

Expert Opinion Regarding the Historic Designation of 3619 Toledo Street

Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board

December 19, 2024



Introduction

Steven Avdakov, R.A., Heritage Architectural Associates

- Registered Architect in five states, including Florida
- Founded firm 26 years ago, in 1998
- Focus of work is exclusively in the realm of Historic Preservation
- Bachelor's Degree in Architecture from the University of Miami
- Master's Degree in Historic Preservation from Columbia University
- Qualifications meet Federal Standards for Architecture, Historic Architecture and Architectural History
- Has testified as an expert on numerous occasions in South Florida before the City of Miami Beach Historic Preservation Board, City of Miami Historic & Environmental Preservation Board and City Commission, and Miami-Dade County Historic Preservation Board and Commission

Assertions From Designation Report

- One of the few notable Art Moderne residences in the City
- Clearly Art Moderne
- Retains influences of Mediterranean Revival
- Significant example of Art Moderne in this Mediterranean-inspired city

3619 Toledo Street, Coral Gables

Constructed: 1937

Architect: Robert M. Little



3619 Toledo Street – Elevations



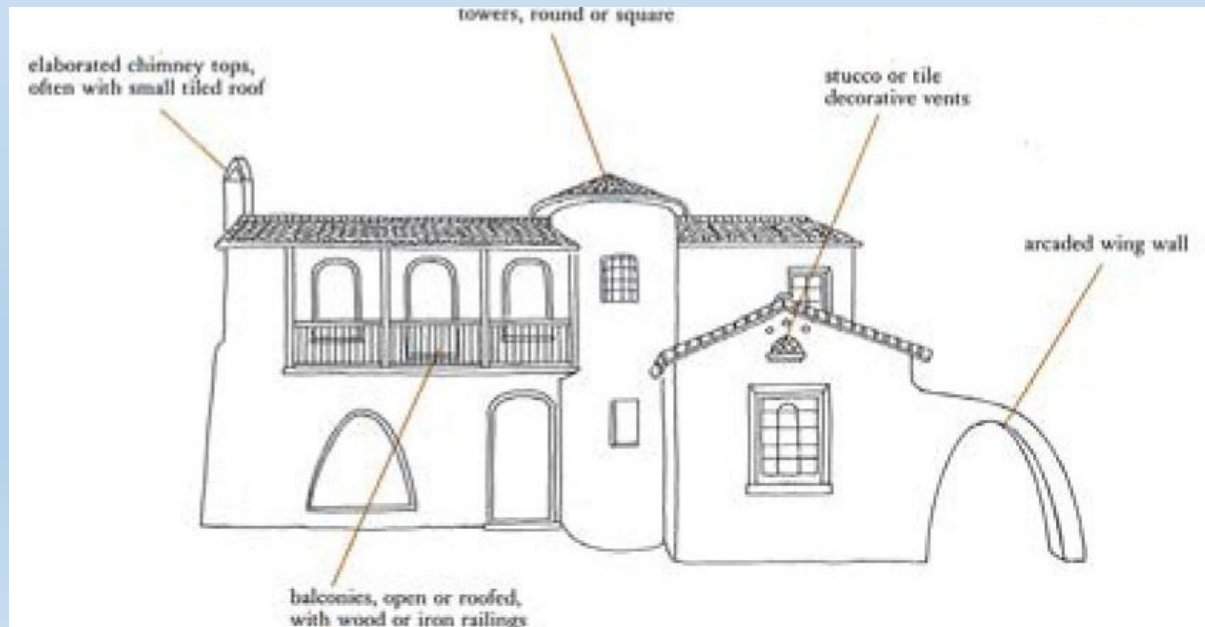
3619 Toledo Street – Details



3619 Toledo Street – Interior



Characteristics of the Mediterranean Revival Style



- Low-pitched roof, usually little or no eave overhang
- Red tile roof covering
- One or more prominent arches
- Wall surface usually stucco
- Façade normally asymmetrical
- Chimneys with elaborated tops
- Round or square towers
- Decorative vents
- Multi-light windows
- Large focal window (often arched)
- Heavy doors emphasized by columns, pilasters, carved stonework or patterned tiles

From *A Field Guide to American Houses* by Virginia & Lee McAlester

Examples of the Mediterranean Revival Style



4365 Alton Road, Miami Beach



1330 Alton Road, Miami Beach

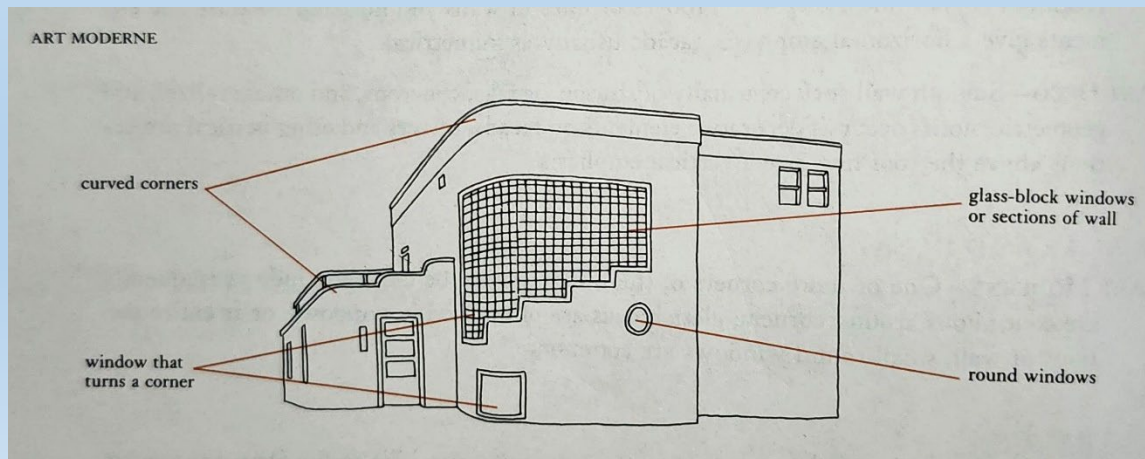
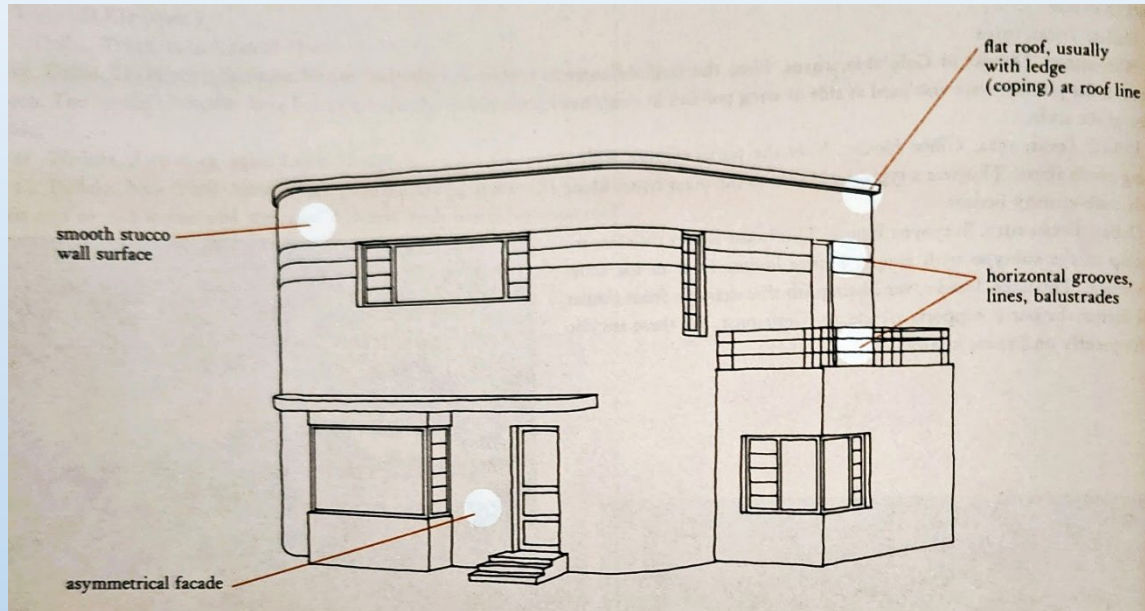


434 W. 43rd Street, Miami Beach



420 Royal Palm Avenue, Miami Beach

Characteristics of the Art Moderne Style



- Smooth wall surface, usually of stucco
- Flat roof, usually with coping at roof line
- Horizontal grooves or lines in walls and horizontal balustrade elements give a horizontal emphasis
- Façade usually asymmetrical
- Corners of the building may be curved
- Windows frequently are continuous around corners
- Glass blocks are often used in windows, or as entire sections of wall
- Small round windows are common

From *A Field Guide to American Houses* by Virginia & Lee McAlester

The Art Moderne Style



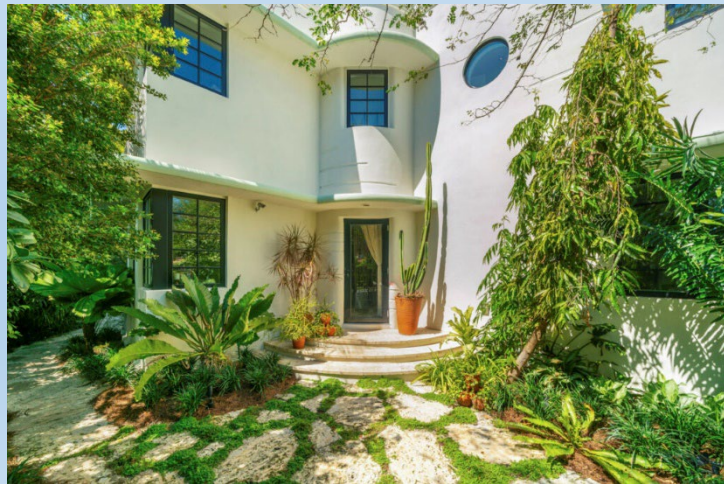
Essex House Hotel, Miami Beach



Greystone Hotel, Miami Beach



Beach Patrol Headquarters, Miami Beach



1301 Lenox Avenue, Miami Beach



St. Paul, Minnesota



1021 N. Greenway Avenue, Coral Gables

Character-defining Art Moderne features cited in Designation Report

- Cylindrical form at the front entry
- Smooth, light-colored, earth-toned exterior stucco surfaces
- Low-pitched roofs with wide eaves
- Sparse ornamentation using only elements that selectively enhance the geometry, sleekness and horizontality of the structure, most notably the use of brick (horizontal lines, shutters, lintel, circular grille) and the built-in planters,
- Ribbons of fenestration
- Geometric chimneystack
- Circular 'porthole' with brick 'basketweave' grille

Analysis

Cylindrical Form at Front Entry

- Cylindrical form at the entrance exists on many 1930s Mediterranean Revival houses – not unique to Art Moderne
- Examples include the Knapp Residence at 5645 N. Bay Road, Miami Beach



Analysis

Smooth, light-colored earth-toned exterior surfaces

- Smooth stucco surfaces interrupted by irregular brick “shutters” and brick lintel, which convey a rustic, deteriorated appearance
- Opposite of the smooth, streamlined appearance that is characteristic of the Art Moderne style



Analysis

Low-pitched roofs with wide eaves

- Series of multi-level gabled roofs clad in barrel tile; Art Moderne roofs are typically flat
- Narrow roof eaves supported by simple wood rafter tails
- Contrary to the smooth, streamlined surfaces of Art Moderne



Hibbing, Minnesota

Analysis

Sparse ornamentation

- Use of elements that “selectively enhance the geometry, sleekness and horizontality of the structure”
- Brick is used to convey a sense of age and deterioration, which is the opposite of the sleek, streamlined appearance of the Art Moderne style



Analysis

Ribbons of fenestration

- Only one example of a horizontal window, at front elevation
- Window opening originally contained six steel casement windows with prominent vertical mullions - juxtaposes horizontality of window opening
- Art Moderne style features ribbon windows that convey horizontality and often wrapped around corners



Des Moines, Iowa

Analysis

Geometric chimney stack

- Prominent feature of the Mediterranean Revival style
- Chimneys have a modest level of ornamentation that is consistent with the style of the house
- Not prominent features of the Art Moderne style – chimneys were generally plain and located out of sight



Analysis

Circular porthole with brick 'basketweave' grille

- Does not convey the appearance of an Art Moderne porthole window
- Brick surround and grille contradict the smooth appearance that is common in Art Moderne styling



Summary

- The house at 3519 Toledo Street is Mediterranean Revival in style and does **not** display significant elements of the Art Moderne style
- It is **not** representative of the “melding of the newer Modernist Art Moderne style within the existing Mediterranean Revival landscape”
- It does **not** represent “a major turning point in Coral Gables architectural history as the City shifted from its Mediterranean foundation to embrace new styles.”
- It is **not** a “significant example of the interpretation of Art Moderne in this Mediterranean-inspired city
- It is **not** “clearly Art Moderne”



3519 Toledo Street, Coral Gables



1021 N, Greenway Drive, Coral Gables

Conclusion

- The house at 3519 Toledo Street is, purely and simply, a modest **Mediterranean Revival-style house**
- It does not significantly exemplify or portray any trend toward Modernism
- Contrary to the assertions made in the Designation Report, it does not embody any distinguishing characteristics of the Art Moderne style

Based on the above analysis, the property at 3519 Toledo Street **does not meet the criteria** for individual designation for its Historical, Cultural & Architectural significance, and it should NOT receive designation as an historic site.