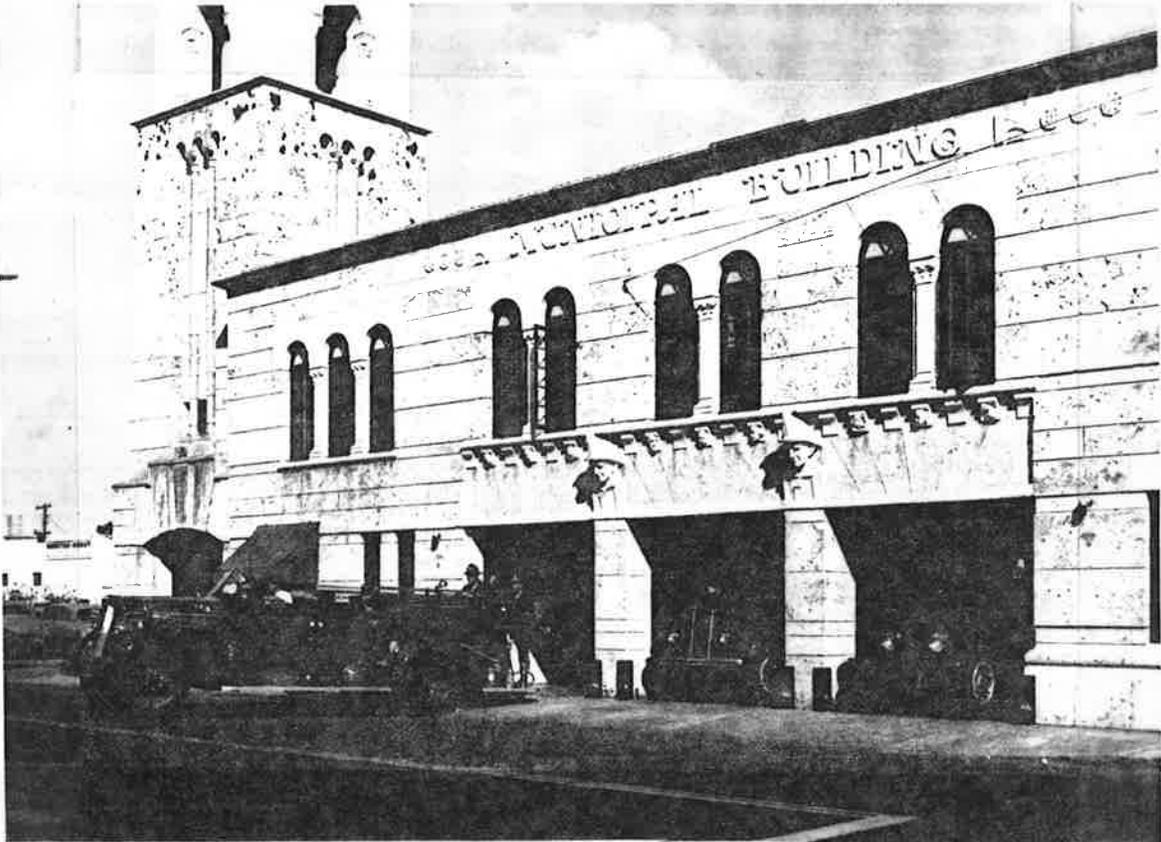


OLD POLICE AND FIRE BUILDING



DESIGNATION REPORT

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

REPORT OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES PLANNING DEPARTMENT
TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
ON THE DESIGNATION OF

OLD POLICE AND FIRE BUILDING

285 ARAGON AVENUE
AS AN HISTORIC LANDMARK

(PREPARED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 16B-17,2(B)
OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES ORDINANCE 2508)

PREPARED BY *Robin Lang Krchak* *1-16-85*
ROBIN LANG KRCHAK DATE
HISTORIC LANDMARK OFFICER

APPROVED BY *John E. Vinsant* *1-16-85*
JOHN E. VINSANT DATE
PLANNING DIRECTOR

ACCEPTED BY *Arwa M. Parker* *1-17-85*
CHAIRMAN DATE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD

DESIGNATED BY THE CITY COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES

RESOLUTION NO. 21669
MAY 12, 1977

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

HISTORIC NAME:

CITY OF CORAL GABLES PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

COMMON/CURRENT NAME:

OLD POLICE AND FIRE BUILDING

LOCATION:

285 ARAGON AVENUE
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA 33134

PRESENT OWNER:

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

PRESENT OCCUPANT:

CITY OF CORAL GABLES/
JUNIOR LEAGUE OF MIAMI, INC.

PRESENT USE:

CITY OFFICES/JUNIOR LEAGUE OF MIAMI, INC. HEADQUARTERS

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION OF HL SITE:

LOCATED ON THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF BLOCK 34 OF SECTION "K" WHICH IS BOUNDED SOUTH BY ARAGON AVENUE, WEST BY SALZEDO STREET, NORTH BY GIRALDA AVENUE, AND EAST BY PONCE DE LEON BOULEVARD. OCCUPYING LOTS 42 - 48 FOR A FRONT OF 175 FEET ON ARAGON AVENUE AND A FRONT OF 100.16 FEET ON SALZEDO STREET.

DADE COUNTY HISTORIC SURVEY RATING:

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE	-1
HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE	-1
CONTEXTURAL SIGNIFICANCE	-1

II. SIGNIFICANCE:

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

THE OLD POLICE AND FIRE BUILDING IS SIGNIFICANT AS AN OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF OOLITIC ROCK ARCHITECTURE CONSTRUCTED BY THE W.P.A. DURING THE DEPRESSION YEARS. IT IS ONE OF TWO W.P.A. MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTED IN CORAL GABLES AND IS NOTED FOR ITS DESIGN, DETAIL, MATERIALS AND CRAFTSMANSHIP.

THE BUILDING WAS DESIGNED BY PHINEAS PAIST, WHO WAS THE FIRST ARCHITECT REGISTERED IN MIAMI, AND THE THIRD IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA. EXTERIOR SCULPTURES SEEN ON THE SOUTH AND WEST FACADES WERE EXECUTED BY JON KELLER, A NOTED DEPRESSION MODERNE SCULPTOR.

RELATIONSHIP TO CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

- (A) IS ASSOCIATED IN A SIGNIFICANT WAY WITH THE LIFE OR ACTIVITIES OF A MAJOR HISTORIC PERSON IMPORTANT IN THE PAST.

THE OLD POLICE AND FIRE BUILDING WAS DESIGNED BY PHINEAS PAIST WHO WAS VITAL TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF GEORGE MERRICK'S DREAM CITY AND WAS THE PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT FOR THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES.

- (E) IS ASSOCIATED IN A SIGNIFICANT WAY WITH A PAST OR CONTINUING INSTITUTION WHICH HAS CONTRIBUTED SUBSTANTIALLY TO THE LIFE OF THE CITY.

THIS BUILDING SERVED TO HOUSE THE POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES FROM 1939 UNTIL 1975.

- (F) PORTRAYS THE ENVIRONMENT IN AN ERA OF HISTORY CHARACTERIZED BY ONE OR MORE DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURAL STYLES.

THE OLD POLICE AND FIRE BUILDING FEATURES THE SIMPLE LINES AND MASSING ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONTEMPORARY PRIVATE SECTOR ARCHITECTURAL STYLE--STREAMLINE MODERNE--COMBINED WITH TRADITIONAL CLASSICAL ELEMENTS RESULTING IN A STYLE BEST DESCRIBED AS DEPRESSION MODERNE. FURTHER COMPOUNDING THE STYLE OF THE OLD POLICE AND FIRE BUILDING IS THE USE OF COLITIC LIMESTONE WHICH IS MOST OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE MEDITERRANEAN REVIVAL STYLE FOR WHICH THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES IS MOST NOTED.

- (G) EMBODIES THOSE DISTINGUISHED CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ARCHITECTURAL STYLE, OR PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION.

THE OLD POLICE AND FIRE BUILDING IS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF W.P.A. DEPRESSION MODERNE ARCHITECTURE AND IS PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY FOR ITS INTERPRETATION IN NATIVE BUILDING MATERIAL. OF SPECIAL NOTE ARE THE SCULPTURES ON THE SOUTH AND WEST FACADES.

- (I) CONTAINS ELEMENTS OF DESIGN, DETAIL, MATERIALS OR CRAFTSMANSHIP OF OUTSTANDING QUALITY OR WHICH REPRESENT A SIGNIFICANT INNOVATION OR ADAPTATION TO THE SOUTH FLORIDA ENVIRONMENT.

THE OLD POLICE AND FIRE BUILDING, THOUGH ALTERED, IS PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY FOR THE EXCELLENCE OF ITS CRAFTSMANSHIP AND DETAILING EMBODIED IN SUCH FEATURES AS THE THREE STORY TOWER OF THE NORTHWEST CORNER, THE ENTRANCEWAYS OF THE BUILDING, AND THE DEPRESSION MODERNE SCULPTURE FEATURED ON THE SOUTH AND WEST FACADES.

III. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

DATE OF ERECTION:

1938-39

ARCHITECT:

PHINEAS PAIST/W.P.A./P.W.A.

BUILDER/CONTRACTOR:

W.P.A.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

THE OLD POLICE AND FIRE BUILDING WAS BEGUN IN 1938 AND COMPLETED IN 1939. AS A W.P.A. PROJECT, THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES PROVIDED THE LAND AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PROVIDED THE LABOR AND FINANCING OF 71.7% OF THE CONSTRUCTION COST. IN 1975 THE NEW POLICE AND FIRE BUILDING, LOCATED AT 2801 SALZEDO STREET, WAS COMPLETED. SINCE 1976 THE OLD POLICE AND FIRE BUILDING HAS BEEN EXTENSIVELY REMODELED ON THE INTERIOR TO ACCOMODATE VARIOUS CITY DEPARTMENTS IN ADDITION TO THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF MIAMI, INC. AND FOR A BRIEF PERIOD THE SPANISH CONSULATE.

IV. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING:

THIS TWO STORY MUNICIPAL BUILDING FOR THE POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS WAS BUILT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REVIVAL STYLE, TYPICAL OF THE CORAL GABLES AREA. IT IS LOCATED IN DOWNTOWN CORAL GABLES, ONE BLOCK NORTH OF MIRACLE MILE ON THE NORTH-EAST CORNER OF THE INTERSECTION OF SALZEDO STREET AND ARAGON AVENUE. THE BUILDING IS "L" SHAPED WITH SEMI-CIRCULAR ARCHED WINDOWS, ENGAGED COLUMNS WITH MASONRY LINTELS, AND A THREE STORY CORNER TOWER. THE EXTERIOR IS OF NATIVE KEYSTONE, BROUGHT FROM WINDLEY KEY IN THE FLORIDA KEYS, AND IT IS IN EXCELLENT CONDITION. THE ROOF IS OF RED FLAT TILE, CHARACTERISTIC OF THE SPANISH INFLUENCE IN EARLY CORAL GABLES. ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE BUILDING THERE WERE ORIGINALLY FOUR WOODEN ROLL-UP DOORS WHICH SEALED THE FIRETRUCK BAYS--THESE BAYS ARE NOW ARTICULATED WITH GLASS STOREFRONT TREATMENT. THE WEST ELEVATION ALSO FEATURES A RECTANGULAR ENTRANCE TO THE FIRE DEPARTMENT AND SEMI-CIRCULAR HEADED ARCHED WINDOWS WITH ENGAGED COLUMNS AND MASONRY LINTELS. THE THREE STORY TOWER OF THE NORTHWEST CORNER HAS AN ARCHED OPEN GALLERY AT THE TOP WHICH WAS ORIGINALLY INTENDED FOR HOSE DRYING. THE LOWER PORTION OF THE TOWER HOUSES THE FOURTH BAY FOR THE FIRETRUCKS. THE WINDOWS OF THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE BUILDING ARE IN GROUPS OF TWO AND THREE. ON THE SOUTH SIDE ARE RECTANGULAR AND ARCHED WINDOWS IN GROUPS OF THREE, TWO AND ONE. THERE IS AN ARCHED ENTRY ON THE SOUTH ELEVATION FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT.

A DISTINCTIVE PERSONAL TOUCH OF ARTWORK WAS ADDED TO THE BUILDING IN THE FORM OF CHISELED AND CARVED STONE SCULPTURE, DONE BY A YOUNG SCULPTRESS PROFESSIONALLY KNOWN AS JON KELLER. THE SCULPTURE ON THE WEST DEPICTS TWO FIREMEN IN CORAL GABLES AND A TYPICAL FAMILY WHICH THEY PROTECT. THE DESIGN IS DEPRESSION MODERNE--SOMBER AND REALISTIC, WITH POWERFUL FACES ON THE FIREMEN FIGHTING TO REBUILD OUR COUNTRY. BENEATH THEM, AT THE BASE AND FLANKING THE OPENING TO THE BAYS, ARE THE FIREMEN'S EMPTY BOOTS. ON THE SOUTH ELEVATION THERE ARE SCULPTURED PELICANS SUPPORTING THE LINTEL.

WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE c.1962 AWNING WINDOW REPLACEMENTS, THE SECOND FLOOR EXTERIOR IS VIRTUALLY UNALTERED. THE INTERIOR HAS BEEN RENOVATED.

IN 1954 AN ADDITION WAS MADE TO THE EAST, ADDING A COURTROOM AND OFFICES; HOWEVER, THE DESIGN BLENDS COMPATIBLY WITH THE ORIGINAL BUILDING AND DOES NOT DETRACT FROM THE INTEGRITY OF THE OLD POLICE AND FIRE BUILDING.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

THE OLD POLICE AND FIRE BUILDING IS SITUATED ON THE NORTH-EAST CORNER OF ARAGON AVENUE AND SALZEDO STREET. THE BUILDING OCCUPIES ALL OF LOTS 42 - 48 OF BLOCK 34, SECTION "K".

V. HISTORIC LANDMARK "HL" ZONING ELEMENTS

EXISTING ZONING:

LOTS 42, 43 AND 44: "CB", COMMERCIAL USE; LOTS 45, 46, 47 AND 48: "CC" COMMERCIAL USE.

BOUNDARIES

THE BOUNDARIES OF THE "HL" DESIGNATION HAVE BEEN DRAWN TO INCLUDE ALL OF LOTS 42 - 48, OF BLOCK 34, SECTION "K".

MAJOR EXTERIOR SURFACES SUBJECT TO REVIEW:

ALL FACADES OF THE OLD POLICE AND FIRE BUILDING SHALL BE CONSIDERED MAJOR EXTERIOR SURFACES SUBJECT TO REVIEWS.

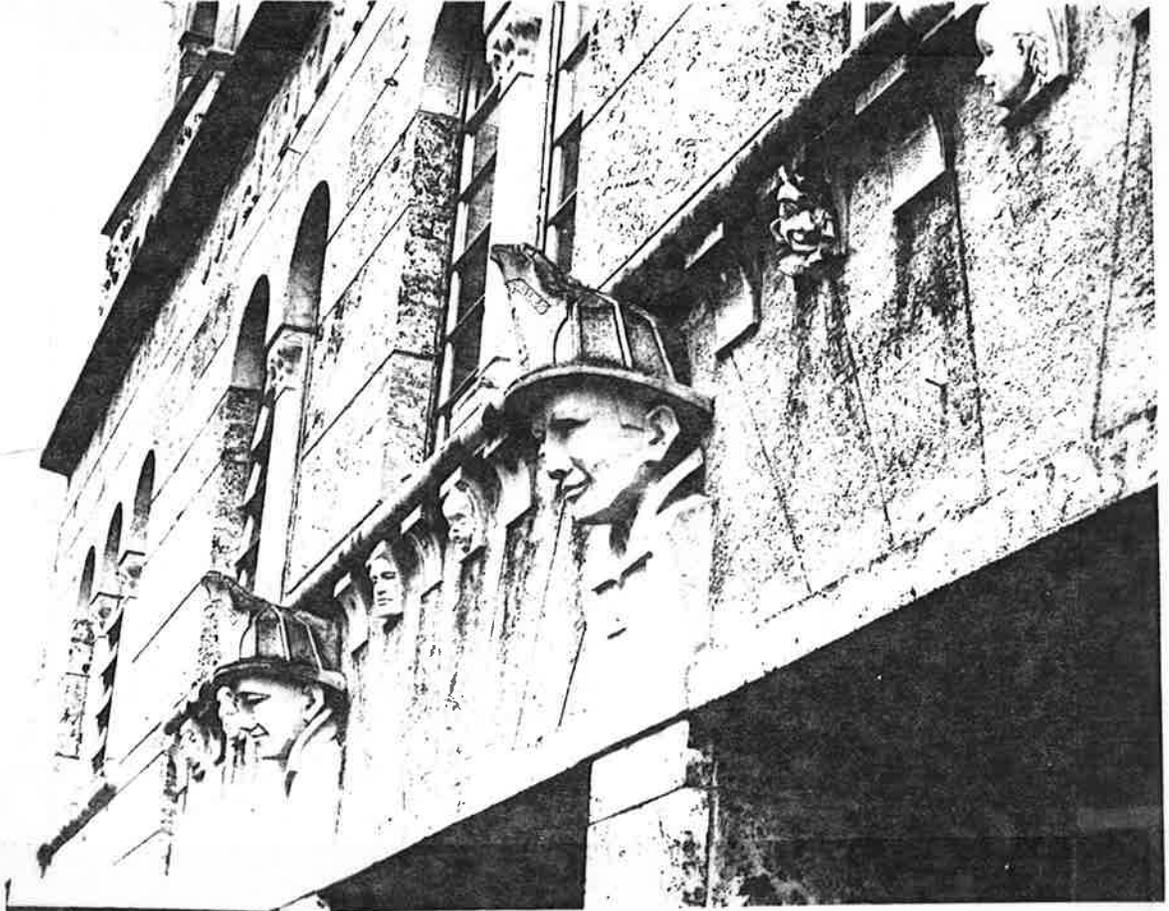
MAJOR INTERIOR SURFACES SUBJECT TO REVIEW:

NONE

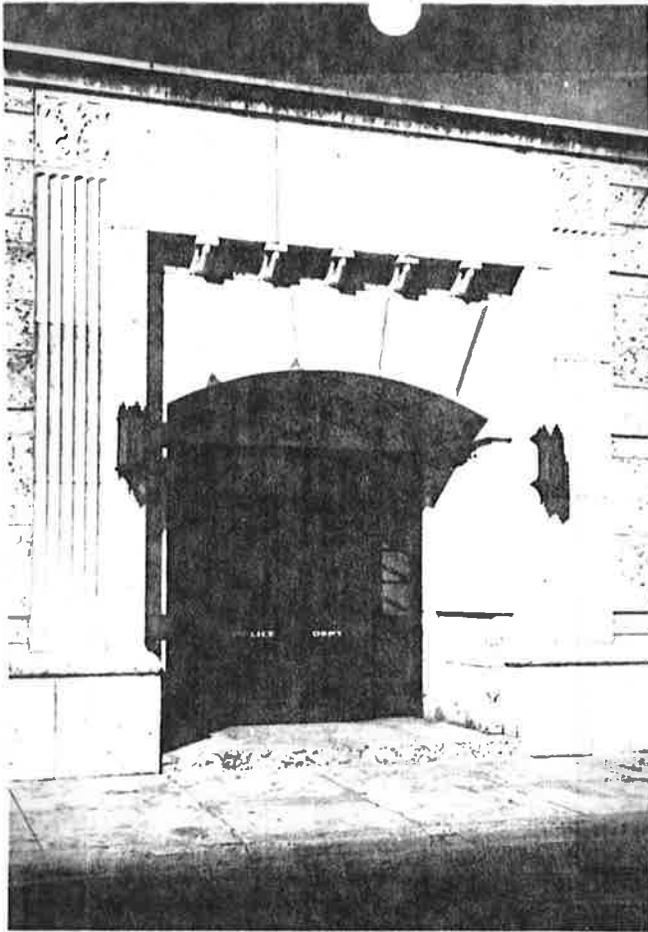
EVALUATION GUIDELINES:

THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES SHALL BE USED BY THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD TO EVALUATE THE APPROPRIATENESS AND COMPATIBILITY OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AFFECTING THE DESIGNATED SITE:

U.S. SECRETARY OF INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION.

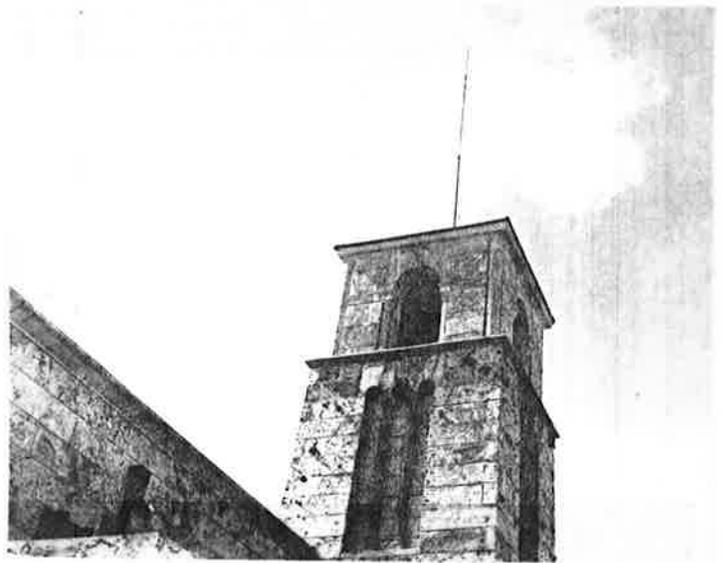


OLD POLICE AND FIRE BUILDING
285 ARAGON AVENUE
DETAIL OF SCULPTURE ON WEST FACADE
1985



OLD POLICE AND FIRE BUILDING
285 ARAGON AVENUE
DETAIL OF ENTRANCE ON SOUTH FACADE
c.1939

OLD POLICE AND FIRE BUILDING
285 ARAGON AVENUE
DETAIL OF NORTHWEST CORNER TOWER
1985



VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

CITY OF CORAL GABLES. HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION.
HISTORIC LANDMARK DIVISION. HISTORIC LANDMARK INVENTORY
FILE FOR 285 ARAGON AVENUE.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE.
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285 ARAGON AVENUE.

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY. OFFICE OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT. HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION. FROM WILDER-
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FLORIDA, PUBLISHERS, 1982.