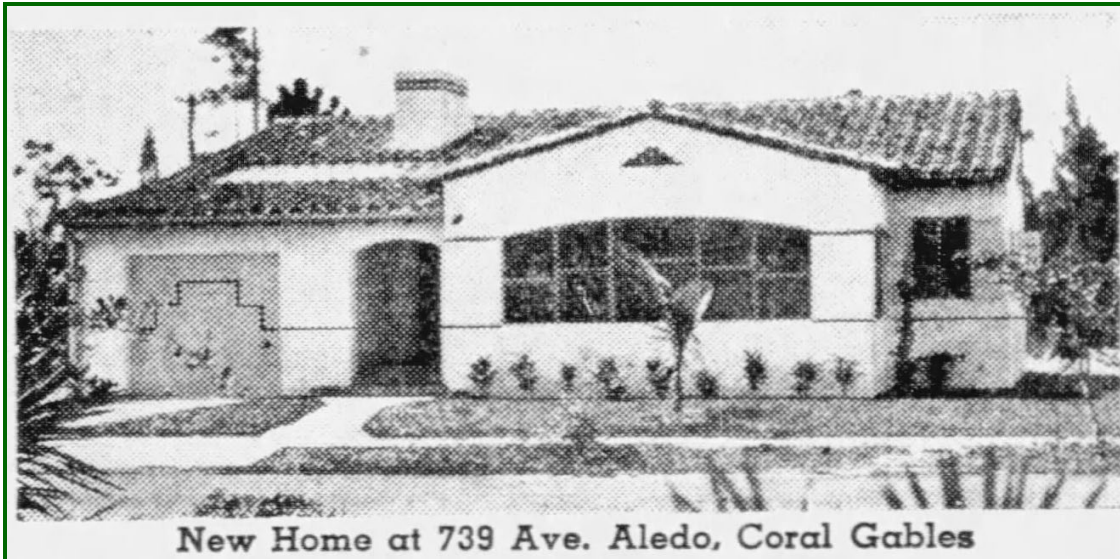


**REPORT OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES
HISTORICAL RESOURCES & CULTURAL ARTS DEPARTMENT
TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
ON THE DESIGNATION OF
THE PROPERTY AT
739 ALEDO AVENUE
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA**



Miami Herald, July 18, 1937



LHD 2023-12
November 20, 2024

**LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION
739 ALEDO AVENUE, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA**

Application: submitted by resident

Note: All observations were made from the public-right-of-way

Historical Resources &
Cultural Arts

2327 SALZEDO STREET
CORAL GABLES
FLORIDA 33134

☎ 305-460-5093
✉ hist@coralgables.com

Folio Number: 03-4117-004-1000
Legal Description: Lot 19 & the East 1/2 of Lot 20, Block 125, Coral Gables Country Club Section Part Six according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 20, at Page 1 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida
Original Permit No.: 5431
Date of Construction: 1937
Original Architect: John & Coulton Skinner
Present Owner: Sara M. Enciso Trust
Building Type: One-story, SFR
Style: Mediterranean Transitional (Modern)
Site Characteristics: The property is located on an interior approx. 74' x 139' lot on the north side of Aledo Avenue between Anderson Road and Palmarito Street.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Permitted in December 1937, the single-family residence at 739 Aledo Avenue was amongst the earliest homes built in Coral Gables during the New Deal Era. Designed by the esteemed architects John and Coulton Skinner, it is a refined and early representation of the Mediterranean Transitional style. It blends the Modernistic style of Art Moderne with elements of the Mediterranean Revival.

During the City's second developmental era, 1927-1944, there were only several hundred homes built. As construction in Coral Gables tried to regain its footing in the 1930s it shifted away from the elaborate and embellished Mediterranean Revival style of the 1920s towards simpler and more modern designs that reflected the new aesthetic and priorities of society. In doing so, Coral Gables began to follow national housing trends and it entered a new architectural era. The home at 739 Aledo Avenue was amongst the earliest homes that ushered in this new era.

This single-family residence is a thoughtful execution of a home that acknowledges the City's Mediterranean Revival foundation while embracing Modernistic aesthetics. The property at 739 Aledo Avenue retains its historic integrity and significantly contributes to the historic fabric of the City of Coral Gables. It is part of the collection of quality residences that contributes to the story and the City's sense of place over time.

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

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

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

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

CRITERIA FOR SIGNIFICANCE

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

The single-family residence at 739 Aledo 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, 739 Aledo Avenue meets the following **three (3) criteria**:

A. Historical, Cultural significance

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

B. Architectural significance

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

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

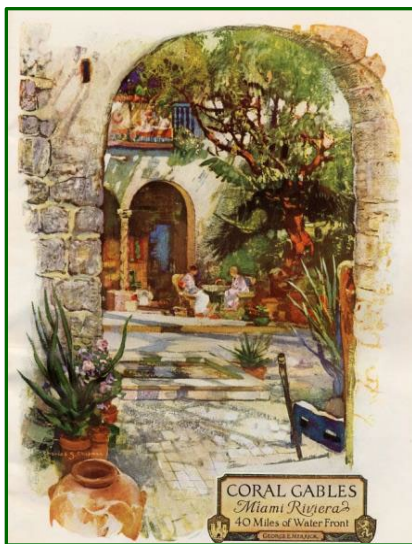
HISTORIC CONTEXT

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

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

The single-family home at 739 Aledo Avenue was constructed in 1937 during Coral Gables' second developmental phase when new construction was sparse.

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 century to create his vision for a fully-conceived, cohesively-designed, Mediterranean-inspired city which is now considered one of the first modern planned communities in the United States. Advised by landscape architect Frank Button, artist Denman Fink, and architects H. George Fink, Walter De Garmo, H.H. Mundy, and Phineas Paist, Merrick converted 3,000 acres of citrus plantation and native hammock into ornate plazas, grand entrances, small parks, monumental buildings, and tree-shaded streets.

Figure 1: 1925 Ad, *House Beautiful*

The use of Mediterranean designs was one of the featured selling points in early promotional materials. Merrick and his team felt that this type of architecture harmonized best with south Florida's climate and lifestyle. The architecture constructed during the initial period of development combined elements commonly used in Spanish, Moorish, and Italian architecture, and has come to be known as the Mediterranean Revival style. Careful attention was paid by the development team to ensure that the buildings and streetscape elements conformed to Mediterranean ideals. (Figure 1)

Nationally-acclaimed landscape architect Frank Button produced the first comprehensive map of Coral Gables in 1921. It was based on an infrastructure of the inherited grid of fruit trees from the Merrick family's citrus plantation. Coral Gables'

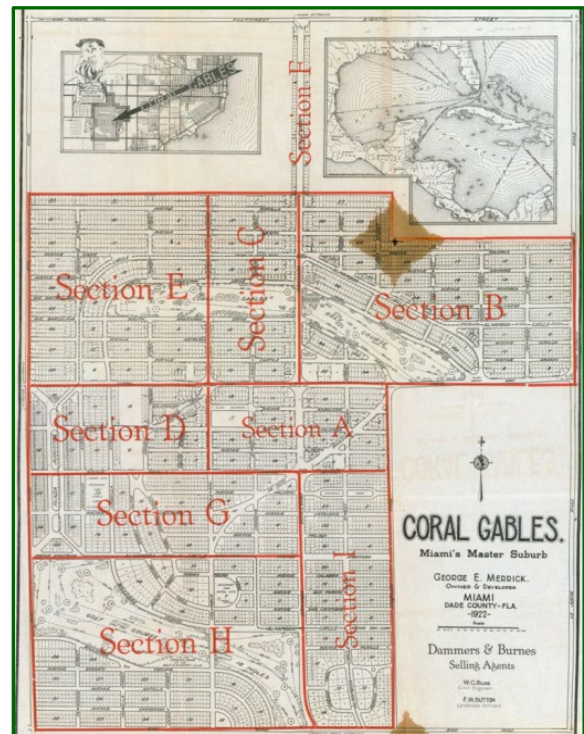


Figure 2: Coral Gables Map 1922

initial development was predominantly around Merrick's plantation in Section A and the planned Granada Golf Course. (Figure 2) Lots in Sections A, B, and C were offered for sale in 1921-2.

In the mid-1920s plans for a premier hotel and golf course in Section H were announced. The 18-hole championship course was designed by legendary golf course architect Donald Ross. Sections G, H, and I, which were primarily undeveloped, were reworked to accommodate the large \$10 million Biltmore Hotel complex. These three sections were subdivided into six sections and renamed Country Club Sections Parts One through Six and a portion given to the Biltmore Section. (Figure 3) The Biltmore Section was labelled as the "Heart of Coral Gables" and is where City Hall was later built.

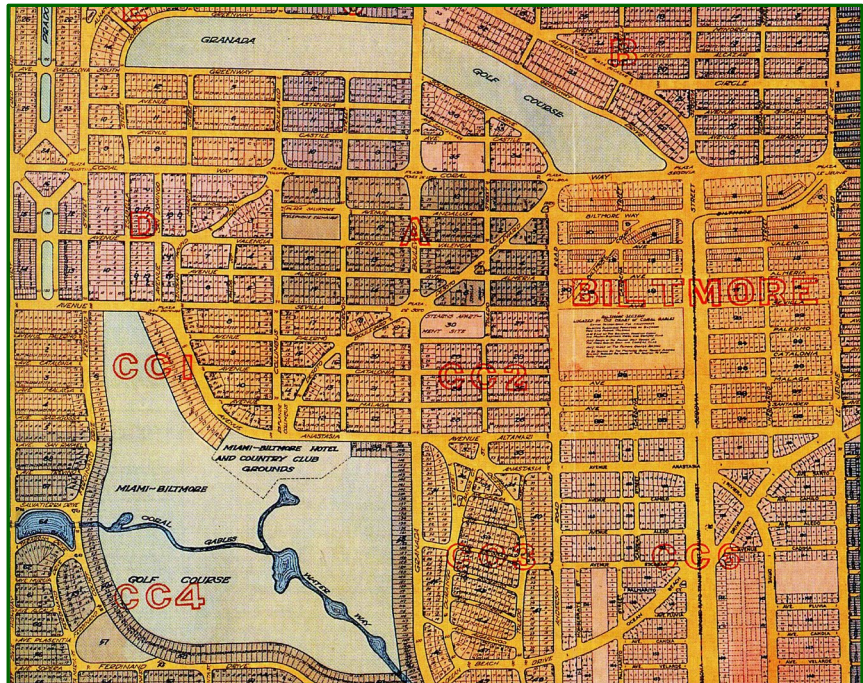


Figure 3: Replatted Sections, 1925
Map: "Miami Riviera: 40 Miles of Water Front"
Note: 739 Aledo Avenue is in Country Club Section Part Six (CC6)

Button took this opportunity to add additional scenic boulevards and reroute streets. Most notably, the S-shaped DeSoto Boulevard became a clearly defined scenic thoroughfare between the Granada and the Miami-Biltmore golf courses whose halfway point was celebrated by a traffic circle plaza with a magnificent pedestal-type fountain. (Figures 4)



Figure 4: Aerial Photo c.1925

The golf courses were prominent features of Merrick's development. They were integrally-incorporated into Merrick's plan to attract tourists and to provide social amenities for residents. The Biltmore course was the crown jewel in this campaign. Construction of the Miami-Biltmore Hotel and Golf Course began in early 1925. The course opened with elaborate fanfare on January 2, 1926. The Miami-Biltmore Golf Course was designed as a championship golf course and has retained its elite status over the years. Unlike the Granada Golf Course, which was bounded by streets, the lots abutting the Miami-Biltmore Golf Course were platted as residential. It is likely that the Country Club Sections Parts One through Six would have seen rapid development if the hurricane had not hit later that year. (Figures 5)



Figures 5: Aerial Photographs
1931 [top] *Courtesy Florida International University Archives*
1938 [bottom] *Note: 739 Aledo Avenue circled in red*
Courtesy of University of Florida Archives

Second Developmental Phase: 1927-1944

Construction in the City boomed until the combination of the devastating Hurricane of 1926 and the Great Depression. In the aftermath of the 1929 Wall Street Crash, the economy in Florida declined steeply. Between 1929 and 1933, 148 state and national banks in Florida collapsed. By 1933, approximately one out of four Floridians was receiving some type of public relief and assistance. As the decade wore on, relief measures expanded under the New Deal administration and people adjusted to a new way of life. As a result, priorities and aesthetics changed. This was reflected in all aspects of life including the types of homes that were built.

The dire downturn in the economy, coming so closely on the heels of the devastating Hurricane of 1926, had a drastic impact on new construction in Coral Gables. Not only did the number of new houses greatly decrease but the types and style of the homes also changed. For example, the dollar value of permits issued in 1926 was \$13,402,012. Permits steadily declined over the next few years and plummeted to \$71,605 in 1931. (Figure 6) As a result, despite valiant efforts, Merrick's grand plans for completing his Mediterranean-inspired city ended.

Recovery was slow. By 1936 permit dollar values were in the vicinity of \$1,000,000 where they held steady for several years. (Figure 6) As seen in Figures 7, there were few single-family homes built in Coral Gables during the Depression Era. With the

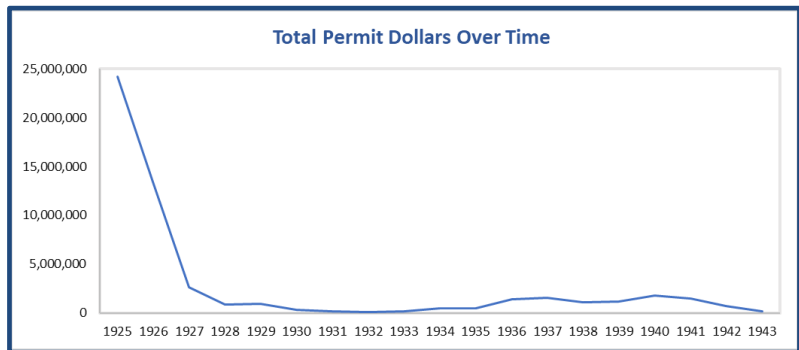
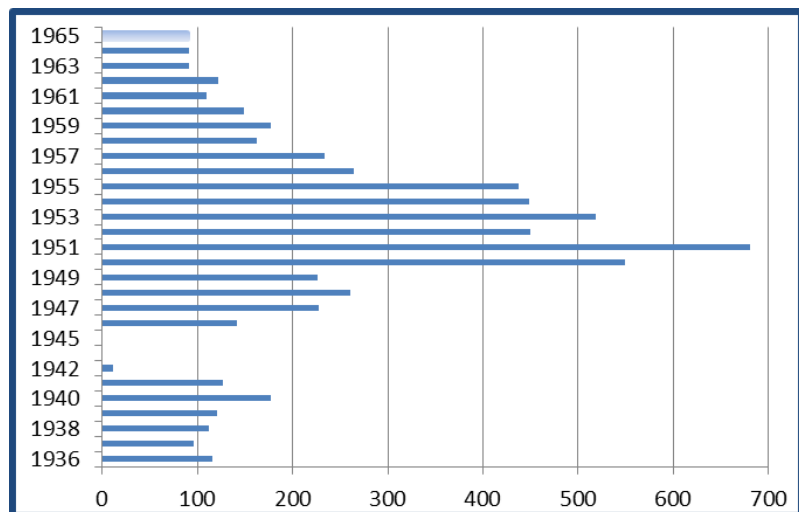
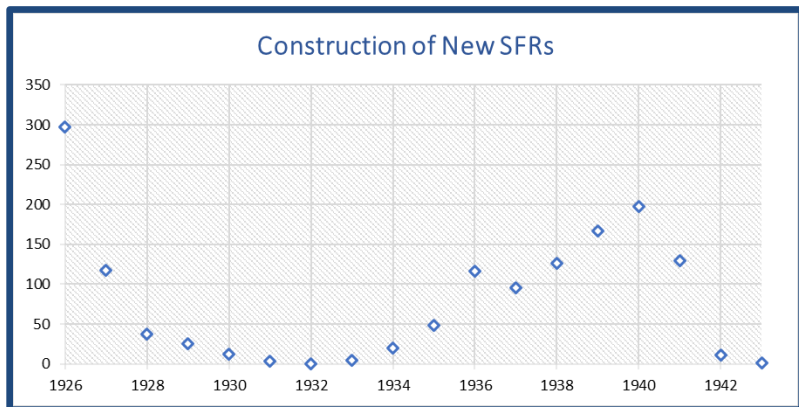


Figure 6: Coral Gables Total Building Permit Dollars, 1925-1943



**Figures 7: Number of New SFR Building Permits:
 1926-1943 [top]
 1936-1965 [bottom]**

Note: no data for 1945;

1926 building curtailed by a major hurricane in September

implementation of New Deal and other incentives, the building industry finally experienced a small resurgence in the late 1930s and early 1940s. However, it abruptly ground to a halt during the War years of 1942-1945 as materials, expertise, and manpower were diverted to the war effort.

The design of the few single-family homes built during this second developmental phase in Coral Gables was a distinct departure from the ornamented and picturesque Mediterranean Revival style that had dominated the City's landscape since its inception. 1930s single-family homes transitioned away from Mediterranean Revival and began embracing Minimal Traditional, Modernistic (Art Deco & Art Moderne), masonry vernacular and ranch styles. In particular, the Art Deco style emerged in other communities during the mid-1920s, and the Art Moderne style came into fashion during the 1930s. However, Coral Gables' shift towards the new architectural styles was slow. Rather than fully embracing the Modernistic styles prevailing in other communities, Coral Gables saw transitional architecture which blended elements of the Mediterranean Revival style with the more contemporary styles. In a community whose early identity was so strongly tied to the Mediterranean theme, it is not surprising that most architects sought to acknowledge Coral Gables's roots and Merrick's desire for a cohesively-designed community. Thus, while they embraced 'modern' styles they also still retained elements from the Mediterranean Revival style. However, transitional architecture which combines Mediterranean Revival with Modernistic elements is not an isolated stylistic phenomenon within Coral Gables, it is seen throughout South Florida. In the 1920s it was often called Modern Spanish. This unique hybrid type of architecture is now known as the Mediterranean Transitional style in official style lexicons. (see Mediterranean Transitional section below) It was also known as Mediterranean Modern or, when specifically warranted, the Med-Deco Transitional.

Construction of 739 Aledo Avenue

739 Aledo Avenue is a prime example of the Mediterranean Transitional style in Coral Gables. Permitted in 1937 it was built for Virginia Hamilton, a local investor, who had built several homes in the City. She teamed up with builder W. Clayton Getty who was building investment homes and aligning with other investors to stimulate building in Coral Gables. They hired John and Coulton Skinner to design the home. John was a nationally-known architect whom Merrick recruited in 1925 to create an architecture program for the new University of Miami. (see Architect section below) Upon arrival John also opened a private practice, designing numerous notable homes in the Mediterranean Revival style. His brother Coulton, also an architect, joined him in Coral Gables a year later and together they designed homes in the Florida Pioneer Village and the French Normandy Village. The Skinners remained partners and had a successful practice that spanned over three decades. From 1925 to 1953, John and Coulton Skinner designed over one hundred structures in Coral Gables many of which have been designated as historic landmarks. Hence, the Skinners were well-versed in Merrick's vision for Coral Gables and well-positioned to meld the new Modernistic styles with the traditional architecture of the City.

Inherent to its nature as a "transitional" style, Mediterranean Transitional Architecture was only produced for a brief period before the new stylistic trends took over. It represents a pivotal link between the two historic building boom eras in the City. The historical period that the Mediterranean Transitional style was utilized (primarily during the 1930s and early 1940s) further adds to its limited nature as these were Depression and wartime years which saw sparse development. There were few of these types of homes built in the City; nonetheless, they are an important piece of the City's architectural history.

As seen in Figures 8, 739 Aledo Street was one of the first homes built in the Country Club Section Part Six. The home was also one of the few homes built in the City during the second developmental period. Furthermore, it remains as one of a limited number of Mediterranean Transitional style homes in the City.

Retaining Context: Building Out of the Area

The Post-War prosperity that followed these lean years created an optimism which reigned through the 1950s and 1960s and resulted in unprecedented building boom. (Figures 7) During this time single-family homes in Coral Gables followed national trends both in numbers and in style and had largely moved away from Mediterranean precedents. By the late 1950s the area around 739 Aledo Street was built out with new residences. Country Club Section Part Six retains its initial with context of single-family homes to the present. (Figures 8)



**Figures 8:
Aerial Photographs**

1948
[top]

1957
[bottom]

Note:
739 Aledo Avenue
circled in red

*Courtesy University of
Florida*

Mediterranean Transitional Style (aka Mediterranean Modern Or Med-Deco Transitional)

The Mediterranean Transitional style employed Mediterranean Revival elements while using the forms and features of Modernistic or Ranch styles. In Coral Gables this style first appeared in the mid-1930s. These homes are typically one-story in height and rectangular in plan. While this style tends to retain recessed and projecting bays of the Mediterranean style, the overall form is simple, streamlined, and with a focus on geometric forms rather than undulating and intricate decorative features. Character-defining features include barrel roof tiles on low-pitched gabled roofs, geometric or tropical ornamentation concentrated around windows, doors and eaves, and metal screen doors with tropical motifs.

General Characteristics

- Plan: regular and rectangular
- Height: typically, one-story built over a crawl space
- Primary Exterior Materials: stucco
- Roof Type: low-pitched side-gabled, front-gabled
- Roof Surfacing: barrel tile
- Recessing and projecting facades with a focus on geometric forms
- Attached garage often with cast masonry vents with tropical or geometric motifs
- Metal screen doors with tropical motifs
- Fenestration: predominantly metal casement windows often with transoms on primary facades; corner windows or circular port hole windows may also be present
- Fenestration usually deeply recessed
- Eyebrow canopies over windows or doors
- Detailing: usually minimal and reserved for window and door surrounds, gable vents, stucco beltcourse or cornice, built-in planters, or projecting sills

Modernistic Styles (1920-1940)

The Modernistic Styles were distinctly different from the eclectic and revivalist styles that preceded it. The Modernistic Styles emphasized sleek lines with Machine Age geometric decorative elements. The early form of the Modernistic Styles was Art Deco. A creative but short-lived movement, from 1925 to 1940 it permeated all modes of the arts from architecture to decorative arts to fashion. Art Deco was common in public and commercial buildings built in the 1920s and early 1930s but it was rarely used in domestic architecture.

Art Moderne, or Streamline Moderne, is a later type of the Modernistic Styles. As the Great Depression of the 1930s progressed, the Modernistic Styles changed. It became more austere, less ornamented, and more streamlined with a horizontal emphasis. Streamlining was a concept first conceived by industrial designers who favored the aerodynamic pure-line concept of motion and speed. Hence, the sharp angles, the stylized floral decorative motifs, and the vertical emphasis of the Art Deco were replaced with simple, aerodynamic curves, and long horizontal lines of the Art Moderne. This later type emphasized smooth surfaces, curving forms, geometric forms and long horizontal lines, and sometimes nautical elements. Exotic woods and stone were replaced with cement and glass. Cylindrical forms and long horizontal window groupings were common. (McAlester)

The home at 739 Aledo Avenue was built in the Mediterranean Transitional style with influences from the Art Moderne style.

SIGNIFICANCE ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION

Executive Summary

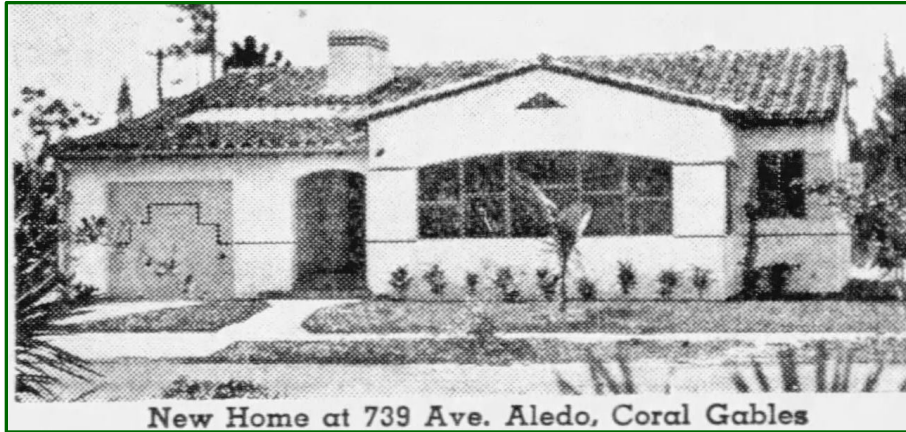
Permitted in November 1937, the single-family residence at 739 Aledo Avenue was one of the earliest homes built in Coral Gables during the New Deal Era and it represents a new architectural era in the City. During the second developmental era there were only several hundred homes built in the City. As construction in Coral Gables tried to regain its footing in the 1930s it shifted away from the elaborate and embellished Mediterranean Revival style of the 1920s towards simpler and more modern designs that reflected the new aesthetic and priorities of society. In doing so, Coral Gables began to follow national housing trends and it entered a new architectural era. The home at 739 Aledo Avenue was amongst the earliest homes that ushered in this new era.

Designed by the esteemed architects John and Coulton Skinner, 739 Aledo Avenue is a refined and early representation of the Mediterranean Transitional style that blends the Modernistic style of Art Moderne with elements of the Mediterranean Revival. In the Modernistic aesthetic, the main features of the home are simple and impart a geometric and horizontal impression. The home is clad in smooth stucco and the fenestration is recessed without sills which gives the Modernistic impression of the openings being carved out. Taking its cue from the Mediterranean Revival style, the home has a projecting front porch/Florida room bay, roofs clad in barrel tile, and exposed rafter tails. Also, the original windows were casements (steel) in type. The remaining ornamentation and elements are in keeping with the Art Moderne aesthetic. Character-defining features of this Mediterranean Transitional home, include but not limited to:

- ✓ Emphasis: horizontality and geometry
- ✓ Plan & Height: regular and rectangular, one-story built over a crawl space
- ✓ Primary Exterior Materials: smooth stucco
- ✓ Roof: low-pitched side-gabled, front-gabled clad in barrel tile
- ✓ Recessing and projecting bays with a focus on geometric forms
- ✓ Garage: front-facing, built-in
- ✓ Fenestration: recessed without sills; originally metal casement windows; dominant front façade shallow-arched opening with a horizontal emphasis
- ✓ Entry: Segmental arch covered entry with original cascading, bull-nosed tiled steps
- ✓ Detailing: triangular brick ‘vents’ in front gable end, barrel tile vents in triangular grouping in side gable ends; thin brick horizontal lines across front façade; incised horizontal lines wrapping around the home; simple rafter tails and fascia board; visually prominent rectangular chimney with horizontal lines

The original 1937 permit (#5431) has not been located to date. However, a July 1937 newspaper sale photo and a c.1940 historic real estate photo (Figures 9) provide documentation of the original front façade of the home. Assessment of the property, additional permit documents, building records, historic photographs, and other primary sources indicate that there were few changes to its historic character-defining features. (see discussion below) As per, Article 8, Section 8-103 of the Coral Gables Zoning Code--*Criteria for designation of historic landmarks*: “Districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects of national, state and local importance are of historic significance if they possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, or association.” Staff determined that this property has retained its original context and that it possesses sufficient integrity for designation. Thus, the property at 739 Aledo Avenue is part of the collection of quality residences that contributes to the City’s sense of place over time.

Images Over Time:



Figures 9:
739 Aledo Avenue
Front (South) Façade
Top to Bottom:
July 18, 1937
Miami Herald
c. 1940
1980
Courtesy Miami-Dade
Property Appraiser
2024

Extant Description & Alteration Discussion

Note: All observation were made from the public-right-of-way



Figure 10: 739 Aledo Avenue, 2024

The single-family residence at 739 Aledo Avenue sits on an interior lot (approx. 74' x 139') on the north side of the street. The one-story home with a built-in garage is centered on the front (south) portion of the lot and to the rear is an open back yard. (Figure 11) In 1940, the rear and side yards were enclosed by a low (approx. 3') masonry wall. Portions of that wall remain. Original concrete tire strips lead to the garage. Framing the sides of the front yard is a very low (approx. 1') stem wall ensemble.

The one-story home is rectangular in plan and built over a crawl space. Constructed with cement block, it is finished with smooth stucco. The home retains the projecting bay form of the Mediterranean Revival style with its front porch / Florida room. However, the overall parti is Art Moderne with an emphasis on horizontality and geometry. There have been no additions to home.

While the roof is clad in barrel tile of the Mediterranean Revival style, the front-facing gable of the Florida room and the side-facing roof of the remainder of the home is low and broad. The latter gently flares and extends to accommodate the garage and front entry at the southwest corner of the home. (Figures 12) At the rear this main roof also extends over the back entry. (Figures 11 & 16) The low, broad roof with long continuous lines contributes to the horizontal emphasis of the home and is a distinct departure from the use of separate roofs of varying types and heights common in the Mediterranean Revival style. The roof was originally clad with two-piece barrel tile; it was changed to the current S-tile in 1993.

The fenestration is deeply recessed without sills or lintels which gives the Modernistic impression of the openings being carved out. The windows appear to have been originally steel casements. Permits for window changes have not been located to date. County building records document that by 1968 the home had glass jalousie on the front bay and at least some awning windows in other areas of the home. From an examination of historic photos, it appears that glass jalousies were replaced with the current configuration between 2008 and 2011.



Figure 11: Aerial View of Property
Courtesy Property Appraiser



Figures 12: Front (South) Façade, 2024

The smooth stucco of the Art Moderne style also accents the home's geometric and horizontal emphasis. On the front facade the primary elements are three bays defined by their geometric fenestration openings and the simple decorative detailing that ties them together. The openings visible from the street are dominant and visually balance each other--from the large, long segmental arch opening of the Florida room to the segmental arched opening of the front entry to the rectangular garage opening.

In the Modernistic aesthetic, numerous decorative features of the Mediterranean Revival style have been replaced with simple features that impart a geometric impression. For example, the projecting front porch bay under a separate roof from the Mediterranean Revival style is retained, but the presentation of this bay is Art Moderne. The Mediterranean Revival style covered front porch with a series of full-height semicircular arched openings supported by decorative columns has been replaced with a Modern Florida room with long, half-height openings. In the Modernistic styles a large plate glass window centered on the front façade was common. In this home, the feature is a melding of Mediterranean Revival and Art Moderne. A shallow segmental long arched opening spans the front façade of the bay. The shallow arch and length of the feature are horizontal and Art Moderne in nature. This opening was originally screened. The original screen frames were artfully arranged as a shallow stepped center 'line' that reflected the shallow arch of the opening and proved another horizontal element on the front façade. As mentioned above this screen feature was

replaced with glass jalousies by 1968. Also extending out from the corners of this arched opening are horizontal lines, brick at the top and incised at the bottom. The top brick line wraps around the sides of bay. The bottom incised line appears to run around the home. At the garage it continues as a stepped up and down line across the garage door. Early historic photos indicate that the incised line was originally painted to highlight it. (Figures 13) The date of the garage door replacement is unknown. The use of the Mediterranean Revival feature of exposed rafter tails provides another horizontal element that runs across the front façade. Gutters obscure this feature along some sections of the eaves.



Figures 13: Art Moderne Elements

Front (South) Façade, July 18, 1937, *Miami Herald* [top]
**Note: Shallow arches, Screen arrangement, Horizontal lines,
Garage door stepped motif, Recessed covered entry,
Triangular brick element in gable end,
Interior squat chimney with brick lines**

Garage Bay, c. 1940 [bottom left]
Note: Incised ‘painted’ lines

Southeast Corner, 2024 [bottom right]
Note: Incised line wrapping from front to side façade

The covered and recessed front entry is the central bay of the front façade. In the Mediterranean Revival style, the front façade has projecting and receding bays. In this Mediterranean Transitional style home, the ‘tunnel’ recess of the entry bay visually presents it as a separate bay without breaking the facades plane. In the Modernistic manner, the shallow segmental arch gives the impression of being carved out of the façade which emphasizes its shape and geometry.



Figure 14:
Covered Front Entry, 2024
Note: shallow arch ‘cutout’ of façade
Original cascading tile entry steps
Incised horizontal lines
Exposed rafter tails

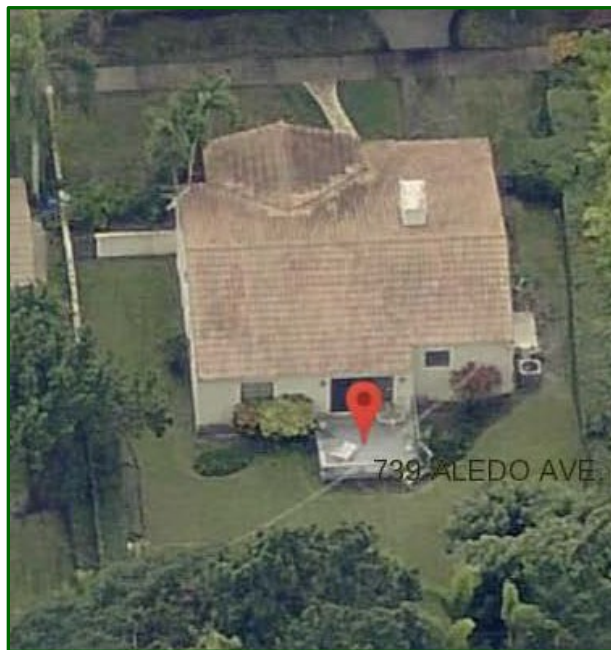


Figures 15: Gable End Features, 2024
Front Façade, brick [top]
Side Facades, barrel tile [bottom]

A feature of note is the repeated triangular element in the gable ends. Mediterranean Revival style homes in Coral Gables commonly had groups of round vents decoratively arranged above windows or in the gable ends. On the side-facing gable end of this home, barrel tiles are decoratively arranged in a triangle in keeping with this Mediterranean Revival tradition. On the front façade, this element plays homage to the feature but in Modernistic fashion. The triangular feature is made of horizontal lines of bricks. (Figures 12 & 15)

In the Art Moderne fashion, the decorative Spanish chimney with a large chimney stack of the Mediterranean Revival style has been replaced with a simple interior chimney placed roughly above the front entry. The rectangular chimney reinforces the geometric and horizontal emphasis of the home. It originally also had what appeared to be horizontal brick bands near the top of the stack. (Figures 13)

As is indicative of the Mediterranean Transitional style, additional embellishment on the home is minimal. Aerial photos in Figures 16 show the side and rear facades. Note that the home retains its side entry and steps on the west façade. On the rear façade it appears that the original back entry was expanded to include a sliding door and patio/deck.



Figures 16: Aerial Photos, 2023
East Façade [top]; Rear (North) Façade [center]; West Façade [bottom]

Ownership History

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.

This property has essentially been the hands several long-term owners from shortly after it was constructed in 1937. Harold and Jessie Littledale were the first owner-occupants. They purchased it in 1939 and lived in the home for twenty-six years. In 1965 they sold the property to John and Frances Moonan who enjoyed the house for the next decade. In 1979 the home the Enciso family became the new owners. They have owned the home for forty-five years and are the current owners.

List of Owners / Occupants:

- 1937-1939 Virginia Hamilton (aka Catherine Virginia Knight Hamilton) (1894-1982)
- 1938 Mr. & Mrs. Chauncey W. Butler (tenants)
- 1939-1965 Harold J. Littledale (1872-1955) & Jessie Littledale (1875-1967)
- 1965-1975 John J. Moonan & Frances Moonan
- 1975-1979 Gregory M. Morris & Anna D. Morris
- 1979-Present Enciso Family
 - 1979-2003 Manuel J. Enciso (1928-2002) & Sara M. Enciso
 - 2003-Present Sara M. Enciso Trust



Figures 17: Property Listings
July 18, 1937, *Miami Herald* [left]
April 1, 1975, *Miami Herald* [right]

Architect

The single-family residence at 739 Aledo Avenue was designed in 1937 by architects John and Coulton Skinner. The brothers were born in Ohio and arrived in Coral Gables in the 1920s. They are responsible for numerous landmarked and high-profile projects in the area.

John graduated from the University of Toronto with honors in 1915. In 1919 he accepted a travel fellowship from Harvard University to travel Europe and earned a graduate degree in architecture. From 1922-25 he chaired the architecture department at Georgia School of Technology. In 1925 John moved to Coral Gables when Merrick recruited him to create an architecture program for the new University of Miami. Upon arrival John also opened a private practice, Skinner & Pierson, with John Pierson, who managed the firm. Pierson first met Skinner, then the Dean of Architecture, while a student at Georgia Tech.

When the firm of Skinner & Pierson was awarded the contract for the Florida Pioneer Village by Merrick, John's brother Coulton joined the firm and it became Skinner, Skinner & Pierson. Coulton Skinner, also a University of Toronto grad, had been practicing in Detroit under the internationally renowned architect, Albert Kahn. In 1926, with the French Normandy Village contract, they become the Skinner Brothers. The Skinners remained partners and had a successful practice that spanned over three decades. From 1925 to 1953, John and Coulton Skinner designed over 100 structures in Coral Gables. Twenty-four are currently historically-designated, either individually and/or within the Florida Pioneer, French Normandy, and Italian Village Historic Districts, the Country Club of Coral Gables Historic District, and the Church of the Little Flower Historic District. In 1940, a pattern book of architect-designed homes titled Homes of the Year included a Tropical Colonial designed by them.

In the 1940s, they joined forces with Harold Steward. Steward was a leading architect in South Florida for over fifty years. Born in Asbury Park, NJ, he earned his architecture degree from Syracuse University and served in the Navy during World War I. Steward worked as a draftsman in Walter DeGarmo's firm in the early 1920s. In 1924 he opened a private practice with Phineas Paist,

forming Paist & Steward. Paist also became the Supervising Architect for the newly incorporated City of Coral Gables - a post he held until his death in 1937. After Paist's death, Steward and the Skinners were joint architects on several projects and formalized their partnership in 1944 as Steward & Skinner Architects. One of their first projects was the Church of the Little Flower complex. During War II Steward served as head of the local Federal Housing Authority in Coral Gables. Also, during the war, Steward & Skinner were the designers on several projects in Key West. These included the Naval hospital and the Key West airport terminal building. Over the next thirty years the firm designed numerous high-profile and notable projects. These include Miami Seaquarium; original Miami International Airport Terminal; Dade County Auditorium; Mercy Hospital; and Jackson Memorial Hospital including the University of Miami Science Building and Medical School.



Coulton Skinner (right), c.1926

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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

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

Designed in 1937 in the Mediterranean Transitional style the property at 739 Aledo Avenue (legally described as Lot 19 & the East 1/2 of Lot 20, Block 125, Coral Gables Country Club Section Part Six, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 20, at Page 1 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida) is significant to the City of Coral Gables’ history based on the following **three (3) criteria** found in the Coral Gables Zoning Code, Article 8, Section 8-103:

A. Historical, Cultural significance

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

B. Architectural significance

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

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

Staff finds the following:

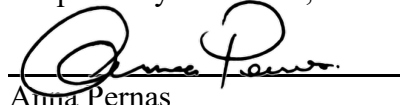
The property at 739 Aledo Avenue is significant to the City of Coral Gables history based on:

HISTORICAL, CULTURAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Therefore, Staff recommends the following:

A motion to **APPROVE** the Local Historic Designation of the property at **739 Aledo Avenue** (legally described as Lot 19 & the East 1/2 of Lot 20, Block 125, Coral Gables Country Club Section Part Six according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 20, at Page 1 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida) based on its historical, cultural, and architectural significance.

Respectfully submitted,



Anna Pernas

Historic Preservation Officer

Selected References

- 1940s Archival Photographs, City of Coral Gables, Historical Resources Department.
- Aerial Photography: Florida Collection. 2004-2011, University of Florida George A. Smathers Libraries.
- Building Microfilm Records for 739 Aledo Avenue, Building and Zoning Department, Coral Gables, Florida.
- Building Permits Record Books, City of Coral Gables, Historical Resources Department.
- McAlester, Virginia, A Field Guide to American Houses, Alfred A. Knopf, 2015.
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- Miami-Dade County Property Appraisers Department Records.
- Miami-Dade County Clerk, County Records.
- Newspapers.com
Miami Herald
“739 Aledo Ave – sold” Morris to Enciso, February 1, 1979, p.145.
“W. Clayton Getty, Contractor” obituary, July 13, 1968, p.47.
“Spanish Elegance: 739 Aledo Ave for sale” April 1, 1975, p.50.
“Welcome Sir Knights: 739 Aledo Ave For Sale” July 18, 1937, p.28.
“Country Club Section Part 6, Whitten to Hamilton” June 6, 1937, p.31.
Miami News
“Littledale, Jessie E.” obituary, September 14, 1967, p.21.
“Littledale Rites Set” Harold Littledale, December 20, 1955, p.16.
“New Firm Will Design Houses” July 17, 1925, p.12.
- Parks, Arva Moore. *George Merrick’s Coral Gables “Where Your ‘Castles in Spain’ Are Made Real!”* Ponce Circle Development LLC with Centennial Press, Miami, Florida, 2006.
- Polk, R. L. R. L. Polk and Company’s Miami City Directory. Jacksonville, Florida: R. L. Polk and Co., various editions.
- Real Estate Records for 739 Aledo Avenue, Coral Gables Historical Resources Department.
- Roy, Joaquin. The Streets of Coral Gables: Their Names and Meanings. Ideas ’92 Publications, 1989.
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1924 updated through 1950. On file, City of Coral Gables, Historical Resources Department.
- United States Census Records, various years.

REVIEW GUIDE

Definition:

The Review Guide comprises of some of the extant and character-defining features, which contribute to the overall significance of the structure and/or district. Hallmark and character-defining features are the *visual and physical features that give a building its identity and distinctive character*.

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

Every historic building is unique, with its own identity and its own distinctive character. Character refers to all those visual aspects and physical features that comprise the appearance of every historic building. Character-defining features are the visual and physical features that give a building its identity and distinctive character. They may include the overall building shape, its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, features, and aspects of its site and environment.

Use:

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

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

Property Address:	739 Aledo Avenue
Lot Description:	interior lot
Date of Construction:	1937
Use:	single-family residence
Style:	Mediterranean Transitional
Construction Material:	concrete block covered with smooth stucco
Stories:	one-story
Roof Types:	gabled, clad in barrel tile

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

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Style: Mediterranean Transitional



- ✓ Emphasis: horizontality and geometry
- ✓ Plan & Height: regular and rectangular, one-story built over a crawl space
- ✓ Primary Exterior Materials: smooth stucco
- ✓ Roof: low-pitched side-gabled, front-gabled, clad in barrel tile
- ✓ Recessing and projecting bays with a focus on geometric forms
- ✓ Garage: front-facing, built-in
- ✓ Fenestration: recessed without sills; originally metal casement windows; dominant shallow-arched front façade opening with a horizontal emphasis
- ✓ Entry: Segmental arch covered entry with original cascading, bull-nosed tiled steps
- ✓ Detailing:
 - triangular brick ‘vents’ in front gable end
 - barrel tile vents in triangular grouping in side gable ends
 - thin brick horizontal lines across front façade
 - incised horizontal lines wrapping around the home
 - simple rafter tails and fascia board
 - visually prominent rectangular chimney