

## LANDMARK DESIGNATION ACTIVITIES – FY2015

### Landmarks Preservation Commission: Status of Selecting Potential, Future Landmarks

The Landmarks Preservation Commission is gearing up for the "designation season" that lies ahead. The Commission's purpose and intent includes the protection, enhancement and perpetuation of properties of special, notable, aesthetic or architectural character or historic interest and value. A prescribed process in Town Code details the required designation process, all beginning with the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

The process of designating a property as a local landmark starts with a Commission action placing the site "under consideration." During the Commission meeting of August 20, 2014, Commissioners reviewed three lists of potential properties for landmarking. The lists were generated by Commissioners themselves, and by present and former Town's historic preservation consultants. Seven sites were officially placed "under consideration" for designation as follows:

- 233 Clarke Avenue
- 133 Seaspray Avenue
- 311 South County Road
- 17 Middle Road
- 255 Royal Poinciana Way
- 209-215 Royal Poinciana Way\*
- 189 Bradley Place

\*Staff will ask the Commission to reconfirm the more specific, intended address of 211 Royal Poinciana Way at its meeting of September 17, 2014.

The next step in the designation process involves detailed research. The Town's consultant, Murphy Stillings, will research available records and compile a Designation Report containing as much information as possible about each potential site. Designation Reports are generally more complete when owners cooperatively share information, yet they are not required to assist or incur any cost in this process. When available, the Report will include information about the structure's age, architect and/or builder, ownership, plans, architectural style and features, history, subsequent building changes, etc.

The Commission may consider designations during the months of November, December, January, February, March and April. The results of the Designation Report, coupled with testimony from all interested parties, is heard during a public meeting with notice to the general public. The Commission then votes affirmatively to recommend landmarking, or determines that the site does not meet the Town's prescribed criteria for landmarking, and votes not to recommend landmarking. Positive Commission recommendations are forwarded to the Town Council thereafter. The Town Council, during a public hearing held no later than 90 days following the Commission recommendation, then makes a final ruling on approving landmarks.

Nearly 300 of the Island's most prestigious properties have been landmarked during the program's 30+ year history. "Landmarking" does not prohibit future alterations, yet future changes must be reviewed and approved by the Commission. The Commission has an established record of allowing for changes provided that historical integrity is not lost. Property values do not suffer as a result of landmarking; many studies conclude that values appreciate.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission will continue to discuss potential sites for landmarking in the months ahead, and may choose to add additional sites to the listing of seven noted above. Any person interested in reviewing the lists of potential sites that were compiled by individual Commissioners or Town consultants may do so at the Town's Planning, Zoning and Building Department.