

**The Jungle Country Club Hotel
501 Park Street North
HPC #92-01, Designated September 1994**



The 1925 Jungle Country Club Hotel is significant for its association with the development of tourism in St. Petersburg during the 1920s. Built during the city's golden era of hotels, the hotel reflects the changing character of the city's lodging industry from small boarding homes such as those built in the 1910s to the larger sized hotels built during the Florida Land Boom Era. One of ten large hotels built in St. Petersburg during the Florida Boom Era, the Jungle Country Club Hotel was unique in that it was the first of three hotels constructed on the western portion of the Pinellas Peninsula. This setting allowed the hotel to offer a variety of recreational activities that were not readily available at downtown hotels.

Although the property was acquired by H. Walter Fuller, who developed a golf course nearby in 1916, the hotel is significant for its association with his son Walter P. Fuller, the original developer. Born in Bradenton, Fuller moved to St. Petersburg and sought employment from his father in 1915 after graduating from the University of North Carolina. He built his home on the shores of Boca Ciega Bay, where he became the first permanent resident of St. Petersburg living west of Disston Avenue (49th Street). He was the first Boy Scout in Florida, assisting in organizing the Pinellas Boy Scouts and serving as their first Scout Master. In 1923, Fuller purchased his father's interests in the Allen Fuller Corporation, which was founded in 1919, and began extensive development in the Jungle Area on the shores of Boca Ciega Bay. Fuller's developments include the Jungle Country Club Hotel, the Jungle Prado, several downtown structures and a multitude of residential lots throughout the city.

The Jungle Club Hotel housed many wealthy, northern tourists until the beginning of World War II, when many of the hotels in St. Petersburg saw a sharp decrease in tourism. To supplement the lack of tourism, most of the large hotels leased themselves out to the U.S. Army Air Corps. The Jungle Country Club was no exception, and in 1942 the building began housing Air Corps trainees. In 1945, the Jungle Country Club Hotel and the Golf Course were sold to the Admiral Farragut Academy, a Military Preparatory School. The Admiral Farragut Academy adaptively reused the hotel building, and began the design of a campus plan which included the construction of numerous administration and classroom buildings as well as the addition of recreational facilities. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Academy sold portions of the original golf course site which was subsequently developed with single family homes.

The hotel was designed by New York architect Henry Taylor in the Mediterranean Revival style of architecture. Taylor also designed the Vinoy Park Hotel, St. Mary's Church, the Florida Theater (now demolished), and the Jungle Prado. The two- and three-story structure forms a rectangular block around a central courtyard. Two canted wings project from the west facade, opening like arms to Boca Ciega Bay. These wings, three stories in height, spring from asymmetrical towers, the north tower being most prominent. The building was constructed of steel and hollow clay tile with the exterior walls finished in a textured stucco. The roof is covered with a multi-chromatic random mixture of red, brown and beige barrel clay roofing tiles. The main entry to the hotel faced south onto 5th Avenue and is identified through a two-story sopraporta, which features classical detailing capped by four urns.