

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Domestic/Hotel

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Domestic/Hotel

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Mediterranean Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Concrete, stuccoed

roof Tile

other Concrete; Loggia

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See Continuation Sheet

See continuation sheet

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
Commerce (Tourism)

Period of Significance

1916-1934

Significant Dates

1916
1921
1925

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Olmstead Brothers

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

See Continuations Sheet

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

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

UTM References

A

1	7
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4	4	1	6	8	0
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3	0	9	0	1	6	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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 Zone Easting Northing

D

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

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

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation Sheet

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See Continuation Sheet

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title W. Carl Shiver, Historic Sites Specialist
 organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date _____
 street & number 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (904) 487-2333
 city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1

Description

Summary

The Colony House is a hotel/clubhouse located one mile north of Lake Wales, Florida in a planned residential development known as Mountain Lake. The original portion of the building, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., was completed in 1916. The west and east wings, designed by Charles R. Wait, draftsman and architect for Olmsted Brothers, were added in 1921 and 1925 respectively. Rising three stories in height, the Colony House has a U-shaped ground plan, a stucco exterior finish, and a gable roof. Distinguishing features of the building include pergolas, a loggia, balconets, scuppers, and a barrel tile roof. The building is designed in an eclectic style best described as Mediterranean Revival. With the exception of an addition dating from c. 1960, it is little altered and maintained in pristine condition.

Present And Original Physical AppearanceSetting

The Colony House is located in Mountain Lake, a planned residential community covering some 3500 acres. With its winding roads, rolling hills, lake side setting, pocket parks, citrus groves, and golf course, Mountain Lake was an innovative planned landscape when it was laid out in 1915. The Colony House was a centerpiece of the planned development. Sited atop a hill, the building is located on a peninsula formed by sections of Mountain Lake (formerly Buck Lake). It is situated between the first and eighteenth holes of the golf course with a southwest orientation. The southwest orientation provides direct sunlight on its longest (south), unbroken elevation during the winter and spring months, when the Colony House has historically received guests.

With an open view provided by the eighteenth fairway, the Colony House provides a commanding southern vista of the lake, golf course, and other key components of the development. On the north, the main entrance is on axis with a driveway covered by a graceful canopy of planted oaks. Because of its location, size, and architectural features, such as a loggia framed by gable ends, the Colony House is a focal point of the Mountain Lake development (see photographs 1-10, particularly 1 and 7).

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2

Description

Present Appearance

The Colony House is a detached three story building designed as a hotel/clubhouse. It has a U-shaped ground plan, formed by the original building and the east and west wings which were added during the 1920s. It has a wood frame structural system, and its exterior is finished in stucco. The roof is a gable type with exposed rafter ends beneath the soffit (photographs 1-10).

The original roofing material was removed shortly after the construction of the main portion of the building. In attempting to imitate buildings that he had seen in Bermuda, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., the architect of the Colony House, experimented with an original roofing material. Seeking to replicate the long horizontal lines of the older Bermuda Houses, Olmsted had the roofers fold a rubberized roofing paper over horizontal wide boards. They then covered the paper with heavy granite chips that were grouted with a cement and lime wash. Shortly thereafter the roof began to leak. It was discovered that the local birds were removing the granite chips and, in the process, poking holes in the roofing paper. Olmsted then had the original roof surfacing removed and replaced with the existing barrel tile (photographs 2-4; see also historic views of building in the photocopied materials).

Protruding from the roof are six chimneys. They are constructed of brick and finished in stucco. Three are located on the north slope of the original building, one is on the west slope of the east wing, and two more perforate the east slope of the west wing (photographs 2-4).

The main entrance to the Colony House is located on the northwest side of the building. The entrance is accessible through a courtyard with several decorative features. Pergolas covered with ivy are attached to the wings which form the east and west sides of the courtyard. A half-circular driveway is bisected by a walkway composed of cast concrete tiles. Flanking the driveway are six evenly placed urns resting on pedestals. On either side of the walkway are grassy areas featuring palms. Covering the main entrance is a steel-framed canopy (photographs 2-4).

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3

Description

A projecting vestibule forms the main entrance to the building. It is three bays wide on the north side and one bay wide on its two additional exterior sides. It has two centrally placed doors with vertical bands of windows. Above the doors are transom lights which continue the window pattern found below. On either side of the doors are matching casement windows with transom lights above and kick-panels below. The window pattern is replicated on the remaining exterior sides of the vestibule. The roof of the vestibule is flat and accented with exposed rafter ends and other structural elements similar in design to the pergolas. It is terminated with a balustrade. Scuppers protrude from the pilasters which frame the entrance to the vestibule (photograph 3).

The main block, completed in 1916, is seven bays wide on its northern side. The fenestration pattern is regular, and the windows are symmetrically placed. The windows are casement types with vertical bands and some transom lights similar to those of the vestibule. Above the main entrance are three hopper type windows which replicate the light pattern of other portions of the building (photographs 2-3).

The south side of the main block is also seven bays wide. Its principal feature is a loggia, extending the full seven bays. When originally constructed, the loggia was completely open. Four of the seven bays of the loggia are presently closed with Palladian windows. The central three bays remain open. The loggia is formed by simple, Doric columns. It extends two stories in height. Above the loggia, at the third story level are balconets located at each bay. Casement and hopper type windows, matching the standard light pattern of the building, correspond to each balconet (photographs 7-8).

On the west side of the original building is a wing constructed in 1921. Designed by Charles R. Wait, the draftsman for the original portion of the Colony House, the wing is well integrated with the rest of the building. It has a stucco exterior finish and a gable roof covered with barrel tile. It has a rectangular plan, and has ten bays on its west side, seven on its east (courtyard), and three each on the shorter north and south sides. The fenestration is regular and symmetrically placed. Windows are casement and hopper type, similar in design to those on the remainder of the building (photographs 7, 9-10).

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 4

Description

A two-story addition was added to the west wing during the 1950s. With the exception of the roof, which is a built-up type with parapet, its major architectural features are similar in design to other portions of the exterior (photographs 9-10).

On the east side of the original building is a second wing. Constructed in 1925, the wing was also designed by Charles R. Wait as a planned addition and constructed in 1925. Like the west wing it is well integrated with the rest of the building. It has a stucco exterior finish and a gable roof covered with barrel tile. It has a rectangular plan, and has ten bays on its east side, six on its west (courtyard), and three each on the shorter north and south sides. The fenestration is regular and symmetrically placed. Windows are casement and hopper type, similar in design to those on the remainder of the building. An ivory covered pergola runs along the east side of the wing. At the first story level, also on the east side, French doors open onto a patio area. Balconets are attached to the building at the second story level of the southern end of the wing. A half-circle attic window is located in the north gable end of the wing and a circular attic window in the south gable end (photographs 4-7).

The Colony House is formally designed. Its exterior design is influenced by architecture drawn from the Mediterranean region, highly popular in Florida at the time the building was constructed. The stucco exterior finish, the loggia, the barrel tile roof, the scuppers, and the balconets are among the features which express the Mediterranean styling of the building (photographs 1-10).

Interior

The interior plan of the Colony House is designed as a hotel. The first floor contains the major public spaces and the upper two floors rooms for guests and seasonal visitors. The primary entrance is through the projecting vestibule on the north side. Beyond the vestibule is the lobby area, the most elaborately decorated interior space. The lobby contains tile floors and plaster over lathe wall and ceiling finishes. The wall and ceiling finishes are consistent throughout the remainder of the building. Decorative features include chamfered columns with Doric capitols, balustrades with spindle

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National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 5

Description

balusters, simple newel posts, and sconces and a massive, centrally hung chandelier designed in a floral pattern. Flanking the lobby are stairways leading to the second floor. A short stairway descends from the vestibule to the lobby. Beyond the lobby is the open portion of the loggia, accessed through a Palladian style doorway (photographs 11-12, 14).

To the east of the lobby, still within the original portion of the building, are a hallway, writing room, and card room. To the west are two lounges. The card room and the southern lounge are located in enclosed portion of the loggia (photograph 13).

The first floor of the west wing of the building contains a dining room, kitchen, and service areas. The dining room has additional decorative features, including chandeliers, niche like windows with shutters, engaged pilasters, and columns. The arches on the west side of the dining room mark the original exterior walls of the wing. An additional dining room, storage, offices, linen service, and a service court were added about 1960. The second dining room has oak parquet floors, columns, and coffered ceilings (photographs 15-18).

The first floor of the east wing features the living room, the office/reception area of the hotel, the library, public rest rooms, storage and offices. The living room is the most significant space in the wing. It contains columns, coffered ceilings, panelled balustrades, and a fireplace (photographs 19-21).

The second and third floors of the Colony House contain the guest rooms. The rooms are located around centrally placed corridors. On the second floor there are thirty-six rooms and on the third twenty-nine. The corridors and rooms are largely unadorned. The floors were originally heart pine, which is now covered with a low-ply, commercial grade carpet. Wall and ceiling finishes are stucco over lathe. Rooms consist of bedroom, bath, and closet. Some rooms have interior doorways which allow them to be converted to suites. Many rooms contains louvered shutters, decorative window trim, and baseboards. Most of the bathrooms have been remodeled, and the original bathroom features removed (photographs 22-31).

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Continuation Sheet**

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Description

Alterations

The overall integrity of the Colony House is excellent. The 1921 and 1925 wings were of compatible design as was the addition to the west (1921) wing completed during the 1950s. The loggia has been partially filled in with Palladian windows, but again this alteration is tasteful and well-designed. The principal alteration to the interior has been the upgrading of the plumbing system and replacement of most of the original bathroom fixtures. The building is in excellent condition and well maintained. As a result of its fine integrity and condition, it continues to embody its historic design and associations.

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Photographs

Inventory of Photographs

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Main (North) Entrance, Looking South
7. Photo No. 1 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Main (South) Entrance, Looking North
7. Photo No. 2 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Main (South) Entrance, Looking North
7. Photo No. 3 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. East Wing, Looking Southeast
7. Photo No. 4 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. East Elevation, Looking Southwest
7. Photo No. 5 of 31

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Continuation Sheet**

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Photo ra h~~s~~

Photo List (cont.)

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. East Elevation (Detail), Looking Southwest
7. Photo No. 6 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. South Elevation, Looking North
7. Photo No. 7 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. View of Loggia, Looking North
7. Photo No. 8 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. West Wing, Looking East
7. Photo No. 9 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. West Wing (Detail), Looking Southwest
7. Photo No. 10 of 31

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 9

Photo raphs

Photo List (cont.)

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Lobby (Detail), Looking West
7. Photo No. 11 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Lobby (Detail), Looking South
7. Photo No. 12 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Loggia (Detail), Looking West
7. Photo No. 13 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Doorway Detail, Looking South
7. Photo No. 14 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Main Dining Room, Looking West
7. Photo No. 15 of 31

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Continuation Sheet**

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Photographs

Photo List (cont.)

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Lower Dining Room, Looking West
7. Photo No. 16 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Floor of Dining Room (Detail), Looking Downward
7. Photo No. 17 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Kitchen, West Wing, Looking West
7. Photo No. 18 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Living Room, East Wing, Looking West
7. Photo No. 19 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Reception Area, East Wing, Looking South
7. Photo No. 20 of 31

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Photographs

Photo List (cont.)

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Library, East Wing, Looking South
7. Photo No. 21 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Bathroom, Room 208, Looking South
7. Photo No. 22 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Bathroom Detail, Room 208, Looking East
7. Photo No. 23 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Window Detail, Room 208, Looking West
7. Photo No. 24 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Shutters, Room 208, Looking East
7. Photo No. 25 of 31

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Photographs

Photo List (cont.)

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. West Wing, 2nd Floor Corridor, Looking South
7. Photo No. 26 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Interior Detail, Room 201, Looking South
7. Photo No. 27 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. East Wing, Stairs, Looking Northwest
7. Photo No. 28 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. East Wing Stairway Surround, 3rd Floor, Looking West
7. Photo No. 29 of 31

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. French Doors, Room 315, Looking East
7. Photo No. 30 of 31

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Photographs

Photo List (cont.)

1. Colony House
2. Mountain Lake (Polk County), Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. 1989
5. Historic Property Associates
6. Corridor, 3rd Floor, Looking West
7. Photo No. 31 of 31

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Significance

Summary

The Colony House, a hotel/club house at Mountain Lake near Lake Wales, Florida, fulfills criteria A and C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Constructed in 1915 with later additions in 1921 and 1925, the Colony House is significant in the area of commerce for its association with events resulting in the development of Mountain Lake as a tourist destination and an exclusive winter resort. It has further significance in the area of architecture for its association with Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and Charles R. Wait, the architects who designed the original building and subsequent additions, and with George M. Miller, the contractor. It has additional architectural significance because of its architectural style and the type of building it embodies. The Colony House is little altered since its original construction and is maintained in pristine condition.

Background History Of Lake Wales And Mountain Lake

The Colony House is located in a residential development known as Mountain Lake, one mile north of Lake Wales, Florida. Lake Wales occupies a relatively late role in the recorded history of Florida. It is situated in the central highlands region of the state, an area that experienced little development prior to the turn of the twentieth century.

Timber industries, the production of lumber and naval stores, were the initial economic activities in the vicinity of Lake Wales. Among the first to recognize the development potential of the area was G.V. Tillman, who first visited the Highlands Ridge in 1902. Tillman, a native of Belleville, Georgia, had previous experience with the production of naval stores in Georgia and North Florida. In 1906, he and three other men formed the Sessoms Investment Company for the purpose of dealing in real estate and promoting the naval stores industry in the area. The company purchased 180,000 acres of land in the region. In 1911, the same group, joined by E.C. Stuart, formed the Lake Wales Land Company and purchased 5,000 acres of land near Lake Wales from the Sessoms Investment Company. Stuart and Tillman later became officials of the Mountain Lake Corporation and part of their land holdings would form essential pieces of the Mountain Lake development.

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Significance

The event that proved crucial to the early development of Lake Wales was the extension of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad from Haines City in June, 1911. The railroad ended the relative isolation of the community, which previously could be reached only by sand trails. It also provided an outlet to northern markets for the naval stores and citrus industries, and transportation for prospective settlers, among them the wealthy visitors and seasonal residents who formed the Mountain Lake Colony.

Like many Florida communities, Lake Wales expanded dramatically during the 1920s when real estate speculation became the prime force behind what became known as the Florida Land Boom. Entranced by a flood of promotional literature expounding upon the beauty of Florida, freed by the increased mobility which the automobile afforded, and seeking to make an easy fortune through land speculation, visitors from all throughout the nation descended upon the state in unprecedented numbers. The boom quickly exhausted itself, however. Its crash was devastating, propelling Florida into a protracted economic depression after 1926. Economic historians regard the phenomenon as one of the precipitating causes of the Great Depression that struck the nation at large in the early 1930s.

Residential expansion in the Lake Wales vicinity during the Florida Boom was distinguished by an exclusive development at Mountain Lake, immediately north of the town. Established by New York real estate developer, Frederick C. Ruth, Mountain Lake included the Colony House, an eighteen-hole golf course, private residences, and several thousand acres of citrus groves. Circumstances favorable to founding of the Mountain Lake development began in February, 1885 with the acquisition of 1400 acres of raw land north of present-day Lake Wales by Baltimore resident Robert J. Ruth. The family's land holdings eventually became vested in Ruth's son, Frederick. In 1914, Frederick, by then residing in New York, moved to Lake Wales and began acquiring additional land for a planned development.

On December 12, 1914 Ruth formed the Mountain Lake Corporation and was voted president of the company. Frank S. Washburn was made vice-president and G.V. Tillman became secretary-treasurer. Other members of the board of directors were E.C. Stuart and M.E. Gillet. On December 15, the Mountain Lake Corporation purchased key parcels of land needed for the development from the Lake Wales Land Company. These pieces comprised 570 acres and included Iron Mountain and the land

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Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 3

Significance

surrounding Buck Lake. Between 1914 and 1918, the corporation acquired additional acreage, bringing its total holdings to 2,800 acres. During the 1920s it added an additional 700 acres, bringing its holdings to the current total of approximately 3,500 acres.

The development concept for Mountain Lake was similar to that of Roland Park, near Baltimore, Maryland, where Frederick Ruth had been reared. Ruth envisioned Mountain Lake as a state of the art residential development. The plan of Mountain Lake was unique to Florida at the time but had characteristics similar to a number of planned residential developments then being developed elsewhere in the nation.

There was no precedent for a planned, self-contained residential development in the United States before the 1850s. Among the first residential neighborhoods professionally designed to be completely independent of the existing urban context were Llewelyn Park, New Jersey (designed by Andrew Jackson Davis in 1853), and Riverside, Illinois, a satellite community of Chicago, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted for Calvert Vaux and Company in 1869. Such developments were seen as a synthesis of rural and urban living. While readily accessible to the city, these suburbs provided their residents with a beautiful, healthy, and natural setting in which to live. The plans of the early residential neighborhoods followed the natural contours of the land, featuring meandering street patterns, parks, natural vistas, and lots of generous size. Setbacks were established at considerable distance from the street to provide for spacious lawn and garden areas, and restrictive covenants prevented the construction of inexpensive and jerry-built residences.

The basic concepts of the planned community developed in the second half of the nineteenth century were refined and further codified during the first decades of the twentieth century. Throughout the United States, planned residential developments shared common characteristics. They emphasized the rural characteristics of spaciousness and greenery, but tended to be elitist in their purpose. Strict controls governed land use, building design, and the social, ethnic, and economic backgrounds of persons allowed to reside in these developments. Restricted residential communities were constructed near numerous American cities, wherever sufficient numbers of "well-to-do" families could be induced to build homes. Although these planned communities were usually similar in many respects, regional distinctions among the developments resulted from the use of

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Significance

local materials and the adaptation of local history or myth for architectural models. Spanish revival architecture found favor in California, the Southwest, and Florida. Greek Revival was popular in the South, and the Prairie School was common in the Midwest. Tudor and Colonial Revival enjoyed popularity in the Northeast.

Fred Ruth began developing Mountain Lake with many of these concepts in mind. He envisioned winding roads, pocket parks, citrus groves and a golf course integrated with the residences. He chose the name "Mountain Lake" for the development because of its association with nearby Iron Mountain and because it provided the development with a "highland image." Mountain Lake was distinct from many other developments of the time because of its truly rural setting. The nearby town of Lake Wales was little more than a village, and most of Central Florida was only lightly settled. The developers controlled land use, density of development, and setback through restrictive covenants. Mountain Lake offered a sharp contrast with the speculative, largely uncontrolled development of other Florida communities dating from the same and earlier periods.

Early residents and visitors to Mountain Lake were attracted by its natural setting, mild climate, the opportunities for hunting, fishing, and its lake side setting. For the most part, the residents lived in the community only during the winter season. Property owners built large, well-designed homes, while visitors stayed at the Colony House. The Colony House was the focal point of the community. It was the first building constructed at Mountain Lake and housed guests and many permanent residents during their initial visit.

Most of the seasonal visitors and residents were wealthy men and their families from the northeastern states. Among them were E.W. Rice, Jr., president of General Electric; Milton J. Warner and Samuel J. Ferguson, owners of electrical utility companies in Connecticut; Frank S. Washburn, president of American Cyanamide, E.T. Bedford, a pioneer in the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, who served as president of Mountain Lake Corporation beginning in 1919, and Elmer A. Sperry, President of Sperry Gyroscope Company. Frederick C. Ruth, was himself a resident of Mountain Lake, as were August Heckscher and Edward Bok, both of whom were associated with the development of Mountain Lake as a winter resort.

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 5Significance

Hecksher had extensive mining interests in Pennsylvania and New Jersey and had large real estate holdings in Florida. In the Lake Wales vicinity he purchased some 3,000 acres of land for orange groves and acquired a major interest in the local bank. Hecksher sold his interest in the Alcoma Packing Company, which maintained the groves, in 1941. Bok was vice-president of the Curtis Publishing Company, publishers of the Ladies Home Journal. In 1922 he stayed at the Colony House while waiting the completion of his residence "Valentino." He subsequently acquired 25 acres of the development at the summit of Iron Mountain. There he established a spacious garden preserve, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. The gardens are dominated by a carillon tower, now called the Bok Singing Tower. This Mountain Lake Sanctuary has become a major Central Florida tourist attraction. It was formally opened to the public in 1929 with ceremonies attended by President Calvin Coolidge.

During the 1920s, the community experienced its most expansive period of growth. The Colony House continued receiving a steady stream of guests and forty-five houses were constructed in Mountain Lake during the decade. The continuing development of the residential community, and the prosperity of the citrus industry may have insulated Lake Wales to some extent against the more dramatic effects of the collapse of the Florida Land Boom. The speculative bubble began to deflate in 1925. Property values that in some locations had soared to exaggerated levels during the Boom's peak fell precipitously, bringing over extended speculators down with them. Conditions worsened in 1926 and construction activity in most parts of the state shut down in 1927. The Great Depression descended upon Florida, three years in advance of the rest of the country.

The collapse of the Florida Land Boom and the onset of the Great Depression sharply curtailed development at Mountain Lake. Only six residences were constructed between 1930 and 1934, four of those in 1930. No houses were constructed between 1934 and 1951. About fifty residences have been added since the latter date, and today the development is a secluded, tranquil community of about 100 residents. The the historic residences, and the Colony House have changed little since they were originally constructed.

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Significance

Historic Significance: Criterion A

The National Register of Historic Places, under criterion A, recognizes historic properties for their association with a significant event, pattern of historical development, or for the role which the property played in such a development. The Colony House has significance in the area of commerce for its association with the development of tourism in Lake Wales. Tourism and seasonal residency have long been significant features of Florida's economy.

The concept behind Mountain Lake was that of an exclusive, primarily winter resort for wealthy, socially prominent Northerners. One of the key events in the history of Florida during the late nineteenth century was the development of the state as a tourist mecca and winter resort for wealthy Northerners. The prototype community was St. Augustine, which Henry M. Flagler sought to convert into the "Winter Newport." Later tourists and winter residents frequented Ormond, Daytona, Palm Beach, and eventually Miami. These towns and cities, however, were for the most part developed as ordinary communities rather than "exclusive" communities intended solely for wealthy residents. The Colony House operated on a seasonal basis, catering to wealthy guests. Some of these visitors made long-term contributions to the economic development of the area.

Architectural Significance: Criterion C

The Colony House has architectural significance for its association with Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., son of one of the most significant landscape architects in the history of the United States. Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. (1822-1903) is recognized as the designer of Central Park in New York City. Central Park became a world renowned open space that influenced park development in communities throughout the United States. A protege of the well-known American architect, Andrew Jackson Downing, Olmsted became superintendent of Central Park in 1857. After the Civil War, he became the best-known landscape architect in the country. He and his partner, Calvert Vaux, designed sixteen residential communities, including Riverside near Chicago, Illinois; Brookline and Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts; Sudbrook and Roland Park, Maryland; and Yonkers and Tarrytown Heights, New York.

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Significance

In 1884 his stepson, John C. Olmsted, joined the firm, and was joined in 1895 by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., following his graduation from Harvard. Following their father's retirement in 1898, the name of the firm was changed to Olmsted Brothers. The Olmsted Brothers remained the nation's foremost landscape architects. Among the younger Olmsted's commissions were the United States Military Academy at West Point, the Brooklyn Botanical Garden, and the Boston and Baltimore Park systems. He served as a member of the National Capital Planning and Park Commission, Washington, D.C. The American Academy of Arts and Letters credited him with being the most influential individual upon the planned development of the nation's capital. He was one of the key individuals in the construction of the Lincoln Memorial.

On September 18, 1914 Ruth wrote Olmsted, offering him the commission for the development plan for Mountain Lake. Olmsted accepted the commission and by a month later was advising Ruth on preliminary details of the development. Olmsted completed his initial plan in May, 1915. The Olmsted Plan included the residential component of the development, the tentative block and lot dimensions, all major roadways, grove lands, and a layout for an eighteen hole golf course. Seth J. Raynor, a nationally renowned golf course designer, was responsible for final design of the golf course. The Olmsted plan for Mountain Lake, which remains largely unaltered to this day, was completed in December, 1916.

In addition to the overall planning of Mountain Lake, Olmsted designed the Colony House, the hotel/club house which became the centerpiece of the development. Olmsted located the building with a sweeping view of Mountain Lake at the end of the eighteenth fairway. The Colony House further served as an architectural model for subsequent buildings in the community. Olmsted's design was heavily influenced by the architecture of the Caribbean and Bermuda, whose climates are similar to that of Florida. Olmsted's draftsman, Charles Wait, attributed the design of the building to influences drawn from Spain and Italy, as well as Bermuda and the Caribbean. He summarized the building's style as being Spanish Florida, which today is best described as Mediterranean Revival. In addition to designing the Colony House, Olmsted is credited with the design of four of the early residences at Mountain Lake. In 1917, the Olmsted Brothers

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Significance

decided to devote their practice exclusively to landscape architecture, ending their design of buildings. Thus the Colony House is one of the last examples of the firm's architectural designs.

The Mediterranean Revival is an eclectic style containing architectural elements drawn from Spanish, Italian, and Islamic sources. Popular in those states that have a Spanish colonial heritage, the Mediterranean Revival style includes such subtypes as Mission, Moorish, Turkish, Byzantine, and Spanish Eclectic Revival styles which became popular in the Southwest and Florida. The influence of those Mediterranean styles found expression through a detailed study in 1915 of Latin American architecture made by Bertram Grovesnor Goodhue at the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego. The Goodhue exhibit prominently featured the rich Spanish architectural variety of South America. Encouraged by the publicity afforded the exposition, other architects began to look directly to Spain and elsewhere in the Mediterranean where they found still more interesting building traditions.

Mediterranean Revival buildings in Florida display considerable Spanish influence. A popular building style in Florida during the 1920s, it remained popular even in the 1930s after the collapse of the land boom. It was adapted for a variety of building types, ranging from grandiose tourist hotels to small residences. The popularity of the style became widespread, and many commercial and residential buildings underwent renovation in the 1920s to reflect the Mediterranean influence. Identifying features of the style include flat roofs (usually with some form of parapet), ceramic tile roof surfacing, stuccoed facades, porches with arched openings supported by masonry columns, casement and double-hung sash windows, and a variety of ceramic or stucco decorative details.

The Colony House also represents a type of building, the resort hotel, which was significant to the development of Lake Wales and other Florida communities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During its period of significance the Colony House was a fine hotel and clubhouse, catering to a sophisticated clientele. Its architecture and its clientele maintained the tradition of earlier prototypes such as the Ponce de Leon and Alcazar hotels in St. Augustine, the Tampa Bay Hotel in Tampa, and the Ormond Hotel in Ormond Beach.

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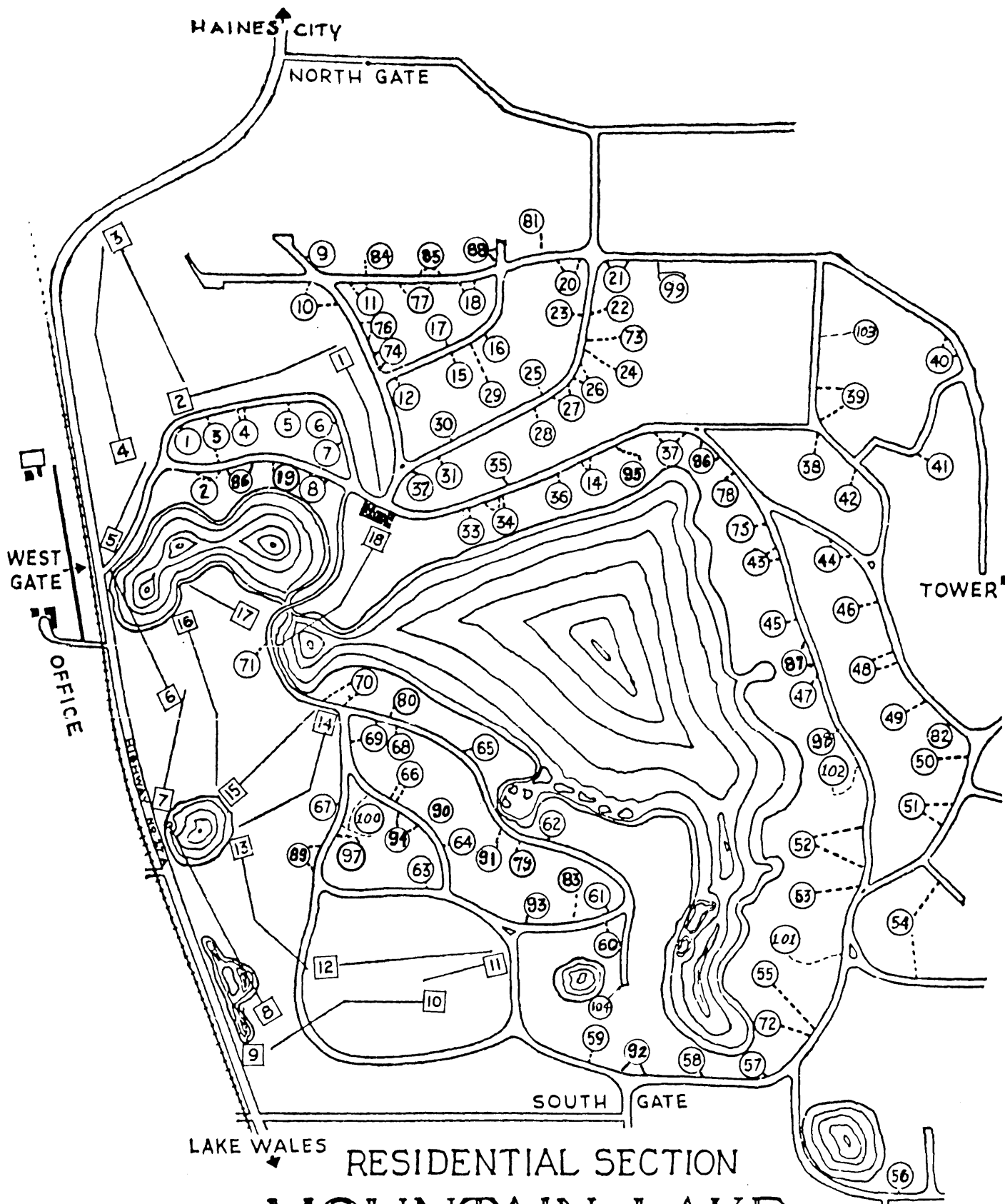
Boundary Description & Justification

Verbal Boundary Description

The Colony House is located in the unsubdivided portion of Mountain Lake Estates more fully described in Polk County Official Records, Book 1, Page 55. The boundary begins at the northwest corner of the building and runs along the roadway on the northeast side of the building approximately 219 linear feet; then it proceeds southwest along the southeast side of the building approximately 119 feet to the southeast corner of the building; then it proceeds in a northwesterly direction approximately 219 feet to the southwest corner of the building; then it proceeds in a northeasterly direction approximately 119 feet to the point of beginning. The boundary follows the plot plan of the building and is roughly defined by the above referenced roadway on the northeast; grounds and a putting green on the southeast; additional grounds and the eighteenth green on the southwest; and the swimming pool area on the northwest.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the Colony House are based on man-made elements. They are the roadway on the northeast side, the extent of the building on the southeast and southwest sides, and the pool area on the northwest side. The elements contained within these boundaries are limited to the building itself and any of its subordinate additions and connecting elements, including the courtyard on the northeast side, which is embraced on three sides by the building.



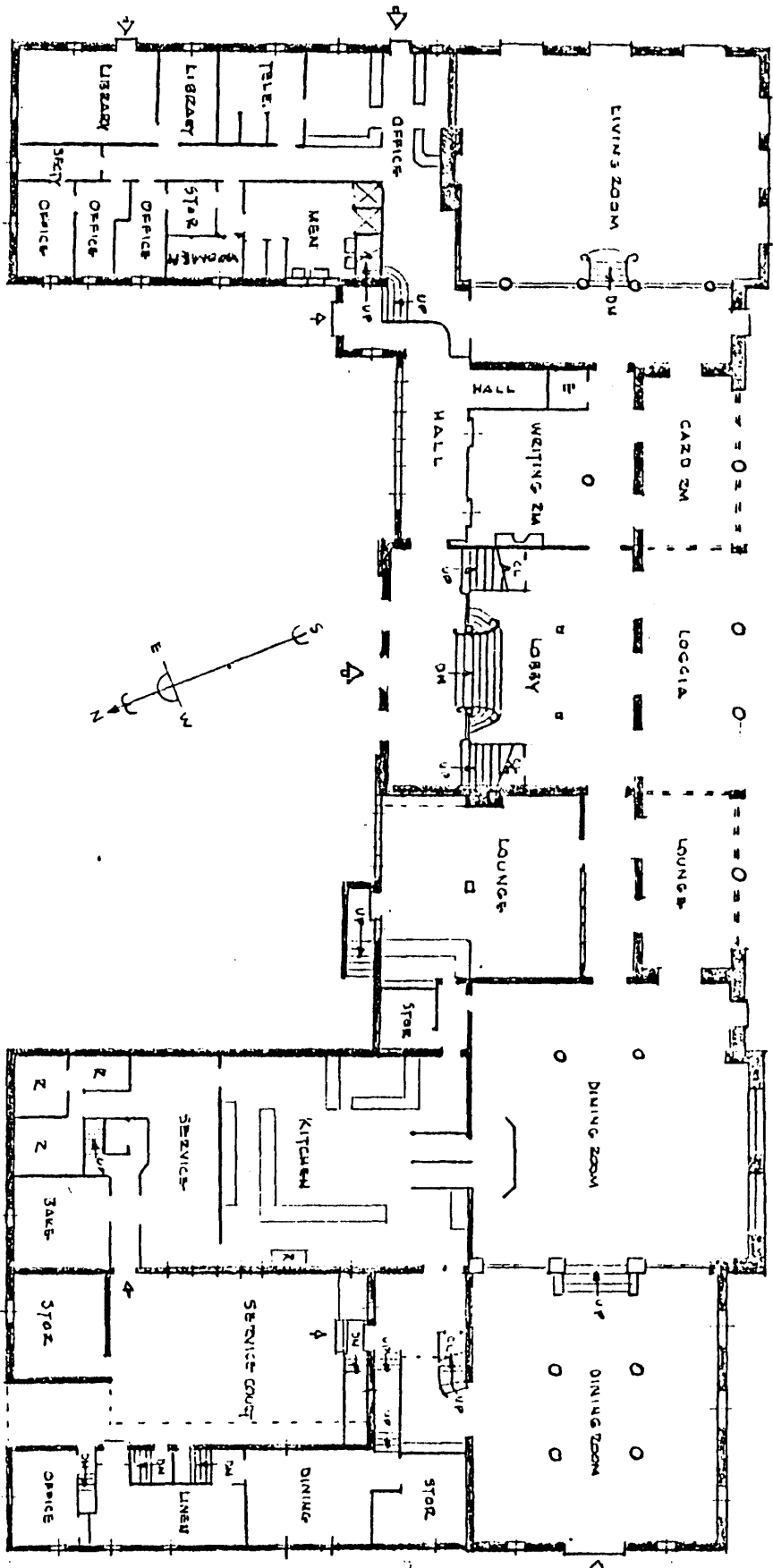
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MOUNTAIN LAKE
 POLK COUNTY · FLORIDA

MOUNTAIN LAKE COLONY HOUSE

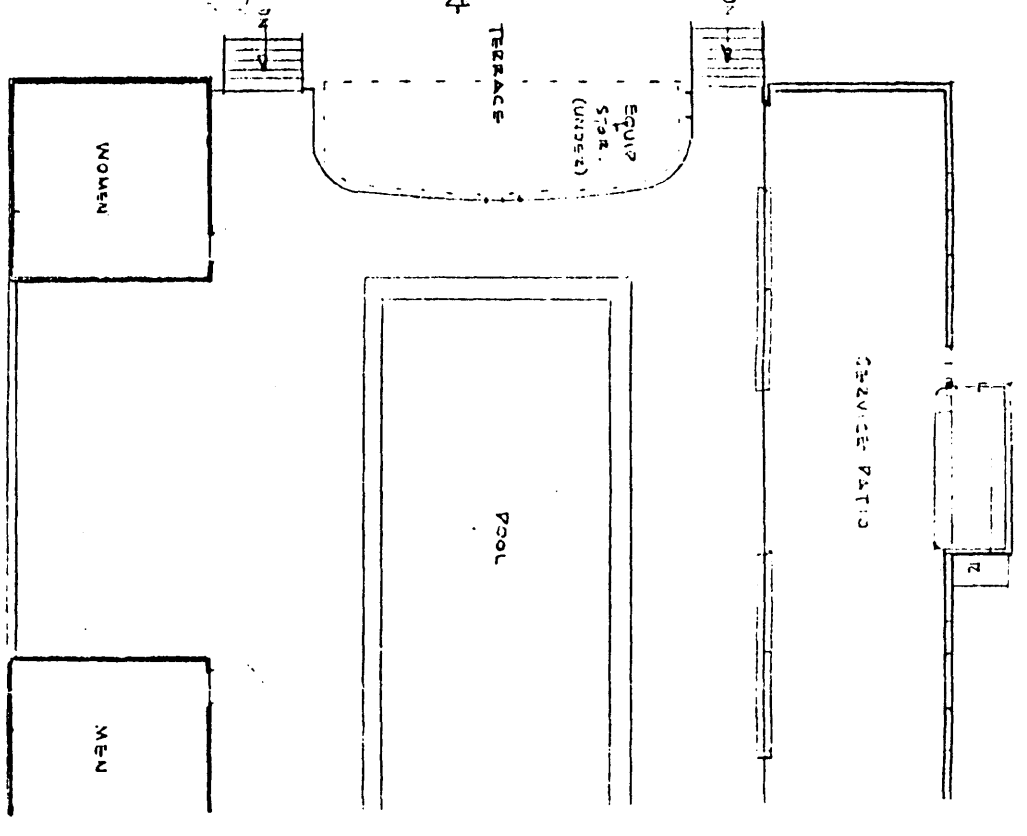
MOUNTAIN LAKE

FLORIDA

FIRST FLOOR PLAN



POOL COMPLEX

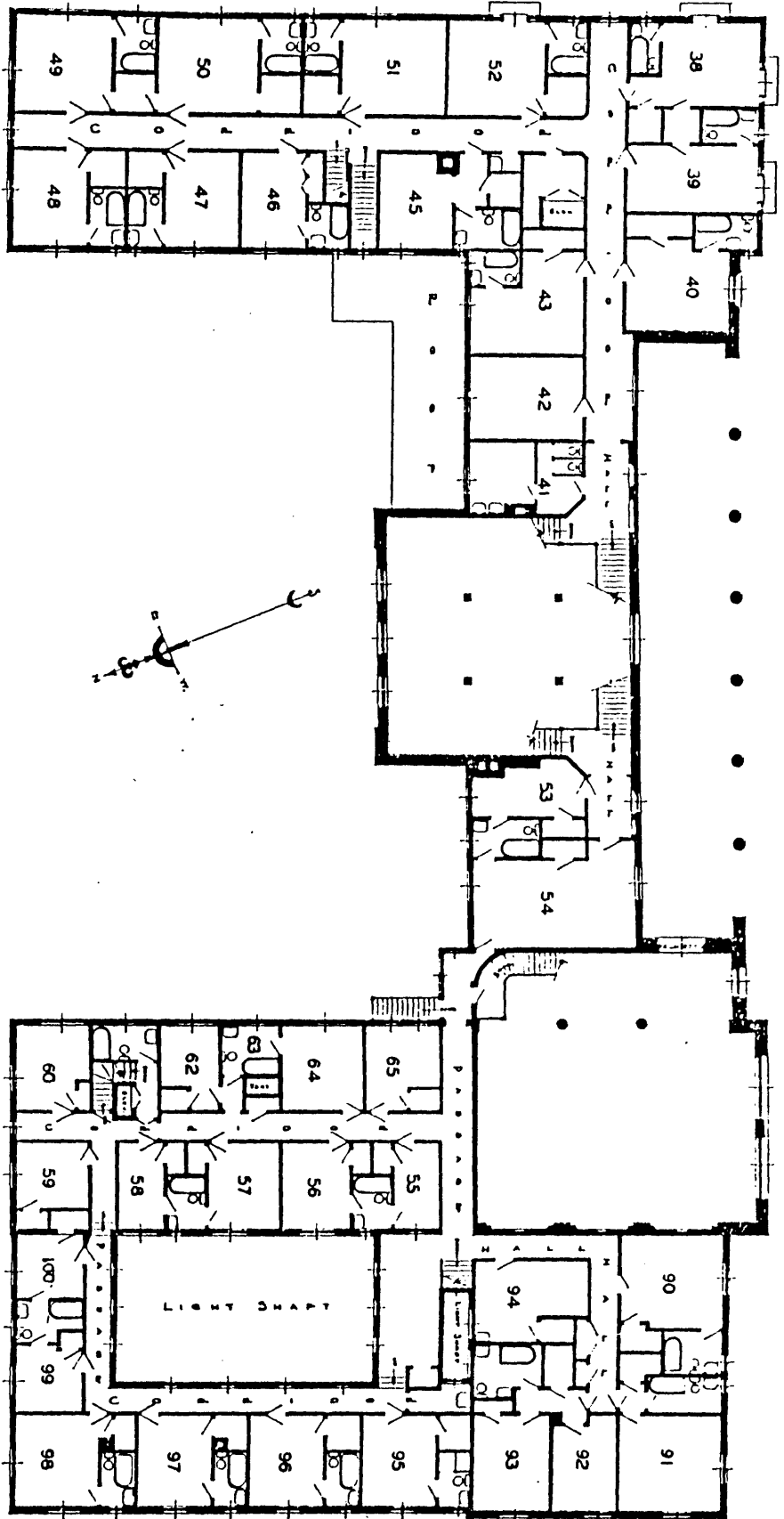


M.C. 1963 CH
SCALE 1" TO 25'

LEGEND

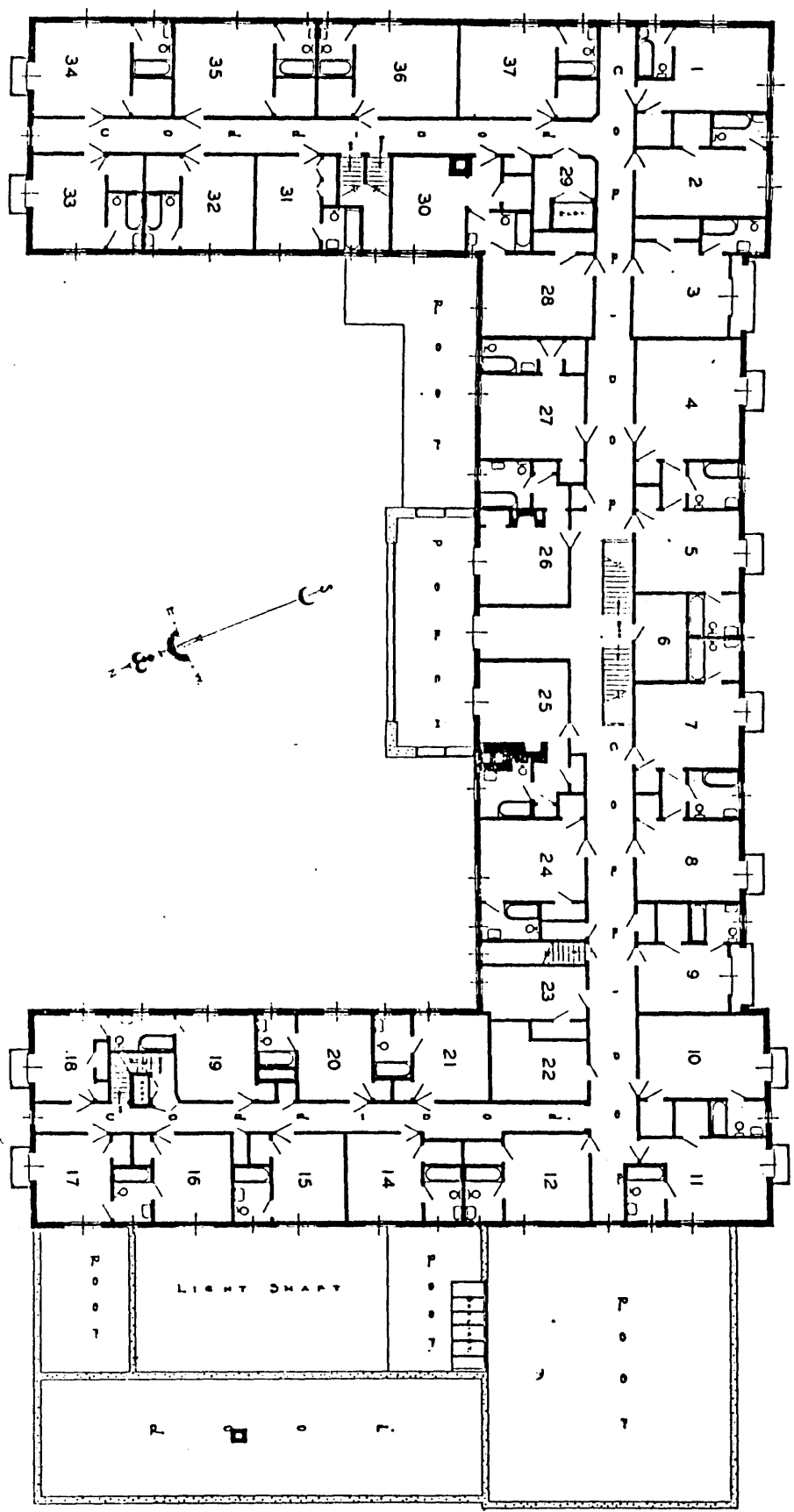
E	- ELEVATOR
R	- REFRIGERATOR
○	- ENCLOSURE AREAS/GUYS
○	- PILLARS

MOUNTAIN LAKE CLUB HOUSE
SECTION D FLOOR PLAN
MOUNTAIN LAKE FLORIDA.



MOUNTAIN LAKE CORPORATION,
LAKE WALKER,
FLORIDA.
DECEMBER, 1925 - S.A. PERIN.

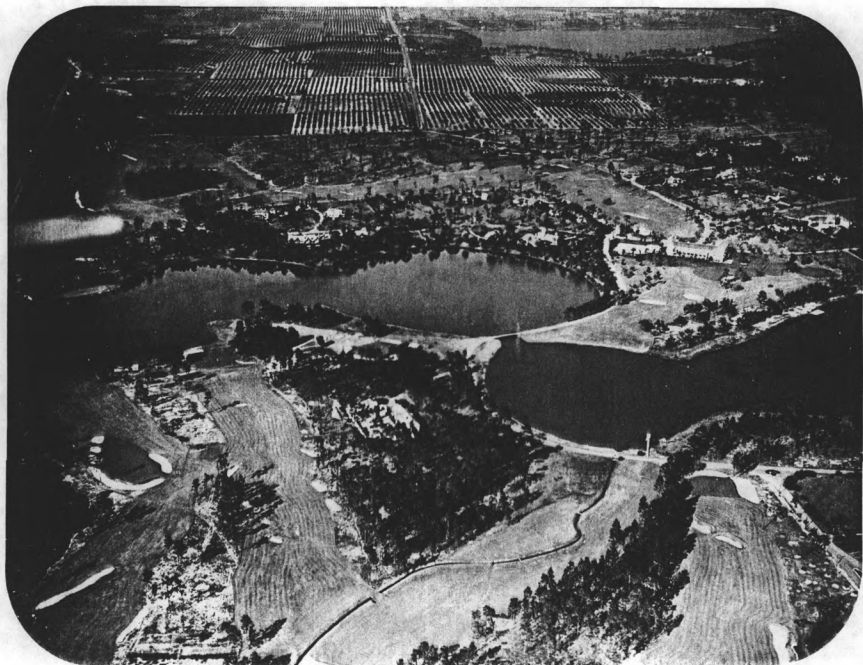
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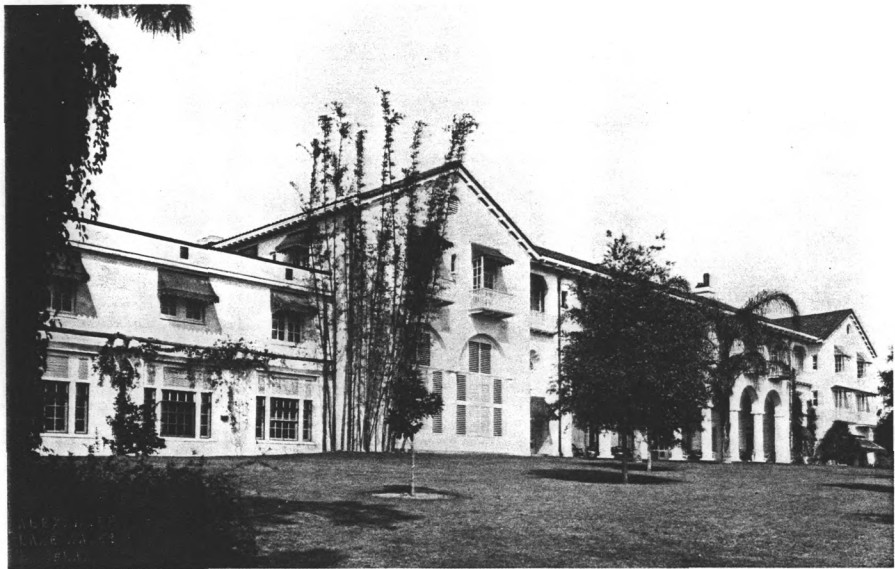
Mountain Lake Corporation
Lake Wales, Florida.
December 21, 1955 - R. W. F. R.



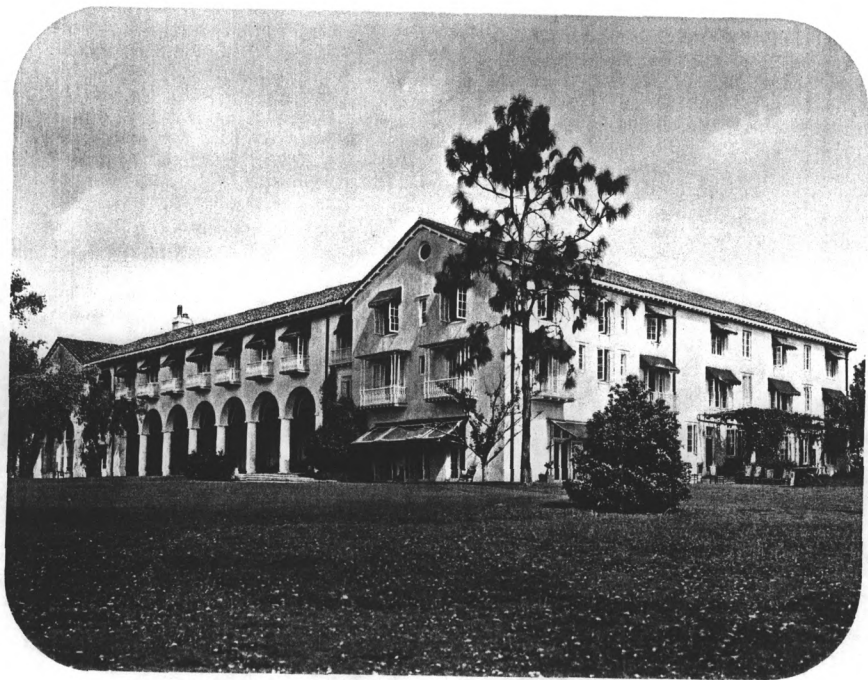
COLONY HOUSE ADDITION — By 1920, Charles R. Wait, an associate of Olmsted's, had been called on to design this addition to the Colony House which was added in 1921.



EARLY AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH — Early photograph looking north over western end of Mountain Lake. E. T. Bedford's great Jacobean house is on north shore, just left of center. To the right of center, the original tennis courts can be seen just left of the Colony House on the ground now occupied by the pool and pool house.



THE CLUB-HOUSE



COMPLETED STRUCTURE — By 1925, Wait had been asked to design a matching wing for the Colony House, resulting in this finished structure. This photograph was taken from the lakeside.