

**REPORT OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES
HISTORICAL RESOURCES & CULTURAL ARTS DEPARTMENT
TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
ON THE DESIGNATION OF
THE PROPERTY AT
1432 URBINO AVENUE
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA**



Historic Photo, c.1940



LHD 2024-012
November 20, 2024

**LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION:
1432 URBINO AVENUE, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA**

Application: Designation requested by Owner

*Historical Resources &
Cultural Arts*

2327 SALZEDO STREET
CORAL GABLES
FLORIDA 33134

☎ 305-460-5093
✉ hist@coralgables.com

Folio Number: 03-4119-007-2270
Legal Description: Lot 11, Block 75, Coral Gables Riviera Section Five, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 20, at Page 38, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida
Permit No. & Date: 2137; January 1926
Architect/Builder/Owner: United Builders Corporation
Present Owner: Gerald & Janet Kefler
Building Use, Type, Style: One-story SFR, Mediterranean Revival
Site Characteristics: The property is located on a 50' x 106' interior lot on the south side of Urbino Avenue between Alhambra Circle and San Amaro Drive.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Permitted in January 1926, the single-family residence at 1432 Urbino Avenue was amongst the earliest homes built in Coral Gables. Coral Gables 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 during the South Florida real estate boom of the 1920s. 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.

In the fall 1925, with the expansion of the City to the south, the new Riviera Section opened. In accordance with Garden City ideals, the Riviera Section Part Five was intentionally platted with smaller lots on some streets for moderately-affordable homes to support the adjacent newly-founded University of Miami, as well as working families. Merrick's plan embraced modest homes built with the same high-quality construction and Mediterranean Revival style features as other structures that shaped the new city in the early 1920s. They were to be built adjacent to, and in harmony with, other larger homes in Coral Gables. They were an important feature in the initial planning of Coral Gables, and many are recognized with the distinction of being a Coral Gables Cottage.

The property at 1432 Urbino Avenue retains its historic integrity as one of these modest 1920s Mediterranean Revival style home in keeping with Merrick's vision. It significantly contributes to the historic fabric of the City of Coral Gables, and it is part of the collection of quality buildings that serves as a visible reminder of the history and the cultural heritage of the City.

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 1432 Urbino 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, 1432 Urbino Avenue meets the following **three (3)** criteria:

Historical, Cultural significance

- 4. Exemplifies the historical, cultural, political, economic, or social trends of the community*

Architectural significance

- 1. Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by one (1) or more distinctive architectural style*
- 2. Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or method of construction*

HISTORIC & CULTURAL CONTEXT

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

- Initial Planning and Development/Florida Land Boom (Pre-1926 Hurricane),
- 1926 Hurricane/Great Depression Aftermath & New Deal/Wartime Activity (1927-1944),
- and Post World War II & Modern periods (1945-1963).

The single-family home at 1432 Urbino Avenue was permitted in January 1926. Built during the first historical period, it is amongst the early homes built in Coral Gables. As discussed below, the home exemplifies the Mediterranean ideals espoused by founder George Merrick.

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.

Advised by landscape architect Frank Button, artist Denman Fink, and architects H. George Fink, Walter De Garmo, Martin Hampton, H. H. Mundy, and Phineas Paist, Merrick transformed 3,000 acres of citrus plantation and native hammock. Merrick's team felt that Mediterranean-inspired architecture harmonized best with south Florida's climate and lifestyle. The architecture constructed during the community's first period of development combined elements commonly used in Spanish, Moorish, and Italian architecture, and has come to be known as the Mediterranean Revival style. During the 1920s structures and amenities were built almost exclusively in this style and it was a featured selling point in early promotional materials. The single-family residence at 1432 Urbino Avenue is an example of the Mediterranean Revival style and is indicative of the type of architecture that was the founding premise of Coral Gables.

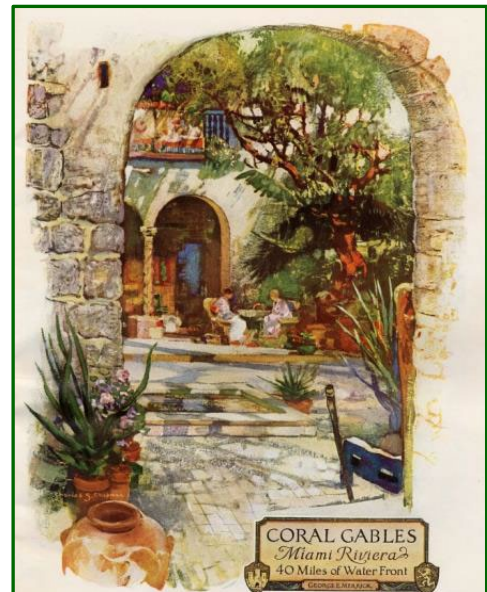


Figure 1: Ad, *House Beautiful*, 1925



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. (Figure 2) Laid over the grid of orthogonal streets (north-

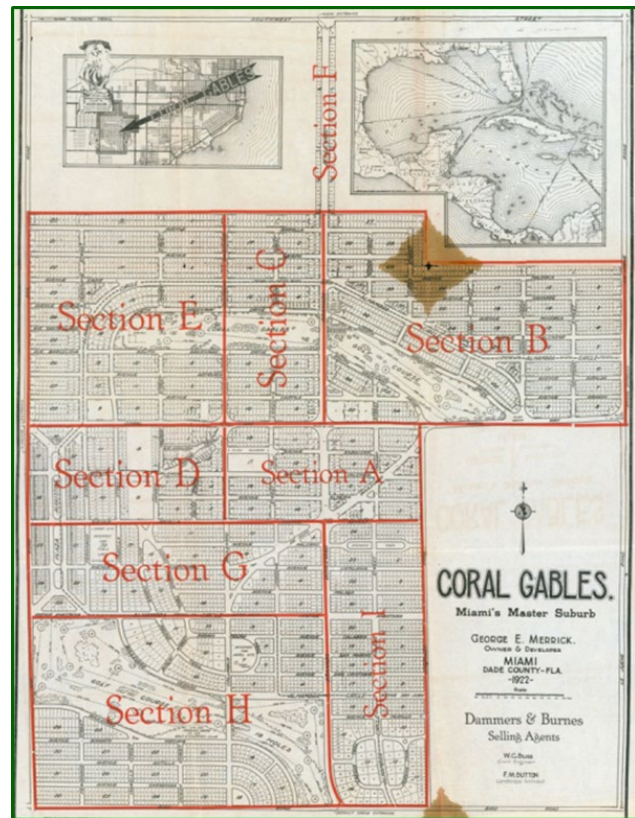
Figure 2: Streets in Coral Gables Under Construction, July 22, 1922

south) and avenues (east-west) are a series of diagonal and curved roadways. (Figure 3) The team carefully maximized the potential of the tropical environment. They laid out broad sweeping boulevards with grand vistas and tree-lined streets, and plazas with fountains that invited visitors to linger. They designed Mediterranean-inspired homes that conveyed a quality of centuries-old permanence with generous street setbacks for front yards and tropical vegetation. They employed restrictive zoning to control development and aesthetics. The city plan embraced the City Beautiful ideals of copious amounts of public green space and monumental public buildings. It also wholeheartedly incorporated the Garden City precepts of comprehensive planning with defined areas for different uses, a wealth of public facilities, as well as housing for varied income levels without sacrificing quality.

Merrick realized that automobile ownership was increasingly commonplace for the affluent and middle classes 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, as well as parkways with substantial swales for tree-planting that supplied internal access and scenic routes. (Figure 3) It also included majestic place-making features. The grid opened at strategic locations to include grand entrances, plazas, and fountains giving focus to major arteries and vistas, and providing visual interest for both the pedestrian and the motorist. Broad boulevards curved around planned features that included golf courses, monumental public and community buildings, and other amenities.

In July 1921 Coral Gables' infrastructure began in earnest. Miles of roads were laid with sidewalks, green space, and trees, along with 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.

At the end of November 1921, at a heavily advertised auction, the first lots went on sale. They lay south of Merrick's homes on Coral Way in the seventy-five acre tract of Section "A." (Figure 3) It offered both large and small lots to accommodate different income brackets. Records indicate that upwards of 5,000 people attended. Three hundred lots sold for more than a half-million dollars. Buoyed by the sales, in December 1921 Merrick pledged \$10,000 for a library, and another \$100,000 plus land to create the University of Miami in Coral Gables. Sections "B" through "E" were quickly put up for sale.



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

Riviera Section

Throughout the early 1920s Merrick continued to re-invest earnings in public amenities and land acquisition. By late 1924 he had expanded Coral Gables to the north and to the east. On February 22, 1925, Merrick announced the purchase of 6,000 acres to the southeast along Biscayne Bay. It included the Cocoplum Beach property from James and Charles Deering and the rights to land on Key Biscayne as well Soldier Key and the Ragged Keys. This vastly expanded Coral Gables to the south and provided something new – bayside property. (Figure 4) A Miami News article of May 3, 1925, announced that Merrick now called his development ‘Coral Gables: Miami Riviera with 40 Miles of Water Front.’

With the acquisition of the southern Biscayne Bay waterfront acreage, the footprint of Coral Gables read as two distinct sections – a landlocked northern section and a section running along the bay – connected by a narrow strip of land at their southeast and northwest corners. (Figures 5) Merrick envisioned the northern section as primarily residential and intended to develop the south section as substantially recreational. To demark the connection between these sections of the City, a new grand ‘symbolic gateway intersection’ was constructed—the Cocoplum Circle. When Merrick’s plans were released in June it was heralded as the “The Greatest of All Coral Gables Achievements.”



**Figure 4:
1926 Map**

**Figure 5: Riviera Section
 Merrick’s University of Miami
 Land Donation,
 Miami Tribune, June 3, 1925
 [left]**

**“The Greatest of All Coral
 Gables Achievements” Map,
 Miami News, June 5, 1925
 [right]**

**Miami University
 Edition**

M IAMI is to have a \$15,000,000 university, built upon a site of 160 acres in the Riviera section of Coral Gables and known as the University of Miami.

George E. Merrick, creator of Coral Gables, has donated the site, together with a gift of \$5,000,000.

All of Coral Gables Achievements

There are residential, industrial and business plots in the Riviera Section. No plots will be sold before Monday, June 15. Reservations from prospecting customers will be received at any time previous to the 15th, and these reservations will be filled in numerical order for selection. Make your reservation now at any Coral Gables office, or with any Coral Gables representative. Exceedingly favorable pre-development prices are effective now.

In March 1925 the founding charter for the University of Miami was signed with an anticipated opening several years away. In June 1925 Merrick jumpstarted that process with his donation of 160 acres in the new Riviera Section as well as a gift of \$5 million. \$1 million was earmarked for the first building to be an administration building that would bear the name of Merrick's father, Reverend Solomon Merrick. (Figures 5) The generous gift allowed the university to open in fall 1926 and it became the center of Merrick's plans for the area.

It was important to Merrick that the University be integrated into the community and not an isolated entity. A grand University Concourse was planned that crossed over Dixie Highway leading to University High School (now Ponce De Leon Middle School) and proceeded to a grand mall terminating at a yacht basin. Other proposed features included the Shriner's Golf Course, a Temple of the Mahi Shrine, The Riviera Sanitarium, a Coral Gables Railway Station, and electric street railways. (Figures 5 & 6) In summer 1925 Merrick began to extend the waterways and lay major roads. The residential area north of Cocoplum Circle was divided into Riviera Sections Parts 1 through 14 and officially platted in the fall of 1925.

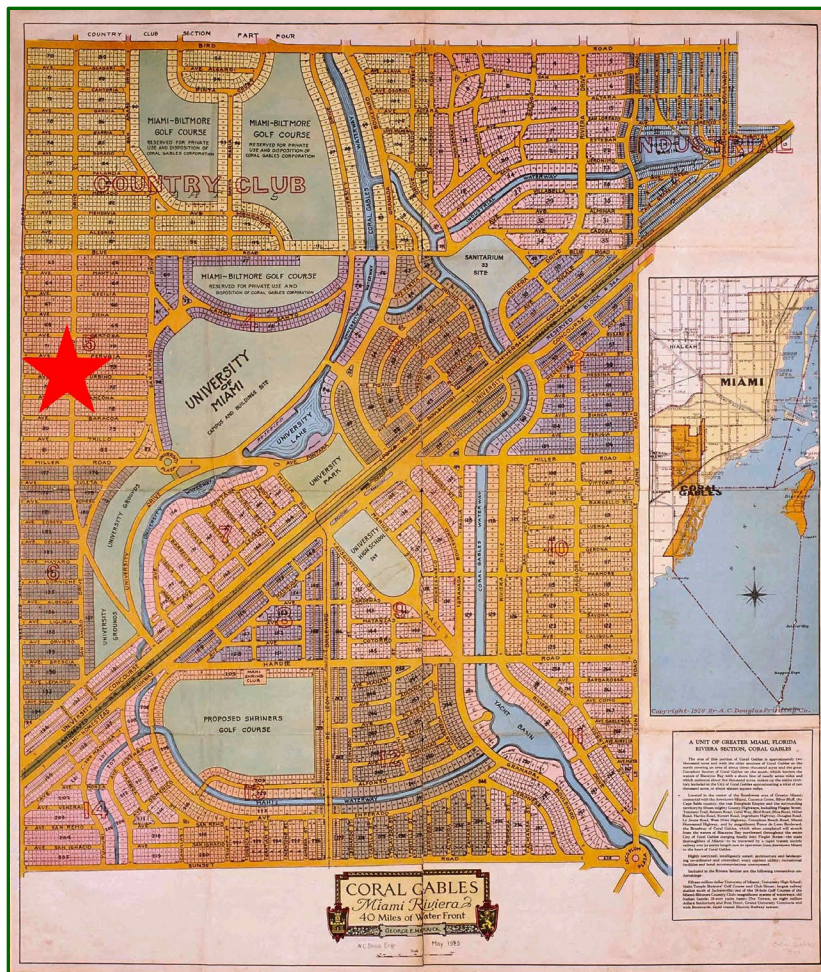


Figure 6:
1925 Map
Riviera Section
Parts 1-14

Red Star:
Part 5:
Location of 1432
Urbino Avenue

The launch of the Riviera Section significantly extended Coral Gables. Merrick decided to also expand his residential vision for the City. In August 1925, a full-page ad in the Miami Herald entitled "A Riviera House" explained his plans for this new section. The ad stated that as the early Mediterranean-inspired homes Coral Gables were heavily influenced by Spanish prototypes and evolved to include Moorish, Italian, and French precedents, likewise the Riviera Section would

evolve too. Merrick asserted that while Coral Gables would remain a primarily Mediterranean-inspired city, the new Riviera Section would have ‘contained zones’ where a new distinctive international style would be produced. It was later dubbed the “Village Project.” While only partially completed most of these Villages are now designated as Coral Gables Historic Districts.

In the remaining residential areas only Mediterranean-inspired homes were allowed. Merrick platted larger lots along the waterways but most of the Riviera Section was platted with smaller lots. The reasoning was two-fold. He wanted to support the needs of the University staff and to provide portions of the Riviera Section for moderately-priced homes affordable to his employees and other working families. Up to this point, most homes were designed and constructed by Merrick’s teams. As sales - and Merrick’s vision for his Mediterranean-inspired city - continued to grow, his workforce expanded exponentially. By 1925 Coral Gables, along with the region, was experiencing a housing shortage. Merrick responded to the dire housing need for his employees by building the San Sebastian Apartment Hotel which broke ground in August 1925. He also began recruiting leading investors, architects, and builders from across the country to work under the oversight of his Coral Gables Construction Company. He was looking, first and foremost, for professionals who shared his vision for Coral Gables and who could mobilize their own workforce and materials and supply this much needed housing. Portions of the Riviera Section were platted towards this end.

For the recreational area to the south of Cocoplum Circle Merrick had big plans. It included another large Biltmore-style hotel, a casino, shopping areas, a Sports Center, a Club House, boating basins, and extensive waterway recreational areas which he hoped would draw families to the Riviera Section. His first foray in developing the Biscayne Bay frontage was Tahiti Beach located to the east of Cocoplum Circle. Designed as an amenity to the Biltmore Hotel, gondoliers ferried guests down the Coral Gables Waterway to the beach. Brightly colored thatched roof bathing huts dotted the shoreline. (Figure 7) It opened in February 1926 and was destroyed by the hurricane in September.



Figure 7: Biltmore Hotel Gondoliers and Tahiti Beach, February 1926

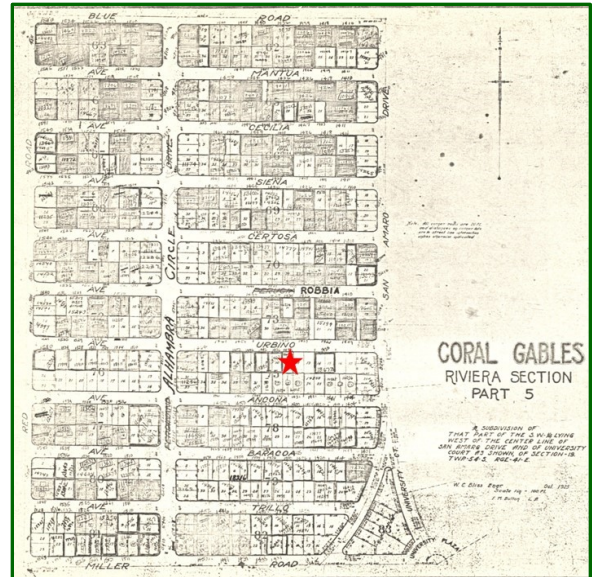
Much of what was promised for the Riviera Section was never realized due to numerous economic factors, material shortages, and the 1926 hurricane. By the late 1920s work in the area below Cocoplum Circle had halted and it remained largely undeveloped pineland and mangroves for several decades. During the 1950s, using the network of roads established by Merrick, it was developed as a single-family residential area. In the section above Cocoplum Circle, Riviera Section Parts 1-14, building proceeded quickly until the September hurricane. Afterwards construction was sparse. Many of the larger projects seen in Figure 6 were rescinded and the area was later replatted to solely residential.

Riviera Section Part 5 & 1432 Urbino Avenue



Figure 8: 1432 Urbino Avenue, c.1940

1432 Urbino Avenue was constructed in Riviera Section Part 5. (Figure 9) Located directly west of the University of Miami (Figure 6) The plat for Part 5 was approved by the County in November 1925 as a single-family neighborhood. It was one of the Riviera sections Merrick envisioned for moderately-priced homes to support the University and to help alleviate the area's housing shortage.



**Figure 9: Riviera Section Part 5:
Plat Map, October 1925
Red Star: 1432 Urbino Avenue**

In January 1926 Permit #2137 was issued for the home to the United Builders Corporation (UBC) as the owner, builder, and architect. These plans have not been located to date. The c.1940 historic photo in Figure 8 is the earliest known image of the home. Miami newspapers list UBC as a Coral Gables company but no information about it, or any other projects were found. On March 24, 1926, the Miami Herald reported the sale of the property from the Coral Gables Corporation to UBC. At this time, when other firms were first building in Coral Gables, the work was still being overseen by Merrick's corporation. The property transfers usually occurred at the end of the building phase when Merrick's team was satisfied with the design and construction.

The UBC owned it until 1929 when the property was sold in foreclosure. Polk's City Directories indicate that the home was rented by Warren and Mary Bennett for several years in the late 1920s. Warren was listed as the General Superintendent of the Coral Gables Utility Corporation. Thus, the property fulfilled Merrick's plans for this area. It was a moderately-affordable home in the Mediterranean Revival style that provided much-needed housing for the family of a City's employee.

1432 Urbino Avenue was constructed in the months between the platting of Part Five and the September hurricane. After the hurricane, construction in Coral Gables drastically slowed. The University opened as scheduled in Fall 1926, but classes were held in downtown Coral Gables and, for a variety of reasons, campus construction ceased. As a result, the residential areas adjacent to campus saw little new construction. As seen in Figure 10, 1432 Urbino Avenue was one of only a handful of homes built in Part Five in the early years of the City under Merrick's plan.



**Figure 10: Riviera Section
Part 5 Aerial Photo, 1938
Red Arrow: 1432 Urbino Ave**

Coral Gables Cottage

Merrick strongly believed in the Garden City concept. In general, the movement strove to provide the working-class with alternatives to farms or "crowded, unhealthy cities." Merrick purposefully laid out large portions of Coral Gables with 25' and 50' lots to accommodate lot bundling for larger homes and singular lots for modest homes. In 1923, Merrick had his architects design finely detailed modest homes on some streets north of the Granada Golf Course to demonstrate that, although smaller, moderately-priced homes in Coral Gables had the same quality of construction and aesthetic as the larger homes. These homes would:

"embody new and radical departures from the usual type of small house designing, with compactness, beauty and comfort that will appeal to smaller families...each home will be a different finely-detailed design."

--George Merrick, September 24, 1923, Miami Herald

These homes served as inspiration for moderately-priced home construction in Coral Gables. It was important to Merrick that, although he sought to attract wealthy families to move to or winter in tropical and luxurious Coral Gables, he also wanted his workforce, retirees, and middle-class families to be able live and enjoy the community too. He was very invested in ensuring the modest homes be just as attractive as the larger homes.

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 some 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.

Many of these smaller homes are now classified as Coral Gables Cottages.

The one-story home at 1432 Urbino Avenue was one of these moderately-priced Mediterranean Revival style homes. It was built in the Riviera Section Part Five which Merrick intended to be an area populated by working- and middle-class families. The initial occupant of the home was a member of the City's workforce and his family.

Coral Gables Cottage Ordinance

In accordance with Garden City and City Beautiful tenets, Merrick planned Coral Gables to provide housing and amenities for all income levels. The initial homes built were larger to attract investors. In 1923, with the platting of the Granada Section, Merrick shifted to demonstrate his vision for modest homes. To showcase it, Merrick commissioned architects to design fifty-eight such homes. Their distribution was: eight on Milan Avenue, twelve on Ferdinand Street, eighteen on Genoa Street, six on Capri Street, and fourteen on Pizarro Avenue. These initial homes were well-received and other architects followed suit. By the mid-1920s modest homes, 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.

In 1993, the City of Coral Gables took official action to aid in the recognition and preservation of these significant 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."* An amendment to the Zoning Code enacted special incentives for cottage owners whose properties met specific requirements. The current Coral Gables Cottage Regulations are found in Article 8, Section 8-200 of the Coral Gables Zoning Code. It defines the Coral Gables Cottage as a detached, single-family dwelling which is distinguished by its movement in plan, projection and recessions, asymmetrical arrangement of entrances, frequently employed surface ornament for embellishment, and at least twelve of nineteen specific Mediterranean Revival style features which are original to the cottage. A cottage property must be one-story in height, zoned SFR, constructed prior to 1940, have a lot frontage no greater than sixty-five feet, and be designated as a local historic landmark. The nineteen features are:

1. Coral rock or stucco finish
2. Combination roof type (e.g., gable, shed, hip or flat roof)
3. Front porch
4. Projecting bay on front elevation
5. Masonry arches or arches springing from columns on front elevation
6. Decorative doorway surrounds
7. Decorative and/or predominant chimney
8. Detached garage to the rear of the property
9. Similar decorative features, parapet and/or roof slope on main house and detached garage
10. Porte-cochere or carport
11. Decorative wing walls
12. Barrel tile roof (two-piece, cap-n-pan)
13. Varied height between projecting and recessed portions of the front elevation
14. Vents grouped as decorative accents
15. Cast ornament and/or tile applied to front elevation
16. Built-in niches and/or planters
17. First floor above crawl space
18. Casement or sash windows
19. Loggias/arcade

1432 Urbino Avenue was designed in the cottage typology. At the owner's request, and with the return of original features, it could qualify for classification as a Coral Gables Cottage and be eligible for the associated Zoning incentives.

Current Context

In general, construction in the City of Coral Gables boomed until the combination of the devastating Hurricane of 1926 and the Great Depression curtailed new development and ended Merrick's grand plans. During the Depression Era of the 1930s few single-family homes were built. With the implementation of the New Deal and other incentives, the building industry experienced a small resurgence in the late 1930s and early 1940s, only to abruptly grind to a halt during the War years. Homes built during this time ushered in an architectural shift. They began to follow national trends and departed from the ornamented and picturesque Mediterranean Revival style that had dominated the City's landscape since its inception. 1432 Urbino Avenue remains as one of the few Mediterranean Revival style homes in the area.

The Post-War prosperity that followed these lean years created an optimism which reigned through the 1950s and 1960s and resulted in an unprecedented building boom. During this time the building of single-family homes in the City of Coral Gables continued to follow national trends both in numbers and in style. As illustrated in Figures 11, the Riviera Section Part Five saw marked construction of single-family homes in the 1950s. This area was platted by Merrick as a single-family neighborhood, and remains so to date. (Figures 13) Thus, the home at 1432 Urbino Avenue retains its historic context.



Figures 11:
1432 Urbino Avenue
red arrow

Siting and Context

Aerial Photographs
Riviera Section Part Five

Top:
1948 [left]
1951 [right]

Bottom:
1954 [left]
1957 [right]

Courtesy
University of Florida

SIGNIFICANCE ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION

Photographic Documentation Over Time



Figures 12: Front (North) Façade Over Time
c.1940s [top]
November 12, 1976 [center] *Courtesy Miami-Dade Property Appraiser*
2024 [bottom]

Executive Summary

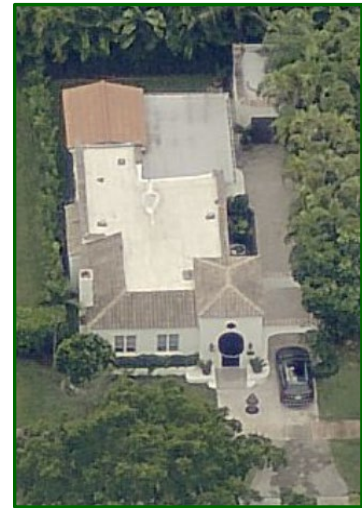
Permitted in January 1926 the home at 1432 Urbino Avenue is amongst the earliest homes built in the City. Coral Gables was founded during the South Florida real estate boom of the 1920s. Founder George Merrick drew from the Garden City and City Beautiful movements of the 19th and early 20th centuries to create his vision for a fully-conceived and cohesively-designed Mediterranean-inspired city. It is now considered one of the first modern planned communities in the United States. 1432 Urbino Avenue was built in the first phase of development in the City under Merrick's plan. It is one of the initial homes in Part Five in the Riviera Section along western border of the University of Miami campus. In accordance with Garden City precepts that guided Merrick, the new Riviera Section was intentionally platted with smaller lots on some streets for modest homes. These smaller homes were built with the same high-quality construction and Mediterranean Revival style features as other structures that shaped the new city in the early 1920s. They are recognized as an important feature in the initial planning of Coral Gables and 1432 Urbino Avenue is a noteworthy example.

Merrick and his original design team felt that Mediterranean architecture harmonized best with south Florida's climate and lifestyle. During the 1920s, Merrick's team ensured that Coral Gables conformed to Mediterranean ideals. 1432 Avenue honors their vision for adapting residential design to the rigors of the climate while keeping the integrity of the Mediterranean Revival style. It features thick cement masonry block walls which keep the home cool, textured stuccoed exterior walls which reflect the sun's heat. It was built over a crawl space for added ventilation and separation from the high-water table. Varied windows supplied much needed ventilation and light in the tropical environment and a porte cochere provided a covered entry to the home. Originally the home also had an entry and sleeping porch, both are now enclosed as living space.

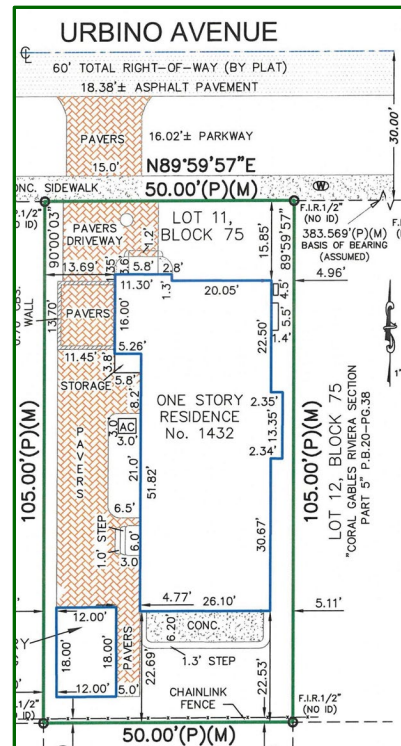
1432 Urbino Avenue was designed as a moderately affordable home with a detached garage in the Mediterranean Revival style. Some of the character-defining features of the style include, but are not limited, to the following. It has rectilinear massing arranged with projecting and recessed planes. The roofs are of varying heights and types. The flat roof has parapets with barrel tile coping. The pitched roofs are shallow, clad in barrel tile and the eaves are coved. The protruding front entry tower bay and the arched porte cochere are common features of the style. Other style characteristics of the home are the textured stucco, shouldered chimney, circular window with a masonry frame, arched front entry door, built-in planters, decoratively-grouped round vents, as well as recessed casement windows with projecting sills, and a detached garage with matching features. These features are illustrated and discussed below.

Staff visually assessed the property and examined permit documents, building records, and historic photographs (Figures 12) and determined that the property at 1432 Urbino Avenue possesses sufficient integrity for designation. As per, Article 8, Section 8-103 of the Coral Gables Zoning Code--*Criteria for designation of historic landmarks or historic districts*: "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." Hence, it is deemed that this property significantly contributes to the historic fabric of the Coral Gables and is part of the collection of quality residences that contributes to the City's sense of place over time.

Extant Exterior Description & Alteration Discussion



Figures 13: 1432 Urbino Avenue, Current Context, Looking South, 2024
Courtesy Miami-Dade Property Appraiser



Figures 14: Property at 1432 Urbino Avenue, 2024
Front of Home with Garage in Background, 2024 [left]
Boundary Survey [right] *Courtesy M.E. Land Surveying, LLC*

1432 Urbino Avenue is an approximately 50' x 105' interior lot on the south side of the street. It contains a one-story, single-family residence with a porte cochere that spans nearly the width of the lot. At the southwest corner of the lot is an accessory one-car garage. (Figures 13 & 14)

The home is rectangular in plan and massing, built of concrete block units, and clad with textured stucco. The living space is primarily under a flat roof with parapets. The low-pitched roofs were originally clad in two-piece barrel tile. The current S-tile was installed in 2022. The fenestration of the home varies in size and configuration. The windows are recessed with protruding sills. The original windows were wooden casements with high-profile muntins. Awning windows replaced them in 1982, and the current hurricane-impact casement windows were installed in 2022. Decoratively-grouped round vents are found above the windows on various facades.

There were two additions to the rear of the house. Both are easily distinguishable from the original home. (Figures 15 & 24) In May 1953, the Hutchinsons, who were long-term owners of the home (1934-1970) filed Permit #11696 to add a Florida room. Marked as “A” in Figure 15, it is at the southwest corner adjacent to the protruding sleeping porch bay. (Figures 24 & 26) The plans by architect W. R. Shiner have not been located to date. The second addition, denoted by “B” in Figure 15, was a master bedroom. Permitted in 2020 by architect Kirk Weng, it converted the original sleeping porch to a master bath and added the gabled roof bedroom. (Figures 26)

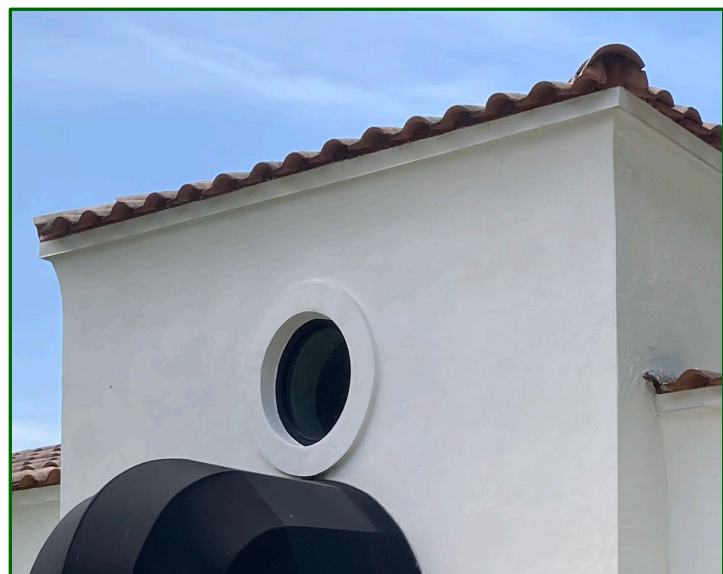


Figure 15: Additions
A: 1953 Florida Room
B: 2022: Master Bedroom



Figure 16: Front (North) Façade, 2024

The front façade has three distinct sections. The entry tower flanked by the porte cochere to the west and the living space to the east. The protruding front entry bay is a one-and-a-half story rectangular tower. Tower features are common in Mediterranean Revival architecture. It is under a hipped roof clad in barrel tile. A simple cove cornice provides a roof transition. Centered in the upper story is circular window with a protruding masonry frame.



**Figure 17: Entry Tower:
Cove Cornice & Circular Window, 2024**

The arched entry is now the front door of the home. As was typical, the archway originally led to a covered front porch. The cracked tile floor, common to 1920s porches in Coral Gables is extant. (Figure 18) As seen in Figures 12, by 1976 the front door to the home had moved to this opening and the arch was squared off. With the 2020 addition and alterations, the archway was reinstated on the exterior. Added to it was a protruding masonry surround matching the circular window above it. Other 2020 alterations to the entry tower include filling and slightly raising the curbed built-in planter flanking the steps and restuccoing them. (Figures 16 & 19) It also appears that the stucco texture of the tower was slightly smoothed out.



Figure 18: Front Entry Porch Original Floor, 2024
Courtesy Realtor.com



Figures 19: Front Entryway Over Time
Left to Right: c.1940; 1976; 2019; 2024

The remainder of the home is one-story and, except for the 2020 addition, under a flat roof. However, the street presence is of a pitched roof. A large pent eave parapet that extends across the front façade from the tower and wraps around the northeast corner gives this impression. (Figures 15 & 26) Running along the front of this façade is a built-in planter with a spiral end. (Figure 20) It is visible in the c.1940 historic photo (Figures 12) which currently is the earliest documentation of the home. However, it is unlikely that spiral end is original. It is not a Mediterranean Revival style feature. Planters of this design became common in the 1930s as Modernistic



Figure 20: Built-in Spiral Planter, 2021

styles took hold in the area. It likely dates to this era. Above the planter on the front façade are two double casement windows. As seen in the c.1940s historic photo (Figure 12) and the recent 2019 photo (Figure 21), for many decades there was slump brick feature below them. In 2022 it was removed or smoothed over and protruding sills installed. Again, like the planter, slump brick was a feature that gained popularity in the 1930s and may not have been original. It is likely that both features were added in the 1930s to ‘modernize’ the home. Regardless, they are considered part of the historic fabric and the story of the home.



Figure 21: Slump Brick Below Windows, 2019

At the west end of the façade is a porte cochere comprised of a series of shallow arched openings. (Figures 20 & 22). Porte Cocheres of this type were a common feature in Coral Gables 1920s Mediterranean Revival style homes. Its original barrel tile clad hipped roof was removed during the 2020-22 alteration campaign. Plans to restore the roof structure are underway.



Figures 22: Porte Cochere Looking North, 2024

The west façade has three distinct sections. The tower whose original entry porch was accessed through the porte cochere. (Figures 18 & 22). It stands proud of the original recessed, flat-roof living space behind it. Tucked into the corner of the recess is a small, shed roof storage unit clad in barrel tile. The parapets of the original flat roofed portion of the home are edged with barrel tile. Centered above the windows on the east and west facades of this original section are three round vents decoratively-arranged in a line. (Figures 23) Behind this original section is the 1953 Florida room addition. (Figure 15) This addition also flat-roofed with wide eave overhangs and exposed carved rafter tails. (Figures 23 & 24)



Figures 23:
West Façade, 2024
Entry Tower,
Looking North
[top]
Original Living Portion,
Looking South
[bottom left]
1953 Florida Room Addition,
Looking South
[bottom right]



The 1953 Florida room addition and the 2020 gabled-roof bedroom addition now comprise the rear of the home. (Figures 15 & 24) The 2019 photo in Figure 24 provides a glimpse of the original protruding sleeping porch bay as well as a view of the Florida room prior to the 2020 alterations and addition.



Figures 24: Rear Façade
1953 Florida Room Addition in Foreground & Original Sleeping Porch in Background, 2019 [left]
Current View, 1953 Florida Room & 2020 Bedroom Addition, 2024 [right]

Courtesy Realtor.com

The east side façade includes the original flat-roofed home and the gable-roofed 2020 bedroom addition at the southeast corner. At the center of the original façade is a shallow protruding bay under a barrel tiled shed roof. Since vegetation currently obscures the façade, 2019 photos with clear views of the façade are provided for reference in Figures 26. Note that they pre-date the addition. As mentioned, wrapping the northeast corner is the pent eave parapet clad in barrel tile. Protruding through the parapet is a semi-engaged double-shouldered chimney. The shoulders are clad in barrel tile. (Figure 25) The remaining parapets have barrel tile edging.

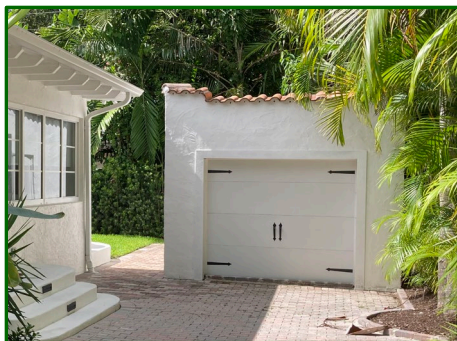


Figure 25: Shouldered Chimney, Looking North, 2024



Figures 26: East Façade: 2019 [top]; 2024 [bottom] *Courtesy Miami-Dade Property Appraiser*

At the property's southwest corner is the original detached one-car garage. (Figures 14 & 27) Contemporaneous to the home, the garage is in the Mediterranean Revival style. It is a flat roof structure with parapets edged in barrel tile. On the front (north) façade the parapet is notched at its center over the vehicular opening. Two vertical plank carriage doors with strap hinges fill the opening. The textured stucco matches the stucco of the original home.



**Figures 27:
Detached
Garage, 2024
Front (North)
Façade [left]
Side (East)
Façade [right]**

Owners

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

The home was built by owner/builder United Builders Corporation (UBC) and, as discussed above, little has been found regarding them. UBC rented the property to Warren and Mary Bennett. Warren was the General Superintendent of the Coral Gables Utility Corporation. Thus, this moderately-affordable home in the Mediterranean Revival style provided much-needed housing for the family of one of the City's employees --which was one of Merrick's intentions in platting Part Five of the new Riviera Section. The UBC lost the property to foreclosure in 1929, and it appears to have passed through a few hands as an investment property - including N.B.T. Roney of the Miami Beach Roney Plaza Hotel.

In 1934 the home was purchased by its first owner-occupants, Lattie and Eddie Hutchinson. (Figures 28) They lived in the home for the next thirty-six years. They were the first of two long-term owners of the home. Lattie was also employee of the City.

Lattie Hutchinson joined the Coral Gables workforce in 1923 as a mechanic. One of his first assignments was to travel to Cincinnati to inspect and bring back new buses to be used to collect and tour potential buyers to and around the development. (Figures 28) In 1934, after he suffered a work-related accident that severely damaged his hand, Lattie became a bus driver until he retired in 1959. At the 1951 dedication of the new bus terminal on Salzedo Street, Hutchinson was amongst eight employees recognized for outstanding and long-term service to the City. (Figures 28)



**Figures 28:
Lattie & Eddie Hutchinson
Owners 1934-1970
Miami Herald,
February 9, 1948
[top]**

**Coral Gables Bus Fleet,
February 1924
[center]**

**Bus Terminal Dedication,
Employees Honored,
Miami Herald,
November 25, 1951
[bottom]**



SNIP WENT THE DEDICATION RIBBON Saturday as Mayor Dave Hendrick, Jr., (with scissors) opened officially the new Coral Gables bus terminal. Former Mayor Thomas Mayes peers over his shoulder. At right are seven of the eight employees honored at the dedication. They are: Drivers H. T. Stuart, Thomas C. Hall, L. A. Hutchinson, Lee Davis, H. M. Duckett, Harry Lord and Chester Smith, superintendent of transportation. Missing was George Warner.

In 1970 the Hutchinsons sold the property to George and Nancy Giampetro. George was the Director of Admission for the University of Miami. When he retired in 1985, the Giampetro family opened Whip-N-Dip. The Giampetros owned the home for three years. It passed through several other short-term owners until John J. Weiss purchased the property in 1986. Weiss was the second long-term owner of the property holding it for thirty-four years. The current owners, Gerald and Janet Kelfer purchased the home in 2024.

Chronological List of Owners & Tenants:

1925-1929 United Builders Corporation – lost in foreclosure
1927-1928 Warren M. Bennett & Mary Bennett
1929-1932 *unknown*
1931-1932 Earle B. Bowser & Mary L. Bowser
1932-1934 N. B. T. Roney
1934-1970 Lattie A. Hutchinson & Eddie Hutchinson
1970-1973 George F. Giampetro & Nancy E. Giampetro
1973-1975 Edward M. Toby & Brenda Toby
1975-1984 Richard A. Horst & Bonnie L. Horst
1984-1986 Terence G. Murphy & Stephanie G. Murphy
1986-2020 John J. Weiss
2020-2024 Rafael A. Barrial & Amanda B. Barrial
2024-Present Gerald D. Kelfer & Janet Kelfer

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The purpose of historic designation within the City of Coral Gables is defined in Article 3, 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 1926, the property at 1432 Urbino Avenue (legally described as Lot 11, Block 75, Coral Gables Riviera Section Part Five, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 20, at Page 38, 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:

Historical, Cultural significance

3. *Exemplifies the historical, cultural, political, economic or social trends of the community*

Architectural significance

1. *Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by one (1) or more distinctive architectural style*
2. *Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or method of construction*

Staff finds the following:

The property located at **1432 Urbino Avenue** is significant to the City of Coral Gables history based on:

HISTORICAL, CULTURAL & ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Therefore, Staff recommends the following:

A motion to **APPROVE** the Local Historic Designation of the property at **1432 Urbino Avenue** (legally described as Lot 11, Block 75, Coral Gables Riviera Section Part Five) based on its historical, cultural and architectural significance.

Respectfully submitted,



Anna Pernas, Historic Preservation Officer

Selected References

- Archival Photographs, City of Coral Gables, Historical Resources Department.
- Aerial Photography: Florida Collection. University of Florida George A. Smathers Libraries.
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- Building Permits 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.
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Coral Gables Miami's Master Suburb, 1923.
- Miami-Dade County Property Appraisers Department Records
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- Newspapers.com
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 "\$75,000,000 Home Building Project Gets Under Way at Coral Gables" December 13, 1925, p.90.
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 "Coral Gables Corporation to United Builders, Ins." March 24, 1926, p.29.
 "Drivers Hold Spotlight in Bus Ceremony" November 25, 1951, p.25.
 "George Giampetro, February 12, 1930-July 6, 2021" obituary, September 12, 2021, p.A14.
 "L. A. Hutchinson, Driver for Gables" obituary, February 6, 1973, p.81.
 "Novel Architecture Being Introduced at Coral Gables" October 4, 1925, p.109.
 "Rooney to Hutchinson" May 8, 1934, p.7.
 "They all Teamed Up for Ice Cream: Family launches story in Coral Gables" October 21, 2004, p.102.
 "They'll Stick to Flying Despite Narrow Escape from Crash into Ocean" February 9, 1948, p.2.
 "Two Fingers Lost as Cap Explodes" October 3, 1934, p.8.
- Miami News
 "\$12,500 House by United Builder's Corp" January 29, 1926, p.38.
 "1932 Tax Rolls" July 23, 1932, p.31.
 "Notice of General Master's Sale" June 29, 1929, p.13.
- 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.
- Real Estate Records for 1432 Urbino Avenue, Coral Gables Historical Resources Department.
- United States Census Records.

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.

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:	1432 Urbino Avenue
Lot Description:	interior lot
Date of Construction:	1926
Use:	single-family residence
Style:	Mediterranean Revival
Construction Material:	concrete block covered with textured stucco
Stories:	one-story SFR; one-story auxiliary structure
Roof Types and Materials:	flat, gable, hipped, pent eave; barrel tile
Other:	possible Coral Gables Cottage

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

Property: 1432 Urbino Avenue
Style: Mediterranean Revival



- ✓ thick cement masonry block walls clad in textured stucco
- ✓ rectilinear massing and floor plan with projecting and recessed bay
- ✓ flat roof has parapets with barrel tile edging
- ✓ pent eave roof parapet clad in barrel tile
- ✓ shallow pitched roofs clad in barrel tile
- ✓ façade walls covered in the eaves.
- ✓ protruding front entry tower bay
- ✓ porte cochere with arched openings
- ✓ shouldered chimney
- ✓ circular window with masonry frame
- ✓ arched front entry door
- ✓ built-in planters
- ✓ decoratively-grouped round vents
- ✓ recessed casement windows with projecting sills
- ✓ detached garage with matching features.