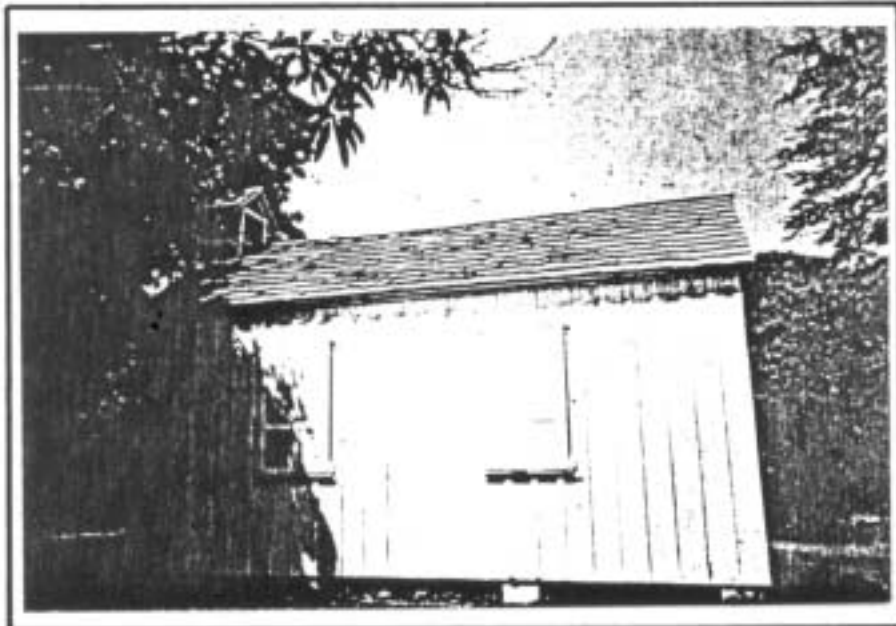

FIRST COCONUT GROVE SCHOOLHOUSE

3429 DEVON ROAD

Designation Report



City of Miami

REPORT OF THE CITY OF MIAMI PLANNING DEPARTMENT
TO THE HERITAGE CONSERVATION BOARD
ON THE POTENTIAL DESIGNATION OF
THE FIRST COCONUT GROVE SCHOOLHOUSE
3429 DEVON ROAD
AS A HERITAGE CONSERVATION ZONING DISTRICT

Prepared by Sarah E. Eaton, 12/06/82
Historic Preservation Date
Consultant

Accepted by Charles Edwin Chase 12/14/82
Chairman, Heritage Date
Conservation Board

Designated by the Miami City Commission

Ordinance No. 9622
Date 05/31/83

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Historic Name:

First Coconut Grove Schoolhouse

Current Name:

First Coconut Grove Schoolhouse

Location:

3429 Devon Road
Miami, Florida

Present Owner:

Plymouth Congregational Church
c/o William C. Lewis
401 Miracle Mile
Coral Gables, Florida 33133

Present Use:

Museum

Zoning District:

R-1

HC Zoning Overlay District:

HC-1

Tax Folio Number:

01-4128-04-0020

Boundary Description:

A portion of Lot A of the plat of EWANTON HEIGHTS, as recorded in Plat Book B at Page 52, of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida; more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at the northwest corner of the SE ¼ of the SW ¼ Section 21 Township 54 South Range 41 East; thence in an easterly direction along the north line of said SE ¼ of the SW ¼, a distance of 295.47 feet; thence with an angle to the right of

45°14' 23" along the southwesterly boundary of THE ROYAL GARDENS (PB 20-P3) a distance of 180 feet to the Point of Beginning of the hereinafter described tract of land; thence run southwesterly at right angles to the said southwesterly boundary of THE ROYAL GARDENS for a distance of 120 feet, thence run southeasterly parallel to the southwesterly boundary of said THE ROYAL GARDENS for a distance of 130 feet, thence run northeasterly 120 feet to a point on the southwesterly boundary of said THE ROYAL GARDENS, thence run northwesterly along the southwesterly boundary of said THE ROYAL GARDENS, 130 feet to the Point of Beginning of the herein described tract of land. It is the intent of this description that it include an area 50 feet from the outermost corners of the First Coconut Grove Schoolhouse.

HC Zoning Classification:

Historic Site

Dade County Historic Survey Rating:

Architectural Significance - 1
Historical Significance - 1
Contextural Significance - 1

FIRST COCONUT GROVE SCHOOLHOUSE

3429 DEVON ROAD



location



site plan

II. SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Significance:

The First Coconut Grove Schoolhouse is significant for its place in the history of education in Dade County and as a reflection of Coconut Grove's pioneer era.

Built by the men of the community, this building has served both the religious and educational needs of the pioneer citizens. The building was constructed as a Sunday School in 1887 and served as a forerunner of Plymouth Congregational Church. The building was rented to the School Board in 1889 for the area's first public schoolhouse. It was also the first home of the Housekeepers Club of Coconut Grove, an important early cultural institution in the community.

Some of Coconut Grove's most influential citizens attended school in this building, and its continued preservation is a reminder of the area's early history.

Relationship to Criteria for Designation:

The First Coconut Grove Schoolhouse is eligible for designation under the following criteria:

2. Is the site of a historic event with significant effect upon the community, city, state or nation.

The First Coconut Grove Schoolhouse is the site of the opening of the area's first public school building.

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

The First Coconut Grove Schoolhouse, one of the oldest surviving structures in the community, reflects the pioneer era in Coconut Grove's history. The building also reflects the early history of education in Dade County.

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

The First Coconut Grove Schoolhouse is an excellent example of vernacular style architecture in Dade County during the late nineteenth century. The building is indicative of this era and is one of the few surviving examples of this mode of construction.

III. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Date of Erection:

1887

Architect:

None

Builder/Contractor:

Unknown

Historical Context:

The First Coconut Grove Schoolhouse was constructed in 1887 as a Sunday School. In 1889, the building was rented to the School Board for the sum of \$12,000 yearly, and Miss Flora McFarlane served as the school's first teacher. The building was the community's only public school until 1894, when a larger school was constructed and the one-room building was abandoned.

George Richardson was the second owner of the property, and the school building was greatly altered during his and subsequent ownerships. The property was acquired by Ryder Systems Inc. in 1969, and the school was donated to Plymouth Congregational Church. The school was moved to church property in 1970.

IV. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Description of Building:

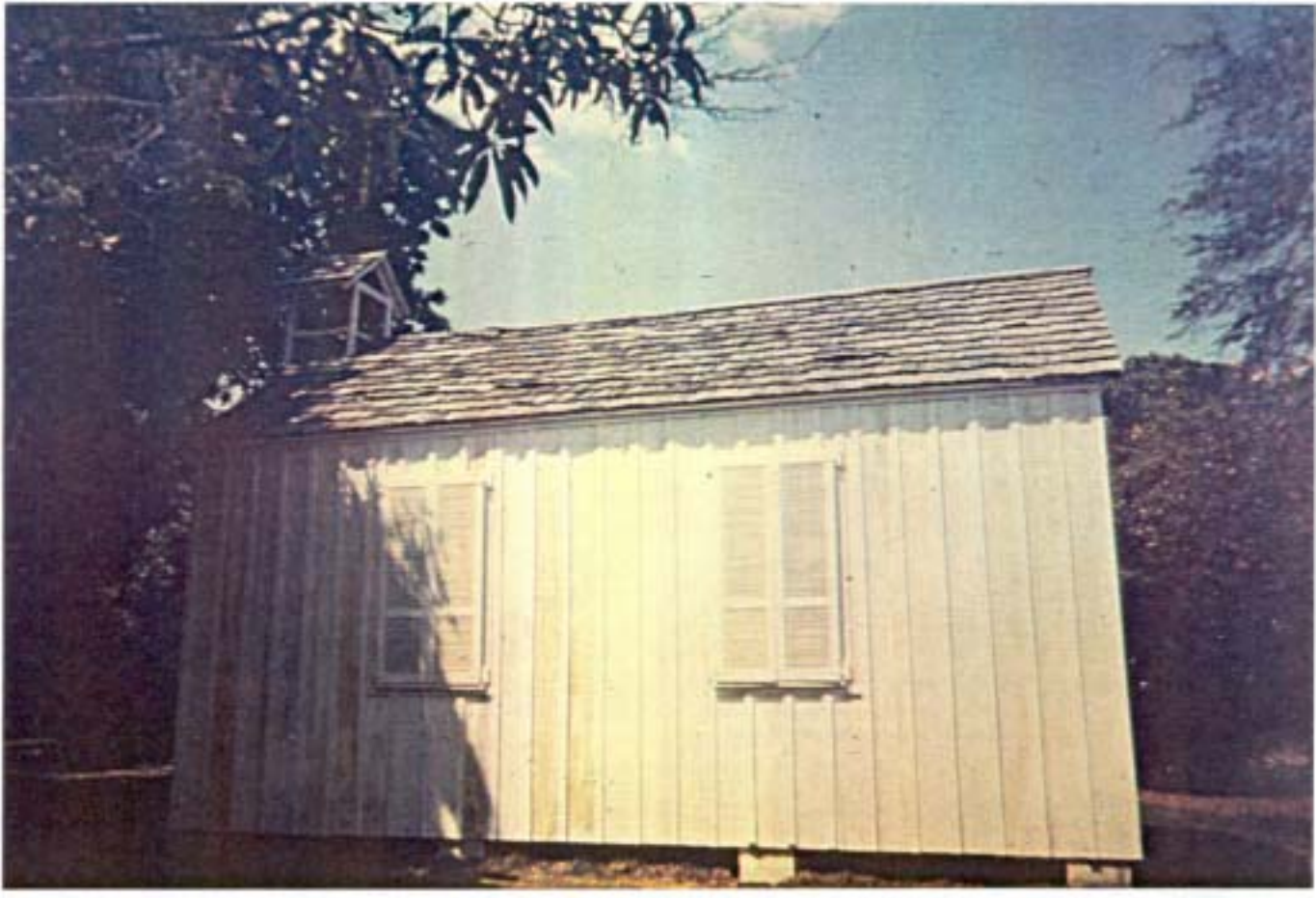
The First Coconut Grove Schoolhouse is a one story rectangular structure. This wood frame building which is faced with vertical board and batten siding, is topped with a gable roof covered with wood shingles. The building rests on concrete block piers.

The First Coconut Grove Schoolhouse is a one room building and features two windows covered with wooden shutters on each side façade. The main entrance is located on what is now the south façade and contains a wood board and batten door with plain wood surrounds.

The building has undergone extensive restoration and reconstruction, but much of the original fabric remains. All additions, porches, dormers, and new windows and doors were removed, and restoration work was based on the attached historic photograph. The belfry was reconstructed at that time, and the original school bell was re-installed. The original materials for the school were salvaged from shipwrecks. During restoration, however, board and battens were replaced with roughly milled lumber.

Description of the Site:

The First Coconut Grove Schoolhouse is located on the grounds of Plymouth Congregational Church. The school is in a park-like setting and is not visible from a public right-of-way.



First Coconut Grove Schoolhouse
3429 Devon Road
East Elevation
1982

V. PLANNING CONTEXT

Present Trends and Conditions:

The First Coconut Grove Schoolhouse was originally located at what is now 2916 Grand Avenue. When Ryder Systems Inc. bought the property in 1969, James Ryder recognized the historic value of the building and donated the school to Plymouth Congregational Church.

Plymouth Church subsequently moved the building and relocated it on the church grounds at 3429 Devon Road. The school has been restored as a museum and a reminder of the efforts of Coconut Grove's pioneer residents.

Conservation Objectives:

The First Coconut Grove Schoolhouse is well protected and maintained by the congregation of Plymouth Congregational Church. Many residents of Miami, however, are unaware of the existence of the school. The church, therefore, should be encouraged to increase public accessibility to the site by providing a small interpretive display.

These conservation objectives can best be achieved by maintaining the present zoning of the property. An HC-1 zoning overlay district will maintain the current zoning, requiring only the review of physical changes to the property.

VI. HC ZONING ELEMENTS

Boundaries:

The boundaries of the HC zoning district have been drawn to include an area 50 feet from the outermost corners of the First Coconut Grove Schoolhouse. Because the School was relocated to this site in 1970, the entire tract of land owned by Plymouth Congregational Church is historically unrelated to the historic structure and should not be included within the boundaries.

Major Exterior Surfaces Subject to Review:

All four facades of the First Coconut Grove Schoolhouse shall be considered major exterior surfaces subject to review.

Major Landscape Features Subject to Review:

The major landscape features subject to review shall include all features which are subject to requirements for tree removal permits as set forth in Chapter 17 of the City Code.

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dade County, Florida. Community and Economic Development, Historic Preservation Division. Dade County Historic Survey, Site Inventory File for 3429 Devon Road, Miami, Florida.

"The History of Plymouth Congregational Church." Brochure, Plymouth Congregational Church, Miami, Florida.

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, Nomination Form for First Coconut Grove Schoolhouse.