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# FRANTZ RESIDENCE

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3529 ST. GAUDENS ROAD

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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 POTENTIAL DESIGNATION OF THE  
FRANTZ RESIDENCE  
AS A HISTORIC SITE

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Historic Preservation Officer

Passed and Adopted On: April 7, 2015

Resolution Number: HEPB-R-15-021

## Frantz Residence, 3529 St. Gaudens Road



0    0.025    0.05    0.1 Miles

## **Contents**

- I. General Information
- II. Preliminary Statement Of Significance
- III. Description
- IV. Application of Criteria
- V. Bibliography
- VI. Photographs

## I- General Information

Historic Name:

Frantz Residence

Current Name:

Frantz Residence

Date of Construction:

1922

Location:

3529 St. Gaudens Road  
Miami, Florida 33133

Present Owner:

Hus., LLC  
9751 E. Bay Harbor Drive, Suite 704  
Bay Harbor Island, Florida 33154

Present use:

Private Residential

Zoning:

T3-R/NCD-3

Folio No.:

01-412-800-800-80

Boundary (Legal Description):

28 54 41 The Justison and Frantz PB 6-20 lot 8 and prop int in and to common elements not dedicated to public lot size site value or 10390-1653 0579 5

Setting:

The home is located on St. Gaudens Road, between Main Highway and Biscayne Bay

Integrity:

The home has not been subject to major alterations on the exterior, with the exception of a second floor addition to the garage footprint.

## **II- Statement of Significance**

Architect(s): Richard Kiehnle and John B. Elliott

Constructed in 1922, the home located at 3529 St. Gaudens Road, was originally built for Albert Frantz and his wife Belle. Albert Frantz was part owner in the Sunshine Fruits Company, an organization that was instrumental in the development of Coconut Grove, along with his business partner Harold deBussy Justison. Both built homes along St. Gaudens Road, formerly named Ozone Avenue, in the subdivision of Justison and Frantz – named for these developers – and each hired the architectural firm, Kiehnle and Elliott to design their respective residences.

As part of the early 1920s development boom, the home represents a significant time in Miami's development progress. This era in Coconut Grove partially owes the reason and direction of its growth, particularly in the southern portion of the area, to the Sunshine Fruits Company who subdivided the land and welcomed new land owners to the area.

### Coconut Grove

Coconut Grove is a uniquely situated area along Biscayne Bay, and whose incorporation predated the story of the City of Miami. The settlement of the area began in 1846 when it was first surveyed and flourished even further once the United States implemented the "Homestead Act" in 1862 which granted 160 acres of land to men willing to live on the land for at least five years.

One of the most prominent early citizens of Coconut Grove, Ralph Munroe, was a resident of Staten Island, New York. Munroe began coming to the area in 1877 and then encouraged his friends to visit and even move to the area that was growing both touristically and agriculturally. In 1910, a booklet was even published by the Cocoanut Grove Development Company, Inc. as a way to specifically entice wealthy northerners to move to and invest in Coconut Grove. The booklet included detailed information pertaining to the climate, landscape, the ability to grow certain fruits, as well as the description of costs to construct a home and profits to be made through the sale of land and fruits. Also included are several "questions and answers" as well as letters from visitors and residents to further entice interest in the area.

Due to these efforts and the overall attractiveness of the area, Coconut Grove prospered and was incorporated as its own city from 1919 until 1925, when it was then annexed to the City of Miami. The area experienced exponential growth with the construction of residential homes, a number of large estates, as well as the formation of the downtown core.

The area where the Frantz Residence is located was initially part of Ewanton Heights, a subdivision that was platted in 1894 by J.W. Ewan. "In 1883 Ewan had purchased from the United States government a patent for a one hundred and sixty acre homestead"<sup>1</sup>, initially subdividing the area into large lots along Biscayne Bay where estates were primarily constructed as winter residences by wealthy northern industrialists.

### The Sunshine Fruits Company

With a growing interest in farming in the Coconut Grove area, there became a need for caretakers of groves for absentee owners. Sunshine Fruits Company was founded in 1910 to partially fill this role of owning, operating, and managing fruit groves where a primary interest was in growing a variety of citrus, avocados, and mangoes.<sup>2</sup> Soon thereafter an interest in real estate and property development was incorporated into the original business. The first real estate venture was in 1912 with the subdivision of lots on Bayview Road.

A small home, now known as the Sunshine Fruits Company Inn, was acquired in 1915 to host prospective clients for the expanding real estate business. The real estate firm sold the Inn in the mid-1920s, it continued operation until the mid-1980s and is now a private residence.

By the late teens, the Sunshine Fruits Company also operated the Sunshine Villas, as one of their initial developments. Sunshine Villas were furnished cottages, located just east of the Inn along present day St. Gaudens Road and Bayview Road, that visitors could rent. They were advertised as "Furnished Bungalows" with "all conveniences" including "electric lights, baths, hot and cold water, screened porches and fireplaces"<sup>3</sup> situated near Biscayne Bay.

### Justison and Frantz

The Frantz Residence is associated with the overall transformation of Coconut Grove during the 1920s, in particular with early developers, Harold deBussy Justison and Albert William Frantz. Justison and Frantz were partners in the Sunshine Fruits Company, an organization that was "instrumental in bringing many people of importance to Coconut Grove."<sup>4</sup> Justison entered the Navy in 1917 and called upon Frantz to maintain the business. Frantz was a cashier in the First National Bank of Kenosha, Wisconsin who owned a grove that was in the Company's care. When Justison returned from duty, this pair bought out the remaining shareholders and took over the company in 1919; Frantz serving as

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<sup>1</sup> "Sunshine Fruits Historic District" Designation Report, author and unknown.

<sup>2</sup> Dorn, Harold W. "Mango Growing Around Early Miami." Tequesta pp. 37

<sup>3</sup> Coconut Grove City Directly, 1925

<sup>4</sup> Well Established Real Estate Firm had a Novel Origin, *The Miami Daily Metropolis*, March 3, 1923

Vice-President and Treasurer, and Justison as President. Coconut Grove experienced exponential growth at this time, and became incorporated as its own city for a period of five years. During this brief period of time, Justison served as the City's fourth and final mayor.

The Sunshine Fruits Company began subdividing lots in the Ewanton Heights Subdivision, renaming this section the Justison and Frantz Subdivision. Originally named Ozone Avenue, St. Gaudens Road was named for the Saint-Gaudens family<sup>5</sup> who held an estate at the end of the street extending to Biscayne Bay, now 3500 St. Gaudens Road. The renaming occurred early on, as by 1926 Miami's City Directory referred to the street as St. Gaudens Road.<sup>6</sup>

Prior to the development of St. Gaudens Road, these developers were also responsible for the subdivision of Entrada, Sunshine Villas, and Bayview Road. Bayview Road was the first of their real estate ventures when the land was purchased from Dr. John C. Gifford, the first American to hold a doctorate in Forestry, in 1912. The Bayview Road Subdivision actually included a portion of what is now St. Gaudens Road.

They also developed commercial properties, including the Sunshine Building constructed in 1923 located on a corner lot at the intersection of Grand Avenue and Ingraham Highway in downtown Coconut Grove. This structure, still in existence today, was also designed by Kiehnle and Elliott.

As a primary influence on the growth of Coconut Grove these developers continue to be commemorated with streets named for each in their honor. The adjacent streets are located northwest of St. Gaudens Road, named Justison Road and Frantz Road.

#### Kiehnle and Elliott

The residence at 3529 Saint Gaudens Road in Coconut Grove was designed by the prominent architectural firm, Kiehnle and Elliott. The firm was originally formed in Pittsburgh by the founding partners, Richard Kiehnle and John B. Elliott, who held offices in both Miami and Miami Beach. The structure exemplifies the Mediterranean style, an architectural mode introduced by this firm to South Florida with their design of the John Bindley mansion "El Jardin" in Coconut Grove in 1917.

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<sup>5</sup> Parks, Arva and Bennett, Bo. *Images of America in Coconut Grove*. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Polk, R.L. *R.L. Polk and Company's Miami City Directory*. Jacksonville, Florida: R.L. Polk and Company, 1917-1944.

The firm continued to design both commercial and residential properties throughout South Florida, with an explosion of work during the early 1920s. Richard Kiehnel was the firm's primary presence in the Miami area and was the senior architect of the firm. The work of this firm can still be seen throughout the area and several structures are designated as Historic Resources in the City of Miami including the Coconut Grove Playhouse, El Jardin, the Old Post Office and Courthouse, and the Scottish Rite Cathedral. In addition, several of their home designs are included in the City's first Historic District, Morningside.

A Miami Metropolitan News story quotes Kiehnel about his residential architectural designs. He comments specifically about the use of patios, front porches, and what he refers to as "bird cages".<sup>7</sup> Bird cages, he expressed, "are the prime essential of the moderate-sized tropical house," utilizing the space for both sleeping and living purposes by incorporating open air passages with doorways, arches, and windows to increase interior air flow. This specific method can be seen in his design of the Justison Residence, also located on St. Gaudens Road, but is also evident in other residential projects with the liberal use of large windows and doors.

The Mediterranean Style, that the Frantz Residence is representative of, has become one that is identified with south Florida architecture. At the time of its introduction, this style was uniquely suited to the tropical climate prior to the invention of air-conditioning. According to architectural critic Beth Dunlop in describing the Mediterranean Style, "the idea was to conjure up images of the old-world in a tropical 'new world',"<sup>8</sup> with an amalgamation of mostly Spanish and Italian Renaissance design elements. In addition, architects Kiehnel and Elliott primarily favored the use of stucco for both "economy and convenience"<sup>9</sup> in their designs. This exterior finish has become a defining feature of the Mediterranean style.

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<sup>7</sup> "Seclusion Instead of a Front Porch Is The Fundamental Factor With European Styles of Houses Say Grove Architect." *The Miami News* 8 September 1922: 16. Print.

<sup>8</sup> Dunlop, Beth. "Inventing Antiquity: The Art and Craft of Mediterranean Revival Architecture", *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, Vol. 23, Florida Theme Issue (1998), pp. 190-207.

<sup>9</sup> "Seclusion Instead of a Front Porch Is The Fundamental Factor With European Styles of Houses Say Grove Architect." *The Miami News* 8 September 1922: 16. Print.

### **III- Description**

#### Architectural Description

Mediterranean in style, the design of the Frantz Residence is laid out in an L-shape with an asymmetrical front façade, retaining both the original floor plan and exterior details. Walls are constructed of concrete with a stucco coating topped with side-gabled barrel tile roof. Majority of the wood windows and doors appear to be original, and replacements are only evident in a few locations.

The corner of the home is anchored by a rectangular box with a flat roof with two half-round stucco roof scuppers signature of the Mediterranean Style. The remainder of the structure is capped by a barrel tile roof, terra cotta in color, with exposed scallop-shaped timber beams extending beneath the overhang. Nestled in the corner of the L-shape plan on the rear of the house is stucco clad chimney that rises above the roof line. The chimney cap provides an element of interest with a set of two arches, each with a carved out arch-shaped opening.

The front entrance is offset towards the west end of the front façade containing glass paneled French doors with a rounded top, capped by a barrel tiled portico. Acting as a focal point on the front facade is a polychrome wooden balcony on the second story, protected by an extension of the barrel tile roof. Glass paneled French doors with flanking sidelights are set within the balcony, and the same fenestration pattern is repeated directly below on the first floor. On the east end of the front façade, there is an enclosed porch area, the opening repeats the use of the same glass paneled French doors found at the front entry.

#### Interior

The interior retains much of the original materials including additional polychrome detailing on the banisters, baseboards, door surrounds, and most impressive, the stenciling on the living room ceiling. The detailing is a combination of scallop-edges, bulbous, and disc shaped elements. Much of the original wood doors and flooring remains and appears to be in good condition.

The first floor of the home contains an enclosed porch, living room, dining room, butler's pantry, and kitchen. The walls in each of the rooms have a stucco texture. Chandelier light fixtures are in each of the main rooms on the first floor, and it is possible that they are all original to the home. There are three different flooring types on the first level, the enclosed patio contains a tile floor, the living and dining room has wood flooring with narrow planks. The kitchen and butler's pantry has new tile flooring and an updated kitchen. Within the butler's pantry are wood built-ins for kitchen storage that appear to be original to the home. In the living room, the main focal point is a stately fireplace set in the center of the

wall. The stucco covered chase that angles out from the wall, connecting with a curved concrete mantel that is supported by two scallop-edged brackets and a quoin pattern extending downwards.

The second floor contains three bedrooms and three bathrooms. Originally there was most likely three bedrooms and two bathrooms and later, an addition to the second floor of the garage, provided an extension to the third bedroom adding another bathroom and creating a master bedroom suite.

Although the floor plan remains primarily intact, the garage space has been altered with the garage addition. When the home was initially built, the tax card record shows a one car garage with a later addition of a second space in 1947. Another addition of a second floor living space over the garage footprint was constructed, although the exact date is unknown.

## **IV- Application of Criteria for Designation**

The Frantz Residence at 3529 St. Gaudens Road possesses quality and character through its architectural design, historical associations with Coconut Grove, and represents a work of master architects, Kiehnle and Elliott. The property is eligible for designation under the following criteria as numbered in Section 23-4(a) contained in Chapter 23 of the City Code:

- (1) *Are associated in a significant way with the life of a person important in the past;*

Justison and Frantz were partners in the Sunshine Fruits Company, an organization that was “instrumental in bringing many people of importance to Coconut Grove.” Justison entered the Navy in 1917 and called upon Frantz to maintain the business. Frantz was a cashier in the First National Bank of Kenosha, Wisconsin who owned a grove that was in the Company’s care. When Justison returned from duty, this pair bought out the remaining shareholders and took over the company in 1919; Frantz serving as Vice-President and Treasurer, and Justison as President.

- (2) *Are the site of a historic event with significant effect upon the community, city, state, or nation;*

The development boom of the early 1920s – turning what was once fruit groves into an active residential and commercial community.

- (3) *Exemplify the historical, cultural, political, economic, or social trends of the community;*

The early development of Coconut Grove, particularly the subdivision of lots in the southern portion of the area, can be attributed to the Sunshine Fruits Company. As an early real estate firm, the Sunshine Fruits Company was active during a time of extreme transformation -- the development boom of the early 1920s – turning what was once fruit groves into an active residential and commercial community.

- (4) *Portray the environment in an era of history characterized by one or more distinctive architectural styles;*

In and of itself, the Mediterranean Style is an eclectic combination of several styles that utilizes techniques and construction methods to uniquely adapt structures to the tropical climate of south Florida.

- (5) *Embody those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or method of construction;*

In and of itself, the Mediterranean Style is an eclectic combination of several styles that utilizes techniques and construction methods to uniquely adapt structures to the tropical climate of south Florida. The architects of the Frantz Residence are directly tied to the creation of this style, one that has been evolved throughout the past century and is specifically identified as a representation of our region's architecture.

- (6) *Are an outstanding work of a prominent designer or builder;*

Kiehnle and Elliot, the architects attributed to the Frantz Residence, was an active firm in south Florida from the 1910s through the 1940s. They were especially busy during the construction boom of the early 1920s and are responsible for the designs of several treasured Historic Resources within the City of Miami;

- (7) *Contain elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship of outstanding quality or which represent a significant innovation or adaptation to the South Florida environment.*

In and of itself, the Mediterranean Style is an eclectic combination of several styles that utilizes techniques and construction methods to uniquely adapt structures to the tropical climate of south Florida. The architects of the Frantz Residence are directly tied to the creation of this style, one that has been evolved throughout the past century and is specifically identified as a representation of our region's architecture.

## V- PLANNING CONTEXT

The home is located on St. Gaudens Road, a street that is heavily landscaped with large trees creating an overarching canopy. It is situated on a corner lot, at the intersection of St. Gaudens Road and St. Gaudens Court, with access to the driveway and garage from St. Gaudens Court.

Most homes along the street are hidden behind this heavily landscaped passage, as well as non-transparent fences and gates, however the Frantz Residence retains a clear view from St. Gaudens Road. The structure is set on a lot that contains a minimal number of trees that obstruct its view from the right of way, and is surrounded by a low, decorative cement and stucco wall. It is located within both a High Probability Archeological Conservation Area and Environmental Preservation District (EP-70).

### Contributing Structures and Landscape Features

There is one contributing structure on the site, the two story residence described in the preceding text, of which all facades shall be subject to review.

The decorative cement and stucco wall and gates set along the southern and eastern property lines holds a stylistic relationship with the residential structure and shall be subject to review.

Any future development at the site should also take into consideration the lush tree canopy created by the existing landscape features, both along the right-of-way and on the property. These landscape features are subject to requirements set forth in Chapter 17 of the City Code.

## VI- BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## VII- Photographs



Figure 1: Tax Card Photo, City of Miami

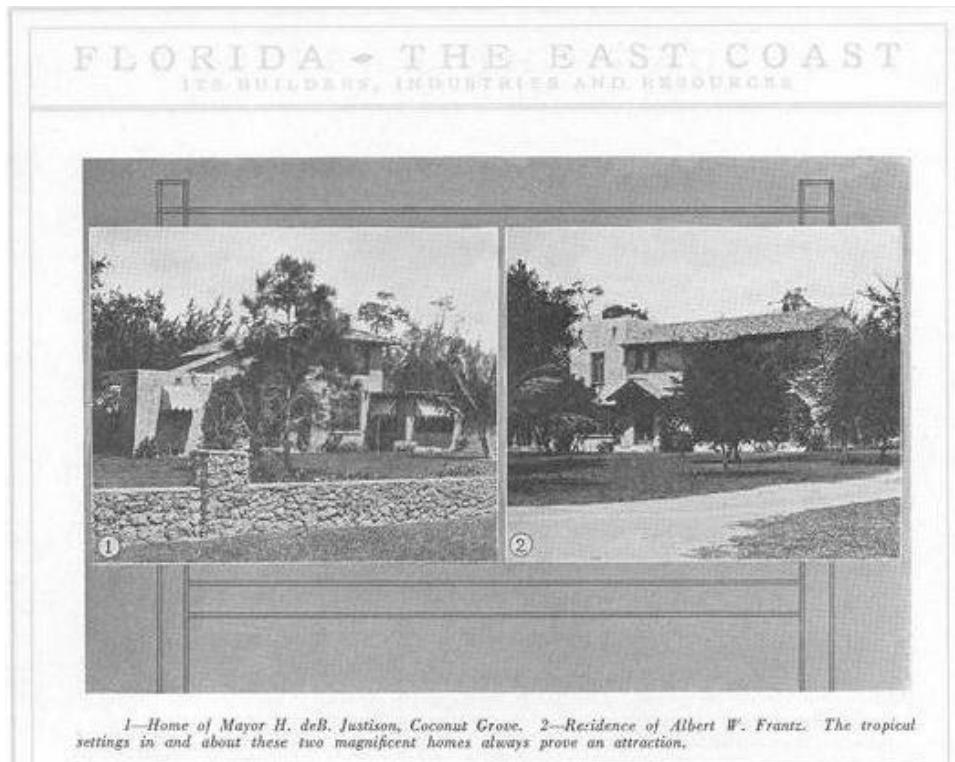
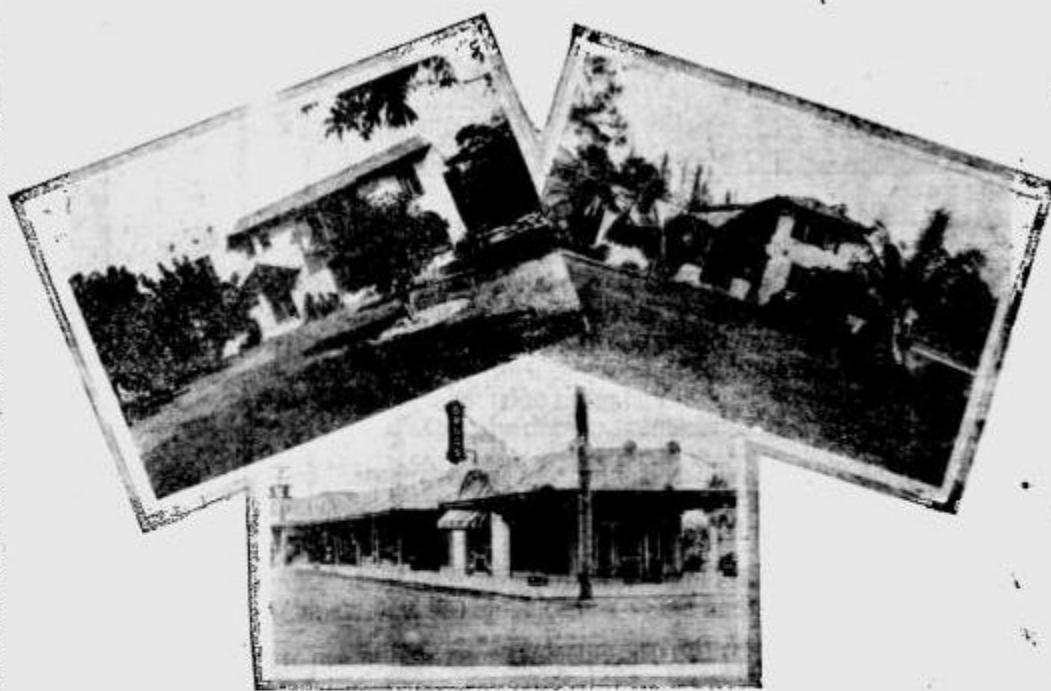


Figure 2: East Coast: Its Builders, Resources, Industries, Town and City Development, *The Miami Herald*, Miami, Florida, 1924; pp. 28, 251



Upper Right: H. G. Justing Residence.  
Upper Left: A. W. Francis Residence.  
Lower: The Sunshine Building.

## A Representative Group of, Coconut Grove Properties



These buildings illustrate the standards we are setting in construction work at Coconut Grove.

Nothing is too good for people who appreciate the best in homes and commercial buildings, and our constant aim is to make the best still better.

*Visitors are always welcome at our office.*

**THE SUNSHINE FRUITS COMPANY**  
Established 1910  
**COCONUT GROVE, FLORIDA**

Figure 4: Sunshine Fruits Company Ad, Miami New-Metropolis, January 1, 1924



Figure 4: Front Façade



Figure 5: Wooden balcony



Figure 6: Garage in rear



Figure 7: Rear Façade and Chimney



Figure 8: Stucco wall in front yard



Figure 9: Stucco wall and gate in front yard



Figure 10: Living room with fireplace



Figure 11: Polychrome wood detailing and stenciled ceiling



Figure 12: Living room



Figure 13: Cabinetry in butler's pantry



Figure 14: Lighting fixture on first floor