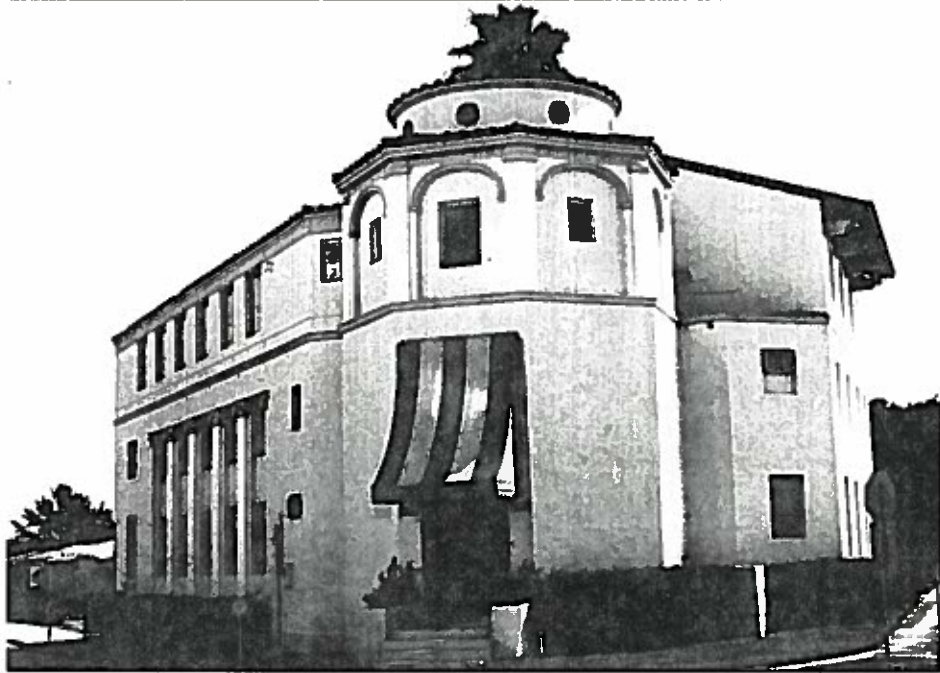


REPORT OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION  
TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD

ON THE DESIGNATION OF  
THE ARTS CENTER BUILDING  
2901 PONCE DE LEON BOULEVARD  
AS AN HISTORIC LANDMARK



(PREPARED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 16B-17,2(B)  
OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES ORDINANCE 2508)

PREPARED BY

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*12-18-86*  
DATE

HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD ACTION \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

# THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES

OFFICE OF  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
CITY HALL



THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

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LHD 86-05

## DESIGNATION REPORT

### THE ARTS CENTER BUILDING 2901 PONCE DE LEON BOULEVARD, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1925

ARCHITECT: Phineas Paist

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: All of Block 24, Crafts Section

PRESENT OWNER: Stanley Glasgow, Jim E. Ferguson & L. F. Brill

PRESENT USE: Office

PRESENT ZONING: CB, Commercial Use, minimum of 1,250 square feet.

### SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The building was constructed for the Coral Gables Corporation and was one of the first buildings in the Crafts Section subdivision. For a number of years it served as the organizational home of the "Architectural League of Greater Miami" a professional association that had as its goal the promotion of "...better architecture and the allied arts". The building is a fine example of the Mediterranean style of architecture, which was the standard for newly constructed buildings in the City of Coral Gables. Phineas Paist, the architect who designed the building achieved great renown for his contribution to the special character of the City of Coral Gables.

### HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS/EVENTS

Merrick's original plan for the City set out specific areas for particular uses. For example, he created a shopping district, a business district, and a crafts district.

### **HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS/EVENTS Cont'd.**

The Crafts Section was envisioned as an area which would encourage artisans and craftsmen to make and display their wares. Their products were intended not only for the local audience, but also for the entire country.

While never built, the focus of the Crafts Section was to be an exposition building to display the goods produced in this Section.

The Arts Center Building was a focal point of the Crafts Section and contained offices for the architectural profession. Further, it served as the organizational homes of the "Architectural League of Greater Miami", a professional association that had as its goal the promotion of "...better architecture and the allied arts". The building housed an architectural library donated to the league by George E. Merrick.

The 1926 officers for the Architectural League included these luminaries in the Coral Gables design profession: Coulton Skinner (first Vice-President), Denman Fink (third Vice-President), Frank M. Button (fourth Vice-President), Phineas Paist and Richard Kiehnel, executive committee.

### **ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Arts Center Building is a fine example of the Mediterranean design practiced in Coral Gables. The building features such characteristic Mediterranean details as: a stucco exterior, prominent entrance bay which terminates in a tower; classical architectural detail in the plasters of the north facade, widely overhanging eaves supported by wooden brackets, and a courtyard.

The building is sited on a corner, and takes maximum advantage of the site. The main entrance with its prominent tower is featured at the intersection of two streets.

### **ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY**

The building has sustained some minor alterations which include:

1. Casement windows replaced by jalousie windows.
2. Shed roofed entrance porch removed; canvas awning now shelters the landing.

**ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY Cont'd.**

3. A cast ornamental shield once above the doorway has been lost.
4. Courtyard wings were once open arcades, but were enclosed when the air conditioning system was installed.

**CONCLUSION:**

Despite the alterations listed, the basic integrity of the building is substantially intact.

**THE ARCHITECT - PHINEAS E. PAIST (1875-1937)**

Of the prominent architects practicing in Coral Gables, Mr. Paist can be considered as the one most responsible for promoting and defining Coral Gables Mediterranean architecture.

In May of 1925 Paist was named Supervising Architect for the City. In that role Mr. Paist headed the Board of Architects. A contemporary report summarized Mr. Paist's scrutiny of new buildings in this way: "...all structures must measure up to exacting requirements laid down by the Board of Architects, Phineas E. Paist, A.I.A."

Mr. Paist's own accomplishments are noteworthy. Before he began work in Coral Gables, Paist served as an Associate of Paul Chalfin at Viscaya, and along with Walter DeGarmo worked on the James Deering estate.

Mr. Paist is responsible for a number of residential and commercial designs, and had incalculable influence on the projects which came before him while leading the Board of Architects.

Perhaps his most impressive work in Coral Gables is the design for the one million dollar Douglas Entrance complex.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

The Arts Center Building possesses architectural significance, and is associated with persons who have made substantial contributions to our community. It also represents a key building in the Crafts Section, which reflects the overall planning scheme for that subdivision.

The staff therefore RECOMMENDS APPROVAL of this request for Local Historic Designation.

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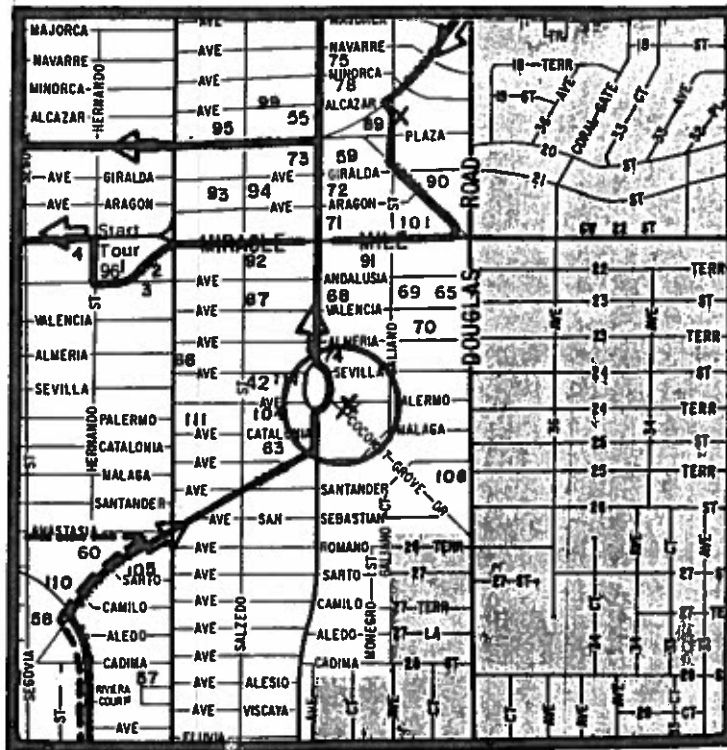
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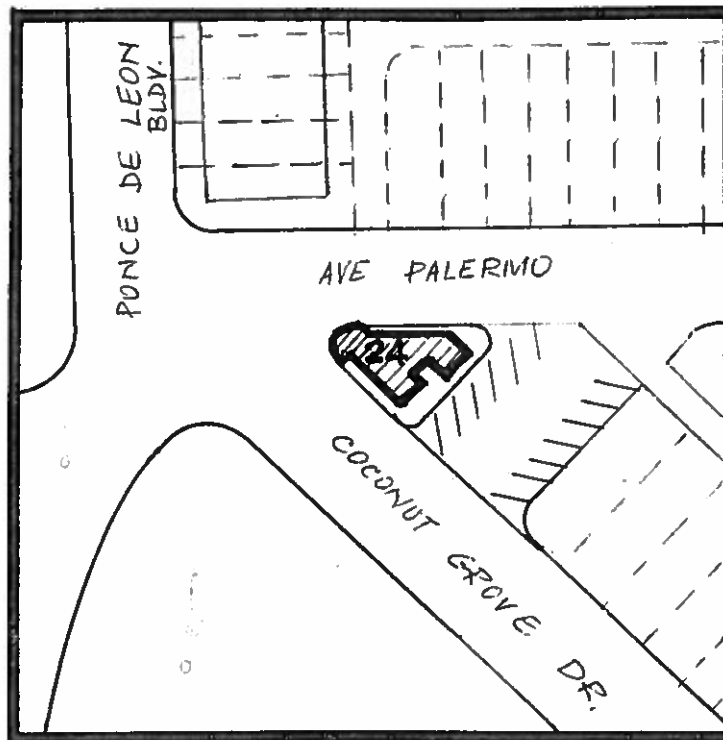
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"The Arts Center Building"  
2901 Ponce de Leon Boulevard



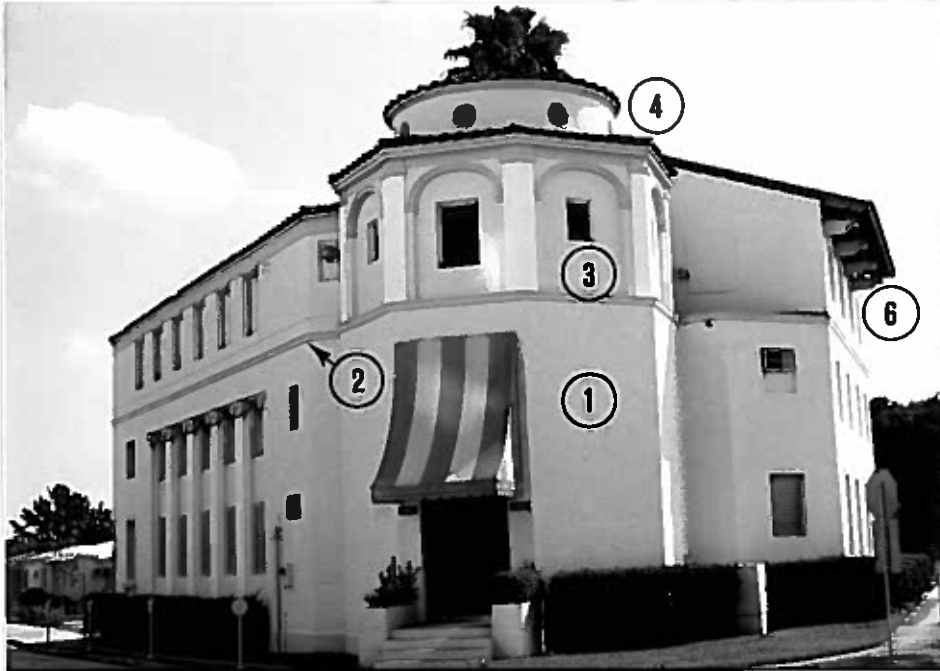
location



site plan

Review Guide  
The Arts Center Building  
2901 Ponce de Leon

LHD 86-05



MAIN ELEVATION: ENTRANCE & SIDE WINGS



DETAIL, NORTH FACADE



DETAIL, COURT AREA



Review Guide  
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SOUTH & EAST ELVATIONS; DETAIL WALL FOUNTAIN



DETAIL: INTERIOR STAIRWELL CONTAINED IN TOWER

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## REVIEW GUIDE

Definition: The Review Guide lists some of the more prominent features which contribute to the overall architectural character of a structure. It is not intended to be all-inclusive, as photographic documentation fully illustrates the present physical character of the property.

Use: The Review Guide may be used to address the impact of additions/modifications/alterations/ and/or renovations which may become the subject of some future Certificate of Appropriateness consideration and....

The Review Guide, describing EXISTING physical features, may be used to determine whether or not elements which characterize the period in which the structure was built are present, and/or whether or not later additions or alterations have so changed that character that the property becomes ineligible for listing in the Coral Gables Inventory of Historic Sites.

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The Arts Center Building  
2901 Ponce de Leon Boulevard

Date of Construction: 1925

Construction Materials: Concrete Block, Stucco, Tile, Wrought Iron

### SITE CHARACTERISTICS:

The building is sited on a triangular shaped parcel of ground created by the intersection of Ponce de Leon Boulevard; Avenue Palermo; and Coconut Grove Drive.

The entrance is a tower bay which is oriented towards Ponce de Leon Boulevard

### TOWER BAY (On Ponce de Leon Boulevard)

1. Three-stage multi-sided tower containing a rectangular doorway approached by a flight of stairs.
2. String course running around the perimeter of the building and separating the second and third stories of the tower.
3. Arches set between pilasters; third story, tower bay.

The Arts Center Building  
2901 Ponce de Leon Boulevard  
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4. Round turret possessing round clerestory windows.

ELEVATION ON AVENUE PALERMO

5. Pilasters terminating in Doric Capitals, separating the rectangular window openings, first and second stories.

NOTE: Jalousie window openings, first and second stories are an alteration. The original windows were wooden casements with multiple lights.

ELEVATION: COCONUT GROVE DRIVE

6. Widely overhanging eaves supported by wooden brackets.

REAR ELEVATION (Adjacent to parking lot)

7. Round turret stairwell bay, breaking the roof line.
8. Wedge-shaped courtyard defined by rectangular free-standing piers surmounted by urns. The piers are connected with a wrought-iron gate.
9. Wall fountain set into a recessed bay framed by a round headed arch.

Prepared: January, 1987