

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received MAY - 8 1984
date entered JUN 7 1984

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Casa Caprona (Markert Apartments)

and/or common Casa Caprona

2. Location

street & number 2605 St. Lucie Blvd, Boulevard N/A not for publication

city, town Ft. Pierce N/A vicinity of

state Florida code 12 county St. Lucie code 111

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Apartment

4. Owner of Property

name See Continuation Sheet

street & number N/A

city, town N/A N/A vicinity of state N/A

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Lucie County Courthouse

street & number 221 South Indian River Drive

city, town Ft. Pierce state Florida

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Constructed in 1926, the Casa Caprona (briefly known as the Markert Apartments) is a two-story, sixteen-unit investor owned apartment building designed in the Mediterranean Revival style. The U-shaped building has overall dimensions of 117 by 235 feet and is of frame and stucco construction. The building retains its original clay barrel tile roof casement and double hung windows and wrought iron exterior lamps. Located immediately to the north of the building is a 1927 monument commemorating the nearby ante-bellum Capron Trail erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution. The building stands in stark contrast to its surrounding neighborhood, primarily post World War II single family homes.

The Casa Caprona is of heart of pine construction with a veneer of stucco laid over a layer of pine diagonal sheathing and wire mesh. The gable roof of the building retains its original clay Ludowici barrel tiles laid over 90-pound slate paper and pine decking. The roof is punctuated by eight stucco over brick chimneys located on the courtyard slope of the roof. The footing is of poured concrete. Fenestration is double hung sash and casements of wood construction. The building has four, two-story porches covered with a clay tile shed roof supported by turned columns. Each of the porches has a small fountain with a bas relief sculpture.

Each of the building's apartments are approximately 1,750 square feet in area. Four apartments, two per story, are contained in the projecting wings of the building; the remainder in their connecting axis. Each apartment contains a living room of 15 by 20 feet, a sunroom and dining room of comparable dimensions, a 13 by 15 foot bedroom, bath, kitchen, hallway and six closets. Original interior walls and ceilings are plaster although about half of the apartments have been panelled. Floors are mixed hardwood over an oak subfloor. Windows are both casement and conventional double hung sash. Each apartment also has a brick fireplace with a keystone facing. Doors are wood with brass hardware. Two of the apartments have had relatively minor alterations in plan (removal of closets and kitchen and bath enlargements) but the other fourteen remain intact.

The fully landscaped grounds of the apartment include extensive shrubbery, citrus, Washingtonian, Queen Palms and other tropical vegetation. Immediately to the north of the semi-circular driveway of the building is a small county park containing a 1927 monument commemorating the ante-bellum Capron Trail, a major supply route during the Seminole Wars. The park also contains an impressive line of Washingtonian palms and five wrought iron lamp posts.

The building has undergone no major exterior alterations although several minor cosmetic changes have been made. Screening has been added to six porch balconies and the original tongue and groove planking for three of the back porches has been replaced. Sixteen of the individual apartments' porch columns have been replaced sensitively with modern replicates painted to conform to the color of the originals. More recently, the building has been steam cleaned and repainted and its damaged or deteriorated roof tiles replaced with similar Ludowici tiles.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1926 **Builder/Architect** J.K. Shinn/Arthur Beck

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Casa Caprona is significant as a notable example of Mediterranean Revival architecture and through its association with the planned development of San Lucie Plaza. Typical of the grandiose dreams of the Florida Land Boom of the 1920s, the Casa was envisioned as the centerpiece of the proposed winter community of San Lucie Plaza. The development failed, but the Casa remains as a monument to a colorful and significant era in Florida history. During the 1930s, under the ownership of Crayola heiress Dorothy Binney Palmer, the Casa played a major role in the cultural life of Ft. Pierce. The building also housed the families of officers engaged in the then-pioneer underwater demolition training on nearby Hutchinson Island during World War II.

The Casa Caprona, known briefly as the Markert Apartments, was completed in 1926 at a cost of \$125,000. The building was designed in the then-popular Mediterranean Revival style by Elmira, New York architect Arthur Beck as the focal point of the planned San Lucie Plaza development. The Ft. Pierce News-Tribune of October 22, 1926 recorded:

"The Markert Apartments are built along extremely modern lines, although the architecture smacks of Spanish beauty of other decades...It was the idea of the architect, Arthur Beck, to plan each apartment so that it would represent a bungalow. This is provided by the extreme privacy of each apartment, made possible by the special construction and providing eight separate entrances, or one to every two apartments."¹

At the time of the Casa's construction, Ft. Pierce was an agricultural shipping center of modest proportions. Citrus groves had only recently replaced the turn-of-the-century pineapple crops. Cattle ranching, a mainstay of the area's later economy, was in its infancy. In 1925, the Ft. Pierce Chamber of Commerce announced the proposed development of San Lucie Plaza. The Plaza was intended to offer some 6,000 lots for purchase along Capron Trail Boulevard (presently 25th Street) which was to connect Ft. Pierce and Indrio, another proposed land development.²

With the collapse of the Florida Land Boom in the late 1920s, none of the grandiose plans for the San Lucie Plaza came to pass, save for the platting and dedication of a few streets. However, the Casa itself was built and quickly became the cultural and social center of Ft. Pierce, especially following its purchase by Alice Binney of Binney Crayola in 1928. Binney renamed the complex Casa Caprona after the nearby site of Fort Capron, established in 1850 as a U.S. Army outpost to protect early settlers from the Seminole Indians. Under Binney and her daughter, Dorothy Binney Palmer, the Casa began to attract more artistic tenants. Recalls landscape artist and long time Ft. Pierce resident A.E. "Bean" Backus:

"Not only was Casa Caprona a showplace, most of the people who lived here were people with great artist appreciation. People like Dorothy Binney Palmer and Betsy Tyler who brought the Metropolitan Opera stars here."³

During World War II, the Casa housed the officers of the Navy's top secret underwater demolition program on Hutchinson Island. Originally known as the Naval Combat Demolition Training program, the Underwater Demolition Training program was initiated at

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property Approx. 1 acre

Quadrangle name Ft. Pierce

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	7	5	6	14	0	14	10	3	10	3	19	9	13	10
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

San Lucie Plaza S/D Unit 1, Block 43, Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and the north 21 ft. of lots 7 and 30. This area includes all significant properties.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Donald B. Hudson/Michael F. Zimny, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Florida Division of Archives date April 20, 1984

street & number The Capitol telephone (904) 487-2333

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

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature George W. Percy

title George W. Percy, State Historic Preservation Officer date Apr. 25, 1984

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Melora Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 6-7-84

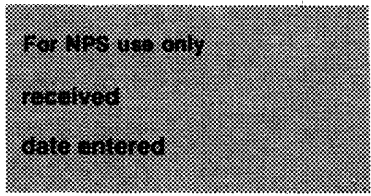
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet One Item number 4 Page 1

- | <u>Unit</u> | <u>Name and address</u> |
|-------------|---|
| 1 | Harold F. Beard
Route 2, Box 255
Creston, North Carolina 28615 |
| 2 | Julie Enders-Hudson
2605 St. Lucie Boulevard
Unit #6
Ft. Pierce, Florida 33450 |
| 3 | Robert Beard
2605 St. Lucie Boulevard
Unit #3
Ft. Pierce, Florida 33450 |
| 4 | Mr. and Mrs. Philip Camp
5401 S. Indian River Drive
Ft. Pierce, Florida 33450 |
| 5 | Martha Delaplaine
1027 S. Indian River Drive
Ft. Pierce, Florida 33450 |
| 6 | Donald Bryan Hudson
2605 St. Lucie Boulevard
Unit #6
Ft. Pierce, Florida 33450 |
| 7 | Cira Steinberg
2150 N.W. 10th Place
Delray Beach, Florida 33445 |
| 8 | Julie Enders-Hudson
2605 St. Lucie Boulevard
Unit #6
Ft. Pierce, Florida 33450 |
| 21 | Susan Beard
Route 2, Box 255
Creston, North Carolina 28615 |
| 22 | Barbara Hightower
2605 St. Lucie Boulevard
Unit #22
Ft. Pierce, Florida 33450 |

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Continuation sheet Two

Item number 4

Page 2

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Name and address</u>
23	Mark and Mary Smith 2605 St. Lucie Boulevard Unit #23 Ft. Pierce, Florida 33450
24	Harold Beard Route 2, Box 255 Creston, North Carolina 28615
25	Mr. and Mrs. Philip Camp 5401 S. Indian River Drive Ft. Pierce, Florida 33450
26	Emily Beacom Route 5, Box 590 Ft. Pierce, Florida
27	John J. and Mary Ann Price 1901 N.W. River Drive Suite 109 Miami, Florida 33127
28	Julie Enders-Hudson 2605 St. Lucie Boulevard Unit #6 Ft. Pierce, Florida 33450

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Continuation sheet Three

Item number 8

Page 1

the Ft. Pierce Naval Amphibious Training Base on May 6, 1943 under the command of Lt. Commander Draper L. Kauffman. Approximately 140,000 officers and men from every branch of the nation passed through the NATB during World War II. The State of Florida has recently authorized the establishment of a museum collection on Hutchinson Island dedicated to frogman lore and artifacts.

FOOTNOTES

¹"Markert Apartments Just Completed," Ft. Pierce News-Tribune, 22 October 1926, p.1.

²Brochure, "City of Ft. Pierce Florida," Florida Collection, St. Lucie County Library, Ft. Pierce, Florida, pp. 13-15.

³"The House of the Good Life," The News-Tribune, 6 June 1982, pp. 5, 16.

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Continuation sheet Four

Item number 9

Page 1

Brochure, "City of Ft. Pierce Florida," Florida Collection, St. Lucie County Library,
Ft. Pierce, Florida, 1925.

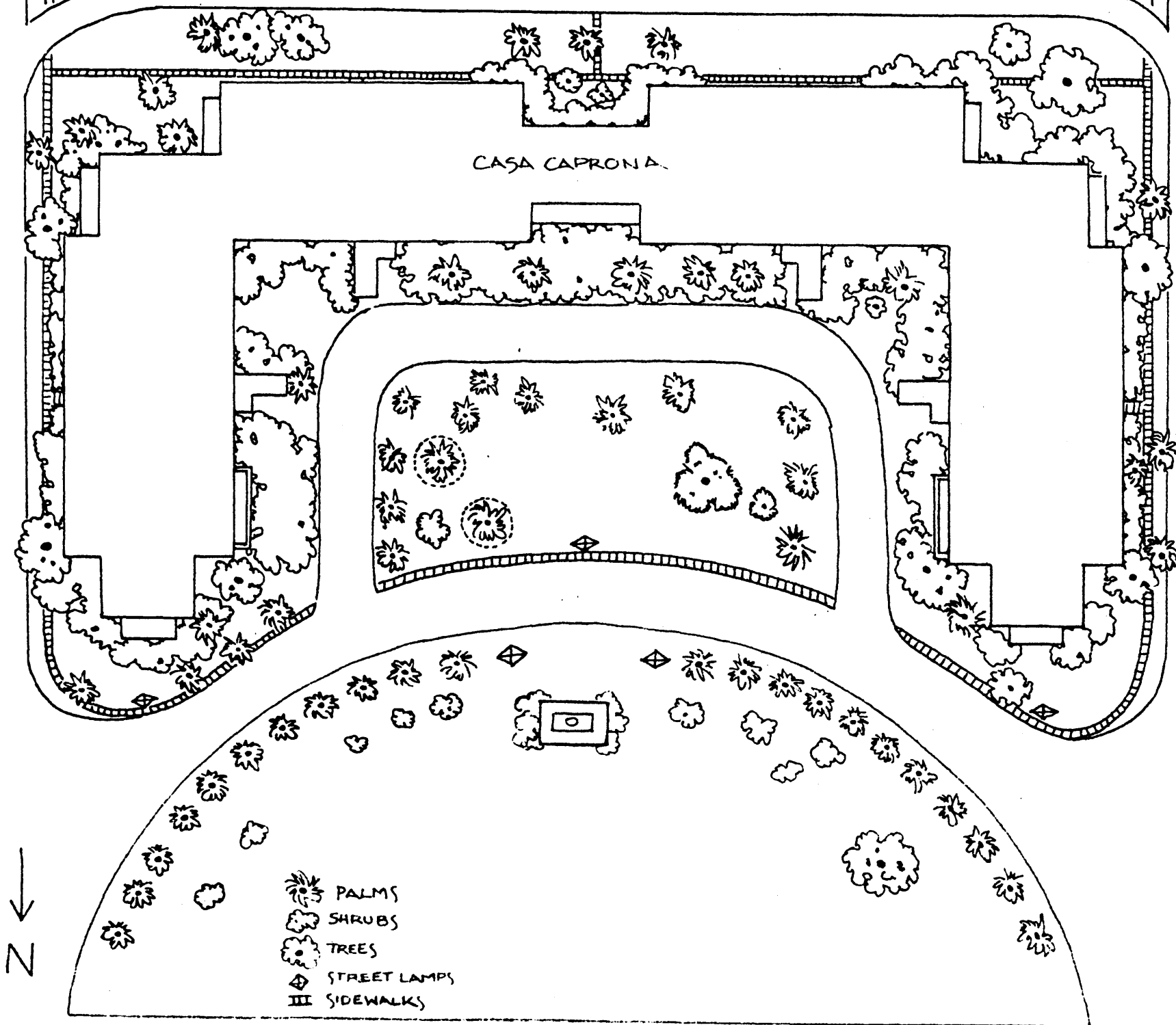
"Markert Apartments Just Completed," Ft. Pierce News-Tribune, 22 October 1926.

"San Lucie Plaza Rated as One of the Best Developments on the East Coast of Florida,"
Ft. Pierce News-Tribune, 29 October 1929.






"The House of the Good Life," The News Tribune, 6 June 1982.

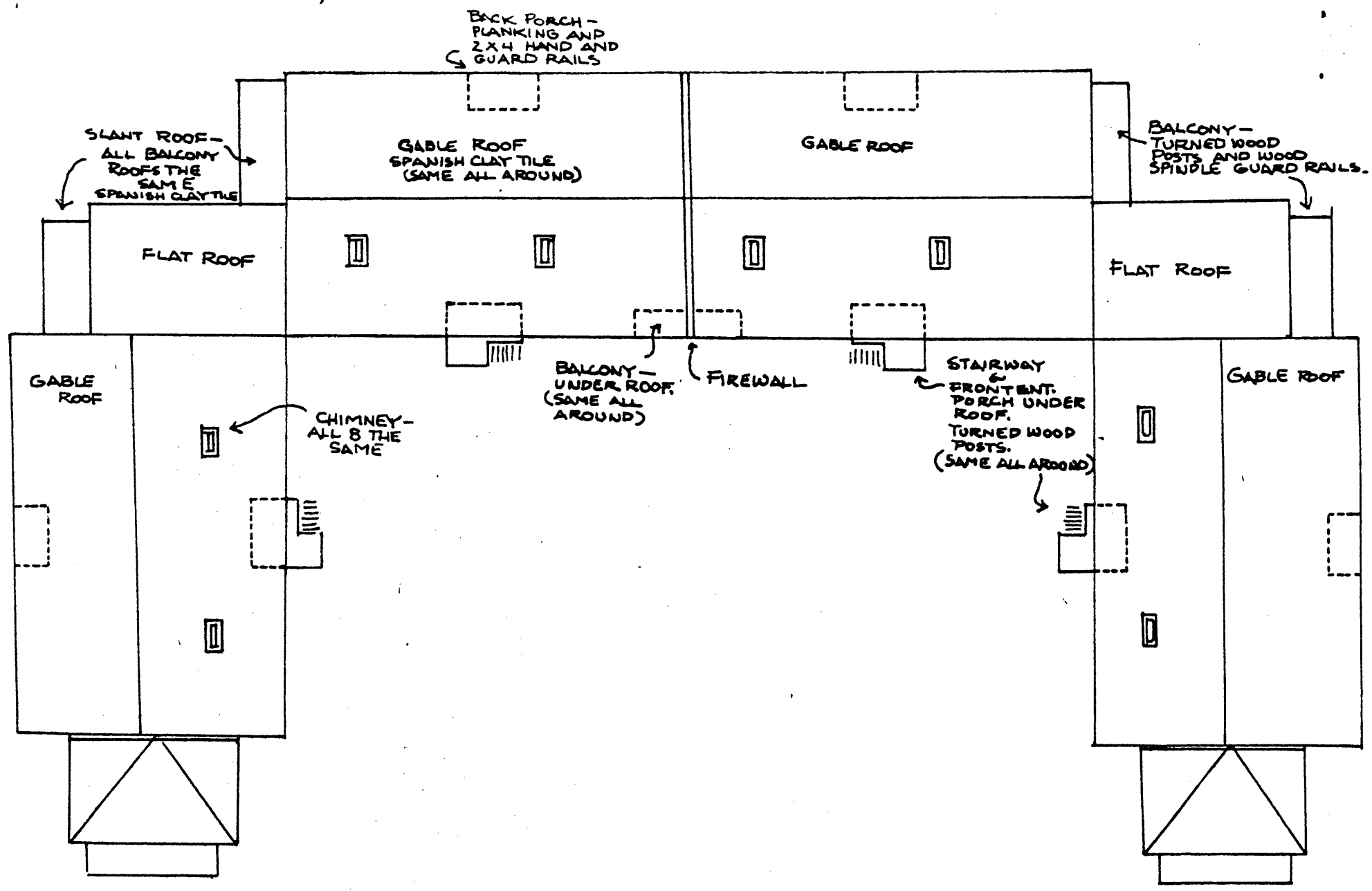
"The Original Plan of a Forgotten Dream," The News Tribune, 6 June 1982.

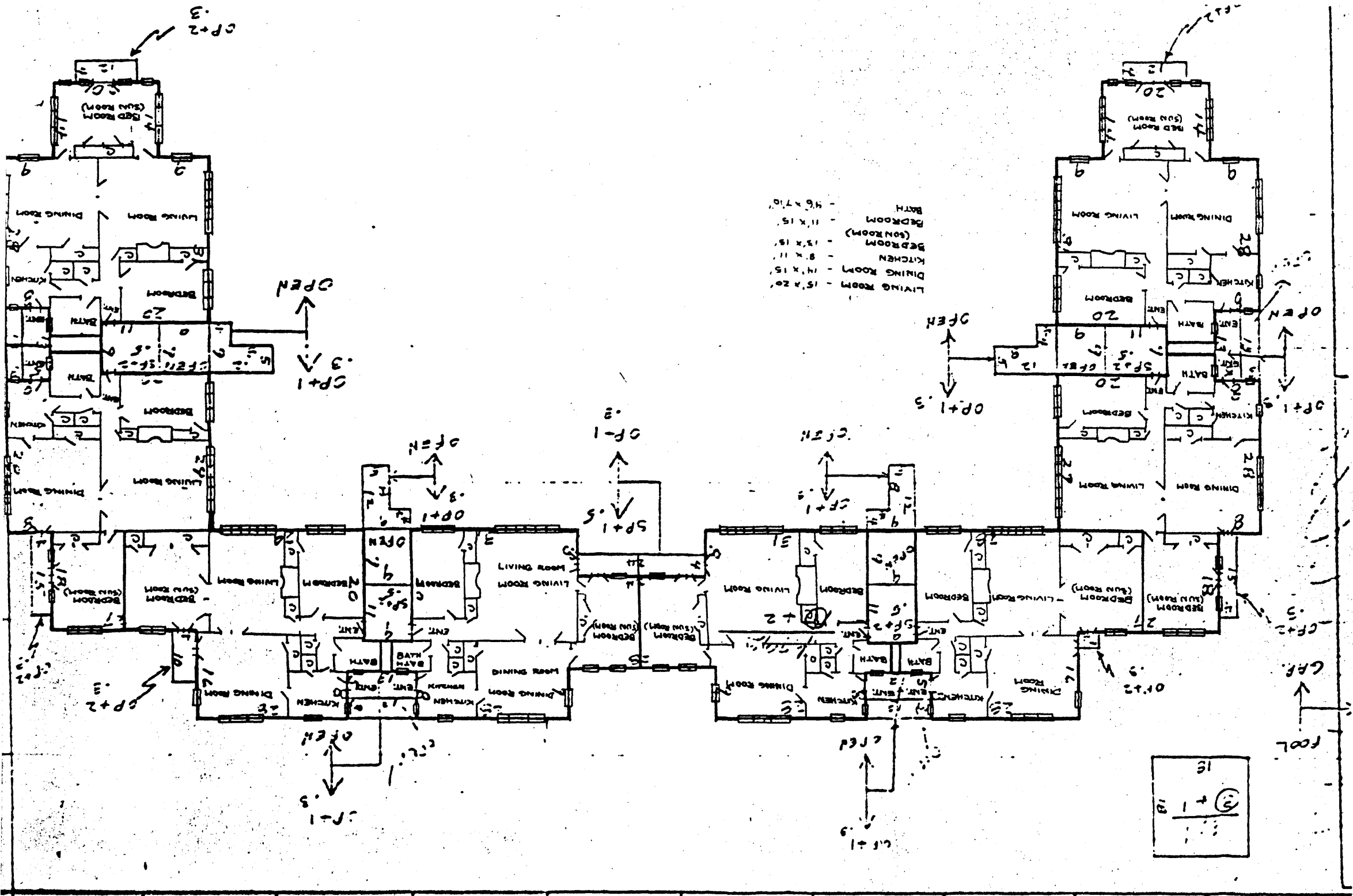
CASA CAPRONA.



N
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-  PALMS
-  SHRUBS
-  TREES
-  STREET LAMPS
-  SIDEWALKS





- LIVING ROOM - 15' x 20'
- DINING ROOM - 14' x 15'
- KITCHEN - 8' x 11'
- BEDROOM (SON ROOM) - 13' x 15'
- BEDROOM - 11' x 15'
- BATH - 4'6" x 7'10"

15
 18
 5
 +