

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



Historic Photo, c.1940s



LHD 2025-010
November 16, 2025

**LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION:
826 ORTEGA AVENUE, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA**

*Historical Resources &
Cultural Arts*

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

Application: Application for Historic Significance Determination filed by owner

2327 Salzedo Street
Coral Gables
Florida, 33134

P: 305-460-5093
E: hist@coralgables.com

<u>Folio Numbers:</u>	03-4107-018-1110
<u>Legal Description:</u>	Lot 5 & the West 25 Feet of Lot 6, Block 7, Coral Gables Granada Section Revised, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8, at Page 113, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida
<u>Original Permit No.:</u>	2415
<u>Date of Construction:</u>	1926
<u>Original Architect:</u>	H. George Fink
<u>Original Owner/Builder:</u>	C. C. Barclay
<u>Present Owner:</u>	Virginia Vich
<u>Building Type / Style:</u>	Two-story SFR / Mediterranean Revival
<u>Site Characteristics:</u>	The property is a 75' x 100' interior lot on the south side of Ortega Avenue between Cortez and Pizzaro Streets.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed by owner/builder Christopher Columbus Barclay, the single-family residence at 826 Ortega Avenue was permitted during Coral Gables first developmental period (1921-Sept 1926); hence it is one of the earliest homes in the City. Designed by architect H. George Fink in early 1926 it exemplifies founder George Merrick's vision for a Mediterranean-inspired planned city. Fink, a member of Merrick's early design team, was a prominent architect in the City for decades. Merrick and his team felt that Mediterranean-inspired architecture harmonized best with south Florida's climate and lifestyle. Fink is largely responsible for the evolution of the Mediterranean Revival style in Coral Gables during the City's first developmental period.

Designed in the Mediterranean Revival style the house and detached two-car garage are representative of the properties built throughout Coral Gables in the mid-1920s. The property at 826 Ortega Avenue retains its historic integrity and exemplifies the Mediterranean-inspired building archetype upon which Coral Gables was founded. Thus, 826 Ortega Avenue significantly contributes to the historic fabric of Coral Gables as a part of the collection of quality residences built during the land boom era that contributes to the City's sense of place over time.

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

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

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

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

CRITERIA FOR SIGNIFICANCE

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

The single-family residence at 826 Ortega 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, 826 Ortega Avenue meets the following **three (3) criteria**:

A. Historical, Cultural significance

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

B. Architectural significance

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

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

HISTORIC CONTEXT

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

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

Constructed in early 1926, the single-family residence at 826 Ortega Avenue occurred during the City's first phase of development and is indicative of the type of architecture that was the founding premise of Coral Gables.

Founding Coral Gables

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 centuries to create his vision for a fully conceived and cohesively designed, Mediterranean-inspired city which is now considered one of the first modern planned communities in the United States. Advised by landscape architect Frank Button, artist Denman Fink, and architects H. George Fink, Walter De Garmo, H. H. Mundy, and Phineas Paist, Merrick converted 3,000 acres of citrus plantation and native hammock. (Figure 1)



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

The use of Mediterranean designs was one of the featured selling points for Coral Gables. (Figure 2) Merrick and his team felt that this type of architecture harmonized best with south Florida's climate and lifestyle. The architecture constructed during Coral Gables' initial development combined elements commonly used in Spanish, Moorish, and Italian architecture, and has come to be known as the Mediterranean Revival style. During the 1920s structures and amenities were built almost exclusively per this style.

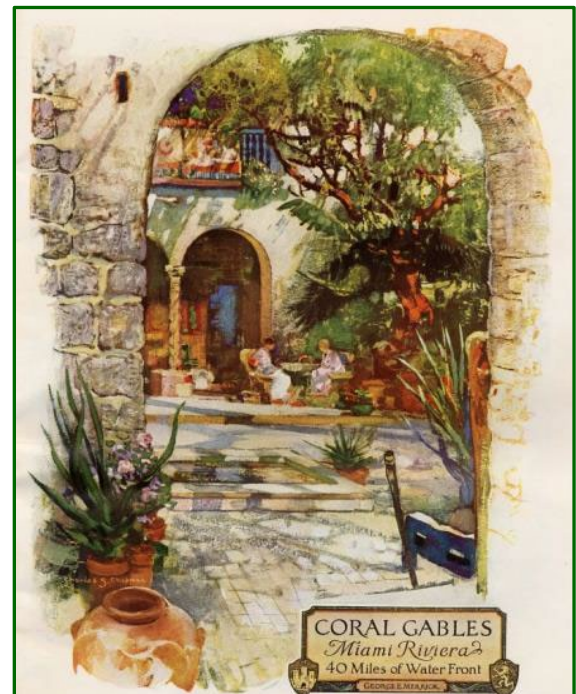
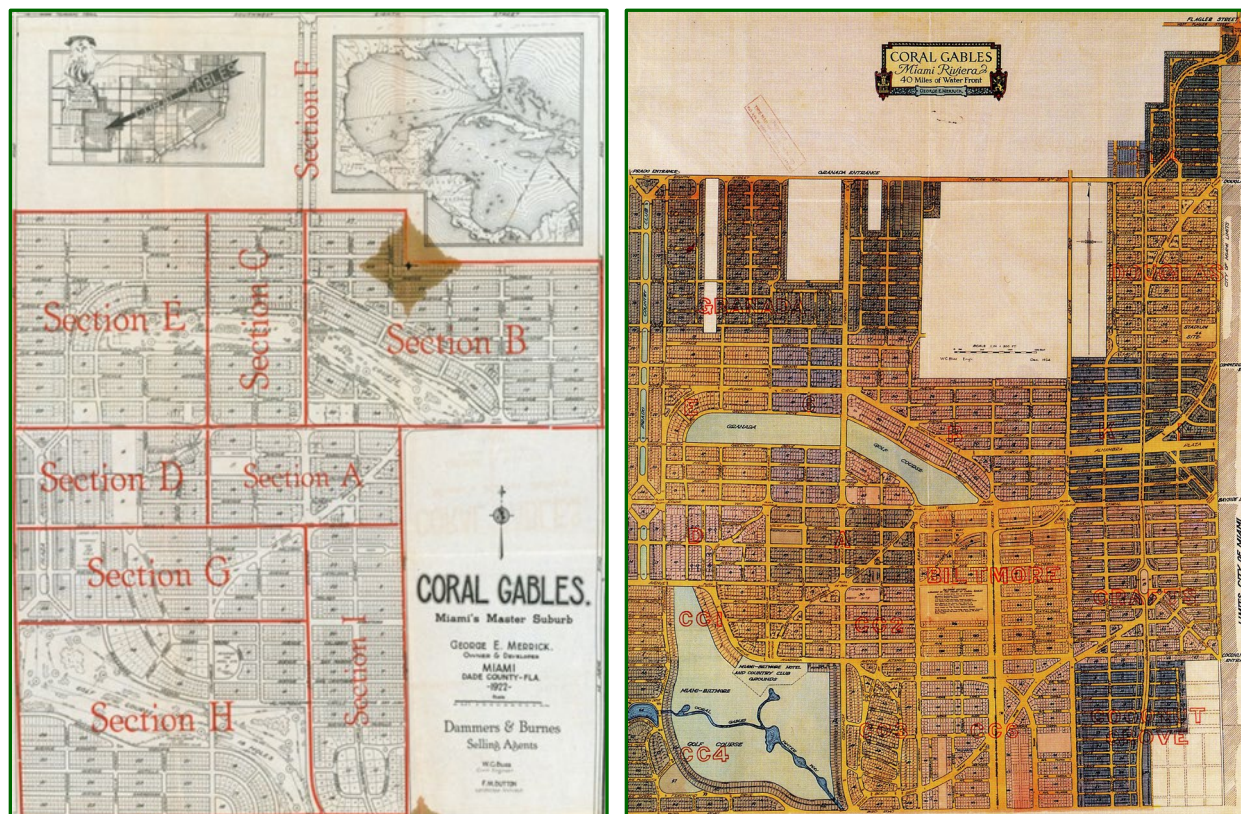


Figure 2: Advertisement in *House Beautiful*, 1925

The home at 836 Ortega Avenue exemplifies the Mediterranean ideals and climate adaptations espoused by City founder George Merrick. As discussed below, it was designed by architect H. George Fink who was well-versed in Mediterranean-inspired architecture. He was amongst a small cadre of select architects Merrick commissioned to develop his vision in the 1920s.

Merrick's design team carefully planned the city to maximize the potential intrinsic to its tropical environment. They laid out broad sweeping boulevards with grand vistas and tree-lined streets, plazas with fountains that invited visitors to linger, and Mediterranean-inspired homes that conveyed a quality of centuries-old permanence with generous street setbacks for front yards that celebrated the 'tropical vegetation in a delightful profusion.' They employed restrictive zoning to control development and aesthetics. The plan embraced the City Beautiful ideals of copious amounts of public green space, tree-lined streets, and monumental public buildings. It also wholeheartedly incorporated the Garden City precepts of comprehensive planning with defined areas for different uses (i.e., residential, commercial, trades), as well as supplying a wealth of public facilities. Merrick was particularly dedicated to the Garden City precept of building a socially mixed community where people of various socioeconomic levels could live side-by-side without sacrificing quality. Homes built for modest incomes were built alongside grand palazzos and a section of the City was devoted to multi-family housing.



Figures 3: Coral Gables Maps
"Miami's Master Suburb," 1922 [left]
"Miami Riviera," 1924 [right]

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

The Granada Section & Garden City Precepts

Throughout the early 1920s Merrick continued to re-invest the earnings into public amenities and into the expansion of land holdings. Acquiring land north of Tamiami Trail was a priority and a hard-fought endeavor for Merrick. As illustrated on Button's 1922 map in Figures 3, while Granada Boulevard connected to the Tamiami Trail, Merrick only owned the small strips of land to either side (Section F). By 1923, with the acquisition of various tracts of land--some lot by lot--he replatted and renamed this area the Granada Section. (Figures 3, 4, & 5) In October 1923 the launching of the Granada Section became Merrick's highest priority. He redirected hundreds of workers to lay streets, sidewalks, and water mains.

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

When first launching Coral Gables during 1921-22, Merrick's team designed and built homes throughout the community to demonstrate their Mediterranean-inspired vision. In 1923, as Merrick substantially increased his land holdings, he began to develop streetscapes following Garden City precepts. Unlike earlier sections, the Granada Section was platted with large areas allocated for moderately-priced and smaller-sized homes alongside the prominent homes such as those he commissioned for Country Club Prado. For the next few years, the Granada Section developed at a strong pace.

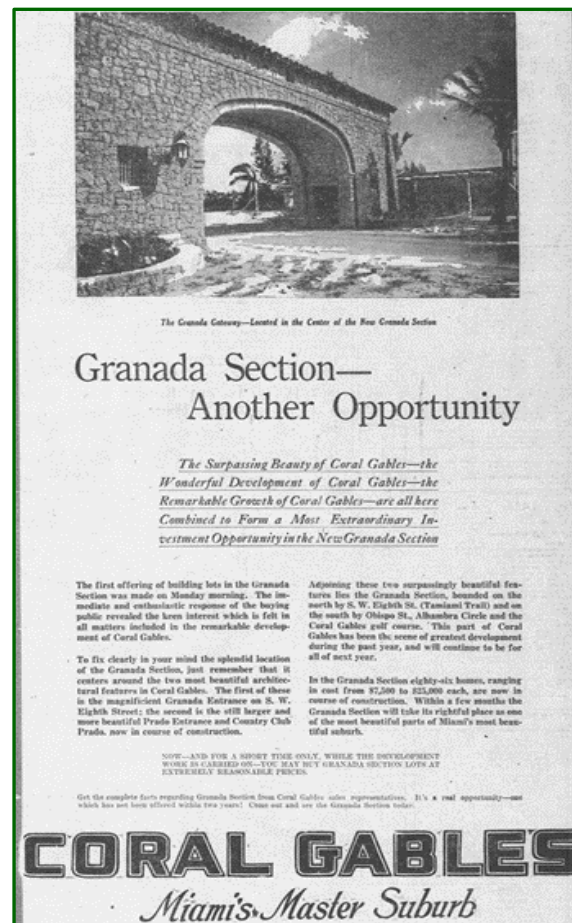


Figure 4: Miami News, November 22, 1923

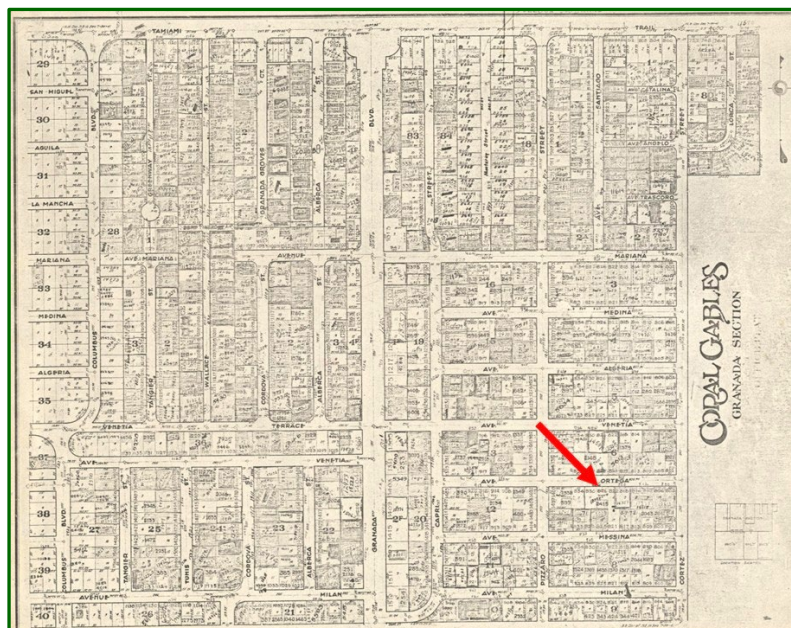
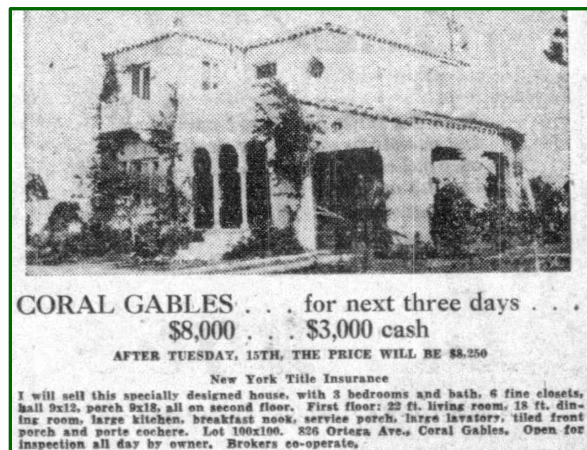
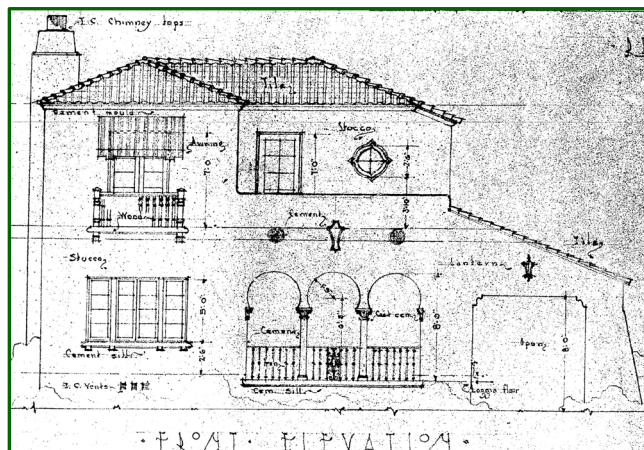


Figure 5: Granada Section: Plat Map Central Section
Red Arrow: 826 Ortega Avenue

826 Ortega Avenue



Figures 6: 826 Ortega Avenue, Front Façade
Permit #2416, 1926 [left]; *Miami Herald*, April 13, 1930 [right]

Virginia builder, Christopher Columbus Barclay (1865-1942) and his wife Emily commissioned architect H. George Fink to design their home in 1926. As discussed previously, Fink was a member of Merrick's original design team who heavily influenced the Mediterranean aesthetic in the City. (see Architect Section below) Permit #2416 (see Attachment A) was filed in September and building records indicate it was complete by December. [Note: initially the permit was erroneously recorded as 826 Messina Avenue.] Barclay was recorded as the owner and builder. He was involved in financing and building of several apartment buildings in Miami at this time.

826 Ortega Avenue follows the precedent set by Merrick's team. Designed in the Mediterranean Revival style, the house and detached two-car garage are representative of the properties built throughout Coral Gables in the mid-1920s. (Figures 6) Fink designed the two-story home with three-bedrooms, an elegant front entry porch, a rear screened back porch, a second story open-air terrace, and a porte cochere.

The Barclay's occupied the home until 1931 when they returned to Virginia. During this time their daughter, Lillian, ran a primary school and tutoring center out of the house. (Figure 7) They sold the property to Dr. William F. Decker and his wife Lillian. Decker had been a prominent doctor in New Jersey and a long-term member of Patterson's Board of Health. A 'serious operation' forced him into retirement and to the sunny south. 826 Ortega Avenue passed through numerous owners including another doctor, otolaryngologist Brian Dougherty (1987-1994) and attorney Charles H. Spooner. Charles and his wife Kathryn were long-term owners living in the home for twenty-three years (1956-1979). In 1958 the City Commission appointed Spooner as the municipal judge of Coral Gables. He held this position for nine years after which he served as the Coral Gable City Attorney for thirteen years. The current owner, Virginia Del Carmen Vich, purchased the home in 2015. See below for a full listing of owners.

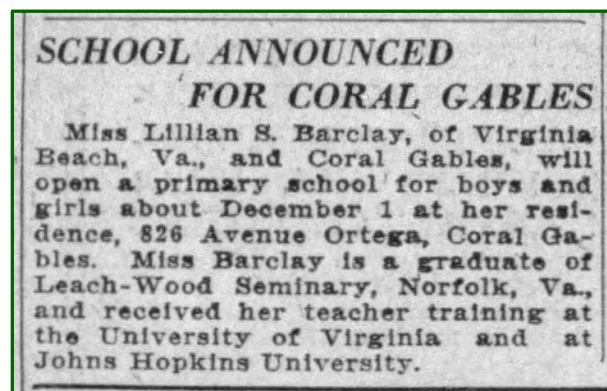
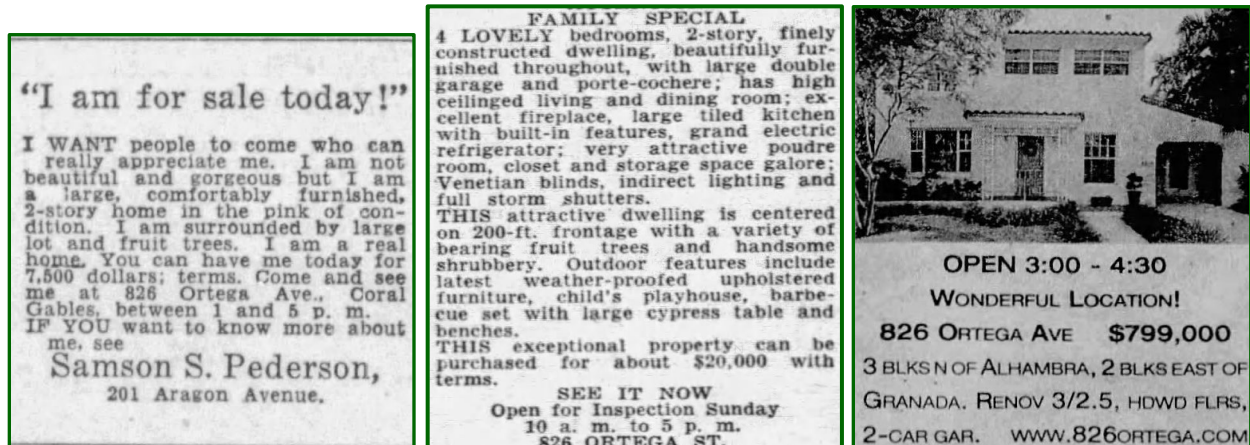


Figure 7: Miss Barclay's Preparatory School
***Miami Herald*, November 10, 1927**

Property Ownership

Note: Primary records regarding ownership prior to 1950 have not been located. Ownership history for this time is based on numerous sources including R. L. Polk City Directories 1926-65), building permits, realtor notes, other records on file with the City of Coral Gables and the Miami-Dade County Clerk.



Figures 8: 826 Ortega For Sale Ads
Miami Herald, November 11, 1934 [left]; *Miami News*, March 25, 1945 [center]
Miami Herald, October 11, 2009 [right]

1926-1931	Christopher Columbus Barclay (1865-1942) & Emily Eugenia Cox Barclay
1931-1935	Dr. William F. Decker & Lillian Decker
1935-1945	Benjamin Levine & Etta Levine
1945-1951	Senterfit family
1945-1950	Olivia Senterfit (1876-1950)
1950	Ollie Railsback & Jim Railsback; Clyde LeFiles & Robert J. LeFiles; Jamie Senterfit [children & their spouses]
1950-1951	Ralph Senterfit
1951-1956	H. Andersen & Eva M. Andersen
1956-1979	Judge Charles H. Spooner & Kathryn B. Spooner
1979-1987	Lawrence G. Berdoll & Maria Jose Berdoll
1987-1994	Dr. Brian E. Dougherty & Bruny Dougherty
1994-2003	Lester Langer & Sharon L. Langer
2003-2011	Lester Langer & Sharon L. Langer Matthew W. Dietz & Deborah E. Dietz
2011-2015	Arturo J. Perez & Rebecca A. Perez
2015-Present	Virginia Del Carmen Vich

Architect: H. George Fink



Figure 9: H. George Fink, Portrait, 1920s

H. George Fink (1892-1975) was the architect for 826 Ortega Avenue. Fink, a cousin of City founder George Merrick, was responsible for much of the early design and planning of Coral Gables. Over 100 of his buildings are designated as Local Historic Landmarks within the City of Coral Gables (individually or in a historic district).

Architect H. George Fink, a key member of Merrick's original design team, was instrumental in creating the fabric of 1920s Mediterranean Revival architecture which characterizes Coral Gables. He designed numerous Mediterranean Revival residential and commercial structures in the City in the early 1920s. His residential designs ranged from cottages to elaborate residences for the City's leaders including George Merrick and Edward E. "Doc" Dammers. Fink's architectural practice was so busy during the early 1920s, that by the end of 1923 he outgrew his office and built an office at 2506 Ponce de Leon Boulevard that served as a showcase for the Mediterranean Revival style. He was regularly featured in newspaper articles

discussing the progress of development in Coral Gables, and in advertisements for the community during the 1920s. In 1924, Fink travelled to Spain to study the architecture and was honored by King Alfonso XIII of Spain for his "interesting, outstanding, and extremely artistic interpretation and reproduction of the Spanish Arts in America." During his visit to Spain, Fink was also made a "Don," the Spanish equivalent of English knighthood.

H. George Fink's architectural career spanned over four decades in Coral Gables. Fink's family moved to the Miami area from Springdale, Pennsylvania in 1904 and he graduated from Miami High School in 1907. He studied architecture at the Drexel Institute in Philadelphia, supplemented with special classes at the University of Pennsylvania. From 1915 to 1921 Fink designed numerous buildings for Miami Beach developer Carl Fisher and Associates. In 1921 he began working with George Merrick. That same year, Fink became a member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) -- the youngest member of the organization at the time of his appointment.

The devastating hurricane in 1926 abruptly halted much of the construction in Coral Gables. In 1928 Fink left the City, accepting a position as the Designing Architect for the J. C. Penney Company of New York. He remained with them until 1932 when he became a Supervising Architect for the Works Progress Administration (WPA). He was assigned to the State of Maine and remained with the WPA until 1937.

Fink returned to Coral Gables in 1937 and resumed his private architectural practice. During World War II, he was Architectural Designer for Robert & Company, of Atlanta, assisting with the Richmond Naval Air Station, the Glynn County Base in Brunswick, Georgia, and the Chamblee Naval Base in Chamblee, Georgia. In 1943, Fink became Architect in Charge, Architectural Division, Bell Bomber Plant, Marietta, Georgia, where the famous B-29s were built and assembled. Fink returned to Coral Gables in 1945 and continued to design there until the middle of the 1960s. He served on the Coral Gables Board of Architects from 1945 through 1956, acting as its chairman for seven years within this period. Fink also served as the Secretary of the Florida South Chapter of the AIA from 1952-1955.

Retaining Context

Ortega Avenue was one of the later streets developed by Merrick in the Granada Section. During the land boom area there were only a handful of homes built on its two blocks in late 1925 and in 1926. During Coral Gables' second developmental period (1926-1944) there were few homes built in the City. The dire downturn in the economy, coming so closely on the heels of the September 1926 hurricane, had a drastic impact on new construction across the City. The 1937 aerial photo in Figure 10 shows 826 Medina Avenue (red arrow) and the sparse development in its direct vicinity up to this point.



Figure 10: 1937 Aerial Photo: Granada Section
Red Arrow: 826 Medina Ave
Courtesy University of Florida

The Post-War prosperity that followed these lean years resulted in an unprecedented building boom (1945-1963). During this era single-family homes in Coral Gables followed national trends both in numbers and in style. In the Granada Section home-building was rapid during the late 1940s and 1950s. As seen in Figures 11, by 1948 the area in the immediate vicinity began to see new construction. By 1957 the full two blocks of Ortega Avenue and its adjacent streets had only a few remaining vacant lots. (Figures 11) Throughout the past century, this area of the Granada Section has held its original context as a neighborhood of moderate to middle-sized single-family homes. Hence, the property at 826 Ortega Avenue retains its historic integrity, context, as well as location.



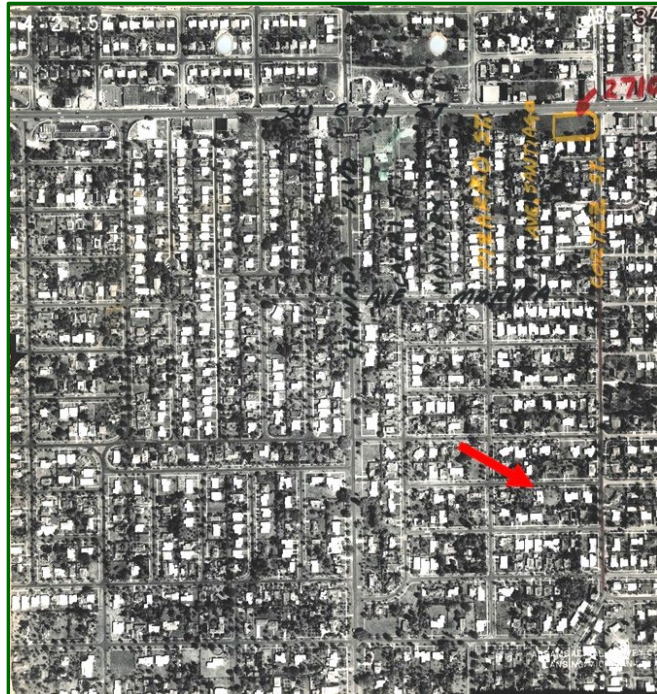
**Figures 11:
Aerial Photos
Granada Section**

**1948
[top]**

**1957
[bottom]**

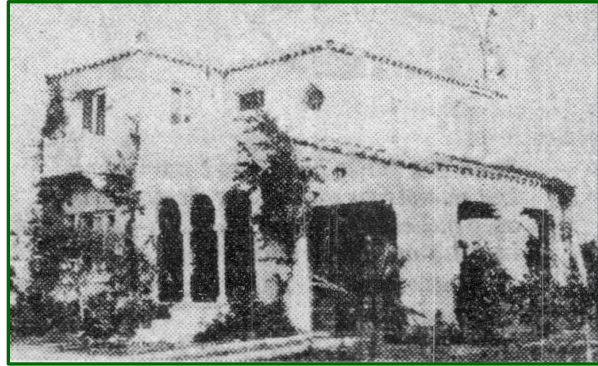
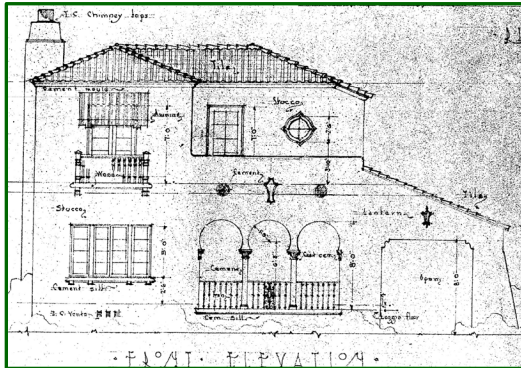
**Red Arrow:
826 Ortega Avenue**

*Courtesy University of
Florida*



It should also be noted that when the construction of single-family homes resumed in Coral Gables after the Depression era, there was a distinct departure from the ornamented and picturesque Mediterranean Revival style that had dominated the City's landscape since its inception. The newer homes embraced contemporary modern styles. 826 Medina Avenue is one of the few extant 1920s single-family residences built in accordance with Merrick's vision that remain in this area.

SIGNIFICANCE ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION



Figures 12: 826 Ortega Avenue Over Time
Top to Bottom: 1926, Permit #2415; April 1930, Miami Herald; c.1945; December 1963, Property Appraiser; October 2009, Miami Herald; 2024

Executive Summary

Constructed in 1926, by owner/builder Christopher Columbus Barclay, the single-family residence at 826 Ortega Avenue is one of the earliest homes in the Coral Gables. Designed by architect H. George Fink it exemplifies founder George Merrick's vision for a Mediterranean-inspired planned city. He was a member of Merrick's early design team and a prominent architect in the City for decades. Fink is largely responsible for the evolution of the Mediterranean Revival style in Coral Gables during the City's first developmental period.

Merrick and his team felt that Mediterranean-inspired architecture harmonized best with south Florida's climate and lifestyle. 826 Ortega Avenue is a fine example of adapting residential design to the rigors of South Florida's climate while maintaining the integrity of the Mediterranean Revival style. Its thick masonry walls were to keep the home cool, and the light-colored stuccoed exterior was to reflect the sun's heat. The window placement afforded much needed ventilation for the tropical environment. Its construction over a crawl space provided ventilation and separation from the high water table.

The home also possesses numerous character-defining features of the Mediterranean Revival style. These include but are not limited to: textured stucco finish; combination of roof types and heights; use of barrel tile on pitched roofs; porte-cochere with distinctive arched openings; a semi-detached, slightly tapered chimney stack with a coved chimney cap and rectangular pot (originally terra cotta) (Figure 13); a pair of wing walls; French doors and balcony ensemble; carved rafter tails; recessed windows (originally casements) with protruding sills; arched windows; and a detached garage accessory building whose styling matches the home.

Figure 13: East Façade, 2025

Note: textured stucco, arched windows, detached chimney stack with cap and pot; recessed windows with protruding sills



Assessment of the property from the public-right-of way, building documents, and historic photos indicate that over the past century 826 Ortega Avenue remains representative of Merrick's vision for Coral Gables' modest Mediterranean Revival style homes. Hence, it has retained 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 determined that it possesses sufficient integrity for designation. Thus, the property at 826 Ortega Avenue significantly contributes to the historic fabric of the Coral Gables and is part of the collection of quality residences built during the land boom era that contributes to the City's sense of place over time.

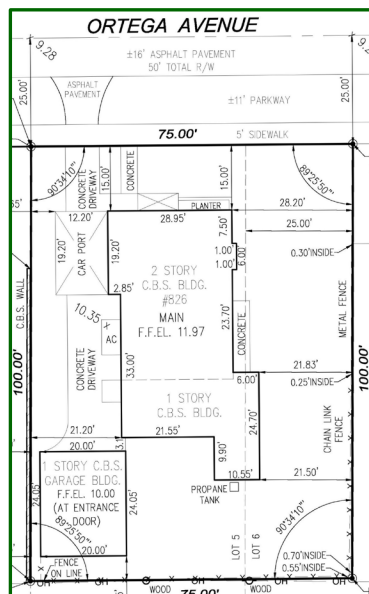
Extant Exterior Description and Alteration Discussion

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

The 800 block of Ortega Avenue is a tree-lined road between Pizarro and Cortez Streets in the Coral Gables Granada Section. It is comprised of one-story and moderately-sized two-story homes ranging in date from the 1920s to the present day. Built in 1926, the single-family residence at 826 Ortega Avenue was one of the first homes in this area.



The home sits on a 75' x 100' interior lot on the south side of the street. The property comprises a single-family home and a detached garage accessory building located at the southwest corner. A concrete driveway runs along the west side of the home through the porte cochere to the garage. The house is approached by a concrete walkway from the sidewalk to the front entry steps. (Figures 13)



The two-story house is built of masonry block units above a crawl space and is clad with textured stucco. Rectangular in plan, the living space (approx. 3,150 SF) is primarily under a series of pitched roofs. The tile was originally a two-piece barrel tile; the current S-tile was installed in 2024.

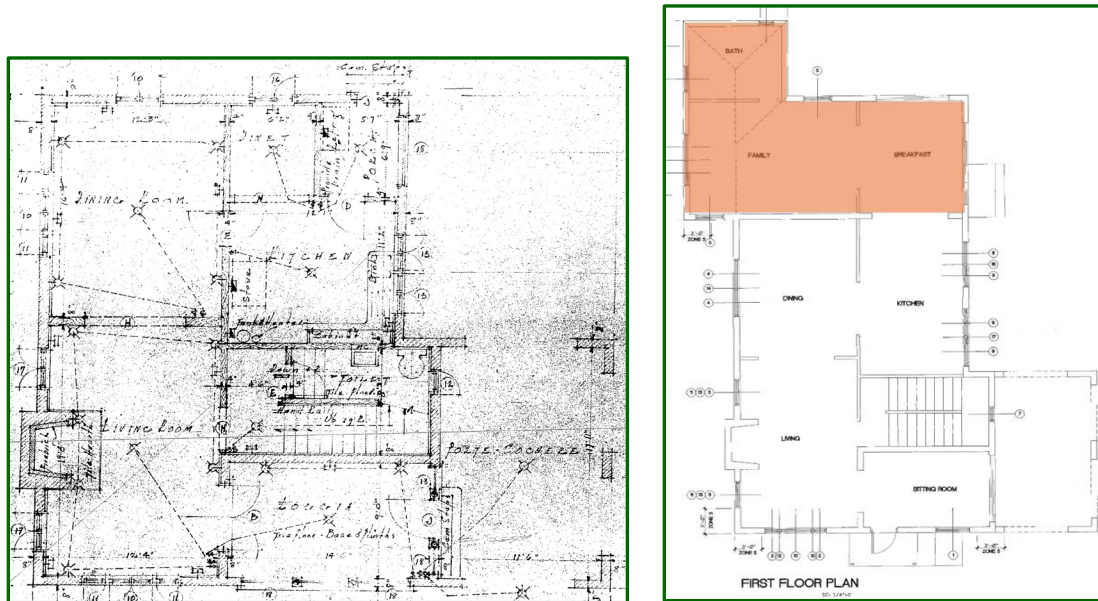
The windows throughout the home are recessed with protruding sills. Building permits indicate that the original casement windows (Figures 12) were changed to jalousies in 1958. In 2003 hurricane-impact single-hung windows were installed and in 2014 some windows were returned to casements.

In 1945 when the Senterfit's purchased the property they hired architect William Shanklin to design two additions and a front porch alteration. (Figures 12, 15-18) These permit drawings (#7106) have not been located to date. A one-story, L-shaped addition was made to the rear of the home. With this addition the screened back porch was enclosed. (Figures 15) The second addition

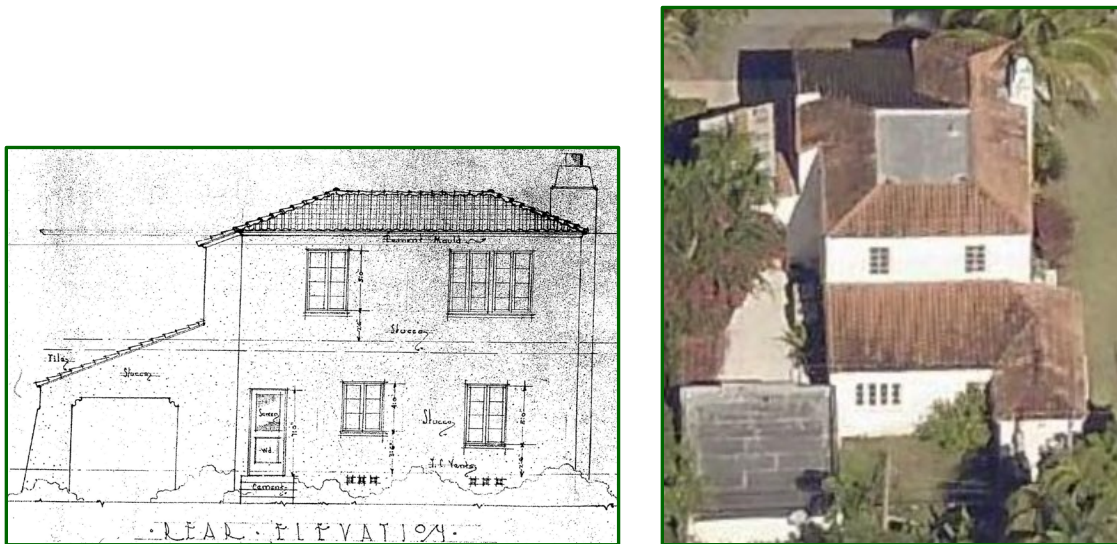
**Figures 14: 826 Ortega Avenue
Front (North) Façade, 2025 [top]
Property Survey, 2023 [left]**

*Courtesy Manuel G. Vera & Associates, Inc.
Aerial, 2024 [right]
Courtesy Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser*

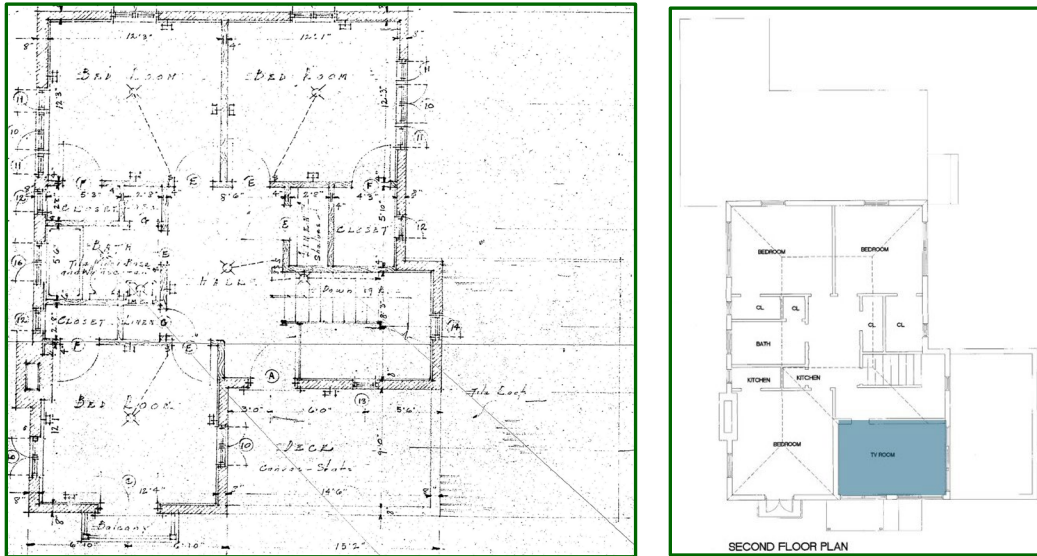
enclosed the second story open terrace area over the front entry porch for living space/sunroom. (Figures 17 & 18) From historic photos it is clear that the front porch was also altered during this campaign. The columns were removed and the arched openings squared off. Additionally, the width of the porch was reduced and it was screened in. The outline of the western end arch is discernable in extant stucco. (Figures 19) The porch and front entry have undergone several subsequent iterations towards its current central entry configuration. (Figures 18 & 19) The 1945 alterations occurred early in the history of the home and may be considered historic fabric.



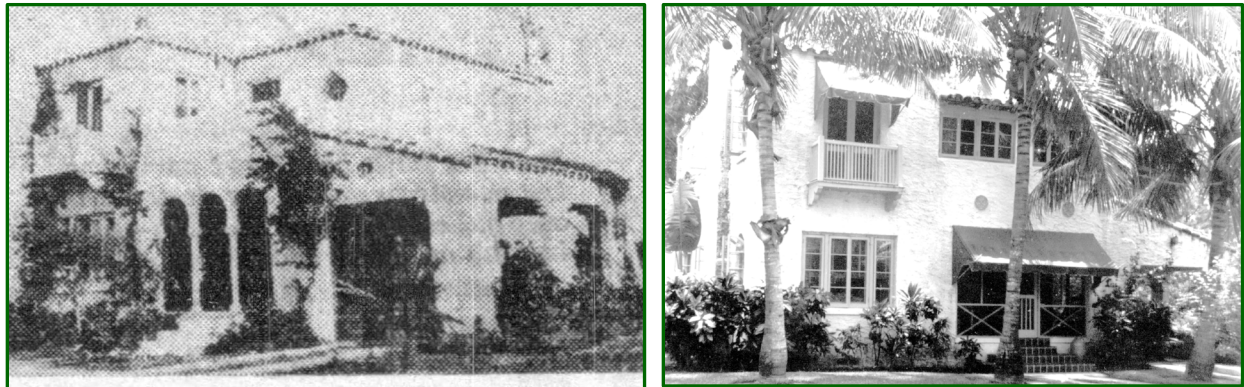
Figures 15: First Floor Plan
Permit #2415, 1926 – Original Floor Plan [left]
Contemporary Floor Plan with 1945 Addition Highlighted in Orange [right]
Courtesy Eng. A. Santamaria



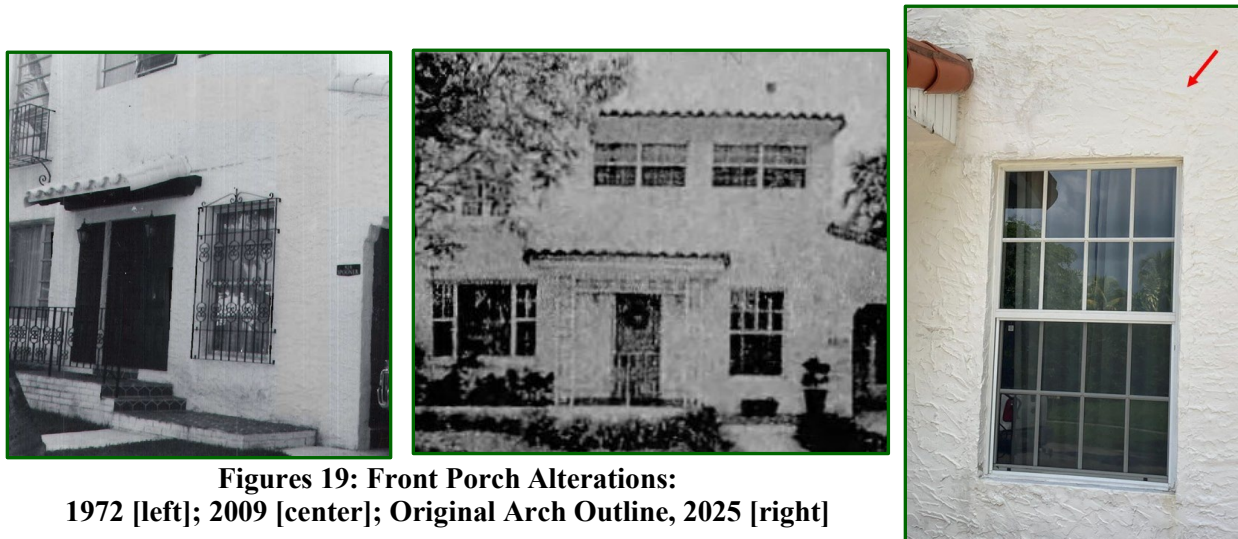
Figures 16: Rear Façade: Permit #2415, 1926 [left]
Aerial Photo with One-story, L-shaped 1945 Addition in Foreground, 2024 [right]
Courtesy Miami-Dade Property Appraiser



Figures 17: Second Floor Plan
Permit #2415, 1926 – Original Floor Plan [left]
Contemporary Floor Plan with 1945 Addition Highlighted in Blue [right]
Courtesy Eng. A. Santamaria



Figures 18: Front Façade Before and After 1945 Alterations: April 1930 [left]; c.1945 [right]



Figures 19: Front Porch Alterations:
1972 [left]; 2009 [center]; Original Arch Outline, 2025 [right]



Figure 20: Front (North) Façade, 2025

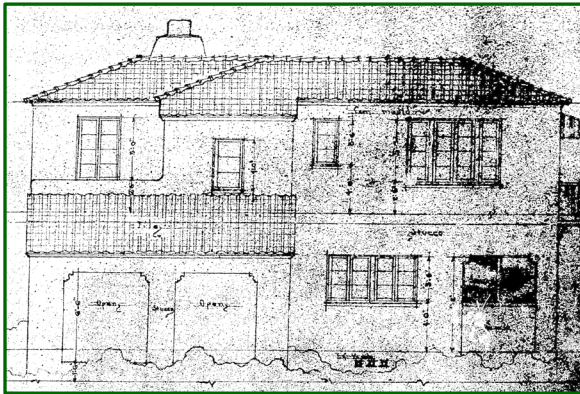
The extant front façade comprises three bays. The two-story eastern bay originally read as a squat tower bay under a hipped roof. On the second story a pair of French doors lead out to a Juliet metal balcony. The 1945 historic photo provides a documentary view of the original wood balcony with spindle railings. The wood balcony was replaced with a metal one by 1963. (Figures 12) Permit language suggests the change occurred in 1958 with the replacement of the wood casement windows. On the first story a large window retains its original size that held two pairs of single casement windows and now sports a modern configuration.

The adjacent two-story center bay is slightly shorter in height than the tower bay. It is under a shed front-facing roof with carved rafter tails under its extended eave. Three original decorative medallions between the first and second story were removed at an unknown date, post-1963. (Figures 12) Disturbances in the stucco mark their placement. The second story of this bay is the 1945 addition that enclosed the original outdoor terrace. (Figures 17) On the second story a series of horizontal windows just under the roofline on the front and west side façade are in keeping with the purpose of the sunroom addition. (Figure 22) These windows do not have protruding sills like the original 1920s window openings. The lack of sills and the distinctly different window proportions and placement clearly defines this addition. As discussed above, the front door is now at the center of the home at the east side of the center bay. The front stoop is covered by a simple shed roof supported by decorative metal railings.

The third bay is porte cochere. It is under a side-facing shed roof. At the northwest and southwest corners matching full-height wing walls gently flare out. There are four flat-arched openings on the feature. Rounding out the upper corners of the arches is a scroll feature. (Figure 21)

Figure 21: Northwest Corner of Porte Cochere, 2025
Note: flared wing wall; flat arch with scroll corner

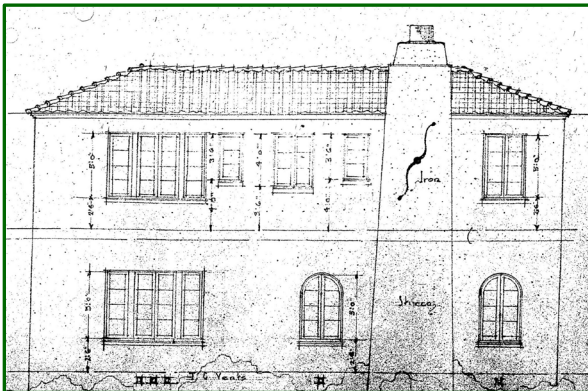




Figures 22: Side (West) Elevation

*Top: Permit #2415, 1926 [left]; Current, 2024 Courtesy Roberto Vich, R. A. [right]
Bottom: Aerial Photo, 2024 Courtesy Miami-Dade Property Appraiser [left]; Streetview, 2025 [right]*

As illustrated in Figures 22 and 23, apart from the 1945 additions discussed above the side façades remains primarily intact. They retain the variety of roof lines, projecting and receding bays, and fenestration opening arrangement typical of the Mediterranean Revival style of Coral Gables' homes in the 1920s. The tapered, semi-engaged chimney stack with its coved cap and rectangular pot on the east façade is a hallmark feature of the home. (Figure 13) It is flanked by a pair of arched windows on the first story. These are highly visible street view features. On the second story of the east façade two small windows were reduced in height. On the first story two pairs of French doors opening to the side yard were added. These alterations do not detract from the overall integrity of this Mediterranean Revival style home.



Figures 23: Side (East) Façade
Permit #2415, 1926 [left]; Current, 2025 [right]

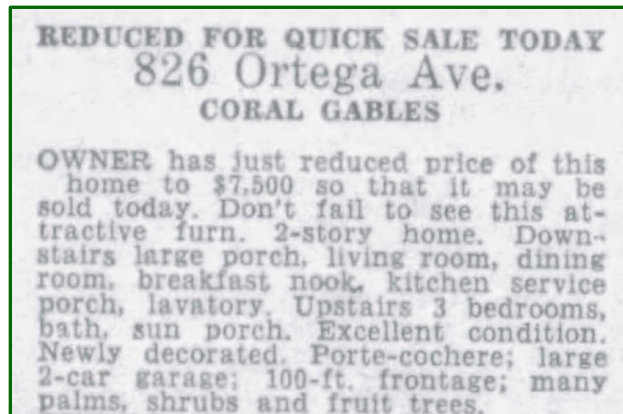


Figures 24: Rear Façade and Yard, 2025
Photos courtesy of Owners

At the rear of the home is the one-story, L-shaped 1945 addition with the second story of the original 1926 home in the background. (Figures 24) Both levels are under hipped roofs. In this 1945 addition the windows have projecting sills, and they are similar in proportion to the original home. The addition is clad in textured stucco like the adjacent 1926 home. Hence, it is the form and placement of this portion of the home that lends itself to recognition as a later addition.

At the southwest corner of the property is a detached, two-car garage. (Figures 14, 24 & 26) The one-story auxiliary structure is clad in a textured stucco similar to the 1926 home. It is under a flat roof with parapets. The parapet on the north, street-facing façade decoratively rises at the center. Its placement and styling are typical of the garages accompanying the homes built in the 1920s in Coral Gables.

Figure 25: Sales Ad Mentioning 2-car Garage
Miami Herald, October 28, 1934



Figures 26: North Façade, Detached Garage
*1972 Courtesy Miami-Dade Property Appraiser [left]
Current, 2025 Photo courtesy of Owners [right]*

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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

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

Constructed in 1926 in the Mediterranean Revival Style the property at 826 Ortega Avenue (legally described as Lot 5 & the West 25 Feet of Lot 6, Block 7, Coral Gables Granada Section Revised, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8, at Page 113, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida) is significant to the City of Coral Gables’ history based on the following **three (3) criteria** found in the Coral Gables Zoning Code, Article 8, Section 8-103:

A. Historical, Cultural significance

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

B. Architectural significance

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

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

Staff find the following:


The property located at 826 Ortega 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 **826 Ortega Avenue** (legally described as Lot 5 & the West 25 Feet of Lot 6, Block 7, Coral Gables Granada Section Revised) based on its historical, cultural, and architectural significance.

Respectfully submitted,


Anna Pernas
Historic Preservation Officer

Selected References

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- Aerial Photography: Florida Collection. University of Florida George A. Smathers Libraries.
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Coral Gables Miami Riviera: Heart of the American Tropics, c.1925
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- Miami-Dade County Clerk, County Property Records
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- “826 Ortega For Sale” April 11, 1950, p.31.
- “Architects Busy Nights to Keep Even with Work” July 22, 1923, p.24.
- “Charles Spooner, retired Gables city attorney” obit, May 24, 1989, p.61.
- “Merrick will Market New Granada Section” November 19, 1923, p.7.
- “School Announced for Coral Gables – Barclay” November 27, 1927, p.8.
- “Spooner New Judge” May 29, 1958, p.26.
- “Start of 40 Dwellings: 15 Miles of Streets” September 24, 1923, p.11.
- Miami News
- “58 Residences Will Be Built in Coral Gables” November 1, 1923, p.1.
- “Better Hurry! Only 30 Days More—Coral Gables Home Building Offer”
November 4, 1922, 24.
- “Coral Gables Marks 15 Years of Progress Since Founding” April 4, 1940, p.17.
- “Everyone Is Talking About What We Are Doing at Coral Gables” February 10, 1922, p.23.
- “Granada Section – Another Opportunity” November 22, 1923, p.19.
- “Mrs. Olivia Senterfit” obit, March 2, 1950, p.11.
- “Opening Auction Sales at Coral Gables—Miami’s Master Suburb” November 25, 1921, p.18-19.
- “Paving the Way for ‘Castles in Spain’” December 7, 1921, p.19.
- Morning Call (Paterson, NJ)
- “Dr. & Mrs. William Decker, 826 Ortega, Coral Gables” January 1, 1932, p.8.
- New York Times
- “Miami and the story of its remarkable growth: an interview with George E. Merrick” March 15, 1925.
- Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA)
- “Deaths: Christopher Columbus Barclay” August 26, 1942, p.17.

Tallahassee Democrat

“C. H. Spooner Named Coral Gables Judge” June 6, 1958, p.9.

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Parks, Arva Moore, George Merrick, Son of the South Wind: Visionary Creator of Coral Gables, University Press of Florida, 2015.

Polk, R. L. R. L. Polk and Company's Miami City Directory. Jacksonville, Florida: R. L. Polk and Co., various editions.

Real Estate Records for 826 Ortega Avenue, Historical Resources Department, Coral Gables, Florida.

United State Census Bureau. Various years.

REVIEW GUIDE

Definition:

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

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

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

Use:

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

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

Property Address:	826 Ortega Avenue
Lot Description:	interior lot
Date of Construction:	1926
Use:	single-family residence
Style:	Mediterranean Revival
Construction Material:	concrete block covered with textured stucco
Stories:	two-story
Roof Types:	hipped, shed, flat

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

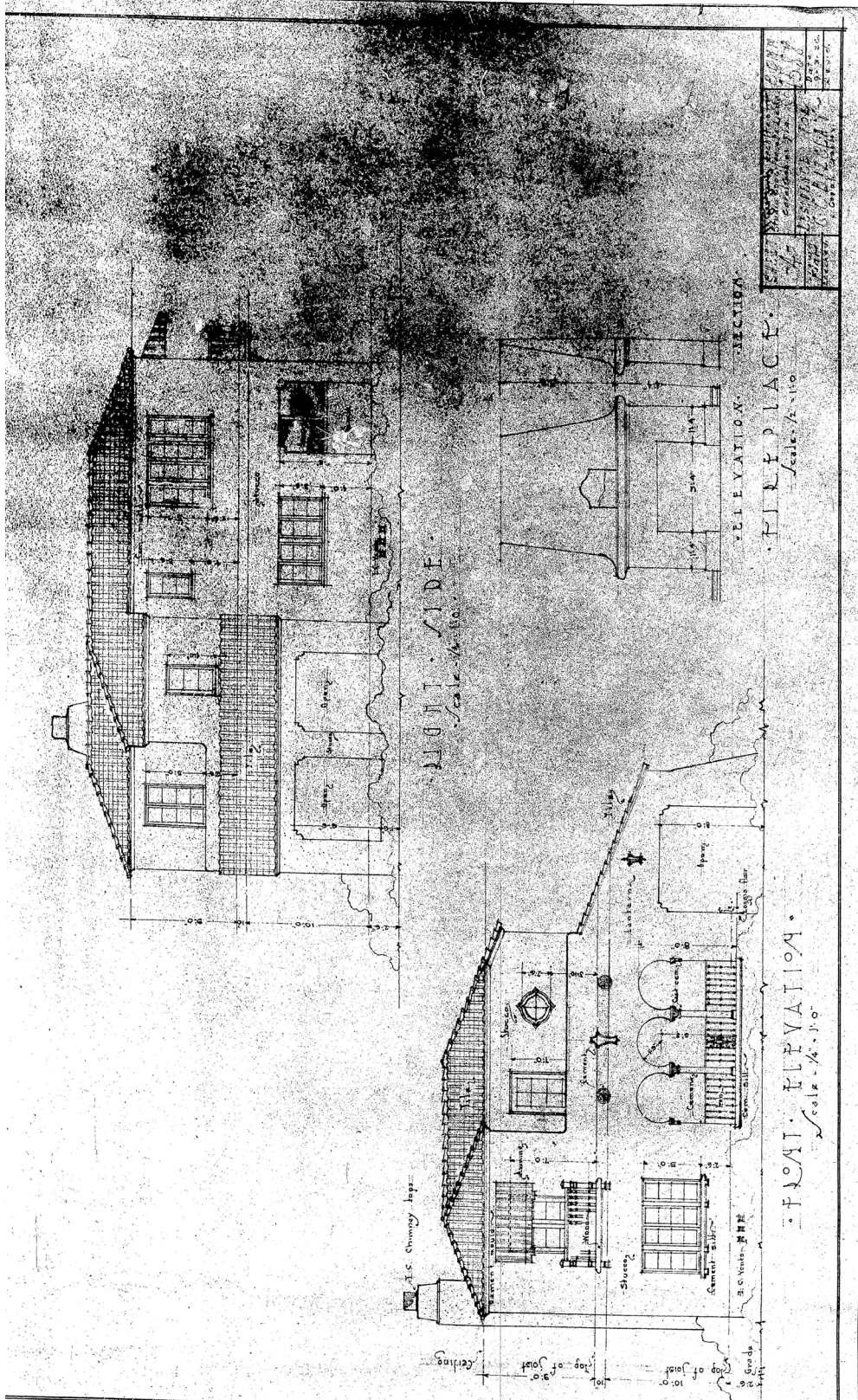
CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Style: Mediterranean Revival

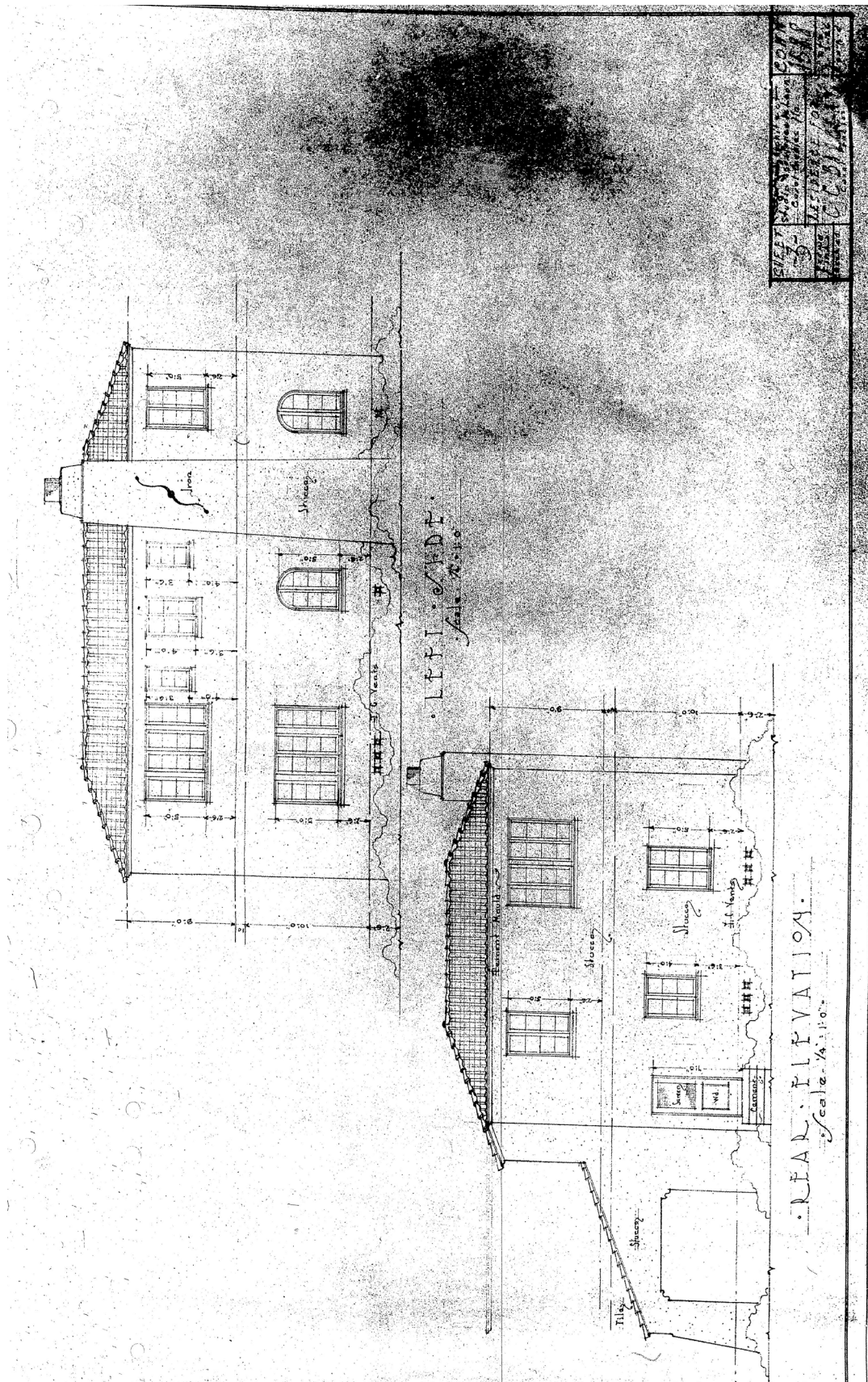


- ✓ thick masonry walls
- ✓ textured stuccoed exterior walls
- ✓ construction over a crawl space
- ✓ combination of roof types and heights
- ✓ use of barrel tile on pitched roofs
- ✓ porte-cochere with distinctive arched openings
- ✓ a semi-detached, slightly tapered chimney stack with a coved chimney cap & rectangular pot (originally terra cotta)
- ✓ a pair of wing walls
- ✓ French doors and balcony ensemble
- ✓ carved rafter tails
- ✓ recessed windows (originally casements) with protruding sills
- ✓ arched windows
- ✓ a detached two-car garage accessory building whose styling matches the home

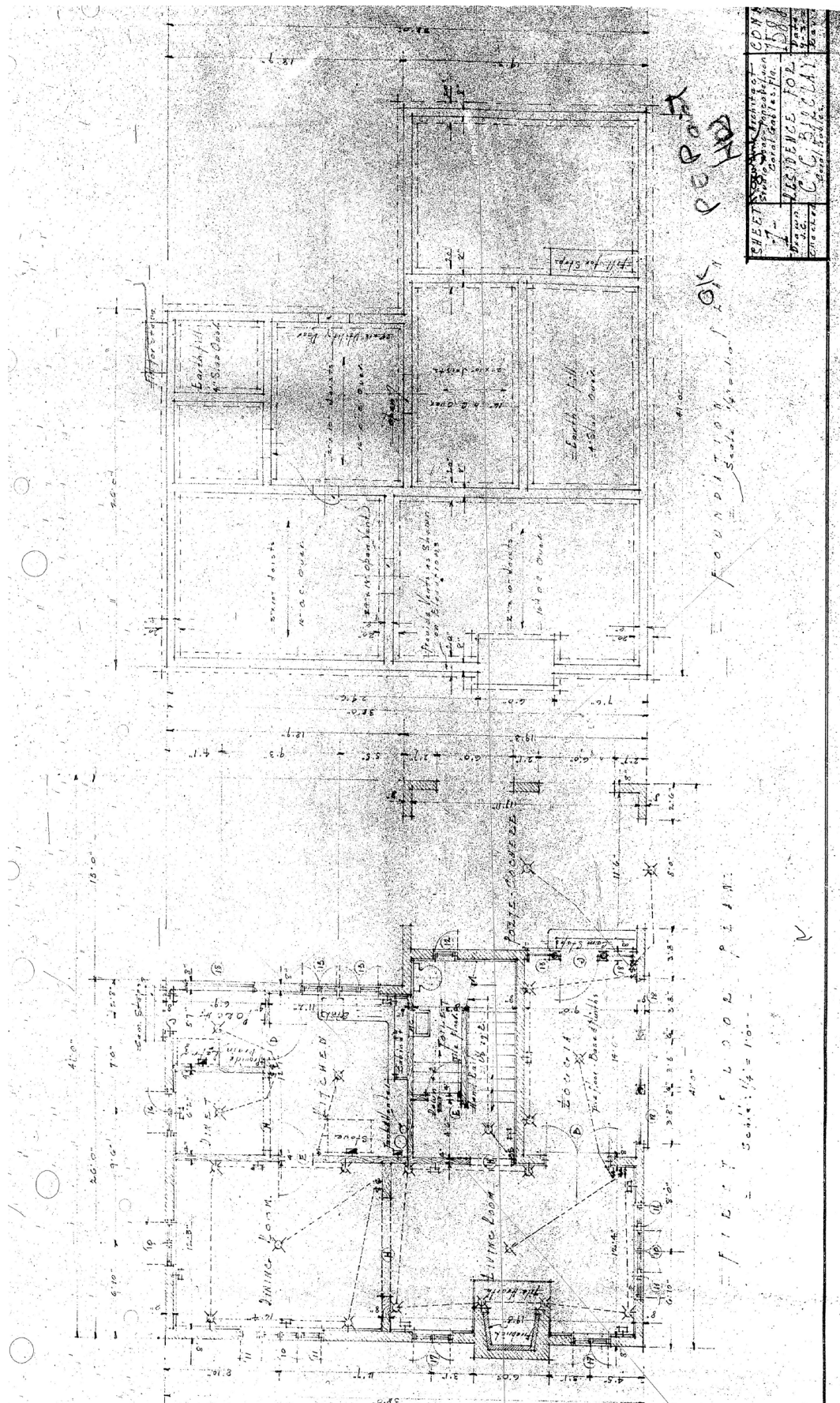
ATTACHMENT A: Permit #2415, 1926
Architect: H. George Fink



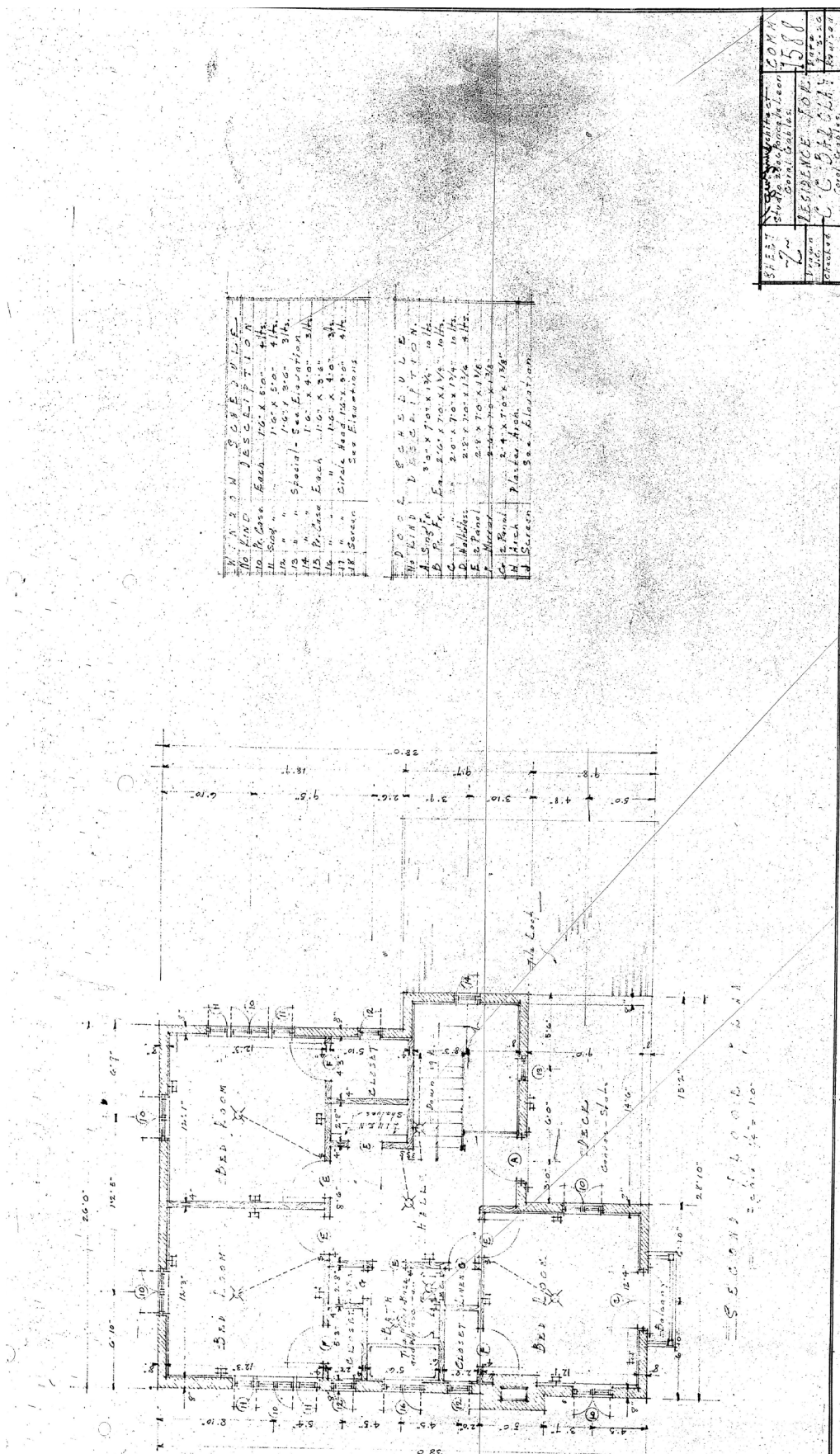
2415



2415



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