
Fisher Residence

3518 South Moorings Way

Designation Report



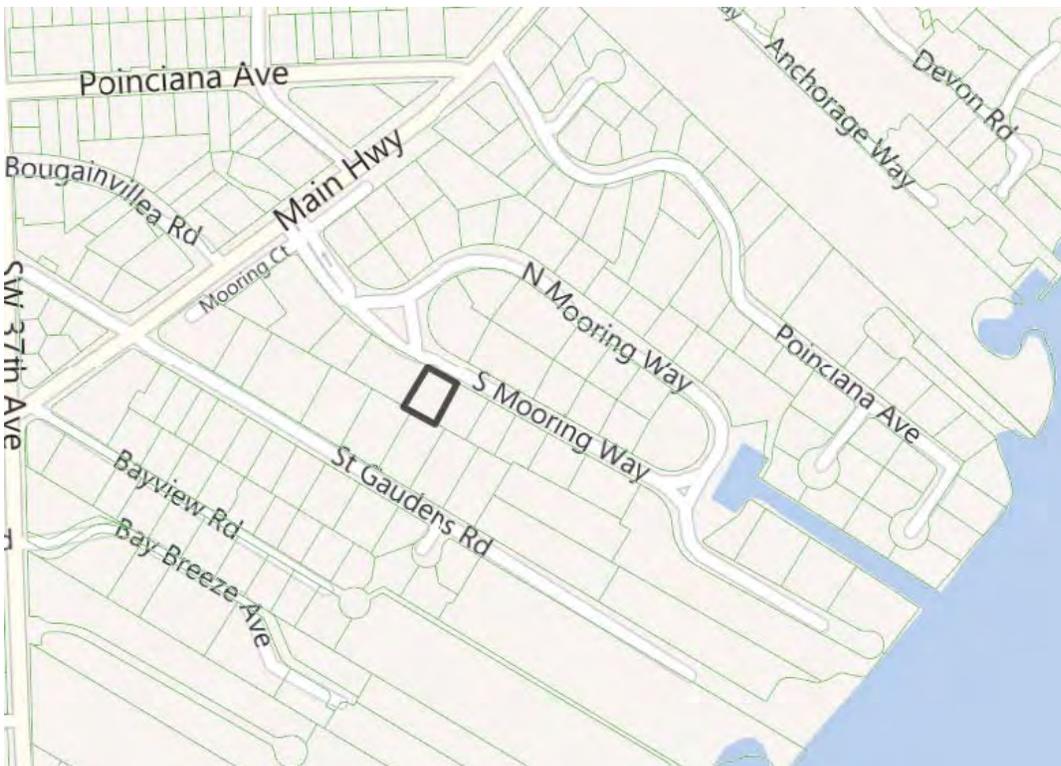
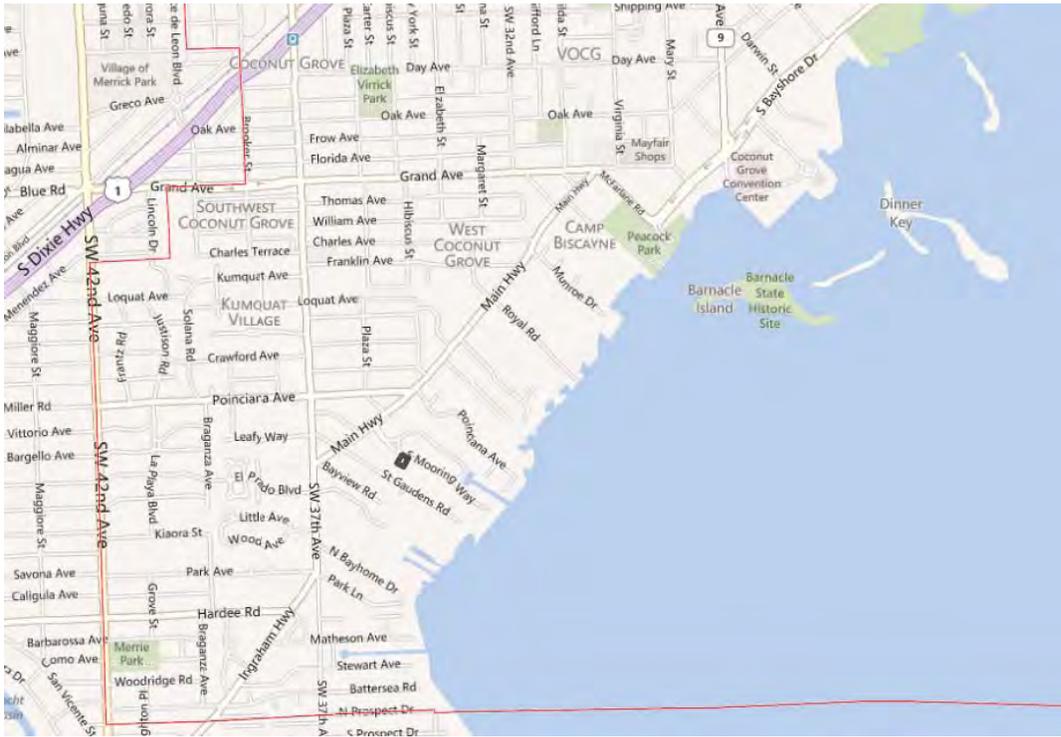
Historic and Environmental Preservation Board



City of Miami

REPORT OF THE CITY OF MIAMI
PRESERVATION OFFICER
TO THE HISTORIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION BOARD
ON THE DESIGNATION OF THE
FISHER RESIDENCE
AS A HISTORIC SITE

Written by Megan McLaughlin
Date July 3, 2012



I. General Information

Historic Name: 3518 South Moorings Way

Current Name: Fisher Residence

Date of Construction: 1925

Architect: unknown

Builder: unknown

Location: 3518 South Moorings Way, Miami, FL

Present Owner: April Fisher (Ijourie Stocks Fisher Trust)

Present use: Residential

Zoning: T3-R

Folio No.: 0141280060110

Boundary (Legal Description): THE MOORINGS PB 31-52 LOT 7 & E10FT LOT 6 BLK C & PROP INT IN & TO STS-PARKS-YACHT BASIN & CANAL LOT SIZE 12000 SQUARE FEET OR 18862-1638 1099 5

Setting: Single-family residence subdivision

Integrity: Excellent – most of the original materials still in place and maintained – original windows, doors, staircase, fireplace and chimney, and architectural elements

Classification: Historic Site

II. Significance

The Moorings

The land on which The Moorings was built was originally part of the Ewanton Heights plat of Coconut Grove. Lots K and J of Ewanton Heights were owned by Katherine and Frank Church, and Lots H and I were owned by Jessie S. Moore.¹ Both were notable waterfront Grove estates of their time. The owners were prominent Groveites who founded the Second Church of Christ Scientist, located on the west side of Main Highway. In 1925, both property owners sold their estates to developers who intended to create an elite subdivision on the site, which would be named “The Moorings,” an adaptation of the name of one of the original landowners, Jessie Moore.²

The Moorings was a product of the South Florida land boom, a small “planned community” with big aspirations. The neighborhood was designed in keeping with the 1920 Bright Plan for Coconut Grove, a City Beautiful blueprint for a transformed Grove with wide boulevards, grand civic spaces, and Mediterranean architecture, in striking similarity to its neighbor, Coral Gables.³ The Moorings is the only subdivision in Coconut Grove that implemented these City Beautiful elements, including widening of the winding, 30’ wide Main Highway to be 100’ wide boulevard with a landscaped median, an elaborate entrance fountain, curving roads, and shared access to dock space by all residents. Unfortunately, by the end of the 1920s the “bubble” had burst, taking its toll on The Moorings and the entire region. In 1932, only eight of The Mooring’s fifty-one lots had been developed.

The Fisher Family

Since 1940, 3518 South Moorings Way has been the home of the Fisher family, a prominent Miami family who made great contributions to the cultural, artistic, and educational development of the greater Miami area. Granville and Ijourie Fisher moved into the home as newlyweds⁴ and the home has stayed in the family to the present day. The home played a significant role in the family’s identity and in their many professional and civic contributions to the Miami community.

Granville Fisher was a classic case of a Miami self-made man. He arrived in Miami as a teenager with little money, and no university education, credentials, or contacts, and quickly made a name for himself through a combination of talent, personality and skillful self-promotion. Throughout his adulthood he moved easily through Miami’s glittering social circles, working alternately as a well-respected art dealer, artist, psychologist, columnist, actor, and minister.

Granville was born in 1908 in Nashville, Tennessee. He had an eventful childhood, working in a Dupont Powder Mill during WWI, laying rail, and later dropping out of high school to ride the railroad across the country and perform many and various jobs. He eventually made his way home to Nashville, where he finished high school and developed his artistic talent in cartooning and later, architectural drafting. He also developed an interest in theatre during this time, and earned a reputation in wrestling and hypnotism.⁵

¹ Publication of Archival Library and Museum Materials. Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1920. <http://palmm.fcla.edu/>.

² Parks, Arva Moore and Donna Knowles Born, *A History of “Snug Harbor”*, 1996, p 41-63

³ Parks, Arva Moore, p 57

⁴ *The Miami News – Florida Living Section* “Granville Fisher Lives a Varied Life” Mac Smith, March 12, 1961

⁵ “The Story of Granville Fisher” *The Florida Teacher*, January 1941, p 16

Granville moved to Miami around 1925 with basic drafting skills and landed a job in the architecture department of the Coral Gables Company⁶, caught up in the euphoria of creating a Mediterranean paradise out of pine forest and citrus groves. Following the South Florida land bust in the late 1920s, Granville left Miami, purportedly to join the Merchant Marine⁷, and did not return until the early 1930s when he took up a position as the Art Director for the Surf Club in Surfside, working alongside Alfred Barton, the Surf Club's famous owner and director.⁸ As Art Director, Granville was charged with designing and executing the elaborate parties and events that were held for club members and their guests, who included the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, General Douglas MacArthur, Elizabeth Taylor, and Winston Churchill.⁹ At the same time, Granville served as the Baptist Minister for Little River Baptist Church, where he met Ijourie, his future wife.¹⁰

Fixing Up “An Old Run-Down House”

Around 1939, Granville purchased 3518 South Moorings Way “as an old house to fix up; to give me something to do”¹¹ It is likely that his youthful experience as a designer at the Coral Gables Company had given him a special fondness for the more formal overall design of the Moorings subdivision, which was a contemporary of Coral Gables, and the Mediterranean Revival design of the home. The house was only fifteen years old at the time, however three hurricanes, a land bust, and the depression years had likely taken their toll. From 1925 to 1940, the address had had four different residents and a total of eight years of vacancy.¹² The home renovation project played a pivotal role in Granville and Ijourie's courtship. In a newspaper article from the 1960s, Granville remembers, “She knew I was working down in this old house by myself and she used to bring me a sandwich for lunch. Sometimes she'd hold a board for me while I nailed it. When I finished the job I figured it was only proper to marry her and let her move in... since she'd had such a hand in the work.”¹³

Educational Achievements and Professional Life

Soon after their daughter April was born in 1941, the family set forth to Chicago to get an education. Granville attended the University of Chicago and earned his Bachelors, Masters, and Ph.D. degrees in Psychology in quick succession.¹⁴ Meanwhile, Ijourie earned her Masters degree in Psychology¹⁵ while raising their baby.

The family moved back to Miami around 1946, where Granville was hired to the Psychology faculty at the University of Miami. By 1948, he was appointed chairman of the Department, a position that he held until 1962. Under Granville's leadership, the department granted the

⁶ “Also in the UM line-up” p 43 *Newspaper clipping from the Granville Chapman Fisher Special Collection at the University of Miami Library*. According to this source, much of the architectural iron work in Coral Gables was made from his drawings. According to another source, “The Story of Granville Fisher” *The Florida Teacher*, January 1941, p 16, he designed many of the Mediterranean style homes in Coral Gables.

⁷ “The Story of Granville Fisher” *The Florida Teacher*, January 1941, p 16

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ Miami Surf Club website, <http://www.miamibeachsurfclub.com>

¹⁰ “Granville Fisher Lives a Varied Life”

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² Richmond, Va., R. L. Polk & Co., *Miami (Dade Co., Fla) City Directory*, 1925 – 1940

¹³ “Granville Fisher Lives a Varied Life”

¹⁴ “Dr. Granville Fisher,” *Florida Division Bulletin*, American Association of University Women, March 1955

¹⁵ “Ijourie Stocks Fisher” February 15, 2012 http://www.gazettetimes.com/news/local/obituaries/ijourie-stocks-fisher/article_71bcb3ec-57a6-11e1-81b1-0019bb2963f4.html

University of Miami's first Ph.D.¹⁶ Local newspapers often quoted Granville Fisher as the leading authority in psychological matters in the community, from interpretations of Joseph McCarthy's doodles, to the emotional backlash of Bobby Kennedy's assassination, to the proper way to raise children, to the changing role of women in society.¹⁷

Ijourie became the chairman of the Psychology and Education Department and the Sociology Department at Miami-Dade College. She later was asked to head up the Dental Hygiene program at the College, where she spearheaded an overhaul of the program and went on to lead accreditation of programs around the country. During this time, Ijourie also received her Ph.D. in Psychology at the University of Miami.¹⁸ Both husband and wife were highly-respected authorities in their academic and professional fields.

Creating a Tropical Paradise in the Moorings

When the family moved back to Miami in 1946, they returned to their old Spanish home at South Moorings Way, where they continued their renovation work. All three family members (daughter April included) contributed to the design and physical labor of the home renovations. As Granville explained, "We did the work as a family. The design was no problem since I was an architect, so all that was left for us to do was the physical labor." Home improvement projects included the construction of new porches, a pool and patio, a generous covered work space around the old car port, and conversion of the old detached garage into a guest cottage and work space.¹⁹

Numerous newspaper articles were written about the family and their home renovation projects, which were lauded as adapting the "old home" to the Miami climate and creating a tropical paradise with a large pool, exotic plants, and orchids.²⁰ One newspaper article summed up the natural, informal beauty of the home: "Dr. Granville C. Fisher's home, 3518 So. Moorings Way, Coconut Grove, is a good deal like the pictures he paints. It's a lot like "Granny," – the painter, the architect, the minister, the psychology professor – too. It can't be classified. It shudders at the idea... It's half nightclub, half art gallery, all homey, styled to fit the Fishers' taste and budget... as Ijourie (Granny's wife, called Ije) says... 'nothing elegant, and that's the way we want it.'"²¹ Interestingly, the not-quite thirty-year old home was described by many as "old" and "settled" – a by-product of the Mediterranean revival style of architecture that evoked a past era: "The first thing you observe about this home on quiet S. Moorings Way in Coconut Grove, is that it is neither new nor elaborate. Both the Spanish architecture and the lush foliage show that the house has been standing on that peaceful street quite some time."²²

The Later Years - Granville Galleries

In 1959, Granville, who had continued to work as an artist throughout his years in Chicago and while working in psychology, decided to open a gallery at 3929 Ponce de Leon, aptly named Granville Galleries. Again, he bought an old Mediterranean building (formerly the Bird Road Ice building) and renovated it himself.²³ The gallery was innovative for its time and for the maturing Miami art scene. It was one of the largest art galleries in the region, and it was market-driven,

¹⁶ "Granville Chapman Fisher" The Miami Herald, 1988

¹⁷ Granville Chapman Fisher Special Collection at the University of Miami Library, newspaper clippings

¹⁸ "Ijourie Stocks Fisher"

¹⁹ "Granville Fisher Lives a Varied Life"

²⁰ "They Pooled Their Interests" The Miami News – Florida Living Section November 3, 1957

²¹ "Granville Fisher Lives a Varied Life"

²² "Homes Tell Tales!" The Miami News – Florida Living Section Sunday January 10, 1954

²³ "He Bets \$50,000 That Art Will Sell" Miami Herald, May 31, 1959

allowing artists to display their work for free but pay a commission when a piece was sold, and allowing homeowners and interior designers to “rent” paintings and try them out to make sure that they liked a painting before buying it.²⁴ Granville also used the upstairs of the building as his art studio, where he devoted himself to painting and sculpture.²⁵ At one time, he had over 200 of his own works on display in the gallery below.²⁶ Ijourie, who was an accomplished painter, sculptor, and stained glass artist, had her sculptures displayed in the gallery as well.²⁷

By 1962, Granville Galleries was wildly successful and Granville shifted his focus away from psychology, family life, and home improvements. He stepped down from his position as Chairman of the Psychology Department at the University.²⁸ Granville and Ijourie divorced in 1963, and Granville dedicated himself to his art and his gallery, both living and working there in the coming years.²⁹ He later relocated the Granville Galleries to Sunset Drive in South Miami, where he continued to show his work and that of others. Granville was a respected figure in Miami, writing a regular newspaper column about psychology that was extremely popular, and continuing to be regarded as a leader in the arts and academic circles of Miami. In 1983, Granville closed the gallery due to advancing Parkinson’s Disease, and in 1988, he passed away.³⁰ The publication *Who’s Who in America* gave the following praise to Granville towards the end of his career: “In the history of the world, a very large part of what has been achieved can be traced to the work or the influence of a relatively small handful of men – men who were dedicated, enterprising, curious and able to a degree which sets them apart from their contemporaries. In a real sense the story of their lives is the history of the world. Granville Fisher is among those men whose civic pride and professional skill have contributed to the progress of American life. He is one of the great men of our time.”³¹

Ijourie continued in her professional and artistic life, living at the family home at 3518 South Moorings Way until 2008, when she moved to Oregon to be closer to her daughter April.³² The home remains in the Fisher family to this day, where both Granville’s and Ijourie’s artwork and handiwork are still on display.

²⁴ *ibid*

²⁵ “Granville Fisher Lives a Varied Life”

²⁶ “Man of Many Roles: Dr. Fisher, Psych Star” *The Hurricane* October 3, 1969

²⁷ “UM Psychologist Swings Open Doors of Gallery for Budding Young Artists” *The Times*, August 6, 1959

²⁸ “Man of Many Roles: Dr. Fisher, Psych Star”

²⁹ “Granville Fisher – Young In Heart” *South Miami News* August 17, 1967

³⁰ “Granville Chapman Fisher” *The Miami Herald*, 1988

³¹ American Institute of Architects, *The Florida Architect*, 1969 p 18

³² “Ijourie Stocks Fisher”

Granville Fisher's Timeline (1908 – 1988)

- Nashville
 - born in Nashville, Tennessee
 - 1923 – Professional Cartoonist
 - Organized the Community Players of Nashville – theatre group
 - 1924- after graduation from high school, landed a job as a letterer in an architectural firm, learning drafting, rendering, and architectural design
- Miami
 - Old Civic Theatre Group – actor
 - 1925 – architect working for the Coral Gables Company, designing Mediterranean-style houses in George Merrick's city
- Louisville
 - 1929 – 1931 Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY
 - Ran an art school
- Miami
 - arrived with no money, lived off of “purloined grapefruit, avocados, and coconuts”
 - Civic Theatre – actor and director
 - 1932-1942 Surf Club Art Director
 - Organized elaborate parties and designed stage sets for Gala nights events
 - one of Miami's well-known sculptors and portrait painters, murals
 - 1933: Pastor of Little River Baptist Church
 - 1937 – Federal Theatre – supervising director (WPA project) – performances at Scottish Rite Temple
 - 1939: Miami Daily News Cartoonist
 - bought 3518 South Moorings Way and started modernizing it
 - met Ijourie (daughter of head Deacon), she would help him fix up house
 - 1941 – family moves into house
- Chicago
 - During WWII –worked nights for the Manhattan Project security staff
 - 1944 Ph.B, University of Chicago
 - 1945 – B.D. Bachelor of Divinity: Meadville Theological School - Unitarian
 - 1946 – MA., psychology, University of Chicago
 - 1949 – Ph.D., psychology, University of Chicago
 - Cook County Criminal Court Chief Psychologist
- Miami
 - 1946 – joined Psychology Department at University of Miami
 - 1948 – 1962 chair of UM Psychology Department
 - 1959 - Granville Galleries
 - 1959-60 President of Miami Art League
 - First Chairman of Miami Fine Art Commission
 - 1963 – Granville and Ijourie Divorce
 - Exhibitions:
 - 1965 Bass Museum of Art Solo Exhibition – extended a month, Rudolph Gallery, Granville Gallery, Miami Art League, Blue Dome, Chicago Renaissance Society
 - 1968: The Miami Herald: Special Interview about psychological reactions to Bob Kennedy's assassination
 - 1969: editor of AIA The Florida Architect
 - 1983 – closed Granville Galleries due to Parkinson's disease

Application of Criteria for Designation:

The Fisher Residence has significance in the historic and architectural heritage of Miami, possesses integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association; and is eligible for designation under the following criteria (as numbered in Section 23-4(a):

1. It is associated in a significant way with the life of a person important in the past.

The Fisher Family, who resided here from 1940 until 2008, had a significant impact on the academic, artistic, and cultural development of Miami. Husband and wife Granville and Ijourie both received Ph.D.s in psychology, and each served in distinguished positions as department chairs at the University of Miami and Miami-Dade College, respectively. Both Granville and Ijourie were respected artists in Miami, and when Granville opened Granville Galleries in Coral Gables, it democratized the art scene in Miami, providing little-known artists with valuable exposure and giving middle class Miamians access to affordable, original art. Granville served in numerous civic positions, such as President of the Miami Art League, Chairman of the Miami Fine Arts Commission and columnist for the Miami Herald, to name a few.

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

The Fisher Residence is a classic example of a 1920s Mediterranean Revival home, typical of Miami boom-time developments such as Coral Gables, Morningside, and Shenandoah, and representative of the formal, Mediterranean vision of architect James Bright, the author of the 1920 Town Plan for Coconut Grove. Distinguishing characteristics include a multi-level roof, stucco wall surface, decorative tiles, arched wood panel door, a half-octagonal stair tower with a focal window, an elaborated chimney top, a wooden balcony, and casement windows. The residence retains many of its original materials, including almost all of its wood casement windows, the arched front door, staircase, mantelpiece, chimney, wooden, roofed balcony off the second-floor bedroom, and tile floors on the front porch.

III. Description

Setting:

The Fisher Residence is located on a ridge close to the entrance to The Moorings from Main Highway, and faces northeast. The front yard of the property is heavily landscaped and the house is no longer visible from the street. The side setbacks are minimal and the adjacent homes are located very close to the residence. The rear yard of the property is defined by the generous pool and patio, with the guest cottage, breezeway, and a side wing of the house creating a U-shaped courtyard.

Exterior Description:

Plan

The Fisher Residence is a Mediterranean Revival home with an irregularly-shaped plan, defined by a long central block parallel to the street, multiple wings, and multiple levels. The home is masonry construction with a stucco finish. The house plan creates a U-shaped courtyard in the rear of the property that encloses a large pool and patio. A two-story bedroom wing extends to the rear. A one-story enclosed porch extends to the front.

Roof

The roof has multiple levels and the main roof is cross-gable, while multiple wings of the house have a flat roof with a parapet. The enclosed front porch has a flat roof with a broken parapet and iron infills. The gable roof and parapet originally had barrel mission tile.

Windows and Doors

The windows and doors of the home are typical examples of Mediterranean Revival openings of the 1920s. The arched front door is original, with vertical wood panels and decorative heavy metal straps. All of the windows have masonry sills and stucco surrounds. Many of the original wood 8-light casement windows remain. In the second-floor master bedroom, groupings of three original arched casement windows are located on three sides of the room, giving a tree-house effect. The stairwell has its original casement window, with a stained glass panel in the arched transom. Some windows have been replaced, in which case they have been replaced with a variety of types: steel casement windows, single-hung sash windows, and awning windows. The original screened openings of the front porch have been filled in with large fixed glass panels.

Architectural Elements

The residence has many significant architectural elements. A half octogonal tower projection is located on the front façade, with a corbel table and stringcourse, and an arched wood casement window. This is the location of the staircase. A wing wall is placed on the front facade at the juncture of the two-story and one-story portions of the home, softening the transition in levels. A roofed, cantilevered balcony is located on the east façade, constructed of wood. A chimney on the west side of the building has an elaborated top with the original barrel tile roof. Decorative tiles are used on the front patio in front of the front door.

Major Interior Features

The original, intricately carved mantelpiece remains unaltered in the living room of the house. The staircase, winding up through the octagonal tower, has an unusual balustrade with fat, turned-wood spindles painted a variety of bright colors.

Style

The Fisher Residence is a classic example of a 1920s Mediterranean Revival home, also referred to as Spanish Eclectic style by some historians. Spanish Eclectic architecture was most prevalent in United States in the 1920s and 1930s, following the Panama-California Exposition of 1915. At this exposition, architect Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue promoted the wide variety of Spanish Colonial architecture found throughout Latin America, and sparked a popular movement within architecture, particularly in states with a Spanish Colonial past, such as California, the Southwestern states, and Florida.³³ Distinguishing characteristics of Spanish Eclectic architecture found in the Fisher Residence include a multi-level roof, stucco wall surface, decorative tiles, arched wood panel door, a half-octagonal stair tower with a focal window, an elaborated chimney top, a wooden balcony, and casement windows.

Additional Structures

A one-story detached garage, contemporary of the original house, is located at the southwest corner of the property. The garage is masonry construction with a stucco finish, a flat roof, and single-hung windows. The garage has been converted into a guest cottage and forms the third leg of the "U" that shapes the rear courtyard.

Alterations/Additions

The Fisher family built a number of porches and breezeways around the house to better adapt the home to its South Florida environment, including a covered front porch, a car port, and a breezeway that connected the carport to the guest cottage, further defining the U-shaped courtyard. Other additions that the Fishers made to the property included digging a large pool in the courtyard and building a oolitic limestone wall along the open end of the courtyard, and a large screened enclosure around the entire rear courtyard. The Fishers filled the openings of the original front porch with fixed glass. The barrel tiles on the main roof of the house were removed. Most of the Fisher's 1940s and 1950s work on the home is still in place, including the front porch, the covered work area along the side of the home, and the screened-in pool and patio.

Present Condition

Thanks in part to the Fisher family's careful maintenance of the home and Ijourie's practical manner (she saw no point in updating the house if it was working properly), most of the original features of the home are intact and in good condition, including the doors, windows, flooring, cabinetry, fireplace and chimney, and staircase. Such a relatively unaltered example of a 1920s boom-time Mediterranean home in Miami is rare. Updates such as new electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and a new roof may be desired, but the structure of the building is sound, the windows and doors operational, and the building is habitable in its current condition.

IV. Planning Context

The Fisher Residence is located within The Moorings subdivision, which is currently an exclusive gated community in Coconut Grove. The biggest threat to historic homes of this kind, in this area, is development. Many of the historic homes in Coconut Grove are purchased for the land value, and then torn down to build mansions of varying styles.

The incentives available for historically designated residences such as the Fisher Residence are the City and County Ad Valorem Tax Exemption, which defers the tax increase for home rehabilitation projects for ten years. Other incentives include technical assistance to property

³³ McAlester, Virginia & Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1992, 418

owners and design review for renovation projects by Preservation Staff and the Historic and Environmental Preservation Board. Incentives change over time; new incentives may be available. The Preservation Office will have the most up to date material on historic preservation incentives.

VI. Bibliography

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City of Miami, Tax Card Photo, 3815 South Moorings Way, 1930s

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"Granville Chapman Fisher" The Miami Herald, 1988

Granville Chapman Fisher Special Collection at the University of Miami Library, newspaper clippings

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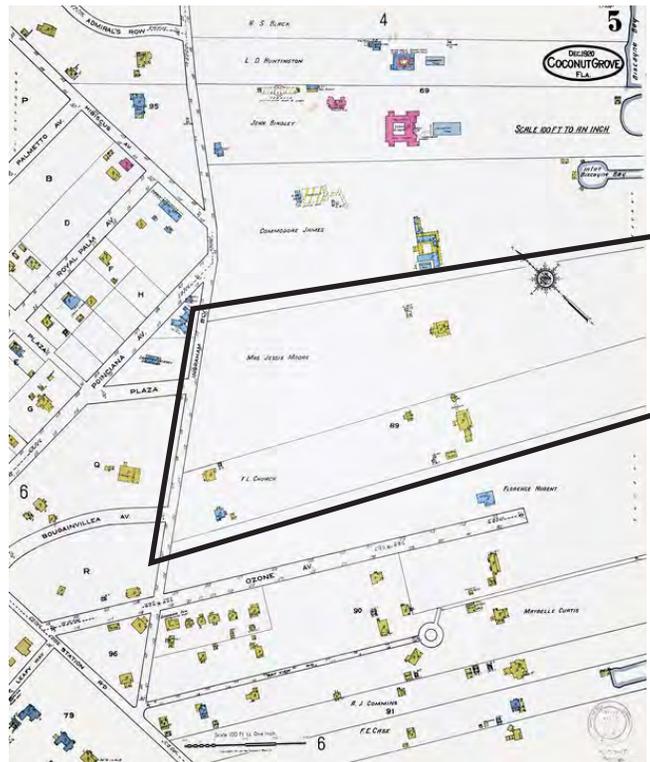
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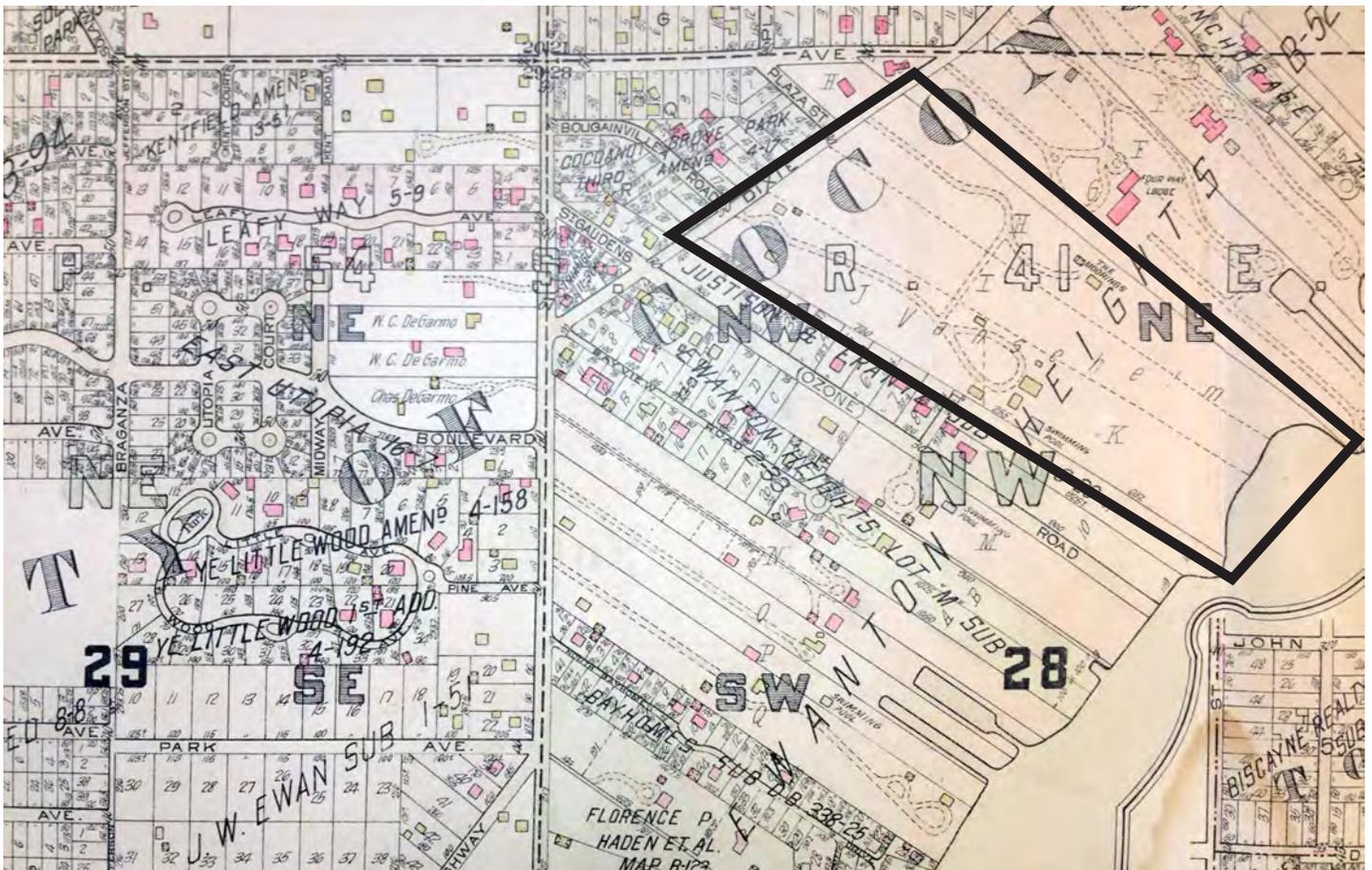
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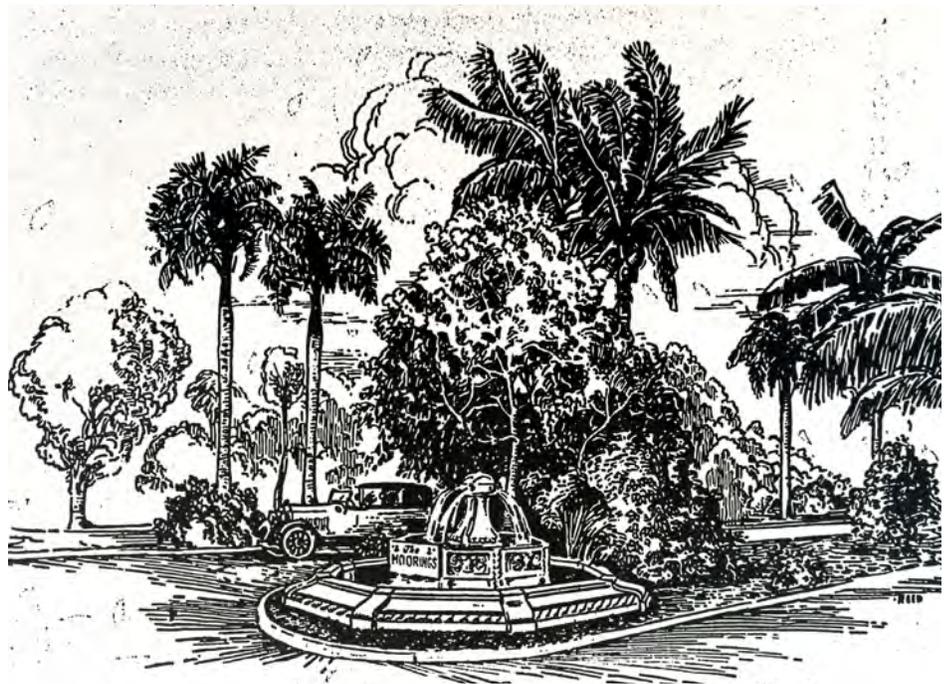
1920 Sanborn Map with the future site of the Moorings outlined



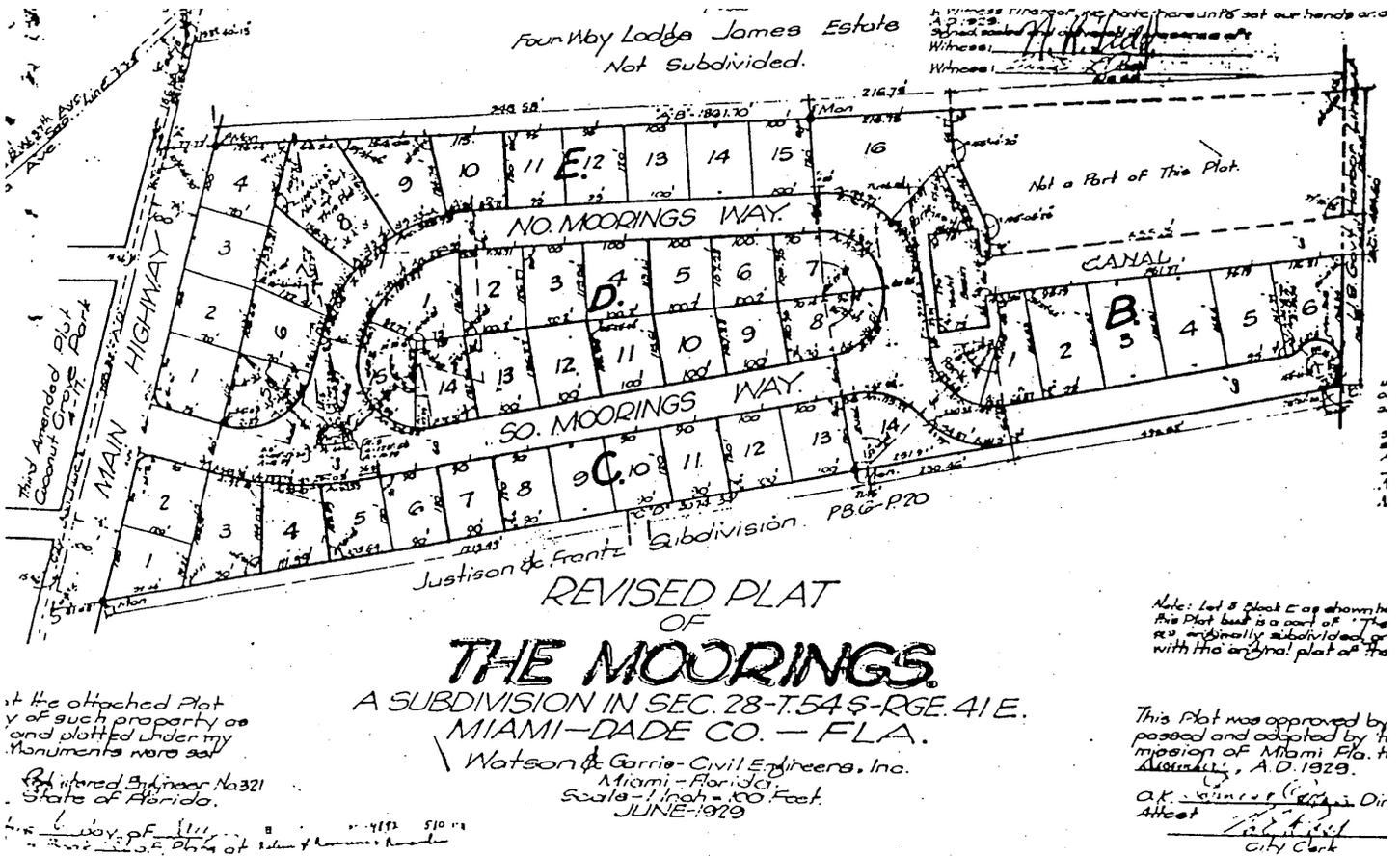
1925 Plat Book of Greater Miami, Fla and Suburbs, G.M. Hopkins Co. with the future site of the Moorings outlined



Cover of the 1920 Bright Plan for Coconut Grove



Architect's Rendering of the Entrance to The Moorings, used for newspaper advertisements



1929 Revised Plat of The Moorings



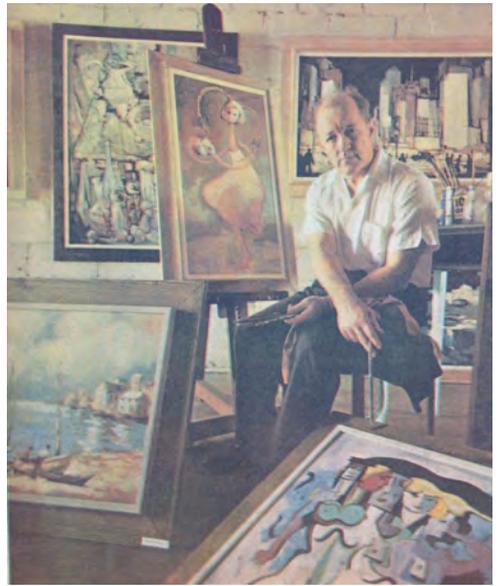
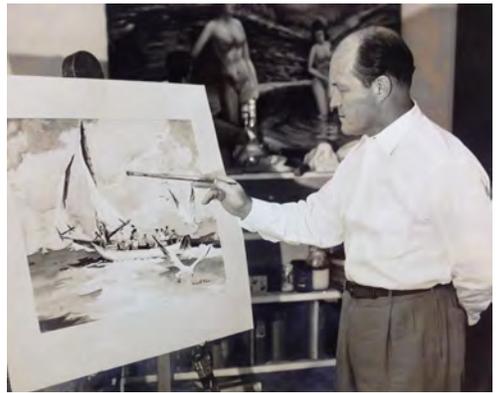
1932 Tax Card Photo of 3518 South Moorings Way



2012 Photos of 3518 South Moorings Way

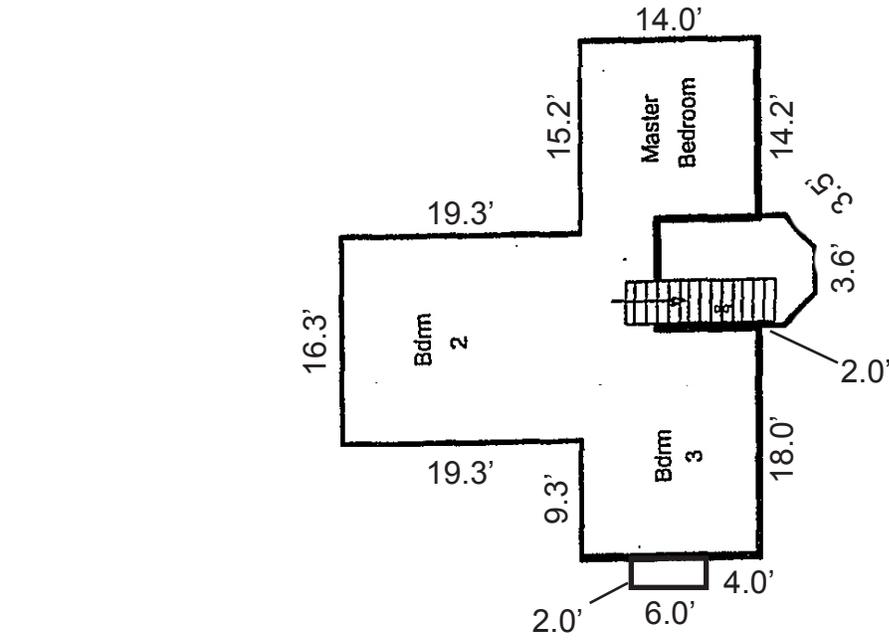


The Fisher Family at home, 1954-1961

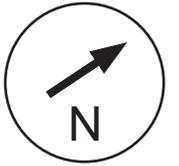
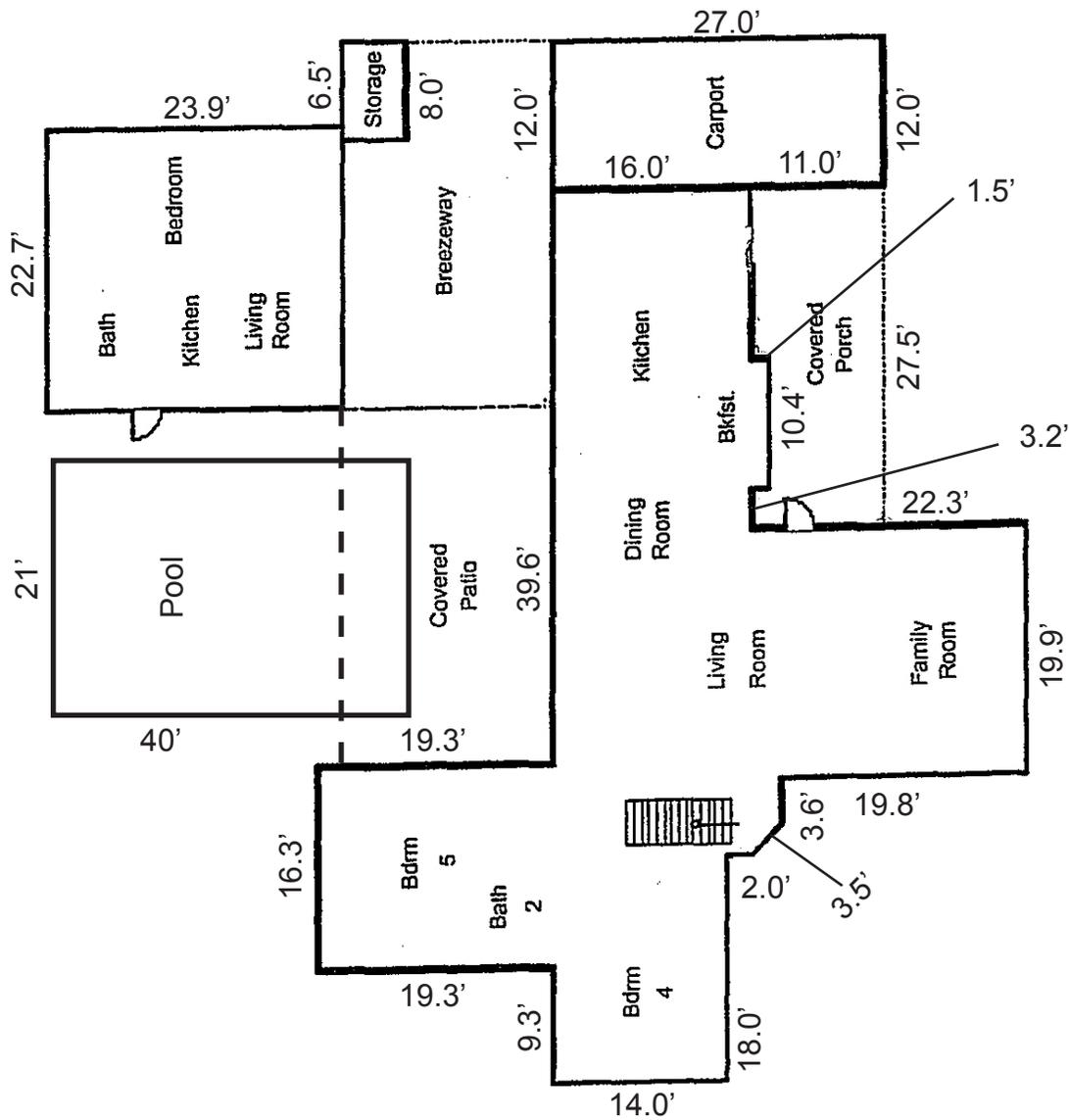


Fisher Family Artists and the Granville Galleries Years

second floor



first floor



South Moorings Way



Front (north) elevation of the home, 2012

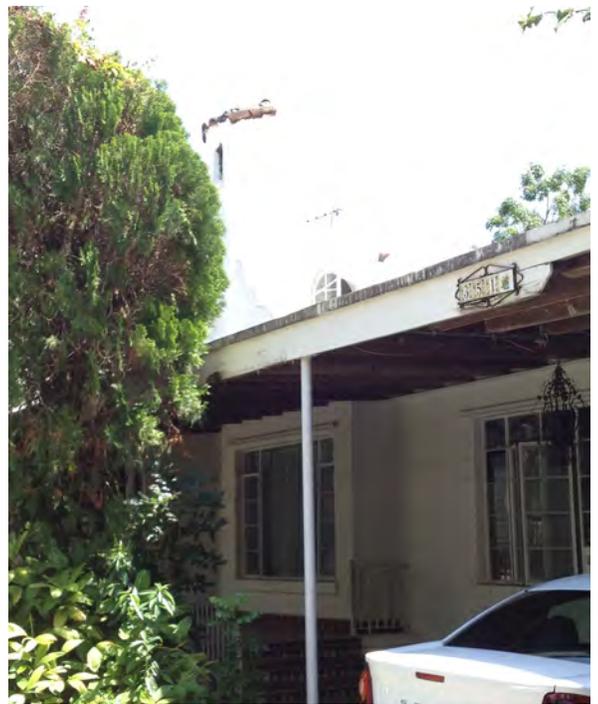




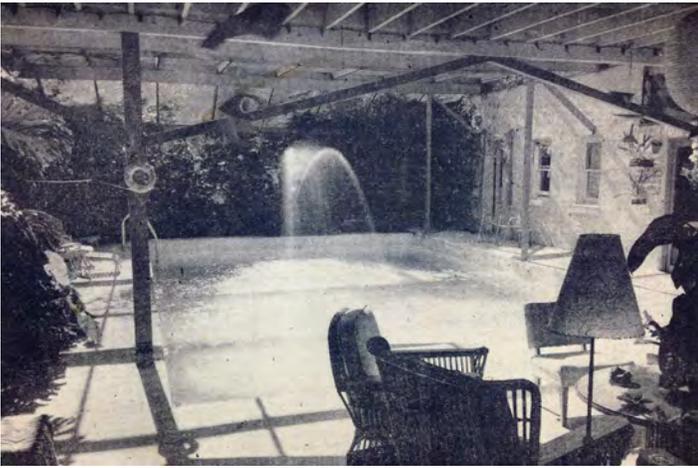
1961 Miami News article "Granville Fisher Lives Varied Life"



North side of the house with chimney, 2012



Front (north) elevation of the home showing covered porch addition and original front door, 2012



Pool and Patio, 1954



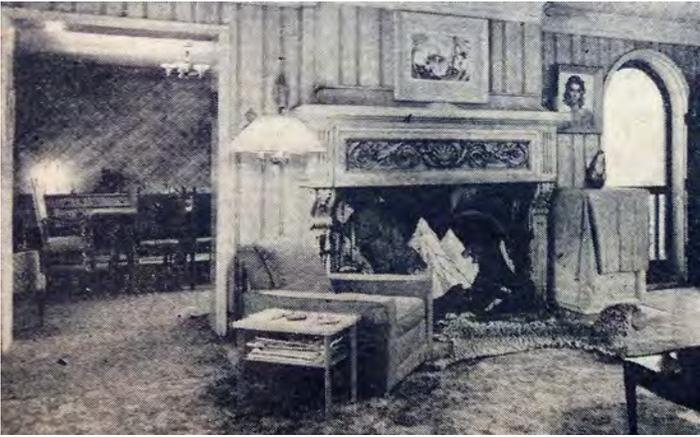
Pool and Patio, 1961



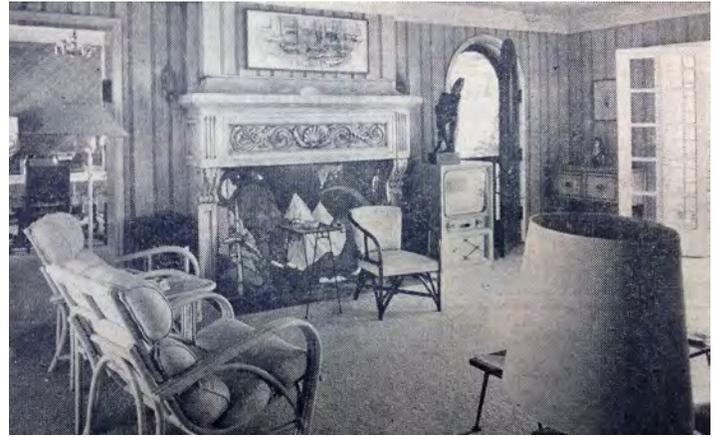
Pool and Patio area on the south side of the home, showing pool, screened enclosure and limestone wall additions, 2012



East side of the house showing wooden balcony, 2012



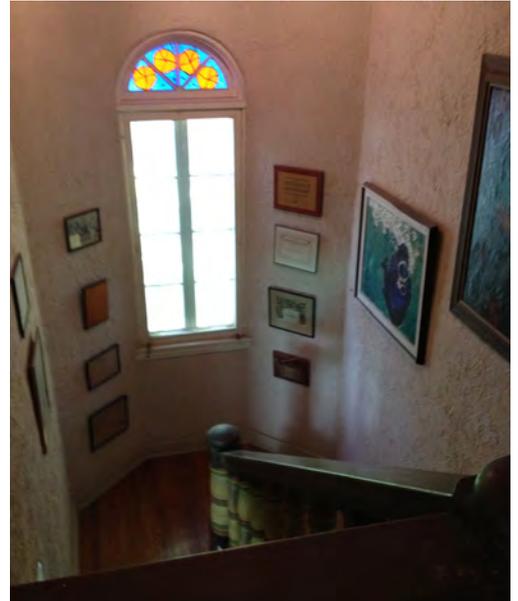
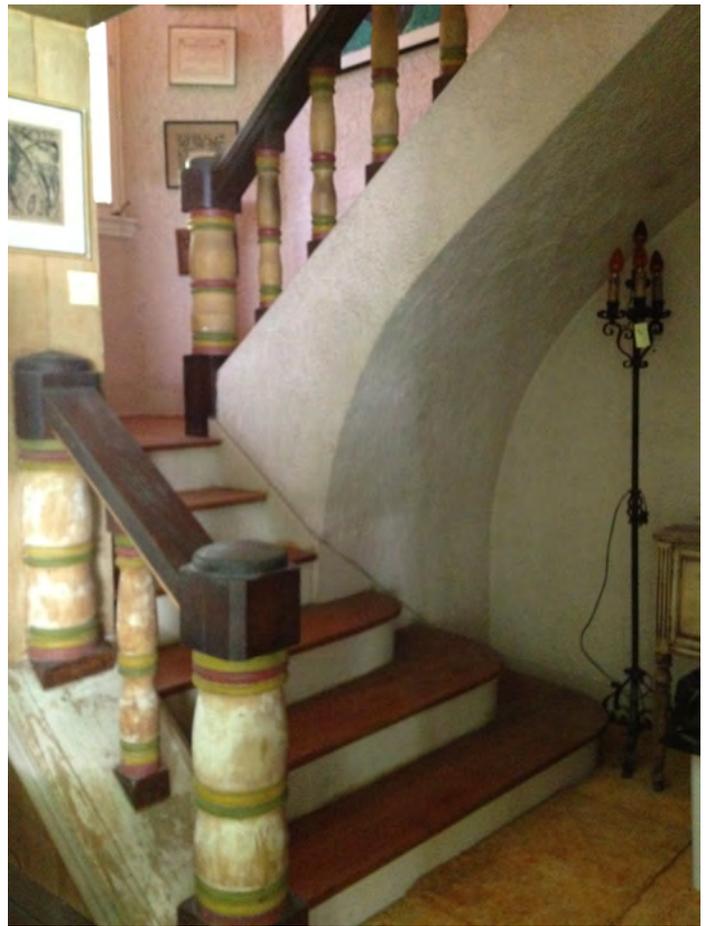
Living Room, 1954



Living Room, 1961



Living Room and original mantelpiece, 2012



Interior photos depicting original front door, staircase, and windows, 2012