

**LETTERS RECEIVED IN SUPPORT OF DESIGNATION
AFTER JANUARY HPB MEETING**



Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, Inc.

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December 26, 2019

Kara Kautz

Assistant Director, Historic Resources & Cultural Arts

City of Coral Gables

2327 Salzedo Street, Second Floor

Coral Gables, FL 33134

Re: 1208 Asturia Avenue – Historic Designation

Dear Ms. Kautz,

We read with interest the articles in the Miami Herald on the proposed designation of the historic ranch home at 1208 Asturia Avenue, designed by Russell Pancoast.

Our organization would like to express support for the designation. We believe it is the right step for historic preservation in the Gables. We entirely agree with Ms. Carbonell as quoted in Mr. Viglucci's article of December 18.¹ It could be added that Merrick incorporated several styles in the design of Coral Gables. And he was a scholar of the history of local vernacular architecture, witness his article "Pre-Flagler Influences on the Lower Florida East Coast" in the first issue of *Tequesta*. Were he alive, he would appreciate its evolution.

This designation proposal did not, as Ms. Valls complained, come "out of left field."² The city is well known for its strong historic preservation program, which is indispensable to its identity and quality of life. Taking into account a home's historic status is a matter of standard due diligence.

Designation will set an important precedent for other communities concerned about preserving their heritage. History for many heritage-conscious Florida communities begins in the era of the ranch home.

Sincerely,

References:

1. <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/business/real-estate-news/article238439058.html>
2. <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/business/real-estate-news/article238512883.html>

Kautz, Kara

From: vicki cerda <vicki_cerda@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2020 11:50 AM
To: Kautz, Kara
Cc: Guin, ElizaBeth
Subject: Link between the 1208 Asturia property & the Kay Pancoast mural at CG library (and other relevant info) in case you are not aware

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Hi Kara and Elizabeth. I am a very long time homeowner in Coral Gables and am extremely concerned about the possible tear down of the Russell Pancoast property at 1208 Asturia if it is not rightly (!) designated a historic property in the future. Do people really buy houses like this with the pre-meditated plan to just tear them down? Maybe they should be required to disclose this to the seller/owner who may not want to sell the property to someone with that intention — I know I would not.

With this email I wanted to pass on something to you (and the historic board) in case you were not aware of it. The Coral Gables library has a mural in their Margaret M. Beaton room inside the library from 1970 by Russell Pancoast's wife Katherine/Kay — an artist and architect in her own right.

You can get a printed brochure inside the library at the reference desk about the mural and see it in person of course. See part of it below in the 1st attachment/picture (another section of the mural has 18 selected landmarks that depict “the very essence” of Coral Gables listed and mapped — CG city hall, Merrick house, Chinese Village etc.) You can view the entire informational brochure as a PDF here: <https://evogov.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/media/91/media/176151.pdf>

I took various pictures of it that I am passing on. In one section there are 3 houses pictured that look like typical houses of CG thru the ages (moving from old Spanish design to modernism). Please refer to the 2nd attachment/picture below. I would like to point out that I am sure that the house in the middle of the others is 1208 Asturia. See attachment/picture # 3 for a close up of the artistic interpretation in the mural (which clearly depicts the unusual chimney, the side wood awnings, a bare limbed tree in the backyard that can be seen above the roof line, a large tree in front of the house ...) and then compare with the actual house today (attachment/picture # 4). It is no coincidence that even today the bare limbed tree is still in the backyard as well as the large tree in front!

As this mural is currently in the CG library, this is very significant. It is also unbiased and real evidence that this house is truly part of the history of Coral Gables and needs to be preserved and designated historic. How can we even have this mural in the library and give people brochures about it and then even think about/allow for demolition of one of the properties it depicts in this mural that celebrates Coral Gables?

And needless to say, by virtue of this very important architect for S Florida alone, it should be saved. I have also learned the following: which may be of interest: the HistoryMiami museum

downtown (formerly Historical Museum of South Florida) has many archives about Russell Pancoast and his family (he is interestingly enough the grandson of John Collins who helped develop Miami Beach); Pancoast is included in interviews in library archives in Florida; his architecture firm was one of the first in S Florida and even had offices in CG (it later morphed into the very important and respected Spillis and Candela architecture firm); he wrote a book called Guide to Miami for the American Institute of Architects; and lastly that 1208 Asturia was featured on page 30/31 as one of the houses in the first “Book of Homes” by the Miami Herald in 1938 — one of the few properties listed for Coral Gables by the way — this book that was made to help those who “seek to build their own homes to the end that the architecture, the location, the building itself, and the materials used shall be of the highest quality”. And of course Pancoast is mentioned in architecture books of many kinds (or has entire chapters dedicated to him) in addition to his houses included in scholastic teachings including our very own University of Miami in CGables (one book being “Florida Modern” by a University of Miami architecture professor).

I hope you find this all of interest and can use all research to save the house. I am happy to pass on supporting documentation for all stated (and I know there is even more supporting documentation — you may have much more yourselves). In summary, by all accounts, 1208 warrants historic designation and is part of the history of Coral Gables as all above confers. Plus the property (and it’s lovely backyard) is in very good shape and has been kept unaltered by all the previous owners.

Please advise if anything is not clear and/or you would like more information. I am not sure of the next steps but wanted you to have all this relevant info ASAP.

Thank you and have a nice holiday weekend.

Vicki

Katherine "Kay" Pancoast



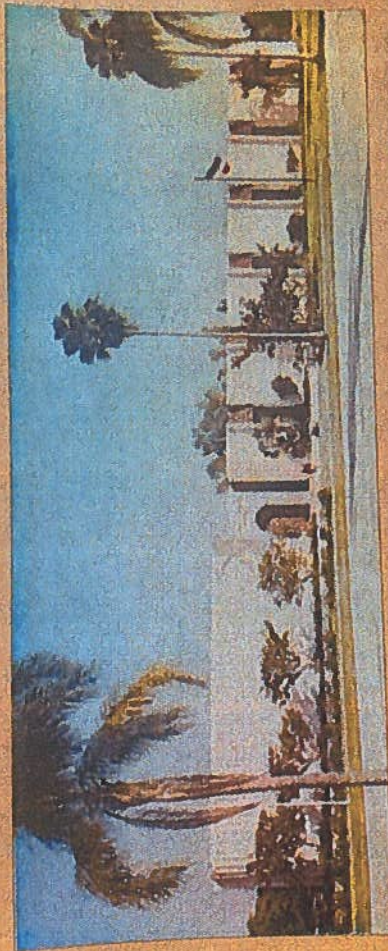
Born in North Tonawanda, New York, Katherine (Kay) Pancoast graduated from Cornell University's School of Architecture in 1922. In 1924 she relocated to Miami Beach with husband, Russell Pancoast, who was also an architect. While raising their two children, Pancoast was very involved in community work and used her talents to create elaborate stage set designs. She applied some of her many talents to painting portraits and nursery furniture. She also created wallpaper designs, which were sold to manufacturers.

In 1950, quite by accident, she discovered ceramics - her favorite medium - which gave her deep satisfaction. From then on, Pancoast turned her attention to tiles - carving, impressing, glazing, and fashioning them in varied ways fueled by her imagination and research. Pancoast's ceramic works have been sold in New York at American House, Georg Jensen, Bonniers, and Edwin Jackson. Her designs were also sold at The University of Pennsylvania Museum Shop, The Cosmopolitan Club in Philadelphia, and in Miami, the Pageant Gallery and Arango.

Pancoast was not only a Miami pioneer in the world of ceramic art but a ceramic artist of international stature and a force in the art world at large. Architects, interior designers, and those who found their way to her studio, used her tiles and slab constructions as paintings, to decorate fireplaces, screens, and murals. Some of her major mural works are located in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Florida (Orlando, Boca Raton, and Miami). They hang proudly in banks, hotels, a hospital, a prison, and since 1970 in the Coral Gables Branch Library.

Reprinted as a joint effort by the Miami-Dade Public Library System and the City of Coral Gables Library Advisory Board

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THE CORAL GABLES MURAL



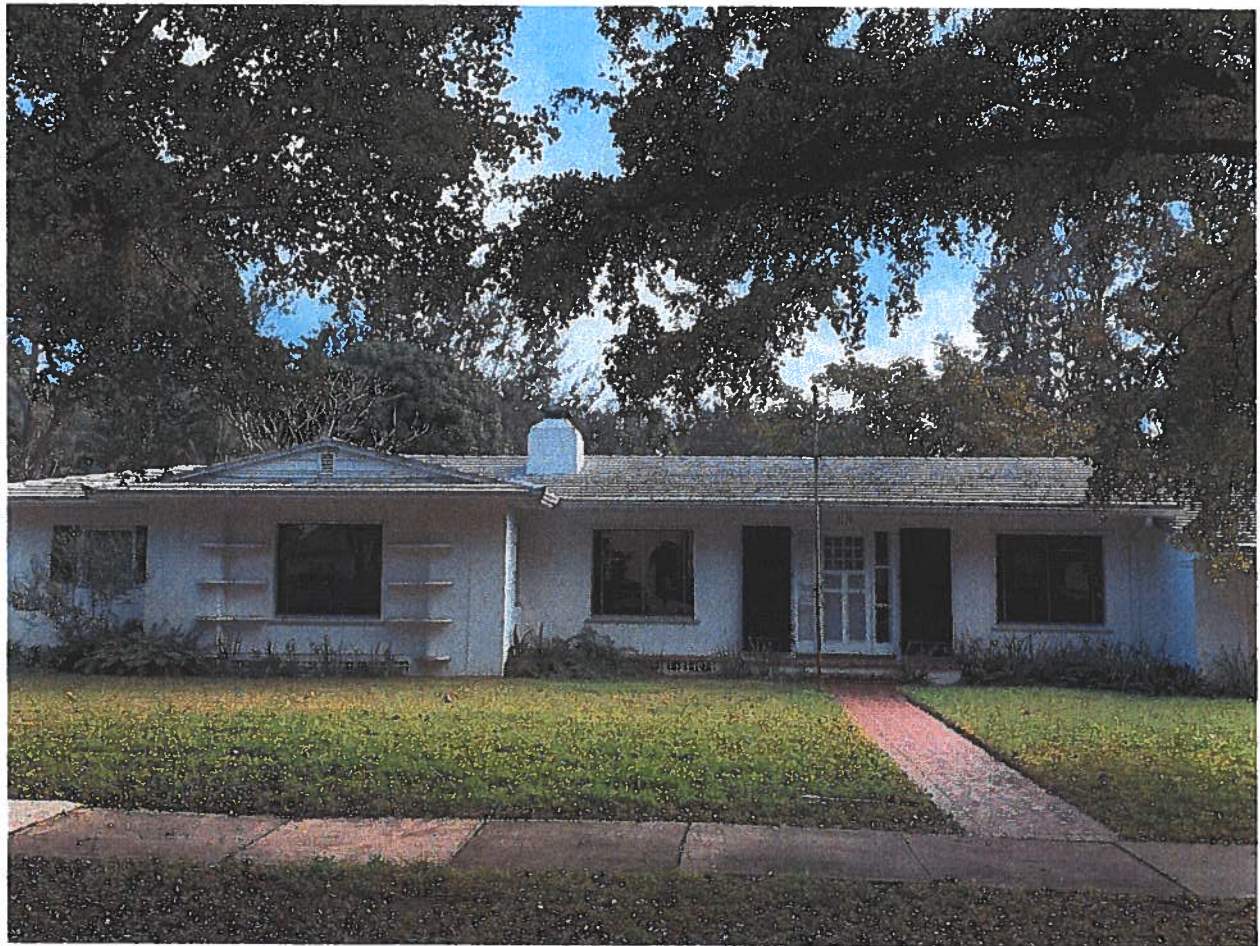
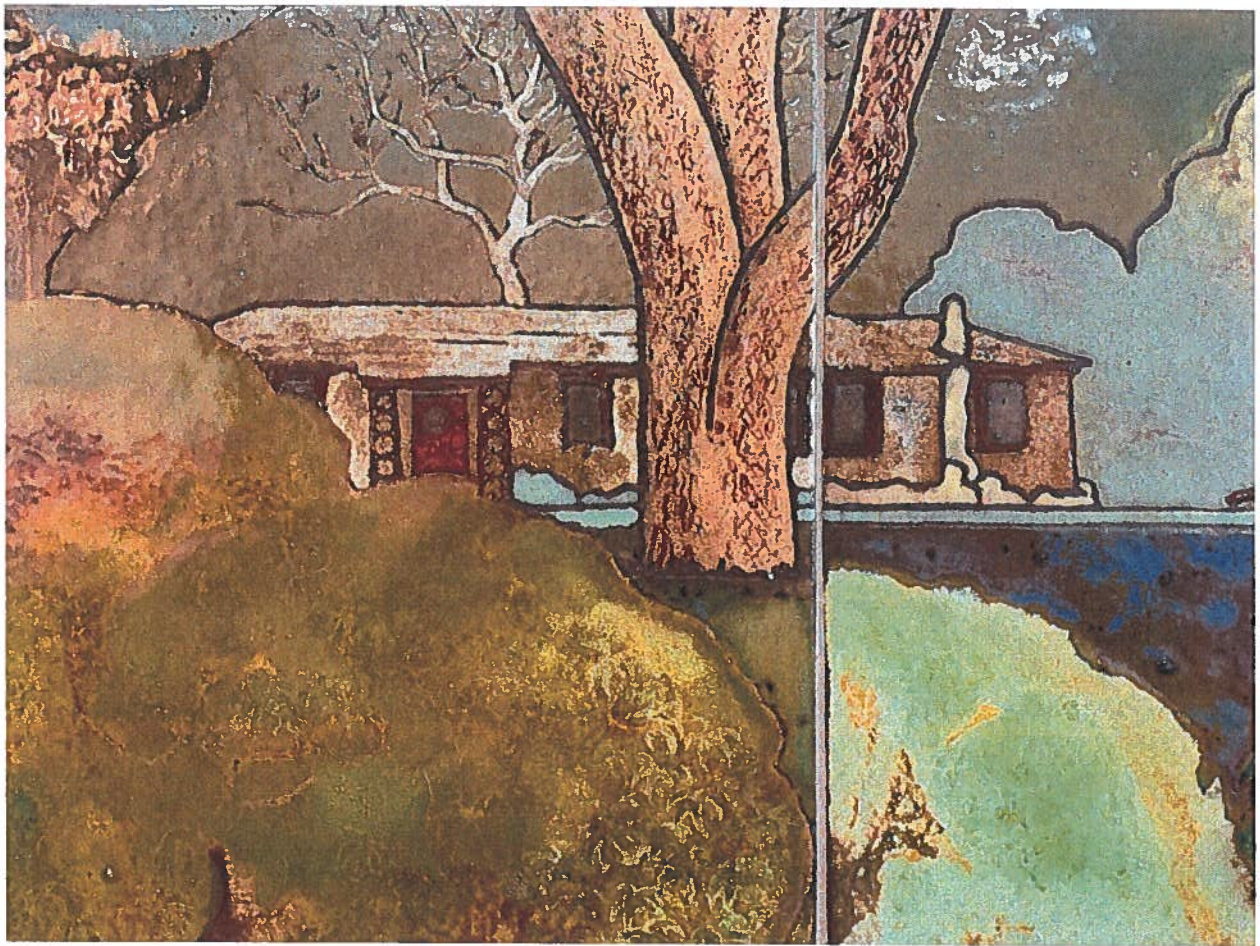
Coral Gables Branch Library

Miami-Dade Public Library System

Margaret M. Beaton Room

3443 Slogonia Street • Coral Gables, Florida





Kautz, Kara

From: Norma E Arenas <norma.e.arenas@us.hsbc.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2020 10:36 AM
To: Kautz, Kara
Subject: 1208 Asturia Avenue - Please designate

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To the members of the Historic Preservation Board:

I am unable to attend the meeting but would like to support the preservation of the historically significant PANCOST-designed home located at 1208 Asturia Avenue.

The historic architecture of Coral Gables matters to me. I hope you will preserve the treasure for future generations.

CORAL GABLES WILL LOSE ANOTHER PIECE OF ITS HISTORICAL LEGACY IF THIS PROPERTY IS NOT DESIGNATED, THEN IT MAY BE DEMOLISHED AND “GONE FOREVER”

Thank you,
Norma Arenas
1231 Madrid St.,
Coral Gables, FL 33134

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