

**REPORT OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES
HISTORICAL RESOURCES & CULTURAL ARTS DEPARTMENT
TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
ON THE DESIGNATION OF
THE PROPERTY AT
1208 ASTURIA AVENUE
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA
AS A LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK**



c.1940 Historic Photograph



LHD 2019-008
January 15, 2020

LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION
of the property at
1208 ASTURIA AVENUE, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA

Application:

September 25, 2019: Historic significance determination application filed
October 4, 2019: Preservation Officer issued determination that the property *does meet* the minimum eligibility criteria for local historic landmark designation
November 20, 2019 & December 19, 2019: item deferred at request of applicant

Historical Resources &
Cultural Arts

2327 SALZEDO STREET
CORAL GABLES
FLORIDA 33134

☎ 305.460.5093
✉ hist@coralgables.com

Note: *All observations regarding this property were from the public right-of-way. There was no access to the property.*

Folio Numbers: 03-4107-016-0900

Legal Description: Lots 13 & 14, Block 6, Coral Gables Section E, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8 Page 13 of the public records of Miami-Dade County, Florida

Original Permit No/ Date: 5058 / 1936

Original Architect: Russell Pancoast

Original Builder & Owner: Mr. & Mrs. B. E. Meyers

Present Owner: Lordes Valls

Present Use: Single-family residence

Building Style: Traditional Custom Ranch House

Site Characteristics: The property is located on an interior lot on the south side of Asturia Avenue between Columbus Boulevard and Madrid Street. The lot dimension is 100' x 125'.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The single-family residence at 1208 Asturia Avenue is an early excellent example of an early Traditional Custom Ranch House. Designed by the nationally-acclaimed architect Russell Pancoast, who was known for his cutting-edge thinking, it was one of the first residences in this style in Coral Gables. Pancoast designed Miami Beach Library and Art Center (now the Bass Museum of Art) in 1930, which is considered by many to be the city's first Art Deco building and contributed heavily to the development of Art Deco on Miami Beach. In this home, Pancoast brings these modern influences to the newly-evolving ranch typology and breaks away from the Mediterranean Revival foundation of the City and aids in launching a new chapter in Coral Gables architectural history. The property at 1208 Asturia Avenue retains a high degree of historic integrity and significantly contributes to the historic fabric of the City of Coral Gables.

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 Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, & Reconstructing Buildings.

CRITERIA FOR SIGNIFICANCE



Figures 1: 1208 Asturia Avenue, Front (North) Elevation -- c.1940 [top]; 2019 [bottom]

Article 3, Section 3-1103 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 1208 Asturia 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, 1208 Asturia Avenue meets the following **three (3)** criteria.

Historical, Cultural significance

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

Architectural significance

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

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Coral Gables Developmental History: 1200 Block Asturia Avenue

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

- Coral Gables' Initial Planning and Development/Florida Land Boom (Prior to the Hurricane of 1926),
- ***Post-1926 Hurricane/Great Depression/New Deal/Wartime Activity (1927-1944)***,
- and Post World War II and Modern periods (1945-1963).

Coral Gables was originally conceived as a suburb of Miami and attracted investors from across the nation during the South Florida real estate boom of the 1920s. Founder, George Merrick drew from the Garden City and City Beautiful movements of the 19th and early 20th century to create his vision for a fully-conceived 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 3000 acres of citrus plantation and native hammock into ornate plazas, grand entrances, small parks, monumental buildings, and tree-shaded streets. The goal was to create architectural splendor in a Spanish suburb with tropical luxuriance. The building of Coral Gables proceeded at a frantic pace until the Hurricane of 1926.

In the aftermath of the 1929 Wall Street Crash, the economy in Florida declined steeply. Between 1929 and 1933, one hundred forty-eight (148) state and national banks in Florida collapsed. By 1933, approximately one out of four Floridians was receiving some type of public relief and assistance. As the decade wore on, relief measures expanded under the direction of the New Deal administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. As people adjusted to a new way of life, their priorities and aesthetic changed. This was reflected in all aspects of life, including the types of homes that were built.

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. Not only did the number of new houses greatly decrease but the types and style of the homes also changed. For example, the dollar value of permits issued in 1926 was \$13,402,012. Permits steadily declined over the next few years plummeting to \$71,605 in 1931. Recovery was slow. By 1936 permit dollar values rose to approximately \$1,000,000 where it held steady for several years. Historic structure surveys of Coral Gables (i.e., North Gables Section, Flagler Section) conducted by Janus Research indicate that the predominant architectural style in Coral Gables continued to be Mediterranean Revival through the 1920s but when the construction of new homes began to rise in the late 1930s, the Minimal Traditional and masonry vernacular styles were more common in tandem with some early Traditional Custom Ranch houses. The permitting and initial construction of the single-family home at 1208 Asturia Avenue occurred during the New Deal era. It was one of the first homes built as building began to resurge in the City and is indicative of the type of architecture that emerged during this period.

The home at 1208 Asturia Avenue is in Section E of the City of Coral Gables. This section, located in the vicinity of the Granada Golf Course and the main thoroughfares of Alhambra Circle and Granada Boulevard, was intended by Merrick to be prominent section and was platted with larger 75'x125' lots. (Figure 2) It was one of the earliest areas of Coral Gables developed. Figure 3 illustrates the density of 1920s homes on Asturia Avenue in vicinity of the golf course.

In particular, the 1200 block was developed with larger prominent homes. Figure 4 highlights the eleven properties built on the 1200 block of Asturia Avenue between 1923 and 1930. The orange indicates the six large homes that were built in 1923 --one on 2-1/2 lots, two on 2 lots, one on 1-1/2 lots --hence firmly establishing it as a prominent area with the inception of Coral Gables. (Figure 5) In the 1930s there was only one home, 1235 Asturia, built on the block in addition to this home at 1208 Asturia Avenue. Building in 1930s was sparse and as there were large portions of the City available for building, it was clearly a concerted choice to build in this new style on a prominent block versus later years where infill was common. The remaining seven homes on the block were built between 1949 and 2006. This neighborhood still retains this context of larger-lot, single-family homes. (Figures 6)



Figure 2: Plat Map, Coral Gables Section E



Figure 3: Asturia Avenue, 1920s homes
Orange = built in 1923; Green = built 1924-1930

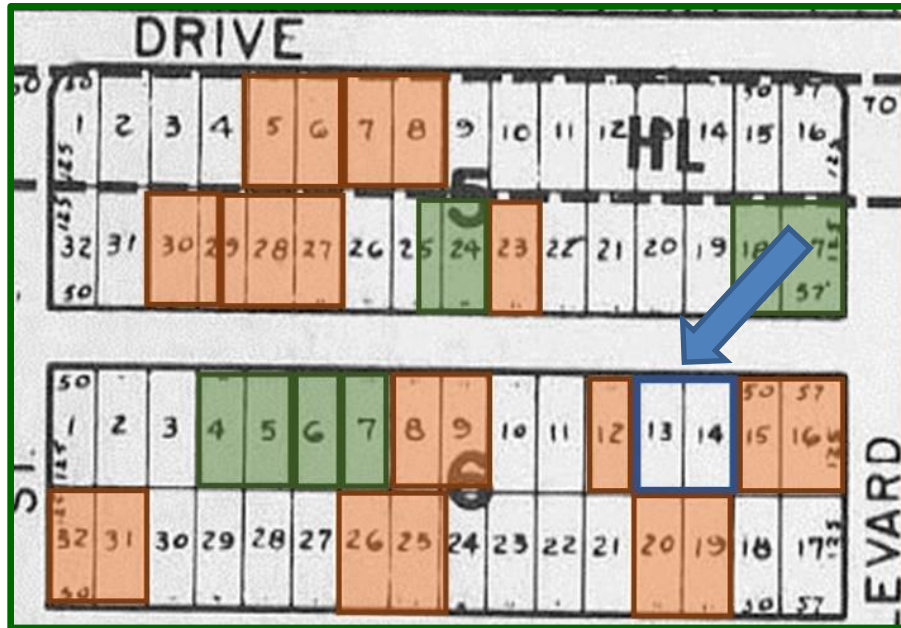


Figure 4: Plat Map, Section E, 1200 Block Astoria Avenue, 1920s homes
Orange = built in 1923; Green = built 1924-1930
Note: many of the homes are built on multiple lots



Figures 5: Examples of 1920s homes on the 1200 block of Astoria Avenue
Top: 1202 (1924) [left]; 1229 (1926) [right]
Bottom: 1243 (1923) [left]; 1225 (1923) [right]



**Figures 6: Aerial Photographs
1948 [top left]; 1957 [top right]; Current Context [bottom]**

*Courtesy of Aerial Photography: Florida Collection, University of Florida, George A. Smathers Libraries
Courtesy of Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser*

The Ranch House: 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; a dream that was realized for many during the mid-century building boom. The Ranch home was at the heart of the boom.

Figure 7: Vintage Ad, c. 1955
Courtesy of Lumberman's Association

During the Depression Era of the 1930s few single-family homes were built. With the implementation of New Deal and other incentives, the building industry finally experienced a resurgence in the late 1930s and early 1940s; only to abruptly grind to a halt during the War years of 1942-1945 as materials, expertise, and manpower were diverted to the war effort.

Conceived from a variety of stylistic influences that incorporated references to the past as well as those associated with the more forward-thinking, avant-garde tenets of Modernism, the Ranch house and Ranch style architecture made their formal debut in the 1920s. Ranch houses were built in the 1930s and 1940s but proliferated after World War II, when they became the preferred choice for residential design in many cities and suburbs across the nation. In the 1930s, Ranch homes were promoted throughout the country in architectural journals and magazines. Its simplicity was a subtle response to the economic hardships of the Depression and the ornate styles of the 1920s. Ranch homes combined a restrained combination of features from earlier house styles while adhering to the burgeoning modern aesthetic of subtle ornamentation and streamlined homes. The homes were well-built, often using modern materials (i.e., plywood, modern cement mixtures) and methods (i.e., solar). The Ranch typology and style was flexible and embraced elements of previous styles. This led to area-specific and sometimes architect-specific variations. In general, the Ranch house refers to a one-story, single-family residence with a rambling footprint, horizontal massing, an open and free-flowing interior plan, and an integral relationship with the outdoors. Historians Alan Hess and John English note that the informal composition of the Ranch house type exhibits “many of the same spatial and structural tendencies seen in other Modern residential architecture of the period, though in a more moderate manner.” Moreover, Ranch houses were almost always accompanied by a garage to house the family’s car.

In Coral Gables, when home-building began to regain its footing in the mid-1930s there was a distinct departure from the ornamented and picturesque Mediterranean Revival style that had dominated the City’s landscape since its inception. The trend moved to homes in the Minimal Traditional and masonry vernacular style as well as some early Traditional Custom Ranch houses. In Coral Gables these styles often reflected the influence of Mediterranean Revival features as well as the dominant regional style of Art Deco. These early Traditional Custom Ranch homes were designed by prominent architects for clients who were embracing this revolutionary architectural type and style. These homes are distinct and often unique. Such was the case for the home at 1208 Asturia Avenue. Built on the prominent 1200 block by an acclaimed architect who was known for breaking new ground it melded the new revolutionary typology with modernistic influences.

The Ranch House was at the heart of the twentieth century's mid-century building boom. It is fair to say that at no other time has a single new type of home housed so many people in such a short period of time AND had as profound an impact on the built environment of the nation as the Ranch house. While the Ranch House was well-accepted prior to World War II as a revolutionary new style of custom-designed homes by prominent architects, they are most strongly associated with the rapid suburbanization that occurred in the postwar period, during which time they were built in unprecedented numbers and often not-custom designed.

The Ranch House was conceived from a variety of stylistic influences that incorporated references to the past as well as those associated with the more forward-thinking, avant-garde tenets of Modernism. Its origins can be traced to multiple architectural and cultural antecedents. At the forefront were the vernacular residential buildings that peppered the landscape of the American West and Southwest in the nineteenth century--specifically the simple adobe "rancho" buildings and the casual pioneer farmhouses. These vernacular homes were typically one-story with L- or U-shaped floor plans, wide overhanging eaves, and low-pitched roofs. Using this inspiration, the Ranch House also incorporated influences from the early 20th-century Craftsman and Prairie styles and utilized moderated spatial and structural tendencies seen in contemporaneous residential Modern architecture.

The Ranch House represented a radical departure from tradition. It was a deliberate new style of residential architecture. These low-slung homes were affordably designed for family-living. They accommodated different aesthetics; embraced the opportunities of expanding suburbia and the automobile-centric communities; and most importantly it was widely-recognized as new way to live and as a place for all strata of families to call their own.

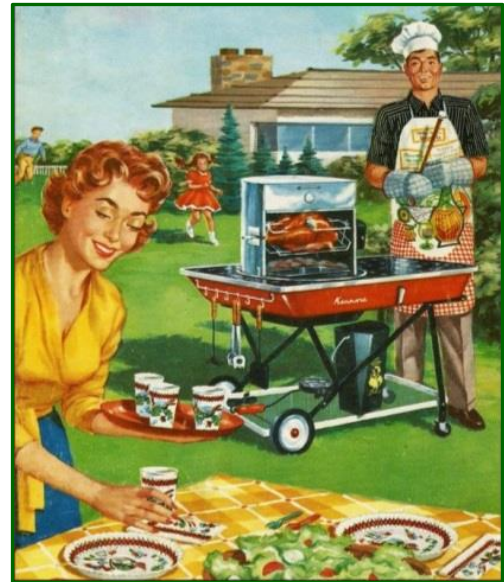


Figure 8: Ranch House advertisement, 1948, National Home Builders

The homes were one-story with a decidedly horizontal emphasis. The exterior was unabashedly modern and did away with steep roofs, dormer windows, and porches. The layout was open and casual, with wood paneling instead of wallpaper, and room dividers instead of interior walls. Formal spaces were replaced with open family spaces and indoor and outdoor space was melded with the incorporation of picture windows, sliding glass doors, and terraces and patios. They first began to appear in small versions that were low to the ground or as lengthened versions of Minimal Traditional homes. By the late 1930s the typology was fully-conceived and embraced by forward-thinking architects and clients. The Ranch House quickly evolved and grew in popularity. It clearly

became the house of choice of the post-War generation and was wildly popular throughout the building boom of the early 1950s. By some accounts, nine out of ten new houses built in the United States during the 1950s were of the ranch typology and four out of five in the 1970s. (Rybczynski) In Coral Gables the ranch house dominated the residential landscape Post-WWII and throughout the 1950s and those built in the City followed the national trends.

There are several reasons why the Ranch House proved so popular among middle-income Americans at this time. These homes and its associated lifestyle received a great deal of press during the late 1940s. It was widely disseminated in popular media and was touted as the ideal dwelling for the modern American family. Magazines such as *Good Housekeeping*, *House Beautiful*, and *Better Homes and Gardens* often published full-page spreads of the ‘ranch living.’ The Ranch House was intentionally unpretentious and simultaneously innovative, precedent-setting. It was new kind of house for a new kind of living. It capitalized on the postwar profusion of cheap land and sprawling suburbs and it spoke to an optimistic generation that was looking forward. With a long front façade that turned its back on the streetscape to focus on backyard living, it celebrated family. It also embraced the automobile, ‘green’ technology, and flexible design. In short, the Ranch House epitomized family living at mid-century and it became the most iconic and pervasive type of single-family home for over three decades.



**Figure 9: Ranch Living,
Vintage Sears Ad, c.1950**

Many suburban Ranch Houses of the 1940s and 1950s are true to form and showed great finesse. The flip side is that ranch typology was also mass-produced, first for defense workers during World War II and later as low-cost housing. These homes were minimal in character and took the basic features of the Ranch House—often with a loss of some of its salient characteristics. Variation was achieved through the different orientation of plans, treatment of elevations, and selection of



Figure 10: Ranch Houses of Palm Springs, CA
Courtesy of Loom Textiles

materials. In these federal projects, the use of precut lumber and staging areas at the site to ensure timely completion and cost efficiency. While the standardization of these projects was a necessity at the time, this approach to design and construction became a blueprint for later tract developments of ranch homes. These tract developments contributed heavily to the criticism of ranch homes, both at the time and subsequently. Over time the use of the word “ranch” became synonymous with this fast-built tract housing typology. This is unfortunate because the unassuming Ranch House was in fact a remarkable work of residential architecture.

At first glance, the understanding, classification, and evaluation of the Ranch House present daunting challenges. They are by nature unassuming and their character-defining features are few. The vast number of Ranch Houses built, their wide variety, and their extreme diversity –ranging from the modern atomic homes to tract housing– seemingly defy ordering in a traditional stylistic sense. Generally, the Ranch House is often divided into three broad categories:

- Traditional Custom Ranch House, 1930-1975;
- Contemporary Ranch House, 1945-1975;
- and Minimal Ranch, 1945-1975.

The Traditional Custom Ranch House includes custom-designed single-family houses that embody the Ranch House philosophy and may incorporate historicist elements; these homes are commonly portrayed as the “quintessential Ranch house.” The Contemporary Ranch Houses are custom-designed, single-family homes that blend the prevailing design philosophy underpinning the Ranch House and the abstract forms and geometries of Modernism. The Minimal Ranch incorporates those homes that utilize the basic vocabulary of the Ranch House but are not custom-designed and are often mass-produced.

Ranch House: Character-Defining Features

The ranch home’s low profile comes from its roots in the Western United States, where working ranch homes were one-level, practical and unadorned. Modernist influences also kept ranch homes simple and typically single-story. As an architectural style, the Ranch house refers to a distinctive aesthetic that is defined by several essential physical characteristics: informality and asymmetry, low-pitched roofs, a variety of façade treatments, picture/large windows, and the application of historicist or modern ornament and details. Their interior and exterior layout is geared to being conducive to indoor-outdoor living. Ranch Houses are often U- or L-shaped in plan. They are generally long, always low, and close the ground with massing that may be simple or complex and incorporate a variety of exterior materials.

Character-Defining Features: (McAlester)

- ✓ built low to ground
- ✓ horizontal emphasis
- ✓ low broad one-story shape
- ✓ low-pitched roof without dormers
- ✓ garage typically attached to main façade
- ✓ large picture window generally present
- ✓ asymmetrical façade
- ✓ front entry usually located off-center and sheltered under main roof of house
- ✓ commonly with moderate to wide roof overhang
- ✓ wall cladding changes in entry area
- ✓ wall cladding changes in gable end (usually wood boards, applied horizontally)
- ✓ wall changes at base of window
- ✓ patterns of three elements

The interior of the Ranch House is ‘zoned’. This was a relatively new concept in floor plans with ‘family’ activities (living room, dining room, den, etc.) in one zone and ‘private’ or ‘individual’ spaces (like bedrooms and bathrooms) in another zone. The family spaces were often open with one space flowing into the other. And a new kind of room appears with the Ranch House – the

family room (later called the den) an informal living room for the immediate family. The kitchen was no longer a utility room isolated in the back of the house. It became part of the family space. On the exterior, the family car moved from its traditional place in a freestanding garage in the back yard to the side or front of the house itself in attached garage or carport. Classic Ranch-house arrangement with a sleeping section at one end (marked with different size windows) a living section in the middle (marked by a picture window) and a section for cars at the other end (marked by garage doors). It was not uncommon for front-facing garage configurations to have a utility room and kitchen located behind the garage. The home at 1208 Asturia Avenue is an early example of this zoned layout.

Traditional Custom Ranch Houses

Traditional Custom Ranch Houses are reflective of important trends in domestic architecture between the early 1930s and mid-1970s. Specifically, these houses underscored Americans' infatuation with their collective past and Colonial-era roots, and also represented the casual and informal way of life that came to define patterns of living both before and after World War II. Single-family residences in this category are custom-designed (as opposed to mass produced) and are among the best examples of the traditional Ranch style. These residences were typically designed by noted architects.

The Traditional Custom Ranch style is almost always expressed in the form of a one-story, single-family residence. Houses designed in this architectural style include several identifying characteristics such as rambling, elongated plans; a horizontal emphasis; general asymmetry; free-flowing interior spaces; and a designed connection to the outdoors. Traditional Ranch style houses are distinguished from other variations of Ranch architecture by their incorporation of elements associated with the working ranches that historically dotted the vernacular landscape. Features such as: low-pitched roofs with wide eaves; combination of cladding; shutters; multiple windows and shapes; broad low chimney; rear patio or covered porch; may incorporate simple ornamentation of current or regional styles as design elements (as opposed to applied features). (Los Angeles) Early examples of Traditional Custom Ranch Houses in the southeastern Florida region followed the housing trend across the nation and often incorporated elements from dominant regional styles--in particular Art Deco and Art Moderne.

SIGNIFICANCE ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION

Note: All observations regarding this property was from the public right-of-way. There was no access to the property.



Figure11: 1208 Asturia Avenue: Front (North) Façade, 2019

The residence at 1208 Asturia Avenue is significant as an example of is an early Traditional Custom Ranch House. Designed by the nationally-acclaimed architect Russell Pancoast, who was known for his cutting-edge thinking, it was one of the first residences in this style in Coral Gables. In this home he embodied the newly-evolving ranch home while incorporating Art Deco and Art Moderne influences. Pancoast designed the Miami Beach Library and Art Center (now the Bass Museum of Art) in 1930 which is considered by many to be the city's first Art Deco building and contributed heavily to the development of Art Deco on Miami Beach.

As discussed above, during the 1930s New Deal Era as people adjusted to a new way of life, their priorities and aesthetic changed. This was reflected in all aspects of life including the types of homes that were built. Coral Gables began to follow national home-building trends at this time and when the construction of new homes began to rise in the late 1930s the Minimal Traditional and masonry vernacular styles were more common in tandem with some early Traditional Custom Ranch houses. In this home Pancoast brings modern influences to the ranch typology, breaking away from the Mediterranean Revival foundation of the City and aids in launching a new chapter in Coral Gables architectural history. And he does this on a prominent block dominated by higher-end Mediterranean Revival style homes.

The original Permit #5058 drawings for the residence are dated March 1936 and are for a one-story single-family home with an attached garage. The home includes many prominent and defining features of a Traditional Custom Ranch House such as: built low to ground with an horizontal emphasis; one-story; low-pitched roof without dormers; garage attached to main façade; large windows; asymmetrical façade; off-center front entry sheltered under main roof of house; wide roof overhangs; wall cladding change in gable end (wood horizontal siding); wall changes at base of windows; as well as elements in patterns of three (shelves, windows). Additionally, the home contains shutters; a broad low chimney; and a covered porch. It also incorporates simple ornamentation of current or regional styles—in this case Art Deco and Art Moderne. These elements include punctured fenestration openings; sculptural built-in exterior shelves; sculptural full-height broad pilasters and sculptural eaves and cornices.

This home retains a high degree of historic integrity. Thus, the property at 1208 Asturia Avenue is part of the collection of quality residences that significantly contributes to the historic fabric of the City of Coral Gables.

Extant Exterior Description



**Figures 12: 1208 Asturia Avenue, Front (North) Facade, 2017 [left] *Courtesy of Realtor.com*
Aerial Photo of Roof [lower right] *Courtesy of Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser***

The single-family residence at 1208 Asturia Avenue sits on an interior 100' x 125' lot on the south side of the street. The front façade faces north onto Asturia Avenue. The one-story residence is built over a crawl-space and is rectilinear in plan. The home was originally permitted as a three-bedroom, two-bath home with an attached two-car garage and servant's quarters which real estate records indicate was used as a 'den'. It is roughly U-shaped with a screened porch spanning the center of the "U" on the rear façade. (Figure 12 & 13) The home is approached by a brick paver walkway leading from the sidewalk to the front door. This main entry faces north onto a brick paver stoop accessed by two steps. The two-car garage, located at the west end of the home, is accessed by a pair of tire strips.

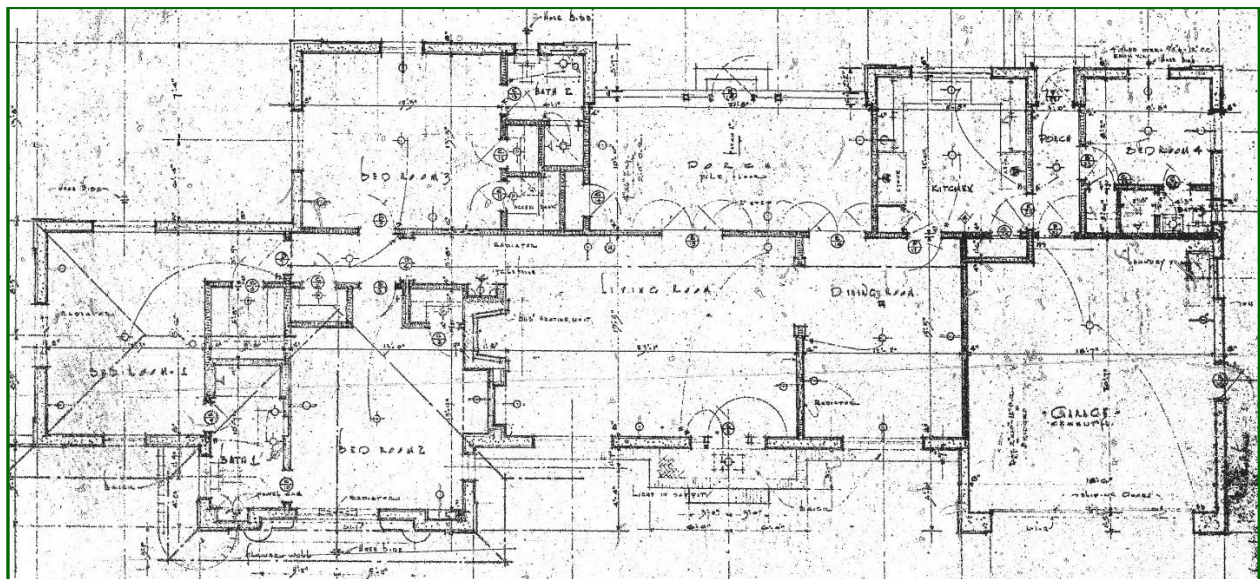


Figure 13: Floor Plan, Permit 5058, March 1936

The massing of the one-story home is low and broad with an overall emphasis on horizontality. It has a smooth stucco finish and roofs that are gable and shed in type and clad with flat tile. A squat chimney stack rises from the front side-gable roof at approximately the mid-point of the home (living space sans garage). The majority of windows in the home are currently awning or clearview in type. The windows were originally steel casement windows arranged in a streamlined appearance creating horizontal band as often seen in Art Moderne buildings--a style in which Pancoast was extremely proficient. The windows are recessed several inches giving the impression of punctured openings. The bottom of the openings is slanted which aids in water runoff and adds visual interest to the window openings. This element is partially currently obscured by hurricane tracks. (Figure 14) The combination of smooth walls with rectangular cut-out openings is Art Deco in nature.



Figure 14: Recessed Windows with sloped bottom (typ.), 2019

The asymmetrical front (north) façade is broad, extending the full width of the lot. It comprises four bays with projecting second and fourth (moving east to west) bays. The horizontality of the home is emphasized by numerous features such as:

- low-pitched side-gable and hipped roofs
- wide eaves with sculptural molded cornices
- simplicity of the façade where the embellishments and features emphasize the horizontality
- banding fenestration -- large windows of similar heights, some with shutters, and the large two-car garage opening that draw your eye along the façade
- sculptural shelves flanking the window of the projecting bay
- extended brick line of the front stoop, broad flat pillars whose capitals and bases complement the visual orientation established by the larger features as well as a compilation of other details

As was common with Ranch homes, the front façade reflects the interior ‘zone’ configuration. (Figures 15 & 16) The two smaller eastern bays (approximately 18’ and 20’) house the private bedroom areas. The larger central bay (approximately 39’) fronts the public/family space (living, dining) and the eastern bay is the garage (approximately 20’). The roof over the living spaces are shallow and similar in pitch. The garage bay is lower in height and the side-gable roof is slightly shallower with a ridge further south than the main house hence producing a larger street-side roof plane which visibly distinguishes it from the living space.

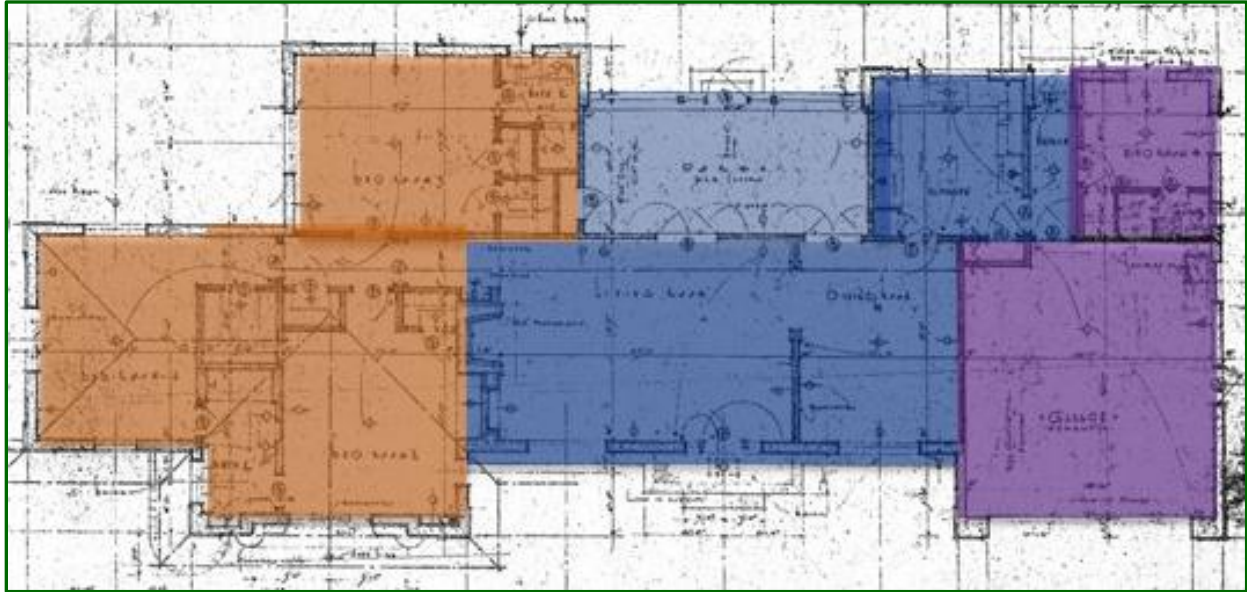


Figure 15: Zoned Living Plan
Blue: 'Family' activities - living, dining rooms, den, kitchen
Orange: 'Private' or 'individual' spaces – bedrooms, bathrooms
Purple: Attached garage, utility / servants' quarters



Figures 16: 1208 Asturia Avenue, Front (North) Facade, looking southeast, 2019

The central bay fronting the public/family zone is the largest in length with a low-pitched side-gabled roof. The front door ensemble is flanked by two large windows resulting in a symmetrical bay on this asymmetrical façade. The front door ensemble rises almost to the full height of the façade and presents as a strong horizontal feature. The ensemble is comprised of the original front and screen doors flanked by sidelights and shutters. The front door has a one-third, two-third configuration with a 12-lite window on the upper one-third and a paneled bottom two-thirds. The screen door is constructed with members that frame the front door window and presents a modern geometry. The flanking sidelights are narrow and evenly divided into three lites. The shutters also have a one-third, two-third configuration with the louvered upper one-third corresponding to the door window and the horizontal member of the screen door aligning the bottom frame of the louvered portion. The lower two-thirds of the shutter is a large panel. (Figure 17)

The front entry ensemble is the visually dominant feature of the front façade. It is balanced by the shelves on the protruding bay and the steeper-pitched roof and large opening of the garage bay. The ensemble is further accentuated by the brick course that extends the ‘line’ of the stoop along the façade of this central bay. Below the brick course are masonry block crawl space vents creating another horizontal feature.



Figure 17: Front Entry Ensemble, 2017
Courtesy of Realtor.com

The eastern ‘private’ end of the home has two bays. The front façade of the eastern-most bay is along the same plane as the front entry public bay discussed above. This small bay has a hipped roof with a central window flanked by shutters. The second bay projects approximately five feet and has a very shallow front-facing gable roof. The gable end is visually minimized by a ‘hip’ skirt roof that becomes the wide projecting eaves of this bay. The typical Ranch feature of horizontal wood siding fills the gable end. The bay is framed by wide pilasters with simple molded capitals with corresponding bases demarked by lines incised in the smooth stucco. The center of the bay is stepped back to frame a large window. The hallmark of this bay and a major feature of the front façade are the Art Deco-inspired masonry shelves flanking the window. These shelves start on the same plane as the window and follow the curve of the projecting frame and terminate along the front façade with rounded shelves. (Figures 18 & 19) Three shelves flank the window and a fourth round shelf wraps into a shallow ledge above the masonry crawl space vents. These bottom shelves align with the inscribed pilaster base line and the brick course of the central entry bay. This bay adds a decided Art Deco flair to the front façade.



Figures 18: Front Façade, Central Projecting Bay
Note: Sculptural shelving, Inset for window, Corner pilaster, Wood siding in gable end



Figures 19: Front Façade, Central Projecting Bay, Details



Figure 20: Interior, 2017 – note fireplace reflects exterior detailing
Courtesy of Realtor.com

As mentioned above, the western bay houses the garage. This bay is lower in height than the living space. Its side-gable roof is slightly shallower with a ridge further south than and main house hence producing a larger street-side roof plane. This opening for the two-car garage is approximately 15'-0". The opening is framed along its vertical edges by a course of bricks/masonry blocks. Framing the opening, at the northeast and northwest corners of this bay are pilasters, approximately 2'-5" wide, that echo those on the second projecting bay described above. These pilasters likewise have molded capitals and bases demarked by an inscribed line.



Figures 21: Garage Bay, 2019
Note: Corner pilaster and Masonry block framing opening

As depicted in the original permit plans and in photos supplied by the applicant (Figures 22-24) it is clear that the corner pilaster is an element that is carried throughout all the facades as well as the inscribed base line. The rear porch is identified on a current property survey as a terrace and has a metal grate 'enclosing' it.

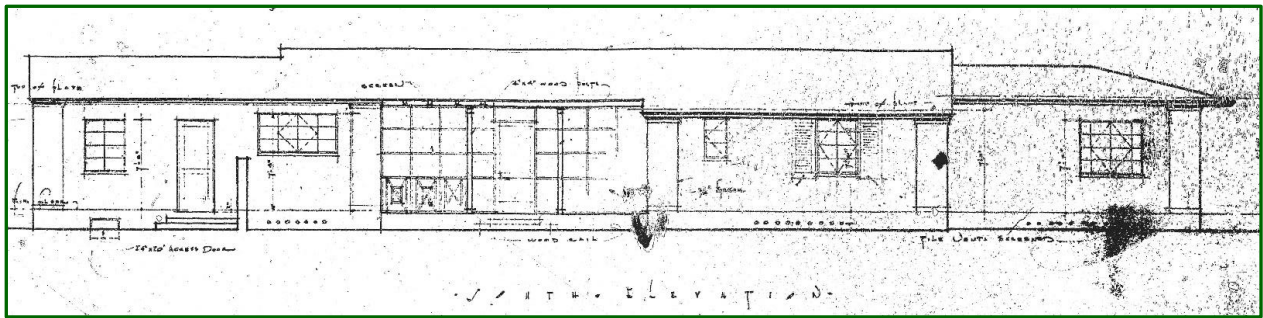
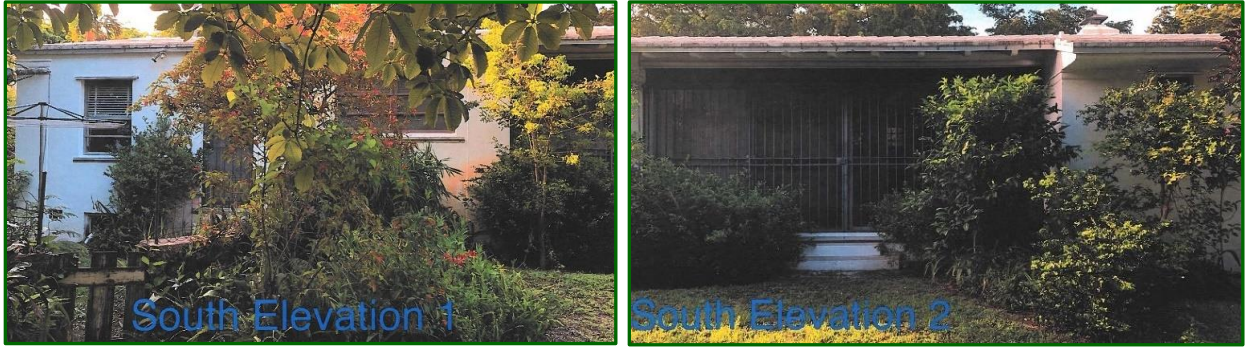


Figure 22: Rear South Elevation, Permit 5058, March 1936

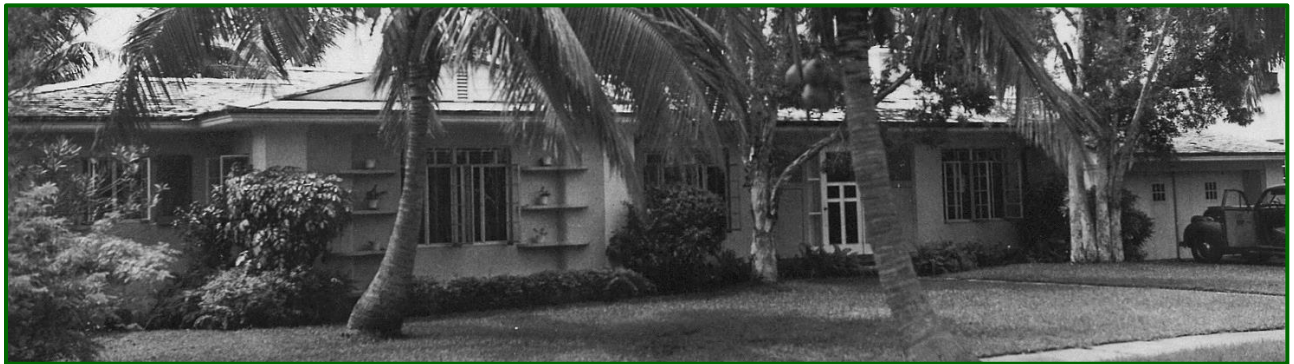
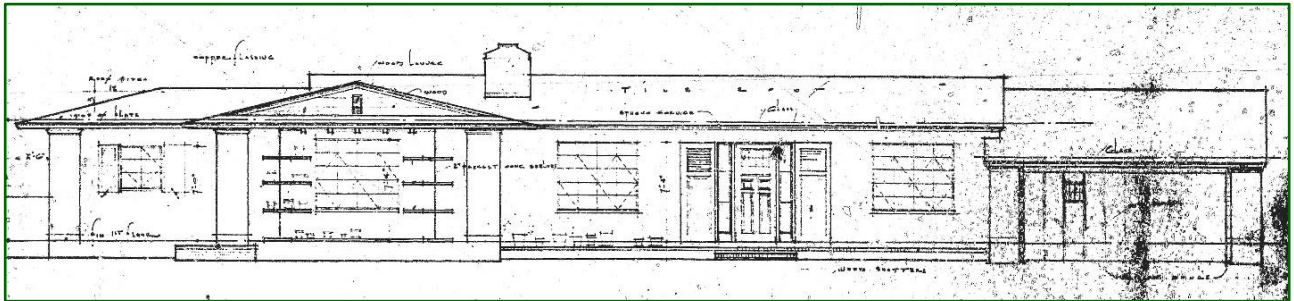


Figures 23: 1208 Asturia Avenue, 2019, photos provided by applicant
South elevation looking northwest [left]
East elevation (bedroom #3) rear of home [right]



Figures 24: 1208 Asturia Avenue, 2019, photos provided by applicant
South elevation, western end (servant's quarters & kitchen) [top]
South elevation, terrace/porch, rear of home [bottom]

Additions / Alterations



Figures 25: Front (North) Elevation:
Permit #5058, 1936 [top]; Historic Photo c.1940 [center]; Current Photo, 2019 [bottom]

Comparison of historic photographs and the original architectural plans with the extant home demonstrates the high degree of historic integrity this home has maintained over the years. (Figures 25) The home has retained its massing and most of its character-defining features. There have been no additions to the home.

The most dominant alteration was the removal of the original steel casement and transom windows with clearview and awning windows (date unknown). The two carriage garage doors were replaced with a single double-wide door at an unknown date. Another change that is noteworthy is the monochromatic exterior paint scheme. Historic photos (Figures 25) indicate that the pilasters were called out in a different color.

The only other alteration of note is the replacing of the cement walkway and rear patio with brick pavers in 1971. There are very few building permits associated with this property. The white cement flat roof shingles were replaced in 1973 and 2004. A gutter system was installed in 1980.

Ownership History

Note: Records regarding ownership prior to 1970 have not been located. The ownership history for this time period is based on numerous sources including R. L. Polk City Directories (available from 1926-65), building permits, realtor notes, other records on file within the Coral Gables Historical Resources Department and the Miami-Dade County Clerk.

1936-1938	B. E. Meyers, general contractor – Coral Gables office: 365 Greco Avenue A noted contractor who worked on local high-profile projects for architects such as Russell Pancoast, Phineas Paist, John & Coulton Skinner, Murray Dixon, Vernon D. Lamp
1938-1944	Dr. L. D. Pankey, Dentist President National Association of Dental Examiners
1944-1948	Dr. Howard H. Burkhart
1948-1950	William H. Molton & Irene Watkins Molton (-1960)
1950-1960	Irene Watkins Molton, William W. Moulton & John R. Moulton
1961-1965	Estate of Irene Molton
1965-2016	Walter R. Davison & Marilyn H. Davison
2016	Walter R. Davison & Marilyn H. Davison co-trustees of Davison Revocable Joint Trust
2017-2018	Marilyn H. Davison & Davison Revocable Joint Trust
2018-Present	Lourdes Valls

Architect: Russell T. Pancoast

Russell T. Pancoast was a distinguished architect who was known for ‘respectively breaking new stylistic ground repeatedly’. He has been quoted numerous times stating that one needs to evolve and to build in their present time and climate. His designs ranged from traditional to fully Modern with many defying a standard stylistic category when built and being classified as progressive ‘subtropical’. Most notably, Pancoast is considered by many to be key in helping shape the architecturally exotic Art Deco landscape of Miami Beach.

Russel Pancoast studied architecture at Cornell University an upon his return to Miami he worked for Kiehnel & Elliott before starting his own firm in the 1926. In 1951, Pancoast was elected a Fellow of the AIA. His citation for the honor reads ‘he was one of the first South Florida architects to get away from the Spanish influence’. He served as past secretary and past president of the Florida South Chapter of the AIA, was a member of the Florida Association of the AIA and served as past president of the Florida State Board of Architecture for thirteen years. He also served on the Miami Housing Board of Appeals, Citizens’ Planning Committee of Miami Beach, Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce Board of Governors, South Florida Building Code Committee, and worked as a planner for the City of Plantation.



Figure 26: Local Architects: Robert Law Weed, Russell T. Pancoast, Alfred Browning Parker. John E. Petersen, and Robert Fitch Smith (seated), 1964

The firm originally founded in 1926 by Russell T. Pancoast, known as Pancoast and Sibbert, became the most prestigious and longest standing architectural firm in the history of the Miami region. The following shows the evolution of his firm:

- 1926: Pancoast and Sibbert
- 1947: Russel T. Pancoast and Associates
- 1947: Ferendino, Skeels and Burnham
- 1954: Pancoast, Ferendino, Skeels and Burnham
- 1963: Pancoast, Ferendino, Grafton, Skeels and Burnham
- 1965: Pancoast, Ferendino, Grafton & Skeels
- 1966: Pancoast, Ferendino, Grafton
- 1969: Ferendino, Grafton, Pancoast
- 1971: Ferendino, Grafton, Spillis, Candela
- 1983: Spillis, Candela and Partners Inc.
- 1999: Spillis Candela DMJM -- to the present



Figure 27: Miami Beach Public Library and Art Center (1930) – Bass Art Museum-- listed on the National Register of Historic Places, 1979

Pancoast designed the Miami Beach Library and Art Center (now the Bass Museum of Art) in 1930 which is considered by many to be the city's first Art Deco building. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. Pancoast also designed buildings on the University of Florida campus including The Hub (1950) as well as the Surfside Surf Club and the Miami Beach Woman's Club and was responsible for the planning of the Snapper Creek Lakes Subdivision.

Projects in Coral Gables included:

- 1230 Catalonia Avenue (1934)
- 6800 Riviera Drive (1936)
- 9651 Ingraham Highway – Journey's End: auxiliary buildings (1948;1951)
- 4850 Biltmore Drive (1951)
- 5801 Augusto Street – Ponce De Leon High School auxiliary (1951)
- 5115 Orduna Drive (1951)
- 1075 Old Cutler Road – Fairchild Tropical Gardens office building (1952)
- 1075 Old Cutler Road – Fairchild Tropical Gardens residence (1953)
- 9555 Old Cutler Road – Journey's End (1953)

Pancoast was innovative, ground-breaking and a leader in the field of architecture. The single-family residence at 1208 Asturia Avenue is a prime example of his work. With this home he thoughtfully introduced a new style and typology to the landscape of Merrick's Mediterranean-inspired city.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The purpose of historic designation within the City of Coral Gables is defined in Article 3, Section 3-1101 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 3, Section 3-1103). 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 3, Section 3-1103.

Constructed in 1936, the property at 1208 Asturia Avenue (legally described as Lots 13 & 14, Block 6, Coral Gables Section E according to the plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 8 Page 13 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 3, Section 3-1103:

Historical, Cultural significance:

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

Architectural significance:

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

Staff finds the following:

The property located at **1208 Asturia 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 **1208 Asturia Avenue** (legally described as Lots 13 & 14, Block 6, Coral Gables Section E) based on its historical, cultural, and architectural significance.

Respectfully submitted,



Kara N. Kautz
Interim Historic Preservation Officer

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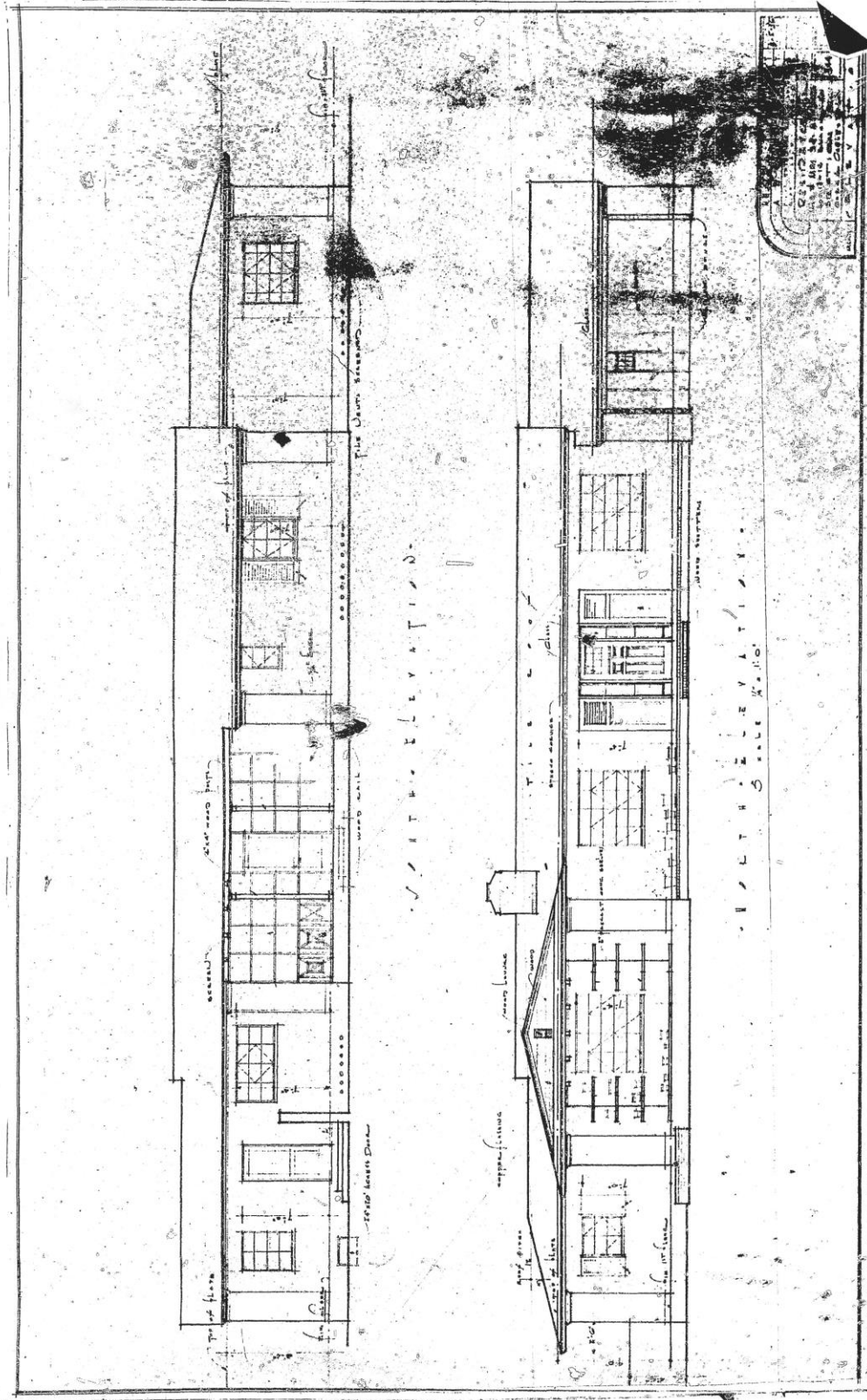
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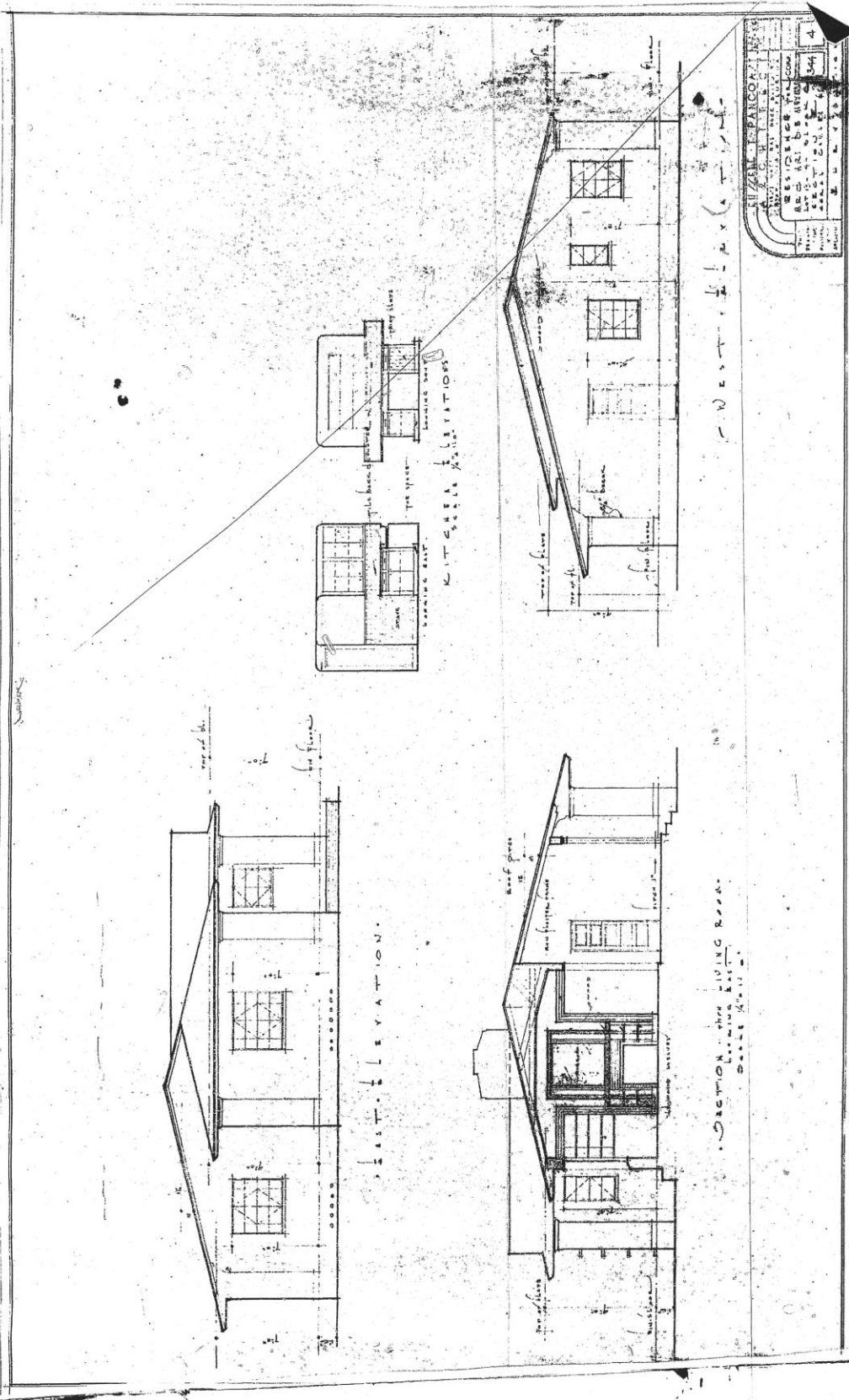
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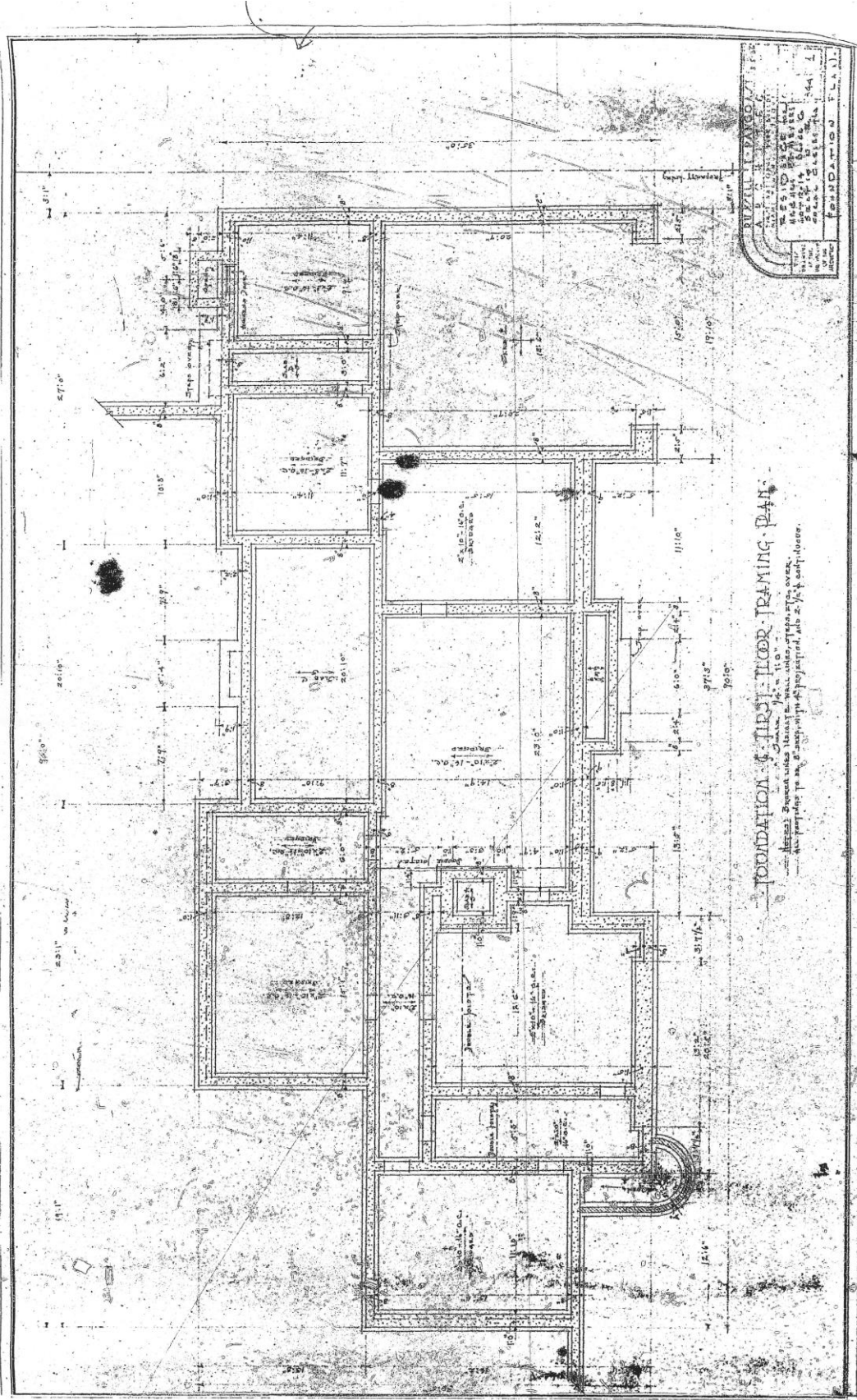
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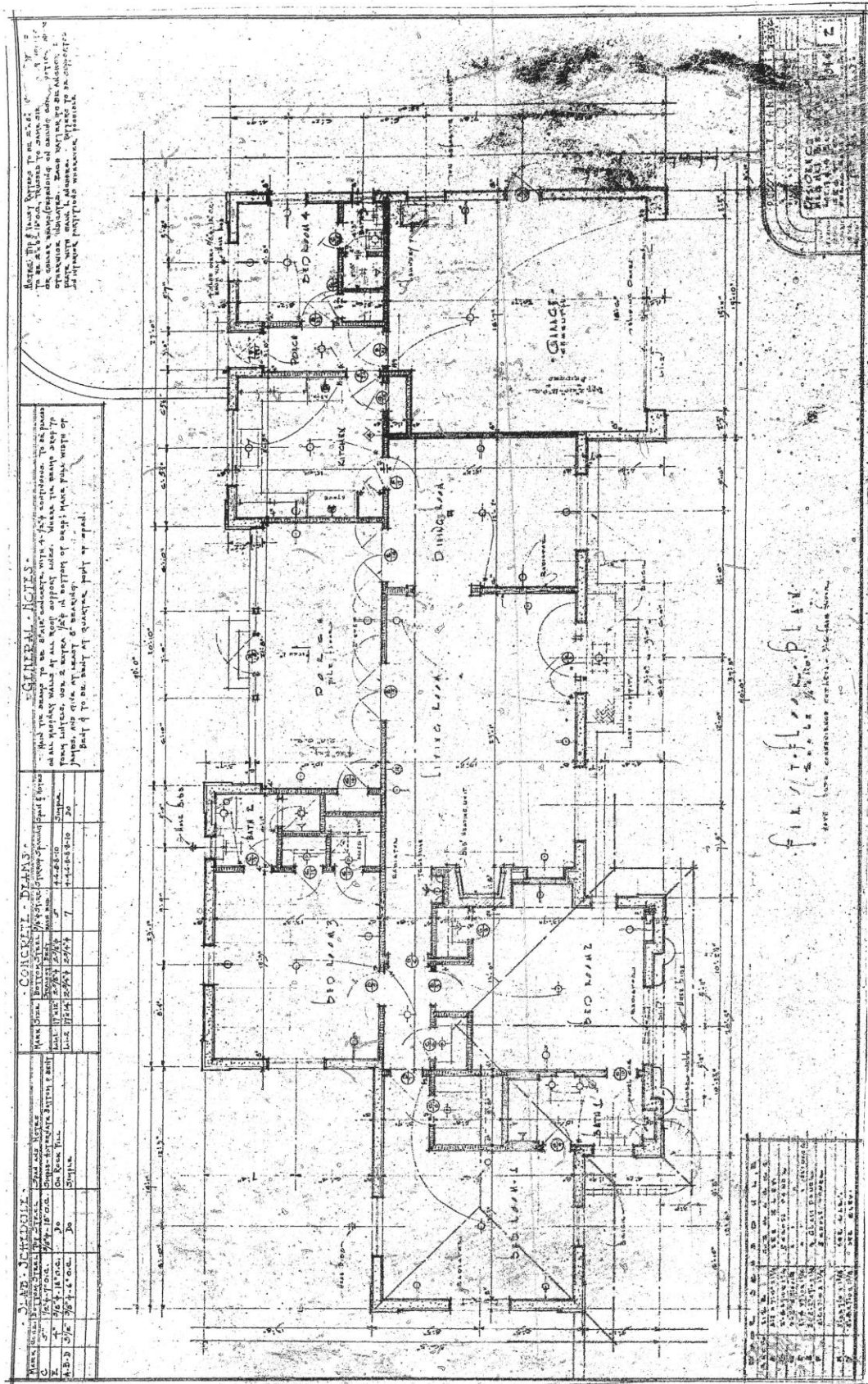
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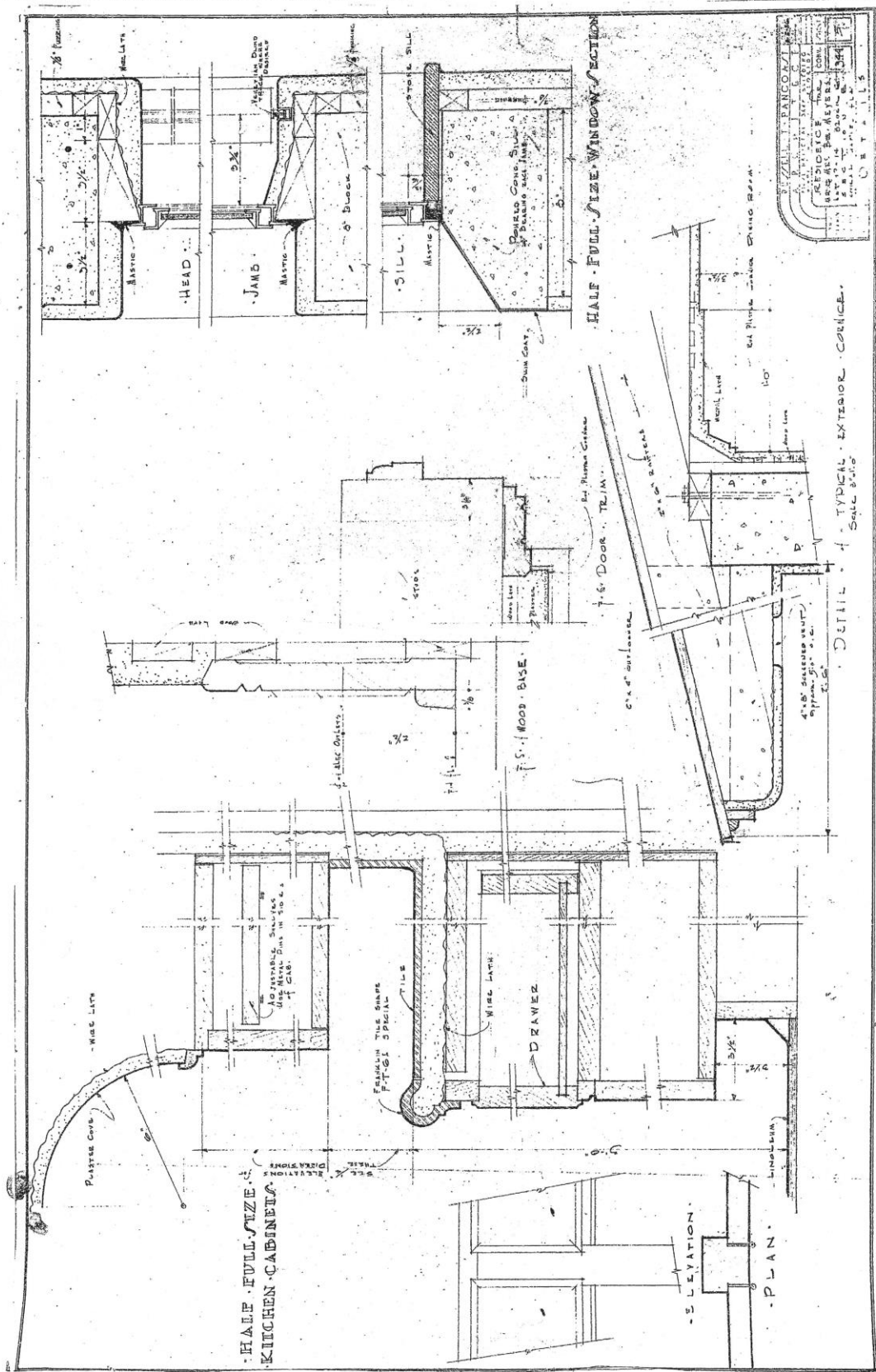
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