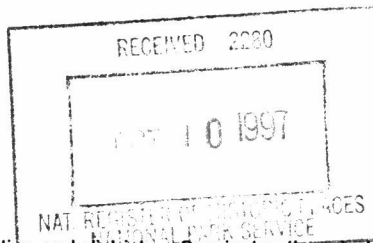


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



1329

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Old Martin County Court House

other names/site number Court House Cultural Center

2. Location

street & number 80 East Ocean Boulevard

N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town Stuart

N/A ☐ vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Martin code 085 zip code 34994

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official/Title

9/30/97
Date

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ removed from the National
Register.

☐ other, (explain) _____

for
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall

11/7/97

Old Martin County Court House
Name of Property

Martin County, Florida
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ buildings
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

Name of related multiple property listings

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/Courthouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE/Cultural Center

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete Slab

walls Concrete, Poured

roof Built-up

other Stucco

Concrete

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County

Physical Description

Summary

The Old Martin County Court House, now the Court House Cultural Center, is an Art Deco style building that was erected in 1937 and restored for its present use in 1989-1990. The structure is rectangular in shape and two stories high, with a built-up flat roof. Its base is an elevated concrete slab (Photo 1). Exterior walls are site cast concrete covered with a stucco finish. Since restoration, the walls have been painted in pale colors, appropriate to the Art Deco style, that emphasize the trim. The facade is symmetrically balanced, having a central section with a recessed entrance, and slightly setback wings on each side. Tall narrow windows emphasize a vertical feeling, as do recessed pilasters at the outer corners. There is a parapet decorated with a horizontal band consisting of a repeating angular motif that continues around three sides of the building. At the time of the 1990 restoration, an addition was constructed across the rear of the building to allow for the installation of fire stairs, a kitchen on each floor, two storage rooms, a first floor restroom and a small upper floor computer room. The addition has a plain back wall with a repeat of the front entrance and window pattern in the center. The interior of the main floor of the original building presently contains a reception counter/office and two large exhibition galleries. The second floor has offices and two meeting rooms. The addition has kitchens, toilets and storage spaces on both floors. The east and west wings are entered through wide central hallways on both floors.

Setting

Except for the 1990 rear addition, the building now looks as it did when built in 1937 as an addition to an earlier building. It faces north between a recently (1989) designed open park space on the west that features a bandstand and the new modernist glass-walled Martin County Court and Constitutional Offices complex, which borders it on the east and south. Set back 58 feet from the curbing on East Ocean Boulevard, landscaping (Photo 2) in front of the 1937 court house has been designed to accommodate a changing sculpture exhibit in keeping with the uses currently scheduled in the restored building: art exhibits, arts classes, workshops, community meetings, and offices for the Martin County Council for the Arts.

The land on which the present building stands was once part of the Homestead Certificate No. 10965 granted on April 10, 1894 to Reuben Russell Frazier. Stuart at that time was part of Dade County and was a town called Potsdam, a stop on the Florida East Coast Railway line. In 1896, a wooden schoolhouse was built in a half acre of the property deeded by Frazier to Dade County. A larger concrete block school was erected in 1908 on an additional acre acquired by the

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section number 7 Page 2

Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County

Physical Description

county from Frazier's widow, Margaret. Before Martin County came into existence in 1925, city officials had moved into the, by then empty, 1908 school building and later offered it to the new Martin County Commission for use as a court house (Photo 3).

With \$9,000 that was released to the county in 1936 after the settlement of bond money lost in the 1933 bank failure, and \$12,000 received from the federal Public Works Administration, bids were submitted for the construction of an addition to the old court house. At the time, the area was sparsely occupied and residential, shaded with Australian pines and tall palm trees. It was (and still is) bordered on the west by the FEC railroad tracks and was some distance from the business center of town. At present, the 1937 portion (Photo 4) faces what is now a primary street, East Ocean Boulevard. The Old Court House is still owned by Martin County, leased to the city of Stuart and managed by the Martin County Council for the Arts.

When the present Martin County Court House was built in 1988-1989, the original 1908-1937 court house and its modern style additions were slated for destruction in order to provide additional parking space for the new county building. At that time, Martin County was still using the old court house to which three additions had been constructed during the years from 1950 to 1960. The first (western) addition was designed by Donald E. Armstrong, Sr. An eastern wing was built later. The connection of a commercial building (A&P Grocery) to the court house also occurred later (Photo 5). The Art Deco portion of the expanded court house was saved from demolition by a strong recommendation from Andres Duany, the architect hired by the City of Stuart for urban renewal plans. He appreciated the beauty of the 1937 building and encouraged its preservation. With support from local architects and concerned citizens who agreed with Duany, it was decided to remove the additions and the 1908 schoolhouse and to save the 1937 section, which now houses the Martin County Council for the Arts.

Currently, the 1937 Art Deco building is bordered on the west by a landscaped park area centered with a bandstand, and it sits in the angle of the south and east wings of the 1988-1989 Martin County Court and Constitutional Offices complex. The area surrounding both buildings is now commercial, mainly small businesses, restaurants and doctors' offices.

Exterior

The 1937 Court House is modest in size: 58' east-west, 40' north-south; rectangular in shape, two stories in height, with a flat, built-up roof. Its base is a concrete slab, two feet above grade. Walls are concrete, covered on the outside with a stucco finish (Photo 4). The facade has

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Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County

Physical Description

three divisions: a 26' wide center and two 16' side wings. An original concrete oblong 13' 6" by 9' two step platform at the front center of the building leads from ground level to a 10' wide recessed entrance with a metal-frame, glass double door below a fixed, single-light transom. These doors are duplicated at the center rear of the building. There are three metal-frame awning windows grouped on the second story above both the front and rear entrances, and there is a single metal awning window on each side of both levels outside the front entrance recess (Photo 6). The two-foot deep recessed entrance is framed on both sides and across the top by a three inch round concrete pipe-like border.

Over the front double doors are three friezes: bas-relief castings depicting the scales of justice, an eagle, and a law book (Photo 7) on panels with a bronze colored background, with the symbols silver colored. The recessed entrance area is painted a "conch shell" pink. The rest of the exterior is painted a creamy white. Across the top of the central section, the words "MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE" are incised in two foot high, sans serif Art Deco style letters.

The east and west wings are set back six inches from the center section (Photo 4). These side sections each have two tall awning windows at each story, joined with incised, vertically "striped" panels. Between the tops of the upper pairs of 42" wide windows (Photo 8) there are decorative bas-relief castings applied to the walls. At ground level, the concrete slab base extends fifteen inches from the facade and has two set-backs which repeat the horizontal lines of the frieze border on the front, east, and west sides of the building.

In spite of the strong horizontal Art Deco style zig-zag frieze (Photo 8), the facade is vertical in effect, with its tall narrow windows and the square, two-story high faux columns (quoins) at the outer front and rear corners (Photos 1 & 9). These corner columns are topped with bas-relief decorations that repeat some of the motifs used in the castings between the windows. The east and west walls of the structure are plain, except for the parapet frieze, and have two pairs each of the tall, narrow awning windows (Photo 9). The added rear wall of the building is without any opening, except for the recessed double doors and the triple window above, which repeat the front entrance format (Photo 10). Handicap access is available here. All windows are of the metal frame awning type. The decorative trims were pre-cast and applied to the poured concrete walls. They have been visually emphasized with paint treatment in colors chosen by a local artist, Aida Fry. A flat, built-up roof covers the entire structure.

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**Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County**

Physical Description

Interior

The eight-foot wide central halls on the first and second floors (Photos 11 & 12), with the original two-tone green/gold and gray/brown terrazzo, divide the building interior into east and west wings. Just inside the front entrance, there is an inlay of tan terrazzo in the shape of a multi-pointed star, centered with a thirty-inch circle of black terrazzo in which the construction date "1937" is shown in brass numbers (Photo 11). Both main halls have six-inch high brown marble baseboards (Photos 11 & 12). At the west rear of the building, a wide brown marble staircase with one landing leads to the second floor (Photo 13).

The first floor, where the tax collector's and county clerk's offices had been, is presently divided into two large gallery spaces, built around the 4' 6" by 6' 6" concrete and steel vault in the east gallery (Photos 14 & 15) and around the present reception office in the west gallery (Photos 16 & 17). The upper level is divided on the east side into two meeting rooms (Photos 18 & 19) and on the west side into offices for the Arts Council (Photo 20), more or less the same divisions of space as in the 1937 court house.

The four-foot wide brown marble stairs have eighteen treads and an 8' by 14' landing (Photo 13), lit by a 6' by 4' skylight. The main alterations in the upper level resulted from the space added at the rear: storage closets, a small kitchen, a computer room, a hall addition, and fire stairs. The east wing spaces are now used for two meeting/exhibition rooms, one 15' 6" by 24' (Photo 18); the other 15' 9" by 20' 6" (Photo 19). The north facing room retains the original inlaid wood parquet flooring. The west wing houses four offices (Photo 20), and uses the former built-in safe for storage space. The women's toilet is in its original location at the front of the second story and retains the 1937 black and white tiling and original plumbing fixtures (Photo 21). All spaces on the second floor are illuminated by authentically styled reproduction globe fixtures in the hall and track lighting in the exhibition/meeting rooms.

When the 1908 schoolhouse to which the 1937 building had been attached was demolished, the original back wall of the 1937 courthouse addition, because it was site-cast concrete, retained the impression of the facade of the school house, which had been constructed of stone-faced concrete blocks, popular in the time of its construction. These blocks had been hand-made by Frank Frazier, son of the original homesteader who deeded the land for the school. The impression of the blocks, now enclosed in the 1989 addition, can still be seen on the interior walls of the added closets, the men's toilet, the wall of the fire staircase, and in the small

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Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County

Physical Description

computer room. The walk-in vault in the first floor east wing retains most of the 1937 carpentry (shelves and cupboards).

Alterations

The first floor alterations were made in late 1990 to convert the east and west wings into museum quality gallery space (Photos 15 & 17). Non-bearing walls were removed and window openings covered. This conversion was paid for by a grant from Mitsubishi Estate, New York, Inc. in anticipation of an exhibition of Ansel Adams photographs. Venetian blinds similar to the originals were hung in all windows to maintain the historic appearance of the building exterior. Window openings were blocked in the interior by inserting drywall over plywood panels which were covered on the exterior side with drapery cloth. Half-inch plywood and half-inch drywall was applied to metal studs on all of the interior walls to form a continuous hanging surface for art work. Acoustical tile was glued to the original exposed concrete ceilings. Exhibition areas were carpeted and track lighting installed. The gallery spaces are now: east- 645 square feet [31' 8" by 22' 10"] (Photo 15), west- 562 square feet [27' 8" by 22' 10"] (Photo 17).

The addition at the rear of the east wing contains a catering kitchen (Photo 22), storage space and the men's toilet. The west wing addition houses fire stairs and a storage closet on the lower level. Doors to the kitchen and storage area have been hidden with six foot wide floor-to-ceiling panels, which also add display space (Photo 15). On the upper level the addition furnished space for a small kitchen, an art closet, and a computer room. Air conditioners were installed, one in each of the four storage areas.

Local architects and engineers who had supported the renovation proposal volunteered their services: Peter Jefferson, exterior design; Dmiter Stoyanoff, interior design; David Wojcieszak, engineering design; and others of the Martin County Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) 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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1937

Significant Dates

1937

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Clarke, L. Phillip (Architect)

Chalker & Lund (Builders)

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of Repository

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Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County

Statement of Significance

Summary

The 1937 Martin County Court House is significant at the local level under Criterion C as a distinctive example of Art Deco style architecture applied to a public/governmental building in a small Florida town. It is also significant under the same criterion as an example of what the Works Progress Administration projects contributed to the cityscape and to the economy of the city of Stuart during the era of the Great Depression. The structure was designed by West Palm Beach architect L. Phillip Clarke, who also designed the 1937 Citizens Bank Building and the 1949 St. Mary's Episcopal Church, both located in Stuart. The renovated courthouse is a centerpiece of the master plan for the revitalization of the city of Stuart through the National Main Street Program.

Historic Context

In 1909, Palm Beach County, which included the town of Stuart, was carved out of northern Dade County. Present-day Martin County, located on the east coast of Florida about 100 miles north of Miami was created in 1922 from a south portion of St. Lucie County and a north portion of Palm Beach County. The town of Stuart was incorporated in 1914. In anticipation of being part of a new county, the community received a new charter to become the city of Stuart, the charter being approved by the Florida House of Representatives on May 11, 1925. In the fifteen years before the creation of Martin County, governmental affairs in Stuart had been conducted in a 1908 schoolhouse bought by the city from the Palm Beach County School Board. The schoolhouse had been built on one-half acre of land that had once been part of a homestead granted to Reuben R. Frazier. Frazier had deeded the property to Dade County before the formation of Palm Beach County in 1909. An additional acre was acquired from Frazier's widow, Margaret.

Until 1925, the schoolhouse/courthouse building in Stuart was the satellite site of government activities for Palm Beach County. The creation of Martin County came about because the residents of Stuart and the surrounding area became incensed at the lack of attention given by the elected county officials to their requests, including repeated demands for a highway bridge across the St. Lucie River to replace a ferry. They were dissatisfied with the fact that few of their tax dollars were being spent to improve local roads and other necessary infrastructure. They formed a delegation headed by J.B. McDonald, the first mayor of the city of Stuart, and accumulated 4,000 signatures on a petition to the Florida Legislature requesting the creation of a

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Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County

Statement of Significance

new county. The bill calling for the establishment of a separate county made its way through the legislature in just eight weeks, with official ratification coming on August 5, 1925.¹

The new county was named for the then serving governor, John W. Martin, and the governor rode in the parade in Stuart celebrating the creation of the new county. Stuart was made the temporary county seat for a period of five years, and the city hoped that having the courthouse in Stuart would make the choice permanent. The city of Stuart offered the newly purchased schoolhouse to the county at a rental of \$150 a month. The county refused to pay, and lawsuits were threatened by both parties, until an agreement was reached to allow the county use of the building rent free until the five-year period ended and Stuart was finally designated the permanent county seat. Until 1936, the county rented the building from the city, then bought the ex-schoolhouse for the equivalent of \$25,000 in bonds and cash.

Soon after Martin County was formed, the Florida land boom tapered off and then collapsed after the hurricane of 1926 struck the east coast of the state. By 1928 Martin County had lost its only bank, the Seminole, and the bond money in it. By 1932 half the population was on relief.² The Works Progress Administration, initiated in May 1935, offered living wages to the unemployed and became a positive presence in Martin County. The Federal Works Projects Administration assisted in the construction of several buildings in Stuart, including the Art Deco addition to the 1908 courthouse in 1937.

West Palm Beach architect L. Phillip Clarke was hired to remodel the existing 1908 structure and design a new front addition. Chalker and Lund, West Palm Beach contractors, were awarded the courthouse addition job in February 1937. Their low bid on the project was \$24,650. The rear wall of the new building was attached to the front of the old courthouse, creating a single structure. The job was financed by both the county and federal governments, with the county standing for 45 percent of the entire cost, using a 3 percent dividend from the old Seminole Bank in the amount of \$9,000, released the summer before from a million dollar bond issue deposited before the crash. An added sum was raised through the "economical handling of racetrack revenue," and that was supplemented by a fund raised from a five mill assessment for one year. The total gave the county exactly enough to apply for a Public Works Administration loan of \$12,000. The total cost of the renovation and addition came to \$27,272.³

¹ Laws of the State of Florida. Chapter 10,180.

² The Daily News (Stuart) December 14, 1975 (50th Anniversary Issue).

³ The Daily News (Stuart) February 19, and March 2, 1937, "Work Underway on Addition to County Building."

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Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County

Statement of Significance

Men hired to work on the project had been on the waiting list of Martin County relief roles, and included four skilled and six unskilled laborers. As construction on the building progressed, W.R. Vincent of Jensen Beach worked on the stucco and plaster, using 480 sacks of cement, one and a half tons of plaster, and 3,700 laths. Fred Michael, painting contractor from West Palm Beach, estimated that he used 203 gallons of paint, furnished by the Casa Lumber Company of Stuart. Other contractors were: Hal's Electric of Stuart, Woods Lumber Company of Gomez, and Anderson Roofing Company, W.D. Burns Plumbing, French Mirror and Glass, Rice Marble and Tile Company, and Palm Beach Woodworking—all from West Palm Beach.⁴

County officials were pleased with the new structure, even though it was far smaller than the \$125,000 building planned in 1924-1925 to be paid for from the million dollar bond issue that was "one of the greatest improvements in the county in the past decade." The tax collector, L.C. Kickliter, gained a spacious office on the east side of the main floor, with cabinets for county plats, tax rolls and other records, and a fireproof vault. On the west side, county clerk, James R. Pomeroy's main floor office extended the entire length of the new building and had two fireproof vaults. The court room on the upper level was enlarged with "ample room provided for spectators." Also on the upper level of the new section was a judge's chamber, the office of the first assessor, and the women's toilet for whites. The Martin County Commission held a session in its new room at the back of the second floor on June 8, 1937, more than two weeks prior to the completion of the building.⁵

Martin County grew from a population of 6, 295 in 1940 to 90,000 in 1988. With major industry in the area changing from agriculture and fishing to small and mid-sized businesses, tourism, retail sales and real estate—all to serve the tide of vacationers and retirees, the schoolhouse/courthouse soon needed expansion. Don Armstrong, Sr. designed the first extension on the west. It was flat-roofed and somewhat lower in height than the 1937 structure (Photo 5). In time, an east wing was added, and a further west addition, a former A&P store, became part of a still crowded courthouse complex.

As early as 1975, it became apparent to the Martin County commissioners that their present courthouse, even with the additions, was crowded, inefficient, and infested with mice and

⁴ The Daily News (Stuart) June 25, 1937. "Dream of Years is Fulfilled;" "Officials Are Pleased with New Structure."

⁵ The Daily News (Stuart) February 19, and March 2, 1937, "Work Underway on Addition to County Building."

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Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County

Statement of Significance

roaches. Eventually a decision was made in 1988 to build a modern and much larger county judicial center, the chosen design of which called for the demolition of the old structure to make room for a parking lot for the new courthouse. At about the same time, the Stuart City Commission hired Miami architect-partners planners Andres Duany and his wife Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk to update the Stuart urban code and to create a master plan for the downtown Stuart Redevelopment Area, including the buildings from Stuart's pioneer days. Duany insisted that the 1937 Court House "was the finest piece of serious architecture remaining in the downtown" and that "it was arguably the most historic building remaining in Stuart. On its site stood the first high school. Visible on its facade are symbols...attesting to the vigorous and idealistic era of Roosevelt's WPA.

There was considerable disagreement with Duany's assessment among the public and city/county officials, but most county architects strongly supported Duany; and a volunteer, non-profit group, Stuart Heritage, Inc., which was dedicated to the preservation of historic buildings, added its voice to saving the 1937 Court House. The result was a decision on August 23, 1988 by the Martin County Board of Commissioners to apply to the Florida Division of Historical Resources for a historic preservation grant-in-aid. James L. McGuffey, Intergovernmental Specialist, and Ms. Cathy Reeder, an urban planner, helped write the grant and provided administrative oversight. The restoration grant for a sum of \$200,000 was approved on January 27, 1989, and signed by then governor Bob Martinez. County commission chairman Frank Wacha proposed to the city commission and to City Manager Jack Noble that the grant funds be transferred to the city by an inter-local agreement, which was agreed to and concluded on February 21, 1990. Terry O'Neil was appointed the project coordinator for the city.

Architectural design work for the renovation was donated by Peter Jefferson, AIA. The interior design was donated and supervised by Dmiter Stoyanoff, AIA. Engineering planning was done free of charge by David Wojcieszak of Wojcieszak & Associates. Dan Casey was contracted to do the painting; J.A. Taylor & Associates for sandblasting; the renovation contractor was Mosley & Sons Construction, Inc. Contract agreements cost a total of \$204,549.00. The September 30, 1990 Palm Beach Post noted that "Saturday's (9/29/90) grand opening (of the renovated courthouse) was the culmination of a \$210,000 renovation paid for by a \$200,000 state grant, with which the City of Stuart transformed an old rundown building into a local cultural center." The Stuart News commented that "January 10, 1989 was a happy day for Martin County. That was the day county courthouse employees bid a not-so-fond farewell to the rodent and rat infested, Art Deco building on East Ocean Boulevard, and moved to the new Martin County Courthouse." The promise stated in the application for the grant-in-aid has been

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Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County

Statement of Significance

carried out. "Envisioned is the day-to-day management and scheduling of events by a volunteer civic group in exchange for office space, and such uses as historical and cultural displays, civic group and public meetings, and festivals using both the indoor rooms and outdoor space."

Architectural Significance

Architect Clarke's design for the 1937 courthouse backs up a statement made by Richard Pare in Court House, that "in 1936, a mid-Depression year... federal money was beginning to flow through the Works Progress Administration into county court house construction. The 'scraped classical' with Art Deco touches was almost the official WPA style.... There is a papery structure... typical of what can loosely called the WPA period.... New evidence of a certain stasis in the courthouse design... is the retention of earlier courthouse buildings... to which additions were made in the WPA mode...."⁶ The distinctive Art Deco facade of the Stuart Court House was decorated with hand wrought detail that featured an angular zig-zag frieze near the top of the building, cast concrete decorations applied to the smooth white plaster exterior, a nearly post-Depression style less ornate than in the 1920s and more decorative than the new "Moderne" style coming into fashion in the later 1930s and early 1940s. Architect Clarke's design uses many of the standard feature of Art Deco: Flat roof, stepped and set-back facade, geometric linear forms, hard edges contrasted with elaborate decorations, smooth painted stucco, metal frame windows, zig-zag, floral and tropical motifs, all apparent in the 1937 court house.

Architect L. Phillip Clarke

L. Phillip Clarke was born in New York in 1897. He was the grandson of Florida pioneer Charles J. Clarke. He received a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Pennsylvania and first worked for the architectural firm of Harvey & Clarke in Philadelphia. The partnership moved to Palm Beach County, and during the real estate boom era, became one of the largest architectural firms in the area. Harvey & Clarke designed the West Palm Beach City Hall and that community's fire station. They also designed the Daily News Building and the railroad station in West Palm Beach, plus several other stations in Florida. The firm also was responsible for the design of several Episcopal churches and many residences. After his partner was elected mayor of West Palm Beach, Clarke formed his own firm and was selected in 1928, after the

⁶ Richard Pare, editor, Richard Pare, editor, Court House, Horizon Press, 1978.

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Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County

Statement of Significance

hurricane of 1926, as architect for the city of West Palm Beach to review all plans for repair and reconstruction. In the Palm Beaches, Clarke worked mostly in a style resulting from his early training with Addison Mizner but used Art Deco design in Stuart for both the Martin County Court House and the Citizens Bank.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 1

Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County

Major Bibliographical References

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Hutchinson, Janet, compiler, Paige, E.K, editor. History of Martin County. Martin County Historical Society, Hutchinson Island, FL: Gilbert's Bar Press, 1975.

Martin County Library Collection. Martin County History, Vols. A to E.

Pare, Richard, editor. Court House. New York: Horizon Press, 1978.

Newspapers

Miami Herald, "Martin Architects Agree to Preserve Old Courthouse," August 7, 1988.

Miami Herald, "County Courthouse Awarded \$200,00 Preservation Grant," file clipping, no date.

Palm Beach Post, December 18, 1925; October 2, 1928; April 25, 1929; June 29, 1929; June 4, 1932; July 13, 1947; October 30, 1973.

Palm Beach Post, "Old Courthouse to Get New Lease on Life," file clipping, no date.

Stuart Daily News, November 30, 1936; January 19, 1937; June 25, 1937.

Stuart News, February 19, 1937; March 2, 1937; January 4, 1964 (Anniversary Issue); March 17, 1968; April 7, 1968; October 14, 1975; December 1987; June 2, 1991.

Public Documents

Dade County, Warranty Deed, Margaret Frazier to School District of Dade County, November 9, 1908.

Laws of Florida, Chapter 5970, Creation of Palm Beach County, April 30, 1909.

Palm Beach County, Corporation Book 1, Page 394, Incorporation of the Town of Stuart, May 7, 1914.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 2

Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County

Major Bibliographical References

Laws of Florida, Chapter 10, 180, Creation of Martin County, June 11, 1925.

Laws of Florida, Chapter 11214 (No. 1192), Creation of City of Stuart, 1925.

Old Martin County Courthouse
Name of Property

Martin County, Florida
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	5	7	4	7	2	0	3	0	0	8	7	0	0
Zone	Easting		Northing												
2															

3															
Zone	Easting		Northing												
4															

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jane Dickerson, Cultural Center Board of Directors/Carl Shiver, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date February 1997

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name County of Martin

street & number 2401 S.E. Monterey Road telephone (561) 288-5400

city or town Stuart state Florida zip code 34996

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page 1

Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County

Boundary Description & Justification

Verbal Boundary Description

The legal description of the property as filed in the Martin County Property Appraiser's Office is: "Old Court House & Bandstand Parcel" Being portions of Lot D, Lainhart & Potter parcel adj. to E. of Lot D: Beg. 15' S of NE cor lot D, E 120', S 119', W 29', S 20', W 185.34', NW 102.17', N 63.02', E 162.65', to POB... "as in lease agr to City of Stuart." (OR 841/1837). The 1937 Court House is built on the eastern most portion (approximately one-third acre) of the entire above described property, all owned by the County and leased to the City of Stuart. See attached site plan.

Boundary Justification

The general historic boundaries of the building include the street frontage of the Court House, plus 10 feet distance from its west, south, and east elevations.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Page 1

Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County

Photographs

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. Front (Main) Elevation, Camera Facing Southeast
7. Photo No. 1 of 24

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. Front Patio Area, Camera Facing North
7. Photo No. 2 of 24

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Unknown
4. Prior to 1937
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. Main Facade, Camera Facing Southwest
7. Photo No. 3 of 24

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. Main Facade, Camera Facing Southwest
7. Photo No. 4 of 24

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Page 2

Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County

Photographs

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Unknown
4. Prior to 1988
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. Main Facade, Camera Facing South
7. Photo No. 5 of 24

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. Main Facade (Front Entrance) Camera Facing South
7. Photo No. 6 of 24

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. Main Facade (Frieze over Main Entrance), Camera Facing South
7. Photo No. 7 of 24

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. Main Facade, West Wing (Cornice and Window Details), Camera Facing South
7. Photo No. 8 of 24

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Page 3

Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County

Photographs

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. East and South (Rear) Elevations, Camera Facing Northwest
7. Photo No. 9 of 24

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. Rear (South) Entrance, Camera Facing North
7. Photo No 10 of 24

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. Central Hall, First Floor, Camera Facing North
7. Photo No. 11 of 24

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. Hallway, Second Floor, Camera Facing North
7. Photo No. 12 of 24

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Page 4

Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County

Photographs

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. Stairwell down from Second Floor, Camera Facing South
7. Photo No. 13 of 24

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. East Exhibition Room, First Floor, Camera Facing South
7. Photo No. 14 of 24

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. East Exhibition Room, First Floor, Camera Facing South
7. Photo No. 15 of 24

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. West Exhibition Room, First Floor, Camera Facing West
7. Photo No. 16 of 24

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Page 5

Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County

Photographs

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. Reception Desk, First Floor, Camera Facing Northwest
7. Photo No 17 of 24

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. South Meeting Room, Second Floor, Camera Facing Southeast
7. Photo No 18 of 24

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. North Meeting Room, Second Floor, Camera Facing East
7. Photo No. 19 of 24

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. MCCA Office, Second Floor West, Camera Facing South
7. Photo No. 20 of 24

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Page 6

Old Martin County Court House
Stuart, Martin County

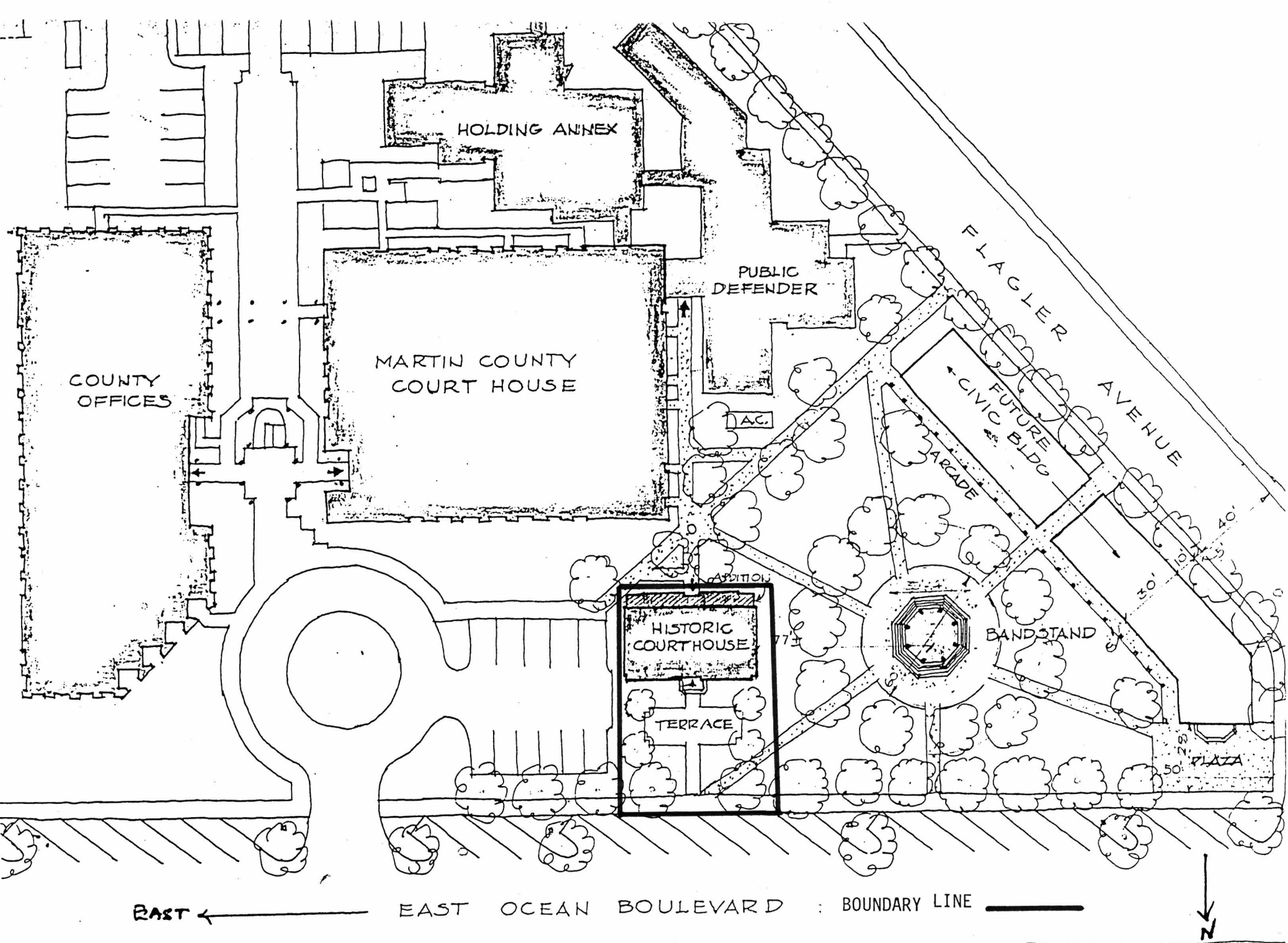
Photographs

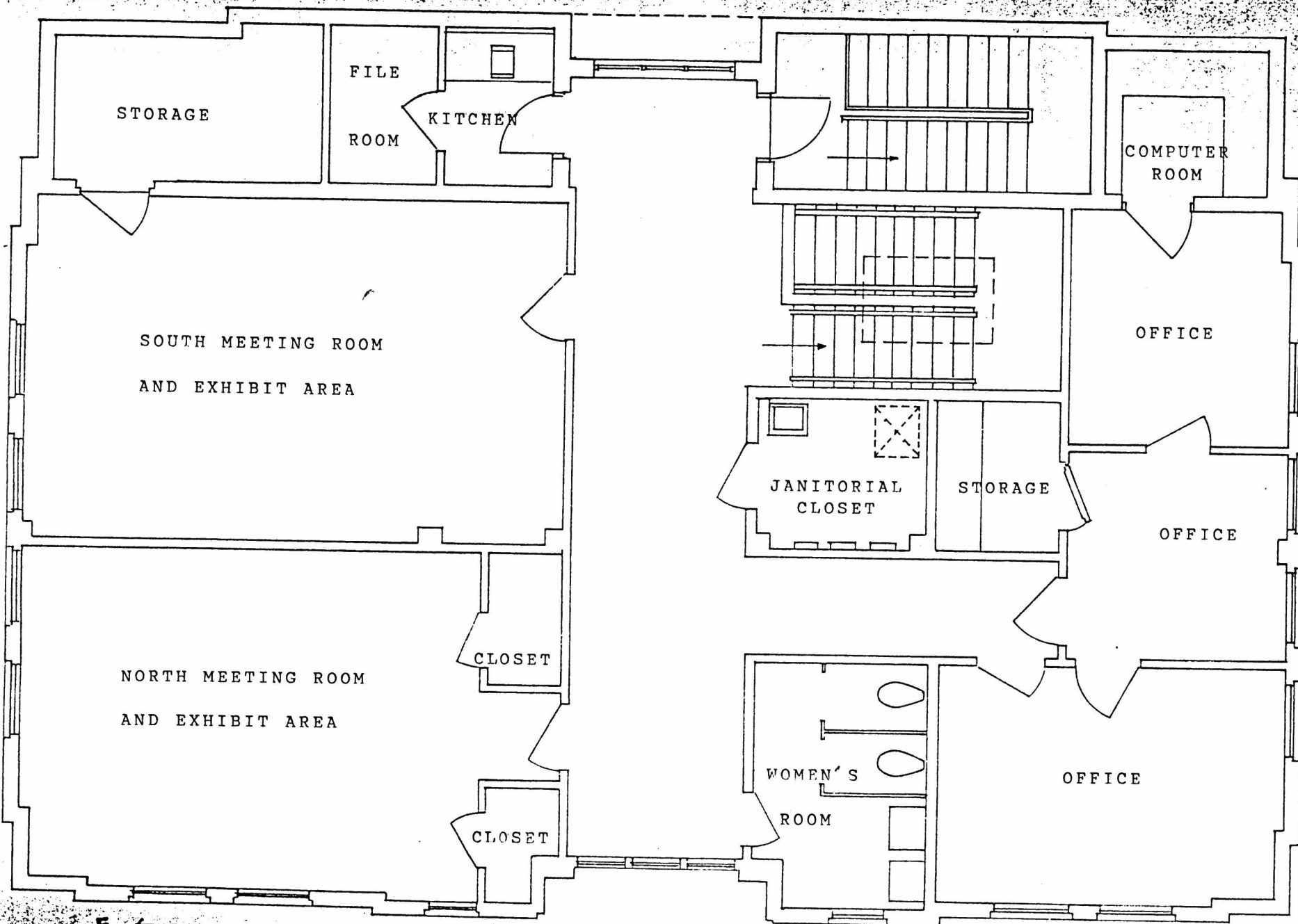
1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. Women's Toilet, Second Floor, Camera Facing West
7. Photo No. 21 of 24

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. Kitchen, First Floor Addition, Camera Facing West
7. Photo 22 of 24

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Mark Taylor
4. May 1996
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. Dedication Plaque, Main Facade, Camera Facing South
7. Photo 23 of 24

1. Old Martin County Court House (Court House Cultural Center)
2. 80 E. Ocean Boulevard, Stuart (Martin County), Florida
3. Unknown
4. November 1950
5. Martin County Council for the Arts
6. Main Facade, Camera Facing Southwest
7. Photo No. 24 of 24





SECOND FLOOR - 1937 COURTHOUSE
AFTER 1990 RENOVATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Martin County Court House, Old

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: FLORIDA, Martin

DATE RECEIVED: 10/10/97 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 10/22/97
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/07/97 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/24/97
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 97001329

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 11/7/97 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

Court House
Cultural
Center



MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE

MARTIN COUNTY
COURT HOUSE

#1 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



#2 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



#3 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE

CULTURAL CENTER

#4 OLD MARTIN County COURT HOUSE
MARTIN County, FL



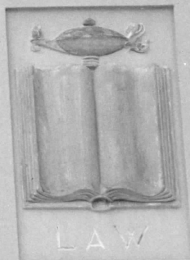
MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE

#5 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL

MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE



#6 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



CULTURAL
CENTER

#7 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



8 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



9 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



10 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



#11 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



#12 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



13 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



14 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



#15 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



#16 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



#17 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



18 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



#19 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



#20 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



#21 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



#22 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL

THIS PLAQUE COMMEMORATING
THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE
CREATION OF MARTIN COUNTY
IS DEDICATED TO

JOHN W. MARTIN
GOVERNOR OF FLORIDA
1925 - 1929

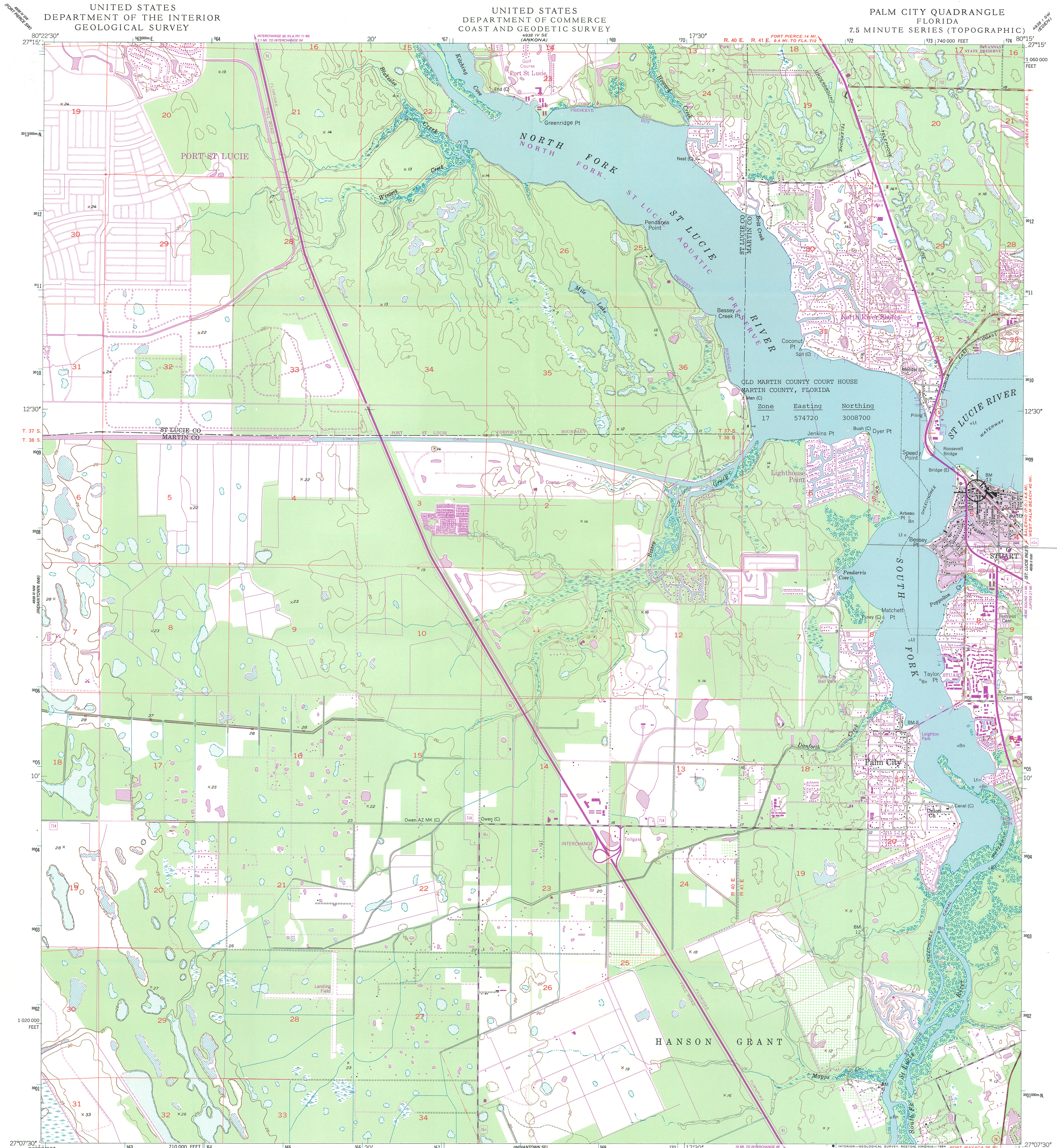
FOR WHOM MARTIN COUNTY
IS NAMED

DEDICATION CEREMONY
NOVEMBER 11, 1950

#23 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



#24 OLD MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
MARTIN COUNTY, FL



Mapped by U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey
Edited and published by the Geological Survey
Control by NOS/NOAA (C) and USCE (E)
Planimetry in part by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1946. Topography by planetable surveys 1948. Field checked 1948.
Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Florida coordinate system, east zone. 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 17, shown in blue. 1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 33 meters south and 22 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks.
No distinction is made between dwellings, barns, commercial and industrial buildings.
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map.

UTM GRID AND 1983 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

3° 53' M
0° 19' 6" M

SCALE 1:24,000

1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET

1 5 0 1 KILOMETER

CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE AVERAGE RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 1 FOOT

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

FLORIDA

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
	State Route
	County Route

PALM CITY, FLA.
27080-B3-TF-024
1948
PHOTOREVISED 1983
DMA 4938 III NE-SERIES V847

CAROLINA GLOBAL MAPS
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Phone: 1-800-246-6277
Fax: 1-800-321-6277

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled by the Geological Survey in cooperation with State of Florida agencies from aerial photographs taken 1980 and other sources. This information not field checked. Map edited 1983
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas