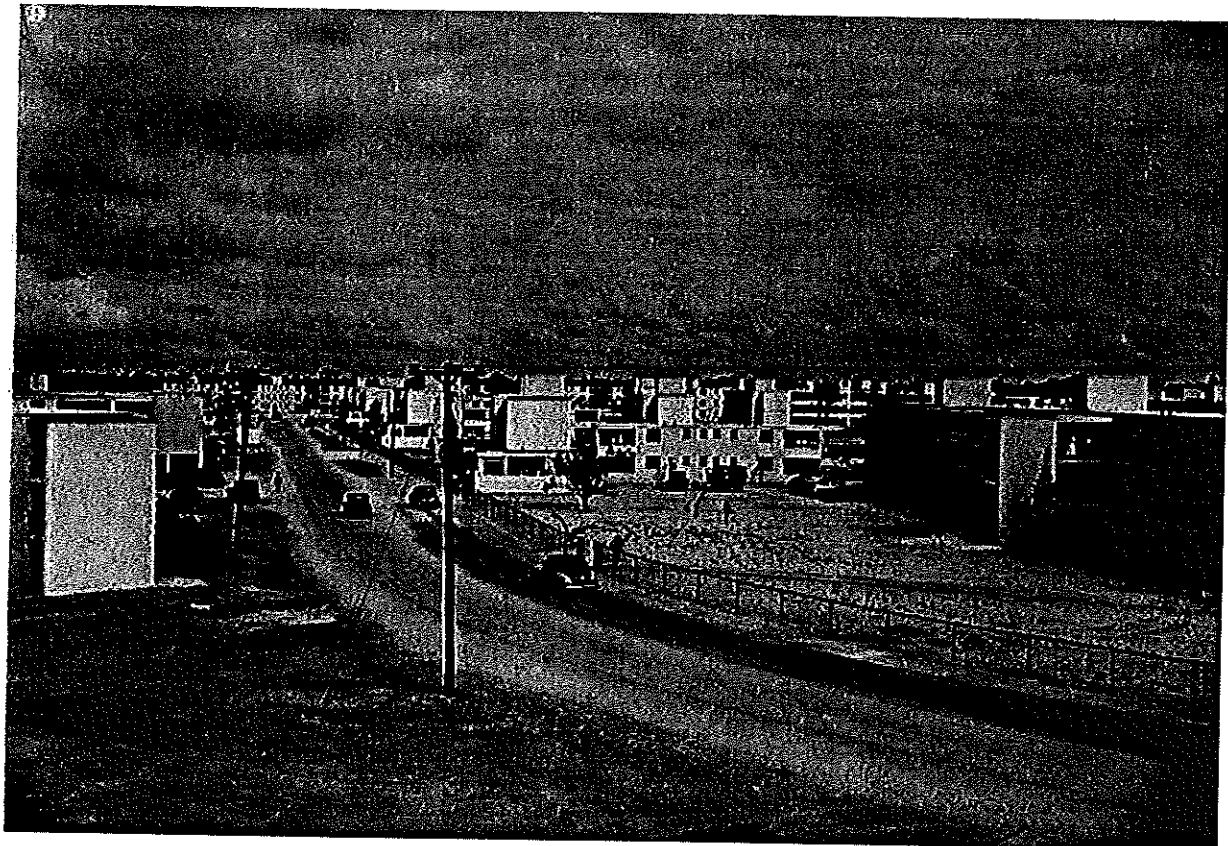


**REPORT OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES
HISTORICAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
ON THE DESIGNATION OF
THE PROPERTIES AT
1238 AND 1228 DICKINSON DRIVE
“PENTLAND BUILDING #34B”
AND
“LA GORCE BUILDING #35”
LOCATED ON THE MAIN CAMPUS OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA**



c. 1947 photograph



The City of Coral Gables

LHD 2010-05
NOVEMBER 18, 2010

Historical Resources Department

**DESIGNATION REPORT
PROPERTIES AT
1238 AND 1228 DICKINSON DRIVE
"PENTLAND BUILDING #34B" AND "LA GORCE BUILDING #35"
LOCATED ON THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI MAIN CAMPUS
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA**

Legal Description: All of the "Apartment Building 34B (Pentland)" as now existing, laid out and in use, the same being a portion of Tract 5 of Amended Plat Portion of Main Campus University of Miami, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 46 at Page 81 of the Public Records of Dade County (now Miami-Dade County), Florida and all of the "La Gorce - Building 35" as now existing, laid out and in use, the same being a portion of Tract 1 of Amended Plat Portion of Main Campus University of Miami, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 46 at Page 81 of the Public Records of Dade County (now Miami-Dade County), Florida.

Original Architect: Marion I. Manley and Robert Law Weed

Original Builder: Gust K. Newberg Construction Company

Original Owner: University of Miami

Present Owner: University of Miami

Year Constructed: 1947

Original Use: Veterans' housing / Student residences

Present Use: School of Architecture (classrooms, studios, wood shop) and student housing

Building Type: International Style ("Subtropical Modern")

Site Characteristics: The property is located on the main campus of the University Miami. The buildings are in the southern portion of the campus south of Dickinson Drive (internal road). The closest external road is Ponce de Leon Boulevard to the south.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1947, the structures on the University of Miami's main campus known as the "Pentland House" (Pentland Building #34B) and "La Gorce House" (La Gorce Building #35) are two of twenty-seven structures designed by Robert Law Weed and Marion Manley that were built to

house veterans taking advantage of the "GI Bill." Part of the University's rapid growth in the Post-War years, the structures were styled in a modern and highly efficient manner emblematic of the International Style. In the 1980s, portions of Building 35 were adapted to accommodate the newly formed School of Architecture after it was made independent from the School of Engineering.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

a. Historical, cultural significance:

3. *Is associated in a significant way with a major historic event whether cultural, economic, military, social, or political*

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

These buildings are emblematic of the national post-war boom of the 1940s. With the "GI Bill" introduced to further higher education for returning war veterans, the University was faced with an influx of students and a need for student housing. The structures were financed by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and were designed to house war-veteran students as part of America's first modern college campus and one of Florida's largest housing projects at the time.

5. *Is associated in a significant way with a past or continuing institution, which has contributed, substantially to the life of the City.*

The University of Miami has been an integral part of George Merrick's original vision for Coral Gables. The two subject buildings were part of the master plan from the University's transformational period following World War II, when it finally constructed a dedicated campus. These are two of the University's oldest surviving buildings, serving first as student housing and later used in part by the School of Architecture.

b. Architectural significance:

2. *Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or method of construction.*

As an example of the International Style of twentieth century architecture, the distinguishing characteristics of these buildings include minimalism and scarcity of ornamentation, mixture of stucco and brick surfaces, flat roofs, metal-framed windows, and pipe railings.

3. *Is an outstanding work of a prominent designer or builder*

Robert Law Weed achieved international prominence with his Florida Tropical Home for the 1933 Chicago World's Fair, and many well-known buildings locally, many of them designated as historically significant. Marion Manley, the second woman to become a registered architect in Florida, was also well-known locally, especially for her prodigious work on the University of Miami campus, as represented by the subject buildings.

4. *Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship of outstanding quality or which represent a significant innovation or adaptation to the South Florida environment.*

“Subtropical Modern” is a local interpretation of the International Style, specifically adapted to the local environment. Elements include the use of exterior stairways and breezeways, cross-ventilation, wooden louvers, and overhanging eyebrows to protect from sun and rain.

Contextual History:

The early history of the University of Miami is well-known: plans for an elaborate, Mediterranean Revival-style campus were waylaid by the September 1926 hurricane, and construction halted with the subsequent failure of funding. The unfinished Merrick Building was abandoned for twenty years as the struggling University leased or purchased nearby hotels and apartments, hastily converting them into classrooms and housing, giving the school the nickname “Cardboard College.”

It was in the wake of World War II that the University would undergo a renaissance, when the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 (“GI Bill”) brought a flood of new students, and federal funding programs became available for building expansion. This was a nationwide phenomenon, but the University of Miami seized the opportunity to create “the first completely modern United States campus—also, one of the handsomest.” The old plans were scrapped and the campus completely redesigned, largely by architects Robert Law Weed, Robert M. Little, and Marion I. Manley, in a modern style, receiving nationwide publicity and setting the standard for new academic architecture.

Marion Manley, Miami’s first female registered architect, had worked for the University as early as 1940; Robert Law Weed joined the project in 1944, and subsequent work was done under the auspices of Weed’s firm, with Manley as “associate architect.”¹ The two were responsible for most of the University’s master plan. “Fresh, clean planning, with every building designed to serve its particular function is the rule by which we are being guided as we proceed with our work,” Manley was quoted in 1946.²

The first permanent classroom building, the Dooley Memorial Building, was begun in 1946, as were a number of wooden temporary structures. In January 1947, President Ashe procured a \$5 million loan from the Federal Housing Administration, the largest loan it made to a university,³ for a massive project to build housing for the thousands of veterans, most of them married, applying for admission under the GI Bill. This was the largest housing project in Florida at the time,⁴ and included over 500 apartments in 27 buildings, with a capacity for 2,166 occupants. They were to be constructed in the southeastern section of the campus, east of Lake Osceola, which was in the process of being dredged.

Specific History:

The subject structures, Buildings 34B (“Pentland”) and 35 (“La Gorce”), are two of the original 27 apartment buildings constructed in the 1947 federal housing project. Extra draftsmen were hired to draw the plans for the University’s Federal Housing Authority (FHA) loan application in 1946. The buildings were designed as apartment houses, with one- two- and three-bedroom

¹ Lynn & Penabad, Marion Manley, Miami’s First Woman Architect, Univ. of Georgia Press, Athens, 2010, pp. 76, 91-92, 96-97.

² Charles Leyden, “University of Miami Plans to Grow,” *Miami Daily News*, Feb. 17, 1946.

³ “\$6,000,000 University Job Rushed,” *Miami Herald*, Oct. 5, 1947.

⁴ “University Asks For Project Bids,” *Miami Daily News*, March 26, 1947.

units, each with a living room, kitchen, and one or two baths rather than traditional collegiate dormitories. This was required by the lender, since the FHA felt that apartments could be more easily converted to public housing in case the University defaulted.⁵ Bidding for general contractors closed in April 1947, and the winning firm was the Gust K. Newberg Construction Company. Work on the 27 apartment buildings began in June.⁶ Some were finished by the following January, and all were completed by May 1948.

By the mid-1980s, Jan Hochstim, A.I.A., and School of Architecture faculty member converted a number of the residential structures to academic space to house the newly independent School of Architecture.

The University had established a program in architecture in 1927, but it was dissolved within a few years. In 1948, as part of the new campus development, a Department of Architectural Engineering was established as part of the School of Engineering. It first occupied the Anastasia Building and in 1960 moved into the upper floors of the McArthur Building. The quarters were cramped, and Architecture struggled to establish its own identity and independence. In the 1980s, Department Chairman John Steffian was instrumental in splitting off from Engineering and establishing a new School of Architecture with its own separate facilities.

Architecture:

Buildings 34B and 35 exemplify the aesthetics and characteristics of the International Style in Miami. They are excellent representatives of the functional aesthetics that characterize that architectural style. They are the work of architect Marion Manley who, together with Robert Law Weed, was responsible for some of the most prominent buildings in the early development of the University of Miami.

Robert Law Weed said in an interview that University President "Dr. [Bowman] Ashe...always considered the university should be one of its own age, the one it was designed in, and not based on some kind of art or architecture of a bygone era."⁷ Like most of the new campus, the veterans' housing project was built in the avant-garde International Style.

The International style had its origins in Europe in the aftermath of World War I, where the urgent need for a great deal of affordable housing in a short time was similar to the University's situation under the GI Bill. The need for efficiency and economy translated into a minimalist style of architecture, devoid of regional characteristics or ornament, giving it an "international" homogeneity.

A subtype of the International Style, "Subtropical Modernism," has been defined by authors Eric Nash and Randall Robinson:

Inventive modernists like Igor Polevitzky, Robert Law Weed and Robert Little sought to adapt the austerity and other signature elements of Mies van der Rohe's International Style to the local environment in a loosely-federated school of Subtropical Modernism....The door to ...Subtropical Modernism was opened by Robert Law Weed with his highly influential concrete-and-glass Florida Tropical Home, built for the 1933

⁵ Lynn & Penabad, *op. cit.*

⁶ "\$6,000,000 University Job Rushed," *Miami Herald*, Oct. 5, 1947.

⁷ Barton Hickman, "Lifted by its Own Bootstraps," *Miami Herald*, June 3, 1956.

Century of Progress Exhibition in Chicago....Subtropical Modernism arrived in South Florida with Weed's and Marion Manley's vision for the University of Miami campus in 1945, the first Modernist campus in the United States. Weed and Manley brought together under the Miami sun the machine aesthetic of High Modernism with the earthy, modern American quality of Frank Lloyd Wright.⁸

"Subtropical Modernism," in adapting structures to the environment of South Florida, employs such elements as sunshades, rain protection, cross ventilation, and a blending of indoor and outdoor environments - all traits found in the Veterans' housing project. The architects themselves said in a 1947 press release concerning these structures, "In orientation, maximum advantage has been taken of prevailing breezes, sunshade and views."⁹

The urgency of the University housing project did not compromise the quality of its design or construction. Weed and Manley devised several basic building modules or "types" that were given different arrangements and variations, such as "right-facing" and "left-facing" mirror images. This approach not only simplified the design process but also gave an overall harmony to the whole assemblage of buildings.

The subject buildings are two- and three-story concrete-block structures on concrete slab foundations, with flat roofs. Through the use of exterior stairways, interior hallways are eliminated allowing all the original apartments (now also including academic space) to span the entire building width, and to have windows on opposing sides to maximize cross-ventilation and lighting. A distinctive window configuration is used extensively in both buildings. It consists of a central panel of four fixed panes, flanked by two two-paned awning windows on either side, all with steel frames.

Buildings 34B and 35 stand interconnected, on an almost east-west axis, on the south side of Dickinson Drive. Building 35 ("La Gorce") is a typology that looks in plan like an "h" or a "4." It has three segments joined at right angles to each other. Building 34B ("Pentland") has a linear footprint and is joined to Building 35 at its east side. Early campus maps and aerial photographs show that additional buildings stood directly to the north, but they were demolished in the 1970s for the construction of "high-rise" dormitories (Pentland and McDonald Towers).

Building 35 has a more complex footprint of the two buildings. It is composed of three segments set at right angles to one another and joined by open bridges, with adjoining stairways. The two east-west segments are three-stories tall while the north-south segment is two-stories in height. The elevations of both of the three-story segments that face Dickinson Drive have a similar rhythm to their fenestration that is repeated twice in each elevation on either side of a central, external stair. (A central stair tower in the middle of the easternmost segment's elevation was removed at the time the School of Architecture's Jorge M. Perez Architecture Center was built.) The basic configuration consists of symmetry about a central vertical axis consisting of a door and two plain windows set in a row. On either side of that are larger single windows and a cluster of two or three units. Each cluster of three windows, at the extreme ends of the building, is unified by a projecting eyebrow. At the two extreme ends of the easternmost segment are open stairwells with pipe railings, and with outer walls of painted white concrete brick. All the brickwork is set in horizontal courses with the vertical seams filled in, enhancing the horizontal

⁸Nash & Robinson; Mimo: Miami Modern Revealed, pp. 10, 38-39.

⁹Lynn & Penabad, op. cit., p. 138.

texture. On the south elevations of the three-story segments, there are also square towers that rise an additional story in the center, flanked by three clusters of three windows each. A single, continuous eyebrow unifies all the window clusters on each floor. The westernmost segment of Building 35 only has the brickwork on its east side – the west side of this segment is connected to Building 34B with an open stair.

The two story segment of Building 35 is oriented in a north-south direction. It exhibits similar rhythms and patterns of fenestration as the taller segments. However, this segment is not as long as the others and has no central vertical axis. Each of the apartment units were entered from the ends and the doors/stair tower were eliminated. The west elevation echoes the north facades of the three-story segments, with short eyebrows over window clusters at the far ends. The east elevation echoes the south elevations of the three-story segments but without the towers. The clusters of windows run the length of the building and are unified by a single, continuous eyebrow on each floor. The three segments are joined by an open bridge to an adjoining stairway again with pipe railings.

The linear Building 34B was, at the time of its construction, the same typology as Building 35. Portions of the building were demolished at some point and what remains is the longest leg of the three segments. It is oriented east west and is on axis with the westernmost segment of Building 35. It is connected to building 35 by an open bridge, with pipe railings, at the second and third floors which create an open passageway beneath. The north elevation has the same rhythm of fenestration as the easternmost segment of Building 35, with the short eyebrows at the far ends of the building. However, this building retains its freestanding central stair tower that is accessed by upper level bridges with pipe railings. At the westernmost extreme end of this segment is an open stairwells with pipe railings, and with an outer wall of painted concrete brick.

At the south elevation of Building 34B, there are two square towers that rise an additional story in the center, flanked by three clusters of three windows each. A single, continuous eyebrow unifies all the window clusters on each floor.

Both Building 35 and Building 34B retain their auxiliary “Service Buildings.” Intended to be garbage, janitorial and laundry facilities, these one-story elements are original to the design of these buildings. Building 34B retains a small perimeter wall that would have enclosed a drying yard. It repeats the horizontal brickwork of the stair towers. Both of these design features should be considered as part of this application.

ADDITIONS / ALTERATIONS

In 1984 and 1985 Professor Jan Hochstim was called in to renovate some of the apartment structures for use by the School of Architecture. Most of the alterations were interior changes to make the spaces acceptable for academic use.

One change that Professor Hochstim brought to these buildings at the time of their conversion was their Mondrian-inspired color scheme of white with primary-color trim, in keeping with their Bauhaus styled design. The buildings’ original color is unknown,¹⁰ but by the 1980s, they were painted putty-gray. The new look was a further effort by the School of Architecture to stand out and create an identity. (Note that Building 34B and the segment of

¹⁰ Lynn & Penabad; op. cit., p. 138.

Building 35 connected to it are not painted with the primary-color scheme, but with beige/putty walls and darker beige and forest green accents as they are used for student housing and not associated with the School of Architecture.)

Additional alterations include the removal of the exterior stair tower on Building 34B and the construction of a one-story addition on the western façade of the two-story segment of Building 34B. It houses a kiln for the School of Architecture's wood shop located in that building.

ARCHITECTS

Marion Isadore Manley (1893-1984) was from Junction City, Kansas, received a B.S. degree in architecture from the University of Illinois, then joined her brother in Miami in 1917 and lived in Coconut Grove for the rest of her life. In 1918 she became the second female registered architect in the State of Florida, and the first in Miami. A friend nicknamed her "Archie" for her interest in architecture. Besides designing a number of private residences, in 1933 she collaborated with architect Phineas Paist in designing the U.S. Post Office and Federal Building in Miami. In the 1940s, the University of Miami hired Manley, together with architect Robert Law Weed, to create a master plan for the new, redesigned campus, and to design several new buildings for it. Manley collaborated with Weed on the Dooley Memorial Classroom Building, among others, and with Robert M. Little on the Ring Theater. Manley herself created plans for twenty buildings on the campus. Well-respected but shunning publicity, over her long career she served as president of the Florida South chapter of the American Institute of Architects, vice-president of the Florida Association of Architects, and a member of the Miami Planning Board and of the Coral Gables Board of Supervising Architects.

Robert Law Weed (1897-1961), a native of Pennsylvania, studied architecture and engineering at the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, and served in both World Wars. He moved to Miami in 1919¹¹ to study under Richard Kiehnel, designed several homes in Coral Gables, opened a private practice in 1922¹² and later partnered with Edwin T. Reeder. Weed designed the Florida Tropical House for the 1933 Chicago World's Fair,¹³ a prototype of Subtropical Modern style. Locally his work included the Boulevard Shops on Biscayne Boulevard and, in Miami Beach, the Beach Theater and the original Burdine's store (now the South Florida Art Center) on Lincoln Road, the 23rd Street Fire Station, and a number of residences and apartment buildings. His firm was hired to design the new University of Miami campus in 1944.

ORIGINAL OWNER/CONTRACTOR

The contractor for this building was the Gust K. Newberg Construction Company. The company was incorporated in the state of Florida in 1973. Little is known about the company except what was found in Gust Newberg's obituary.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Constructed in 1947, the buildings currently on the University of Miami Main Campus (5202 University Drive) referred to as "**Pentland Building #34B**" located at **1238 Dickinson Drive** and "**La Gorce Building #35**" located at **1228 Dickinson Drive** (legally described as all of the

¹¹ Coral Gables: An American Garden City, Univ. of Miami School of Architecture, Editions Norma, Paris, 1997, p.206

¹² Tracy Hollingsworth, History of Dade County, Florida, Glade House, Coral Gables, 1949, pp.179-180.

¹³ "Portraits and Projects of Architects." *Miami Beach Sun* May 7, 1950.

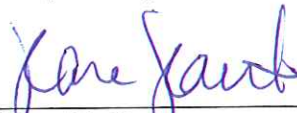
“Apartment Building 34B (Pentland)” as now existing, laid out and in use, the same being a portion of Tract 5 of Amended Plat Portion of Main Campus University of Miami, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 46 at Page 81 of the Public Records of Dade County (now Miami-Dade County), Florida and all of the “La Gorce - Building 35” as now existing, laid out and in use, the same being a portion of Tract 1 of Amended Plat Portion of Main Campus University of Miami, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 46 at Page 81 of the Public Records of Dade County (now Miami-Dade County), Florida are significant to the City of Coral Gables’ history based on the following criteria found in the Coral Gables Zoning Code, Article 3, Section 3-1103:

- a. Historical, cultural significance:
 3. Is associated in a significant way with a major historic event whether cultural, economic, military, social, or political
 4. Exemplifies the historical, cultural, political, economic, or social trends of the community
 5. Is associated in a significant way with a past or continuing institution, which has contributed, substantially to the life of the City
- b. Architectural significance:
 2. Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, period or method of construction
 3. Is an outstanding work of a prominent designer or builder
 4. Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship of outstanding quality or which represent a significant innovation or adaptation to the South Florida environment.

Staff therefore recommends the following:

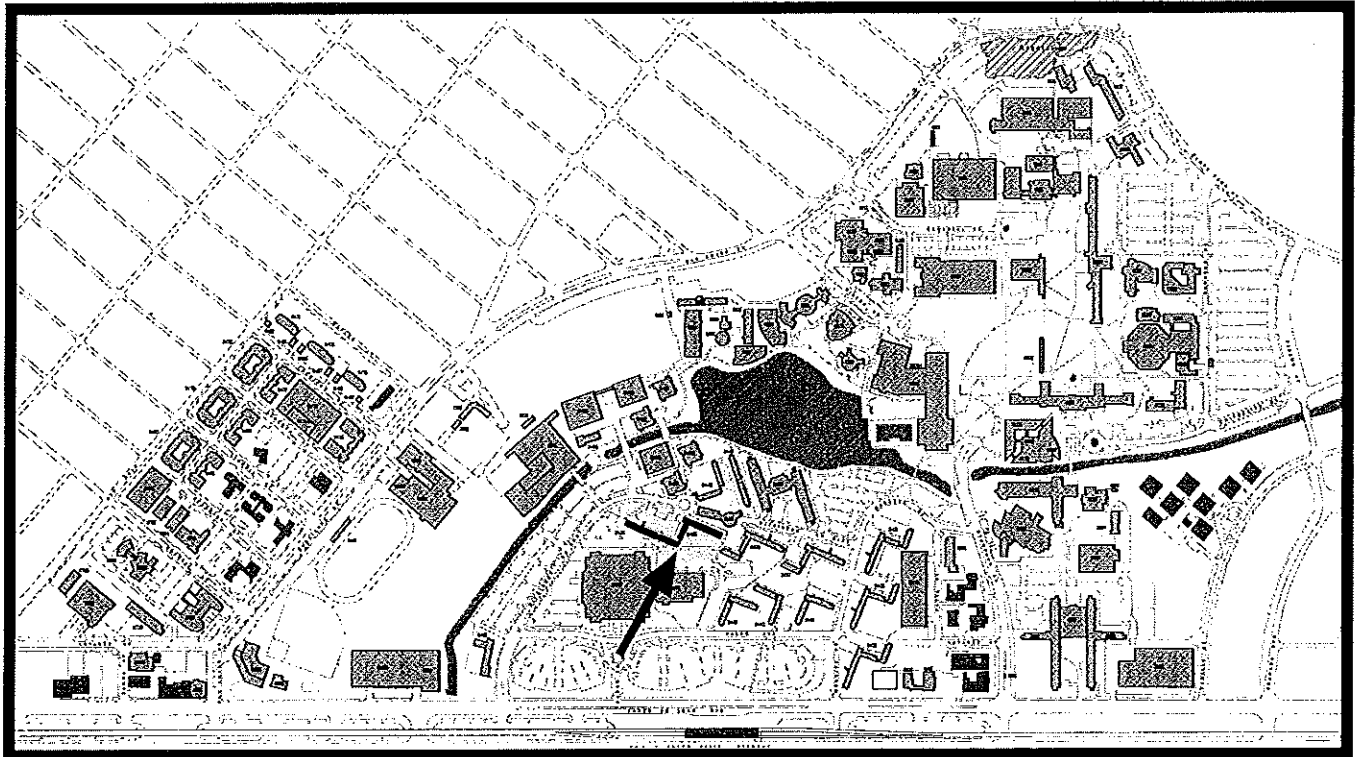
A motion to **APPROVE** the Local Historic Designation of the buildings currently on the University of Miami Main Campus (5202 University Drive) referred to as “**Pentland Building #34B**” located at **1238 Dickinson Drive** and “**La Gorce Building #35**” located at **1228 Dickinson Drive** (legally described as all of the “Apartment Building 34B (Pentland)” as now existing, laid out and in use, the same being a portion of Tract 5 of Amended Plat Portion of Main Campus University of Miami, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 46 at Page 81 of the Public Records of Dade County (now Miami-Dade County), Florida and all of the “La Gorce - Building 35” as now existing, laid out and in use, the same being a portion of Tract 1 of Amended Plat Portion of Main Campus University of Miami, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 46 at Page 81 of the Public Records of Dade County (now Miami-Dade County), Florida, based on its history/culture and architecture.

Respectfully submitted,



Kara N. Kautz
Historic Preservation Officer

Location Map



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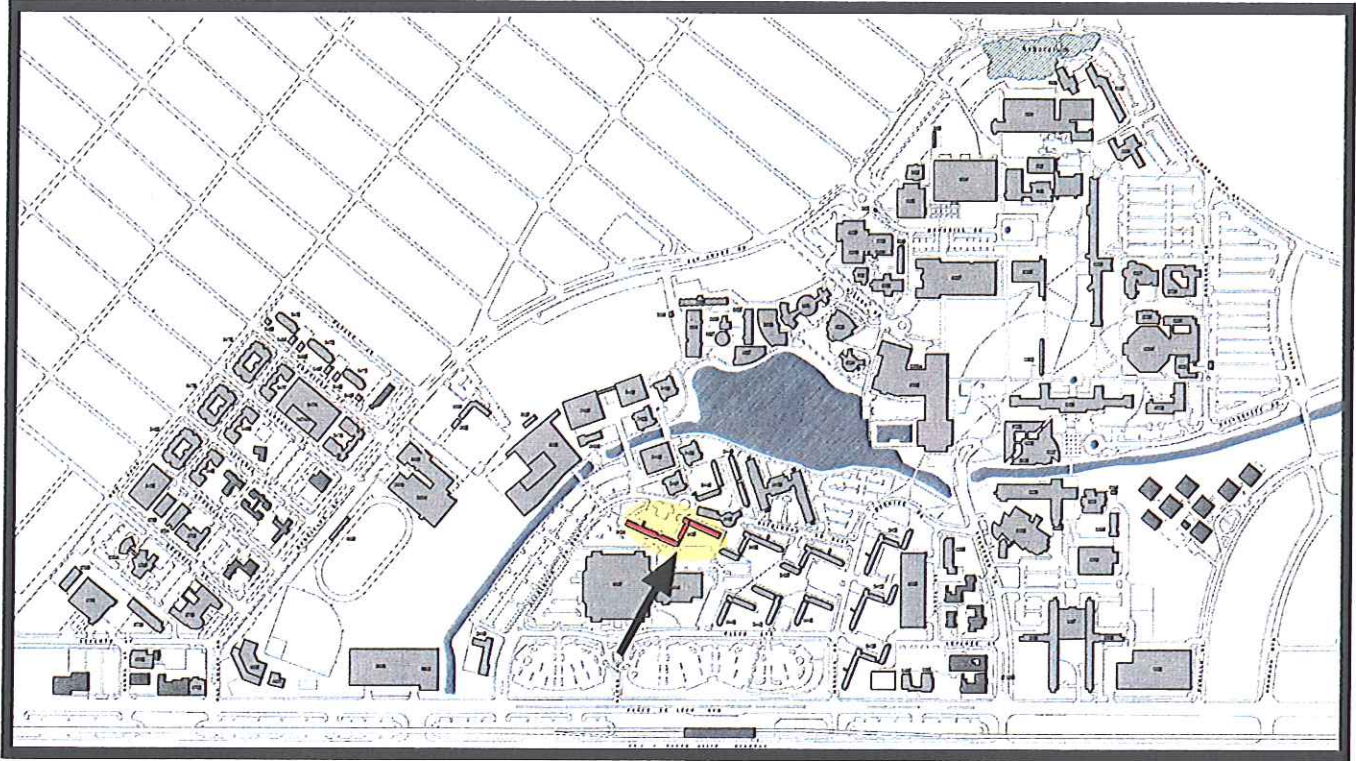
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Location Map



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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.

Building Address: 1228 and 1238 Dickinson Drive

Date of Construction: 1947

Construction Material: CBS, stucco and brick

Photograph Year 2010





