR PUBLICATION	СТ
Maitl	and N/A	VICINITY OF	9	
STATE		CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Flori	<u>da</u>	12	Orange	095
CLASSIFIC	CATION			
CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRES	ENTUSE
DISTRICT			AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
<u>X</u> BUILDING(S)	PRIVATE	UNOCCUPIED	COMMERCIAL	PARK
STRUCTURE	вотн	WORK IN PROGRESS	X_EDUCATIONAL	PRIVATE RESIDENCE
SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	ENTERTAINMENT	X RELIGIOUS
OBJECT	IN PROCESS	YES: RESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT	
	BEING CONSIDERED	XYES: UNRESTRICTED	INDUSTRIAL	TRANSPORTATION
	N/A	NO	MILITARY	X OTHER: & Galler
NAME <u>City of M</u> STREET & NUMBER <u>City Hall</u> CITY. TOWN <u>Maitland</u>	., 1776 Independence La	ane VICINITY OF	STATE Florida	
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7' DESCRIPTION

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Art Center at Maitland is located on two parcels of land, with both parcels fronting on Packwood Avenue. The Center's compound is located on the north side of West Packwood Avenue, with the compound's front wall running parellel with Packwood Avenue for 250 feet. A small orange grove is found west of the compound and is also located on the Center's property. This grove and open space extends (@ 180 ft.) to Lake Sybelia Drive and Lake Sybelia is across the street.

The Center's other parcel of land, immediately across Packwood from the compound, is the Garden Chapel. Altogether the Center occupies 3.6 acres; 2.12 acres in the north parcel with .82 acres within the compound walls; 1.45 acres in the south parcel and with .57 acres devoted to the Chapel.

The main compound (roughly 250' x 155') is surrounded by a masonry wall containing several bas relief monuments and other ornamentation. This wall effectively defines the compound. A large opening in the wall frames the entrance to the Gallery building. Another entry through the wall leads to a large courtyard. The compound is intensively developed with six priniciple buildings and several smaller utility buildings. The north and east sections of the compound are largely occupied by buildings, while the main courtyard and an ornamental pool are found in the southwest quadrant. The buildings themselves, except for their ornamentation, are simple, modestly built one-story stucco and concrete block structures. They have steel casement and awning windows, and built up or clay tile roofs. Where buildings are close together, numerous small courtyards, patios, covered walkways and landscaping provide relief.

The Gallery contains a two-story exhibition space as well as offices. The exhibition hall is rectangular with two single-story wings attached perpendicularly. A courtyard fills the space between these two wings.

A long, irregular "L"-shape classroom/building with one 130' long wing and a second 75' wing is only one room wide, and virtually every room is off-set from the next room. These indentions and protrusions create small exterior spaces, utilized as patios and terraces. Similarly, other buildings, including the residence, are also irregularly laid out.

The buildings and many walls are ornamented by bas reliefs cast in concrete. These bas reliefs surround many door and window openings. They are also frequently employed to create a monument/arch over a walkway. This ornament work, which is done in many different designs and patterns, has a strong Aztec-Mayan motif.

The garden chapel across Packwood Avenue is also decorated, to an even more intense degree, with similar bas relief sculpture. The chapel is an open air monument containing a courtyard, covered patios and small covered three-sided galleries.

Initial construction of the compound took place in 1937-38. The garden and chapel were added in 1942. The suite was designed by Andre Smith, who was the Center's founder and director. Until his death in 1959, Andre Smith continuously worked at improvement of the site (landscaping, ornamentation, etc.).

Today the compound is largely the same as when Mr. Smith died, although time has taken its toll. Some of the sculptures and bas reliefs have been vandalized and the color on some of the carved cement has faded. The residence has been enlarged. Part of the main art gallery was remodeled into offices and wall niches were covered over. The basic integrity of this site as an unusual artist village remains unchanged.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AF	REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	
PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	X_LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
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1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	
1600-1699	XARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	XART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION
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		INVENTION		
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SPECIFIC DAT	1937	BUILDER/ARCH	(New York)	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Maitland Art Center is significant for three reasons. It was the winter home of Andre Smith, architect, etcher, painter, sculptor, stage designer, author and outspoken proponent of modern art. It is an architecturally unique building complex, formerly an artists' village where room and board were provided for guest artists during the winter season. The Maitland Art Center's unusual bas reliefs, carvings and sculptures, in a stylized Aztec-Mayan motif, are set into the walls of its exterior and interior spaces. The integration of sculpture and architecture makes the entire compound a work of art.

Andre Smith was born on December 31, 1880. He graduated in 1902 from the College of Architecture at Cornell University, earning his Master of Science degree in Architecture in 1904. He continued his studies in Europe with the 1904-06 Traveling Fellowship from Cornell.¹ In 1912 he produced a series of monotypes which attracted a great deal of attention due to their evocative mood and expressionism.² In 1915 Smith won the gold medal and first prize for his etchings at the World's Fair and Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco.³

A Captain in World War I he led a team of eight combat artists, later publishing some of his drawings in a widely noted book, <u>In France with the American Expeditionary</u> <u>Forces</u>. After the war he was commissioned to design the Distinguished Service Cross. Smith built a home in Stony Creek, Connecticut, where he designed stage sets for the local theater group. This experience led him to write <u>The Scenewright</u> in 1926, used for years as a textbook by high schools, colleges and drama groups.⁴

In the 1930s Smith became a winter resident of Maitland, Florida.⁵ Through Annie Russell, noted actress and director of the theater at Rollins College that bears her name, he met Mary Curtis Bok (later Mrs. Efram Zimbalist, Sr.). In 1937 Mrs. Bok offered as a gift a "laboratory studio to be devoted to research on modern art."⁶ This workshop/gallery, called the Research Center, was constructed on property adjacent to Andre Smith's house.⁷ Mrs. Bok set up a nonprofit corporation with Smith to provide room, board and living expenses for guest artists who lived and worked during the winter months at the walled compound designed by Smith. Her support continued until Smith died in 1959 at 78.⁸

The creed of the Research Studio was "the artist's job is to explore, to announce new visions and to open new doors."⁹ Initially Smith felt that his "village of studios" should provide a haven for the artist from the public eye.¹⁰ However, by 1940 Smith encouraged attendence by adding a small entrance gallery directly accessible from the street and opening exhibitions to the general public. From that point on the Research Studio expanded its role as one of the first art galleries in Florida and certainly one of the most avant garde.¹¹

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuation Sheet)

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The Research Studio continued as a vital force in Central Florida. Both its visiting artists and Andre Smith contributed to art in the community as well as the Research Center itself until Smith's death.¹² Except for the war years there were two to five artists in residence each winter. Each artist was provided with a studio adjoining a private apartment. Over the years these were modified to include kitchenettes; however, initially great emphasis was placed upon a more communal arrangement. Common areas were provided by the refectory, library, gallery and large central garden complete with reflecting pool.¹³

In 1942 a garden chapel was constructed across the street from the Research Studio. It followed the same walled design, but was more public in nature. This addition consisted of the open air chapel, a large garden and loggia landscaped with tropical foliage. It soon became a focal point for sightseers.¹⁴ Thus Smith imbued the Research Studio with a private and a public spirit fulfilling the needs of both his artist-experimentors and the surrounding community.¹⁵ Some of the artists who resided there and who are now recognized in art circles are Milton Avery, Doris Lee, Boris Margo, Arnold Blanch, Norman Wright and Ernest Roth. All residing artists exhibited their works at the Research Studio gallery.¹⁶

Although the architectural plan and construction of the Maitland Art Center, as it is now called, is simple and straight forward, its unique character is highlighted by Smith's cement carvings. These take the form of wall panels which are affixed about the doorways and windows, on walls and in niches. They were executed in a technique developed by Smith and used throughout both complexes. He used cast cement, carving and molding designs in the cement slabs before they hardened.¹⁷ Additionally there were flagstones, grillework and free-standing statues which are concentrated mainly in the chapel complex. Some of the work is painted and most exhibits a pre-Columbian flavor though with varying themes. Nearly all were either executed by Smith or done under his direct supervision.¹⁸

The predominatly Aztec-Mayan motif is seen in varieties of stylized faces with fanciful headdresses and costumes. Animals, birds and plants are also represented. In the garden and chapel areas different religious themes appear. One bas relief shows an obvious Oriental influence, while another depicts a Madonna and Child with Negroid features.¹⁹ Pagon idols abound, and Buddist and Christian iconography are exhibited.

The importance of this architectural decoration cannot be overemphasized. It is an integral part of the Maitland Art Center which was perhaps Andre Smith's greatest achievement. It compels even the casual observer to enter and then search for its often surprising placement and themes. Moreover, it changes the very character of the complex, with its delightful maze-like quality, to what one critic has called "one of the important examples of fantastic architecture in America."²⁰ FHR-8-300A (11/78) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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In its walled village design, the Maitland Art Center reflects Andre Smith's original purpose to provide a retreat for its residents to pursue artistic experiments and a cogenial environment for creative talent.²¹ The apartments and studios are now used for art classes, and an artist-in-residence program is in effect. The Maitland Art Center has delighted the Central Florida community for years and continues to do so to this day. It is historically, architecturally and artistically important to the people of Florida and demands to be recognized as such and preserved for future generations.

#### FOOTNOTES

¹Thomas W. Leavitt, Andre Smith, Winston-Salem, N.C.: Hunter Publishing Co., 1968, p. 5.

²"Research Studio Center is Mecca of Artists," <u>Orlando Sentinal-Parade of Progress</u>, November 25, 1954, p. 6.

³Andre Smith, Art and Subconscious, Baltimore, Md: Norman T.A. Munder, 1937, p. 107.

4 Leavitt, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 3.

⁵"Paintbox Gallery", Winter Park Topics, April 20, 1935, p. 1.

⁶"The Research Studio," <u>Winter Park Topics</u>, January 9, 1937, p. 1.

⁷"Research Studio Plans Enlarged," <u>Winter Park Topics</u>, March 6, 1937, p. 1.

⁸The Research Studio, Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the Board of Directors, October 14, 1937, and March 9, 1959.

⁹"An Artist's Arcady," <u>The Art Digest</u>, August 11, 1937, p. 27.

¹⁰"Art School News," <u>The Art Digest</u>, August 11, 1950, p. 30.

¹¹In his President's Report to the Research Studio Board of Directors for 1951, Andre Smith commented, "Going back to 1937, it is interesting to note that the Research Studio was one of only three art galleries in Florida, The Ringling Museum, The Four Arts in Palm Beach, and our gallery." The Research Studio, Minutes, 1951.

¹²Andre Smith designed a church for the black community in Winter Park and painted murals for the St. Lawrence A.M.E. Church in nearby Eatonville. <u>Winter Park Topics</u>, January 24, 1947, p. 6. Leavitt, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 8.

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13 _{The Research Studio, Minutes, 1951.}
¹⁴ The Research Studio, Minutes, 1945.
Winter Park Topics, February 21, 1941, p. 10.
Winter Park Topics, March 28, 1947, p. 6.
Winter Park Topics, March 5, 1948, p. 5.
¹⁵ The Research Studio, Minutes, 1951.
16 The Research Studio, Minutes, 1936-1959.

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¹⁷Andre Smith, "Two Parts Sand-One Cement," <u>American Artist</u>, Vol. 4, September, 1940, p. 18-19.

¹⁸The Research Studio, Minutes, 1937-1959.

¹⁹Leavitt, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 8.

²⁰Ibid., p. 7.

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²¹"New Florida Studio Gives Artists 'Asylum' from World," <u>Architectural Record</u>, Vol. 83, March, 1938, p. 81.

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- "Art School News." The Art Digest, Vol. 24, February, 1950, p. 30.
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- Smith, Andre. "An Insanitorium of Art." <u>Art Instruction</u>, Vol. 3, November, 1939, p. 14-15 & 28.
- _____. "Mrs. Grundy on Modern Art." <u>The Art Digest</u>, Vol. 18, August, 1944, p. 10.

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Smith, Andre. "Two Parts Sand-One Cement." American Artist, September, 1940, P. 18-19 & 36.

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- <u>Orlando Sentinel</u>. October 31, 1950; November 25, 1954; April 5, 1956; December 12, 1956; November 19, 1958; December 21, 1958; March 4, 1959; March 5, 1961.
- Sentinel Star. May 16, 1973.
- <u>Winter Park Herald</u>. January 18, 1951; February 1, 1951; December 20, 1951; January 10, 1952; March 5, 1959.

Winter Park Sun. February 19, 1959.

<u>Winter Park Topics</u>. April 20, 1935; January 3, 1937; March 6, 1937; April 16, 1938; February 25, 1939; January 3, 1940; February 3, 1940; January 24, 1941; February 21, 1941; January 10, 1947; January 24, 1947; March 28, 1947; March 5, 1948.

#### UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS

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- Play programs, Annie Russell Theatre, Rollins College, March, 1934 and January, 1935.
- The Research Studio. Mintues of the Annual Meetings of the Board of Directors, 1937-1959. (Xeroxed)
- Wolfe Davidson, guest artist of the Research Studio, 1952, private interview held in Tallahassee, FL, February, 1979.

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Andre Smith, et. al., Charter of the Research Studio, Inc., Incorporation Book 7, Orange County, Florida, (September 9, 1937), 203-207. FHR-8-300A (11/78) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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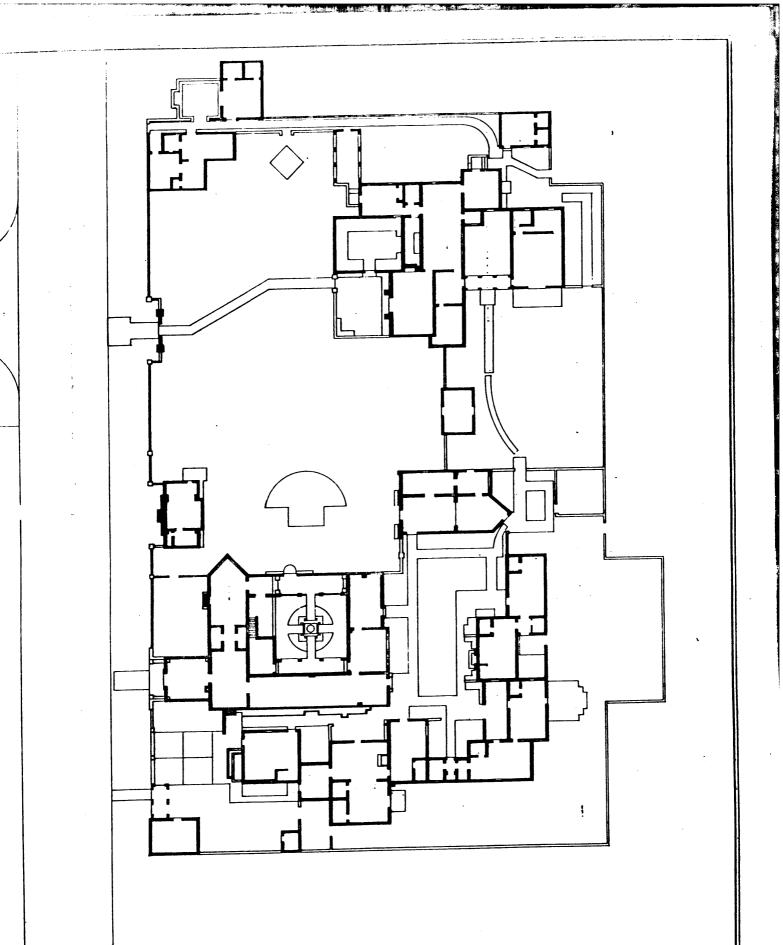
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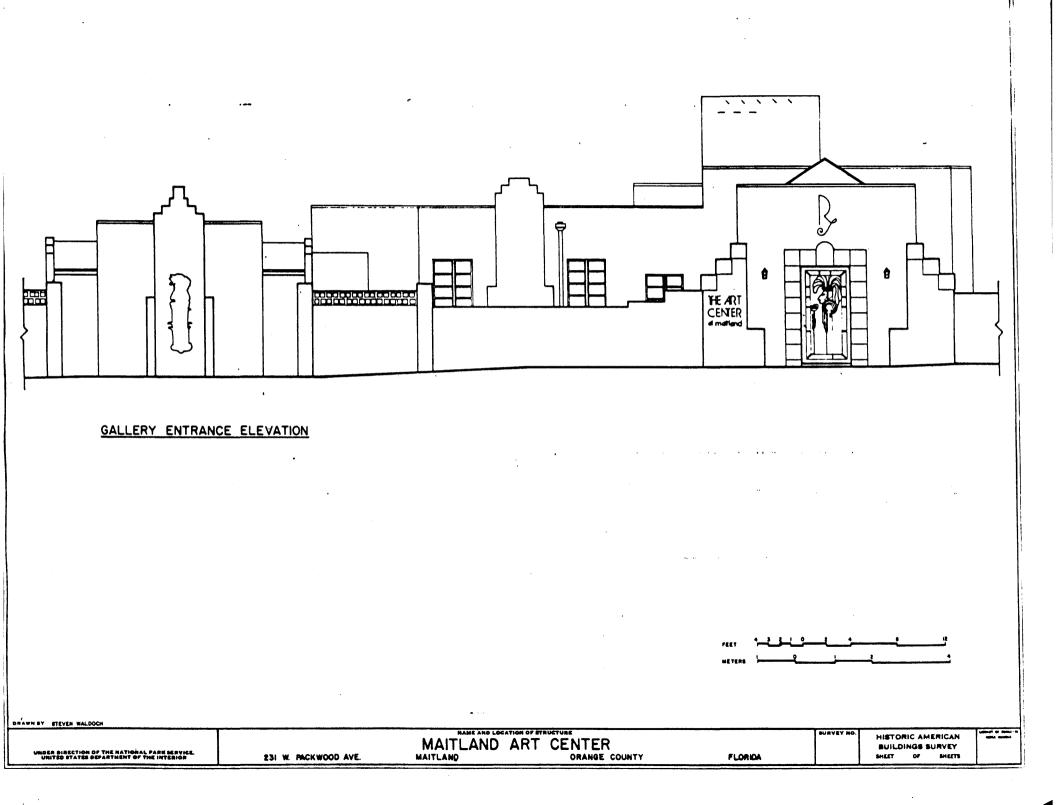
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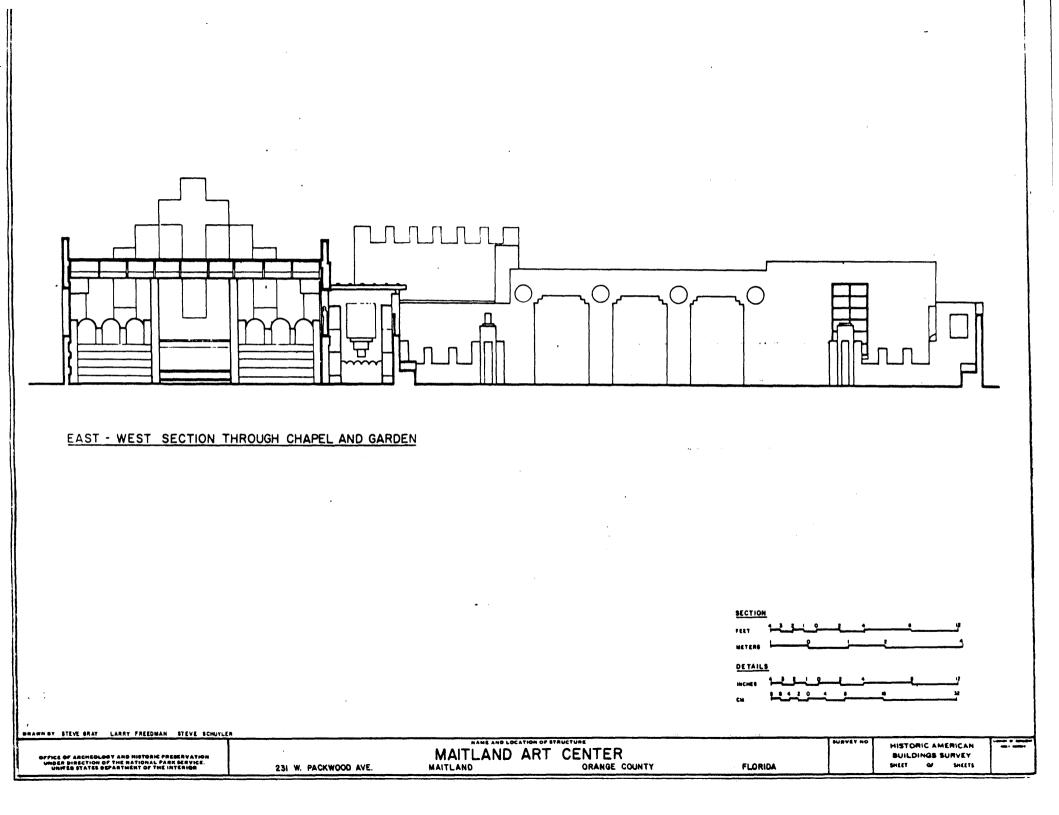
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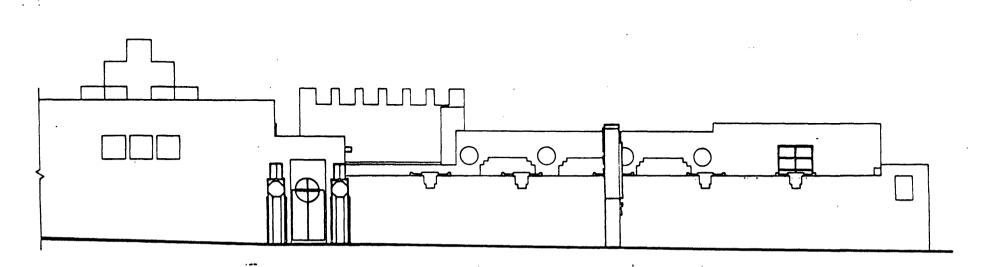
Lots 18 through 27, inclusive; the south forty (40) feet of Lot 28 and the North one hundred (100) feet of the East five (5) feet of Lot 28; and the South fifteen and seven-tenths (15.7) feet of the East five (5) feet of Lot 35; and the South twenty (20) feet of Lots 46 and 47 of Lake Sybelia Heights, as per Plat thereof recorded in Plat Book "J", Page 22, Public Records of Orange County, Florida.

Also, Lots 3 and 4, inclusive, of Isaac Vanderpools Addition to Maitland, Florida, as per Plat thereof recorded in Plat Book "B", Page 70, Public Records of Orange County, Florida.









### NORTH CHAPEL AND WALL ELEVATION - FACING STREET

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