
FORT DALLAS (WILLIAM ENGLISH PLANATATION) LUMMUS PARK, 404 N.W. 3 STREET

Designation Report



City of Miami

REPORT OF THE CITY OF MIAMI PLANNING DEPARTMENT
TO THE HERITAGE CONSERVATION BOARD
ON THE POTENTIAL DESIGNATION OF
FORT DALLAS (WILLIAM ENGLISH PLANTATION)
LUMMUS PARK, 404 N.W. 3 STREET
AS A HERITAGE CONSERVATION ZONING DISTRICT

Prepared by Sarah E. Eaton 11/4/83
Historic Preservation Consultant Date

Accepted by John Ward Clark 11/15/83
Chairman, Heritage Conservation Board Date

Designated by Miami City Commission
Ordinance No. 9809
Date 2/28/84

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Historic Name:

Fort Dallas (William English Plantation)

Current Name:

Fort Dallas

Location:

Approximately 404 N.W. 3rd Street
Miami, Florida 33128

Present Owner:

City of Miami
3500 Pan American Drive
Miami, Florida 33133

Present Occupant:

Daughters of the American Revolution
c/o Mrs. Margaret Johansen, President
403 N.E. 31st Street
Miami, Florida 33137

Present Use:

Clubhouse

Present Zoning District:

PR

HC Zoning Overlay District:

HC-1

Tax Folio Number:

01-0109-30-2010

Boundary Description of HC Zoning District:

That portion of "Tract A" of the plat of LUMMUS PARK OF MIAMI, as recorded in Plat Book 81 at Page 23, of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida, lying westerly of the southerly extension of the westerly right-of-way line of North West 4th Avenue. Also described as Block 93N as shown on the plat A.L. KNOWLTON'S MAP OF MIAMI, as recorded in Plat Book B at Page 41, of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida.

HC Zoning Classification:

Historic Site

Dade County Historic Survey Rating:

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

FORT DALLAS (WILLIAM ENGLISH PLANTATION) LUMMUS PARK, 404 N.W. 3 STREET



location



site plan

II. SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Significance:

Fort Dallas (William English Plantation) is significant as a reflection of settlement and military occupation along the Miami River during the mid-nineteenth century and for its association with William English, one of Dade County's early pioneers. The building is also an outstanding example of early masonry vernacular architecture and is one of only two buildings from this era to survive.

William English came to the Miami River in 1842 at the close of the Second Seminole War after purchasing a tract of land from his uncle, Richard Fitzpatrick, for \$16,000. Envisioning a new town here, English laid out the "Village of Miami" on the south bank of the Miami River and began to sell lots. English also established his own plantation on the River and sometime prior to 1844 began the construction of a stone residence and slave quarters. English, however, left Miami in 1849 to follow the California Gold Rush.

Although Fort Dallas (William English Plantation) is significant as a reflection of this early period of settlement along the Miami River, it is best known for its role in Miami's era of military occupation. English's stone buildings were taken over by the Army when Fort Dallas was reestablished here in 1849 and again in 1855. Both buildings were roofed and floored, and the former slave quarters became a storehouse on the first story with additional quarters for the troops on the newly added attic story. The Army, however, soon abandoned Fort Dallas for the final time in 1858.

Fort Dallas (William English Plantation) is the earliest surviving example of native limestone construction in Miami and represents one of the earliest manifestations of the development of a South Florida architectural vernacular. The building is one of only two structures which survive from this period and is therefore unique in Miami's collection of historic properties.

Relationship to Criteria for Designation:

Fort Dallas (William English Plantation) is eligible for designation under the following criteria:

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

Fort Dallas (William English Plantation) is the only remaining structure associated with William English, a pioneer citizen in South Florida who platted the "Village of Miami" in 1843.

2. Exemplifies the historical, cultural, political, economic, or social trend of the community.

Fort Dallas (William English Plantation) is one of only two surviving buildings from the early days of settlement along the Miami River and reflects this mid-nineteenth century development of the area.

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

Fort Dallas (William English Plantation) is the earliest surviving example of native limestone construction in Miami and represents one of the earliest expressions of the development of a South Florida architectural vernacular.

III. HISTORIC INFORMATION

Date of Erection:

c. 1844

Architect:

None

Builder/Contractor:

Fort Dallas (William English Plantation) is said to have been built by the slaves of William English.

Historical Context:

William English came to the Miami River from Columbia, South Carolina, in 1842 and began the construction of his plantation, utilizing the labor of approximately 100 slaves. English was a leading citizen of the small settlement and was elected Senator to the Legislative Council in 1844.

A Seminole Indian attack at Indian River in 1849 prompted the government to reestablish Fort Dallas. The Army occupied the English plantation, improved the two stone buildings he had constructed, and added several others. These troops were withdrawn from Florida in 1850.

During the occupation, English left the Miami River for the California Gold Rush. He died in California before he could return to Florida.

In 1855, the Army reestablished Fort Dallas as a large compound and again completed the construction of English's two stone buildings. Numerous other buildings were also erected at this time. The Army abandoned Fort Dallas for the final time in 1858.

The stone building was variously used as a residence, store, post office, and trading post during the second half of the nineteenth century, and it was often occupied by early pioneers upon their arrival in South Florida. For a short time, the building became the Dade County Courthouse. The building was owned in the late nineteenth century by Julia Tuttle, who used it for storage.

By 1904, however, the stone building had fallen into disrepair. The building was renovated shortly thereafter by the son of Julia Tuttle, and it was at this time that the porch and center gable, as seen in the photograph on page 13, were added. The building was then rented as a single family residence and, later, as a tea

room. Photographs and articles in various publications in the early 1900s indicated that it had already become a building of major historic significance to the City.

When plans were announced in 1925 to demolish the building for a high-rise hotel, the public joined together for the first time in the City's history to try and save something historic. A committee, led by the Miami Woman's Club and the Daughters of the American Revolution, soon raised the money to move the structure, and the City agreed to accept it in place it in Lummus Park. The building was demolished and rebuilt in the park in 1925.

IV. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Description of Building:

Fort Dallas (William English Plantation) is a one story rectangular structure constructed of native oolitic limestone quarried on the site. The building is topped with a gable roof covered with composition shingles and features exposed jig-cut rafters under the eaves.

The main entrance is located on the northeast façade and contains a wood panel door recessed behind an iron gate. Windows are wooden double hung sash with two-over-two lights and are also recessed behind iron grills.

The gable ends are finished with wooden shingles and contain small louvered vents. Also located at each gable end are interior brick chimneys, with the brick exposed below the shingles.

Fort Dallas (William English Plantation) was reconstructed in Lummus Park in 1925 after having been demolished at its original site. In rebuilding the structure, the plan of the original building was copied and old window and door frames were reused.

Description of Site:

Fort Dallas (William English Plantation) is located in the western half of Lummus Park overlooking the Miami River. Also, located on the site is the William Wagner House (see separate designation report), a one story recreation building, and shuffleboard courts.



Fort Dallas (William English Plantation)
Lummus Park, 404 N.W. 3rd Street
North & West Facades
1983



Fort Dallas (William English Plantation)
North bank of the Miami River
Front façade showing building before relocation
c. 1907
(Historical Association of Southern Florida)

V. PLANNING CONTEXT

Present Trends and Conditions:

Fort Dallas (William English Plantation) has been occupied by the Daughters of the American Revolution since 1929. The building is used as the headquarters of the DAR and is maintained by that organization. The building is not open to the public.

Conservation Objectives:

Fort Dallas (William English Plantation) should continue to be protected and maintained by the City and the DAR. The planned renovation of Lummus Park should include an interpretive display or marker to explain the history and significance of the building.

The 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 the western half of Lummus Park. The eastern portion contains newer park structures and is historically unrelated to the historic building.

Major Exterior Surfaces Subject to Review:

All four facades of the Fort Dallas (William English Plantation) 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.

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

"An Interesting Story of Fort Dallas." The Miami Herald. Copy on file at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Miami, Florida, 1910-1911.

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Parks, Arva Moore. "Where the River Found the Bay." Unpublished Report, Miami, Florida, 1979.

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