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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

RECEIVED
OCT 11 1991

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 Old Palmetto Hotel
other names/site number Charlton Apartments, Regent Court Apartments

2. Location

street & number 1889 Old Dixie Highway N/A not for publication
city, town Vero Beach N/A vicinity
state Florida code FL county Indian River code 061 zip code 32964

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> objects
			<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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 does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Suzanne P. Walker, deputy SHPO 9/27/91
Signature of certifying official State Historic Preservation Officer Date
State or Federal agency and bureau Florida Division of Historical Resources

In my opinion, the property meets 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. See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:) _____
Selma Byun 11/13/91
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/hotel/multiple dwelling

GOVERNMENT/government office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: frame vernacular

LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS:

Mediterranean Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls stucco

roof asphalt

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Please 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)

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1921-1941

Significant Dates

1921, 1925

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder

Newman, L.M. (builder)

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

Please see continuation sheet.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please 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:

Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre.

UTM References

A

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5	5	9	3	2	0
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3	0	5	6	8	1	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 attached legal description of property.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire parcel of land that has been historically associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Tulia W. Taylor, Historic Sites Specialist Emily Dieterich, Consultant
organization Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation date 9-19-91
street & number 500 S. Bronough St. telephone (904) 487-2333
city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32309

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DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

The Old Palmetto Hotel at 1889 Old Dixie Highway in Vero Beach, Florida is an L-shaped, two-story frame vernacular building with Mediterranean Revival influences. Built in 1921, it was originally rectangular in shape. In 1926, two additions, one on the west end and one on the south side changed the building's configuration to its present L-shape. The south wing addition features a three-story square tower. In 1990 the Palmetto was rehabilitated and restored as an apartment building, one of its historic uses.

SETTING

Located on the Indian River, Vero Beach was a small agricultural community of 750 people when it was incorporated in 1919. By 1923, the city's population had nearly doubled to 1,500 residents. The Old Palmetto Hotel was built in 1921 on Old Dixie Highway near the city's commercial district. Another small hotel, the Edgewood, was located on Old Dixie Highway a block to the north. Today Vero Beach has a population of over 17,000 people. The area where the Old Palmetto Hotel is located has been absorbed into the city's commercial district. Other commercial structures are located near the building although a vacant lot adjoins the property on the south side.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Old Palmetto Hotel is a two story, frame vernacular building clad in stucco. The north wing, rectangular in shape, was built in 1921. (Photo 1) Five years later the north wing was expanded to the west and a new wing was added on to the south. (Photos 2 and 3) The building retains its 1926 L-shaped configuration. Both wings have three over one double hung sash windows, often arranged in sets of two or three. Applied decorative quoins appear on the front facade of both wings and on the back elevation of the north wing. (Photos 3)

The north wing has a hip roof covered in asphalt shingles with dormers on the north, east, and west elevations. Exposed rafter ends are visible on all elevations. An exterior chimney protrudes through the north eavesline. The porch on the front (east) facade is enclosed with windows, which replaced the

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original screen enclosure c. 1940. Double entrance doors are centrally located and feature fan-shaped windows. The back or west end of the north wing has a first floor walkway with three segmental arch cut-outs. The interior of the north wing is accessed by the double doors on the front facade or entrance doors on the south and west facades. (Photos 4 - 7)

The south wing is characterized by Mediterranean Revival details. It has a flat roof with a parapet and, on the front facade, a square tower with a hip roof. Although the tower's roof was originally clad in barrel tile, photographs from the 1960s show it clad in asphalt shingles. The east elevation of the tower is decorated with three enclosed arches set above the second floor windows. The south elevation has a first floor walkway with open arches. The interior of the south wing is accessed through three doors on the west elevation. (Photos 3, 8, and 9)

The interior of the Old Palmetto Hotel is divided into twenty apartments. Walls are plaster and lath. The building's hallways are original as are the stairwells and balustrades. (Photos 10 and 11)

Historic Alterations

The Palmetto was converted from a hotel to apartments in the late 1930s. Areas allocated for a hotel lobby and central kitchen were turned into apartment units at that time. In addition, the crawl space under the building was enclosed with concrete blocks and small air grates, and the front porch on the north wing was enclosed with windows. The applied decorative quoins on the building are also thought to date from the late 1930s.

Recent Alterations

The Old Palmetto Hotel was rehabilitated for use as apartments in 1990. Most of the changes involved updating kitchen and bathroom facilities. New security doors, interior and exterior, were installed throughout the building along with new wooden exterior stairs on the south and east elevations of the north wing. (Photos 6 and 7) Several windows were enclosed and metal sash windows were installed in the same style as the original wooden ones. The double windows on the second floor of the north wing's front facade were reduced to one window. Despite these changes,

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the Old Palmetto Hotel retains its integrity of location, design, materials, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The Old Palmetto Hotel, constructed in 1921, is significant at the local level under Criterion A as one of the first hotels built in Vero Beach. The hotel filled the need for accommodations for the large number of tourists and land speculators who visited Vero Beach during the real estate boom in the mid-1920s. The building is also significant at the local level under Criterion A for its additional use from 1925 to 1937 as administrative offices for the newly established Indian River County. By 1941, the building was converted to apartments, its current use.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Florida pioneers in the 1880s were attracted to the area known today as Vero Beach by its lush vegetation, marine resources and homesteading opportunities. The Homestead Act of 1862 provided land grants for farmers and speculators in surveyed areas of the state. Located on the Indian River, Vero Beach was a convenient shipping point for the area's agricultural products. In 1891, a post office was established at the settlement known as "Vero." Henry Morrison Flagler's railroad, the Florida East Coast Railway, reached Vero in late 1893. In many practical ways the railroad stimulated the economy. Farmers could transport crops more quickly to market and tourists could reach the town easily. A train depot, which is still extant, was constructed in Vero in 1903 (NR listed 1987).

During the first decade of the 20th century, Vero grew at a moderate pace. Fewer than 100 people lived in the small settlement in 1905. By 1910, the population had reached 200. One of the most significant projects undertaken in Vero and other parts of Florida during this time was the drainage of wetlands. Land reclamation, as it was known, was promoted during the gubernatorial term of Napoleon Bonaparte Broward (1905-1909). This program created new lands for agricultural development, primarily for citrus production. It also brought about an improved road system and an influx of residents. The Indian River Farms Company, organized in 1912, drained much of the

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wetlands close to Vero and sold the land to farmers for citrus groves.

With the Indian River Farms Company attracting new residents, the town of Vero was platted in 1913. Numerous subdivisions were established between 1914 and 1917, and a small but bustling business district emerged west of the railroad depot. In 1919 with 750 residents, Vero incorporated as a city.

As in other parts of Florida, the real estate boom of the 1920s brought unprecedented development and economic expansion to Vero. The population increased, transportation networks expanded, and Vero experienced its most intensive period of development. In 1920, a bridge spanning the Indian River was constructed, connecting Vero to the peninsula and allowing easy access to the beaches. In 1925, U.S. Highway 1 was paved in asphalt through Vero to Miami, which provided greater access to the area for middle-class tourists traveling by car. Vero and other coastal towns along Highway 1 became popular tourist destinations.

The population of Vero grew rapidly during the 1920s. By 1923, it had reached 1,500 residents. Increased construction activity resulted in the expansion of the downtown commercial district. In 1925, the city reincorporated as Vero Beach and the city limits were expanded to encompass nearly four square miles. The same year, Indian River County was created from St. Lucie County and Vero Beach became the county seat of government.

The real estate boom began a rapid decline in 1926 with decreased bank deposits, real estate fraud, and an FEC freight embargo. The effects of the "bust" were moderate in Vero Beach due to the community's diversified economy based on agriculture, citrus, commerce, fishing and tourism. The population of Vero Beach continued to increase, reaching 2,500 in 1929. The tourist industry helped Vero Beach through the Great Depression in the 1930s. The automobile facilitated tourism and some parts of Florida, including Indian River County, experienced increased population growth. Vero Beach recorded more than 3,000 residents in 1940.

A small naval air station was activated at Vero Beach in 1942 and the first squadrons arrived in January, 1943. After the war, the local economy reverted back to agriculture, citrus production,

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commercial fishing, and commerce. Today, Vero Beach has over 17,000 residents, many of whom are retirees, and its main sources of income are agriculture and tourism.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Due to Vero's rapid growth and popularity in the early 1920s, housing and hotel accommodations were hard to come by in the city. By 1920, Vero had only two small hotels, the Sleepy Eye Lodge (demolished) and the Edgewood (now extensively altered). To meet the need for more hotel accommodations, George W. Gray signed a contract in early 1921 for the erection of a two-story hotel on the corner of Eighteenth Street and Dixie Highway. The Vero Press, on February, 1921, reported that the building plans called for twenty-one guest rooms. Local building contractor L.M. Newman was awarded the contract for the hotel. Concrete and plaster work was to be done by the Vero Concrete Company and the Beesley Plumbing Shop was in charge of plumbing. According to the newspaper, construction work was to begin immediately. An advertisement in The Vero Press in May, 1921 indicated that all furnishings for the Palmetto were supplied by the Vero Furniture Company, owned by C.A. Routh. The formal opening of the stuccoed frame hotel was in August, 1921, with a community reception and dance. Although little is known about the hotel's first guests, they were probably middle-class tourists and real estate speculators visiting the area.

In 1925, Indian River County was created from St. Lucie County and Vero, now called Vero Beach, was included in the new county. Soon after, a rivalry ensued for the designation of county seat. The principle contenders were Vero Beach and Winter Beach. One consideration was the offer of \$100,000 for a courthouse if the decision were in favor of Winter Beach. Despite the financial incentive, a county-wide referendum was held and voters chose Vero Beach by a narrow margin. Since the city did not have a courthouse, the county's administrative offices were established on the second floor of the Palmetto Hotel. A courtroom was located a few blocks away in the Seminole Building (since demolished), which housed business and real estate offices.

The Palmetto was enlarged in 1926, probably due to the popularity of Vero Beach as a tourist destination. The building was extended to the west and an addition was added to the south. The

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new wing to the south was designed in the Mediterranean Revival style, which was popular in Florida in the 1920s.

The Palmetto functioned as the center of county government until 1937 when a courthouse (now extensively altered) was completed on 14th Avenue with the assistance of Works Progress Administration (WPA) funds. By 1941, all of the county's administrative offices had moved to the courthouse and the Palmetto had been converted into the Charlton Apartment Building. The building functioned in this capacity through the 1980s when it fell into disrepair and was acquired by its current owner in 1987. Presently the building is known as the Regent Court Apartments and contains twenty units.

The Old Palmetto Hotel is significant as one of the oldest hotel buildings still extant in Vero Beach. The building was constructed, and later expanded, to accommodate the increasing number of middle-class tourists and real estate speculators visiting the east coast of Florida. Prior to the availability of the automobile, tourism in Florida was for wealthy northerners. During the 1920s, cheap automobile transportation allowed middle-class families to vacation in the state. Hotels like the Palmetto were built specifically to cater to these visitors.

The building is also significant for its use from 1925 - 1937 as the main administrative offices for Indian River County. Vero Beach was chosen for the county seat in 1925. The lack of funds for a courthouse made it necessary for the county to find office space in the commercial district that was convenient for citizens and businessmen. The Palmetto had the right location as well as the space necessary for the administration of the county until a courthouse could be built. Its subsequent conversion to an apartment complex after 1937 continued the building's use as a multiple dwelling.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Contract Let This Week for Twenty-One Room Hotel." The Vero Press, February 19, 1921.

Historic Properties Associates, Inc. "Historic Properties Survey of the City of Vero Beach." St. Augustine: 1990.

Honeywell, O.D.. Telephone interview by Emily Perry Dieterich, November 8, 1990.

Lockwood, Charlotte. Florida's Historic Indian River County. Vero Beach, Florida: MediaTronics, Inc., 1975.

"Many Improvements are Going Forward in Vero." The Vero Press, July 28, 1921.

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"National Publicity Supplement." Vero Beach Journal, May 23, 1926.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. Vero Beach. 1923, 1929, 1944.

Tebeau, Charlton W. A History of Florida. Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1971.

"The Palmetto, Vero's New Hotel, Is Now Open." The Vero Press, August 11, 1921.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Old Palmetto Hotel
2. 1889 Old Dixie Hwy., Vero Beach, Florida
3. unknown
4. circa 1922 (publicity brochure, "Vero, Florida," published by the Vero Chamber of Commerce)
5. Indian River County Historical Society, Vero Beach, Florida
6. Southeast facade, camera facing northwest
7. 1

1. Old Palmetto Hotel
2. 1889 Old Dixie Hwy., Vero Beach, Florida
3. unknown
4. 1926 (Vero Beach Journal, "Publicity Supplement," May 23, 1926)
5. Indian River County Historical Society, Vero Beach, Florida
6. Northeast facade, camera facing southwest
7. 2

1. Old Palmetto Hotel/Regent Court Apartments
2. 1889 Old Dixie Hwy., Vero Beach, Florida
3. Anders Nyquist, property owner
4. September, 1991
5. Research Atlantica, Inc., Coral Springs, Florida
6. Front (east) facade, camera facing southwest
7. 3

Items 1-5 are the same for photographs 3-4.

6. Close-up of front of north wing, camera facing west
7. 4

1. Old Palmetto Hotel/Regent Court Apartments
2. 1889 Old Dixie Hwy., Vero Beach, Florida
3. Sandra Norman
4. October, 1990
5. Research Atlantica, Inc., Coral Springs, Florida
6. North elevation of north wing, camera facing south
7. 5

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Items 1-5 are the same for photographs 5-11.

- 6. West elevation of north wing, camera facing east
- 7. 6

- 6. South elevation of north wing, camera facing northeast
- 7. 7

- 6. Detail of tower on south wing, camera facing southwest
- 7. 8

- 6. West elevation of south wing, camera facing east
- 7. 9

- 6. Interior stairway and balustrade, camera facing southwest
- 7. 10

- 6. Interior hallway, camera facing east
- 7. 11

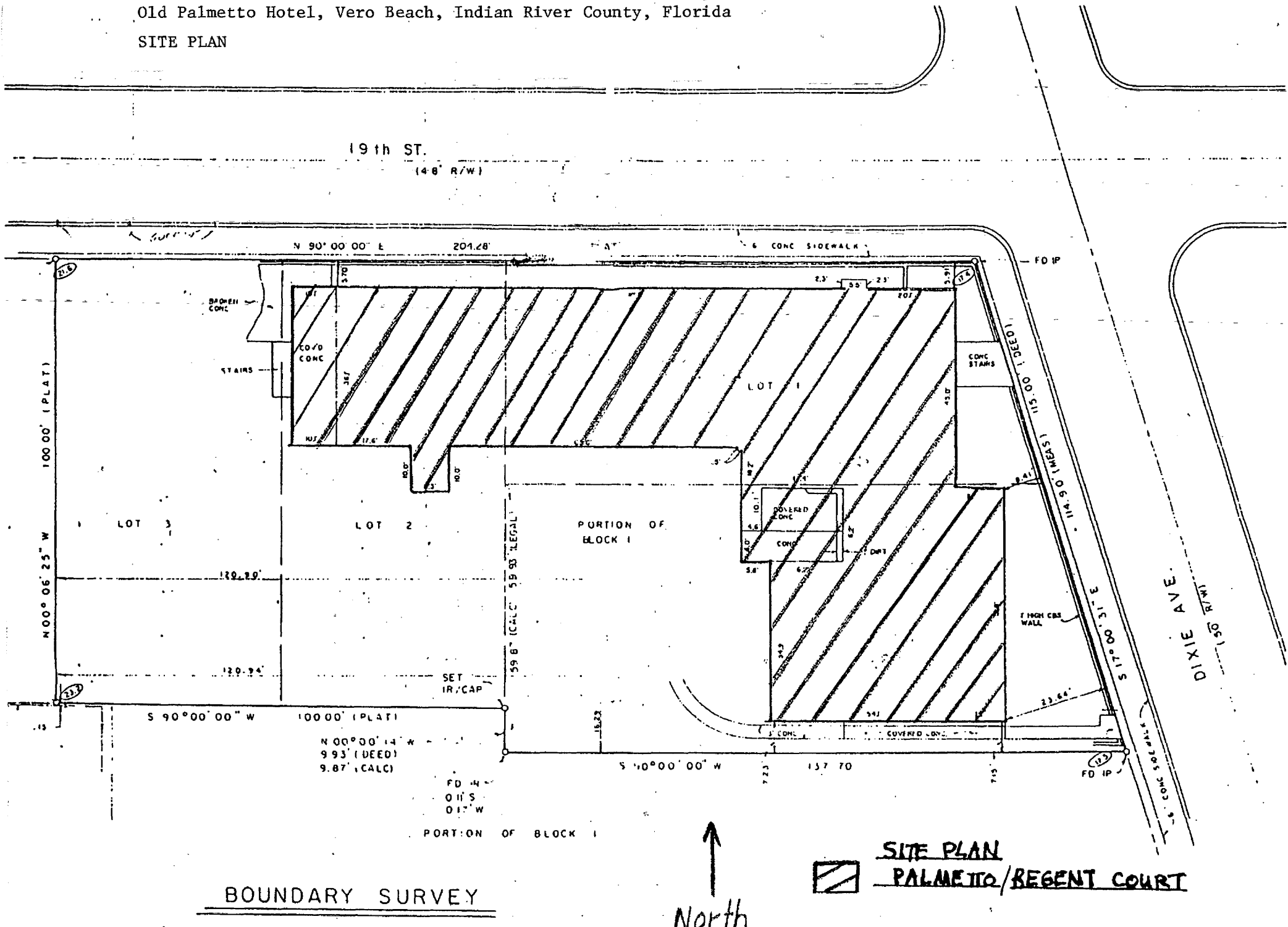
Legal Description: Old Palmetto Hotel, Vero Beach, Florida

Lots 1, 2, and 3, Block 1, REPLAT OF BLOCKS 3, 4 and 7 of KNIGHTS ADDITION TO EDGEWOOD, according to the plat filed in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of St. Lucie County, Florida, in Plat Book 4, Page 16;

AND, Beginning at the SW corner of said Lot 1, Block 1, REPLAT OF KNIGHTS ADDITION TO EDGEWOOD, run South 59.93 feet, thence East to the West line of Dixie Highway, thence Northwesterly along the West line of Dixie Highway to the SE corner of said Lot 1, Block 1, thence West along the South line of said Lot 1 to the point of beginning; all of said land now lying and being in the City of Vero Beach, Indian River County, Florida.


Old Palmetto Hotel, Vero Beach, Indian River County, Florida

SITE PLAN



BOUNDARY SURVEY

↑
North

 SITE PLAN
PALMETTO/REGENT COURT