



Historical Resources &
Cultural Arts

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LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION

320 ROMANO AVENUE, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA

Application: Owner request

Folio Numbers: 03-4117-007-0760

Legal Description: Lots 12, 13, & 14, Block 8, Coral Gables Coconut Grove Section Part One, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 14, at Page 25, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida

Original Permit No.: 1192

Date of Construction: 1925

Original Architect: H. George Fink

Present Owner: Sandra Bonell

Building Type: One-story, SFR

Style: Mediterranean Revival

Site: The property is located on an interior 75' x 100' lot on the south side of Romano Avenue between Le Jeune Road (SW 42nd Avenue) and Salzedo Street.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1925, the single-family residence and detached garage at 320 Romano Avenue were amongst the earliest structures constructed in Coral Gables. Coral Gables was founded during the South Florida real estate boom of the 1920s. Founder George Merrick drew from the Garden City and City Beautiful movements of the 19th and early 20th centuries to create his vision for a fully-conceived and cohesively-designed Mediterranean-inspired city. Merrick felt that Mediterranean architecture harmonized best with south Florida's climate and lifestyle. During the 1920s, Merrick's development team paid careful attention to ensure that the buildings and streetscape elements conformed to Mediterranean ideals. Merrick's success in carrying out his vision during the early 1920s was staggering. Coral Gables is now considered one of the first modern planned communities in the United States.

The single-family home at 320 Romano Avenue was built during these early boom years. In March 1925 Merrick platted the Coconut Grove Section employing the Garden City precepts of supplying comparable housing for a mix of incomes. This area was specifically intended to aid in meeting a housing shortage and providing an area for attractive, affordable, and modest homes. The home at 320 Romano Avenue exemplifies the Mediterranean-inspired building archetype upon which Coral Gables was founded. It is representative of the modest homes built in the 1920s, which were smaller in size but built with the same high-quality construction and features as other structures that shaped the new city. The property at 320 Romano Avenue retains its historic integrity and hence, significantly contributes to the historic fabric of the City of Coral Gables.

CORAL GABLES REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES: Preserving the City's Story

The built environment reflects the beliefs, values, creative expressions, and technical capacity at a place in time in history. Historic Preservation preserves those structures and spaces that tell the story of the community's historic past. The buildings that comprise the Coral Gables Register of Historic Places portray the City's story of progress, change, and preservation. They are valuable, non-renewable resources that embody our collective heritage. The retention of these tangible touchstones provides a sense of community, a sense of evolution, a sense of identity, a sense of ownership, and a sense of place for the City of Coral Gables. In other words, these historic resources provide continuity and context; they are the foundation of the City's identity.

Coral Gables is a Certified Local Government (CLG) and as such must maintain a Register of Historic Places and abide by associated preservation standards. A local community works through a certification process --jointly administered by the National Park Service (NPS) and the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs)-- to become recognized as a Certified Local Government (CLG). Once certified the community gains access to benefits of the program and agrees to follow required Federal and State requirements.

The City of Coral Gables was certified in 1986 and was amongst the first cities in Florida to become a CLG. Hence, it is the task of Historic Preservation, and an obligation of Certified Local Governments, to identify and protect those resources that contribute to the story of the City over time. Furthermore, the City must abide by the federal regulations as put forth in The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, & Reconstructing Buildings.

CRITERIA FOR SIGNIFICANCE

Article 8, Section 8-103 of the Coral Gables Zoning Code--*Criteria for designation of historic landmarks or historic districts*--states that to qualify for designation as a local historic landmark individual properties must have significant character, interest, or value as part of the historical, cultural, archaeological, aesthetic, or architectural heritage of the City, state, or nation.

The single-family residence at 320 Romano Avenue is eligible as a local historic landmark based on its historical, cultural, and architectural significance. For designation, a property must meet **one (1)** of the criteria outlined in the Code. As discussed below, 320 Romano Avenue meets the following **three (3) criteria**:

A. Historical, Cultural significance

Criterion 4: Exemplifies the historical, cultural, political, economic or social trends of the community

B. Architectural significance

Criterion 1: Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by one (1) or more distinctive architectural style

Criterion 2: Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or method of construction

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Coral Gables' developmental history is divided broadly into three major historical periods:

- Pre-1926 Hurricane: Coral Gables' Initial Planning and Development/Florida Land Boom
- 1927-1955: 1926 Hurricane Aftermath/Great Depression and New Deal/Wartime Activity
- 1945-1963: Post World War II and Modern periods

The home at 320 Romano Avenue was constructed in 1925 in the Coconut Grove Section. It is indicative of the type of architecture that was the founding premise of Coral Gables.

Launching Coral Gables

Coral Gables was originally conceived as a suburb of Miami and attracted investors from across the nation during the South Florida real estate boom of the 1920s. Founder George E. Merrick, drawing from the Garden City and City Beautiful movements, envisioned a cohesive Mediterranean-inspired city. It is now considered one of the first modern planned communities in the United States. Advised by landscape architect Frank Button, artist Denman Fink, and architects H. George Fink, Walter De Garmo, H. H. Mundy, and Phineas Paist, Merrick converted 3,000 acres of citrus plantation and native hammock (Figure 1) into a new residential community replete with ornate plazas, grand entrances, small parks, monumental buildings, and tree-shaded streets.

Merrick and his team felt that Mediterranean architecture harmonized with south Florida's climate and lifestyle. The team drew inspiration from Spanish, Moorish, and Italian architecture. The coalescing of these influences has come to be known as the Mediterranean Revival style and it was used almost exclusively for structures and amenities during the 1920s. (Figure 2) The home at 320 Romano Avenue exemplifies these Mediterranean ideals and climate adaptations espoused by Coral Gables' founder.

Merrick's design team carefully planned Coral Gables to maximize the tropical environment. They laid out broad sweeping boulevards with grand vistas, tree-lined streets, and plazas with fountains that invited visitors to linger. They also designed Mediterranean-inspired homes that conveyed a quality of centuries-old permanence



Figure 1: Streets in Coral Gables under Construction, July 22, 1922

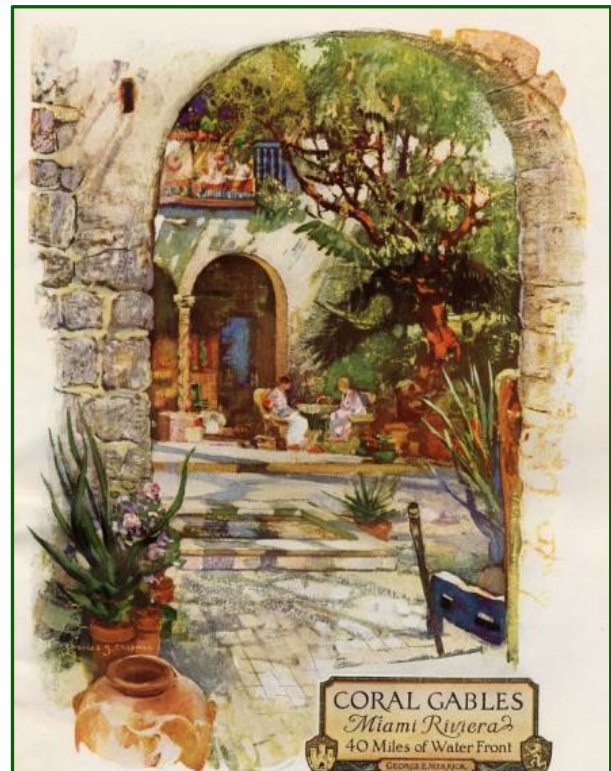


Figure 2: Advertisement in *House Beautiful*, 1925

along with generous street setbacks for front yards that celebrated the “tropical vegetation in a delightful profusion.” It also employed restrictive zoning to control development and aesthetics. Embracing the City Beautiful ideals, it boasted copious amounts of public green space, tree-lined streets, and monumental public buildings. It also wholeheartedly incorporated Garden City precepts and provided a wealth of public facilities, as well as offering housing for different income levels without sacrificing quality. The plan accommodated grand palazzos alongside modest homes and anticipated a multi-family housing section.

In 1921 George Merrick publicly launched Coral Gables. He touted it as Miami’s Master Suburb. Landscape architect Frank Button, an associate of Frederick Law Olmstead, produced the plans. The first lots in Section A went on sale in November 1921. This was the area immediately south of Merrick’s family home. Section B opened on December 27, 1921, and included lots on the impressive Greenway Drives surrounding the proposed golf course, as well as along Alhambra Circle, a wide boulevard with a lushly planted center median. In January 1922 Section C was released for sale. The northern portion of this section featured 50 foot lots to that allowed for smaller homes on single lots or the bundling of lots for larger homes. Sales were brisk and Merrick quickly divided up the remaining land for sale. (Figure 3) In this early stage most construction was concentrated near the Granada Golf Course. (Figure 4)

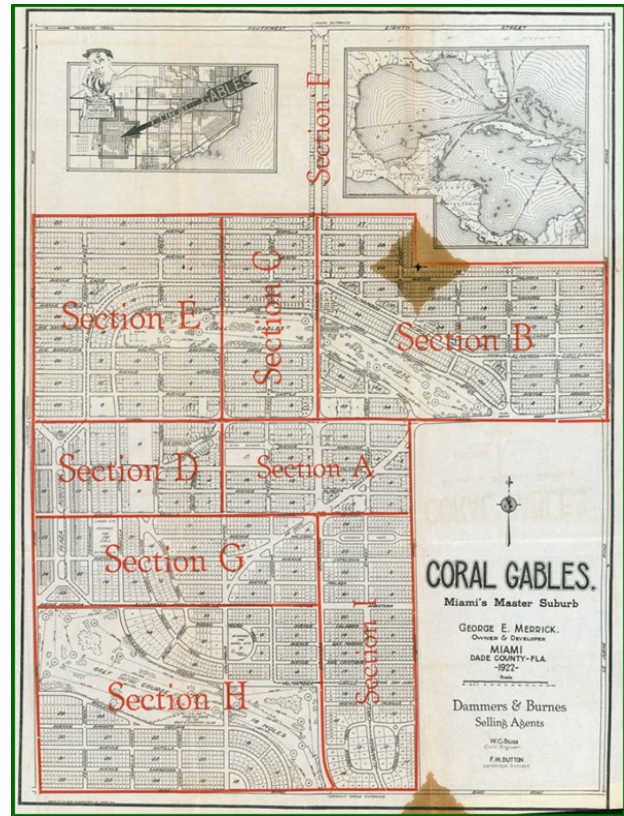


Figure 3: Coral Gables Section Map, 1922



Figure 4: Aerial Photo, c. 1924: Development around Granda Golf

Coral Gables Coconut Grove Section

Sales and construction continued at a feverish pace in Coral Gables in the early 1920s and Merrick re-invested the earnings back into his dream. As seen in Figure 5, by late 1924 he acquired large amounts of land to the north and east of his original holdings and was beginning to expand to the south. At the southeast of his expanded holdings was the Coconut Grove Section which he officially platted in March 1925. (Figures 5 & 6)

In 1921-22, when first launching Coral Gables, Merrick's team designed and built homes throughout the community to demonstrate their Mediterranean-inspired vision. As sales boomed, Merrick began in earnest to develop streetscapes following Garden City precepts. His goal for the Coconut Grove Section was to provide high-quality homes for working class families.

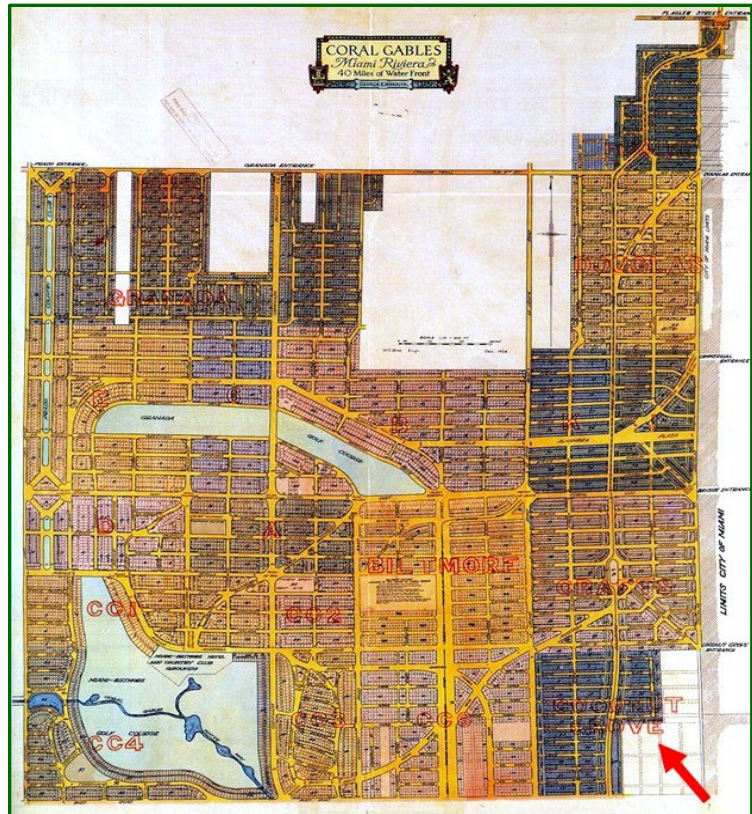


Figure 5: Coral Gables Map, December 1924

Note: Coconut Grove Section bottom right of map



Figures 6: Coconut Grove Section Plat Maps, 1925

Blue Triangle: San Sebastian Apartment Hotel

Red Arrow: 320 Romano Avenue

Merrick understood that for the grand vision to flourish, quality housing for employees needed to be a priority. During the early 1920s Coral Gables grew at an exponential rate and thus, so did the workforce. Merrick brought in architects, craftsmen, builders, salesmen, administrative personnel, and executives from across the country. However, as the Florida Land Boom took hold in the mid-1920s there was not enough available housing in South Florida. Merrick took a multi-pronged approach to alleviate the housing crisis for his employees and other working-class families.

For his workforce he provided temporary living quarters in what became dubbed Tent City at Coral Gables while he worked towards more permanent housing. In August 1925 he broke ground in the undeveloped land south of Ponce Circle for the San Sebastian Apartment Hotel which included 72 apartments for his workforce. (Figures 6 & 7) He authorized 24-hour construction crews with the first employees moving from Tent City to the apartments in early 1926.

Simultaneously in March 1925 he opened the Coconut Grove Section with the intention that it would be populated with modest homes affordable to his employees and other middle-class families. Located immediately south of the San Sebastian Apartment Hotel, it was platted with 25' lots which allowed for incremental purchases that fit varied incomes. (Figures 6) Merrick also replatted portions of the Country Club Sections towards this end.

In late 1923, Merrick had commissioned three members of his team, H. George Fink, Martin Hampton, and Lewis Brumm to design finely detailed modest homes on some streets north of the Granada Golf Course. They provided tangible examples of Merrick's intention for smaller homes. Most importantly to show that they were to be built with the same high-quality construction and Mediterranean Revival style features as other structures that shaped the new city in the early 1920s. These homes were used as inspiration for the Coconut Grove Section. In subsequent years, architect H. George Fink became the leading architect for Coral Gables in the genre. 320 Romano Avenue shows Fink's evolution with these designs.

Providing quality housing for various incomes was clearly important to Merrick. The following quote is contemporaneous to the building of 320 Romano Avenue.

Frequently at night Mrs. Merrick and I drive through Coral Gables. We go into moderate-priced sections, and we find something which gives me even more pride in the accomplishment of an ideal—people who formerly used stock plans can now have a well-appointed home... it is gratifying to see the difference in the attractiveness of one of our very moderately priced houses as compared to a house of similar cost in the unrestricted section of Miami.

--George Merrick, June 28, 1925, Florida Times Union

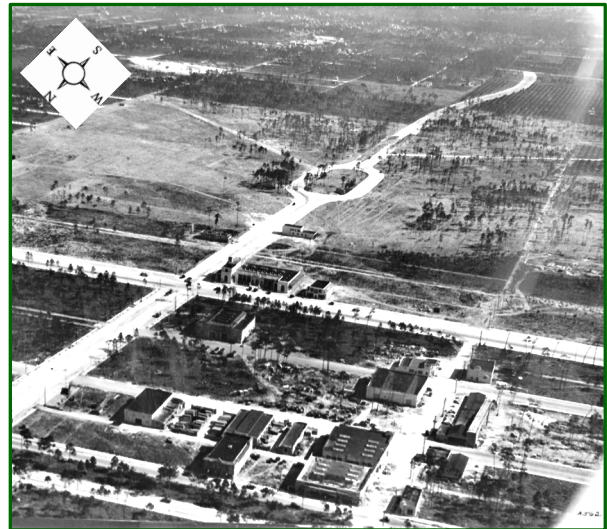
In a 1925 publication authored by Merrick entitled *Coral Gables Miami Riviera: Heart of the American Tropics* he waxed poetic about the design tenets of these smaller homes:

A small house, in which every detail is a joy, is made beautiful with a cloistered entrance whose slightly pointed arched and carved columns lead to an open patio, as finely thought out and executed as a Renaissance palace, and as beautiful in its setting. Another small house, whose wall spaces are unusually simple, has as its chief decoration an entrance loggia with a group of three round arches, the middle slightly higher than the other two, separated by twisted columns so delicate and right that no other decoration is necessary. Even grouped ventilator holes are made to play delightful part in the design of a whole house front, and such inconspicuous details as in the iron work of a window, the trim of a chimney, the curve of a

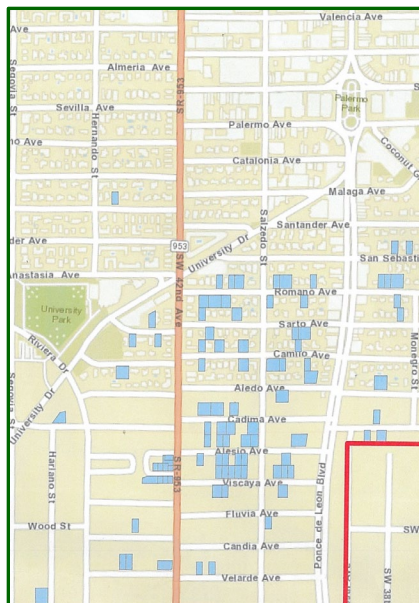
garage roof, the right placing of a huge Spanish water jar to break the surface pattern of an open veranda, are harmonious, styled, architecturally right.

These homes are an important piece of Coral Gables' early history. In 1993, the City of Coral Gables took official action to aid in the recognition and preservation of these historic resources and passed a "Cottage Ordinance." Its stated purpose is to "*maintain and preserve the architectural quality and character of Coral Gables' traditional, small scale, residential neighborhoods by encouraging the preservation of the existing Coral Gables Cottage style houses.*"

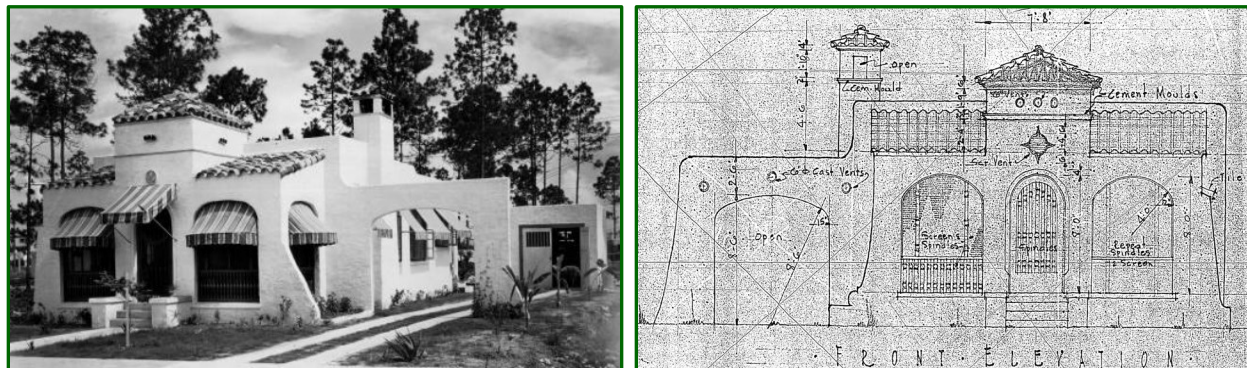
Overall, development in the City continued rapidly until South Florida was struck by the devastating hurricane in September 1926. This was particularly true of construction in the Coconut Grove Section. The upper portion 1924 aerial photo in Figure 7 shows the undeveloped land south of Ponce Circle that less than a year later was developed as the Coconut Grove Section. Figures 8 visually documents its early single-family homes. Almost all of the homes shown as blue in Figures 8 were built during the 18 months prior to the hurricane. The accompanying aerial photo provides a sense of the concerted manner that Merrick developed this small-scale neighborhood. As was the case across the City, there were very few new homes built after 1928 in the Coconut Grove Section until the early 1940s as the hurricane busted the land boom and was followed by the Depression-era years.



**Figure 7: 1924 Aerial Photo:
Ponce De Leon Boulevard: Looking South
from the Business District Toward Bird Road**



Figures 8: Early Development in Vicinity of Coconut Grove Section
Map of Pre-1935 Homes (blue boxes) [left] Courtesy of City of Coral Gables IT
Aerial Photograph, 1938 [right] Courtesy of Aerial Photography: University of Florida

320 Romano Avenue**Figure 9: 320 Romano Avenue****Historic Photo, May 26, 1926 [left]; Proposed Permit #1192, June 1925 [right]**

The home at 320 Romano Avenue is a prime example of the moderately-affordable homes envisioned by Merrick for the Coconut Grove Section. (Figure 6) The section was officially platted in March 1925. The original plans for this property are dated June 8, 1925 (see Attachment A: Permit #1192) and the project was posted in the Miami Herald on June 26, 1925. (Figures 10)

H. George Fink was the architect. Fink was a key member of Merrick's original design team and was very instrumental in creating the fabric of 1920s Mediterranean Revival architecture which characterizes Coral Gables. As mentioned above, he designed some of the initial moderately-priced residences in the City for Merrick in 1923. (see Architect section below) This home is indicative of the evolution of his design in this realm.

M. H. Gabbert will erect a six-room residence in Coconut Grove section 1 at a cost of \$7,500. H. George Fink is the architect and C. J. Close is the builder.

G. Merrick to M. Gabbert, lots 13 and 14, block 8, Coco No. 1, \$3,000.

Figures 10:**Construction Announced & Approved****Announced:**

June 26, 1925, *Miami Herald*
[top]

Approved:

December 26, 1925, *Miami News*
[bottom]

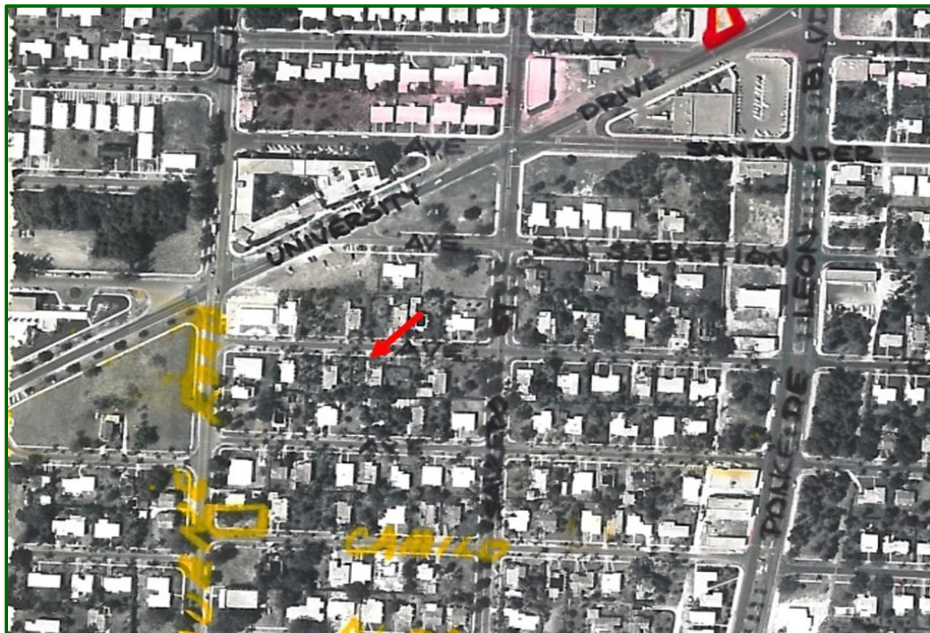
It should be noted that the original permit plans as filed are a mirror image of what was built. This type of field change was not unusual during the 1920s. Fortunately, a historic photo taken less than six months after completion is available that documents the as-built conditions of the property. (Figures 9)

The single-family residence was commissioned by M. H. Gabbert who hailed from Kentucky. He appears to be an investor who built several homes in Coral Gables prior to the hurricane. As was common with Coral Gables investors, Merrick retained ownership until construction was complete and final aesthetic approval granted. The Miami News reported the final property transfer in December 1925. (Figures 10) In 1926 Gabbert sold the property to Emmanuel Goldweber, a salesman, who alternately lived in or rented the home for the next twenty years. (see Ownership section below)

Context

Construction boomed again in the City following the conclusion of World War II and the Coconut Grove Section followed suit. New residences filled the vacant lots, and by the late 1950s, the area bounded by Ponce de Leon Boulevard and Le Jeune Road was built out (Figures 11). Throughout the past century, the Coral Gables Coconut Grove has held its original context as a neighborhood of smaller, primarily one-story, single-family homes. Hence, the property at 320 Romano Avenue retains its historic integrity, context, as well as location.

It should be noted that when the construction of single-family homes resumed in Coral Gables after the Depression era, there was a distinct departure from the ornamented and picturesque Mediterranean Revival style that had dominated the City's landscape since its inception. The newer homes embraced contemporary modern styles. The home at 320 Romano Avenue is one of the remaining single-family residences built during the 1920s per Merrick's vision.



**Figures 11:
Aerial Photographs**

1948

[top]

1957

[bottom]

*Red Arrow:
320 Romano
Avenue*

*Courtesy
University of Florida*

SIGNIFICANCE ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION



**Figures 12:
320 Romano Avenue
Over Time**

**Historic Photos
*Top to Bottom:***

May 26, 1926

c. 1940

January 8, 1988

*Courtesy
Miami-Dade Property
Appraiser*

May 2020

*Courtesy
Realtor.com*

Executive Summary

The single-family residence with its detached garage at 320 Romano Avenue is amongst the earliest homes in Coral Gables. Constructed in the fall of 1925, it has retained its historic integrity and context for the past century. It stands as a testament to founder George E. Merrick's vision for this Mediterranean-inspired City whose plan drew from City Beautiful and Garden City precepts. Merrick was particularly dedicated to the Garden City precept of building a socially mixed community where people of various socioeconomic levels could live side-by-side. He had his architectural team design Mediterranean-inspired homes for various incomes to demonstrate his intention for the City. In March 1925 Merrick platted the Coconut Grove Section with 25' lots which allowed flexibility in lot and home sizes. During this time there was a dire need for working class homes in south Florida and he opened this section specifically to address this need. 320 Romano Avenue is one of these homes.

320 Romano Avenue exemplifies the early development of the City and the Mediterranean-inspired archetype upon which Coral Gables was founded. As discussed above, Merrick and his team felt that Mediterranean architecture harmonized best with south Florida's climate and lifestyle. This home is a fine example of adapting residential design to the rigors of South Florida's climate while maintaining the integrity of the style. It is built over a crawl space to provide ventilation and protection from the area's higher water table. Thick masonry walls keep the home cool, the light-colored stuccoed exterior walls reflect the sun's heat, and the varied recessed windows provide much needed ventilation and light in this tropical environment. The home originally had a full length screened front porch and a rear sleeping porch for indoor/outdoor living.

Fink's composition is finely tuned and represents the evolution of the modest typology as well as the Mediterranean Revival style in the City. During this time Fink was also producing adapted Mission Revival homes in this genre and there are some of those influences in the design of the home. These include the squat entry tower with its barrel tiled pyramidal roof, the full-length front porch with its shallow arches, the belfry-inspired chimney, and the buttress-inspired wing walls. Other Mediterranean Revival style character-defining features include, but are not limited to, the following. The massing of the home is rectilinear with living space under a flat roof with simple parapets. It is clad in textured stucco. The porch roofs are low-pitched and clad with barrel tiles. The entry tower is adorned with a masonry rondel, a raised 'stringcourse' moulding, and decoratively-arranged round vents. The latter are also found above the window openings of all facades. The windows are recessed with protruding sills and were originally casement in type with high-profile muntins. The arched front entry opening is framed with a smooth-faced surround.

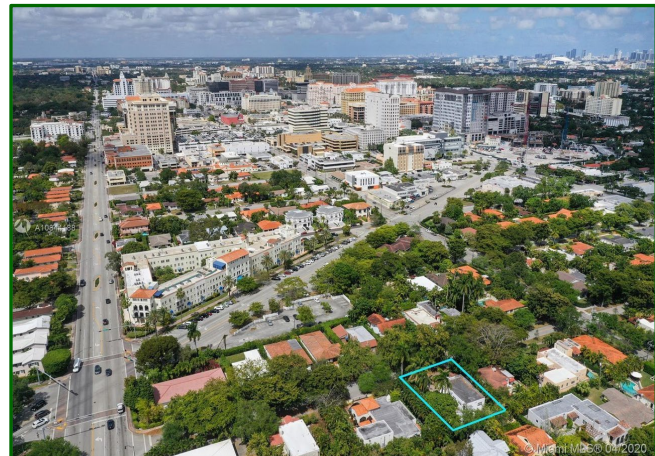
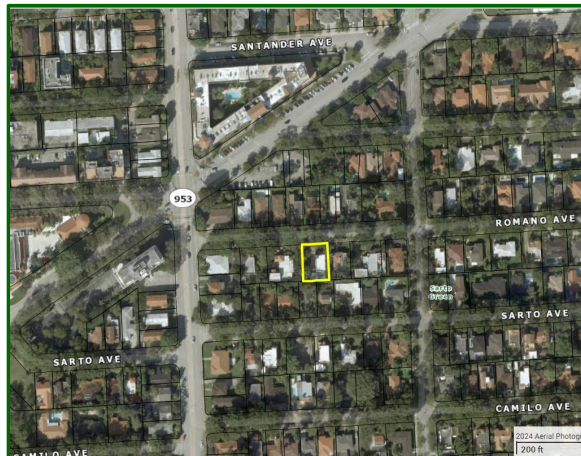
Examination of building documents, permit records, and historic photographs, as well as visual assessment of the property, indicate that the character-defining features of the home at 320 Romano Avenue are primarily intact. The extant building description provided below illustrates that the property has retained its architectural integrity for the past century. As per Article 8, Section 8-103 of the Coral Gables Zoning Code--Criteria for designation of historic landmarks: "Districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects of national, state and local importance are of historic significance if they possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, or association." Staff have determined that the property possesses sufficient integrity for designation. Thus, the property at 320 Romano Avenue contributes to the historic fabric of the City and is part of the collection of quality residences built during the land boom era that embodies Coral Gables' sense of place over time.

Extant Exterior Description & Alterations Discussion



Figure 13: 320 Romano Avenue, 2020 *Courtesy Realtor.com*

The Coral Gables Coconut Grove Section, located east of LeJeune Road and south of the San Sebastain Apartments, is a tree-lined, single-family residential neighborhood of primarily one-story homes. 320 Romano Avenue is a north-facing interior 75' lot. The one-story, single-family residence is sited along the lot's eastern boundary. A paver driveway along the west side of the home leads to a one-story detached garage centered at the rear of the lot.



Figures 14:
Property Overview
Context Aerial Photos, 2025
[top]

Site Aerial Photo, 2024
[bottom left]

Aerials courtesy
Miami-Dade Property Appraiser
& Realtor.com

Boundary Survey, 2021
[top right]
Courtesy Bello & Bello Land
Surveyors

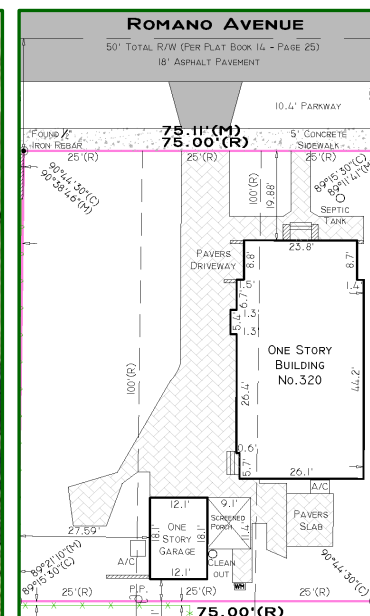
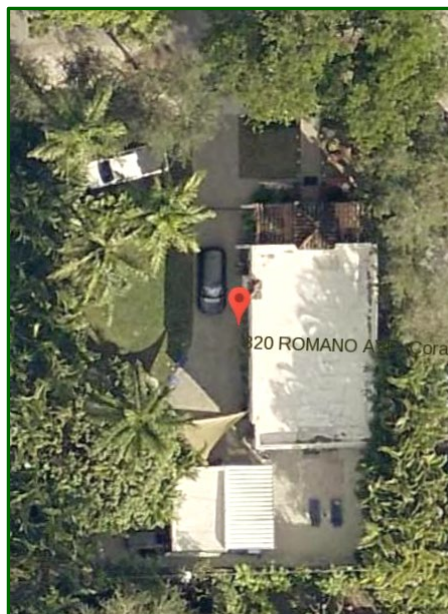




Figure 15: 320 Romano Avenue, 2025

The single-family residence is constructed of masonry units over a crawl space and is clad with a textured stucco finish. The one-story home is rectangular in plan with approximately 1,530 SF of living space. Architect H. George Fink designed this Mediterranean Revival style home with two bedrooms, a rear sleeping porch, a small screened back entry porch, and a screened front porch that ran the full length of the street façade. (Figure 16) The screened porches are now enclosed for living space. The home retains its original massing with no additions.

The primary living space is under a flat roof with simple parapets. The street-facing pitched roofs of the original front porch are clad in two-piece barrel tile. The fenestration of the home varies in size and configuration. Centered above most openings are decoratively-arranged round vents. The windows are recessed with projecting sills and were originally casement in type. The current single-hung windows were installed in 2008. Some of the window openings were slightly reduced in size at an unknown date. However, the original sizes are obvious as the sills remain extant, the stucco textures are different, and the infills attempted to retain the original recess. Hence, the original overall fenestration pattern of the house is retained.

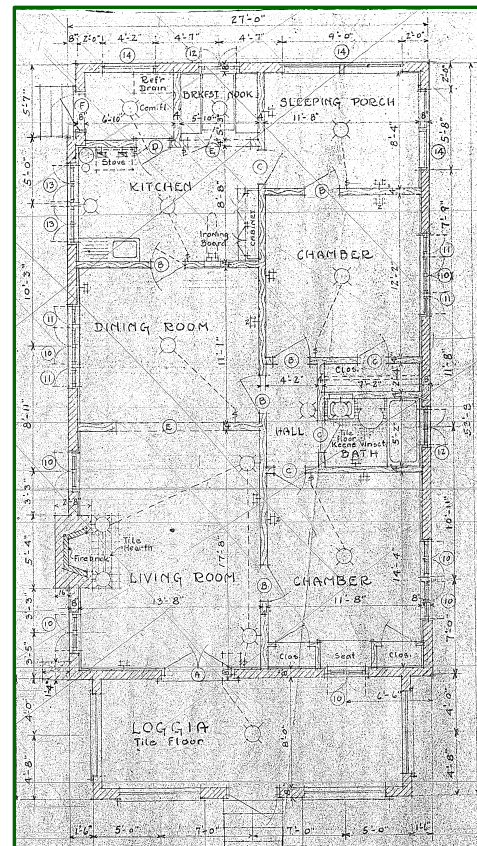


Figure 16: Floor Plan

Permit #1192, June 1925

Note: mirror image of as-built



Figure 17: Front (North) Facade, 2025

The symmetrical front façade is comprised of a protruding bay. At the center rises a squat, one-and-a-half story rectangular entry tower. It is capped with a pyramidal roof. A simple step leads to its round arched entry opening. Flanking the entry tower are one-story bays under matching shed roofs each with large front-facing and side-facing shallow segmental arched openings. Wing walls extend from the front corners giving this small home a larger street presence. The wing walls of differing design flair out in a buttress-like manner. The ornamentation of the front façade is restrained and focuses attention on the entry tower. A raised ‘stringcourse’ molding wraps around the tower at the height of parapet coping behind it. Above the molding are a line of three decoratively arranged round vents center on each tower face. Below the molding on the front façade is an applied masonry rondel. The front entry arch is framed by a simple, smooth-faced surround.



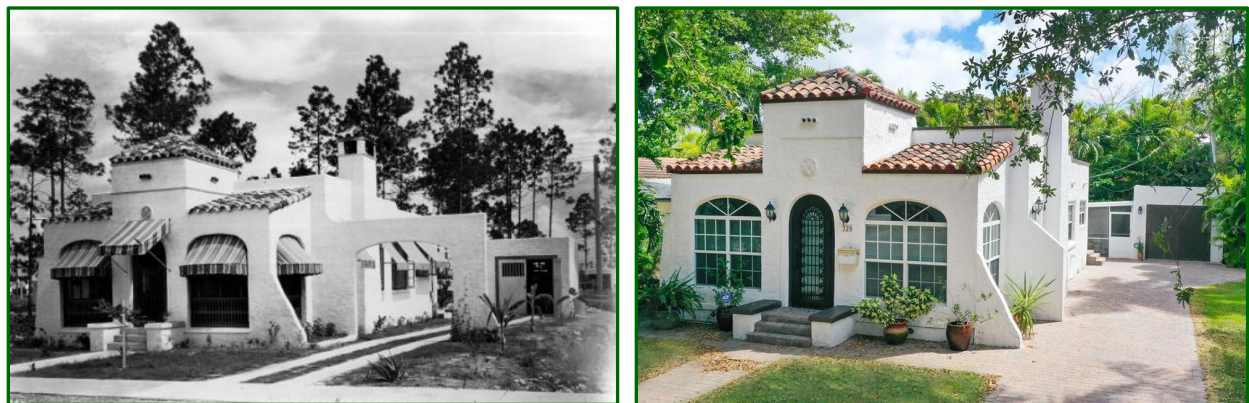
**Figure 18:
Front Entry Detailing, 2025**

Originally, this protruding front bay ensemble was a full-length screened porch. The c.1940 historic photograph in Figures 12 and 19 shows the spindle railing and spindle post ensembles found in each of the arched openings. Also shown is the unique screen and spindle entry door. As seen in Figures 12, by 1980 the spindled features were removed and the porch enclosed. Solid inserts were placed in the arched portions. These were likely made of wood. A permit for this work has not been located to date. A 2008 window permit indicates that there were other interventions between 1980 and 2008. The opening height was reduced, the inserts removed, and fanlight fixed windows installed. Retaining the latter is noted on the 2008 permit. When the height was reduced by blocking in the bottom, the projecting sills were retained; thus, the original size is easily discerned. (Figure 19, typ.) The entry arch was reclaimed in 2012 with the installation of the current arched iron grate front door



**Figures 19: Original Front Porch Screened Door & Opening Ensemble, c. 1940 [left & center]
Reduced Opening (typ.), 2025**

As seen in Figures 20, the home was built with a vehicular arch feature extending from the rear corner of front porch's west façade over the driveway. As documented in the 1940 historic photo (Figures 12) this feature did not last long. It may have been damaged by the fierce September 1926 hurricane or by one of the two substantial hurricanes that occurred in the 1930s. When the feature was removed a portion was left in place and repurposed as another buttress-inspired wing wall. (Figures 20)



Figures 20: 320 Romano Avenue: 1926 [left]; 2025 [right]

One of the hallmark features of the home is the distinctive bell tower-inspired chimney that rises along the west façade of the home. (Figure 21) The gently narrowing protruding chimney stack with its rectangular opening and barrel tile cap are reminiscent of a Spanish mission belfry. Like the entry tower, the chimney is capped with by a pyramidal roof. The 1926 historic photo shows that originally this feature also had a protruding molding wrapping around the stack just below the openings. (Figures 20)



Figures 21: Secondary Facades, 2025

Side (West) Façade [top] and Back Entry [left]; Rear Façade [right]; Side (East) Façade [bottom]

The east and west side facades maintain the original fenestration openings with their associated protruding sills below and decorative round vents above. The parapet height steps down slightly at approximately the center of the facades. The recessed bay at the southwest corner of the home was originally a small screened back porch. (Figures 16) Windows on the rear façade in this area were enclosed post-2008. Their locations are evident due to the difference between the infill and original stucco textures. At the southeast corner of the home was the original screened sleeping porch. It was enclosed at an unknown date for living space. A 1937 rental ad mentions the sleeping porch but by 1957 the home is advertised as a three-bedroom home, which may indicate that this change occurred pre-1957. As seen in Figures 21, the large, screened openings on both the rear and east side façade were slightly reduced to accommodate windows. The recess and the projecting sills were retained and hence the size of the original opening is evident.





**Figures 22:
Original Detached Garage**

**North Façade, 2020
[top]**

Courtesy Realtor.com

South Façade [right]

Centered along the rear property line is the original detached garage. The one-car structure, like the house, has a flat roof with parapets. The textured stucco cladding matches that of the home. A screened porch is currently attached to the east façade of the garage.



Ownership History

Note: Records regarding ownership prior to 1950 have not been located. Ownership history for this time is based on numerous sources including R. L. Polk City Directories 1926-65), building permits, realtor notes, other records on file with the City of Coral Gables and the Miami-Dade County Clerk.

1925	M. H. Gabbert
1925-1945	Emanuel Goldweber
1945-1957	Thomas W. Ventulett & Edith Ventulett
1957-1978	Charles E. Clark & Charmaine Lantaff
1978-2006	Miguel Restrepo & Gladys Restrepo
2006-2010	Teri Gould Jacobs & Jullian Jacobs
2010-2020	Andres Carlos Siso
2020-Present	Sandra Bonell

Architect: H. George Fink

Figure 23: H. George Fink, Portrait, c.1920s

H. George Fink was a key member of founder George Merrick's original design team and was instrumental in creating the fabric of 1920s Mediterranean Revival architecture, which characterizes Coral Gables. He designed numerous Mediterranean Revival residential and commercial structures in Coral Gables in the early 1920s. His residential designs ranged from small cottages to more elaborate residences for the City's leaders including George Merrick and Edward E. "Doc" Dammers. Over 100 of his buildings are designated as Local Historic Landmarks within the City of Coral Gables (either individually or as part of a historic district).

Fink's architectural practice was so busy during the early 1920s that by the end of 1923 he outgrew his office and built an office at 2506 Ponce de Leon Boulevard that served as a showcase for the Mediterranean Revival style. He was regularly featured in newspaper articles discussing the progress of development in Coral Gables, and in advertisements for the community during the 1920s.

In 1924, Fink travelled to Spain to study the architecture and was honored by King Alfonso XIII of Spain for his "interesting, outstanding, and extremely artistic interpretation and reproduction of the Spanish Arts in America." During his visit to Spain, Fink was also made a "Don," the Spanish equivalent of English knighthood.

H. George Fink's architectural career spanned over four decades in Coral Gables. Fink's family moved to the Miami area from Springdale, Pennsylvania in 1904. He graduated from Miami High School in 1907 and went on to study architecture at the Drexel Institute in Philadelphia while supplementing his education with special classes at the University of Pennsylvania. From 1915 to 1921 Fink designed numerous buildings for Miami Beach Developer Carl Fisher and Associates. In 1921 he began working with George Merrick. That same year, Fink became a member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and was the youngest member of the organization at the time of his appointment.

The devastating hurricane in 1926 abruptly halted much of the construction in Coral Gables. In 1928, Fink left the City accepting a position as the Designing Architect for the J. C. Penney Company of New York. He remained with them until 1932 when he became a Supervising Architect for the Works Progress Administration (WPA). He was assigned to the State of Maine and remained with the WPA until 1937.

Fink returned to Coral Gables in 1937 and resumed his private architectural practice. During World War II, he was Architectural Designer for Robert & Company, of Atlanta, assisting with the Richmond Naval Air Station, the Glynn County Base, in Brunswick, Georgia, and the Chamblee Naval Base in Chamblee, Georgia. In 1943, Fink became Architect in Charge, Architectural Division, Bell Bomber Plant, Marietta, Georgia, where the famous B-29s were built and assembled. Fink returned to Coral Gables in 1945 and continued to design there until the middle of the 1960s. He served on the Coral Gables Board of Architects from 1945 through 1956, acting as its chairman for seven years within this period. Fink also served as the Secretary of the Florida South Chapter of the AIA from 1952-1955.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The purpose of historic designation within the City of Coral Gables is defined in Article 8, Section 8-101 of the Coral Gables Zoning Code as, *to promote the educational, cultural, and economic welfare of the public by preserving and protecting historic structures or sites, portions of structures, groups of structures, manmade or natural landscape elements, works of art, or integrated combinations thereof, which serve as visible reminders of the history and cultural heritage of the City, region, state or nation.*

It is the intent of the Coral Gables Zoning Code to recognize all buildings which possess “significant character, interest or value as part of the historical, cultural, archaeological, aesthetic, or architectural heritage of the City, state or nation” qualify for designation as a local historic landmark (Coral Gables Zoning Code, Article 8, Section 8-103). To that end, the Coral Gables Zoning Code states that for designation as a local historic landmark the property must meet **one (1)** (or more) of the criteria stipulated in Article 8, Section 8-103.

Constructed in 1925 in the Mediterranean Revival style the property at 320 Romano Avenue (legally described as Lots 12 to 14 Inclusive, Block 8, Coral Gables Coconut Grove Section Part One, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 14, at Page 25, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida) is significant to the City of Coral Gables’ history based on the following **three (3) criteria** found in the Coral Gables Zoning Code, Article 8, Section 8-103:

A. Historical, Cultural significance

Criterion 4: Exemplifies the historical, cultural, political, economic or social trends of the community

B. Architectural significance

Criterion 1: Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by one (1) or more distinctive architectural style

Criterion 2: Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or method of construction

Staff find the following:


The property at 320 Romano Avenue is significant to the City of Coral Gables history based on:

HISTORICAL, CULTURAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Therefore, Staff recommends the following:

A motion to **APPROVE** the Local Historic Designation of the property at **320 Romano Avenue** (legally described as Lots 12 to 14 Inclusive, Block 8, Coral Gables Coconut Grove Section Part One, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 14, at Page 25, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida) based on its historical, cultural, and architectural significance.

Respectfully submitted,


Anna Pernas
Historic Preservation Officer

Selected References

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"\$15 Per Month, year lease, 320 Romano Avenue" April 29, 1927, p.20.

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"Furnished C.B.S. 2 bedrooms and sleeping porch for rent," August 29, 1937, p.23.

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"Coral Gables Building," May 29, 1925, p.5.

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United States Census Records, various years.

REVIEW GUIDE

Definition:

The Review Guide comprises of some of the extant and character-defining features, which contribute to the overall significance of the structure and/or district.

Character-defining features are the visual and physical features that give a building its identity and distinctive character. They may include the overall building shape, its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, features, and aspects of its site and environment.

Use:

The Review Guide may be used to address the impact that additions, modifications, alterations and/or renovations may have on the historic structure and site.

The Review guide may also inform appropriate new construction in an historic district, neighborhood, or streetscape.

Property Address:	320 Romano Avenue
Lot Description:	interior lot
Date of Construction:	1925
Use:	single-family residence
Style:	Mediterranean Revival
Construction Material:	concrete block covered with stucco
Stories:	one-story
Roof Types:	flat, shed, pyramidal
Photograph Year:	2025

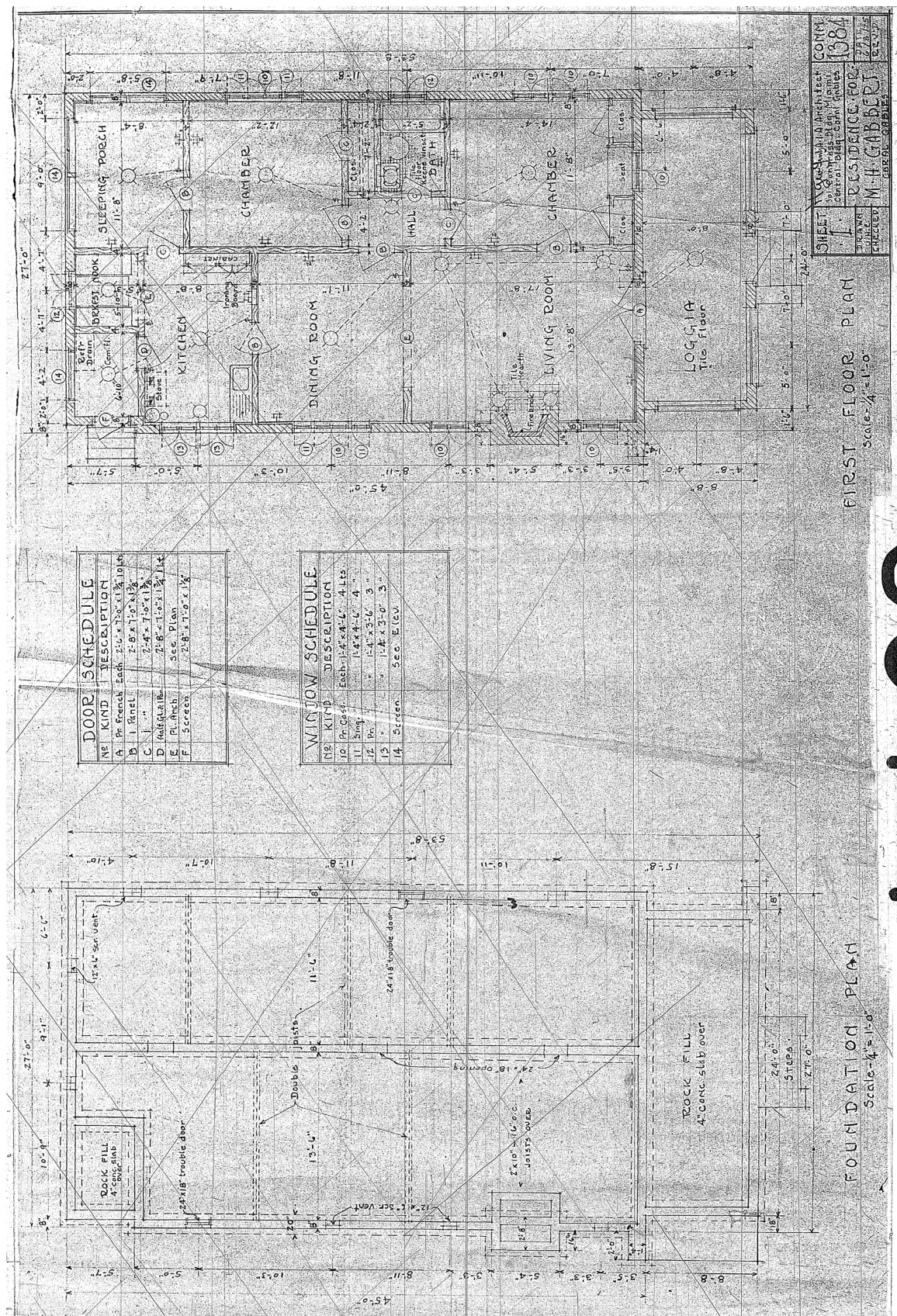
NOTE: The Review Guide is to be referenced in conjunction with the information and photographic documentation contained elsewhere within this Report. Character-defining features may include, but are not limited to, the listing found on the following page.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Style: Mediterranean Revival



- ✓ rectilinear massing built over crawl space
- ✓ flat roof with simple parapets
- ✓ thick masonry walls clad with textured stucco
- ✓ barrel tiled pyramidal roof entry tower
- ✓ full-length front porch with shallow arches & roofs clad in barrel tile
- ✓ belfry-inspired chimney
- ✓ buttress-inspired wing walls
- ✓ arched front entry with smooth-faced surround
- ✓ masonry rondel
- ✓ raised 'stringcourse' moulding
- ✓ decoratively-arranged round vents
- ✓ recessed windows with protruding sills of varying sizes arranged for crossed ventilation (originally casement in type with high-profile muntins)
- ✓ one-story detached garage with same features



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