

October 21, 2020

Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Board,

In reference to agenda item: 20-1756 Historical Significance Determination of 649 Palmarito Court

UNDER THE CITY'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE, the property may be considered significant if it can be associated with *persons or events which have made an impact on our community*, or if the property is deemed to possess architectural distinction.

I wish to express my support in granting historical significance of 649 Palmarito Court. As presented in the research article below, its original owners made an impact in our community with passion and patriotism and their choice of architectural style reflected their lifestyle. Their home stands today as one of the earliest Colonial Revival homes built in Coral Gables designed by William Shanklin, an architect whose other residences have garnered historical status in Coral Gables.

Please preserve our heritage.

Thank you.

Dr. Karelia Martinez Carbonell
532 Altara Avenue, Coral Gables

From the HPACG EBLAST dated October 20 2020

SAVE "TARA"

The Architecture of 649 Palmarito Court

The home is a fine example of the Colonial Revival style in Coral Gables. Also known as Neoclassical, or "Southern Colonial," one is drawn to love and appreciate the historical, cultural, and architectural value of 649 Palmarito Court, and its style—the most patriotic of styles.

BEHIND THE STONE COLUMNS, A SOFT SIDE

A stately Coral Gables of "Georgian" inspiration evokes Southern charm as original owners selected a home to reflect their Colonial heritage

649 Palmarito Court is referred to in a 1988 Miami Herald real estate ad as a "stately Georgian home with giant oaks." And it is fitting to refer to the home as a "Georgian" since its original owners selected their new home to reflect their Georgian and Colonial heritage. Let's name it "Tara."

Mr. and Mrs. George C. Simpson, originally from Georgia, brought their Southern charm and hospitality with them to Coral Gables. In late 1930s, they selected for their new residence a Colonial Revival

designed by the well-known architect William Shanklin, a southerner from Mississippi, who in 1935 had designed a Colonial Revival style house on 1125 Alhambra Circle.

The couple dedicated their lives to civic altruism throughout the 30s, 40s, and 50s. They were pillars [just like the firm upright columns in their stately home] of Coral Gables society. They were, as the saying goes, the “fabric of society.” Their home, always a place of welcome, was host to numerous events and social affairs for state dignitaries and members of local club chapters. The Colonial architecture of their home served as an emblem of their patriotic passion.

Mrs. George C. Simpson [Minnie Wolcott Simpson] was a direct descendant of "Oliver Wolcott" one of the original signers of the Declaration of Independence. Her mother was Charles H. Wolcott from Atlanta.

Mrs. Simpson “lived’ the Colonial traditions through her leadership in the D.A.R. [Daughters of American Revolution] Everglades Chapter [Coral Gables] rising to Regent in 1940. She was a leader in D.A.R. local and state affairs including chairing many committees such as St. Distaff Day [an old tradition of sewing for charity inherited from Colonial times], the DAR Museum, and Conservation and Thrift.

Celebrating American heritage was Mrs. Simpson’s life-long commitment. This was reflected in her other volunteer work for the D.F.P.A. [Daughters of Founders and Patriots]. For the 200th anniversary of the birth of George Washington, Simpson, representing the Everglades Chapter of DAR, dedicated a tree to his memory at Old Fort Dallas.

Aside from her commitment to American history, she was also involved with local clubs. She was active in the Coral Gables Garden Club, serving as president from 1938-1940; Coral Gables Women’s Club; Ladies of the Civitan Club; elected officer at University Baptist Church; and a supporter of the Opera Guild of Greater Miami. She died in 1987 at 89 years.

Minnie Simpson was not the only civic leader in the family.

Mr. George C. Simpson, an attorney who practiced law in Miami since 1923, was with the firm Hudson & Cason for eight years. He later formed his own practice. He was originally from Talbotton, Georgia where he was elected mayor at the young age of 27.

During his lifetime, he served as past president of the Miami Civitan Club; Vice President of the Riviera Country Club; He was selected as a Governor’s Colonel under Governor Fuller Warren; and nominated as Commander of the Harvey Seeds Post, American Legion. He died in 1970 at 76 years old

Save "Tara" and avoid it being gone wth the wind.

[Recognition goes to Jorge Zaldivar board member of the Miami Pioneers & Natives of Dade for the research used in this article.]

**Emails received in support of
the designation of 649 Palmarito Court**

Kautz, Kara

From: Karelia Carbonell <karelia.m.carbonell@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 21, 2020 3:04 PM
To: Kautz, Kara
Subject: Fwd: 649 Palmarito Ct. - Coral Gables

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

SEE BELOW

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Jorge J. Zaldivar <jzald001@fiu.edu>
Date: Tue, Oct 20, 2020 at 2:57 PM
Subject: 649 Palmarito Ct. - Coral Gables
To: <kkautz@coralgables.com>, <burquia@coralgales.com>

Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Board,

I wish to express my support in granting historical significance of **649 Palmarito Court**. This is one of the earliest Colonial Revival homes built in Coral Gables designed by William Shanklin, an architect whose other residences have garnered historical status in Coral Gables.

I also value the Simpson family legacy and their story. It's exciting to learn of all the society events they held at their home, including something that is much needed these days, sitting down for tea and coffee and appreciating the value of conservation and history. Mrs. Simpson was a staunch advocate of this premise, and often visited Fort Dallas in her time to acknowledge what once was.

Where are the gardens of yesterday? How will we find them if they get cut and torn down?

This home is in an often overlooked section of the city surrounding the winding University Drive and Riviera Drive intersection, in addition to the overlooked 'White Way Lights'. One of my favorite homes sits nearby at 711 University Dr., this area needs to maintain and preserve our heritage.

Thank you,
JORGE J. ZALDIVAR
445 ALEDO, CORAL GABLES, FL 33134

Respectfully,
Jorge J. Zaldivar
jzald001@fiu.edu

Kautz, Kara

From: macbirch@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, October 20, 2020 7:50 PM
To: Kautz, Kara
Subject: 649 Palmarito Court

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I am writing to give my support to the designation of 649 Palmarito Court. It meets the at least two of the criteria for designation and is a noted visual landmark in the community. Please preserve it and its neighborhood.

Dolly MacIntyre
Former Board Member and Chair

Kautz, Kara

From: Viviam Maria Lopez <viviammaria@ymail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 20, 2020 2:57 PM
To: Kautz, Kara; burquia@coralgales.com
Subject: 649 Palmarito Court

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Board,

I am unable to attend the October 21st meeting. However, I wish to express my support in granting historical significance of 649 Palmarito Court.

This is one of the earliest Colonial Revival homes built in Coral Gables designed by William Shanklin, an architect whose other residences have garnered historical status in Coral Gables. Please preserve our heritage.

Thank you for your attention and understanding.

Viviam & William Rios
6420 SW 42 Ter
Miami, FL 33155

Kautz, Kara

From: Carol Smith <miami_lorac@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 20, 2020 1:22 PM
To: Kautz, Kara
Subject: Fw: 649 Palmarito Court correction to previous letter

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello. My previous email was incorrect. I lived across the street from another historic home, not this one, but I still want the Palmarito Court residence to be saved! Please accept this replacement letter.

Thank you,
Carol Smith

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Carol Smith <miami_lorac@yahoo.com>
To: kkautz@coralgables.com <kkautz@coralgables.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 20, 2020, 01:11:21 PM EDT
Subject: 649 Palmarito Court

Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Board,

I am unable to attend the October 21st meeting.
However, I wish to express my support in granting historical significance of 649 Palmarito Court.
This is one of the earliest Colonial Revival homes built in Coral Gables designed by William Shanklin, an architect whose other residences have garnered historical status in Coral Gables.

Carol M. Smith
824 Galiano Street
Coral Gables FL, 33134

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Carol Smith <miami_lorac@yahoo.com>
To: kkautz@coralgables.com <kkautz@coralgables.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 20, 2020, 01:11:21 PM EDT
Subject: 649 Palmarito Court

Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Board,

I am unable to attend the October 21st meeting.
However, I wish to express my support in granting historical significance of 649 Palmarito Court.
This is one of the earliest Colonial Revival homes built in Coral Gables designed by William Shanklin, an architect whose other residences have garnered historical status in Coral Gables.

I enjoyed living diagonally across the street from this home from 1992 - 2005. Thank you for all that you do to preserve our heritage.

Thank you.
Carol M. Smith
824 Galiano Street
Coral Gables, FL 33134

Kautz, Kara

From: Brett Gillis <brett.gillis@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 19, 2020 11:37 PM
To: Kautz, Kara
Cc: Urquia, Billy
Subject: 649 Palmarito Court letter
Attachments: Phalanx of Style.docx

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

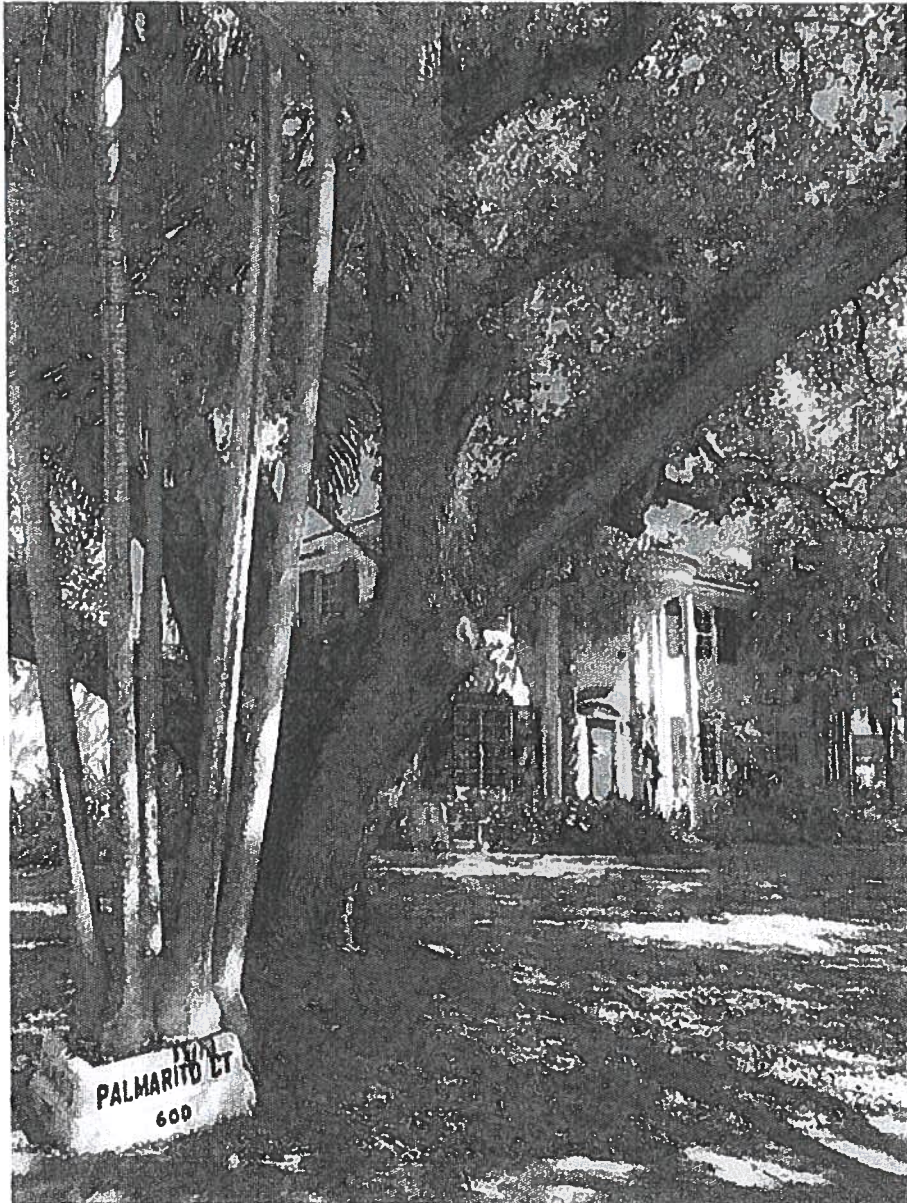
Dear Mrs. Kautz and the Historic Preservation Board,
I have attached my findings and evidence from my scrapbooks re: 649 Palmarito Court.
It would be very distressing if Coral Gables loses a Colonial Revival residence of this caliber. This house should be designated and preserved.
I would like to think that Virginia McAlester is smiling at me from above - when she started out, homes like this were not appreciated, but now they are.. at least in many parts of the country.
Will Coral Gables continue to fall behind or will the Board wake up and preserve the buildings that meet the criteria for designation like the code mandates.. before they are lost to the wrecking ball, only to be regretted a few years later?
Thank you,
Brett Gillis
915 Ferdinand

Phalanx of Style

A Report to the Historic Preservation Board

Re: 649 Palmarito Court, Coral Gables

by Dr. Brett Gillis, Local Historian & Preservationist



649 Palmarito Court in 2020

Then & Now



649 Palmarito Court c. 1940 (William Shanklin, architect)



649 Palmarito Court in 2020

Note that no significant alterations have been made to the character-defining features of the primary façade. The windows and some decorative elements have been replaced (but not obliterated) and the side porch has been enclosed (common among historic homes in Coral Gables).

649 Palmarito Court clearly meets the criteria for designation.

As stated in the City of Coral Gables Zoning Code Section 3-1103:

In order to qualify for designation as a local historic landmark or local historic landmark district, 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 eligibility of any potential local historic landmark or local historic landmark district shall be based on meeting one (1) or more of the following criteria: **(emphasis added)**

Please refer to the designation report for 3501 Granada Boulevard as this is another Colonial Revival home that has been designated as a local historic landmark in Coral Gables (649 Palmarito Court also meets the criteria). Consider the following criteria (even though only 1 is necessary for designation):

A4: Exemplifies the historical, cultural, political, economic, or social trends of the community, or

B1: Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by one (1) or more distinctive architectural styles, or

B2: Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or method of construction

Section 3-1104 states that “properties which meet the criteria for local historic landmarks and local historic landmark districts set forth in Section 3-1103 **shall be designated...**” **(emphasis added)**

649 Palmarito Court also contains elements which represent an adaptation of the Colonial Revival to the South Florida environment (**B4**): Mr. Shanklin’s designs for the Batcheller Construction Company were noted to be designed for year-round living, “all bedrooms with cross ventilation” and the living and dining rooms and kitchen with “through ventilation.” Access may be had from the kitchen to the garage through a doorway, which eliminates the necessity of going outdoors to reach one’s automobile or storage (in the 1920s, most garages were detached or recessed from the principal residence). One-story side wings shield the main living areas of the residence from the harsh South Florida sun (side wings are not generally found on original Georgian and Federal houses) while the broad eaves direct pouring South Florida rain away from the residence (eaves on original examples are less pronounced). Also, the broad windows permit abundant ventilation if air conditioning is undesired or unavailable (windows in original examples are generally simple double-hung sashes—they are never oversized like the first-story windows or found in adjacent pairs like the two windows under the portico that enhance ventilation of 649 Palmarito Court).

1125 Alhambra Circle is another home designed by William Shanklin in the Colonial Revival style that has been designated. 800 Obispo Avenue is another home that the Board recently reviewed that is designated and in the Colonial Revival style. 2320 Segovia Circle and 1300 Coral Way are two other residences designed by William Shanklin (in other styles) that have been designated.

Numerous other residences are designed in the Colonial Revival style but are not designated yet in Coral Gables (and have never been reviewed for designation due to limited resources). Failure to designate 649 Palmarito Court may result in the loss of many other fine residences if 649 Palmarito Court sets a precedent for this style. Failing to designate 649 Palmarito Court could forever change the composition of Coral Gables.

649 Palmarito Court revives the first Coral Gables style:



Coral Gables House ("Merrick House") 907 Coral Way, c. 1910

"The Merrick House's design exemplifies the adaptation of the period's prevailing architectural styles from the northeastern United States to the South Florida environment, utilizing local building materials and adding features to impart a regional identity. The early use of coral rock in the construction of the residence influenced the naming of the home, the community, and the city, 'Coral Gables.' In the construction of their family home, the Merrick family set the design precedents of material and forms which would be repeated throughout the City in the following years."

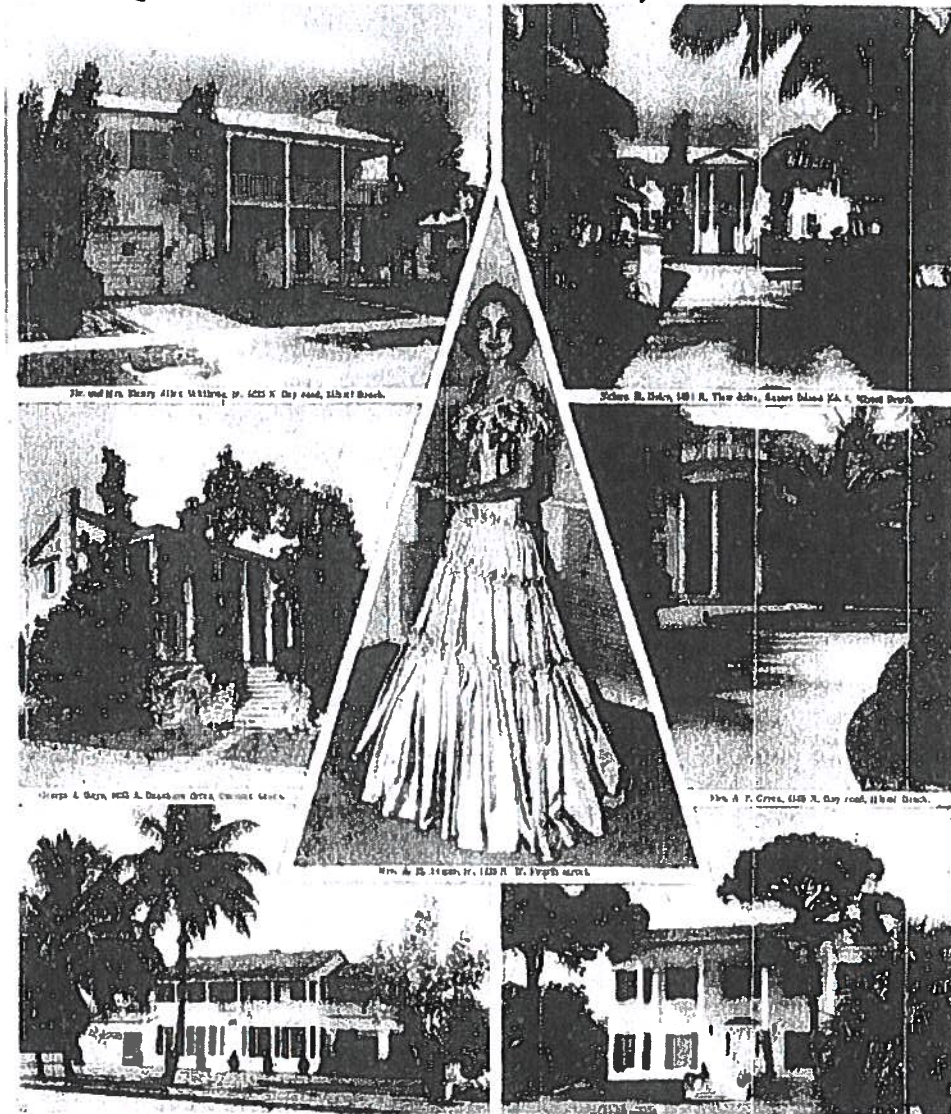
Excerpt from: <https://www.coralgables.com/nationally-recognized-historical-landmarks>

The Colonial Revival and classical features of the Coral Gables House embody the early Coral Gables spirit and aesthetic. At the time, the Coral Gables House was described as the finest in the backwoods of Miami.

From this outstanding residence grew the inspiration for the early coral rock Arts & Crafts and Spanish Mission bungalows that line Coral Way, and from those bungalows grew the overarching Old Spanish (and later Mediterranean) design theme for the city during the real estate boom of the 1920s. But, by the mid-1930s, the Old Spanish/Mediterranean style had begun to fall out of favor, and, by 1940, was virtually abandoned. On the other hand, the Colonial Revival design philosophy flourished and represents the trends of the community of this period.

1939 article praises Colonial Revival (described in the article as "modern adaptation of colonial architecture") and even notes influence on fashion and design:

Sub-Tropics Enhance Traditional Beauty of Colonial Homes



Mr. and Mrs. Henry Albrecht, 1425 N. Bay Road, Miami Beach. Mrs. B. E. Egan, 1401 N. Bay Road, Miami Beach. Mrs. A. F. Green, 1401 N. Bay Road, Miami Beach. Mr. and Mrs. Charles L. Adams, 1401 N. Bay Road, Miami Beach. Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Adams, 1401 N. Bay Road, Miami Beach. Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Adams, 1401 N. Bay Road, Miami Beach.

**JAN FIRM ERROTS
NEW HEADQUARTERS**

**Sales At Beach
Total \$887,790
For September**

MODERN ADAPTATION OF COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE is not confined to the picturesque homes of Metropolitan Miami. Look in the center and you'll see milady's modern version of the colonial style in a pink taffeta carefully placed over hoops. Colonial architecture, which prevailed in British settlements of North America before the Revolution, is chiefly a modification of the English Georgian style.

**C. of C. Compiles
Questionnaire For
Accommodations**

**DEALERS FORECAST
LUMBER COST RISE**

Caption enlarged:

MODERN ADAPTATION OF COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE is not confined to the picturesque homes of Metropolitan Miami. Look in the center and you'll see milady's modern version of the colonial style in a pink taffeta carefully placed over hoops. Colonial architecture, which prevailed in British settlements of North America before the Revolution, is chiefly a modification of the English Georgian style.

October 1, 1939 (dated on back) Miami Herald Clipping, *Author's Collection*

1942 ad references Colonial architecture and "old Philadelphia tradition" with the Biltmore tower in the background (not as the primary subject):

When they signed the Constitution in Independence Hall, Philadelphia was renowned for good cheer



...and here's
whisky that carries on this
old Philadelphia tradition

It's hard to put flavor into words. But this whisky has the same mellow tones of a rare old print or old Colonial architecture. Your first sip brings the pleasure of something really perfect, a feeling of past good things brought down to today. Get a bottle of Philadelphia. Toast the past in the present!

Continental Distilling Corporation, Philadelphia, Pa.

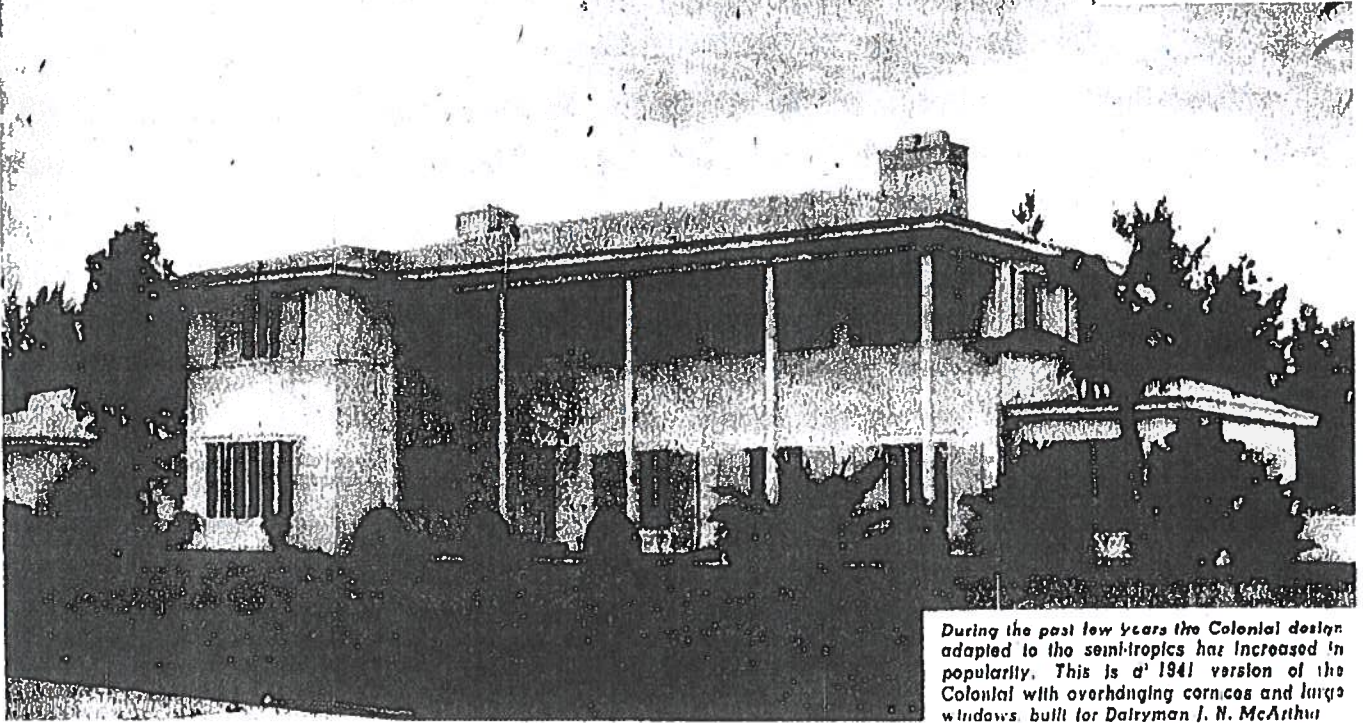


Author's Collection

Colonial architecture touted in ad:

Architecture At Its Best In Miami Area

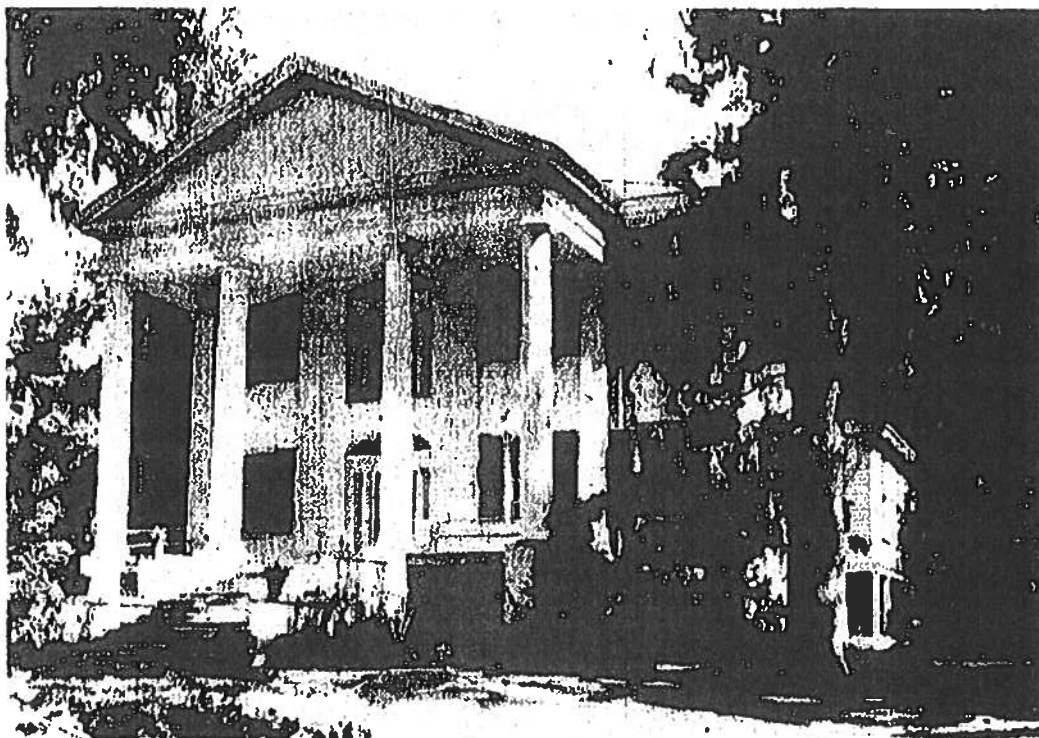
Despite De



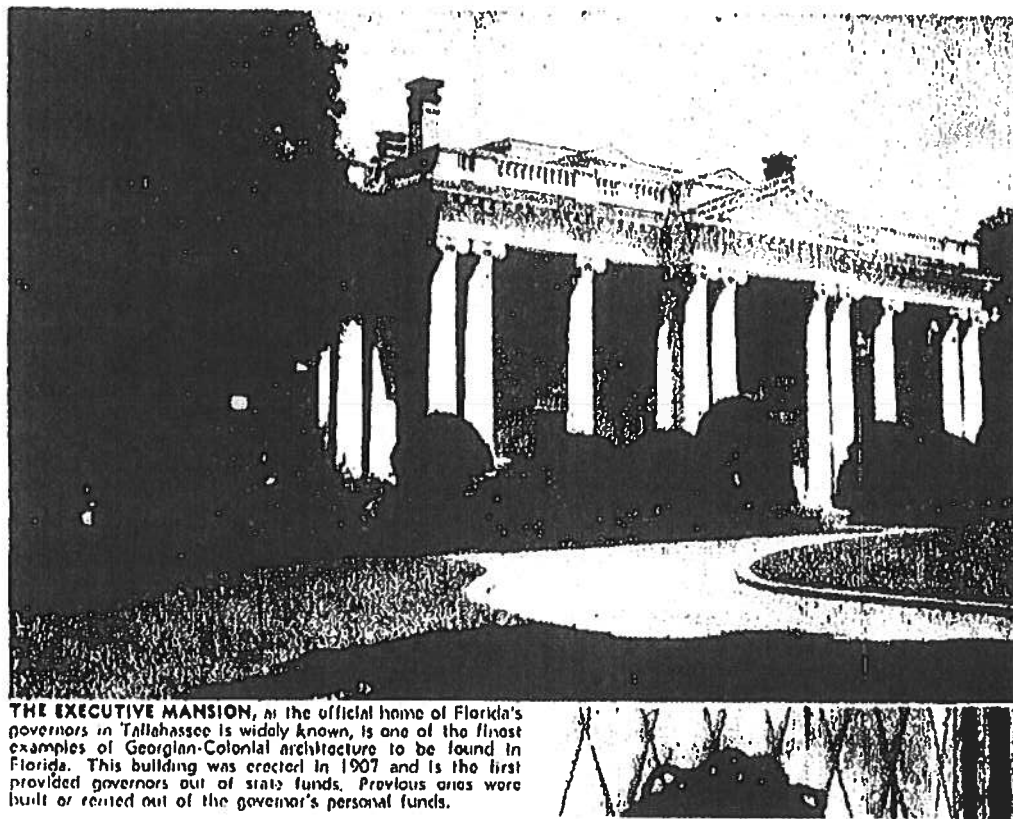
During the past few years the Colonial design adapted to the semi-tropics has increased in popularity. This is a 1941 version of the Colonial with overhanging cornices and large windows, built for Dairyman J. N. McArthur

1940s Miami Herald Clipping, *Author's Collection*

Florida Governors' homes receive much praise and press:



THE CALL MANSION, now known as the Grove Inn, was occupied by Territorial Gov. Richard Keith Call, 1836-39.



THE EXECUTIVE MANSION, as the official home of Florida's governors in Tallahassee is widely known, is one of the finest examples of Georgian-Colonial architecture to be found in Florida. This building was erected in 1907 and is the first provided governors out of state funds. Previous ones were built or rented out of the governor's personal funds.

1940s Miami Herald Clippings, *Author's Collection*

By 1942, even non-architectural newspaper articles (in this case golf) reference the Colonial Revival:

And the course--well, it was something that wouldn't look bad in heaven. Every day every blade of grass had its nails manicured. The greens got a mureel as regularly as a dowager, and the rough was so nice that quill put aside money each year in order to return to it in their old age.

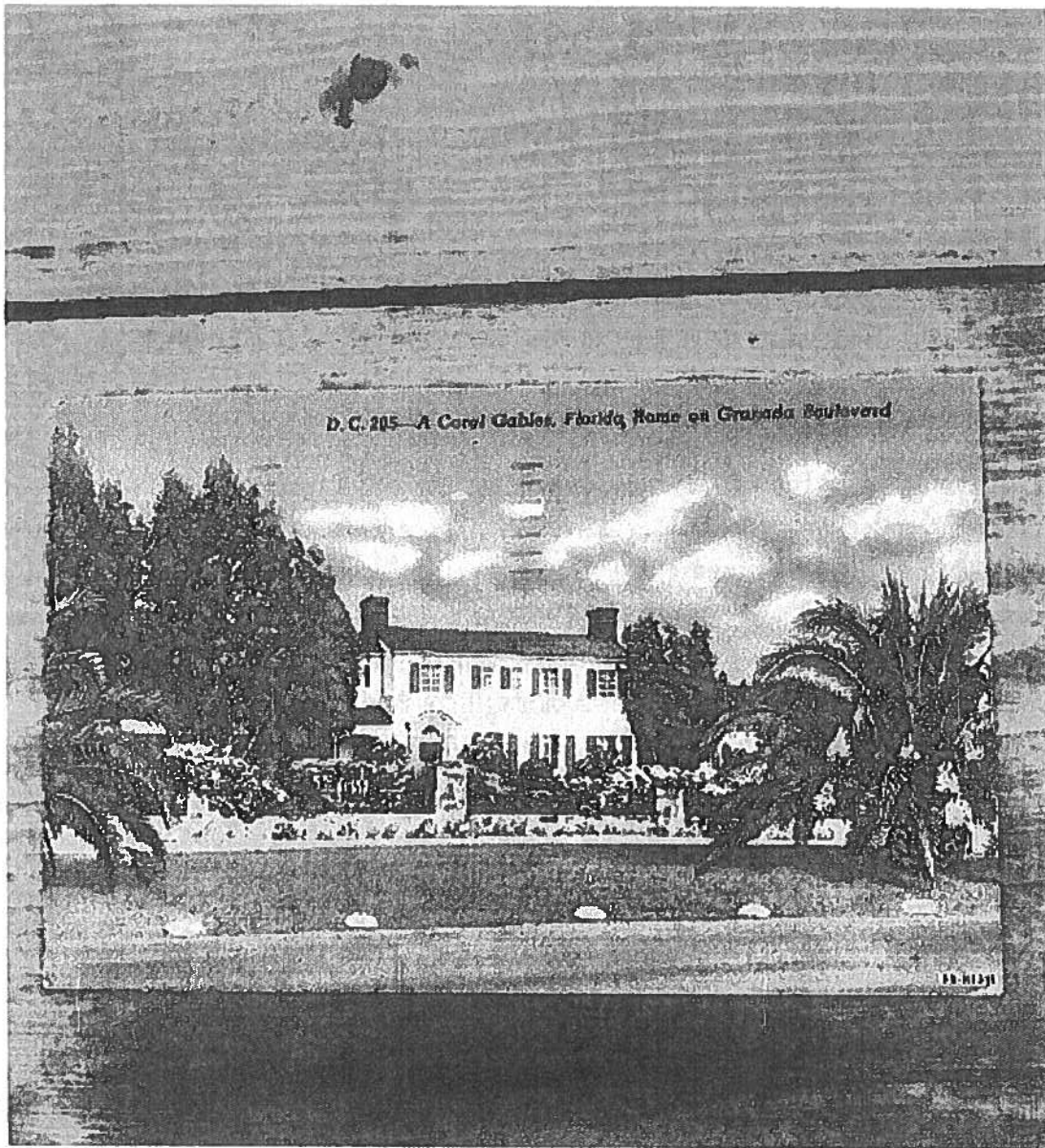
TURNED OVER TO COWS

No matter where you were on the course the scent of dogwood and jasmine and wisteria helped you on your backswing, and the little clubhouse was a bit of colonial architecture that Thomas Jefferson would not have been ashamed to have designed.

Now, with the war on, and half its members wearing whaki and brogans instead of slacks and spiked shoes, the Augusta National has been turned over to the cows.

1940s Miami Herald Clipping, *Author's Collection*

So prevalent and noteworthy did the Colonial Revival become in Coral Gables that postcards depicting the style were printed to send around the globe:



1940s postcard features a stately Colonial Revival residence on Granada Boulevard, *Author's Collection*

(1920s architectural postcards of Coral Gables usually featured buildings of Spanish or Mediterranean styling.)

Note the absence of a tile roof. Tile was required for sloped roofs in Coral Gables in the 1920s, but, by the 1930s, tile roofs were no longer mandatory and thus became less common. This permitted different architectural styles to flourish. Colonial Revival architecture in the Coral Gables area prior to 1935 is generally isolated to a very few early pioneer homes and the Florida Pioneer Village on Santa Maria Street, where the requirement for tile was waved as part of the Villages program.

The Architecture of 649 Palmarito Court

Style names evolve over time as architectural styles and periods reach their apex of study/popularity, such as how the term “Old Spanish” has been largely replaced with “Spanish Eclectic” and “Mediterranean” over time. 649 Palmarito Court is a fine example of the Colonial Revival style in Coral Gables. (Some sources may describe this home as being of the “Neoclassical” style, but this term has been phased out by some scholars to avoid confusion when the modern New Formalist style has been described as the “Neoclassic” style.) “Southern Colonial” is a simplified and lovingly-applied lay term used to describe the Colonial Revival or Neoclassical style in the South. The terms “Old Spanish” and “Southern Colonial” live in the hearts and minds of many and will likely continue to do so for, if nothing else, the nostalgia and love of them, even if they are not the most accurate terms. But, whether, Colonial Revival, Neoclassical, or “Southern Colonial,” how could one not love and appreciate the historical, cultural, and architectural value of 649 Palmarito Court, and its style—the most patriotic of styles?

The Philadelphia Centennial of 1876 is recognized as being the catalyst for first reawakening interest in our colonial architectural heritage, and the widely attended, photographed and reported on World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 (that celebrated the 400th anniversary of Columbus’ arrival in America) is credited with bringing about a renewed American interest in classical models. Exposition pavilions were designed by different states of the Union and drew heavily upon the country’s previous interest in the Early Classical Revival and Greek Revival styles. The Virginia Pavilion was a replica of George Washington’s Mount Vernon and its full-façade porch, among the first in the country. By the late 1800s, fashionable architects were touring New England to study original Georgian and Federal buildings, and the restoration of Williamsburg and the writings of Royal Barry Wills helped to maintain interest in building Colonial Revival houses from the 1930s to the 1950s. In the years leading up to the War and, later, many families, victorious and returning from World War II, built Colonial Revival homes out of patriotic pride to rekindle the essence of the colonial architecture and optimistic spirit of our fledgling nation. The Colonial Revival gained traction throughout Coral Gables in the late 1930s once tile roofs were no longer mandatory.

Architectural historians recognize that the Colonial Revival “refers to the entire rebirth of interest in the early English and Dutch houses of the Atlantic seaboard.” The Georgian and Federal styles generally form the backbone of the Revival, with secondary influences and details originating from other prototypes. As such, starting in the late 1930s, the Colonial Revival served as one of the styles that Coral Gables architects could deliberately use to step away from the then-passé Spanish and Mediterranean architecture of the 1920s whilst staying true to the Coral Gables spirit by referencing the classically-inspired Coral Gables “Merrick” House. In the case of 649 Palmarito Court, its imposing front portico is a reinterpretation of a feature from another famous colonial estate—the “phalanx” of columns that grant entrance to Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello, itself inspired by the classical models of the Italian master Andrea Palladio. With 649 Palmarito Court, architect William Shanklin deliberately departs from the classical model by introducing new features (such as the dominant but curved portico and broad windows) that are rare in original colonial houses. As such, Mr. Shanklin depicts how direct copies of colonial houses are not generally intended or expected during the Colonial Revival of this era. Instead, architectural advancements, local tendencies and eclectic flair render a lovable pastiche that is applied to traditional colonial and classical models so that the Revival produces free interpretations based only loosely on the originals, thus creating a *new typology* for a *new era*.

Credit for the architectural history in this report goes to the late, great Mrs. McAlester who helped to save from the wrecking ball many homes of similar style to 649 Palmarito Court:

McAlester, Virginia, et al. *A Field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America’s Domestic Architecture*. Revised and expanded second edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013. Print.

Kautz, Kara

From: Kautz, Kara
Sent: Friday, October 23, 2020 11:55 AM
To: Jeanette Pressman; Urquia, Billy
Subject: RE: Letter in support of granting historical significance of 649 Palmariito Court

The Historic Preservation Board considered the item at their 10/21 meeting and directed Staff to prepare a designation report for review at a later date.

Thank you,
Kara

Kara Kautz
City of Coral Gables
Historical Resources and Cultural Arts Department

kkautz@coralgables.com
305-460-5090



Please Note: Florida has a very broad Public Records Law. Most written communications to or from State and Local Officials regarding State or Local business are public records available to the public and media upon request. Your email communications may therefore be subject to public disclosure.

From: Jeanette Pressman [<mailto:jeanettepressman@gmail.com>]
Sent: Friday, October 23, 2020 9:42 AM
To: Kautz, Kara; Urquia, Billy
Subject: Letter in support of granting historical significance of 649 Palmariito Court

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Board,

Good morning, I wish to express my support in granting historical significance of 649 Palmarito Court.

It's been brought up to my attention that this is one of the earliest Colonial Revival homes built in Coral Gables designed by William Shanklin, an architect whose other residences have garnered historical status in Coral Gables such as the property at 2320 Segovia Circle.

Being in real estate, I looked at the location and condition of the property. The house graces the corner of Palmerito St. and Ct. beautifully! It is in very good condition and its architectural details says "Coral Gables" all over! It would be a true shame to turn down this property.

Yours truly,

Jeanette Pressman, P.A.

Broker Associate

Dezer Platinum Realty

786.205.0525

Listing agent for: 1498 Sevilla Ave., Coral Gables FL 33134

Peacock-Tyson Residence www.1498sevilla.com

**Additional Emails & Letters received in support of
the designation of 649 Palmarito Court**



December 14, 2020

Ms. Kara Kautz
City of Coral Gables
2327 Salzedo Street
Coral Gables, FL 33134

Re: Designation of 649 Palmarito Court

Dear Ms. Kautz:

Dade Heritage Trust has advocated for the preservation, restoration and use of historic places in Miami-Dade County for 44 years. We continue that mission today as we write to urge the City of Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board to support the recommendation of Historic Preservation staff to honor 649 Palmarito Court with historic designation.

This is one of the most comprehensive designation reports I have ever seen and clearly justifies designation of this stately home.

Coral Gables' grand historic residences remain as symbols of the City's regard for architectural integrity and variety, and they continue to reflect the stories of the City Beautiful's historic past. 649 Palmarito stands as a fine example of an early Coral Gables Neoclassical home worthy of protection and preservation.

Sincerely,

Dolly MacIntyre

Dolly MacIntyre
Advocacy Committee Chair

Kautz, Kara

From: mervol@aol.com
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2020 9:09 AM
To: Kautz, Kara
Cc: Urquia, Billy
Subject: historic designation of 649 Palmarito Court

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD:

Following the recommendation of the City's preservation staff to grant historical designation to 649 Palmarito Court, I wish to add my support of such designation.

The 1940 home in question is a fine example of the Colonial Revival style and is as much a part of our architectural heritage as homes built in the Mediterranean Revival or Art Moderne styles, both of which are enshrined in the cultural fabric of our City.

As I am unable to attend the December 16th meeting, I respectfully submit this request in absentia.

Bruce Fitzgerald
Coral Gables

Kautz, Kara

From: Michelle Dunaj <DunajM@msn.com>
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2020 8:48 AM
To: Kautz, Kara; Urquia, Billy
Subject: SUPPORT for City Preservation Staff's recommendation to designate 649 Palmarito Court a local historic landmark.

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Board,

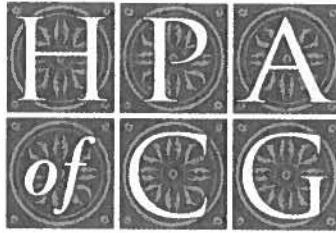
Thank you for your work in preserving our historical heritage.

I cannot attend the December 16th meeting, but want to express my support for the City preservation staff's recommendation that historical designation be granted for the home at **649 Palmarito Court**.

The City's recommendation and detailed report establishes that 3 out of the 5 ordinance criteria have been met. Therefore pursuant to Coral Gables Zoning Code, Article 3, Section 3-1102, local historic designation must be approved.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Best regards,
Michelle Dunaj
1224 Castile Avenue



HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ASSOCIATION OF CORAL GABLES

December 12, 2020

Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board Meeting December 16, 2020

Att: Historic Preservation Board

Re: 649 Palmarito Court, Coral Gables #2020-008

On behalf of the Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables, please accept this letter in support of the historic designation for **649 Palmarito Court** – one of the earliest Neoclassical-style homes to be designed by Coral Gables dream team—architect William Shanklin, Jr. [whose 4 other Coral Gables residences have garnered historical status] and owner/builder George E. Batcheller [who developed the Italian Village.] The construction in 1940 of this single-family home occurred during the New Deal era and it was amongst the first 700 homes built during 1936 and 1941. The style is indicative of the type of architecture of this time period as the City began to move away from its Mediterranean Revival foundation. The 80-year old home has retained its historical integrity. Its original owners made an impact in our community with passion and patriotism and their choice of architectural style reflected their lifestyle. The couple dedicated their lives to civic altruism throughout the 30s, 40s, and 50s. They were pillars [just like the firm upright columns in their stately home] of Coral Gables society and their Neoclassical home served as an emblem of their patriotic passion.

The Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables promotes the understanding and the importance of historic resources and their preservation in Coral Gables. We ask the Historic Preservation Board to accept the recommendation of the City's Preservation Office and approve the local landmark designation of **649 Palmarito Court**.

Sincerely,

Karella Martinez Carbonell, President Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables

Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables
Post Office Box 347944, Coral Gables, Florida 33234
info@historiccoralgables.org
www.historiccoralgables.org

Kautz, Kara

From: Connie Crowther <connie_crowther@msn.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2020 5:22 PM
To: Kautz, Kara
Cc: brett.gillis@gmail.com
Subject: Neighbors' Support for 649 Palmarito Court Historic Designation

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Subject: Neighbors' Support for 649 Palmarito Court Historic Designation

We have read the information/report about our neighbors' home at 649 Palmarito Court being considered for designation as a local historic landmark at the Historic Preservation Board meeting on Wednesday, December 16, at 4 p.m. We enjoyed reading your report, especially since we have lived across the street from this property since 1977 and have known Minnie Simpson and all the subsequent owners of this historic home.

We are pleased to offer our full support for this designation for Ed Zaharawicz's and Cecelia Danger's beautiful stately home, built in 1940. Every historically designated home adds to the history and posterity of the City Beautiful. This home is a prime example of the mid-20th Century style of homes built in Coral Gables, with many of the fine features of such a home and few substantive changes made over the past 80 years.

We had our 1924 home at 3612 Palmarito Street, located directly across Palmarito Street from 649 Palmarito Court, designated as a local historic landmark in 1996, and Michael (Tim) Crowther is a former member of the Historic Preservation Board, so we understand the rigor of this process.

We ask that you Approve the Historic Designation of 649 Palmarito Court, based on its historic, cultural and architectural significance -- which is also your recommendation as the interim historic preservation officer.

Please feel free to call on us if you need more information.

Sincerely,
Tim and Connie Crowther
3612 Palmarito Street

Kautz, Kara

From: Joyce Nelson <grovites@mac.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2020 12:46 PM
To: Kautz, Kara; burquia@coralgales.com
Subject: designate 649 Palmarito Court--a 1940 Shanklin-designed Neoclassical Style residence-- a local historic landmark

Importance: High

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Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Board,
I am unable to attend the December 16th meeting.
However, I wish to express my support in granting historical designation to **649 Palmarito Court** as recommended by the city's preservation staff. Its original owners made an impact in our community with passion and patriotism and their choice of architectural style reflected their lifestyle. Their home stands today as one of the earliest Neoclassical Style homes built in Coral Gables designed by William Shanklin, Jr. an architect whose four other residences have garnered historical status in Coral Gables. Please preserve our heritage.
Thank you.

Cheers 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

Joyce E. Nelson

305.505.1147



"Be good, be giving, be a good citizen,
and be a good friend...therein all honor lies."

Kautz, Kara

From: Karelia Carbonell <karelia.m.carbonell@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2020 12:34 PM
To: Kautz, Kara; Urquia, Billy; Albert Menendez; Albert Menendez
Subject: OPINION Letter IN support OF 649 PALMARITO CT
Attachments: OPINION_ Do Not Let History Be Gone With The Wind – Gables Insider.pdf

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

KARA & ALBERT,
Attached is the OPINION PIECE in support for 649 PALMARITO COURT.

Please forward to the Historic Preservation Board

BEST,
KARELIA



HOME ABOUT US ADVERTISE WITH US COVID-19 ARTICLES BY CATEGORY

CONTACT US SIGN UP TO OUR NEWSLETTER

OPINION: Do Not Let History Be Gone With The Wind

© DECEMBER 14, 2020 1 COMMENT



By: *Dr. Karelia Martinez Carbonell*

On Wednesday, the Historic Preservation Board will be faced with an important decision: preserve or lose the resource to demolition. The Board will consider local historic designation for 649 Palmarito Court per recommendation of the Coral Gables' Historic Resources Department. Staff has produced an in-depth 34-page designation report in support of preserving the property.

Under the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, a property may be considered significant if it can be associated with persons or events which have made an impact on our community, or if the property is deemed to possess architectural distinction. This home is significant on both counts. But for this piece, the focus will be on "persons who have



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made an impact in our community,” and they are George and Minnie, the original owners of 649 Palmarito Court.

The home on Palmarito is an early example of Neoclassical-architecture [also colloquially known as Georgian or Colonial Revival] in Coral Gables. A most patriotic of styles, a 1988 Miami Herald real estate ad refers to 649 Palmarito Court as a “1939 stately Georgian home with giant oaks.” And it is fitting to refer to the home as a “Georgian” since its original owners selected their new home to reflect their Georgian and Colonial heritage.

So who were the original owners and why are they important to the Coral Gables community? They were somewhat of a celebrity couple. One had the distinction of being the youngest mayor of his town and the other a direct descendant of one of our nation’s founders.


George and Minnie Simpson brought their Southern charm, hospitality, and pride of heritage with them to Coral Gables and settled in the Palmarito neighborhood. Their choice of architectural style reflected a lifestyle full of tradition and patriotism. In late 1939, they selected for their new residence a Neoclassical/Colonial Revival style construction designed by the well-known architect William Shanklin, Jr., a southerner from Mississippi. The builder was northerner George E. Batcheller, who was a significant developer highly admired by George Merrick.

And so began the home life of George and Minnie at 649 Palmarito Court. A life dedicated to civic altruism. Their home, always a place of welcome, was host to numerous events and social affairs for state dignitaries and members of local club chapters. George and Minnie were pillars of their society.

Back in Minnie’s day, women were known by their husband’s name. Therefore, Minnie Wolcott Simpson was officially referred to as Mrs. George C. Simpson in the many society pages. But that was fine with Minnie. She was a traditionalist and proud of her ancestry. She could trace back her heritage directly to “Oliver Wolcott” one of the original signers of the Declaration of Independence. And she lived to honor that heritage. She dedicated her time to local and state leadership in the D.A.R. [Daughters of American Revolution] Everglades Chapter [Coral Gables], rising to Florida Regent in 1940. She chaired local and state affairs in the DAR including St. Distaff Day [an old tradition inherited from Colonial times of sewing for charity], she fundraised for the DAR Museum in DC, and led the Conservation and Thrift committee.

CORAL GABLES WEATHER

CORAL GABLES



77°

partly cloudy

7:00am * 5:32pm
EST




feels like: 77°

wind: 3mph sse

humidity: 77%

pressure: 30.02*hg

uv index: 5

wed	thu	fri
82/68°F	82/54°F	73/63°F
		

Weather forecast
Coral Gables, Florida



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Celebrating American heritage was Minnie's life-long commitment. This was reflected in her other volunteer work for the D.F.P.A. [Daughters of Founders and Patriots]. For the 200th anniversary of the birth of George Washington, Minnie Simpson, representing the Everglades Chapter of DAR, dedicated a tree to the first president's memory at Old Fort Dallas on the Miami River. The building was saved from demolition by the DAR and it has served as its headquarters since 1929.

Aside from her commitment to American history, Minnie was also involved with local clubs. She was active in the Coral Gables Garden Club, serving as president from 1938-1940; Coral Gables Women's Club; Ladies of the Civitan Club; elected officer at University Baptist Church; and a supporter of the Opera Guild of Greater Miami. After a full charitable and patriotic life, Minnie passed away in 1987 at age 89.

But Minnie Simpson was not the only civic-minded leader in the family. There was George too.

George C. Simpson was an attorney who practiced law in Miami since 1923. He was with the firm Hudson & Cason for eight years and later formed his own practice. Originally from Talbotton, Georgia, he was elected mayor of that town at the young age of 27.

During his lifetime, he dedicated his personal time to civic activities. George served as past president of the Miami Civitan Club; Vice President of the Riviera Country Club; He was selected as a Governor's Colonel under Governor Fuller Warren; and nominated as Commander of the Harvey Seeds Post, American Legion. George passed away in 1970 at the young age of 76.

The Simpsons lived a full lifetime in their home from 1940 to 1988. Places matter. People matter.

The call to the Historic Preservation Board is to accept the recommendation of the city's preservation staff and grant historical significance to 649 Palmarito Court, a residence designed by William Shanklin, Jr., an architect whose four other residences have garnered historical status in Coral Gables.

As presented in the information above, George and Minnie made an impact in their community. They were patriots and their home stands today as one of the earliest examples of Neoclassical homes built in Coral Gables. Their home's traditional style reflected their traditional lifestyle.

Preserve Palmarito. Do not let history be gone with the wind.

Below is the link to the 34-page staff designation report.

1_Report_-_LHD_2020-008_-_649_Palmarito_Court.pdf

To support staff’s recommendation of 649 Palmarito Court, please send your comments to the attention of the Historic Preservation Board in care of Kara Kautz and Billy Urquia [kkautz@coralgables.com; burquia@coralgables.com]

[Recognition goes to Jorge Zaldivar board member of the Miami Pioneers & Natives of Dade for the research used in this article.]

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1 thought on “OPINION: Do Not Let History Be Gone With The Wind”

Harriet Gershman says:

December 15, 2020 at 7:40 am

Preserve the history of Coral Gables

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GABLES INSIDER

Gables Insider is an independent online news outlet that seeks to offer residents a regular insight into City Hall and community related matters. Gables Insider seeks to promote the best that Coral Gables has to offer and occasionally sitting down with elected officials and community leaders to educate on things that make Coral Gables a premier city to live, work, learn, play and visit.

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Kautz, Kara

From: Patty Harris <pattykak@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2020 12:15 PM
To: Kautz, Kara; Urquia, Billy
Subject: 649 Palmarito Court

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Re: 649 Palmarito Court

Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Board,

The Villagers is Miami-Dade's oldest historic preservation organization, having started its work in 1966 at the Douglas Entrance. We have assisted in the restoration of at least 75 historic sites, many in Coral Gables.

In keeping with our mission of saving special places, we are writing today to urge you to historically designate 649 Palmarito Court, the subject of one of the most comprehensive designation reports ever written in Coral Gables. Clearly, your professional staff thinks it is worthy of designation and so do The Villagers.

As one of the earliest Neoclassical Style homes built in Coral Gables, the prospect of losing this important residence is, to say the least, very disturbing. Please do not let this happen.

Sincerely,

Marie Vacca

President

The Villagers

Kautz, Kara

From: Sandra Scidmore <sscidmore@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2020 11:27 AM
To: Kautz, Kara; Urquia, Billy
Subject: 12/16/20 Historic Preservation Board Meeting - I SUPPORT HISTORICAL DESIGNATION OF 649 PALMARITO COURT

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Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Board,

I am unable to attend the December 16th meeting.

However, I wish to express my support in granting historical designation to **649 Palmarito Court** as recommended by the city's preservation staff. Its original owners made an impact in our community with passion and patriotism and their choice of architectural style reflected their lifestyle. Their home stands today as one of the earliest Neoclassical Style homes built in Coral Gables designed by William Shanklin, Jr. an architect whose four other residences have garnered historical status in Coral Gables. Please preserve our heritage.

Thank you.

Sandra L. Scidmore
100 Lincoln Road, Apt. 423
Miami Beach, Florida 33139
786-566-0422 C
sscidmore@hotmail.com

Kautz, Kara

From: Maria River Abella <mariariverabella@outlook.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2020 9:55 AM
To: Kautz, Kara
Subject: Fw: Palmarito house

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From: Maria River Abella <mariariverabella@outlook.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2020 9:08 AM
Subject: Palmarito house

Good morning,

I am writing to you regarding the house on 649 Palmarito .
The neoclassical style of

this house is part of what makes the city of Coral Gables unique. I agree the preservation board report of its historical importance, and that it should be tried to be preserve.

I thank you for your time and the opportunity to write to you.

CG Resident
Maria Rivero
333 University Dr
Coral Gables, FL 33134

Kautz, Kara

From: Carlos Ariza <cariza1@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2020 9:39 AM
To: Kautz, Kara; Urquia, Billy
Subject: Preserve 649 Palmarito Court

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To the Historic Preservation Board,

Please consider this a vote of support for preservation of 649 Palmarito Court from a concerned Gables resident.

Part of what makes Coral Gables unique is its historic heritage, reflected in the architecture of its residences. Tearing down a historic home, which happens to be one of the earliest examples of Neoclassical architecture in our city, is allowing our present short-term views prevail over the history of the city. History is not ours to destroy; we are shepherds of it, protecting it for our descendants.

The current owners of the home must have bought it because they appreciate the charm and history of our community. By tearing it down, they devalue our properties and chip away at the uniqueness of our city.

Thank you,

Carlos Ariza
Coral Gables, FL

Kautz, Kara

From: Armando E Hernandez-Rey <hernandezae@mac.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2020 5:08 AM
To: Kautz, Kara
Subject: Pal arito

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As at Gables homeowner, I agree and support that the 649 Palmarito home be recognized and designated a Historical home/treasure and not be allowed to be demolished.

Armando E. Hernandez-Rey, MD, FACOG | Medical Director
Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility
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www.conceptionsflorida.com
FIU-College of Medicine
Assistant Professor, Division of Women's Health

www.facebook.com/hernandezreyivf
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Kautz, Kara

From: Daniel Ciraldo <daniel@mdpl.org>
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2020 9:22 PM
To: Kautz, Kara
Subject: 649 Palmarito Court letter

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Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Board,

Miami Design Preservation League (MDPL) was founded in 1976 to preserve, protect, and promote the architectural, cultural, social, and environmental integrity of Miami Beach and the surrounding areas.

For the past 43 years, MDPL and the City of Miami Beach have welcomed over 150,000 visitors at over 80 events to celebrate Art Deco Weekend. Although Miami Beach may be primarily known for its Art Deco architecture, Miami Beach, like Coral Gables, has a diverse inventory of designated historic landmarks on its register. One noteworthy example is the Betsy Hotel on Ocean Drive that was designed with Colonial Revival and Neoclassical elements. The Betsy has been preserved despite being located in an area that is primarily known for its Art Deco and Streamline Moderne architecture. Different architectural styles and periods add valuable diversity to the historic fabric of cities like Coral Gables and help to tell the story of the community.

The Planning and Zoning Code of Coral Gables states that the purpose of historic designation is to preserve and protect historic structures or sites which serve as visible reminders of the history and cultural heritage of the city, region, state, or nation. 649 Palmarito Court serves this purpose and meets the criteria for designation.

As outlined in the detailed staff report, historic designation is not limited to one architectural style or age of a structure, and, even if a structure or site meets more than one criteria, only *one* of the criteria is necessary for designation. We encourage you to follow the recommendations of your professional staff and designate 649 Palmarito Court as a historic landmark.

Thank you,
Daniel Ciraldo
Executive Director
Miami Design Preservation League

--

Daniel Ciraldo
Executive Director at Miami Design
Preservation League

A 1001 Ocean Drive, Miami Beach, FL,
33139
P W: 305-672-2014
E daniel@mdpl.org
W mdpl.org



Kautz, Kara

From: Debra a. Incera <mrsdebster@bellsouth.net>
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2020 8:09 PM
To: Kautz, Kara
Subject: Save the Palmarito Home

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This beautiful neoclassical home is an example of what makes coral gables interesting and unique. How can we even think of demolishing it? If this one is allowed to be demolished, where will we stop? There are so many other homes in the Biltmore area in this style. I am so disappointed in the City's recent decisions and lack of respect for our preservation code. Please Save this Home!

Debra and Armando Incera
917 Algaringo Ave.
Coral Gables, FL 33134

Sent from my iPhone

Kautz, Kara

From: Annette Hogan <annettepatriciahogan@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2020 7:47 PM
To: Kautz, Kara
Subject: 649n Palmarito Court

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Please do NOT demolish 649 Palmarito Court. It is a Neoclassical home that was built in 1940 when little construction was occurring in Coral Gables compared to the boom years of the 1920's. If Colonial and Neoclassical homes like this are not preserved, then the area particularly around the Biltmore (where many are located) could be changed forever.

It is my request as a Coral Gables resident that this home NOT be demolished BUT rather PRESERVED.

Thank you.

Annette P. Hogan
(E) annettepatriciahogan@gmail.com
(A) 1421 Columbus Blvd, Coral Gables, FL 33134
(M) +1 305 496-6787

Kautz, Kara

From: Douglas Wartzok <wartzok@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2020 7:29 AM
To: Kautz, Kara; Urquia, Billy
Subject: 649 Palmarito Court

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After extensive walking in Coral Gables, I have accumulated sufficient evidence that whatever new construction might replace this property it will be decided less inspiring than the present architecture. Let's preserve what we have.

Thank you.

Douglas Wartzok