

**REPORT OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES**

**HISTORICAL RESOURCES & CULTURAL ARTS DEPARTMENT**

**TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD**

**ON THE DESIGNATION OF**

**THE PROPERTY AT**

**607 UNIVERSITY DRIVE**

**CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA**



Historic Photo, c.1940s



LHD 2025-008  
October 16, 2025

**LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION  
607 UNIVERSITY DRIVE, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA**

**Application:** Resulting from a Historic Significance Determination

<u>Folio Number:</u>	03-4117-004-2170
<u>Legal Description:</u>	Lots 9 & 10, Block 139, 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
<u>Original Permit # &amp; Date:</u>	#5901; 1939
<u>Original Architect:</u>	Upton C. Ewing
<u>Original Builder:</u>	B. D. Massie
<u>Original Owner:</u>	Dr. Oden A. Schaeffer
<u>Present Owner:</u>	Humberto F. Casariego & Teresa D. Carreno
<u>Building Type:</u>	One- & Two-story SFR
<u>Style:</u>	Colonial Revival Era: Neoclassical
<u>Site Characteristics:</u>	The property is located on an approximately 15,373 SF irregularly-shaped lot at the southwest corner of University Drive, Segovia Street, and Escobar Avenue.

**SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Coral Gables was founded in the 1920s by George Merrick as a Mediterranean-inspired City. In the late 1920s the economy plummeted and the building industry ground to a halt. When the construction of homes slowly began again in the late 1930s, society's priorities and aesthetic changed. This was reflected in all aspects of life, including the types of homes that were built. In Coral Gables there was a shift towards following national home-building trends and away from the founding premise of the City.

Built in 1939, the home at 607 University Drive is a significant example of one of the earliest Neoclassical style homes in Coral Gables. It exemplifies the style, as well as the type of prominent home built during the New Deal era when the City began to expand from its Mediterranean-inspired foundation. Building during the 1930s was sparse and this home is a significant example from this pivotal era.

With the construction of the Biltmore complex in 1925, Merrick replatted Country Club Section Part Six as a higher-end area with University Drive as a major scenic boulevard. Sitting on a prominent corner along this boulevard, architect Upton Ewing designed the home for Dr. Oden Schaeffer. The choice of the Neoclassical style, while breaking from the City's Mediterranean-inspired foundation, aligns with Merrick's intention for the area. With the Neoclassical Style, Dr. Schaeffer chose to build in a style whose formality and importance suggested an upwardly mobile lifestyle. Dr. Schaeffer was up-and-coming doctor who later aided in the founding of Doctors' Hospital. 607 University Drive retains its historic integrity. It is a part of the collection of quality residences that contributes to the historic fabric of the City and its 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 607 University Drive 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, 607 University Drive 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:

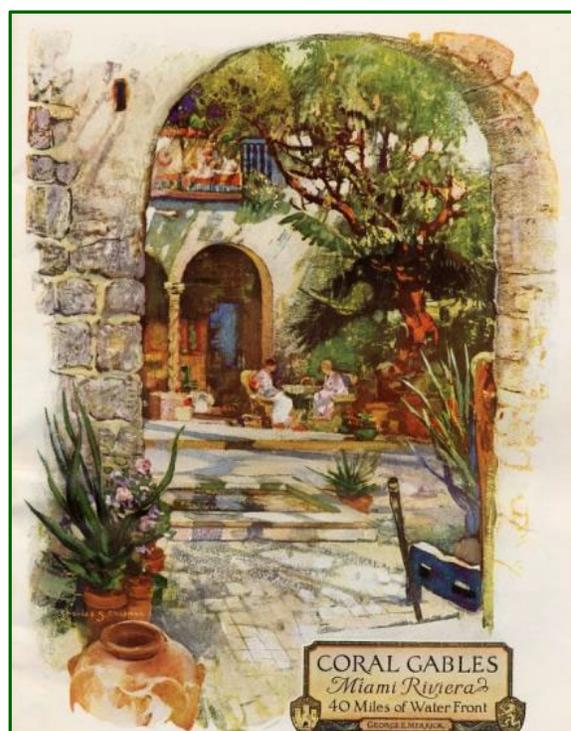
- **Pre-1926 Hurricane:** Initial Planning and Development/Florida Land Boom
- **1927-1944:** *1926 Hurricane Aftermath, Great Depression, New Deal & Wartime Activity*
- **1945-1963:** Post World War II and Modern periods

Designed in the Neoclassical style, the single-family residence at 607 University Drive is located in the Coral Gables Country Club Six Section. It was constructed in 1939 during the City's second developmental phase when building was sparse and the City was moving towards a new architectural era. This property exemplifies this period.

### 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 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. It is now considered one of the first modern planned communities in the United States.

Advised by landscape architect Frank Button, artist Denman Fink, and architects H. George Fink, Walter De Garmo, Martin Hampton, H.H. Mundy, and Phineas Paist, Merrick converted 3,000 acres of citrus plantation and native hammock into ornate plazas, grand entrances, small parks, monumental buildings, and tree-shaded streets. Merrick and his team felt that Mediterranean architecture harmonized best with south Florida's climate and lifestyle. The architecture constructed during the community's 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. During the 1920s structures and amenities were built almost exclusively in this style.



**Figure 1: Advertisement,  
*House Beautiful*, 1925**

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. Merrick envisioned a city with Old-World style and purposefully set aside vast amounts of valuable land to achieve this sense of place. Additionally, realizing that automobile ownership was becoming increasingly commonplace, Merrick wanted Coral Gables to embrace the motorist without sacrificing the beauty of the community or the comfort of the residents.

Buttons carefully laid over the grid a series of wide parkways with center planting medians that were major thoroughfares across the development as well as wide parkways with substantial swales for tree-planting providing internal access and scenic routes. The grid was opened at strategic locations for grand entrances, plazas, and fountains affording visual interest for both the pedestrian and the motorist. Broad boulevards curved around planned features that included vast park land, golf courses, monumental public and community buildings, as well as other amenities.

Coral Gables' initial development was predominantly around the Merrick family's Coral Gables Plantation in Section A. (Figure 2) Lots in Sections A, B, and C were offered for sale in 1921-2. Most early construction was concentrated north of, and in the direct vicinity of, the Granada Golf Course.

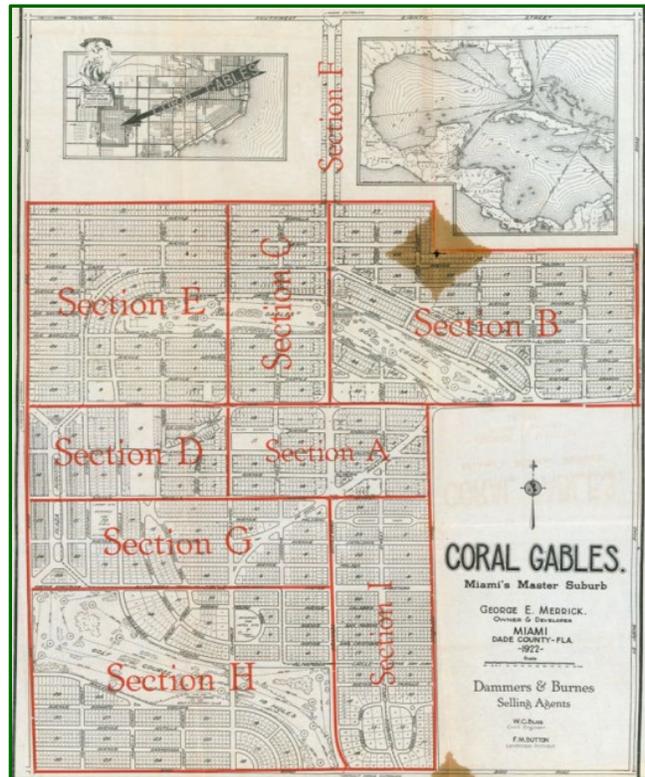


Figure 2: 1922 Map: "Miami's Master Suburb"

### Coral Gables Country Club Sections

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

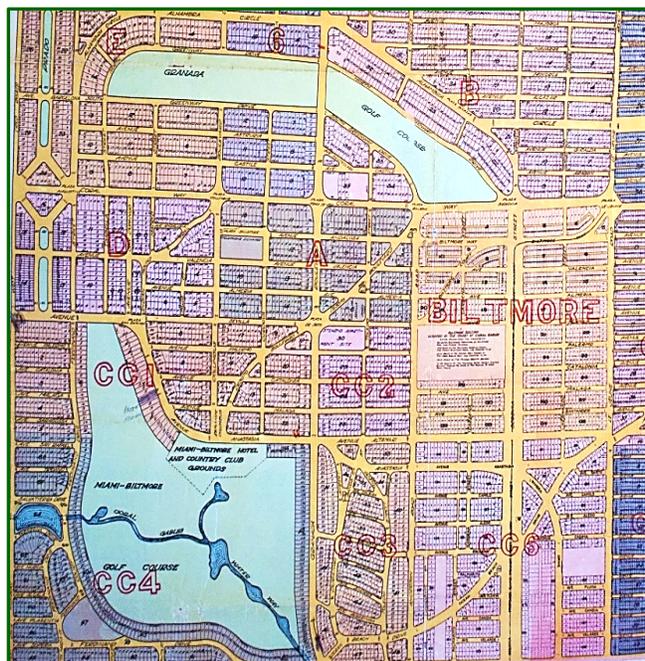


Figure 3:  
Coral Gables "Miami Riviera" Map, 1925  
Detail of Newly Platted Country Club Sections  
Note: Country Club Part Six in lower corner

Golf courses were prominent features of Merrick's plan, and the Biltmore Hotel complex was the crown jewel in his campaign to attract tourists and to provide social amenities for residents. The Country Club Sections were purposefully replatted by

Merrick as prime real estate around the Biltmore complex and intended to be a higher-end area. The course opened January 2, 1926. Rapid growth in the area was anticipated.

With the replatting, Button took this opportunity to add additional scenic boulevards. This included Anastasia Avenue, Ocean Beach Drive (*later renamed University Drive*), and Segovia Street. He rerouted streets, including Alhambra Circle which eventually curved around the west side of the Miami-Biltmore golf course and continued south. He also fine-tuned existing streets such as DeSoto Boulevard. The S-shaped DeSoto Boulevard became a clearly defined scenic thoroughfare between the Granada Golf Course and the Miami-Biltmore Hotel complex. At its midpoint was a traffic circle plaza with a magnificent pedestal-type fountain. (Figures 3 & 4)

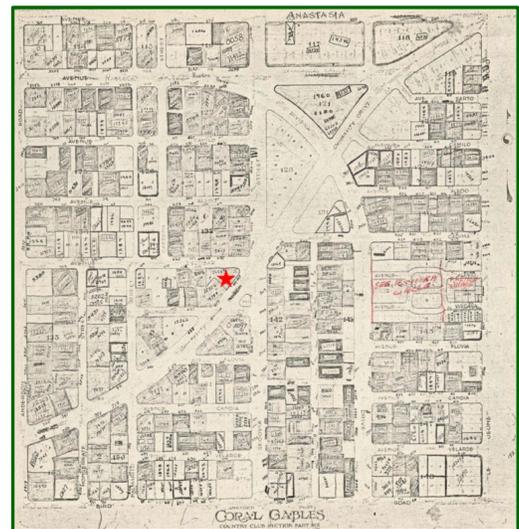


**Figure 4: Miami-Biltmore Hotel & Golf Course, looking southeast, c.1926**  
**Red star: Location of 607 University Drive in Country Club Section Part Six**

### **Country Club Section Part Six**

The home at 607 University Drive is in Country Club Section Part Six. (starred in Figures 4 & 5) This section is east of the Biltmore Golf Course and bounded by Anastasia Avenue, LeJeune Road, Bird Road, and Anderson Road. University Drive was laid out as a scenic curving boulevard bifurcating this section.

Apart from the northeast corner, the section was platted as a single-family residence neighborhood. The northeast corner was to be the Anastasia Hotel. (upper corner of Figure 5) Midway through construction it was sold to the University of Miami who held classes there. The site is now occupied by the City of Coral Gables Youth Center. A large triangular greenspace at the intersection of University Drive, Riviera Drive and Segovia Street initially buffered the residential neighborhood from the Anastasia. (Figures 4 & 5) That site now houses the Coral Gables Library.



**Figure 5: Plat Map: Coral Gables Country Club Section Part Six**

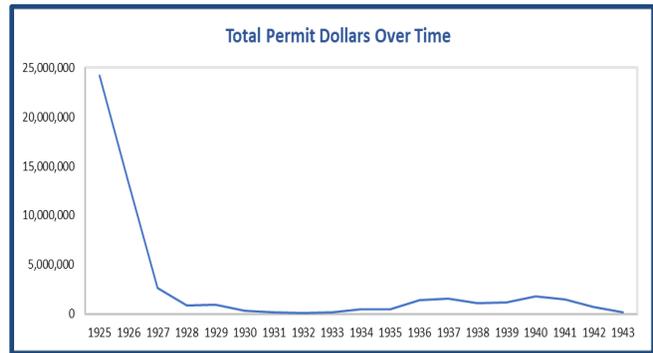
In tandem with the Biltmore construction, Merrick began developing Country Club Section Part Six as a prominent section. Notable undertakings included the home at 711 University Drive at the northwest corner of Palmarito Street and University Drive for Merrick's sister Ethel and her husband Edwin Bishop (1925-6), as well as the launch of the French Normandy Village (1926-7).

It is likely that this area would have seen rapid development if a major hurricane had not hit South Florida in September 1926. Unfortunately, plans were curtailed by the hurricane and were eventually abandoned as the building industry and the economy crashed in the late 1920s. In the end, there were only a handful of homes constructed in Country Club Section Part Six in the 1920s.

**Second Developmental Period: 1927-1944**

During Second Development Period from 1927 to 1944, the building of single-family homes was sparse. During these seventeen-years there were fewer than 1,000 new CBS single-family homes built in the City. (Figures 7) It was period of slow transitioning from Merrick’s Mediterranean-inspired and cohesively-designed community to a city embracing national trends.

Construction in Coral Gables boomed until the combination of the 1926 Hurricane and the Great Depression. In the aftermath of the 1929 Wall Street Crash, the economy in Florida declined steeply. Between 1929-1933, 148 state and national banks in Florida collapsed. By 1933, one out of four Floridians was receiving public assistance.

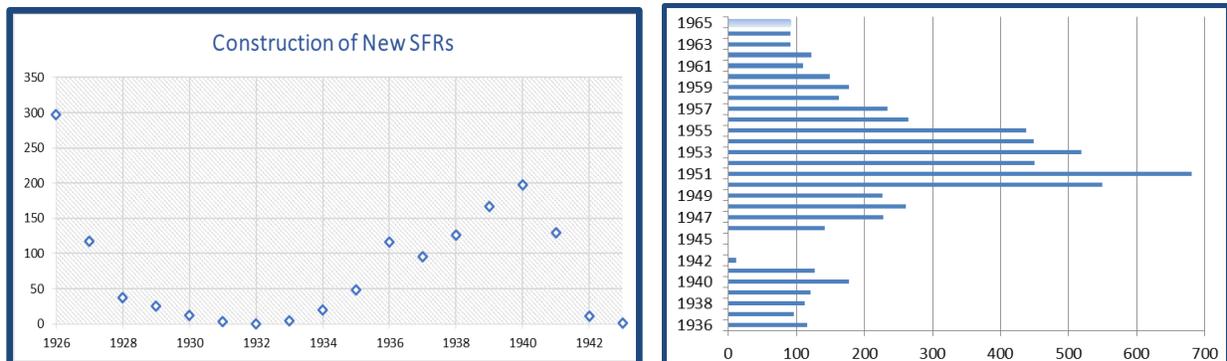


**Figure 6: Total Building Permit Dollars, 1925-43**

The dire downturn in the economy, had a drastic impact on new construction in Coral Gables. 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, and despite valiant efforts, Merrick’s grand plans for completing his fully-conceived, Mediterranean-inspired city ended.

As the decade wore on, relief expanded under the New Deal administration and people adjusted to a new way of life. As a direct result of the economic hardships, priorities and aesthetics changed. This was reflected in all aspects of life including the types of homes built.

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) From 1936 through 1942 there were approximately 700 new CBS single-family homes built in the City – including 607 University Drive in 1939. However, this upward trajectory abruptly ground to a halt during the war. When building resumed afterwards Coral Gables entered a new and prosperous development period. (Figures 7)



**Figures 7: Number of New SFR Building Permits: 1926-1943 [left]; 1936-1965 [right]**

As a result, the Country Club Sections remained sparsely populated into the 1940s. (Figure 8) Hence, 607 University was one of the few homes built during Coral Gables' second developmental period and is amongst the earliest residences in Country Club Section area.



**Figure 8: 1938 Aerial Photo** *Courtesy University of Florida Archives*

**Red star: Location of 607 University Drive**

**Blue Star: 711 University Drive, Ethel Merrick Bishop home (George Merrick's sister)**

### A Shift in Architectural Styles

As a discussed above, in Coral Gables the dire downturn in the economy, coming so closely on the heels of the devastating 1926 Hurricane, had a drastic impact on new construction. The result ended Merrick's plan and his involvement in developing the City. It also resulted in an aesthetic shift. The number of new houses built during the second developmental period were few and those that were built, shifted in type and style.

There were approximately 1,000 new CBS single-family homes built during the seventeen years of the second developmental period (1927-1944). This is a drastic contrast to the several thousand structures built between 1922 and 1926 under Merrick. Of these, around 300 are Mediterranean Revival or Coral Gable Village homes built during the late 1920s when Merrick was valiantly trying to continue his vision and pre-hurricane contracts were being completed. By the close of the 1920s it was clear Merrick could not complete his dream. As discussed above, economics dictated a change. Most of the new homes built after 1930 departed from the Mediterranean Revival style that had dominated the City's landscape since its inception.

During this time single-family home design began, in a limited manner, to employ aspects of contemporary styles that favored more streamlined construction. In South Florida, Art Deco and the Art Moderne were largely in fashion during the mid-1920s, and in the 1930s respectively. In Coral Gables, whose early identity was so strongly tied to the Mediterranean theme, many architects sought to acknowledge Coral Gables's roots and Merrick's desire for a cohesively-designed community. Rather than fully embracing the Modernistic styles prevailing in other communities, some architects moved to a style which blended elements of the Mediterranean Revival style with them to maintain an overall semblance of cohesion. There was also a smaller faction that designed contemporary, nationally popular styles -- predominantly Neoclassical, Minimal Traditional and masonry vernacular. 607 University Drive was one of the first homes in Coral Gables designed in the Neoclassical style.

### **Neoclassical Style (1895-1955): Historical Overview**

Single-family homes are, to a great degree, a distinctly American phenomenon. No other country in the world has invested so much time, money, and energy in designing, building, and living in individual homes. During the twentieth century home ownership became synonymous with the American Dream.

Renowned architectural historian Virginia McAlester in her seminal publication, A Field Guide to American Houses, offers the following historical overview regarding the rise of the Neoclassical style (also known as Classical Eclecticism) in the United States:

“The revival of interest in classical models dates from the World’s Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. The exposition’s planners mandated a classical theme, and many of the best-known architects of the day designed dramatic colonnaded buildings arranged around a central court. The exposition was widely photographed, reported and attended; soon the Neoclassical models became the lasting fashion throughout the country.

The central buildings of the exposition were of monumental scale and inspired countless public and commercial buildings in the following decades. The designs of smaller pavilions representing each state of the union were more nearly domestic in scale and in them can be seen the precedents for most Neoclassical houses. Those of Ohio, Utah, and South Dakota, for example, all had semi-circular, full-height entry porches. Nebraska and Kentucky were represented by more traditional full-height porches with triangular pediments. The Connecticut pavilion had a full-height porch with a lower full-width porch. All of these drew heavily on the country’s previous interest in the Early Classical Revival and Greek Revival styles. Thus, Georgian, Federal, Early Classical Revival and Greek Revival traditions, which originally spanned a century and a half of the nation’s early history, became fused into the eclectic Neoclassical style.”

The most common application of the style was for public and commercial buildings and for larger and/or more affluent domestic homes. The Neoclassical style was a dominant style for domestic architecture throughout the country for over five decades. It had two general waves of popularity. The initial phase of the style lasted from roughly 1900 until 1920 and emphasized hipped roofs and elaborate, but academically accurate, columns and orders. Between approximately 1920 to the 1950s, during the style’s second phase, side-gabled roofs were introduced as well as simplified, slender columns.

The Neoclassical style first appeared in Coral Gables in the late 1930s and became popular in the City after World War II. There are currently only two early examples of the Neoclassical style listed on the Coral Gables Register of Historic Places; both are listed as contributing structures in historic districts. The home at 607 University Drive is one of the earliest examples of the style in Coral Gables. It is representative of the style’s second phase with its simplified slender columns and, as was common of the times, it leans on Colonial Revival precedents.

### **Neoclassical Style: Hallmark and Character-Defining Features**

The dominant characteristic and driving force of Neoclassical design is proportion and symmetry. Neoclassical architecture includes simple geometric forms, symmetry, and balance with austere ornamentation drawn from the classical orders. At its inception in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century these stately homes presented a dramatic contrast to the elaborate ornamentation, asymmetry, curves, moldings, and serpentine lines of the Baroque and Rococo styles. In Coral Gables it offered a similar contrast to the Mediterranean Revival style.

The style, with its uncluttered appearance and grandeur of scale, most often features full-height or full-façade front porches, elaborate front doors, large columns with classical Corinthian, Doric, or Ionic capitals, and flat or low roof lines. Noted architectural historian Vincent Scully described domestic Neoclassical style homes as intending to be ‘austere symbols of affluence;’ their formality and importance seemed to suggest an upwardly mobile lifestyle.

Earliest examples of the styles prior to the 1920s typically have more ornate columns which are typically of the Ionic or Corinthian order. These columns often supported a two-story or full-height porch. Doorways were generally elaborated with detailed, decorative surrounds based on Greek Revival, Federal, or Georgian models and featured elements such as pediments, pilasters, sidelights and fluted or paneled details. Post-1920s tended towards simpler and sleeker ornamentation; typically, in the Doric order and often melded with the contemporaneous Colonial Revival movement.

Hallmark and character-defining features are the visual and physical features that give a building its identity and distinctive character. McAlester identifies the following as distinctive hallmark features that when present are often indicative of the Neoclassical style:

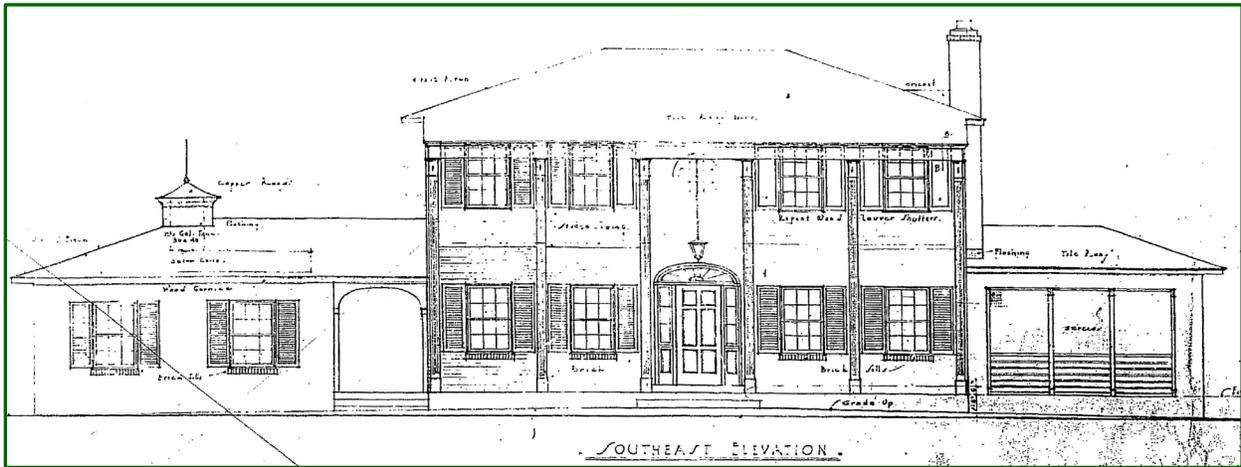
1. Symmetrical purity and balance that reiterate the concepts of simplicity and order.
2. Tall classical columns that support a full-height front porch – usually an even number.
3. Elaborate doorways with pediments that serve as decorative touches.
4. Evenly spaced windows across the front facade and flanked by shutters.
5. Flat roofs with a center dome.

Other Neoclassical style character-defining features include:

- rectangular massing, most often is the form of a larger central mass flanked by symmetrical lower ‘wings’
- a boxed eave with a moderate overhang, often with dentils or modillions
- wide frieze band
- windows: typically, rectangular sash in type; arched windows and windows with transoms also common; windows always have divided panes
- paired windows; lower window panel elongating the prominent front façade’s first story windows
- prominent ornamentation emphasized and elaborated the porch, cornices, doorways and windows
- attached garage with side or rear entry as to not impair the symmetry of the front façade

As described below, the home at 607 University Drive was designed with several of hallmark features of the style as well as numerous other character-defining features typically associated with the style.

607 University Drive



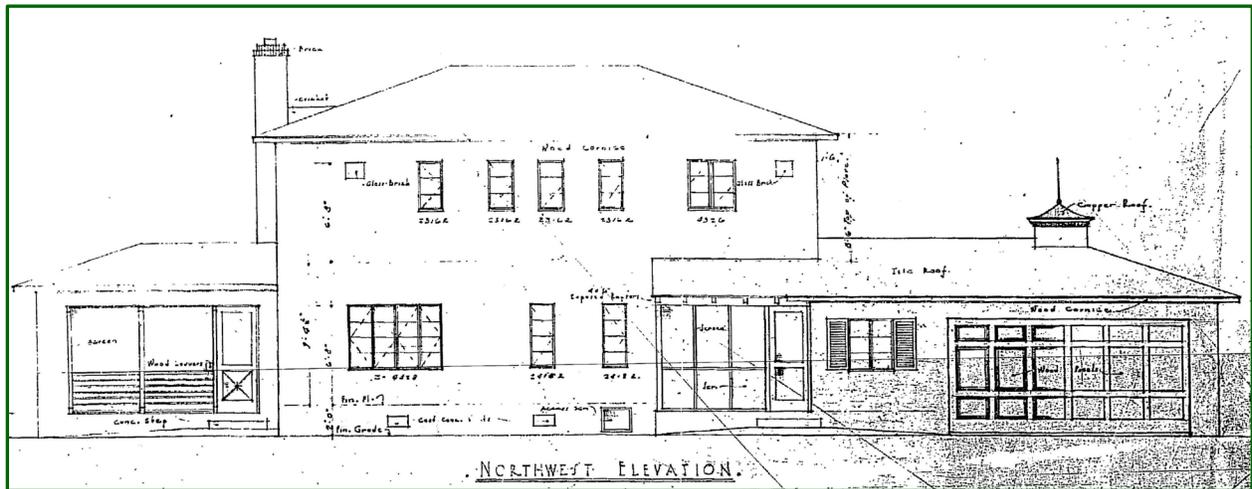
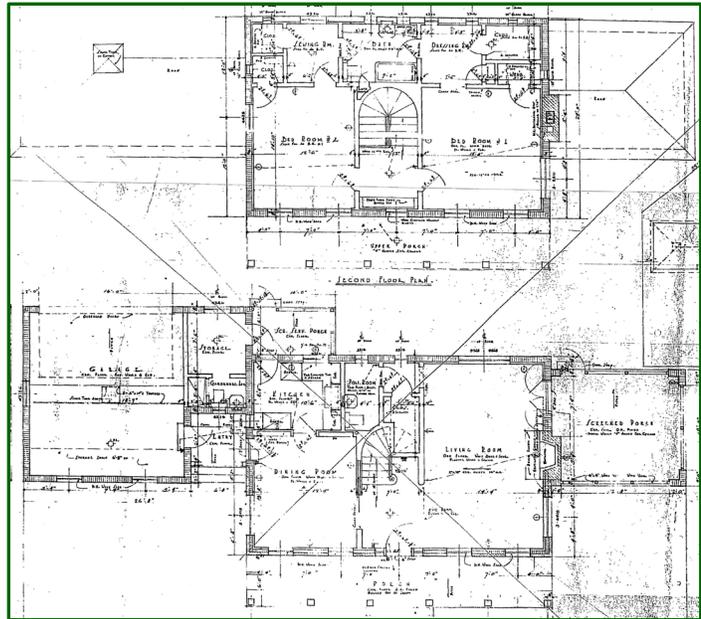
**Figure 9: 607 University Drive, Front Elevation  
Historic Photo c.1940s [top]; Original Permit #5901, 1939 [bottom]**

Located along the scenic University Drive, the home at 607 sits on a prominent lot at the southwest corner of University Drive, Segovia Street, and Escobar Avenue. (Figure 5) Originally platted as 609 University Drive, it was renumbered to 607 in the 1960s. Aerial photographs document that there was little contemporaneous or previous construction in this area when the home at 607 University Drive was built in 1939. (Figure 8)

Dr. Oden Schaeffer (1907-1970) commissioned architect Upton C. Ewing (see bio below) to design his family's home. The permit (#5901; see Attachment A) was recorded in April 1939. The site chosen was one block from the prominent residence of Ethel Merrick Bishop, sister of founder George Merrick, at 711 University Drive. (Figure 8) The use of the Neoclassical style for the home at 607 University Drive aligns with the original intention of the Country Club Sections as an area of prominent homes.

Dr. Schaeffer arrived in Miami in 1933 as a resident physician at University Hospital (now Coral Gables Hospital) after graduating from Temple Medical School. Dr. Schaeffer's obituary records that he later was one of the founders of Doctors Hospital, which opened in Coral Gables in 1949. As an established doctor, in 1939 he chose to design his new home in a style that portrayed an upwardly mobile lifestyle on a prominent corner in the highly-desired area of Coral Gables.

607 University Drive is typical of the post-1920 Neoclassical style as discussed above. Its massing, with its two-story central core flanked one-story wings, reads as symmetrical. Full-height slender box columns span the front two-story core and shelter a central ornamented front doorway. (Figures 9) Also in accordance with the style, one of the wings housed a rear-facing garage. As was common in later Neoclassical homes in the Colonial Revival era, the home is laid out with a center hall floor plan with a grand curved staircase, and the front entry is inspired by Federal style. (Figures 10)



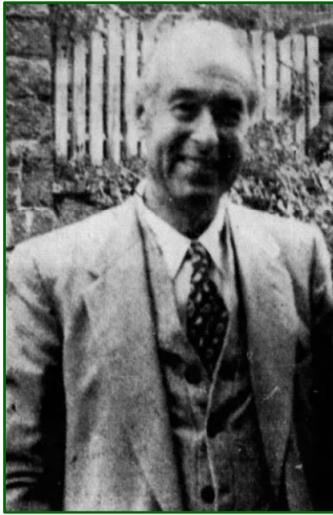
**Figures 10: Permit #5901, 1939**  
**Floor Plan [top]; Rear Façade [below]**

The Schaeffer's lived in the home for fourteen years. As seen in the list below, 607 University Drive had only four additional owners; two of them long-term. At the end of the twentieth century Salem and Gonzalo Shory, father and son, owned the property for twenty-eight years. The current owners have called 607 University Drive home for the past twenty-seven years.

**Owner & Occupants:**

- 1939-1953 Dr. Oden Schaeffer
- 1953-1960 John Jacob Gunther & Clara Selleck Gunther
- 1961 John Jacob Gunther
- 1961-1970 James Barbour Russell & Caroline Q. Russell
- 1970-1998 Salem L. Shory & Gonzalo R. Shory
- 1998-Present Humberto F. Casariego & Teresa Carreno

**Architect: Upton C. Ewing**



**Figure 11:  
Upton Clay Ewing,**

Upton C. Ewing (1893-1967), born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio, dropped out of school at 14 to support his family. Self-taught he worked his way up through the building trades, from craftsman to contractor to architect. Ewing first visited Coral Gables in 1926 and in 1934 decided to open an architectural office in the Douglas Entrance. He maintained his license in both Ohio and Florida.

Ewing was a member of the American Institute of Architects and served as a District Director for the Florida Association of Architects during the early 1940s. Locally, he served on the City of Coral Gables Zoning Board of Appeals (1937-1938), Board of Supervising Architects (multiple terms during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s), Lions Club, and the Chamber of Commerce.

In 1938 Ewing became the founding president of the Architects of Coral Gables Association whose stated objectives were to, “promote fellowship among fellow architects; to maintain a high standard of practice and conduct; to organize and unite the full strength and secure the aggressive support of the registered architects in Coral Gables; to improve and promote building conditions; to educate the public in a co-operative campaign in the wisdom and value of architectural service and to make the profession, in general a constant service to the community” (Miami News 1939).

During the 1940s, Ewing worked with George and Rebyl Zain in developing Miracle Mile. He designed of at least three buildings: 136, 340, and 350 Miracle Mile. In 1946, the Coral Gables City Commission held meetings to address the hotly debated topic of the City’s architectural styles. Ewing spoke at multiple meetings as a member of the Board of Supervising Architects. At the May 21, 1946 meeting, he stated that, “architecture design for use in developed areas should be harmonious with existing [Mediterranean-inspired] buildings and that modern design should be permitted in undeveloped sections.”

Throughout his career, he practiced as an architect, was an artist and sculptor, inventor, as well as an ordained minister. He was also a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Ewing developed the first 35mm Sterco camera in the United States. He is also given credit for inventing pre-cast concrete vents in 1935, and the steel form clamps used for holding form-work when pouring tie-beams for buildings, which became commonly used in the industry. He and his wife, Lois, established The Ewing Gallery, in their home. It was described as a gathering place for music and art lovers during the 1950s. It had a full pipe organ and space for 100 guests (Miami News 1962). It was utilized for a variety of community events including organ recitals by the graduate students from the University of Miami.

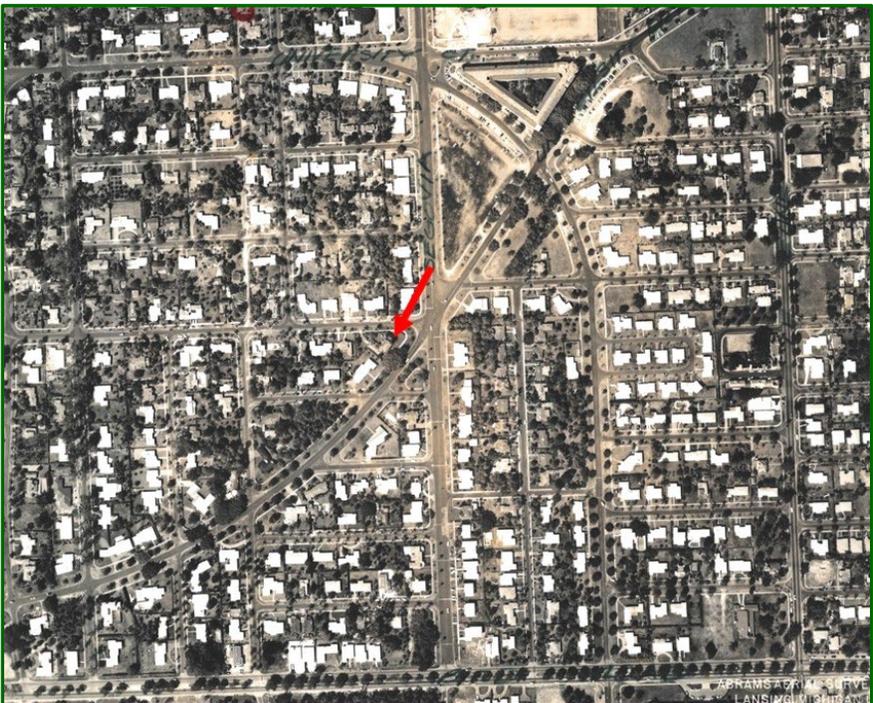
Ewing designed over seventy buildings in Coral Gables. Currently historically designated, either individually or as part of a historic district are 814 and 832 Santiago Street, 765 N Greenway Drive, 3940 Granada Boulevard, 136 Miracle Mile, 340 Miracle Mile, 350 Miracle Mile, and 4615 Santa Maria Street.

**Retaining Context: Country Club Section Part Six**

With the implementation of the New Deal and other incentives, the building industry throughout the City resurged slightly in the late 1930s and early 1940s. During this period homes were, for the first time in Coral Gables, designed in contemporary styles. They launched a new chapter in Coral Gables' architectural history. The Country Club Section Part Six reflected this city-wide movement.

The Post-War prosperity that followed the lean years of the Depression created an optimism which reigned through the 1950s and 1960s and resulted in an unprecedented building boom. During this time the building of single-family homes in the City of Coral Gables followed national trends both in numbers and in style and the City largely moved away from strictly Mediterranean precedents

As is evident in the aerial photos in Figures 8 & 12, the area in the immediate vicinity of the home at 607 University Drive was built out during this boom. To date, Country Club Section Part Six and the adjacent neighborhoods retain their single-family residence context.



**Figures 12:  
Aerial Photographs**

**1948  
[top]**

**1957  
[bottom]**

*Note:*  
**607 University Drive  
at red arrow**

*Courtesy University of  
Florida*

**SIGNIFICANCE ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION**



**Figures 13: 607 University Drive Over Time: Front Façade  
c. 1940s [top]; October 1971 [center]; 2023 [bottom]  
*1971 Courtesy Miami-Dade Property Appraiser***

## **Executive Summary**

Built in 1939, the home at 607 University Drive is a significant example of one of the earliest Neoclassical style homes in Coral Gables. It exemplifies the type of prominent home that was built during the New Deal era during which the City expanded from its Mediterranean Revival foundation. It aided in launching a new chapter in Coral Gables architectural history.

Located in the Country Club Section Part Six, 607 University Drive lies within the replatted areas in the vicinity of the Maimi Biltmore complex that founder George Merrick intended as a higher-end area. In Section Six, University Drive was built as a major scenic boulevard. In 1939, when the home was built, the Country Club Sections remained largely undeveloped due to the aftermath of the 1926 hurricane and the following economic hardships of the Depression. Dr. Oden Schaeffer commissioned architect Upton C. Ewing to design his family's home on the prominent corner of University Drive, Segovia Street, and Escobar Avenue. Permit #5901 was recorded in April 1939 for the Neoclassical style single-family home with an attached garage. The choice of the Neoclassical style for the home at 607 University Drive, while breaking from the Mediterranean-inspired foundation of the City, aligns with the original intention of the Country Club Sections as area of prominent homes. The formality and importance of the Neoclassical style also suggested an upwardly mobile lifestyle for this up-and-coming doctor who later aided in the founding of Doctors' Hospital. Hence, the property exemplifies the historical, cultural, political, economic, or social trends of the community.

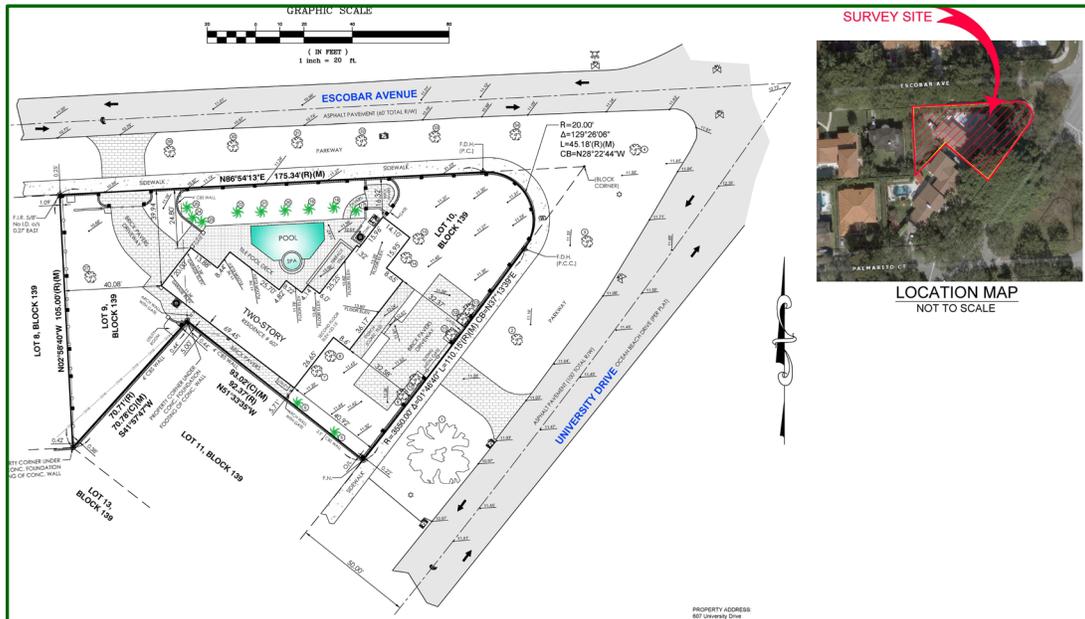
The Neoclassical style is inherently eclectic and often, as does this home, draws from the Colonial Revival. As defined above, 607 University Drive clearly exhibits numerous hallmark and character-defining elements distinctive to this style. The home is symmetrical, and its purity and balance invoke simplicity and order. It has a dominant two-story front porch comprised of an even number (6) of full-height slender classical box columns supporting a molded entablature. The front doorway ensemble is comprised of fanlight with radiating muntins, sidelights, panel insets, and molded framing encircled by a brick door surround. On the front façade the evenly spaced vertical windows are appropriately proportioned and flanked by 'working' louvered shutters with shutter dogs. It also includes the following character-defining features: rectangular in the form of a larger central mass flanked by lower bays imparting an aesthetic symmetry; low-pitched roofs; a boxed eave with a moderate to wide overhangs; large molded cornice; smooth textured stucco; brick facing and large plank siding; brick sills and lintels; windows with divided panes; single-hung windows on front façade; ocular window; small glass block windows; prominent side chimney and a squat chimney with flared cap, as well as exposed rafter tails.

Assessment of the property, building documents, and historic photographs indicates that there were few changes to the home's historic character-defining features, and that it retains its historic integrity. 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 has determined that this property possesses sufficient integrity for designation. Thus, the property at 607 University Drive significantly contributes to the historic fabric of Coral Gables and is part of the collection of quality residences that contributes to the City's sense of place over time.

**Extant Exterior Description and Alteration Discussion**



**Figure 14: 607 University Drive, Front Façade, 2024**



**Figure 15: Property Survey, 2024** *Courtesy Jorge L. Cabrera*

The single-family residence sits on an approximately 15,373 SF irregularly-shaped lot at the prominent southwest corner of University Drive, Segovia Street, and Escobar Avenue. The front façade faces onto the scenic University Drive boulevard approximately 32’ from the sidewalk. The siting of the home is in keeping with Neoclassical Style buildings which are often positioned to offer full views of their stately front facades. Also typical of the style, the garage, while attached, is accessed from the rear so that it does not detract from the stately view. Access to the garage is from Escobar Avenue.

The original 1939 portion of the home faces University Drive and remains largely intact (Figure 16, blue). As illustrated in Figure 16, there were a few additions to the home. In 1948 Dr. Schaeffer

hired architect Upton Ewing again to add a one-story wing behind the rear-facing garage. The permit for this work (#8286) has not been located to date however a tax card records its footprint and dimensions. At this time Ewing enclosed the garage for living space, added an approximately 11 x 20 'staff room' and a new rear-facing garage. Along the east side of the wing Ewing also added an L-shaped covered terrace that was enclosed as a Florida room in 2021. In 2006 the garage was lengthened and covered porch was built along the home's rear façade. These campaigns all occurred at the rear of the home and do not adversely impact the historic integrity of 1939 home.



The massing of this single-family residence is comprised of a central two-story core flanked by one-story bays with a western rear one-story wing. All living areas are under low-pitched hipped roofs clad in flat tile. The current tile was installed in 2013. Designed in the eclectic Neoclassical style the home presents in a typical manner for the style in this time period. It has the grand two-story entry porch supported by columns, a symmetrical appearance with an elaborated front central doorway, and an otherwise uncluttered presence under low roof lines. Overall, it has a refined and balanced street presence.

A character-defining feature of the Neoclassical style is a prominent entry porch highlighted by a visually-dominant classical column assembly. The home has a two-story entry porch whose full-height columns, in the post-1920s fashion, are slender and rectangular. They are fluted with a simple stylized capital and bases. The columns support a simple entablature with a molded cornice. Indicative of the style there is an even number of columns – six – across the porch framing the equally-spaced fenestration openings of front façade. (Figures 14 & 17)



**Figure 17: Column & Entablature, 2025**

The single-family residence, built over a crawl space, is constructed with masonry block units. The front and side facades of the first story are clad in brick. On the second story wide ‘plank’ siding wraps round the home. The use of different materials on the first and second story, which are both horizontally oriented, not only adds visual interest from the street, but it also aids in balancing the verticality of the thin box columns. They ground and impart a permanence to the home. The material choices embrace the contemporaneous Colonial Revival era aesthetic. (Figure 14)



**Figures 18: Front Façade Fenestration, 2025: Entry Ensemble [left]; Window, typ. [right]**

Centered on the front façade, the entry doorway is a Neoclassical, Federal-inspired, ensemble. It comprises a fanlight with radiating muntins, sidelights, panel insets, molded framing, and a brick door surround. (Figures 18) Visually balancing the entryway on the second story is circular window with divided lites. It is framed in the same moulding as the entry ensemble. (Figure 14) Flanking these central features are evenly spaced vertical, appropriately proportioned windows with full-sized ‘working’ louvered shutters held by shutter dogs. The first-floor windows have brick lintels and sills. (Figures 18)

Ewing designed the home with typical Neoclassical single-hung windows on the front façade. However, he placed casements on the secondary facades. (Figures 24 & Attachment A) This choice may have been a nod to the casement windows that adorned most of the 1920s Mediterranean Revival styled homes that in 1939 still dominated the built environment in the City. All windows had high-profile muntins. Building records indicate that owner John Gunther replaced the original windows. The date and the window type are illegible. Gunther owned the property from 1953 to 1961. Later documents seem to indicate that the casements were replaced with awnings. Windows on the side and rear facades are now awning and horizontal slider in type. The installation date for the latter is not clear.

The primary street presence of the home is visually symmetrical with a central two-story core, discussed above, flanked by one-story bays. The bays are both currently hipped roofed, clad in smooth stucco, with a series of single-hung windows and shutters with projecting brick sills that match the windows of the two-story core. Originally the exposed rafter tails of these bays were simple. In 2007 new larger tails with curved edges were installed. Both bays have been repurposed from their original function which resulted in some exterior alterations and is discussed below. However, both bays retain their original massing, and the alterations do not significantly detract from the historic integrity of the property.



The eastern bay, as seen in Figures 10, 19, & 20, was originally a screened porch. When Schaeffer placed the home for sale in 1952 the ads refer to a jalousie porch. Hence, the initial alteration to the screened porch occurred early in its history. In 1972 a permit was issued to remove the jalousie windows and replace them with ‘Colonial type windows to match opposite side of house with shutters.’ This most likely also included the install of the brick sills. The windows were awning in type with muntins. Rising at the juncture of the bay and the home is a large rectangular chimney with a stepped brick top course (now painted over). Centered on the façade and rising a half story above the roof line it is a strong visible feature from Escobar Avenue.

The western bay, as seen in Figures 10, 19, & 22, was originally a rear-facing garage with an arched covered entry porch and storage room between it and the home. An attached garage with side or rear entry is a character-defining feature of a Neoclassical home. This configuration retained the symmetry and stately presence of the front façade. On the street-facing façade of the bay, Ewing placed windows matching the adjacent home. With the covered entry, this bay is slightly larger than the eastern porch bay but from the street the home has the appearance of symmetry. As shown in Figure 22, the archway was screened by 1971 and in 2007 it was enclosed with a window that matches the original windows. As discussed above, the garage became living space in 1948. At the juncture of the bay’s hipped roof ridges sits a squat decorative chimney with a convex and balled cap. (Figure 21)



**Figure 21:**  
**Garage Chimney  
& Cap, 2025**

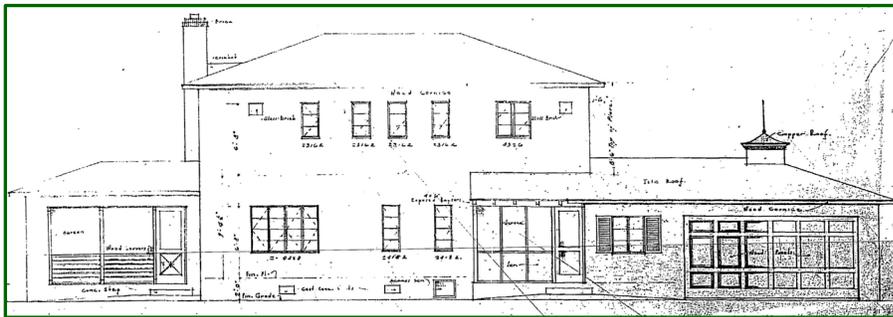


**Figures 22:**  
**Western Bay:**  
**October 1971**  
**[top]**  
*Courtesy Miami-Dade  
Property Appraiser*  
**2024**  
**[bottom]**

The remaining facades of the home are less formal and incorporate a more modernistic vocabulary and arrangement. The windows deviate from the Neoclassical module as they incorporate both grouped and modern narrow openings in an arrangement that is not symmetrical or balanced. (Figures 24) Modern square glass block openings were incorporated under the eaves and strategically-placed to aid in balancing the facades. (Figure 23) With the exception of the additions, these facades remain largely intact.



Figure 23: Glass Block (typ.), 2025



**Figures 24  
Secondary  
Facades**

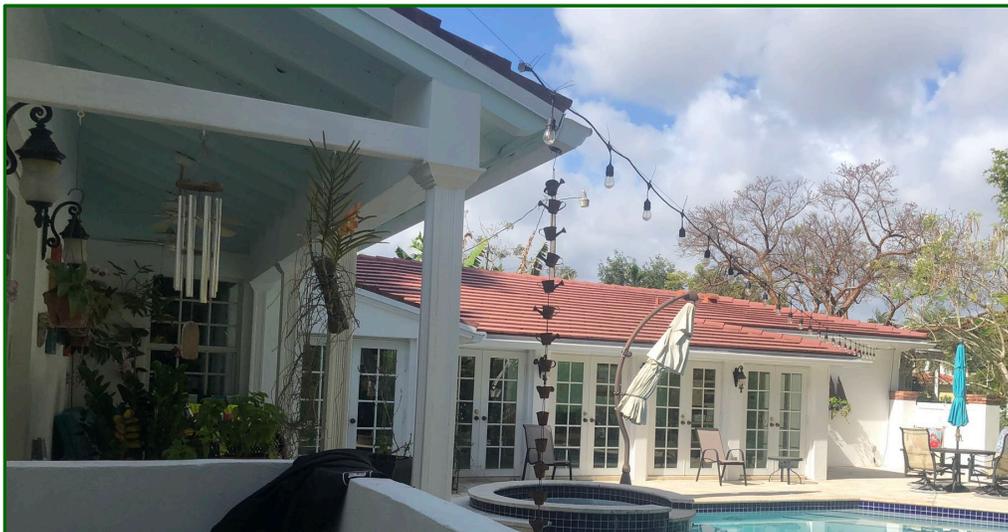
**Rear Façade,  
Permit #5901,  
1939  
[top]**

**Side & Rear from  
Escobar Avenue,  
2025  
[center]**

**Rear Façade, 2025  
[bottom]**

As shown in the annotated plan in Figure 16, the only addition to the rear of the 1939 two-story core is a covered porch built in 2006. It is clearly seen in the bottom photo in Figures 24. The shed roof is supported by simple box columns with articulated bases and capitals of a different configuration from the 1939 front porch columns. This addition is in keeping with the spirit of the original design.

As discussed above, in 1948 the original owner, Dr. Schaeffer, rehired architect Upton Ewing to add a one-story wing behind his original 1939 rear-facing garage. Along the east side of the wing Ewing also added an L-shaped covered terrace. It was enclosed as a Florida room in 2021. This addition is shown in Figures 24 & 25. In 2006 the anchoring rear-facing garage was lengthened and is seen in Figures 25. Overall, this wing is simple and continues some of the elements from the original home throughout the various addition campaigns. These elements include the smooth stucco cladding, low-pitched roof and with rafter tails in the extended eaves, and windows with colonial muntins. The wing does not detract from the overall historic integrity of the 1939 home.



**Figures 25: Rear West Wing Addition, 2025**  
**East Façade of Florida Room [top]; Rear-facing Garage [bottom]**

### 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 1939 in the Neoclassical style the property at 607 University Drive (legally described as Lots 9 & 10, Block 139, 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 607 University Drive 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 **607 University Drive** (legally described as Lots 9 & 10, Block 139, 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.
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    “609 University Dr.” ad, August 26, 1960, p.60.  
    “Miami’s ‘Way of Living’ Enhances Realty Values” August 4, 1940, p.32.  
    “Prewar Colonial Surrounded by Trees, 609 University” November 23, 1952, p.20.  
    “Slender White Columns, 609 University Dr” November 2, 1952, p.18.  
    “Staples for Gables: 6 Pillar Georgian” sales ad, February 13, 1966, p.68.  
Miami News  
    “Dr. Oden Schaeffer” obit, May 21, 1970, p.24.
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- Real Estate Records, Coral Gables Historical Resources Department.
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## 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.

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Property Address:	607 University Drive
Lot Description:	corner lot
Date of Construction:	1939
Use:	single-family residence
Style:	Neoclassical
Construction Material:	concrete block clad in stucco
Stories:	one- & two-story
Roof Types:	hipped clad in flat 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.

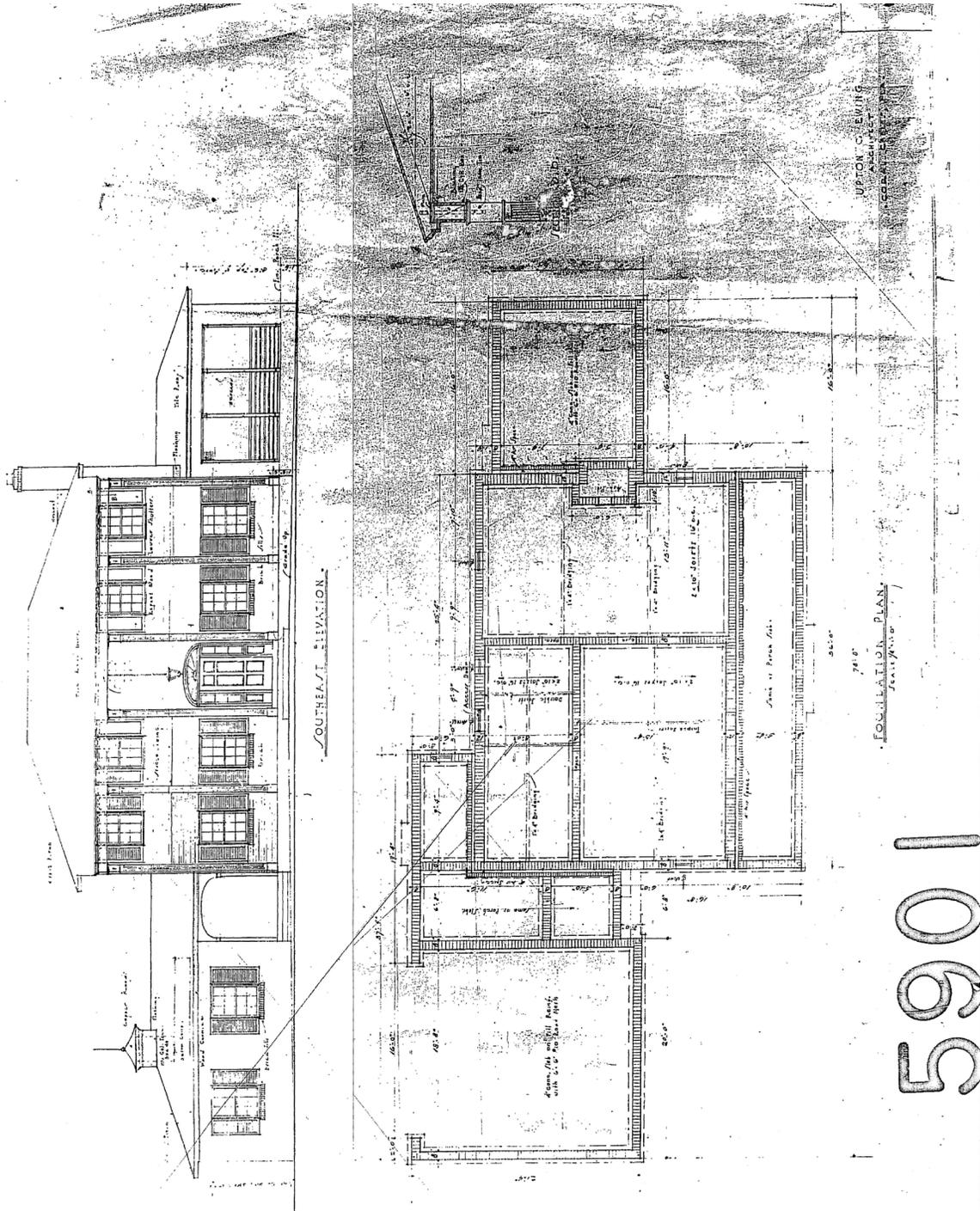
## CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

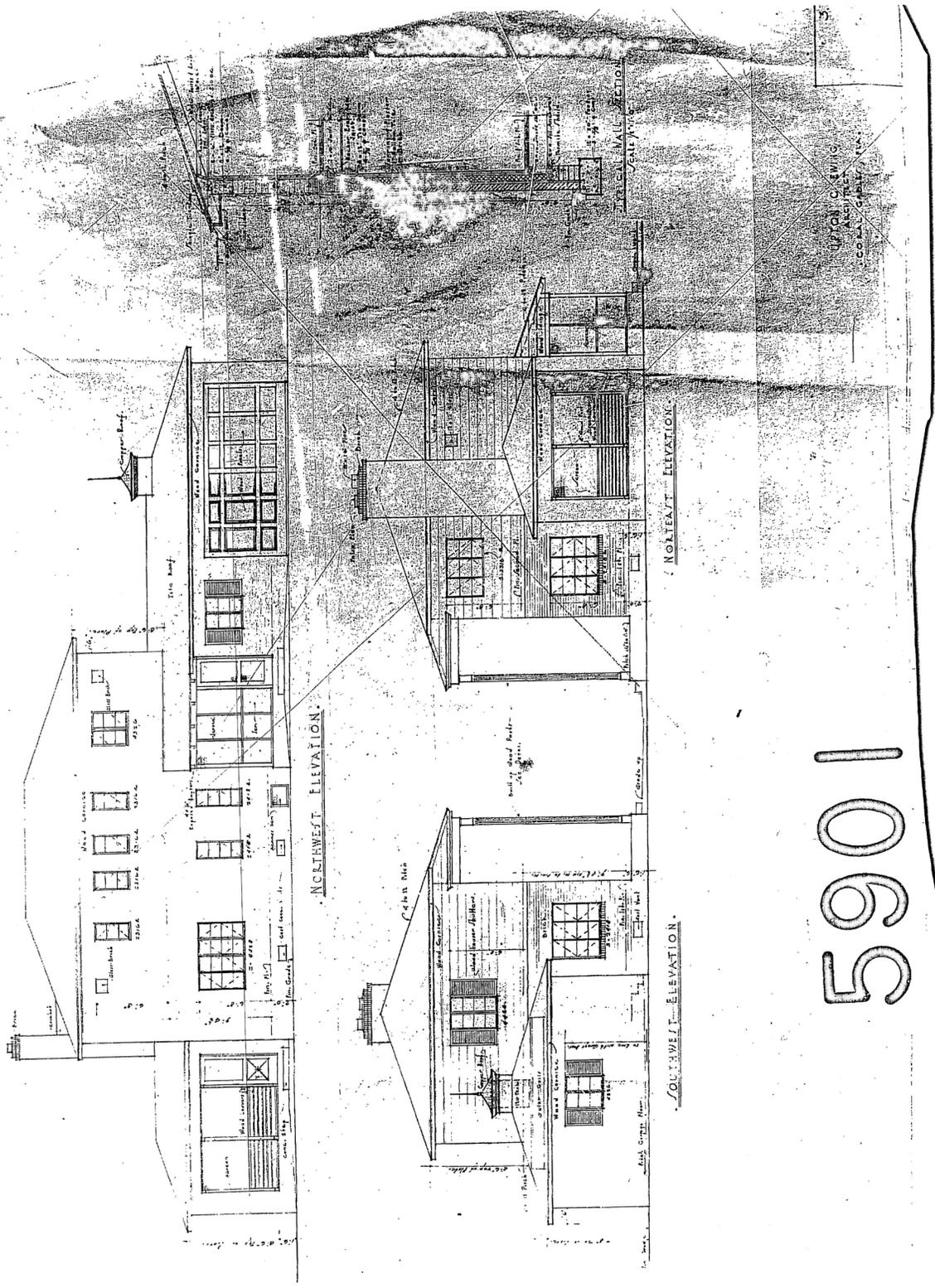
Style: Neoclassical



- ✓ symmetrical massing: a larger central mass flanked by lower bays
- ✓ rectangular in form
- ✓ simple and balanced ornamentation, primarily classical in nature
- ✓ a dominant two-story front porch with an even number (6) of full-height slender box classical columns supporting a molded entablature
- ✓ Federal-inspired front doorway ensemble with a fanlight with radiating muntins, sidelights, panel insets, and molded framing encircled by a brick door surround
- ✓ evenly spaced vertical windows are appropriately proportioned and flanked by ‘working’ louvered shutters with shutter dogs on primary facade
- ✓ clad in smooth textured stucco, brick facing, and large plank siding
- ✓ low-pitched hipped roofs clad in flat tile
- ✓ boxed eaves with a moderate to wide overhangs
- ✓ large, molded cornice
- ✓ brick sills and lintels
- ✓ windows with divided by muntins
- ✓ single-hung windows on front façade
- ✓ ocular window
- ✓ small glass block windows
- ✓ prominent side chimney and a squat chimney with flared cap
- ✓ exposed rafter tails

Appendix A: Permit #5901, 1939  
Architect: Upton C. Ewing





5901

