

# DESIGNATION: LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK 649 PALMARITO COURT

---

## Application:

August 27, 2020: Owner filed Historic Significance Request

October 21, 2020: Historic Preservation Board directed Staff to undertake a designation report



*Note:*

*All observations  
from the public  
right of way.*

*There was no  
access to the  
property.*



# Local Historical Landmark

Article 3, Section 3-1103 of the Coral Gables Zoning Code--*Criteria for designation of historic landmarks or historic districts*: a local historic landmark must have significant character, interest or value as part of the historical, cultural, archaeological, aesthetic, or architectural heritage of the City, state or nation.

For designation, a property must meet **one (1)** of the criteria outlined in the Code.

**649 Palmarito Court is eligible as a Local Historic Landmark based on **three (3)** significance criteria:**

## **Historical, Cultural significance**

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

## **Architectural significance**

1. Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by one or more distinctive architectural style
2. Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or method of construction

# Local Historical Landmark

Article 3, Section 3-1104 C3 of the Coral Gables Zoning Code

*Designation Procedures*

## **Decision of the Board:**

If after a public hearing the Board finds that the proposed local historic landmark or proposed local historic landmark district *meets* the criteria set forth in Section 3-1103, it *shall* designate the property as a local historic landmark or local historic landmark district.

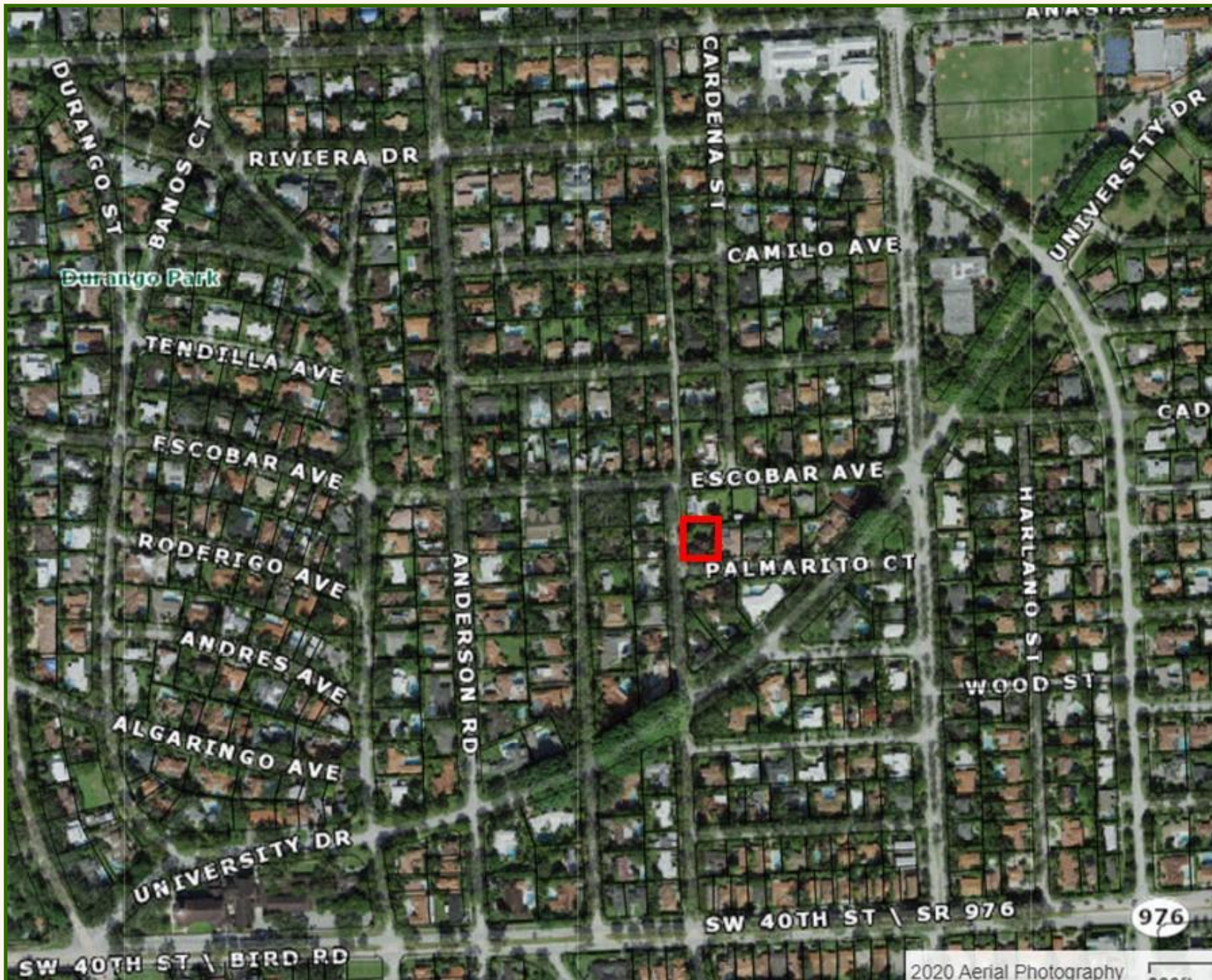
# 649 Palmarito Court

Single-family residence

100' x 105' lot

Corner lot on the northeast intersection of Palmarito Court and Palmarito Street one block north of University Drive

*Aerial Photograph Courtesy Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser*



# 649 Palmarito Court



**Architect:** William Shanklin, Jr.

**Owner/Builder:** George E. Batcheller

**Style:** Neoclassical

**First Resident:** George C. Simpson &  
Minnie Wolcott Simpson

**Permit:** #6225, May 1940

# Coral Gables' Developmental History

**Divided broadly into three major historical periods:**

- Coral Gables' Initial Planning and Development/Florida Land Boom (Prior to the Hurricane of 1926)



- **Aftermath of the 1926 Hurricane/ Great Depression and New Deal/ Wartime Activity (1927-1944)**



- Post World War II and Modern Periods (1945-1966)



# Coral Gables Building Permits 1925-1943

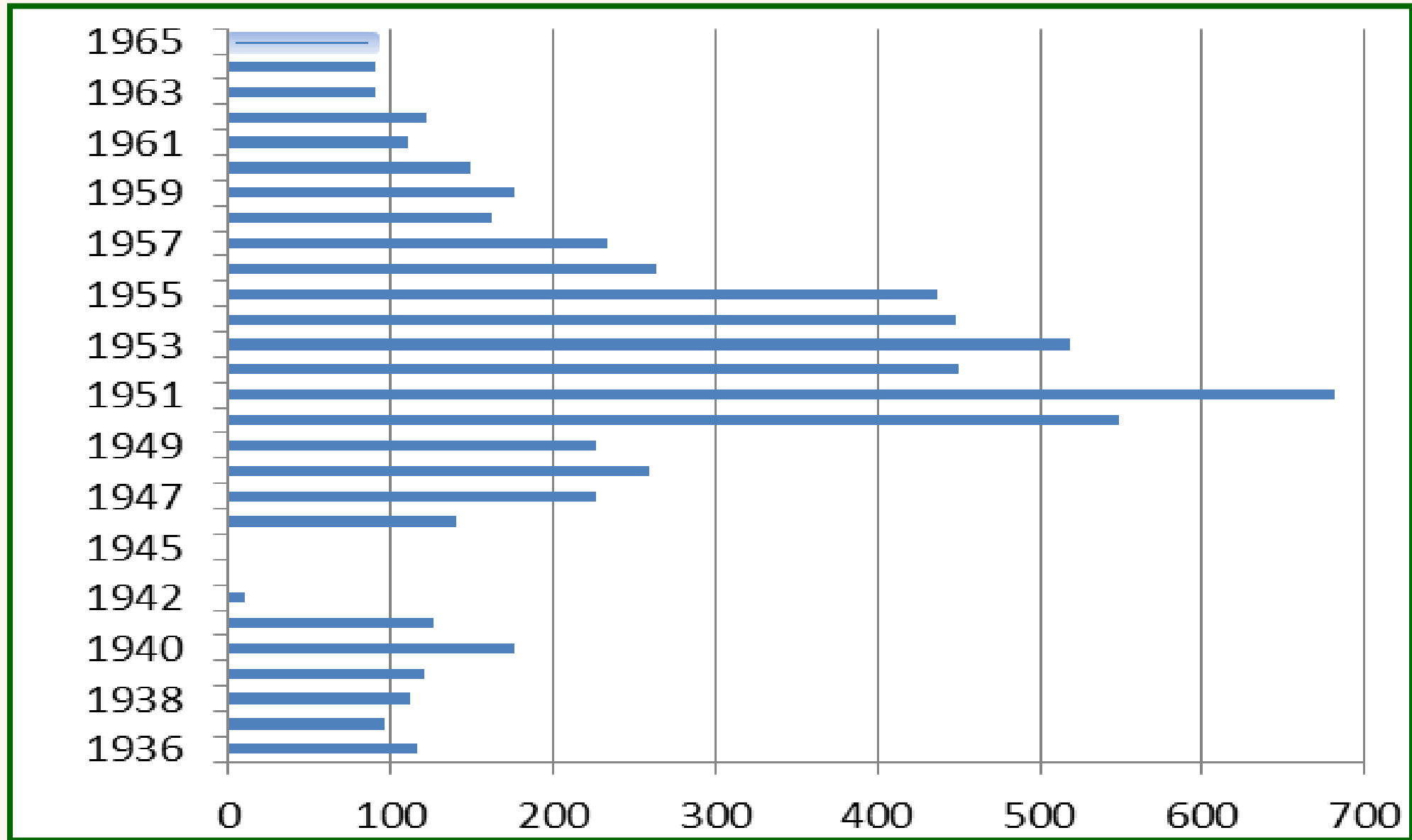
Permit Dollar Value



Year



# Single-family Residences: Building Permits 1936-1965



Note: no data for 1945; SFR permits for 1944 was zero





# Batcheller Properties: George E. Batcheller



## Coral Gables Investors

Joseph Kresse –  
financier

George E. Batcheller –  
builder & designer

## Forest Hills Gardens

Designed: 1909

Architect:

Grosvenor Atterbury

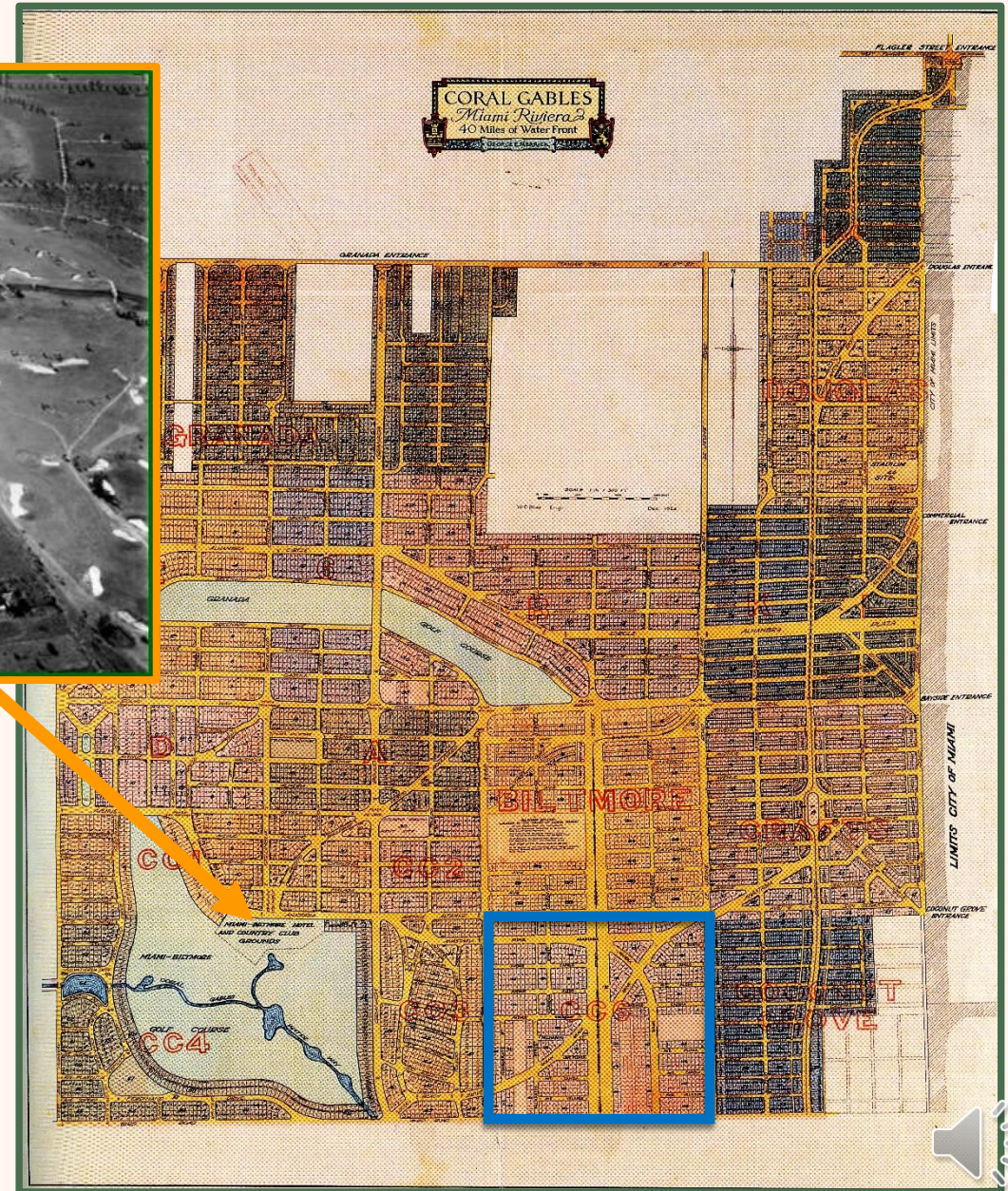
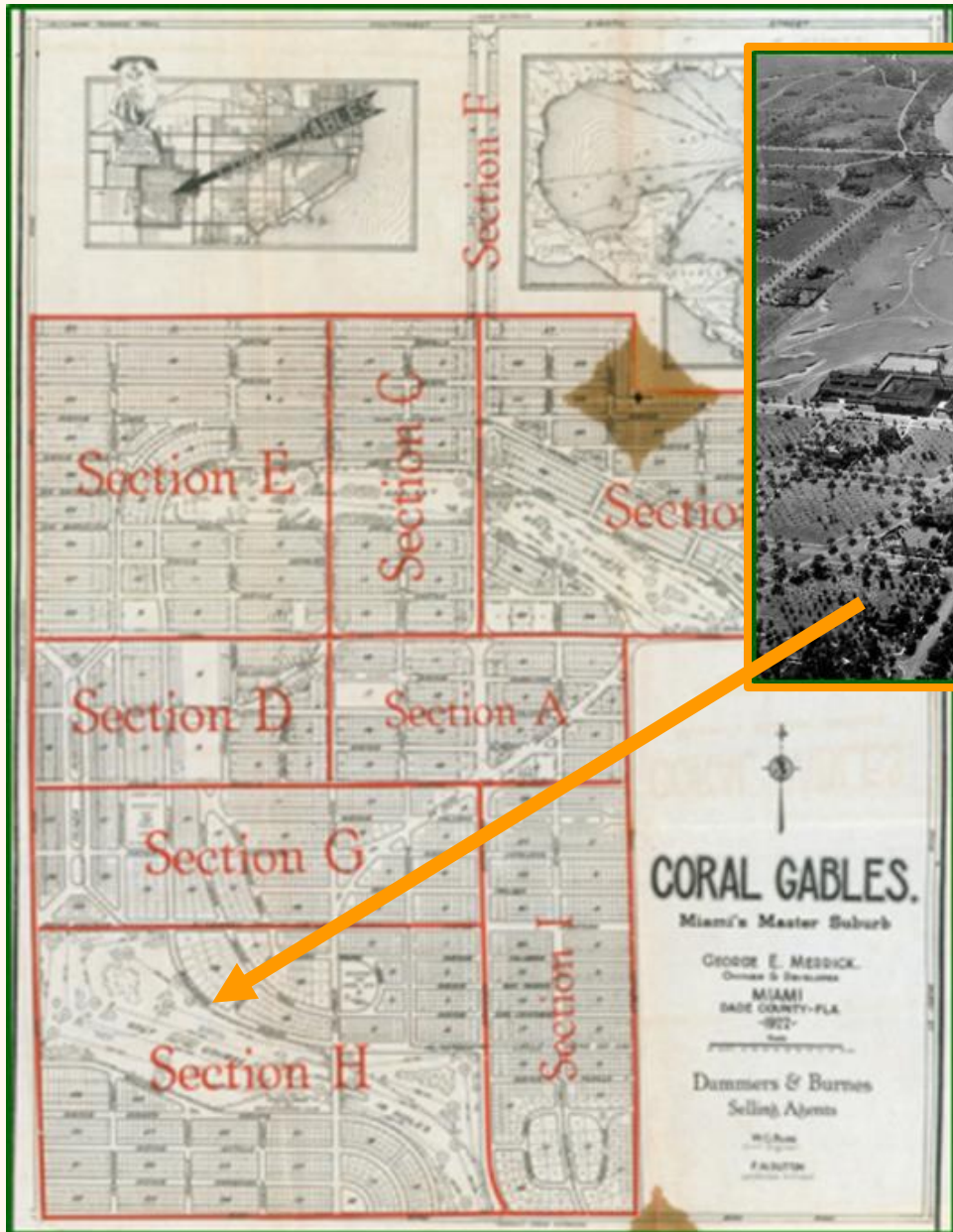
Landscape architect:

Frederick Law

Olmsted, Jr.



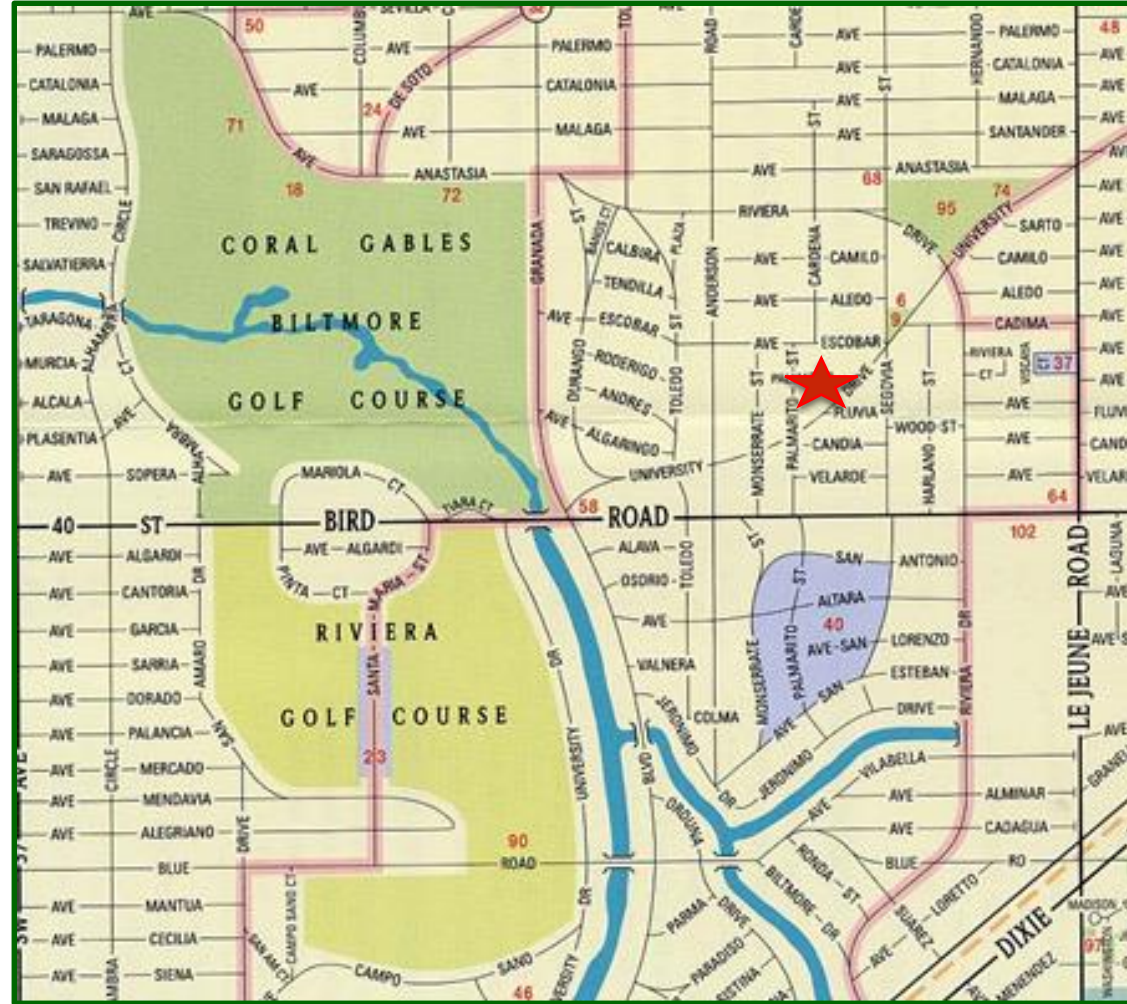
# Miami Biltmore Hotel and Golf Course



Coral Gables  
Section Maps:  
1922 [left]  
1925 [right]



# Batcheller Properties: George E. Batcheller



1928-40+  
Batcheller  
50 lots  
649 Palmarito  
Court  
[red star]

1925-27  
Kresse-Batcheller  
40+ homes  
Italian Village  
Historic District  
[shaded blue]



# Country Club Section Part Six

Located east of the Biltmore Golf Course, bounded by Anastasia Avenue, LeJuene Road, Bird Road, and Anderson Road and is bifurcated by the curving University Drive.

Emphasis on developing it as a prominent section coincided with the construction of the Biltmore complex



Plat Map: Country Club Section Part Six



1925 Aerial Photo: From Biltmore looking east along Anastasia Avenue towards Country Club Sections 2, 5 & 6

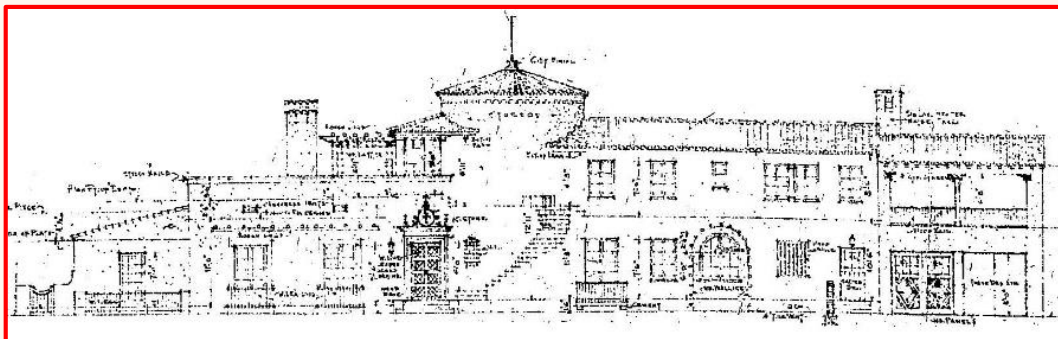


# Country Club Section Part Six

Notable undertakings during this initial development:

- Anastasia Hotel / University of Miami (1925-6)
- French Normandy Village (1926-7)
- 711 University Drive for George Merrick's sister Ethel (1925-6)

[orange arrow: 629 Palmarito Court (1940)]



# Architect William Shanklin, Jr.

1923	Earned architecture degree, Cornell University
1923-26	Practiced in Boston
1926	Moved to the Miami
1926-35	Associated with architectural firms of John Bullen & Walter DeGarmo
1935	Opened own firm based in Coral Gables: William Shanklin, Jr. Architects
1935-46	Designed approximately 100 single-family homes in Coral Gables

## Coral Gables Individual Historic Landmarks

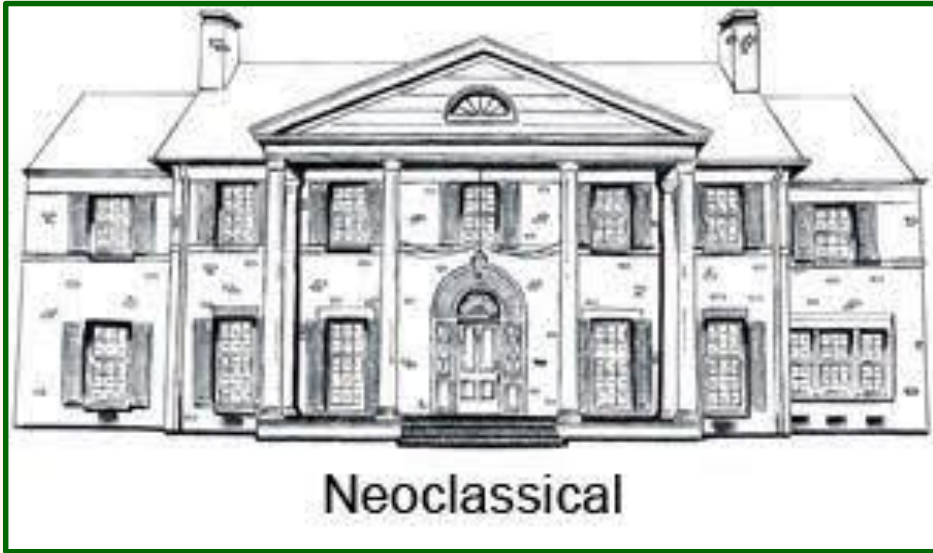
- 8021 Old Cutler Road – 1935
- 3603 Granada Boulevard – 1938
- 2320 Segovia Street – 1938
- 3615 Harlano Street – 1939

## Contributing Structure in a Coral Gables Historic Districts

- 633 Alhambra Circle – 1937
- 2817 Alhambra Circle – 1937
- 1300 Coral Way – 1937
- 2200 Alhambra Circle – 1940
- 1125 Alhambra Circle – 1940
- 418 Alcazar Ave – 1940
- 1306 Castile Ave – 1940
- 4412 Santa Maria Street – 1941
- 819 N. Greenway Drive – 1946



# Neoclassical Style (1895-1955)



## Features:

- ✓ full-height or full-façade front porches
- ✓ elaborate classical style front doors
- ✓ massive or tall slender columns
- ✓ flat or low roof lines

## Dominant characteristics:

- ✓ proportion and symmetry
- ✓ simple geometric forms
- ✓ balance with austere ornamentation drawn from the classical orders
- ✓ uncluttered appearance and grandeur of scale

## Architecture Detective: Neo-Classical Style



The Neo-Classical style is closely related to the Colonial Revival style of the early 20th century. The Neo-Classical style maintains the symmetrical forms and classical detailing, but is distinguished by two-story or full-height porches called porticos. These porticos most commonly display wood columns in the Doric and Ionic orders. Entrances are often highly decorative with pediments, sidelights, and transoms.



# First Residents

George C. Simpson (1894-1970) and Minnie Wolcott Simpson (1898-1987)

Lived at 649 Palmarito Court 1940-1987



- Attorney
- Age of 27 elected the mayor of Talbotton, Georgia
- 1923 moved to Miami area
- President, Miami Civitan Club
- Vice President, Riviera Country Club,
- Commander & Governor's Colonel, Harvey Seeds Post, American Legion



- Regent, DAR Everglades Chapter
- Avid supporter and fundraiser, DAR Museum, Washington, DC
- Volunteer, Daughters of Founders & Patriots
- President, Coral Gables Garden Club
- Officer, University Baptist Church
- Coral Gables Women's Club; Ladies of the Civitan Club; ardent supporter of the Opera Guild of Greater Miami



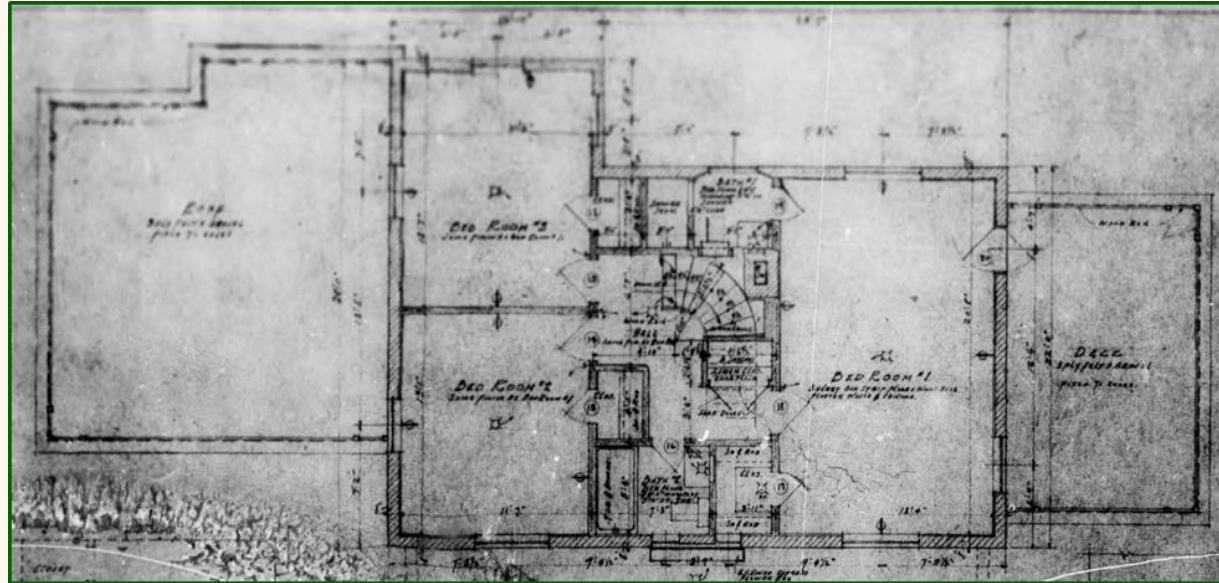
# 649 Palmarito Court: Neoclassical Hallmark Features



- Symmetrical purity and balance that reiterate the concepts of simplicity and order
- A dominant rounded portico comprised of an even number (4) of two-story slender classical columns supporting a flat roof with a molded entablature
- Elaborate front doorway with fanlight with radiating muntins, sidelights, niches and molded framing
- Evenly spaced windows across the front facade flanked by louvered shutters



# Neoclassical Style



## Prominent & Defining Features:

- ✓ rectangular in the form of a larger central mass flanked by lower bays imparting an aesthetic symmetry
- ✓ low-pitched and flat roofs
- ✓ boxed eaves with a moderate overhangs and molded cornices
- ✓ smooth textured stucco
- ✓ rectangular windows with divided panes
- ✓ paired windows on front façade
- ✓ molded cornices on one-story bays
- ✓ an attached garage with side entry as to not impair the symmetry of the front façade
- ✓ two-car garage with one large door



# Front Facade



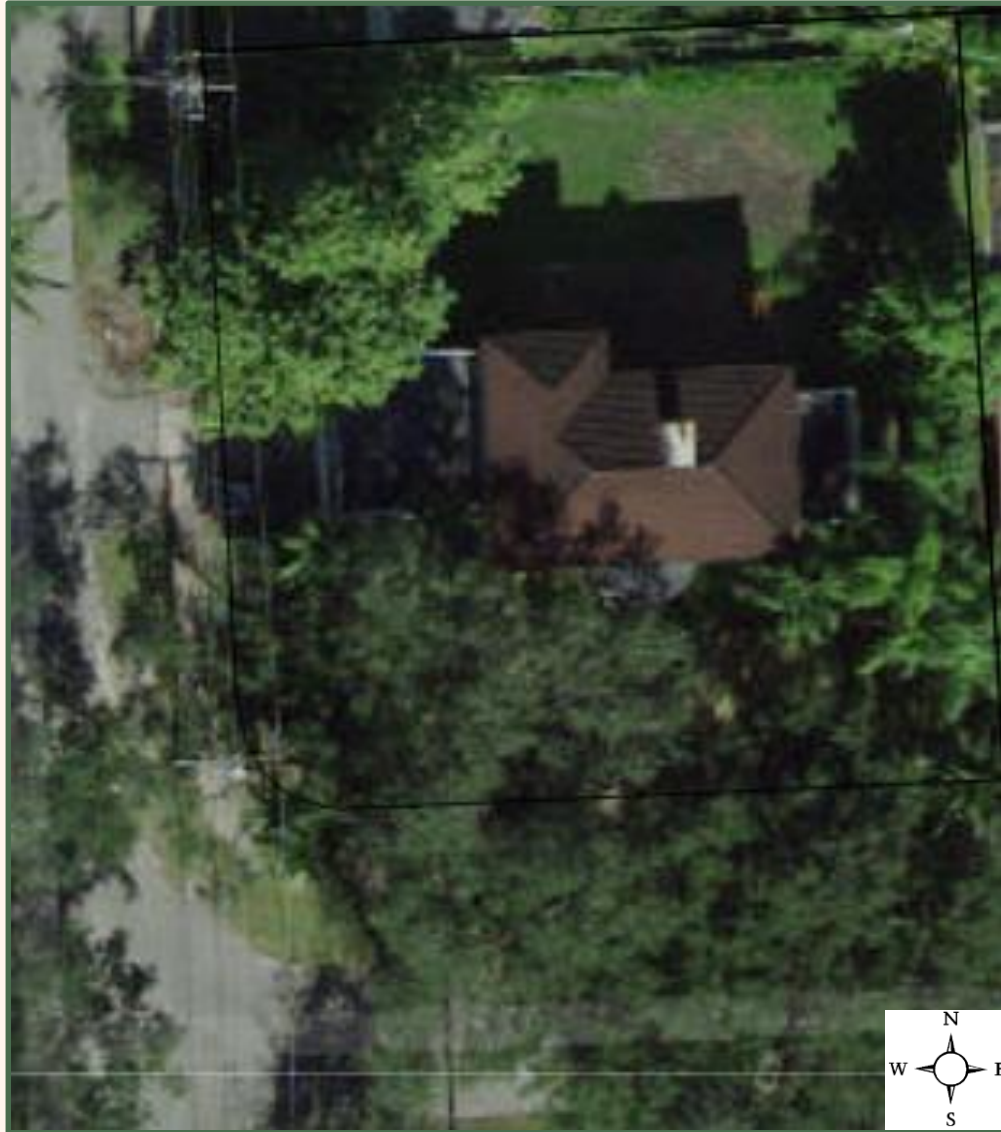


**Front Façade:**  
**Hallmark**  
**Details**

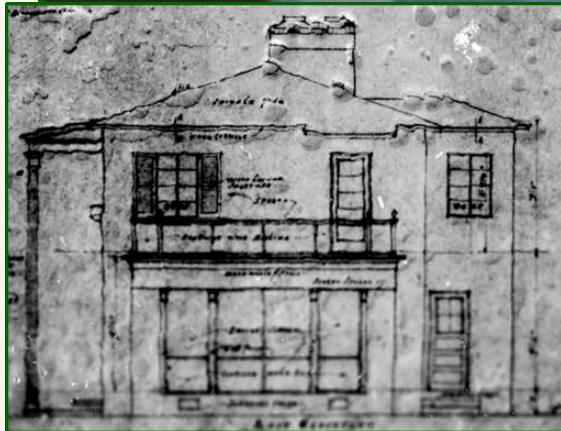
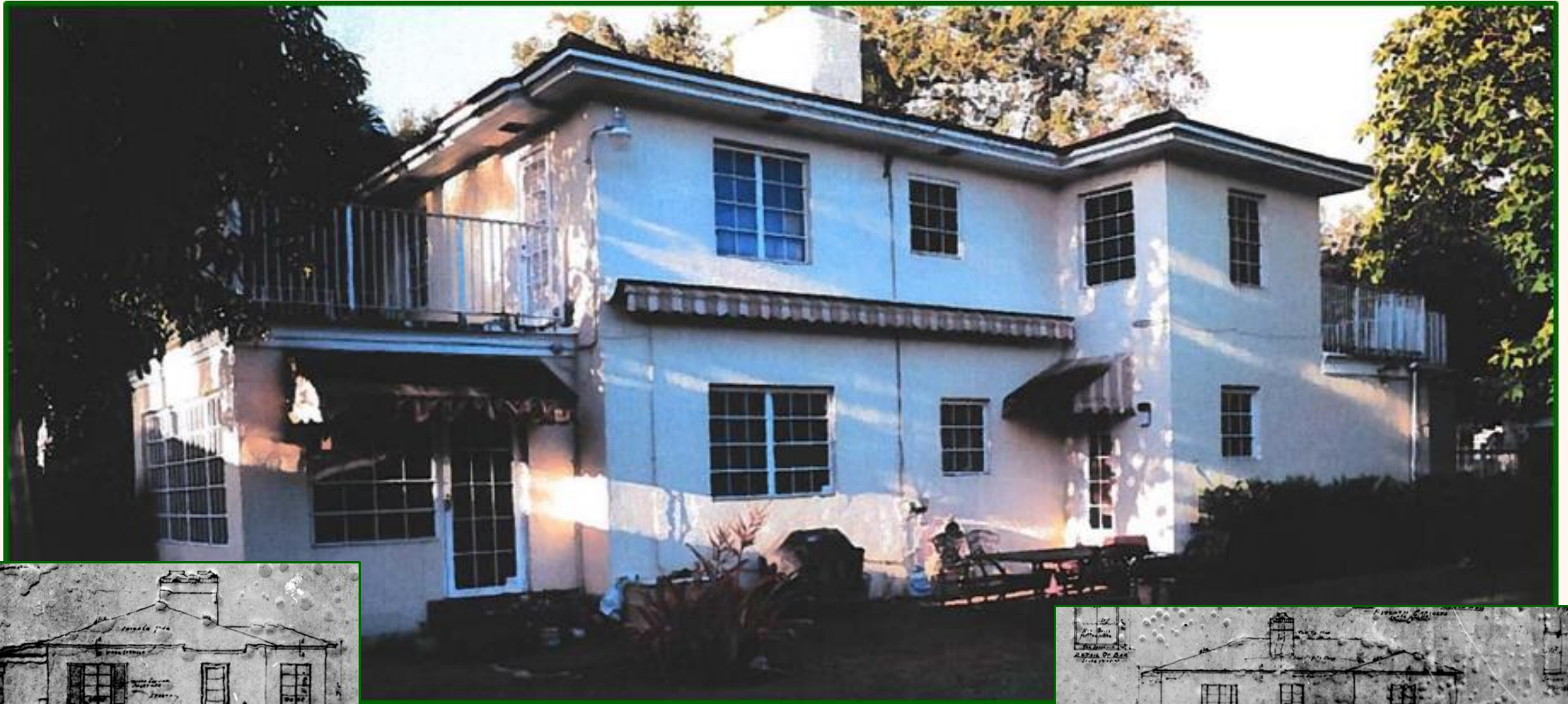
## Side (West) Façade



# Rear Yard



# Rear & Side (East) Façade



# Alterations





# 649 Palmarito Court

**Maintains a significant degree of historic integrity**

Contributes to the historic fabric of the City of Coral Gables and is part of the collection of quality residences that serves as a visible reminder of the history and the cultural heritage of the City.



# Summary Statement of Significance

**Coral Gables was founded in the 1920s as a Mediterranean-inspired City and its buildings were initially designed almost exclusively in the Mediterranean Revival Style. In the late 1920s the economy and the building industry plummeted. When the construction of homes began again in the late 1930s people had adjusted to a new way of life and their priorities and aesthetic changed. This was reflected in the types of homes that were built. In Coral Gables there was a concerted shift to following national home-building trends.**

**Sited on a corner lot, this residence, built in 1940, is a noteworthy as an example of an early Coral Gables Neoclassical home. It was one of the earliest Neoclassical residences in the City and represents an evolution from the Mediterranean Revival foundation and into a new chapter in City's architectural history. The home was designed by a well-established and Coral Gables-based team -- architect William Shanklin, Jr. and owner/builder George E. Batcheller. Building on his success in developing the Riviera Section, Batcheller significantly invested in the Country Club Sections as a prominent area. With the Neoclassical Style, he chose to build in a style whose formality and importance suggested an upwardly mobile lifestyle. The Neoclassical style first appeared in Coral Gables in the late 1930s and became popular in the City after World War II. Shanklin was well-versed in the Neoclassical style and produced some of the earliest examples in Coral Gables, including this home.**

**The property at 649 Palmarito Court has maintained a significant degree of historic integrity and, thus, contributes to the historic fabric of the City of Coral Gables.**

**Staff recommends APPROVAL of the Local Historic Designation of the property at 649 Palmarito Court based on its historical, cultural, and architectural significance.**