

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2015-312**

A RESOLUTION GRANTING GABLES ESTATES CLUB INC. PERMISSION TO MODIFY THE CASUARINA ENTRANCE TO GABLES ESTATES, CONSISTING OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ADDITIONAL ENTRY LANE ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF CASUARINA CONCOURSE SUBJECT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

**WHEREAS**, Mrs. Guilaine Lamar Sosa, Esq., on behalf of Gables Estates Club Inc., is requesting authorization to modify the entrance to the Gables Estates Subdivision consisting of the widening of the south side of Casuarina Concourse to allow for an additional entry lane for members/residents at Casuarina Concourse, Coral Gables; and

**WHEREAS**, the additional lane will be constructed along the existing roadway with a slight encroachment onto the property just to the south of the guardhouse which requires an easement from the owner; and

**WHEREAS**, on May 29, 2015, the property owner "Coastal Drive II, Inc" granted an easement to the Gables Estates Club Inc. described as: The North five (5) feet of Lot 6 in Block A of Gables Estates No. 2, according to the Plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 60 at Page 37 of the Public Records of Miami- Dade County, Florida: and

**WHEREAS**, the Gables Estates Club Inc, a Florida Corporation, wishes to assign all of its right, title and interest under the Easement to the City of Coral Gables;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA:**

**SECTION 1.** The foregoing "WHEREAS" clauses are hereby ratified and confirmed as being true and correct and are hereby made a specific part of this Resolution upon adoption.

**SECTION 2.** That the request to modify the entrance to the Gables Estates Subdivision consisting of the widening of the south side of Casuarina Concourse to allow for an additional entry lane for members/residents at Casuarina Concourse, Coral Gables, shall be and is hereby approved, subject to the following requirements of the Public Works Department:

- a. That the attached "Assignment and Assumption of easement" be fully executed and approved by the City Attorney;
- b. That Gables Estates Club Inc. (The Assignor) shall be responsible for maintenance of the easement area;
- c. That construction documents shall be submitted to the Coral Gables Public Works Department and other applicable agencies for required approvals and permits.

**SECTION 3.** That this Resolution shall become effective upon the date of its adoption herein.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS EIGHTH DAY OF DECEMBER, A. D., 2015.

(Moved: Quesada / Seconded: Slesnick)

(Yeas: Keon, Quesada, Slesnick, Cason)

(Majority: (4-0) Vote)

(Absent: Lago)

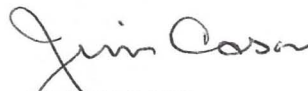
(Agenda Item; H-5)

ATTEST:



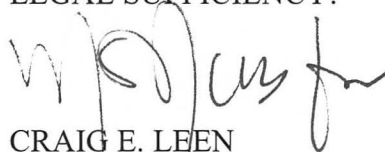
WALTER J. FOEMAN  
CITY CLERK

APPROVED:



JIM CASON  
MAYOR

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND  
LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:



CRAIG E. LEEN  
CITY ATTORNEY



LHD 2015-08  
OCTOBER 15, 2015

Historical Resources &  
Cultural Arts

2327 SALZEDO STREET  
CORAL GABLES  
FLORIDA 33134

☎ 305.460.5093  
✉ hist@coralgables.com

**STAFF REPORT**  
**REMOVAL OF THE LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION**  
**OF THE PROPERTY AT**  
**2900 PONCE DE LEON BOULEVARD**  
**CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA**  
**A LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK**

Date of Construction: 1925

Architect: Phineas Paist

Builder: Coral Gables Construction Company

Legal Description: Lots 16 and 17, Block 26, Coral Gables Crafts Section, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 10, Page 40, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Original Owner: George E. Merrick

Present Owner: Merle V. Strahl 2014 Revocable Trust – Merle V. Strahl, Trustee

Original Permit No.: 1322

Present Use: Parking Lot

Listed on the Coral Gables Register of Historic Places: March 22, 1983

Site Characteristics: The property is located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Ponce de Leon Boulevard and Palermo Avenue.

**SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

In 1925, permit number 1322 was issued for the construction of a commercial structure at 2900 Ponce de Leon Boulevard. Designed by architect Phineas Paist, who was also the Supervising Architect for Coral Gables, the building was a very good example of Mediterranean Revival architecture constructed during the 1920s Florida Land Boom. The building was one of the first to be constructed in the

“Crafts Section” of Coral Gables and originally housed the “Granada Shops,” a furniture company that produced hand-carved, authentic replicas of old-world antiques for homes, offices, and hotels. Their products figured heavily into George Merrick’s vision and were prominently featured furnishings in his promotional material.

### **BACKGROUND**

The following is a brief timeline of events regarding the property.

The property was designated by the Historic Preservation Board as a Local Historic Landmark on February 24, 1983 and ratified by the City Commission on March 22, 1983. (Resolution number 24133). At the time, the building was occupied by the Charade Restaurant. On October 22, 1995 a fire broke out and the structure was a total loss. The fire was later determined to be the result of an arsonist.

Following the loss of the structure, it became apparent that there were no provisions under the Historic Preservation Ordinance (at that time located in the City Code) to address the reconstruction of destroyed historic buildings. In March 1996, the City Commission passed an ordinance which amended the historic preservation section of the Code by adding language for the reconstruction of a historic landmark.

In 1997, a Certificate of Appropriateness application was submitted for the reconstruction of the building. Variances were requested at that time from the Zoning Code to allow the reconstructed building to not provide the required landscaped open space and to only provide two off-street parking spaces in lieu of the 91 required. Case file COA (SP) 97-12-17 was reviewed by the Historic Preservation Board on August 28, 1997. The Board made a motion to approve the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the reconstruction of the building. Another motion was made recommending the granting of the two requested variances.

The variances were heard by the Board of Adjustment on December 1, 1997. (At that time, the Historic Preservation Board did not have authority to grant variances for historic properties.) The Board of Adjustment recommended that the parking variance be denied. The item was presented to the City Commission at its May 12, 1998 meeting. After consideration, the City Commission agreed with the Board of Adjustment and denied the requested variances. No structure was ever constructed on the site and it remains a vacant parcel. In 2013, a permit was issued for site work on the property consisting of paving (parking lot), CBS wall, a dumpster enclosure and landscaping. The property currently functions as a parking lot for the adjacent building

The current request before the Board is to determine whether the property meets the criteria for designation as a Local Historic Landmark in its current state, without the original structure.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

The City of Coral Gables has no criteria for the de-designation of a local historic landmark. In looking for an example from the National Park Service, arbiters of the National Register of Historic

“Crafts Section” of Coral Gables and originally housed the “Granada Shops,” a furniture company that produced hand-carved, authentic replicas of old-world antiques for homes, offices, and hotels. Their products figured heavily into George Merrick’s vision and were prominently featured furnishings in his promotional material.

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Places, one finds within Title 36 Section 65.9 entitled “Withdrawal of National Historic Landmark Designation.” This section provides a set of conditions for the de-designation of a National Historic Landmark. It states, in part:

- (a) National Historic Landmarks will be considered for withdrawal of designation only at the request of the owner or upon the initiative of the Secretary.
- (b) Four justifications exist for the withdrawal of National Historic Landmark designation:
  - (1) The property has ceased to meet the criteria for designation because the qualities which caused it to be originally designated have been lost or destroyed, or such qualities were lost subsequent to nomination, but before designation;
  - (2) Additional information shows conclusively that the property does not possess sufficient significance to meet the National Historic Landmark criteria;
  - (3) Professional error in the designation; and
  - (4) Prejudicial procedural error in the designation process.

It is important to note, however, that the City of Coral Gables standards do differ from those of the National Park Service. The most notable example of the differences is that the City has the authority to designate without owner consent while the Park Service does not.

As stated above, the City has no criteria for the withdrawal of local historic designation from a property. In absence of criteria, if one applies the National Register standards to this property, only criteria (b) (1) would be appropriate because the structure at 2900 Ponce de Leon Boulevard was lost.

The Historic Landmark Site Fact Sheet (precursor to Designation Reports) prepared in 1978 bases the designation on the architectural significance of the structure. The property description on that fact sheet reads as follows:

“This structure represents a fine example of Mediterranean Revival architecture, noteworthy for its stylistic features. George Merrick, who owned the land, had the building constructed to coincide with his master plan for the ‘City Beautiful.’ The structure was originally built for and occupied by Ralph and Leland Wilkins, who ran the Granada Shops, the first tenants.”

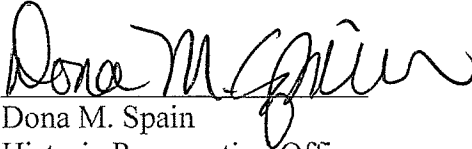
The architecture of the building, coupled with the fact that it was one of the earliest commercial buildings in the Crafts Section of the City, were the reasons that the property was sought for designation.

City Staff is requesting the removal of the Local Historic Landmark Designation from the property. Staff finds that because the building is no longer standing, the property has lost the architectural integrity and significance for which it was initially designated.

**Therefore, Staff recommends the following:**

A motion to **APPROVE** the request for the removal of the Local Historic Designation of the property at 2900 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, Lots 16 and 17, Block 26, Coral Gables Crafts Section, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 10, Page 40, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Dona M. Spain  
Historic Preservation Officer

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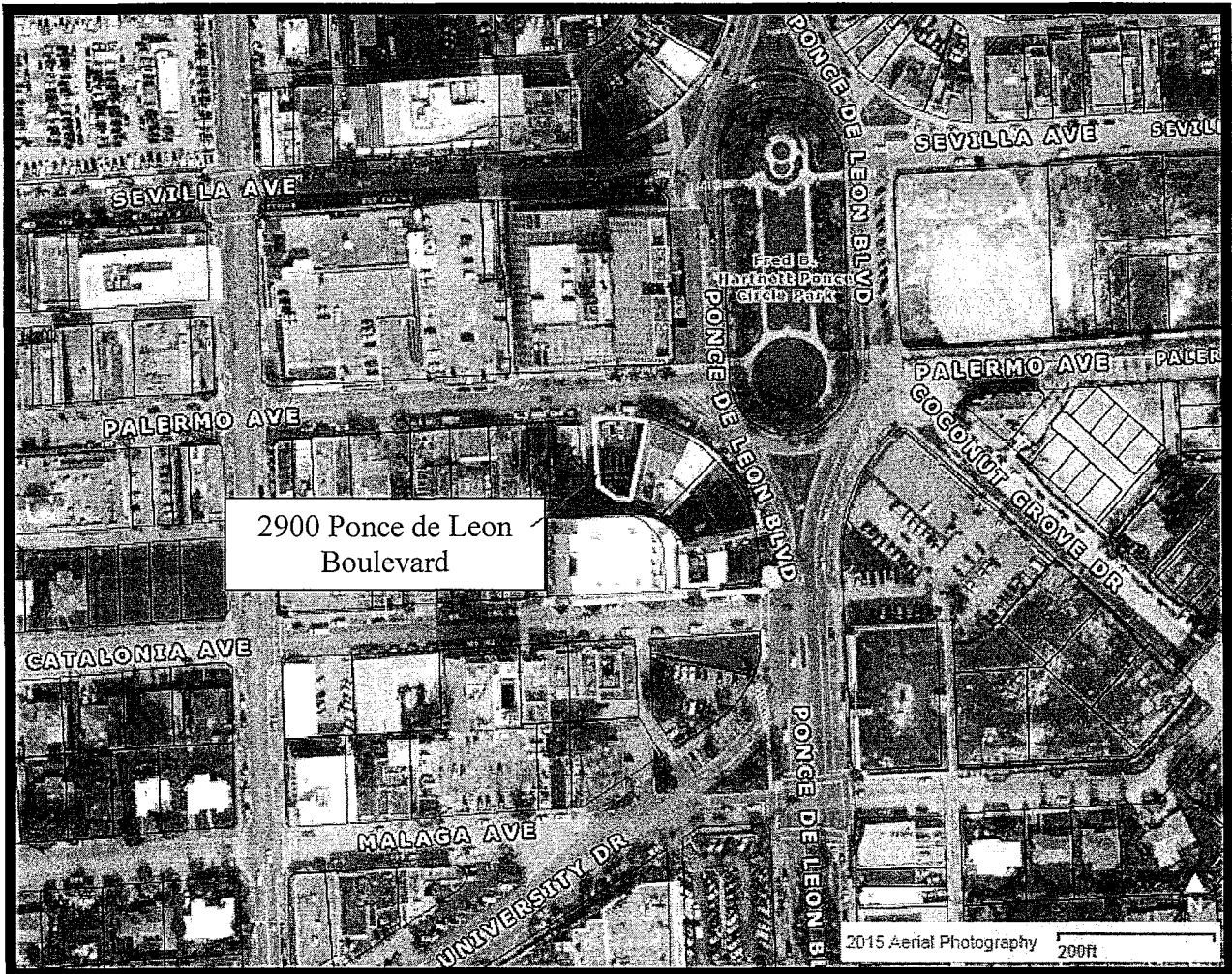
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Respectfully submitted,

  
Dona M. Spain  
Historic Preservation Officer



LOCATION MAP



*Map Courtesy Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser*

### REVIEW GUIDE

Definition: The Review Guide lists some of the more prominent features, which contribute to the overall character of a structure and/or district. It is not intended to be all-inclusive, as photographic documentation fully illustrates the present physical character of the property.

Use: The Review Guide may be used to address the impact of new construction, additions/modifications/alterations and/or renovations which may become the subject of some future Certificate of Appropriateness consideration....and

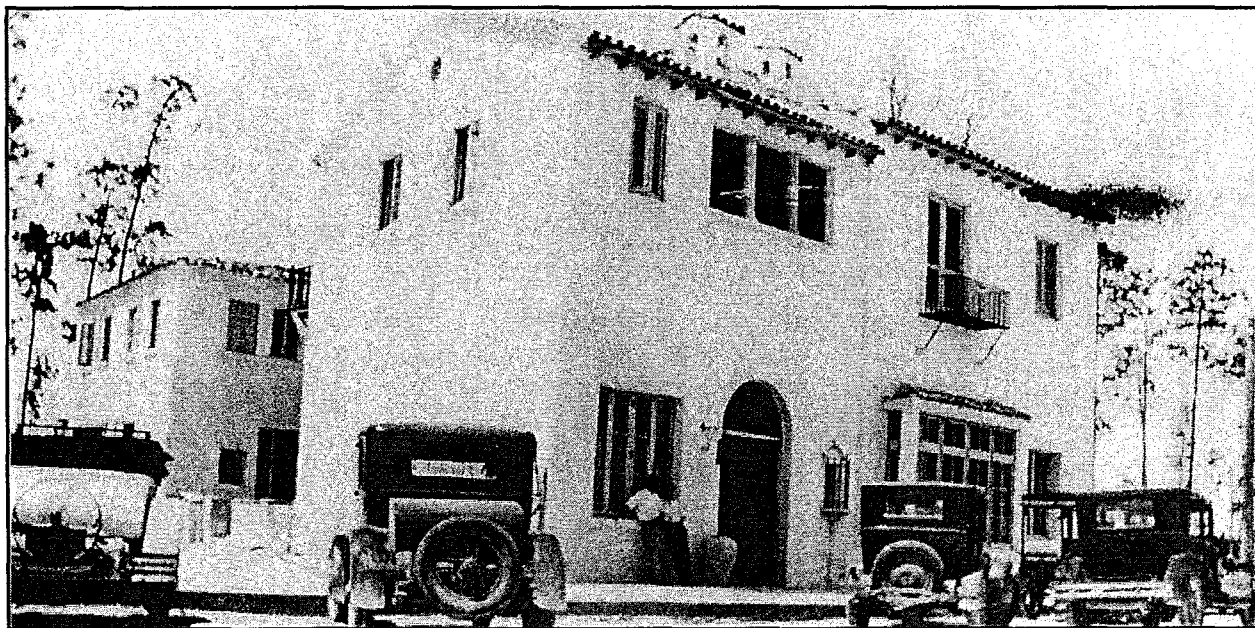
The Review Guide by describing EXISTING physical characteristics may be used to determine whether or not elements which create the character of the structure and/or district is present and/or whether or not later additions or alterations have so changed that character so as to cause the property (ies) to become ineligible for listing.

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Property Address: 2900 Ponce de Leon Boulevard

Date of Construction: 1925

Material: Original structure was masonry covered with stucco, barrel tile



Photograph ca. 1926

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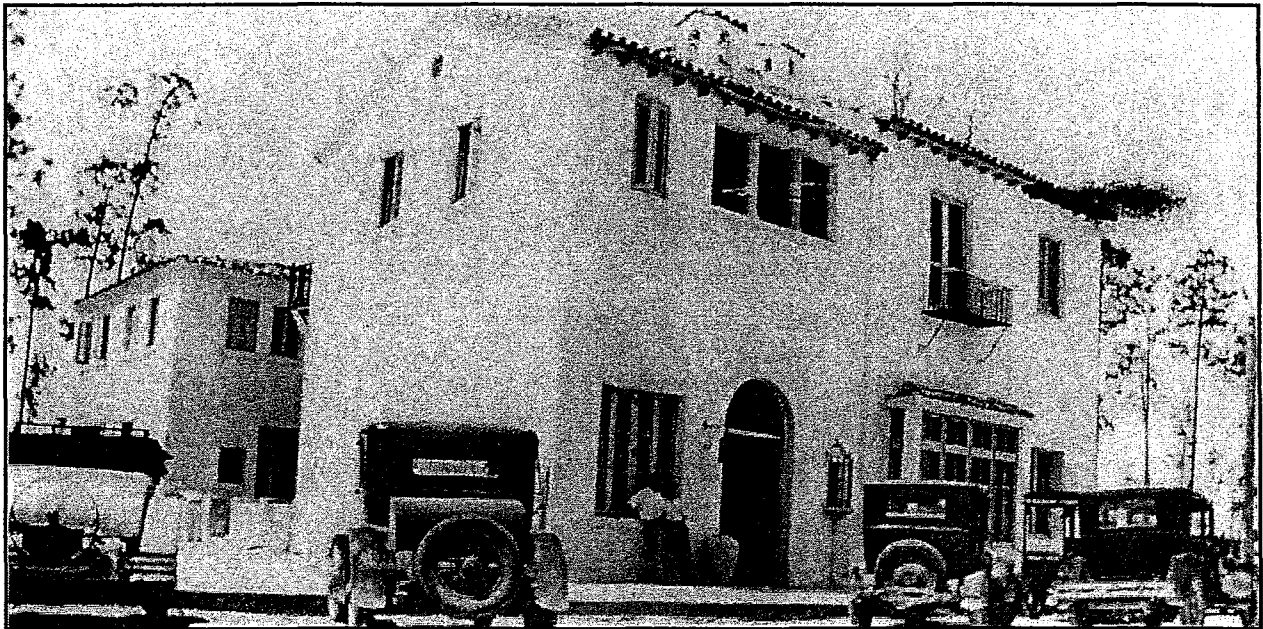
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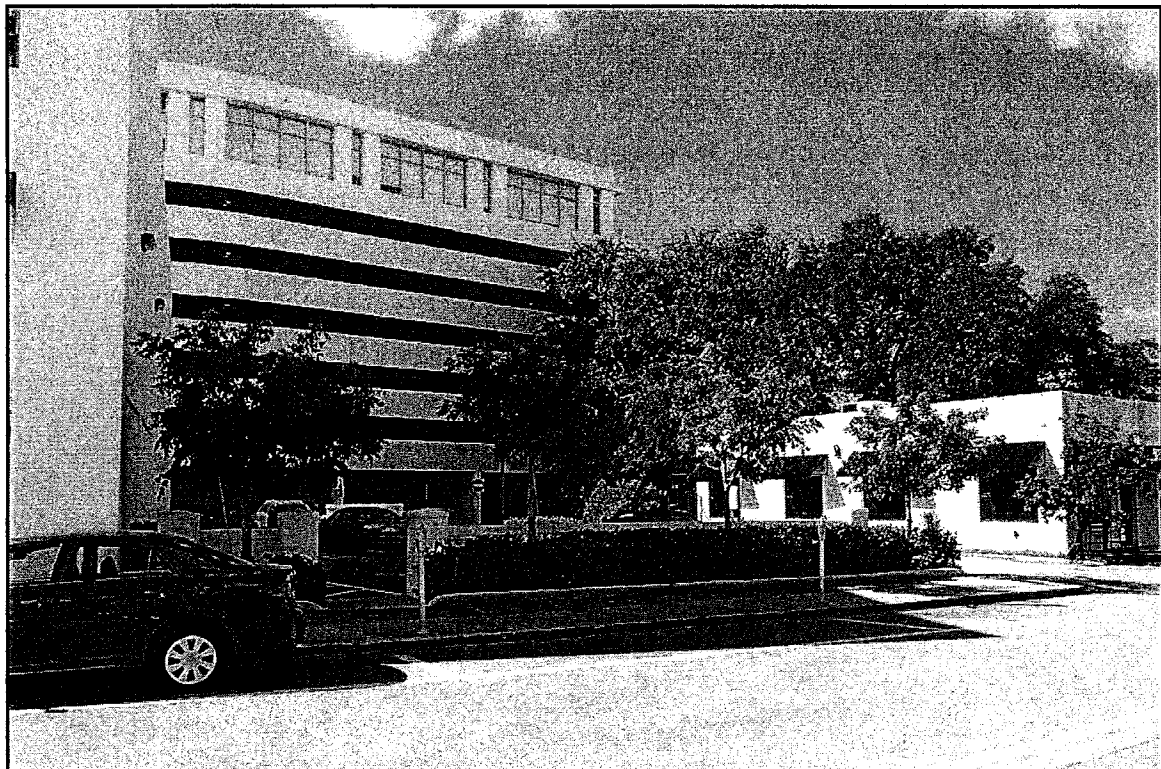
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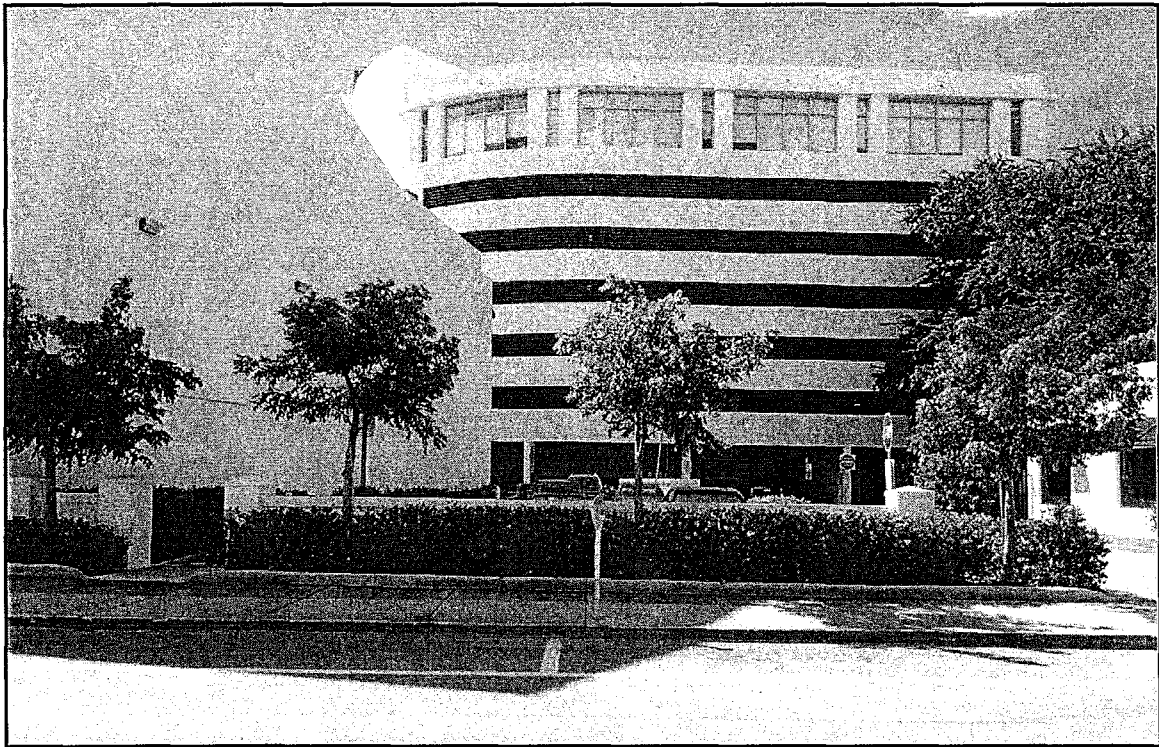
Photograph ca. 1926



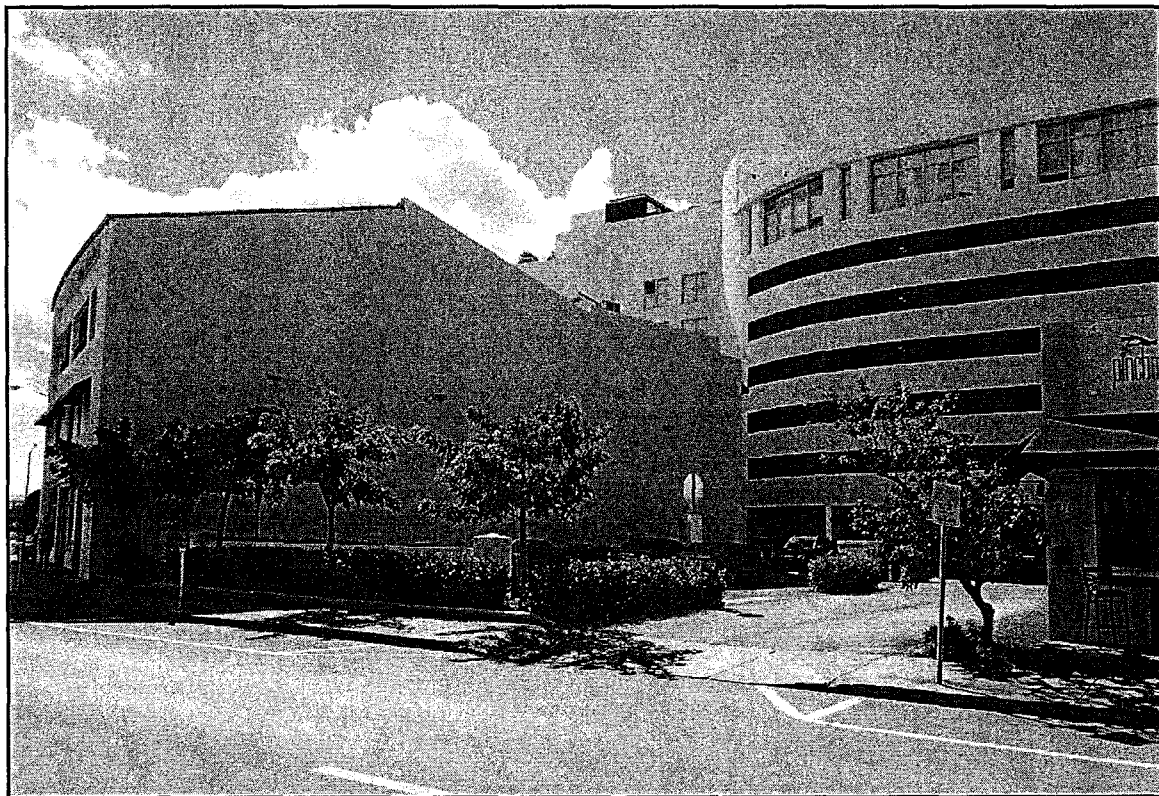
Photograph ca. 1940s



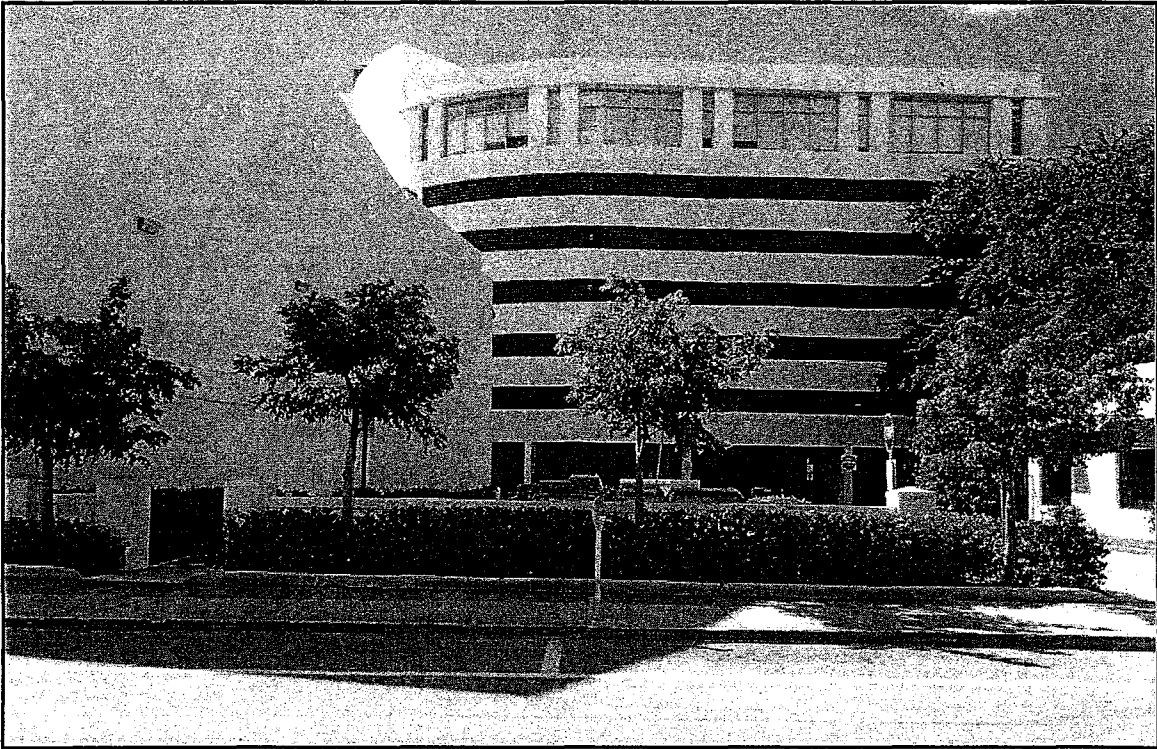
Photograph 2015



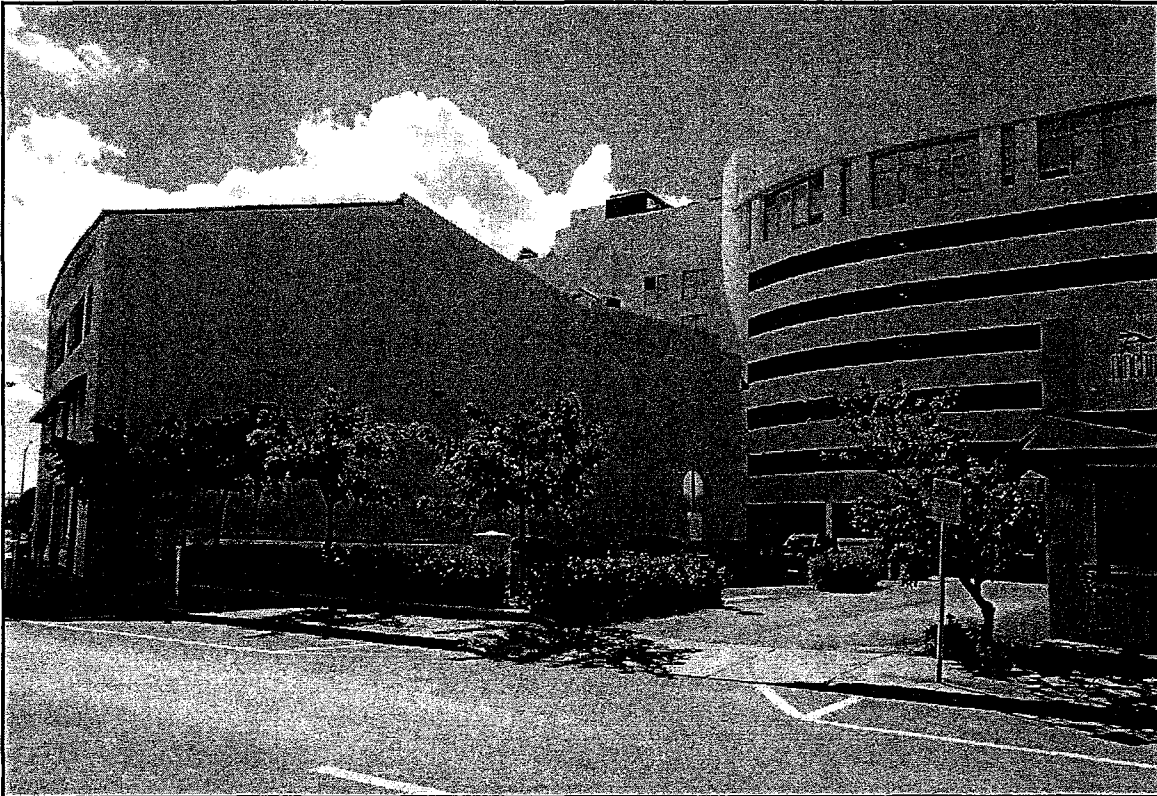
Photograph 2015



Photograph 2015



Photograph 2015



Photograph 2015

CORAL GABLES HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, October 15, 2015

Continued

Ms. Kautz advised that removal of the designation was initiated by staff. As she described the property, she conducted a visual display of property photographs and discussed the property's history, particularly mentioning its past use as Charade Restaurant, destroyed by fire in 1995. Nothing has been built on the site since the fire, and the property is in use today as a parking lot. Ms. Kautz asked the Board to consider if the property still meets criteria sufficient to retain designation as a landmark. After reviewing the property fact and designation data, Ms. Kautz announced that staff was requesting removal of the historic designation, and recommended a recommendation (to the City Commission) to approve staff's report and a removal of the designation.

Mr. Fullerton made a motion to approve staff's report and recommend approval of removing the historic designation of the property located at 2900 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, conditioned on the placement of a descriptive plaque or other permanent feature stating the importance of the site to be incorporated in a later development of the property, and to include recognition of the Wilkins' family and the Granada Shop. Mr. Silva seconded the motion.

Mr. Silva commented that the motion should not be viewed as a "carte blanche" for demolition by neglect issues or by a developer and noted for the record that the City lost the opportunity to secure a reconstruction of the property because it wasn't possible to pass appropriate variances at the time.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ms. Thomson, Ms. Ghia, Ms. Rolando, Mr. Silva, Mr. Fullerton, Mr. Menendez, Mr. Torre.

Nays: None.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

EXCERPT

**CORAL GABLES HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**Thursday, October 15, 2015, 4:00 p.m.**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida**

<b>MEMBERS:</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>APPOINTED BY:</b>
	14	14	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	
Janice Thomson*									P	P	A	P	Mayor Jim Cason
Venny Torre	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Vice Mayor Frank C. Quesada
Elizabeth Ghia*									P	P	P	P	Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick
Alejandro Silva	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Patricia Keon
Alexander Adams*									P	P	P	E	Commissioner Vince Lago
John Fullerton*					E	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	Historic Preservation Board
Robert Parsley	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	City Manager
Margaret Rolando*												E	City Commission
Albert Menendez*												P	City Commission

**LEGEND:** A = Absent; P = Present; E = Excused; \* = New Member; ^ = Resigned Member;  
 - = No Meeting

**STAFF:**

Dona M. Spain, Historic Preservation Officer  
 Kara N. Kautz, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer  
 ElizaBeth Guin, Historic Preservationist  
 Yesenia Diaz, Administrative Assistant, Historical Resources and Cultural Arts Department  
 Miriam Ramos, Deputy City Attorney

**GUESTS:** Monica Loreda; Karen Barnett-Backer, Esq.; Albert Pozo; Jane Maranos; Karelia Martinez Carbonell; Ann Rosalind Goodman; Rashmi Murthy; Hallegere Murthy.

**RECORDING AND PREPARATION OF MINUTES:** Nancy C. Morgan, Coral Gables Services, Inc.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Torre at 4:09 p.m. A quorum was present.

**LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATIONS:**

CASE FILE LHD 2015-08: Consideration of the removal of the local historic designation of the property at 2900 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, legally described as Lots 16 and 17, Block 26, Coral Gables Crafts Section, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 10, Page 40, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Ms. Spain explained that the application was to remove historic designation from the property and would be a recommendation to the City Commission.



CORAL GABLES HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, October 15, 2015

Continued

Ms. Kautz advised that removal of the designation was initiated by staff. As she described the property, she conducted a visual display of property photographs and discussed the property's history, particularly mentioning its past use as Charade Restaurant, destroyed by fire in 1995. Nothing has been built on the site since the fire, and the property is in use today as a parking lot. Ms. Kautz asked the Board to consider if the property still meets criteria sufficient to retain designation as a landmark. After reviewing the property fact and designation data, Ms. Kautz announced that staff was requesting removal of the historic designation, and recommended a recommendation (to the City Commission) to approve staff's report and a removal of the designation.

Mr. Fullerton made a motion to approve staff's report and recommend approval of removing the historic designation of the property located at 2900 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, conditioned on the placement of a descriptive plaque or other permanent feature stating the importance of the site to be incorporated in a later development of the property, and to include recognition of the Wilkins' family and the Granada Shop. Mr. Silva seconded the motion.

Mr. Silva commented that the motion should not be viewed as a "carte blanche" for demolition by neglect issues or by a developer and noted for the record that the City lost the opportunity to secure a reconstruction of the property because it wasn't possible to pass appropriate variances at the time.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ms. Thomson, Ms. Ghia, Ms. Rolando, Mr. Silva, Mr. Fullerton, Mr. Menendez, Mr. Torre.  
Nays: None.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

CITY OF CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA

RESOLUTION NO. 24133

A RESOLUTION APPROVING INCLUSION OF FOLLOWING ON CITY HISTORIC LANDMARK INVENTORY: MERRICK/EVELL RESIDENCE AT 832 SOUTH GREENWAY DRIVE; 713 BILTMORE WAY; CHARADE RESTAURANT, 2900 PONCE DE LEON BOULEVARD.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES:

That the following shall be and they are hereby approved for inclusion on the City of Coral Gables Historic Landmark Inventory:

Merrick/Evell Residence, 832 South Greenway Drive

713 Biltmore Way

Charade Restaurant, 2900 Ponce de Leon Boulevard

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF MARCH, A.D. 1983.

APPROVED:

WILLIAM H. CHAPMAN  
MAYOR

ATTEST:

VIRGINIA L. PAUL  
CITY CLERK

(16)