

**REPORT OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES
HISTORICAL RESOURCES & CULTURAL ARTS DEPARTMENT
TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
ON THE DESIGNATION OF
THE PROPERTY AT
1139 VENETIA AVENUE
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA**



Historic Photo, c.1940



**LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION:
1139 VENETIA AVENUE, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA**

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

Application: Board of Architects directive

Folio Number: 03-4107-018-4140

Legal Description: Lot 4, Block 36, Coral Gables Granada Section Revised, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8, at Page 113 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Original Permit No. & Date: #1456, permitted September 1925

Original Architect: S. M. Ives

Present Owner: Habib Jose Fadel & Ana S. Garcia

Building Type / Style: One-story SFR / Mediterranean Revival

Site Characteristics: The property is located on an interior lot on the north side that spans from Venetia Avenue to Venetia Terrace at the head of Tangier Street. The lot dimension is 50' by 110'.

Historical Resources &
Cultural Arts

2327 Salzedo Street
Coral Gables
Florida, 33134

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SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Permitted in September 1925, the home at 1139 Venetia Avenue is amongst the earliest homes built in the City. Coral Gables was launched during the South Florida real estate boom of the 1920s and founder George Merrick drew from the Garden City and City Beautiful movements to create his vision for a fully-conceived and cohesively-designed Mediterranean-inspired city. It is now considered one of the first modern planned communities in the United States.

Designed in the Mediterranean Revival style by architect S. Martin Ives, it embraces the aesthetics and climate adaptations of the style as developed by Merrick's design team. Built in the Granada Section, 1139 Venetia Avenue represents Merrick's plan for this area. In 1923, in accordance with Garden City precepts, some streets in the new Granada Section were intentionally platted with smaller lots for modest homes. In accordance with Merrick's vision, these smaller homes were built with the same high-quality construction and Mediterranean Revival style features as other structures that shaped the new city in the early 1920s. They are recognized as an important feature in the initial planning of Coral Gables and 1139 Venetia Avenue is an example.

While there have been alterations to the home over the last century, it is still easily recognized as a small 1920s Mediterranean Revival style home designed in accordance with Merrick's vision. Thus, the property at 1139 Venetia Avenue significantly contributes to the historic fabric of the City and is part of the collection of quality residences built during the land boom era that contributes to Coral Gables' 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 the 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 1139 Venetia 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, 1139 Venetia Avenue meets the following **three (3)** criteria:

A. Historical, Cultural significance

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

B. Architectural significance

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

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

HISTORIC CONTEXT

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

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

Constructed in 1925, the single-family residence at 1139 Venetia Avenue occurred during the City's first phase of development and is indicative of the type of architecture that was the founding premise of Coral Gables.

Founding Coral Gables



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

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 E. 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 and 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. (Figure 1)

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. It was one of the featured selling points for his community. The architecture constructed during Coral Gables' initial development combined elements commonly used in Spanish, Moorish, and Italian architecture and has come to be known as the Mediterranean Revival style. During the 1920s structures and amenities were built almost exclusively per this style.

Merrick's design team carefully planned the city to maximize the potential intrinsic to its tropical environment. They laid out broad sweeping boulevards with grand vistas and tree-lined streets, plazas with fountains that invited visitors to linger, and Mediterranean-inspired homes that conveyed a quality

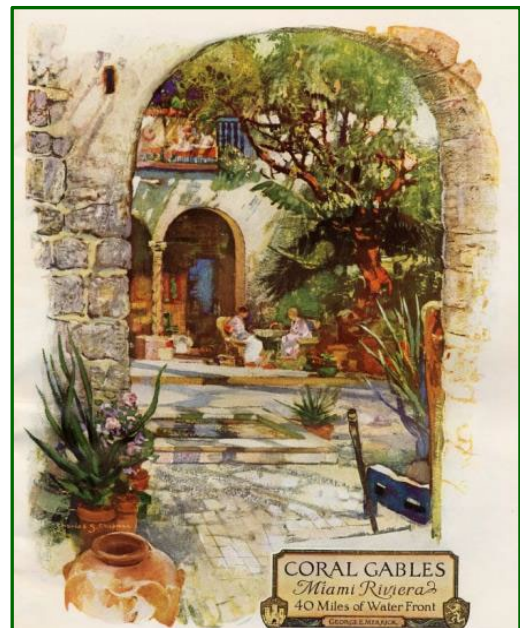
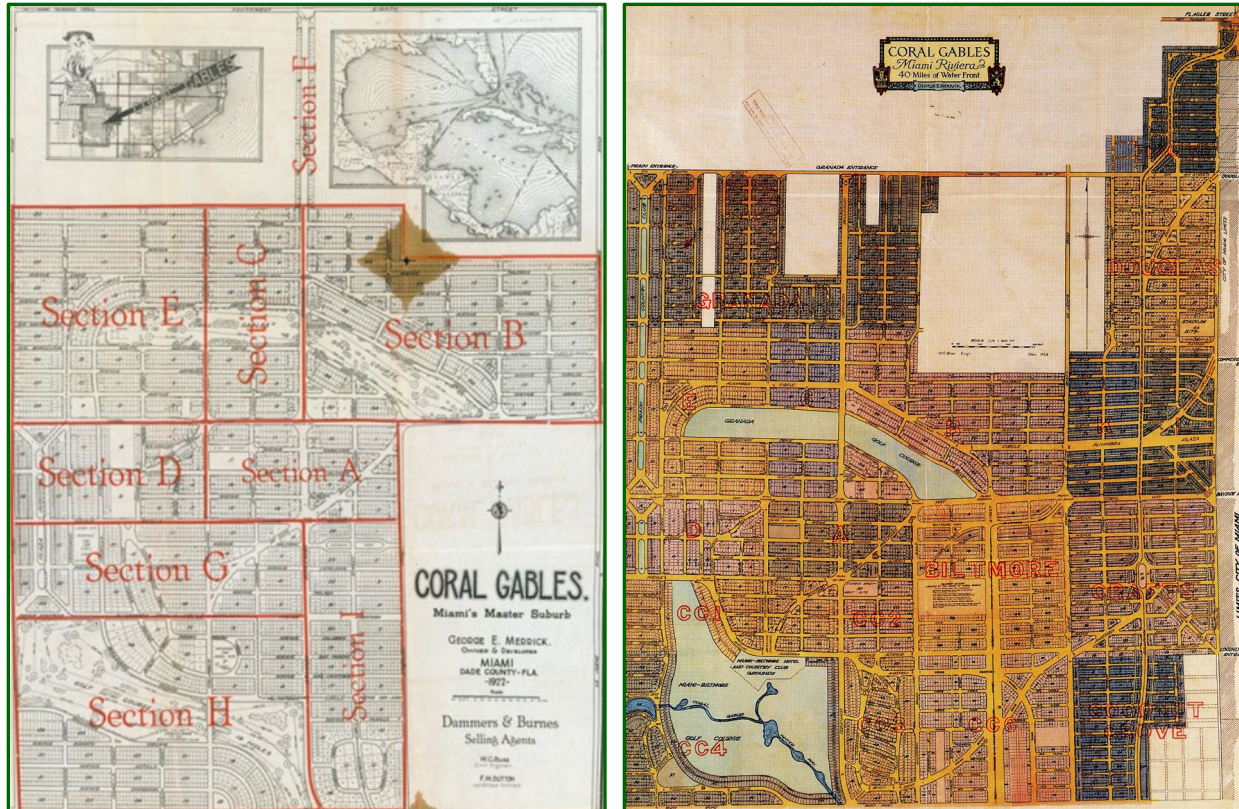


Figure 2: Advertisement in *House Beautiful*, 1925

of centuries-old permanence with generous street setbacks for front yards that celebrated the ‘tropical vegetation in a delightful profusion.’ They employed restrictive zoning to control development and aesthetics. The plan embraced the City Beautiful ideals of copious amounts of public green space, tree-lined streets, and monumental public buildings. It also wholeheartedly incorporated the Garden City precepts of comprehensive planning with defined areas for different uses (i.e., residential, commercial, trades), supplying a wealth of public facilities, and offering housing for different income levels without sacrificing quality. Homes built for modest incomes were built alongside grand palazzos and a section of the City was devoted to multi-family housing.



Figures 3: Coral Gables Maps
“Miami’s Master Suburb,” 1922 [left]
“Miami Riviera,” 1924 [right]

The first lots went on sale in November 1921. They were in Section A, the area immediately south of Merrick’s family home. Section B opened on December 27, 1921, and included the impressive Greenway Drives surrounding the proposed golf course and Alhambra Circle, a wide boulevard with a ‘parked’ center median. In January 1922 Section C was released for sale. Sales were brisk and, as shown on the 1922 map of Coral Gables (Figures 3), the remainder of the suburb was quickly divided into sections.

Sales were brisk. Merrick continued to build infrastructure, public buildings, and amenities. He built a large sales force and launched a nationwide campaign to draw both investors and residents. Merrick also prioritized amassing more land. Figures 3 shows the expansion of Coral Gables in just two years.

The Granada Section & Garden City Precepts

Accounts indicate that acquiring land north to Tamiami Trail was a priority and a hard-fought endeavor for Merrick. As illustrated on Button’s 1922 map in Figures 3, while Granada Boulevard connected to the Tamiami Trail, Merrick only owned the small strips of land to either side (Section F). By 1923, with the acquisition of various tracts of land—some lot by lot—he replatted and renamed this area the Granada Section. (Figures 3 & 4)

The Granada Section spanned from Red Road (SW 57th Avenue) on the west, to Cortez Street on the east, and from Tamiami Trail (SW 8th Street) on the north, to Milan and Mendoza Avenues on the south. Merrick continued to purchase additional tracts in this area over the next several years. He was unable to buy the property to the east of Cortez Street and this area remains as unincorporated Miami-Dade County to this day. (Figures 3)

When first launching Coral Gables during 1921-22, Merrick’s team designed and built homes throughout the community to demonstrate their Mediterranean-inspired vision. In 1923, as Merrick substantially increased his land holdings, he began to develop streetscapes following Garden City precepts. Unlike earlier sections, the Granada Section was platted with large areas allocated for moderately-priced and smaller-sized homes.

To showcase his vision for these homes, Merrick commissioned architects H. George Fink, Martin Hampton, and Lewis Brumm to design fifty-eight homes that (Figures 5):

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

Their distribution was: eight on Milan Avenue, twelve on Ferdinand Street, eighteen on Genoa Street, six on Capri Street, and fourteen on Pizarro Avenue.

The Granada Gateway—Located in the Center of the New Granada Section

**Granada Section—
 Another Opportunity**

The Surpassing Beauty of Coral Gables—the Wonderful Development of Coral Gables—the Remarkable Growth of Coral Gables—are all here Combined to Form a Most Extraordinary Investment Opportunity in the New Granada Section

The first offering of building lots in the Granada Section was made on Monday morning. The immediate and enthusiastic response of the buying public revealed the keen interest which is felt in all matters included in the remarkable development of Coral Gables.

To fix clearly in your mind the splendid location of the Granada Section, just remember that it centers around the two most beautiful architectural features in Coral Gables. The first of these is the magnificent Granada Entrance on S. W. Eighth Street; the second is the still larger and more beautiful Prado Entrance and Country Club Prado, now in course of construction.

Adopting these two surpassingly beautiful features into the Granada Section, bounded on the north by S. W. Eighth St. (Tamiami Trail) and on the south by Ohio St., Alhambra Circle and the Coral Gables golf course. This part of Coral Gables has been the scene of greatest development during the past year, and will continue to be for all of next year.

In the Granada Section eighty-six homes, ranging in cost from \$7,500 to \$15,000 each, are now in course of construction. Within a few months the Granada Section will take its rightful place as one of the most beautiful parts of Miami's most beautiful suburb.

NOTE—AND FOR A SHORT TIME ONLY, WHILE THE DEVELOPMENT WORK IS CARRIED ON—THE BEST GRANADA SECTION LOTS AT EXTREMELY REASONABLE PRICES.

Get the complete facts regarding Granada Section from Coral Gables sales representatives. It's a rare opportunity—and which has not been offered within five years! Check out and see the Granada Section today!

CORAL GABLES
Miami's Master Suburb

**Figure 4: Miami News
 November 22, 1923**

**START 40 DWELLINGS;
 15 MILES OF STREETS**

Opening of New 450-Acre Granada Section Results in Huge Building Program.

CONSTRUCTION of 15 miles of additional streets and approximately 30 miles of sidewalks will be started within the next week at Coral Gables, under the supervision of J. W. Ricketts, superintendent of construction.

Ten miles will be laid in the north-west corner of the suburb, opening up an entirely new section—the Granada—which comprises about 450 acres. At the same time the construction of 30 new homes, moderately priced, and from new and original designs by H. George Fink, Martin L. Hampton and Louis D. Brumm, will be started in the Granada section.

**Figures 5:
 Miami Herald
 September 24, 1923**

THE group of 40 new homes will be the first of a large number of residences to go up in the Granada section. While they are not expensive, they will represent the best of architecture. They will embody new and radical departures from the usual type of small house designing, with compactness, beauty and comfort that will appeal to smaller families. Most of the new homes will contain two bedrooms, combination living and dining rooms, kitchens with sink, cabinet, electric tank and water heater, and bath, with fixtures built in; garages linked artistically with the houses; screened loggias and large and delightfully planted patios with winding walks of flagstone paving, and unique lanterns of early Spanish designs, Gothic entrances, imported Spanish tile roofs, cypress beams and archways.

In addition, the same care will be taken with landscaping surrounding grounds as about the costliest homes in the suburb.

The homes will probably be completed by the first of next year and will be ready for occupancy at that time.

“I am confident that these homes will be entirely unique in Florida,” H. George Fink, architect, who has designed many of the most beautiful homes in Coral Gables, said. “While 40 will be built at the same time, each home will be different in design and appearance. Repetition will be entirely avoided. Individual care has been taken with the plans for each of the homes and the result, I believe, will be astonishing.”

In October 1923 the launching of the Granada Section became Merrick's highest priority. He redirected hundreds of workers to lay streets, sidewalks, and watermains. By November these fifty-eight moderately-priced homes, amongst others, were under construction in the Granada Section.

In Merrick's 1925 publication *Coral Gables Miami Riviera: Heart of the American Tropics*, he waxed poetic about the moderately-priced Mediterranean Revival style homes, in this manner:

A small house, in which every detail is a joy, is made beautiful with a cloistered entrance whose slightly pointed arched and carved columns lead to an open patio, as finely thought out and executed as a Renaissance palace, and as beautiful in its setting. Another small house, whose wall spaces are unusually simple, has as its chief decoration an entrance loggia with a group of three round arches, the middle slightly higher than the other two, separated by twisted columns so delicate and right that no other decoration is necessary. Even grouped ventilator holes are made to play delightful part in the design of a whole house front, and such inconspicuous details as in the iron work of a window, the trim of a chimney, the curve of a garage roof, the right placing of a huge Spanish water jar to break the surface pattern of an open veranda, are harmonious, styled, architecturally right.

As intended, these homes provided a model for, and sparked interest in, developing the Granada Section with moderately-priced homes. Built in 1925, 1139 Venetia Avenue was one of the homes that aided in developing the Granada Section in accordance with Merrick's Garden City vision. Many of these smaller homes are now known as Coral Gables Cottages. (see section below)

Frequently at night Mrs. Merrick and I drive through Coral Gables. We go into moderate-priced sections, and we find something which gives me even more pride in the accomplishment of an ideal—people who formerly used stock plans can now have a well-appointed home... it is gratifying to see the difference in the attractiveness of one of our very moderately priced houses as compared to a of similar cost in the unrestricted section of Miami.

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

Coral Gables Cottage Ordinance

In accordance with Garden City and City Beautiful tenets, founder George Merrick planned Coral Gables to provide housing and amenities for all income levels. The initial homes built were larger to attract investors. In 1923, with the platting of the Granada Section, Merrick shifted to demonstrate his vision for modest homes and as discussed above, commissioned homes towards that end. These initial homes were well-received. In the mid-1920s modest homes, detailed to harmonize with the larger Mediterranean Revival style houses, were built throughout the City. This includes the home at 1139 Venetia Avenue. They are an important piece of Coral Gables' early history.

In 1993, the City of Coral Gables took official action to aid in the recognition and preservation of these significant resources and passed a "Cottage Ordinance." Its stated purpose is to "maintain and preserve the architectural quality and character of Coral Gables' traditional, small scale, residential neighborhoods by encouraging the preservation of the existing Coral Gables Cottage style houses." An amendment to the Zoning Code enacted special incentives to cottage owners whose properties met specific requirements to be classified as a "Coral Gables Cottage." The current Coral Gables Cottage Regulations are found in Article 8, Section 8-200 of the Coral Gables

Zoning Code. It defines the Coral Gables Cottage as a detached, single-family dwelling which is distinguished by its movement in plan, projection and recessions, asymmetrical arrangement of entrances, frequently employed surface ornament for embellishment and at least twelve of nineteen specific Mediterranean Revival Style features which are original to the cottage. A cottage property must be one-story in height, zoned SFR, constructed prior to 1940, have a frontage no greater than sixty-five feet, and be designated as a local historic landmark. The nineteen features are:

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

1139 Venetia Avenue was designed in the cottage typology and could qualify for classification as a Coral Gables Cottage and the associated Zoning incentives, with the return of some of the original features, at the owner's request.

1139 Venetia Avenue

Permitted in September 1925 (Permit #1456, see Attachment A), 1139 Venetia Avenue is a one-story, moderately-priced, single-family home. It is located in the Granada Section and demonstrates the City Beautiful tenets espoused by City founder George Merrick. Designed in the Mediterranean Revival style by architect S. Martin Ives (Figure 6), it embraces the aesthetics and climate adaptations of the style developed by Merrick's design team. Information on Ives is scarce. He earned his degree from Columbia University and arrived in Miami in 1924. Newspapers record a few apartment buildings and stores in Miami prior to the hurricane and no work in the area afterwards. A review of permit books suggests that this may be the only home he designed in Coral Gables. The home was built for Glenn M. McConnell, a young art director from New York. In August 1926 McConnell and the home were featured in a full-page ad issued by Merrick's sales department. (Figure 7)

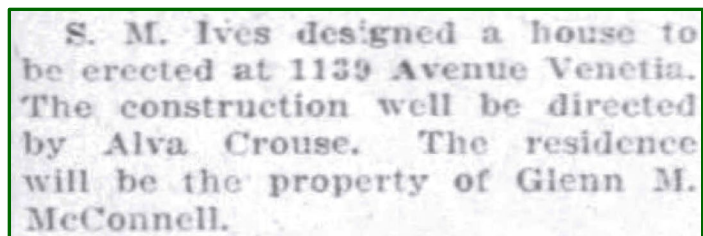


Figure 6: 1139 Venetia Avenue
Miami Tribune, September 16, 1925



Home of Mr. I. G. McConnell, 1139 Avenue Venetia.

Miami's Enterprising Young Men Seize Opportunity in Coral Gables

CORAL GABLES is the home of business opportunity as well as the ground-floor of investment and the ideal in home-location. For all these, and many other reasons, Coral Gables is attracting to its residential sections enterprising young men of Miami, as well as the business and social leaders of the South's metropolis.

During the development of Coral Gables, and most strikingly during the last twelve months, the business community of this suburban city has grown by leaps and bounds. Business buildings are being erected and occupied even before completion. More than five hundred occupational licenses representing that number of firms or individuals, and embracing more than 100 lines of business, are firmly established in Coral Gables. Many of them are new enterprises or branches of well-known Miami merchants. Ford, Hudson-Essex and Nash are represented in the automobile circle of Coral Gables commercial section.

The growth of business in Coral Gables, to supply the insistent demand of a vast and growing residential population, has given rise to opportunities for supplying the needs of merchants. This opportunity has been seized by Mr. I. G. McConnell, commercial artist, who has established his business here in view of the vast business growth.

Mr. McConnell came to Miami more than three years ago from Niagara Falls, N. Y. A graduate of the Pratt Institute of Brooklyn, N. Y., he became Art Director of the Miami High School. Later he declined an invitation to join the faculty of the University of Florida at Gainesville, and started developing his own business in Coral Gables.

There are just as good opportunities for enterprising young men of Miami in Coral Gables as the opportunity which appealed to the initiative of Mr. McConnell. There are just as good opportunities for the securing and establishment of an ideal home, in surroundings ideal in an artistic as well as in a business sense. But the best time to seize the advantage that belongs to the Miamian, in being on the spot when the best opportunities offer, is NOW. If the young Miamian allows himself to be beaten to the ground-floor opportunities, by enterprising young men from outside, he isn't awake to his own interests.

Consult our Homes Department, or see our Sales Department about a selection of lots in Greater Miami's best investment area today.



Why I Prefer Coral Gables

The charm and dignity of Coral Gables, combined with its peaceful atmosphere, led me to build our home here. To our minds, there is no finer nor more stable, substantial section of Greater Miami, with its fast-growing public utilities and shopping district.

— I. G. MCCONNELL.

Executive Offices:
 Administration Building
 Coral Gables

Miami Beach Office:
 Roney's Miami Beach Casino

Miami Sales Office:
 152-154-156-158 E. Flagler Street



AN INVITATION

You are invited to be the guest of Coral Gables on Thursday afternoon, 3:30 to 5 o'clock, at Salon Maritimo, 23rd Street and the Ocean opposite the Roney Plaza, Miami Beach. Music by Jo Astoria's Famous Orchestra. Dance if you wish. No admission charge. Afternoon tea served free. Women's organizations and men's clubs may hold their meetings and functions at the Salon free of charge, any day except Thursdays. For reservations call M. B. 2424.

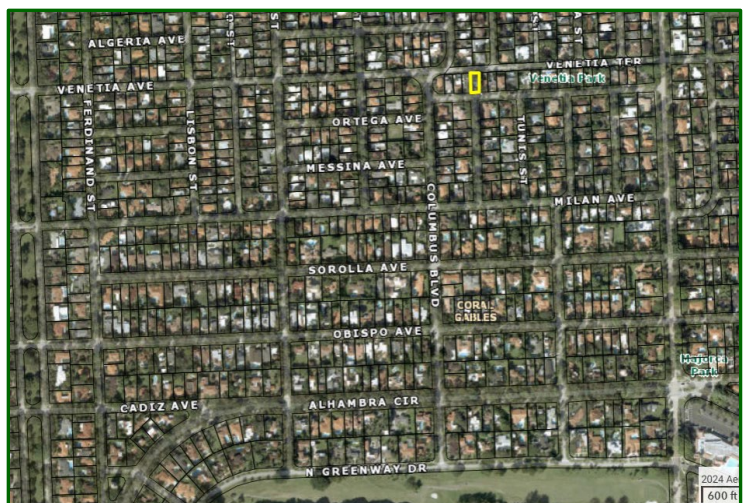
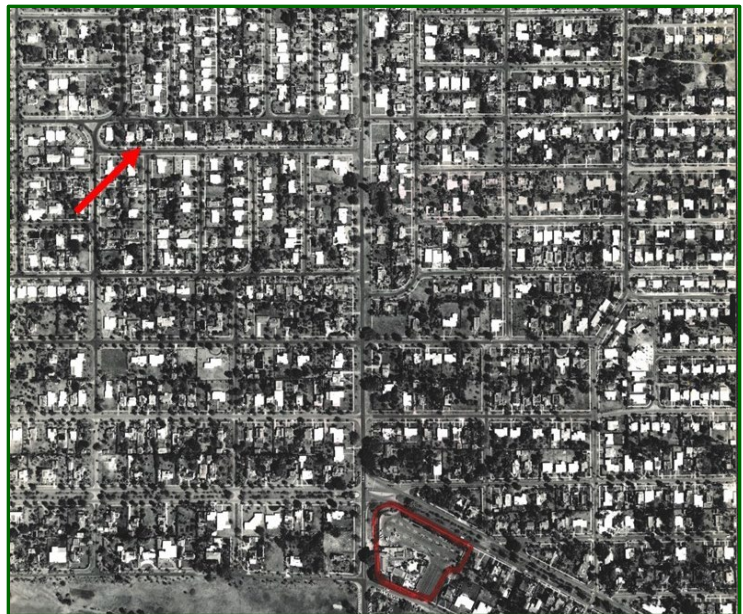
Figure 7: Coral Gables Ad Featuring Glenn McConnell and 1139 Venetia Avenue
 Miami Daily News & Metropolis, August 11, 1926

Context

In general, construction in the City of Coral Gables boomed until the combination of the devastating Hurricane of 1926 and the Great Depression curtailed new development and ended Merrick’s grand plans. The 1938 aerial photo in Figures 8 (top) shows that few homes were built on Venetia Avenue during the 1920s and that construction in the Granada Section was scattered.

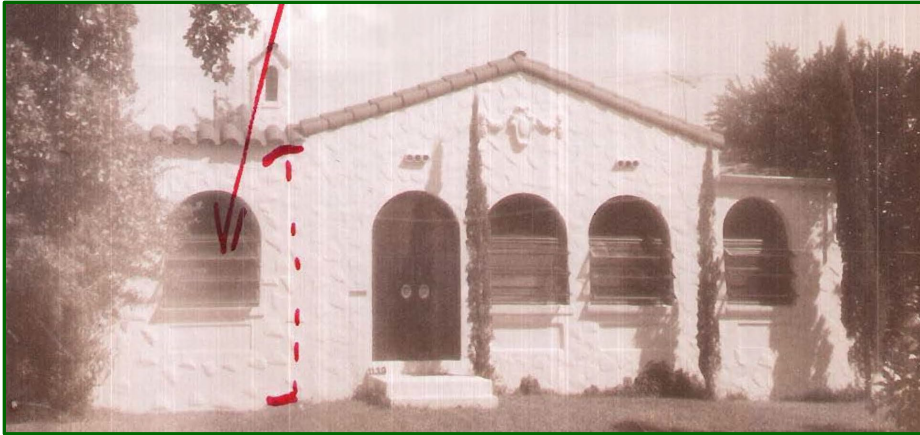
During the Depression Era building was sparse. With the implementation of the New Deal and other incentives, the building industry experienced a small resurgence in the late 1930s only to abruptly grind to a halt during the War years. Homes built during this time ushered in an architectural shift. They began to follow national trends and departed from the picturesque Mediterranean Revival style that dominated the City since its inception. 1139 Venetia Avenue remains as one of the scattered Mediterranean Revival style homes in the area.

The Post-War prosperity and optimism following these lean years reigned in the 1950s. It resulted in a building boom during which home building followed national trends. The Granada Section saw marked construction. (Figures 8) Merrick platted it as a single-family neighborhood and it remains so to date. Thus, the Mediterranean Revival style home at 1139 Venetia Avenue retains its historic context and stands amongst modern styles as a reminder of the City’s roots.



**Figures 8: Aerial Photographs
1139 Venetia Avenue
1938 [top]; 1957 [center];
Current, 2023 [bottom]**

SIGNIFICANCE ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION



Figures 9:
1139 Venetia Avenue
Front (South) Façade
Over Time

Top to Bottom:

August 11, 1926
*Miami Daily News &
Metropolis*

March 1948

1976
*Courtesy Miami-Dade
Property Appraiser*

Current, 2024

Executive Summary

Permitted in September 1925, the home at 1139 Venetia Avenue is amongst the earliest homes built in the City. Coral Gables was launched during the South Florida real estate boom of the 1920s and founder George Merrick drew from the Garden City and City Beautiful movements to create his vision for a fully-conceived and cohesively-designed Mediterranean-inspired city. It is now considered to be one of the first modern planned communities in the United States.

Built in the Granada Section, 1139 Venetia Avenue represents Merrick's plan for this area. In 1923, in accordance with Garden City precepts, some streets in the new Granada Section were intentionally platted with smaller lots for modest homes. These smaller homes were built with the same high-quality construction and Mediterranean Revival style features as other structures that shaped the new city in the early 1920s. They are recognized as an important feature in the initial planning of Coral Gables and 1139 Venetia Avenue is an example.

Merrick's team felt that Mediterranean-inspired architecture harmonized best with south Florida's climate and lifestyle. This home demonstrated their vision for adapting residential design to the rigors of South Florida's climate while maintaining the integrity of the Mediterranean Revival style. Its thick masonry walls were intended to keep the home cool and its light-colored stucco exterior to reflect the sun's heat. The window placement afforded much needed ventilation in this tropical environment. It is constructed over a crawl space for added ventilation and separation from the high-water table. A porte cochere (now enclosed) provided a covered entry to the home and screened front and rear sleeping porches (now both enclosed) were positioned to catch tropical breezes in this pre-air-conditioned era. The home also possesses numerous character-defining features of the Mediterranean Revival style. These include but are not limited to:

textured stucco finish; bays under roofs of varied types and heights; barrel tiled pitched roofs; parapeted flat roofs with barrel tile copings; applied masonry swag plaque under front gable; series of arched openings; front porch and porte cochere (both now enclosed); distinctive Italian-inspired chimney with shouldered stack; inset panels under front porch openings, wing walls (home & garage); decoratively arranged groups of round vents; recessed windows (originally single-hung) with protruding sills, and a detached garage. These features are illustrated and discussed below.



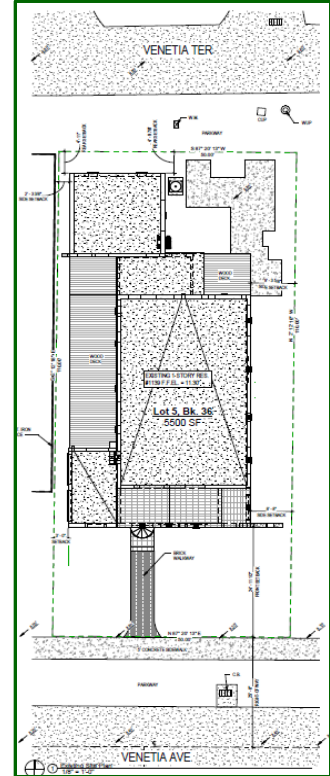
Figure 10: Textured Stucco & Decorative Masonry Swag, 2024

front porch and porte cochere (both now enclosed); distinctive Italian-inspired chimney with shouldered stack; inset panels under front porch openings, wing walls (home & garage); decoratively arranged groups of round vents; recessed windows (originally single-hung) with protruding sills, and a detached garage. These features are illustrated and discussed below.

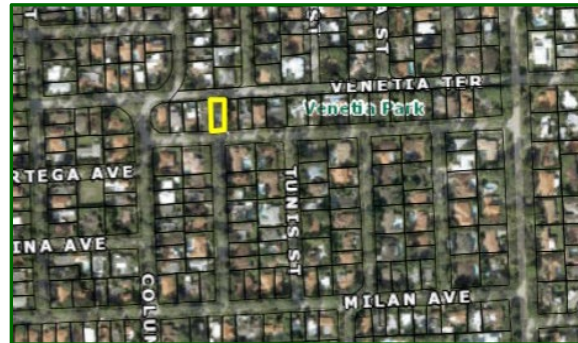
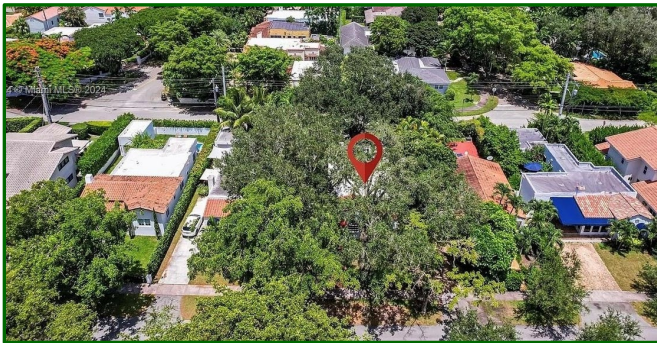
Assessment of building documents and historic photos indicates that alterations, some of which are easily reversible, occurred over the past century. However, it is still easily recognized as a small 1920s Mediterranean Revival style home designed in accordance with Merrick's vision. As per Article 8, 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 have determined that this property possesses sufficient integrity for designation. Thus, the property at 1139 Venetia Avenue significantly contributes to the historic fabric of the City and is part of the collection of quality residences built during the land boom era that contributes to the Coral Gables' sense of place over time.

Extant Exterior Description and Alteration Discussion

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



Figures 11: 1139 Venetia Avenue
Front (South) Façade, 2025 [top]
Current Site Plan, 2024 [right]
Courtesy NOVUS Archetype
Current Aerials, 2024 [bottom]
Courtesy Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser

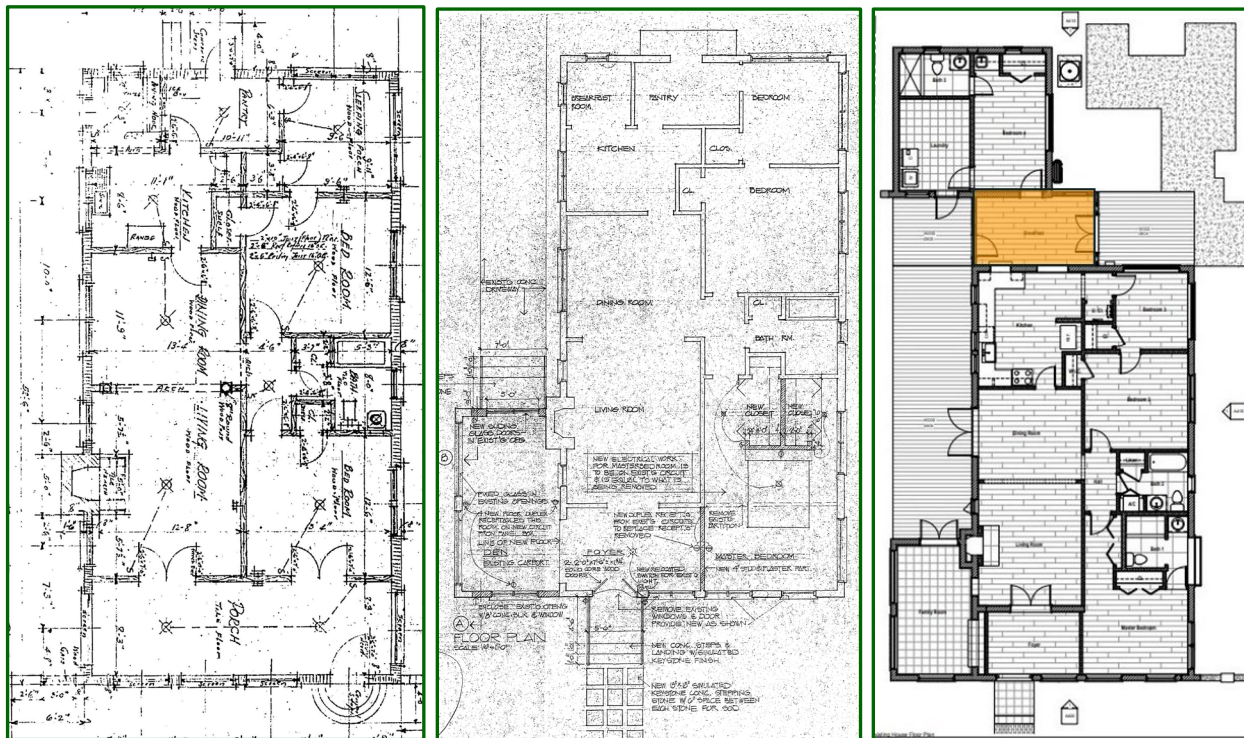


1139 Venetia Avenue is a 50' x 110' south-facing lot in the Granada Section. The 1000 and 1100 continuous block of Venetia Avenue is amongst the few areas in Coral Gables whose lots span street to street; in this case from Venetia Avenue to Venetia Terrace. 1139 Venetia Avenue is an interior lot with heavy vegetation, some of which has been recently cleared. The property comprises a single-family home centered on the lot and a garage located at the northwest corner. The home is approached by a concrete walkway from Venetia Avenue to the front entry steps. The driveway is off Venetia Terrace. (Figures 11)

Built over a crawl space, the one-story house is constructed of masonry block units and clad with distinctive textured stucco. Much of the living space (approx. 1,916 SF) of the home is under a flat roof with simple parapets. The pitched roofs on the front façade, over the original front porch, are clad in barrel tile. The tile was originally a two-piece cap-n-pan. The current S-tile roof was

installed in late 2024. The windows throughout the home are recessed with protruding sills and are predominantly awning and fixed in type. The windows were originally single-hung. On the east façade there are three windows that may be original to the home. (Figures 17 & 18) Round vents decoratively arranged in a line are above many of the original windows on all façades.

The home was designed as a two-bedroom home with a screened sleeping porch at its northeast corner (enclosed, pre-1948) and a full-length screened front porch. (Figures 12 [left] & Attachment A) The plans do not show a porte cochere, but it is in a photo of the home taken less than a year after permitting. (Figure 7) In the 1920s, amidst the flurry of building Merrick's dream, changes during construction often occurred. Since the chimney stack rises at the connection of the porte cochere it is clear that it was not part of the original design but added during construction or within months of completion. Other than enclosing the sleeping porch it appears that the home remained in its original configuration until the mid-1970s.



Figures 12: Floor Plans Over Time
Original 1925 [left]; 1976 Alterations [center] *Courtesy Les D. Beilinson, AIA*
Current 2024 [right] *Courtesy NOVUS Archetype*

In 1976 Les D. Beilinson submitted plans for alterations to the home. (Figures 12 & 13; Attachment B) It included enclosing and dividing the full-length screened porch for living space as well as moving the front door from the east end of the façade to the west. This accommodated the expansion of the master bedroom. The original front arched doorway was reduced in height and a sill and panel added to match the adjacent configurations. The rounded entry stairs were removed. At the west end the arched porch opening was expanded to accommodate the front door. (Figures 9) A fixed and awning window ensemble was installed in arched porch openings.

Also at this time, the porte cochere was also enclosed for living space. The front-facing vehicular opening was reduced and an arched awning window with a panel below to match the porch

openings was installed. The rear vehicular opening was infilled to accommodate a pair of full view French doors. Due to the change in stucco, the original openings are discernable. The west side arched openings were enclosed with fixed full-view windows. (Figures 12-14)

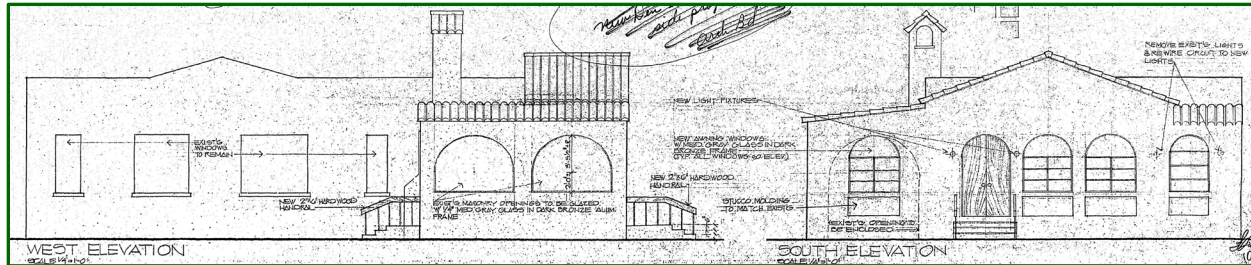
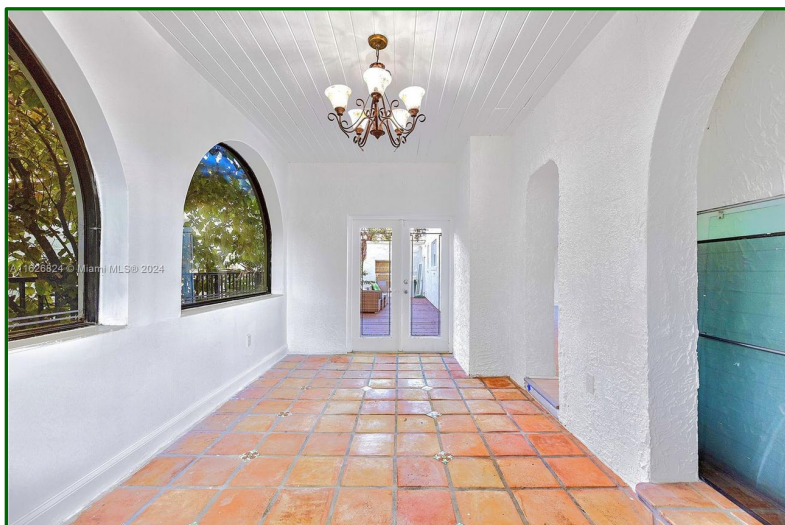
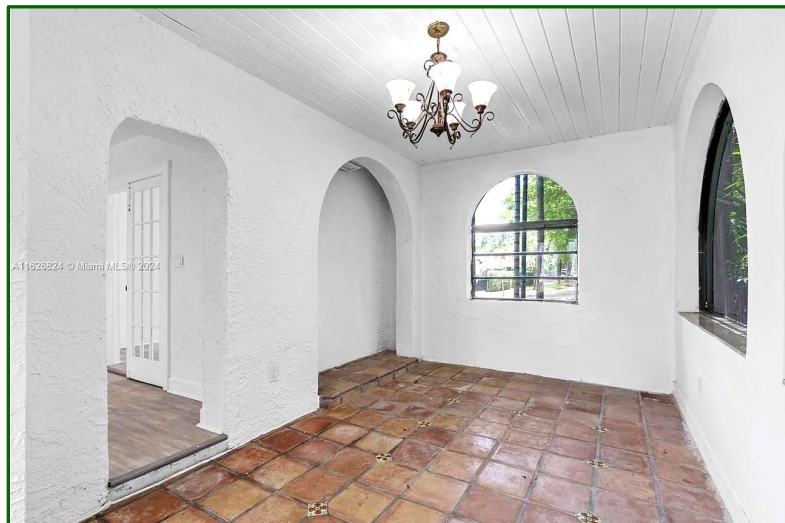


Figure 13: 1976 Alteration Drawings Courtesy Les D. Beilinson, AIA

Figures 14 are current photos of the enclosed porte cochere. As shown, the original archway leading from the porte cochere to the front porch, although blocked, is retained. The opening leading into the home was also retained.

Building records are clear that once the permit was filed by architect Les Beilinson all work and other aspects of the alterations were done by the owner. There are other alterations to the home for which permits have not been located. Beilinson’s permit does not include windows and doors other than porch and porte cochere but there are a number of windows around the home that are similar in type and workmanship that were replaced. These may also date to this general period. Also as called out in orange in Figures 12 there was a small addition that connected the home to the garage. (Figures 18 & 21) It appears to be in place by 1979 as the subsequent owner obliquely refers to it at a code enforcement meeting.



Figures 14:
Enclosed Porte Cochere, 2024
Looking South [top]
Looking North [bottom]
Courtesy Realtor.com



Figures 15: Front (South) Façade: 1926 [top]; 2025 [bottom]

On the front façade there are a variety of roof types and heights as is common in the Mediterranean Revival style. As discussed above, a front porch spanned across the front façade. A front-facing, low-pitched gable roof covered the porch's sitting area, and a lower shed roof marked the original location of the front entry. At the west end of the front façade the porte cochere is under a flat roof whose simple parapets were originally capped with a barrel tile coping. The arched openings across the facade are also representative of the style.

The front façade has several character-defining features of a Coral Gables cottage. Sweeping down at the southeast corner is a shouldered wing wall that ends as a base for a Mediterranean urn. (Figures 15 & 17) Below the windows are rectangular incised panels. These insets have a smooth texture in direct contrast to the very bumpy texture of the façade. On the gable face is an applied masonry decorative heraldic swag plaque (Figure 10) and above two of the arches three round vents are decoratively arranged in a line. The swag plaque and round vents were originally painted a dark color to call attention to them. (Figures 15)

One of the hallmark features of the home is the distinctive Italian-style, bell tower-inspired, chimney that rises through the northwest corner of the original porte cochere and is prominently visible from the street. The shouldering of the stack peaks out at the corner of the porte cochere.

The stack narrows to the top as it rises a half-story above the roof. At the top the chimney is capped by a barrel tile gable ‘roof.’ Below the cap, on all four faces are small arched openings with protruding sills reminiscent of belfry. (Figures 15-17)



**Figures 16:
Italian-inspired Chimney, 2024**
Courtesy Realtor.com



Figure 17: West Façade
Drawing, 2024 [top] *Courtesy NOVUS Archetype*



Figures 18: West Façade
Possible Original Single-Hung Windows, Exterior & Interior Views, 2024
Courtesy Realtor.com

As depicted in the 2024 drawing in Figure 17, the west façade is comprised of the enclosed porte cochere, chimney stack discussed above, and the main living portion under the flat roof with parapets. At the north end the roofline steps down to a flat roof over the small undated addition that connects the home to the garage. At the center of the west façade a pair of windows were enlarged to accommodate a pair of French doors. At the north end there are three single-hung windows in the kitchen that appear to be original to the home. The top sash has vertical high-profile muntins. (Figures 18) These windows should be used as a template for future window replacements.



Figure 19: East Elevation
Drawing, 2024 *Courtesy NOVUS Archetype*

In the foreground of the drawing in Figure 19 is the east elevation of the original home. These fenestration openings remain largely intact. (Figure 19) The arched opening behind the wing wall was originally part of the screened front porch. It was enclosed in the same manner as the front façade, and it likewise retains its incised panel. The adjacent window was originally a pair of single-hung windows. At an unknown date a bay window replaced the pair, and the opening was reduced. However, the original protruding remains intact and hence the initial size of the opening is easily discerned. (Figure 20) The remainder of the fenestration on this original façade retain their size.



Figure 20: East Façade Looking North, 2025

The horizontal openings at the north end were originally a screened opening of the sleeping porch. (Figures 19 & 21) 1948 sales ads list the home as a three-bedroom bungalow. (Figure 23) This suggests that the enclosing of the sleeping porch for a bedroom occurred prior to 1948. In the background of the elevation drawing in Figure 19 is the undated shed-roofed connector addition and the original garage. Figures 21 show the rear elevations of the home and garage. The sleeping porch opening and its associated round vents remain intact. The undated connector addition provided a new rear entry.



Figures 21: Rear Elevation: Home & Garage 2024
Photo [left] *Courtesy Realtor.com*; **Drawing [right]** *Courtesy NOVUS Archetype*

At the northwest corner of the property stands the original garage. It is a flat roofed structure with simple parapets. It is clad with stucco in the same 'bumpy' texture as the main home. At the southwest corner is a flared three-quarter-height wing wall. The 1926 photo in Figure 22 shows a portion of the structure and is the only image found to date. Access to the garage from Venetia Avenue was blocked when the porte cochere was enclosed in 1976. Glimpses of the current structure show that although the garage door was removed the opening remains recessed and discernable. Since the property spans two streets, the garage is still accessible from Venetia Terrace.

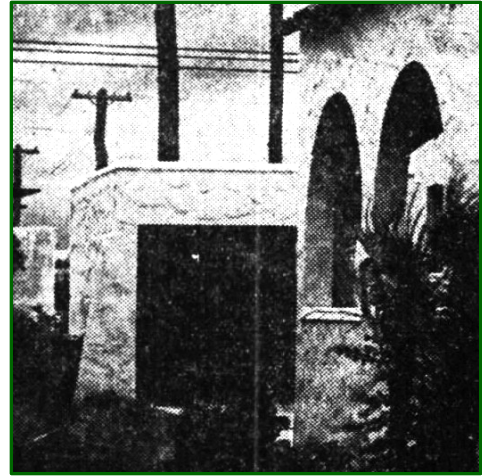
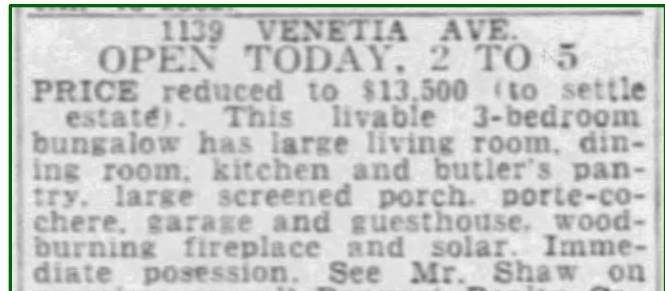
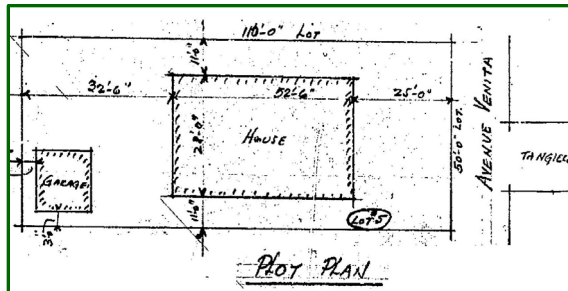


Figure 22: Garage Structure:
August 11, 1926
Miami Daily News & Metropolis

All indications are that it was designed as a one car garage and servants' quarters. The original plot plan shows the garage size as larger than a one car garage. (Figures 23) Realtor notes on the back of a photo dated March 5, 1948, describe this structure as a "1 car garage with one room and bath." In the 1948 sales ad (Figures 23) it is listed as a garage and guest quarters. In subsequent years roofing permits also cite the structure as having a guest quarters.



Figures 23: One Car Garage with Living Quarters
Original 1925 Plot Plan, Permit #1456 [left]
Sales Ad, May 8, 1948, *Miami Herald*

Ownership History

Note: Records of ownership prior to 1950 have not been located. Ownership for this period is based on numerous sources including R. L. Polk City Directories (available from 1926-65), building permits, realtor notes, and other public records.

1925-1929	Greg McConnell
1929-1948	Samuel P. McMinn (1867-1947) & Nannie A. McMinn (1875-1964)
1953-1960	A. G. Moore
1970-1979	Robert P. Foreman, Jr. & Mary D. Foreman
1979-1996	Arthur G. DeNunzio, Jr. & Elissa B DeNunzio
1996-2003	Geoffrey D. Biddulph & Sara C. Biddulph
2003-2022	Sara Corea
2022-2024	524 North Lake, LLC
2024-Present	Habib Jose Fadel & Ana S. Garcia

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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

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

Constructed in 1925 in the Mediterranean Revival Style the property at 1139 Venetia Avenue (legally described as Lot 4, Block 36, Coral Gables Granada Section Revised, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8, at Page 113, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida) is significant to the City of Coral Gables’ history based on the following **three (3) criteria** found in the Coral Gables Zoning Code, Article 8, Section 8-103:

A. Historical, Cultural significance

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

B. Architectural significance

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

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

Staff find the following:

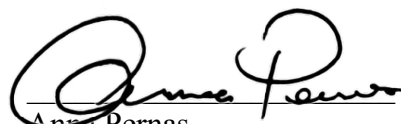
The property located at 1139 Venetia Avenue is significant to the City of Coral Gables history based on:

HISTORICAL, CULTURAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Therefore, Staff recommends the following:

A motion to **APPROVE** the Local Historic Designation of the property at **1139 Venetia Avenue** (legally described as Lot 4, Block 36, Coral Gables Granada Section Revised) based on its historical, cultural, and architectural significance.

Respectfully submitted,



Anna Pernas

Historic Preservation Officer

Selected References

- Archival Photograph Collection, City of Coral Gables, Historical Resources Department.
- Aerial Photography: Florida Collection. University of Florida George A. Smathers Libraries.
- Building Records, Building and Zoning Department, Microfilm Division, Coral Gables, Florida.
- Building Permit Record Books, City of Coral Gables, Historical Resources Department.
- McAlester, Virginia, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Alfred A. Knopf, 2015.
- Merrick, George, *Coral Gables Homes, Miami Florida*, c.1925.
Coral Gables Miami Riviera: Heart of the American Tropics, c.1925
- Miami-Dade County Clerk, County Property Records
- Milas, Aristide J. & Ellen Ugucconi, *Coral Gables Miami Riviera: an architectural guide*, University Press of Florida, 2004.
- Newspapers.com
- Florida Union Times
“Merrick’s Romantic Story of Great Coral Gables Development” June 28, 1925.
- Miami Herald
“Architects Busy Nights to Keep Even with Work” July 22, 1923, p.24.
“Coral Gables To Have Big Building Program: 50 Moderate Priced Homes to be Built in Northwest Section of Suburb” October 15, 1923, p.14.
“Merrick will Market New Granada Section” November 19, 1923, p.7.
- Miami News
“58 Residences Will Be Built in Coral Gables” November 1, 1923, p.1.
“Better Hurry! Only 30 Days More—Coral Gables Home Building Offer” November 4, 1922, p.24.
“Coral Gables Marks 15 Years of Progress Since Founding” April 4, 1940, p.17.
“Everyone Is Talking About What We Are Doing at Coral Gables” February 10, 1922, p.23.
“Granada Section – Another Opportunity” November 22, 1923, p.19.
“Opening Auction Sales at Coral Gables—Miami’s Master Suburb” November 25, 1921, p.18-19.
“Paving the Way for ‘Castles in Spain’” December 7, 1921, p.19.
- New York Times
“Miami and the story of its remarkable growth: an interview with George E. Merrick” March 15, 1925.
- Parks, Arva Moore, *George Merrick, Son of the South Wind: Visionary Creator of Coral Gables*, University Press of Florida, 2015.
- Polk, R. L. *R. L. Polk and Company's Miami City Directory*. Jacksonville, FL: R..L. Polk & Co.
- Real Estate Records, Historical Resources Department, Coral Gables, Florida.
- United State Census Bureau. Various years.

REVIEW GUIDE

Definition:

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

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

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

Use:

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

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

Property Address:	1139 Venetia Avenue
Lot Description:	interior lot
Date of Construction:	1925
Use:	single-family residence
Style:	Mediterranean Revival
Construction Material:	concrete block covered with textured stucco
Stories:	one-story
Roof Types:	flat, gable, shed

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 Revival

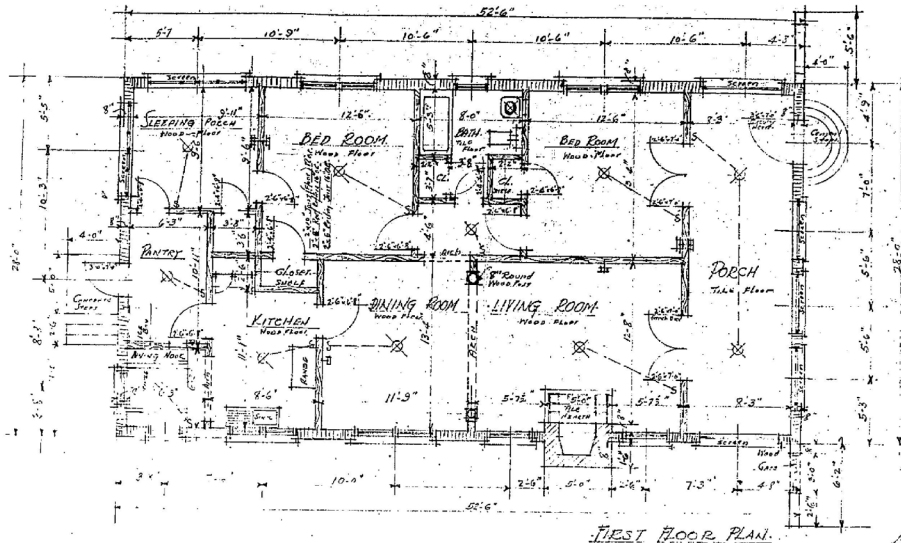


Includes but not limited to:

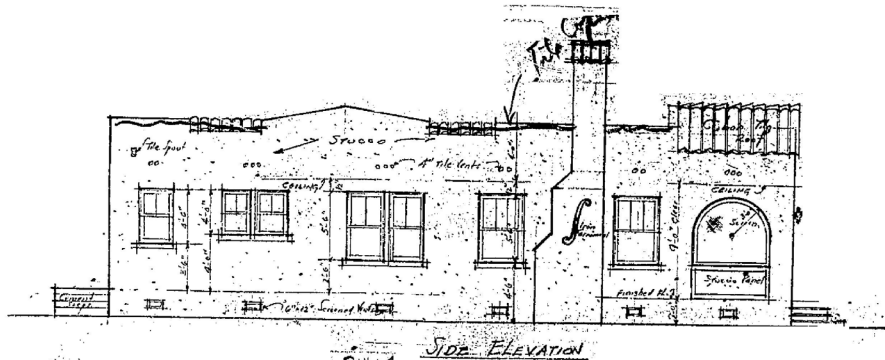
- ✓ thick masonry walls
- ✓ distinctive textured stuccoed exterior walls
- ✓ construction over a crawl space
- ✓ combination of roof types and heights
- ✓ window placement affording ventilation
- ✓ low-pitched roofs clad with barrel tile
- ✓ flat roof with parapets
- ✓ distinctive belfry-inspired chimney stack
- ✓ wing walls (home & garage)
- ✓ cast ornament applied to front elevation
- ✓ recessed panels below front façade openings
- ✓ decoratively arranged groups of round vents
- ✓ recessed windows (originally single-hung) with protruding sills
- ✓ a detached garage whose character matches the home
- ✓ series of arches on front elevation
- ✓ porte-cochere (now enclosed)
- ✓ front porch (now enclosed)

Appendix A: Permit #1456, September 1925

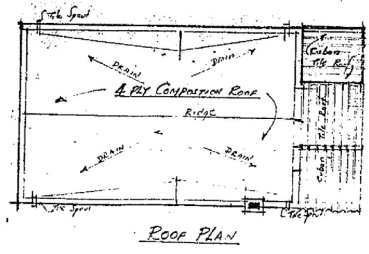
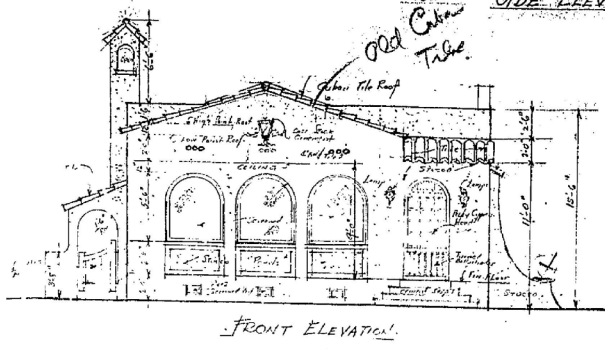
Architect: S. M. Ives



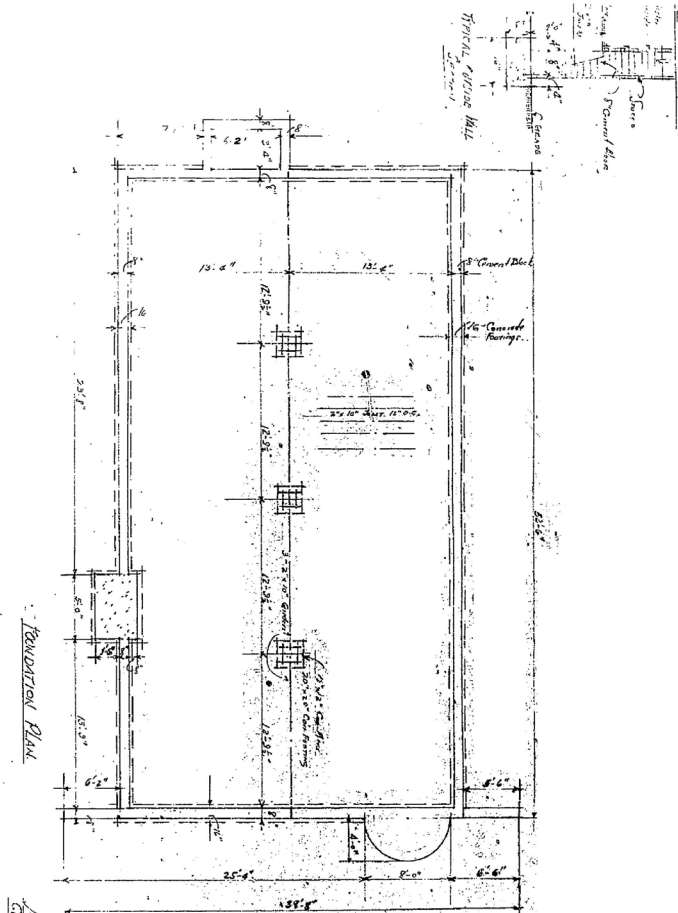
RESIDENCE
FOR
MR. G. M. McQUEEN, JR.
COLUMBIA, MISSOURI



1456



RESIDENCE
FOR
MR. G. M. McQUEEN, JR.
COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

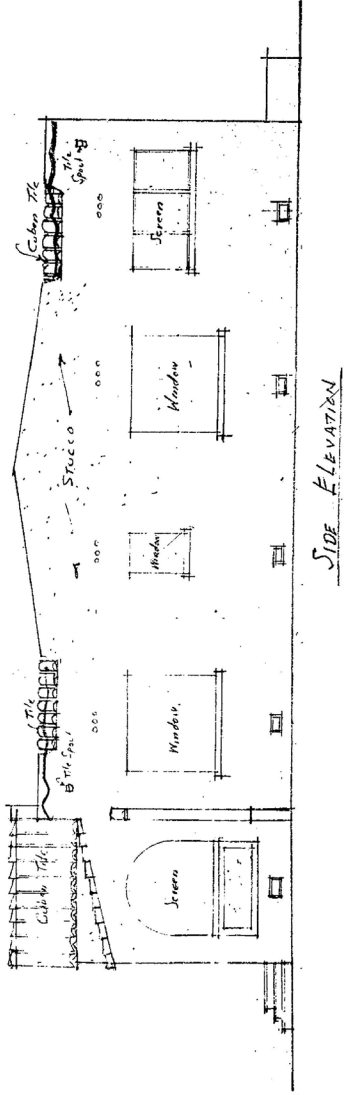


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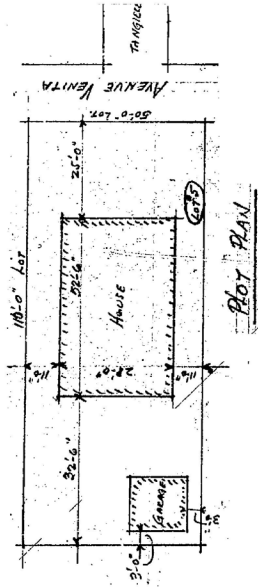
Spec. for 11

RESIDENCE
Mr. G. H. Mc COWELL
COPPER CITY, MICHIGAN

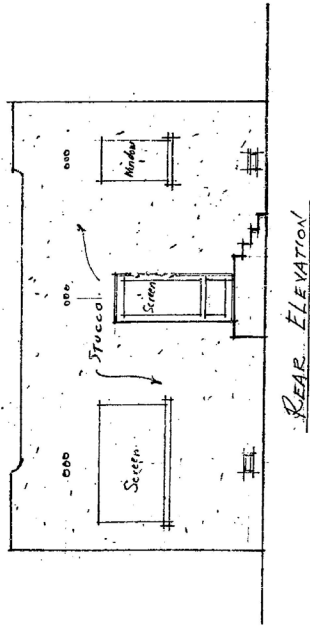
OK
P. DAVIS



SIDE ELEVATION



PLOT PLAN



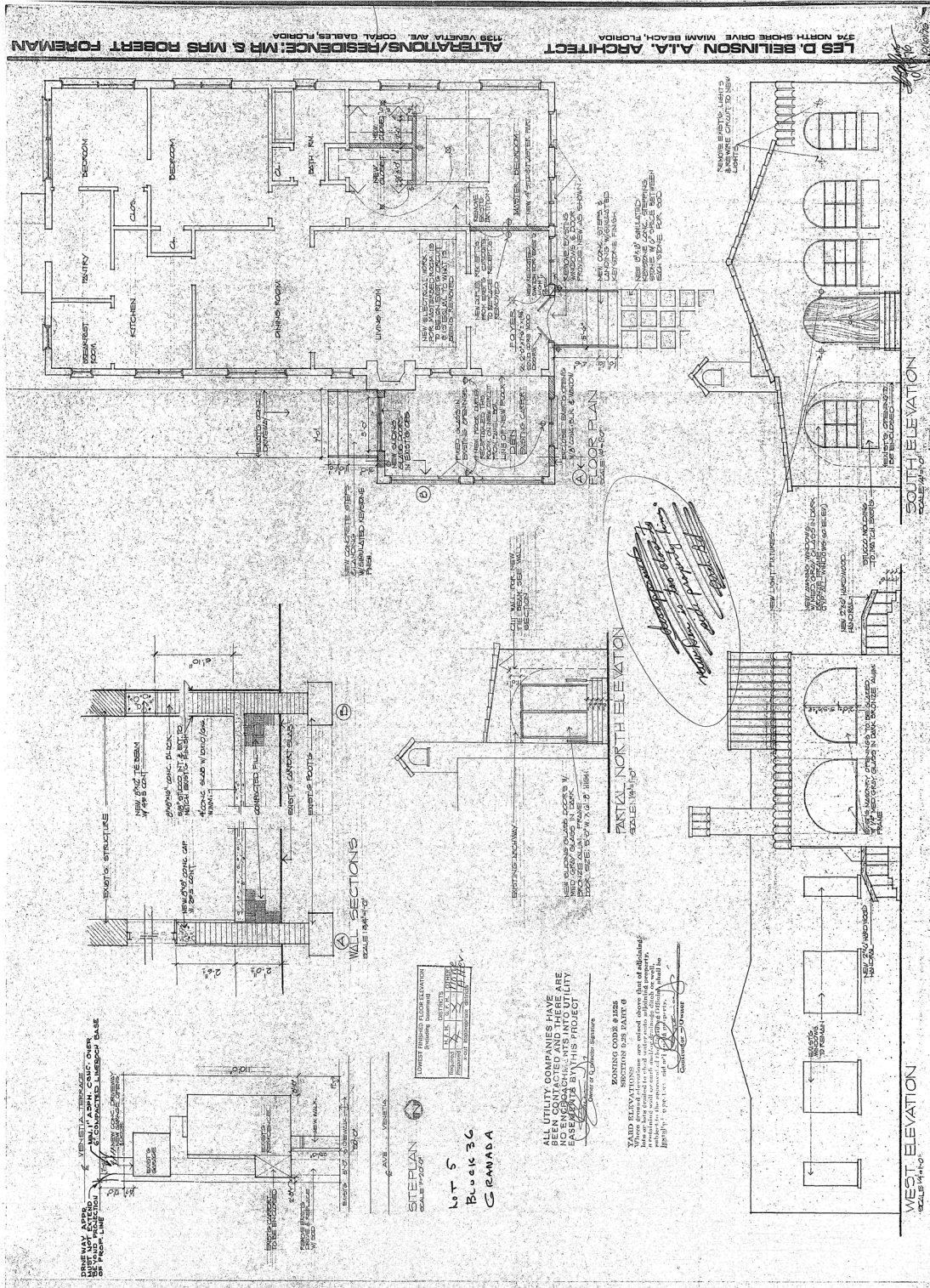
REAR ELEVATION

RESIDENCE
MR. G. M. MC CONNELL
CORAL GABLES - FLORIDA
S. Marjorie Aves
Miami - Dadeland Florida

1456

Appendix B: Permit #24396, 1976

Architect: Les D. Beilinson, AIA



24396 B

ALL UTILITY COMPANIES HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED AND NO EASEMENTS INTO CITY EASEMENTS BY THIS PROJECT

ZONING CODE #1228
 YARD ELEVATIONS
 HAVE BEEN OBTAINED FOR THIS PROJECT AND ARE SHOWN ON THE ATTACHED SHEET FOR THE PROJECT'S PERMITTING PROCESS.

Lot 5
 Block 36
 GRANADA