



LHD 2025-006
June 18, 2026

**LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION:
439 MAJORCA AVENUE, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA**

Note: All observations are from the public right-of-way and public resources.

*Historical Resources &
Cultural Arts*

2327 Salzedo Street
Coral Gables
Florida 33134

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| <u>Folio Number:</u> | 03-4108-001-0110 |
| <u>Legal Description:</u> | Lot 16 & the West ½ of Lot 17, Block 1, Coral Gables Section “B,” according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 5, at Page 111, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida. |
| <u>Original Permit No. & Date:</u> | 31; constructed 1923 |
| <u>Original Architect:</u> | unknown |
| <u>Original Owner:</u> | Martin & Fannie Mastenbrook |
| <u>Present Owner:</u> | Ethan Mansley Curtis |
| <u>Building Type / Style:</u> | One-story SFR / Mission Revival |
| <u>Site Characteristics:</u> | The property is an approximately 75’ x 128’ interior lot on the north side of Majorca Avenue between LeJeune Road and Hernando Street. |

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1923 and recorded as Permit #31, the single-family residence at 439 Majorca Avenue is one of the earliest homes in the Coral Gables. It exemplifies founder George Merrick’s vision for his Mediterranean-inspired city. Coral Gables is now considered one of the first modern planned communities in the United States. In developing the new City, Merrick embraced the Garden City precept of offering housing for different income levels. He platted large portions of the City with smaller lots that allowed for moderately-affordable homes to be built on single lots as well as allowing for larger homes on the same street by bundling the lots. He was determined that the moderately-affordable residences in Coral Gables would, though smaller, also have the same high-quality construction and features as other structures that shaped the new city in the early 1920s. These moderately-affordable homes are an important feature of early Coral Gables. 439 Majorca Avenue was one of these homes.

439 Majorca Avenue exemplifies the Spanish-inspired building archetype upon which Coral Gables was founded. It is further significant as it is one of a handful of examples of the adaptation of Mission Revival style architecture in Merrick’s planned community. Its graceful and restrained ornamentation with its Mission parapets, Moorish-inspired pointed arch chimney, decorative canales, and adobe-inspired stucco texture exemplify the style. It has retained its historic integrity for over a century and 439 Majorca Avenue significantly contributes to the historic fabric of the Coral Gables. It is part of the collection of quality residences built during the land boom era that contributes to the City’s sense of place over time.

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 439 Majorca 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, 439 Majorca 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:** Initial Planning and Development/Florida Land Boom
- **1927-1944:** 1926 Hurricane/Great Depression Aftermath and New Deal/Wartime Activity
- **1945-1963:** Post World War II and Modern periods

Constructed in early 1923 during the City's first phase of development, the single-family residence at 439 Majorca Avenue represents the architecture that was the founding premise of Coral Gables.

Founding of 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 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. The goal was to create architectural splendor in a suburb with tropical luxuriance. It is now considered one of the first modern planned communities in the United States.



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

Merrick, advised by landscape architect Frank Button, artist Denman Fink, and architects H. George Fink, Walter De Garmo, H.H. Mundy, Martin Hampton, and Phineas Paist, transformed 3,000 acres of citrus plantation and native hammock. (Figure 1) Merrick's team felt that Mediterranean-inspired architecture harmonized best with south Florida's climate and lifestyle and thus, structures were designed combining elements commonly used in Spanish, Moorish, and Italian architecture. It evolved into a style now known as Mediterranean Revival. (Figure 2)

Nationally-acclaimed landscape architect Frank Button drew the first comprehensive map of Coral Gables in 1921. It was based on the grid infrastructure of fruit trees from the Merrick family's citrus plantation, as well as the native pineland. It thoughtfully maximized the potential of the tropical environment and implemented restrictive zoning to control development and aesthetics. The Mediterranean-inspired homes were to convey a quality of centuries-old permanence and had generous street setbacks for front yards with 'tropical vegetation in a delightful profusion.' The plan embraced the City Beautiful ideals of copious amounts of public green space, tree-lined streets, and monumental public buildings. It also wholeheartedly incorporated the Garden City precepts of comprehensive planning with defined areas for

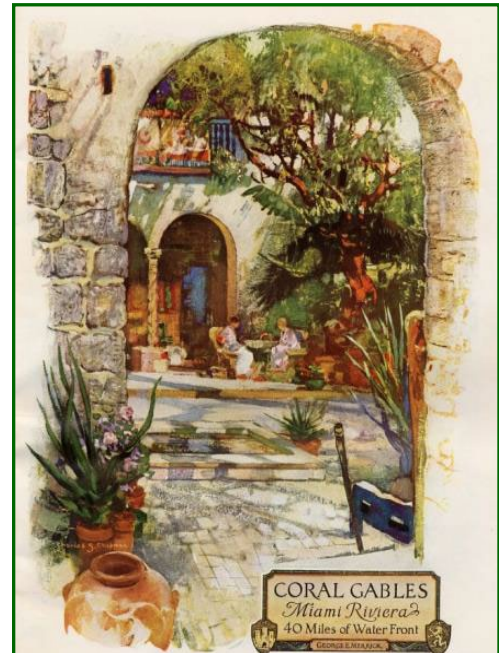
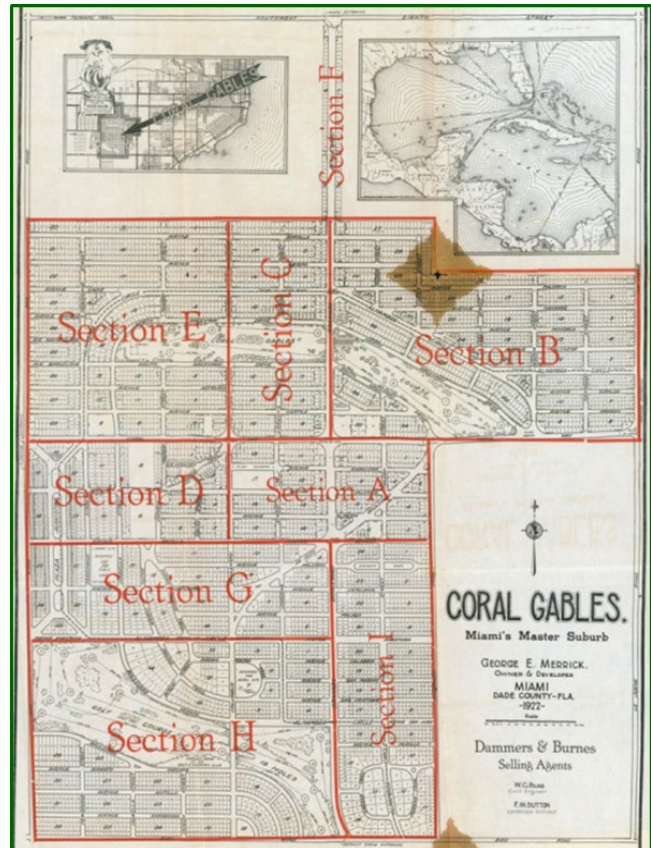


Figure 2: Advertisement in *House Beautiful*, 1925

different uses (i.e., residential, commercial, trades), as well as supplying a wealth of public facilities. 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 without sacrificing quality. Homes built for modest incomes were built alongside grand palazzos and a section of the City was devoted to multi-family housing.

Merrick realized that automobile ownership was increasingly common and wanted to embrace the motorist without impacting the beauty of the community or the comfort of its residents. Thus, he implemented a series of wide parkways with center planting medians as major thoroughfares across the development, as well as parkways with substantial swales for tree-planting that supplied internal access and scenic routes. Merrick's 'Great Development Program,' also included majestic place-making features. The plan opened the grid at strategic locations for grand entrances, plazas, and fountains, hence focusing the major arteries and vistas and providing visual interest for both the pedestrian and the motorist. The broad sweeping boulevards curved around planned features that included golf courses, monumental public and community buildings, and other amenities. (Figure 3)



**Figure 3: Coral Gables Map:
"Miami's Master Suburb," 1922**

With Merrick's acceptance of Button's plan in July 1921, the building of Coral Gables' infrastructure began in earnest. Miles of roads were laid with sidewalks, green space, and trees, along with the establishment of acres of parks. The levelling of the Granada Golf course commenced, and waterways were channeled through the oolitic limestone beds. The boundaries ran from just north of Sorolla Avenue south to Bird Road, west to Red Road, and east to Anderson Road, with a small section abutting Le Jeune Road north of Coral Way. The northern section of Granada Boulevard was only a strip of land from the street north of Sorolla Avenue (then called Coral Valley Road) to the Tamiami Trail where the first entrance was to be constructed.

The map also indicated the location of the first seventy-five acres up for sale. Labeled as Section "A," it was just south of the Merrick's homes on Coral Way. It offered both large and small lots to accommodate buyers from different income brackets. A heavily advertised lot auction commenced on November 26, 1921. Records indicate that upwards of five thousand people attended. Six days later the auction closed with three hundred lots sold for over a half-million dollars. Buoyed by the sales, on December 1921 Merrick pledged \$10,000 from the sales to fund a library and, a few days later, pledged \$100,000 along with land to create the University of Miami in Coral Gables. Merrick continued to acquire land and over the next few years several thousand homes and numerous public and commercial structures were built.

Coral Gables Section “B”

On December 27, 1921, Merrick held his second auction, offering Section “B” for sale. (Figures 3 & 4) Bounded on three sides by grand thoroughfares, Granada Boulevard to the west, Le Jeune Road to the east, and Coral Way to the south, it included an array of Merrick’s planned features. Larger lots lined Alhambra Circle, a wide boulevard with a lush center median, and the impressive Greenway Drives that circled the proposed golf course. Section “B” also included 50’ lots that could be bought separately or bundled together offering both affordable and higher-end options.

In April 1922 Merrick moved the planned business district to the recently acquired one-hundred-forty acres between Le Jeune to Douglas Road directly east of Section “B.” Alhambra Circle was extended from Section “B” across Le Jeune Road to become the main business thoroughfare. In Section “B” the median of Alhambra Circle, which winds through the center of the section, became a bridle path for the Coral Gables Riding Academy located in the business district. In August 1922, as part of Merrick’s Great Development Program, the plazas along Coral Way were completed and three additional plazas in Section “B” - Granada Plaza, Alcazar Plaza, and Castile Plaza (now called Young Park) - were underway. These plazas were designed to break up the street grid and create a varied experience for pedestrians and motorists. In early 1923, the much-anticipated Coral Gables (Granada) Golf Course and its Country Club opened. The clubhouse was the community’s first public building and became the hub of social activities. All these amenities, and its proximity to the new business district, were touted repeatedly in early marketing and defined this area of the city. As a result, Section “B” developed steadily in the 1920s and became a well-developed single-family home area. With the exceptions of those residences along Alhambra Circle and along the Greenways, the homes in Section “B” were predominantly one-story and moderately-priced.

As seen in Figures 3, 4, & 5, in Section B Majorca Avenue was the northern boundary of Coral Gables. Majorca Avenue abutted the groves of Miami Pioneer Charles Girtman. The groves were developed in the 1940s and the area was annexed by the Coral Gables in 1948. (Figures 5 & 9)



Figures 4: Section “B”

**Auction Ad, *Miami Herald*, December 23, 1921 [top]
 Plat Map, 1922 [bottom] - Red Arrow: 439 Majorca Ave**



**Figure 5: Early 1920s Aerial Photo of Coral Gables looking West
Location of 439 Majorca Street located just off photo**

The single-family residence at 439 Majorca Avenue was constructed in 1923 in Section B. It is indicative of the type of architecture that was the founding premise of Coral Gables, exemplifying the Mediterranean ideals, Spanish prototypes, and climate adaptations espoused by founder George Merrick, as well as his plans for this section of the City.

Coral Gables Cottage

In accordance with Garden City and City Beautiful tenets, founder George Merrick planned Coral Gables to provide housing and amenities for all income levels. Merrick strove for Coral Gables to be a socially mixed Garden City community where people of various socioeconomic levels lived side-by-side in quality homes. During 1921-22, when first launching Coral Gables, Merrick's team designed and built homes throughout the community to demonstrate their Mediterranean-inspired vision.

In 1923, as Merrick substantially increased his land holdings, he increased his focus on demonstrating his vision for moderately-priced and smaller-sized homes. In 1923, with the platting of the Granada Section, Merrick commissioned fifty-eight homes towards that end. The commissioned homes were well-received and by the mid-1920s modest residences, detailed to harmonize with the larger Mediterranean Revival style houses, were built throughout the City. They are an important piece of Coral Gables' early history.

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 of similar cost in the unrestricted section of Miami.

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

439 Majorca Avenue, one of these homes, was designed in the Mission Revival style. (Figure 6)

Mission Revival

By the late 19th century, California architects made a monumental shift in their architectural inspiration. Rather than continuing to adopt East Coast styles, they looked to their own historic surroundings, where the Spanish Colonial mission heritage had built beautiful mission chapels, with thick, white stucco walls, red clay roofs and bell towers. The resulting Mission Revival style was characterized by silhouetted shapes that mimicked the old Spanish missions, with stucco facades punctuated by deep windows and door openings and sparse ornamentation.

The most distinctive features of the Mission Revival style were the curved or shaped parapet--and in more ornate cases, one or two square towers symbolizing a mission church's bell tower. Roofs were commonly flat or low-pitched clay-tiled hipped, gabled, or pent with rafters in the eaves. Arches were common and usually semi-circular and without moldings. The style also embraces Moorish detailing --such as quatrefoil windows, pointed arches, and vents-- due to the broader influence of Islamic architecture on the Spanish.

Noted architectural historian Virginia McAlester states that, while the style never became popular outside of the southwest, variants of the style were built in the early 20th century suburbs throughout the country. Coral Gables was one of these suburbs. The initial building campaign in Coral Gables relied heavily on Spanish precedents. Mission Revival and Mediterranean Revival styles have common roots in Spanish architecture and share many characteristics. In 1923 and early 1924 there were some homes in Coral Gables built in the Mission Revival style. They were almost all moderately-priced residences and perhaps the style was used to provide a separate and distinct aesthetic choice for the smaller homes.

Mission Revival is often distinguished from Mediterranean Revival by its restrained or lack of surface ornamentation, its large square pillars, and its distinctive Spanish Colonial-inspired parapets, copings, 'bell towers' and chimneys and/or exposed rafters. The front porches are often full-façade versus projecting bay porches. The window types also have greater variation but are usually adorned only with a simple sill.

General Characteristics

Height: one- and two-stories

Primary Exterior Materials: stucco with smooth or adobe-inspired texture

Roof Type/Surfacing: flat with parapet; low-pitched tiled hipped, gabled, or pent

Roof Detailing: Spanish Colonial-shaped parapet; coping along parapet; broad eaves often with exposed rafters

Fenestration: recessed double-hung sash windows with a 1/1 light configuration; recessed multi-paned casements

Other Prominent Detailing: one-story entry porch often full width of façade with arched openings supported by large square pillars; Mission-like bell tower features; buttress-inspired wing walls; twisted columns; pointed arches; round or quatrefoil window

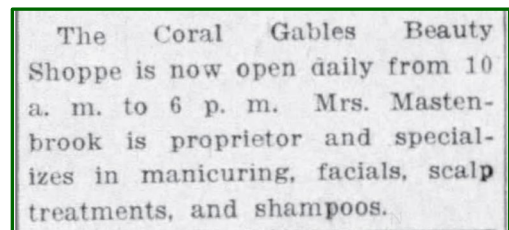
439 Majorca Avenue, constructed in 1923, is moderately-priced residence designed in the Mission Revival style. (Figure 6)

439 Majorca Avenue



Figure 6: 439 Majorca Avenue, 1924

In late 1923, Martin and Fannie Mastenbrook built their home at 31 Majorca Avenue – renumbered to 439 Majorca Avenue a few years later. It is one of the earliest homes in Coral Gables and is recorded as Permit #31. The original plans or other early building records for the property have not been located to date. However, photographs provide some primary documentation of the home. (Figures 6, 8, & 10) The architect is unknown; however, given the date of construction it was a member of Merrick’s original design team as they were the only ones designing homes in Coral Gables at the time. Given that Mr. Mastenbrook’s profession was the supply of native rock (Figures 7), the material for the lintel rock features was likely supplied by him.



Figures 7: *Miami Herald*: January 18, 1921 [left]; November 9, 1924 [right]

Newspapers record the transfer of the property from Merrick to Mastenbrook in December 1923. For the first several years of development it was Merrick’s practice to officially transfer the deed to the new owners once they took possession of the home. Martin (1881-1934) was born in Holland and upon his arrival in Miami in 1921 he opened his rock supply company. After moving into their new home Fannie (1888-1976) opened the Coral Gables Beauty Shoppe a few blocks away on Ponce DeLeon Boulevard. (Figures 7) Daughter of a minister, Fannie was instrumental in establishing Riverside United Methodist Church. The Mastenbrook’s sold the home in 1927. (see below)

Property Ownership

Note: Primary 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.

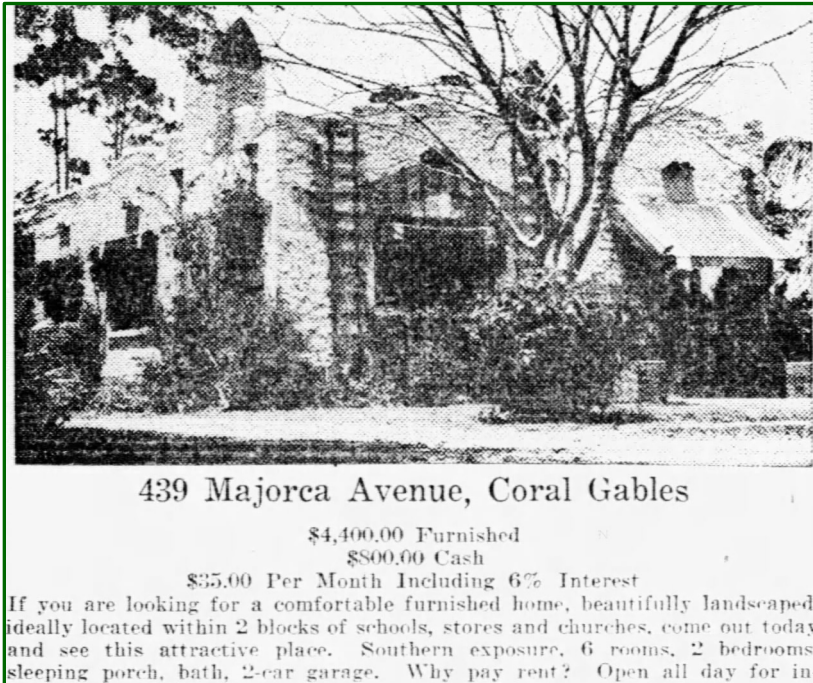


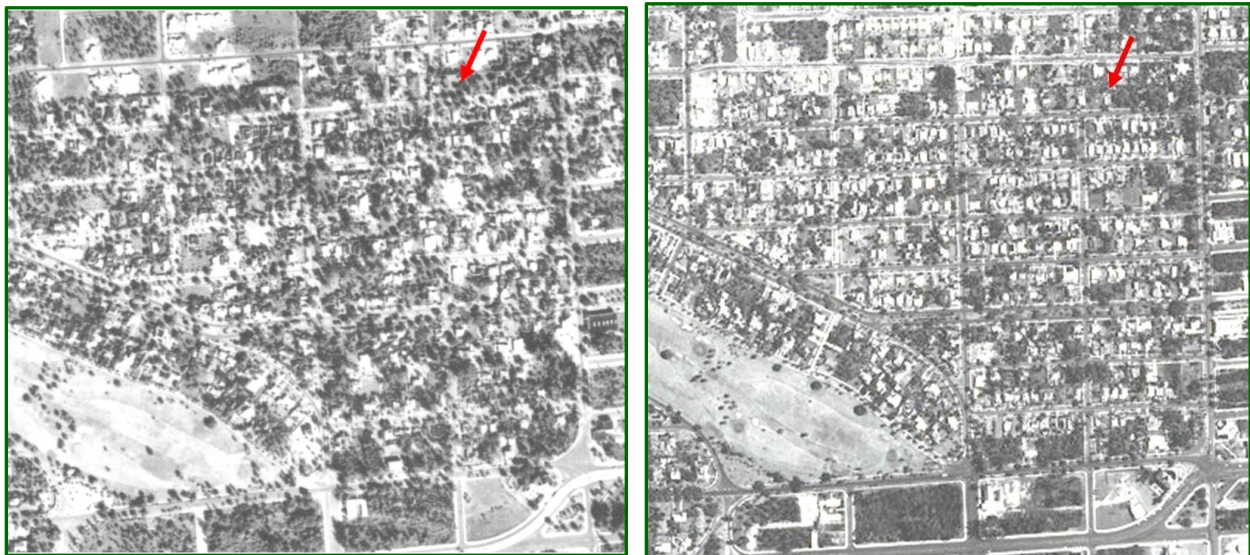
Figure 8
439 Majorca Avenue
For Sale
May 15, 1932
Miami News

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 1923-1927 | Martin Mastenbrook & Fannie Mastenbrook |
| 1927-1930 | John Gretnier & Mary Gretnier |
| 1932-1934 | George Daniels (1892-1934) & Eleanor Daniels |
| 1934 | General American Life Insurance |
| 1934-1944 | Winer Family James Fred Winer (1902-1937) & Hilda Hindert Winer Hilda Hindert Winer McKiver (remarried 1941) & George McKiver Birdie Hindert Rohrer Schwartz (sister) |
| 1944-1956 | Samuel E. Foster (1880-1949) & Sallie Ann Morgan Donald W. Morgan (son) |
| 1956-1980 | Reuter Family Mrs. Leath Bush Reuter (1890-1963) Paul William Reuter, Jr. (1925-1975) (son) Sara Ann Reuter |
| 1980- | Federico Almaraz |
| -1992 | Raul Martinez & Marta Fuertes |
| 1992-2001 | Enrique J. Carrazana |
| 2001-2006 | Flavio Branco & Camila Branco |
| 2006- 2012 | Carlos Sutton |
| 2012-2013 | U.S. Bank National Association |
| 2013-2014 | MAIA Investment, Inc. |
| 2014-2024 | Jorge Brillembourg & Ana Brillembourg |
| 2024-Present | Ethan Mansley Curtis |

Retaining Context

In general, construction in Coral Gables boomed until the combination of the devastating Hurricane of 1926 and Great Depression curtailed new development and ended Merrick's grand plans for completing his Mediterranean-inspired City. However, what he accomplished in the first phase of development of Coral Gables was staggering. By the close of 1928 Merrick had more than tripled his land holdings and issued over 4,100 building permits.

During the Depression Era of the 1930s, few single-family homes were built. With the implementation of New Deal and other incentives, the building industry finally experienced a small resurgence in the late 1930s and early 1940s; only to abruptly grind to a halt during the War years of 1942-1945 as materials, expertise, and manpower were diverted to the war effort. The Post-War prosperity that followed these lean years created an optimism which reigned through the 1960s and resulted in an unprecedented building boom. (Figures 9) During this time the building of single-family homes in Coral Gables followed national trends both in numbers and in style. It should be noted that when the construction of single-family homes resumed in Coral Gables after the Depression 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.



**Figures 9: Aerial Photograph – Siting and Context Over Time
1938 [left]; 1948 [right]**

439 Majorca Avenue indicated by red arrow

Note: the 'white' buildings are new construction

Courtesy of Aerial Photography: University of Florida

Coral Gables Section B was fully developed by the 1960s and has retained its context as a single-family residential neighborhood to present. The home at 439 Majorca Avenue is one of the few remaining Mission Revival style single-family residences built during the 1920s. It exemplifies Merrick's vision for Coral Gables and the founding architecture of the City. Hence, the home at 439 Majorca Avenue retains its historic integrity and context, as well as location.

SIGNIFICANCE ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION



Figures 10:
**439 Majorca Avenue
Over Time**
Top to Bottom:
1924
May 15, 1932
Miami News
c.1940
May 25, 1993
*Courtesy Miami-Dade
Property Appraiser*
2024
Courtesy Realtor.com

Executive Summary

Constructed in 1923 and recorded as Permit #31, the single-family residence at 439 Majorca Avenue is one of the earliest homes in Coral Gables. It exemplifies founder George Merrick's vision for his Mediterranean-inspired planned city which is now considered one of the first modern planned communities in the United States. In planning the new City, Merrick embraced the Garden City precept of offering housing for different income levels. He platted large portions of the City with smaller lots that would allow moderately-affordable homes to be built on single lots or for the bundling of lots for larger homes on the same street. He was determined that the moderately-affordable residences in Coral Gables would, though smaller, also have the same high-quality construction and features as other structures that shaped the new city in the early 1920s. These moderately-affordable homes are an important feature of early Coral Gables. 439 Majorca Avenue was one of these homes.

The residence is also significant as one of a handful of examples of the adaptation of the Spanish Colonial-inspired Mission Revival style architecture in Merrick's planned community. As described below, the simple rectilinear massing, the restrained ornamentation, and the adobe-inspired stucco texture of this home exemplifies the Mission Revival style. Its defining Mission parapets, Moorish-inspired pointed arch chimney, segmental arched entry porch, as well as the decorative canales are hallmark features of the style. (Figure 11) Other character-defining features of the home include the rough stone lintels and door surround, as well as the restrained decorative elements of the grouped curved barrel tile vents, the barrel tile roof of the pop-out side bay, the articulated masonry base, and the deeply recessed windows with projecting masonry sills.



Figure 11: Canale (foreground) & Moorish-inspired Chimney

439 Majorca Avenue is also a fine example of adapting residential design to the rigors of South Florida's climate while maintaining the integrity of the Mission Revival style. Its thick masonry walls were to keep the home cool, and the light-colored stuccoed exterior was to reflect the sun's heat. The window placement afforded much needed ventilation for the tropical environment and its construction over a crawl space provided ventilation and separation from the high-water table. Hence, the home portrays the environment in an era of history in Coral Gables and it embodies those distinguishing characteristics of its architectural style, period, and method of construction.

Assessment of the property from the public-right-of way, building documents, and historic photos indicate that over the past century there were few changes to the historic character-defining features of the residence. It remains representative of Merrick's vision for Coral Gables' modest homes. 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 determined that the property possesses sufficient integrity for designation. Thus, 439 Majorca Avenue significantly contributes to the historic fabric of the Coral Gables and is part of the collection of quality residences built during the land boom era that contributes to the City's sense of place over time.

Extant Exterior Description and Alteration Discussion

Note: All observations are from the public right-of-way and public resources.



The 400 block of Majorca Avenue is a tree-lined street spanning between LeJeune Road and Hernando Street in the Coral Gables Section “B.” It is comprised largely of one-story homes ranging in date from the 1920s to the present day. Built in 1923, the single-family residence at 439 Majorca Avenue was one of the first homes in this area.

The home sits on a well-landscaped 75’ x 128’ interior lot on the north side of the street. The property comprises a single-family residence with an attached open-air terrace along the front facade and a detached carport at the lot’s northwest corner. A paver driveway runs along the west side of the home. The house is approached by a paver walkway from the sidewalk to the front entry steps. (Figures 12)

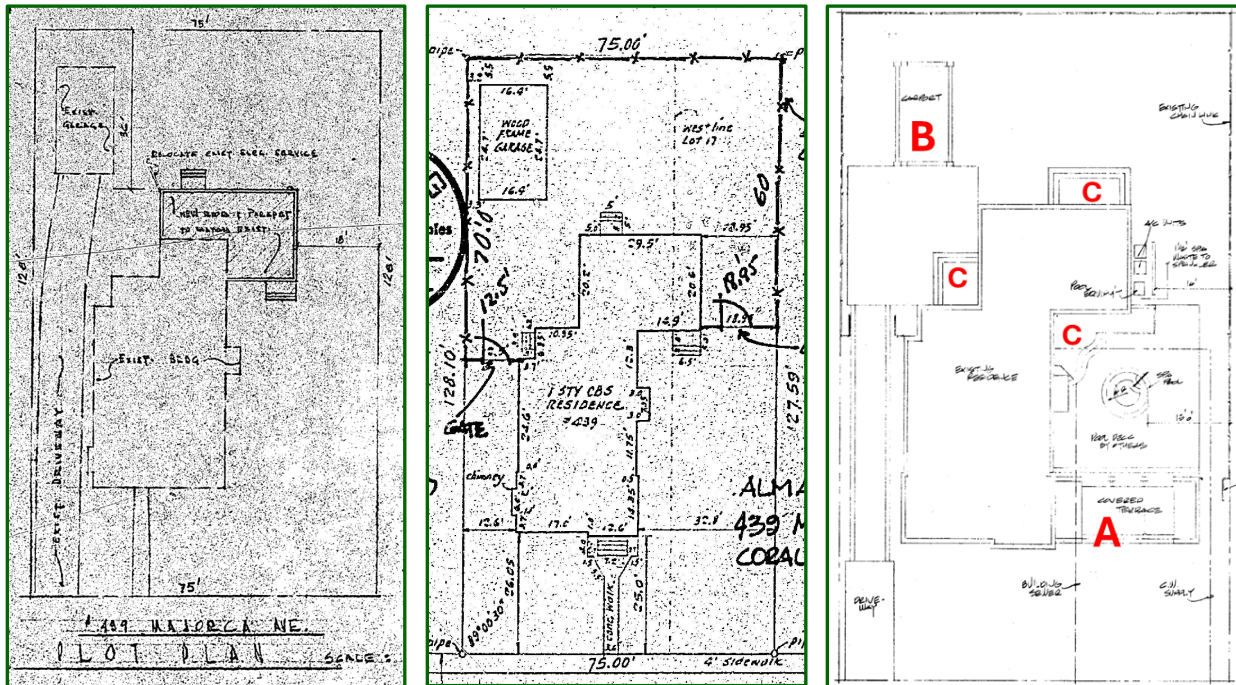


**Figures 12:
439 Majorca
Avenue**

**Front (South)
& Side (West)
Façades
2025
[top]**

**Aerial, 2024
Courtesy Miami-Dade
County Property
Appraiser
[bottom]**

There have been two additions to the home. The rear projecting bay at the northeast corner was likely the location of the sleeping porch. In 1960 an addition for a den and a Florida room was wrapped around the northeast corner – largely encapsulating the sleeping porch. (Figures 13; Attachment A) The addition is clearly delineated in the aerial photo in Figures 12. The second campaign occurred in 1993. An open-air terrace addition extended the front façade to the east and a carport was built near the northwest corner of the lot. It is not clear if the original garage (Figures 13; Attachment B) was demolished during this campaign. Also, new entry landings and stairs were added along the rear and side façades of the home. (Figures 13)



Figures 13: Plot Plans Over Time

1960 [left]

Note Original Footprint & Proposed Addition to NE Corner

1978 [center]

Footprint with Addition; Note Original Garage Labelled as Wood Frame

1994 [right]

Showing 1993 Improvements

A: Open-air Terrace; B: New Carport (original garage demolished);

C: New Landings & Stairs [right]



Figure 14: Front (South) Façade, 2025
 1923 Original Home with 1993 Open-air Terrace

The one-story house is built of masonry block units above a crawl space and is clad with adobe-inspired textured stucco. Rectangular in plan, the living space (approx. 1,874 SF) is under a flat roof with simple Mission style parapets. A slightly protruding articulated base runs along all façades of the home.

In typical Mission Revival style, the window openings are deep without any framing and have protruding sills. Historic photos show that the original windows were single-hung and casement in type. (Figures 6 & 10) They were changed to jalousies in 1967 and by 1994 to clearview casements. Centered above most of the original fenestration openings are decoratively arranged half-round barrel tile vents. Located near each corner are decorative canales. (Figures 11 & 15) Canales (spouts or scuppers) were common on flat-roof missions. The drain projected through the parapet, directing the water away from the face of the adobe structure. The use of barrel tile and the canales feature are distinctive Mission Revival elements.

The front façade of the original home is dominated by two Mission Revival style characteristics, the curved parapets and the arched openings. The front façade has two bays, the western living space bay, and the slightly protruding front entry porch bay. Each has a central large opening with a distinctive Mission Revival curved parapet above. A convex pointed parapet adorns the living space and the typical rounded parapet is above the front and side entry porch arched opening. The parapet wraps around the porch with battlement corners. Feature windows and doors on Mission Revival style homes are often arched. This house accentuates the openings with rough-faced cut stone. At the large living space window, the stone is arranged in a jack arch fashion. The stone was removed/covered at an unknown date however a change in stucco clearly marks its location. (Figures 15) At the original entry porch, the stone frames the shallow segmental arch of the front and east façade. These stone features are extant. (Figures 16) As seen in Figures 10, the entry porch was screened by 1940 and then enclosed for living space by 1993.



**Figures 15: 1924 Historic Photo [top]
Covered Stone Jack Arch [bottom]**

Figures 16:

**Extant Stone
Arch
Features
2025**

**Front (north)
[left]**

**Side (East)
[right]**



Rising near the southwest corner of the home on the west facade is a projecting and shouldered Moorish-inspired chimney. It demonstrates the broader influence of Islamic architecture on the Spanish and its incorporation at Spanish Missions. This influence is also seen in the Mission Revival style. The chimney is a hallmark feature of the home. Flanking it were small windows which were blocked up ca. 2013. (Figures 17, top) The west façade also has a Mission Revival parapet at its center.



The middle photo in Figures 17 shows the 1993 steps leading up to the bay that was originally the sleeping porch. The large, screened opening of the porch was expanded to accommodate French doors. The bay in the foreground of the bottom photo in Figures 17 is a 1960 addition. (Figures 13)



Figures 17

West side Façade

**From Southwest Corner
Looking North
[top]**

**Full Length of 1923 Historic
Home Looking South
[center]**

**Northwest Corner Looking
South with 1960 Addition in
Foreground
[bottom]**

Courtesy Realtor.com



At the southeast corner of the home a substantial open-air terrace was added in 1993. Its masonry elements are clad in stucco whose texture is distinctly different from the original 1923 home. Decorative canales were also installed. The terrace is easily distinguishable as an addition. (Figures 18)



Figures 18: 1993 Open-air Terrace, 2025: Southeast corner [left]; North side [right]

Behind the terrace, the east façade of the 1923 portion of the home largely retains its original configuration and detailing. Since vegetation obscures this façade an historic photo is provided for reference in Figures 19. A small pop-out bay occurs midway down the façade. It is under a front-facing gable roof clad in barrel tile. Barrel tile is a common feature of Mission Revival style. In this home it is used for decorative accent vents and for cladding this small roof. Another small, rounded Mission style parapet rises along the northern end of this façade. It mirrors the parapet on the west façade.



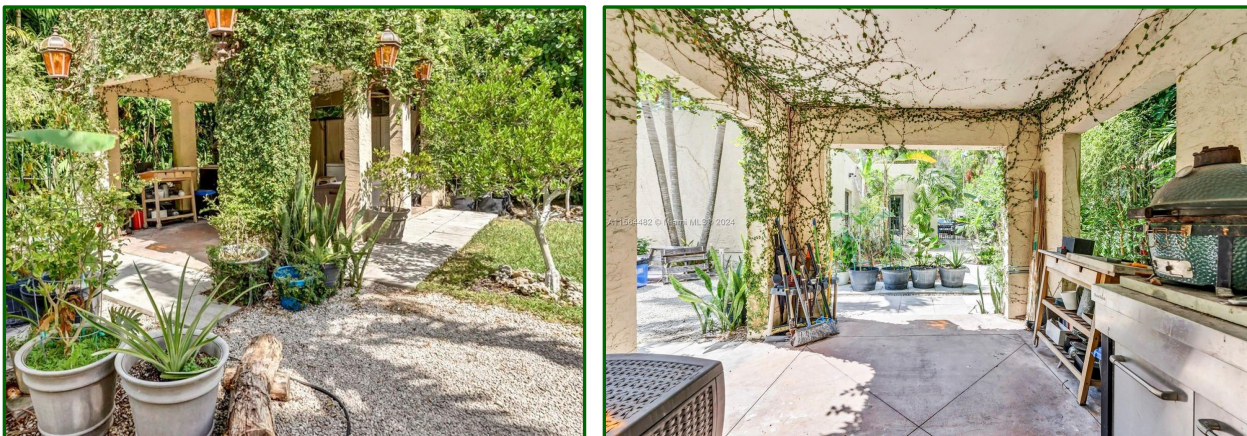
Figures 19:
Views of East Façade
Historic Photo, c.1940
[top]
Current, 2024
[bottom]
Courtesy Realtor.com

Forming an ‘L’ at the north end of the east façade is the 1960 rear addition. (Figures 13 & 20) This addition has simple parapets, and it is clad in stucco whose texture is visibly different from the adobe-inspired texture of the original 1923 home. There is no ornamentation on the addition and the windows have modern proportions. The 1960 addition is clearly differentiated from the original 1923 home and does not adversely impact its historic integrity.



Figures 20: 1960 Rear Addition, 2024: Northeast Corner [left]; North Façade [right]
Courtesy Realtor.com

A detached garage built contemporaneously with the 1923 home originally stood near the northwest corner of the home. Newspaper ads in the 1930s referred to it as a two-car garage. As seen in Figure 6, with its Mission Revival style parapet and adobe-inspired textured stucco it complemented the home. Property surveys indicate that it was a wood frame structure (Figures 13) It was demolished sometime after 1978 and before the 1993 alterations campaign. A new carport was erected slightly to east of the garage’s location. The 1993 carport is a simple flat roofed masonry structure clad in textured stucco which, along with its large rectangular openings, is like the contemporaneous open-air terrace. This auxiliary structure also reads clearly as a later addition to the property and does not detract from the historic integrity of the property.



Figures 21: 1993 Auxiliary Carport, 2024
View from Home Looking Northwest [left]; Interior Looking South [right]
Courtesy Realtor.com

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 eligibility for designation as a local historic landmark is defined by the Coral Gables Zoning Code as meeting **one (1)** (or more) of the criteria stipulated in Article 8, Section 8-103.

Constructed in 1923 in the Mission Revival style the property at 439 Majorca Avenue (legally described as Lot 16 & the West ½ of Lot 17, Block 1, Coral Gables Section “B,” according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 5, at Page 111, 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 located at 439 Majorca 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 **439 Majorca Avenue** (legally described as Lot 16 & West ½ of Lot 17, Block 1, Coral Gables Section “B”) based on its historical, cultural, and architectural significance.

Respectfully submitted,


Anna C. Pernas
Historic Preservation Officer

Selected References

- Archival Photograph Collection, City of Coral Gables, Historical Resources Department.
- Aerial Photography: Florida Collection. University of Florida George A. Smathers Libraries.
- Building Records, Building and Zoning Department, Microfilm Division, Coral Gables, Florida.
- Building Permit Record Books, City of Coral Gables, Historical Resources Department.
- McAlester, Virginia, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Alfred A. Knopf, 2015.
- Merrick, George, *Coral Gables Homes, Miami Florida*, c.1925.
Coral Gables Miami Riviera: Heart of the American Tropics, c.1925
- Miami-Dade County Property Appraisers Department Records
- Miami-Dade County Clerk, County Property Records
- Newspapers.com
- Florida Union Times
“Merrick’s Romantic Story of Great Coral Gables Development” June 28, 1925.
- Miami Herald
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“Merrick to Mastenbrook” December 23, 1923, p.31.
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- Miami News
“Coral Gables Marks 15 Years of Progress Since Founding” April 4, 1940, p.17.
“Everyone Is Talking About What We Are Doing at Coral Gables” February 10, 1922, p.23.
“Many Spanish Homes to be Constructed in the Next Few Months” April 30, 1923, p.16.
“Opening Auction Sales at Coral Gables—Miami’s Master Suburb” November 25, 1921, p.18-19.
“Paving the Way for ‘Castles in Spain’” December 7, 1921, p.19.
- New York Times
“Miami and the story of its remarkable growth: an interview with George E. Merrick” March 15, 1925.
- Parks, Arva Moore, *George Merrick’s Coral Gables “Where Your ‘Castles in Spain’ Are Made Real!”* Ponce Circle Development LLC with Centennial Press, Miami, Florida, 2006.
- Parks, Arva Moore, *George Merrick, Son of the South Wind: Visionary Creator of Coral Gables*, University Press of Florida, 2015.
- Polk, R. L. *R. L. Polk and Company's Miami City Directory*. Jacksonville, Florida: R. L. Polk and Co., various editions.
- Real Estate Records, Historical Resources Department, Coral Gables, Florida.
- United State Census Bureau. 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. Hallmark and character-defining features are the *visual and physical features that give a building its identity and distinctive character*.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties embody two important goals: 1) the preservation of historic materials and, 2) the preservation of a building's distinguishing character.

Every historic building is unique, with its own identity and its own distinctive character. Character refers to all those visual aspects and physical features that comprise the appearance of every historic building. 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: | 439 Majorca Avenue |
| Lot Description: | interior lot |
| Date of Construction: | 1923 |
| Use: | single-family residence |
| Style: | Mission Revival |
| Construction Material: | concrete block covered with textured stucco |
| Stories: | one-story |
| Roof Types: | flat, pent gable |

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.

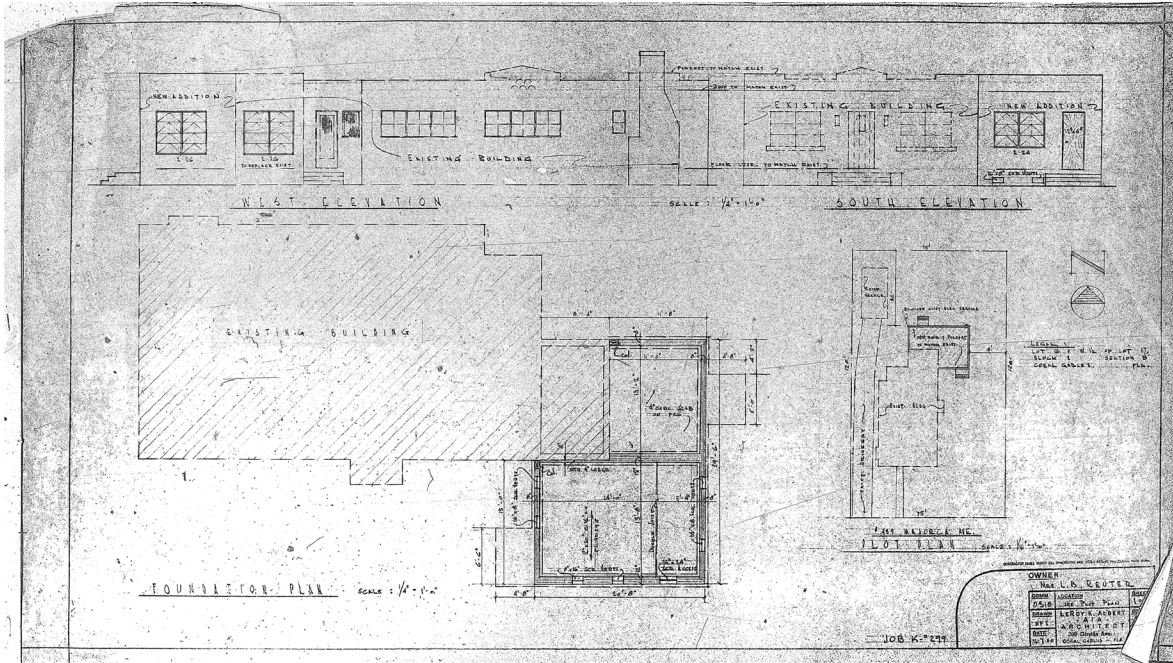
CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Style: Mission Revival

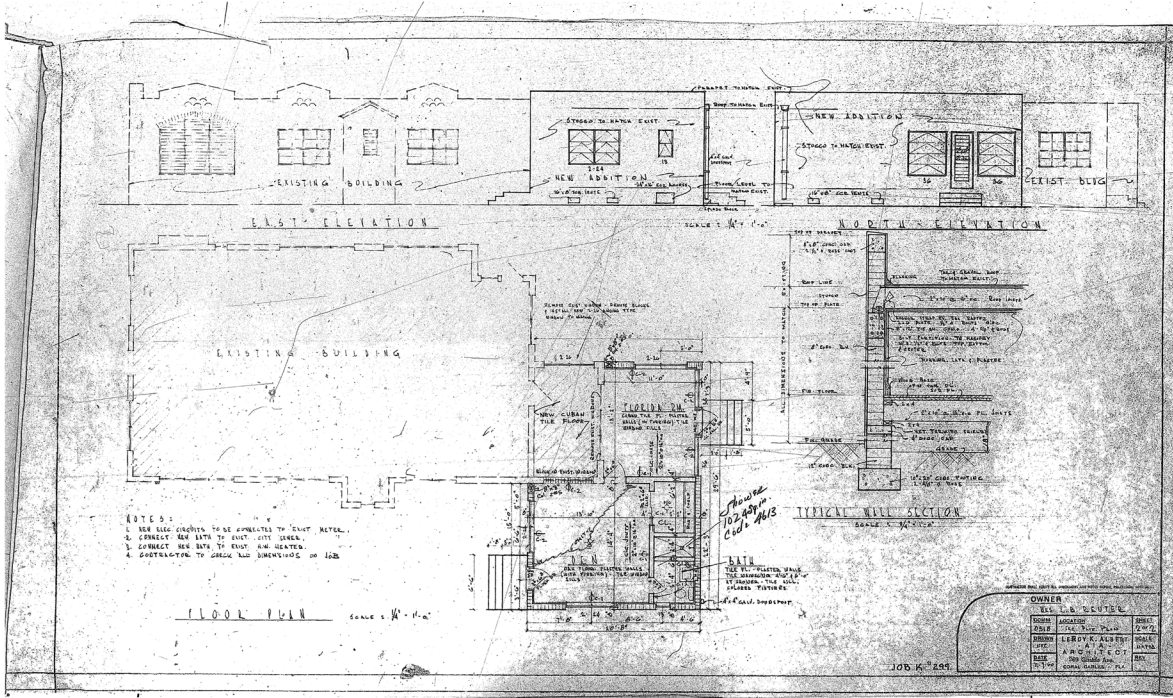


- ✓ simple rectilinear massing
- ✓ thick masonry walls
- ✓ adobe-inspired textured stuccoed exterior walls
- ✓ construction over a crawl space
- ✓ restrained ornamentation
- ✓ Mission parapet design
- ✓ Moorish-inspired pointed arch chimney
- ✓ segmental arched entry porch
- ✓ decorative canals
- ✓ rough stone lintels and door surround
- ✓ grouped barrel tile vents
- ✓ barrel tile roof of the pop-out side bay
- ✓ articulated smooth masonry base
- ✓ deeply recessed windows with projecting masonry sills

ATTACHMENT A: Permit # 16798, Architect: Leroy Albert 1960 Addition



16798



16798

