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# MIAMI WOMAN'S CLUB

1737 N. BAYSHORE DRIVE

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## Designation Report



City of Miami

REPORT OF THE CITY OF MIAMI PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
TO THE HERITAGE CONSERVATION BOARD  
ON THE POTENTIAL DESIGNATION OF THE  
MIAMI WOMAN'S CLUB  
1737 N. BAYSHORE DRIVE  
AS A HERITAGE CONSERVATION ZONING DISTRICT

Prepared by Sarah E. Eaton 10/15/82  
Historic Preservation Date  
Consultant

Accepted by Charles Edwin Chase 10/26/82  
Chairman, Heritage Date  
Conservation Board

Designated by the Miami City Commission

Ordinance No. 9559 and 9560

Date 1/13/83

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Historic Names:

Miami Woman's Club and Flagler Memorial Library

Current Name:

Miami Woman's Club  
International Fine Arts College

Location:

1737 N. Bayshore Drive

Present Owner:

Miami Woman's Club  
1737 N. Bayshore Drive  
Miami, Florida 33132

Present Occupant:

Miami Woman's Club  
1737 N. Bayshore Drive  
Miami, Florida 33132

International Fine Arts College  
1737 N. Bayshore Drive  
Miami, Florida 33132

Present Use:

Social; Educational

Present Zoning District:

C-1

HC Zoning Overlay District:

HC-1

Boundary Description of HC Zoning Overlay District:

All of lot 3, less the south 20 feet east of the original shoreline, and all of lot 4 of the plat of MIRAMAR PLAZA AMENDED, as recorded in Plat Book 33 at Page 18, of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida.

HC Zoning Classification:

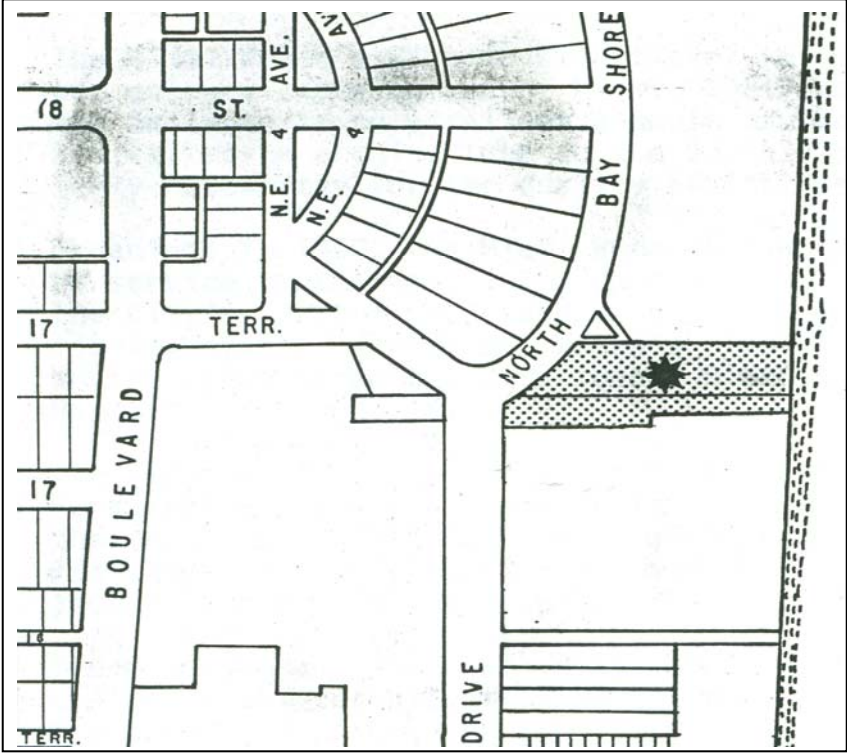
Historic Site

Dade County Historic Survey Rating:

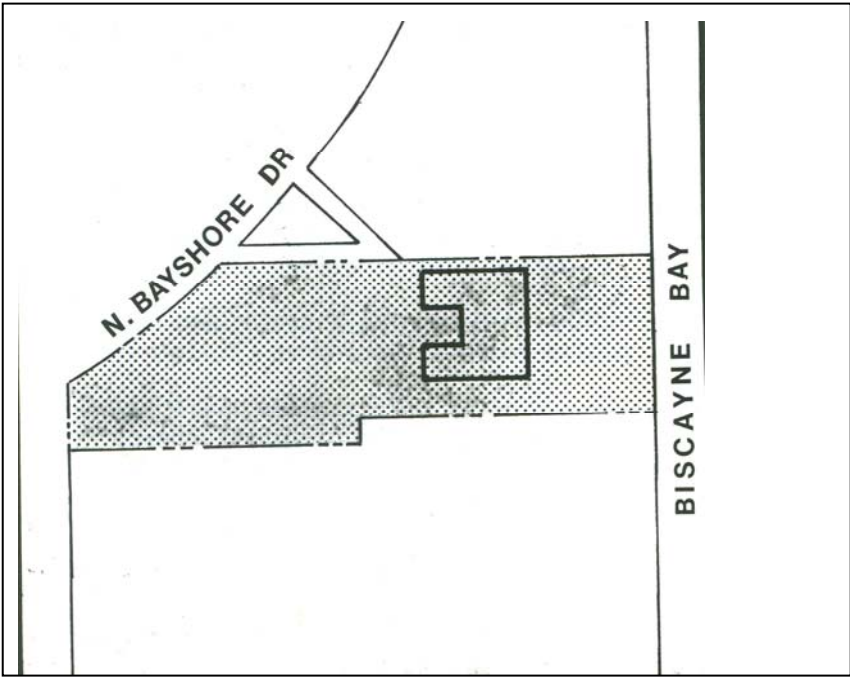
Architectural Significance - 1  
Historical Significance - 1  
Contextural Significance - 1

# MIAMI WOMAN'S CLUB

1737 N. BAYSHORE DRIVE



location



site plan

## II. SIGNIFICANCE

### Statement of Significance:

The Miami Woman's Club is significant for its contribution to the social and cultural development of Miami. Designed by a prominent local architect, the building is an excellent example of the adaptation of Spanish Renaissance Revival style architecture to the South Florida environment and is particularly noteworthy for the quality of its design, craftsmanship and detailing.

Organized in 1900, the Miami Woman's Club has maintained an impressive record of service to the South Florida community. The organization established the City's first library and is credited with founding the present public library system. The Miami Woman's Club also founded the Travelers Aid Society, organized the Dade County Blood Bank and began the City Curb Market.

The Miami Woman's Club is an excellent example of the adaptation of Spanish Renaissance Revival style architecture to the South Florida environment. The excellence of its design, craftsmanship and detailing is evident in its symmetrical composition; articulated fourth story featuring semi-circular arched windows, belt courses and cornice; garden courtyard; and porte-cochere.

The Miami Woman's Club was designed by August Geiger, one of Miami's outstanding early architects. Geiger also designed The Alamo and La Gorce Country Club and was the associate architect for the Dade County Courthouse.

### Relationship to Criteria for Designation:

The Miami Woman's Club is eligible for designation under the following criteria:

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

The Miami Woman's Club has served as one of Miami's most important social and cultural organizations and was responsible for establishing the City's public library system.

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

The Miami Woman's Club is an excellent example of a local adaptation of Spanish Renaissance Revival style architecture and is particularly noteworthy for its articulated fourth story, porte-cochere and garden courtyard.

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

The Miami Woman's Club was designed by August Geiger, a prominent local architect who produced many of Miami's outstanding structures.

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.

The Miami Woman's Club is particularly noteworthy for the excellence of its craftsmanship and detailing, embodied in such features as its porte-cochere, semi-circular arched windows on the fourth story and garden courtyard.



### III. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

#### Date of Erection:

1925-1926

#### Architect:

The architect for the Miami Woman's Club was August Geiger. Geiger, a prominent local architect, also designed The Alamo, La Gorce Country Club, and, as associate architect, the Dade County Courthouse.

#### Builder/Contractor:

F. H. Foster

#### Historical Context:

The Miami Woman's Club was organized in 1900 as "The Married Ladies' Afternoon Club." Founded by Mrs. Curtis W. Gardner and Mrs. James M. Jackson, the Club's initial interests were social and literary but soon expanded to include varied civic endeavors.

The club was chartered on July 24, 1911, and in 1913 built its first clubhouse on Flagler Street on a lot donated by Henry Flagler. As a condition of the agreement with Flagler, the building also housed a public library and reading room, the first free public library in Miami.

The present building was constructed in 1925 to meet the club's growing needs as activities and membership expanded. The Miami Woman's Club has continued to serve the community and has repeatedly been recognized for its contribution to the cultural advancement of South Florida.

#### IV. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

##### Description of Building:

The Miami Woman's Club is a four story U-shaped structure with seven bays across the east façade. The building is topped with a flat parapet roof and is constructed of reinforced concrete covered with stucco.

A porte-cochere on the south façade of the building marks the entrance to the Woman's Club. The building can also be entered on the west façade through double wrought iron gates which lead into the central courtyard.

This garden courtyard, enclosed on three sides by the U-shape of the building, originally featured open galleries on the first, second and third stories. These galleries, topped by a shed roof covered with barrel tiles, were later enclosed to provide additional interior space.

The fenestration of the building is highlighted by tall, semi-circular arched windows on the fourth story. This upper level is further defined by molded belt courses and a projecting cornice. Windows on the other levels are casement and sash types and are rectangular in shape.

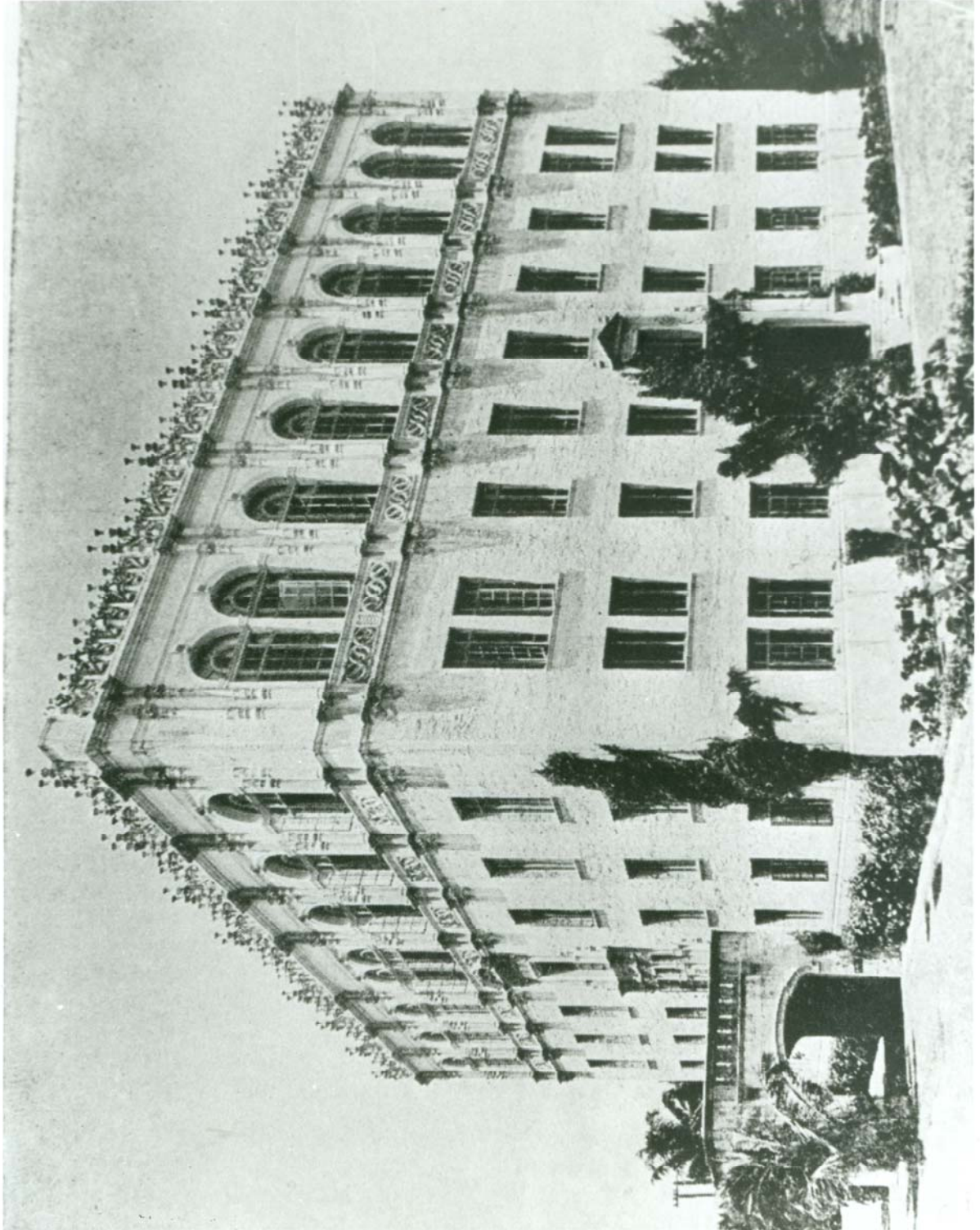
When the building was originally constructed, elaborate metal cresting topped the building's flat roof. This cresting, together with paired pilasters and ornamentation surrounding the fourth story windows, was removed in 1951 due to deterioration from the salt air. Also removed were elaborate door and window surrounds consisting of pilasters and pediments which had graced the center bay of the south and east facades. As a result, the building now presents a much plainer and more simple appearance.

##### Description of Site:

The Miami Woman's Club overlooks Biscayne Bay and is located directly south of Margaret Pace Park. Much of the site itself is paved for surface parking.



Miami Woman's Club  
1737 N. Bayshore Drive  
South and east facades  
1982



Miami Woman's Club  
1737 N. Bayshore Drive  
South and East Facades  
c. 1942 (Courtesy of Historical Association of Southern Florida)

## V. PLANNING CONTEXT

### Present Trends and Conditions:

The Miami Woman's Club has been continually occupied by the Club membership, and the building has been well-maintained. Although it once stood alone on Biscayne Bay, the building is now in the center of an area which is scheduled for redevelopment. This development of the Omni area will greatly alter the scale and feeling of this former residential neighborhood. Plans for Plaza Venetia call for the construction of a Marriott Hotel south of the Club (now under construction) and a second hotel to the west of the building across N. Bayshore Drive.

### Conservation Objectives:

Because deed restrictions on the Miami Woman's Club restrict the use of the property, the continued preservation of the building appears assured, despite redevelopment pressure in the area. The City of Miami and the Heritage Conservation Board should, wherever possible, encourage the continued use of the facility.

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 the entire tract of land owned by the Miami Woman's Club.

### Major Exterior Surfaces Subject to Review:

All four facades of the Miami Woman's Club 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 the requirements for tree removal permits, as set forth in Chapter 17 of the City Code.

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Blackman, E. V. Miami and Dade County, Florida. Victor Rainbolt: Washington, D.C., 1921.

Dade County, Florida. Community and Economic Development, Historic Preservation Division. Dade County Historic Survey, Site Inventory File for 1737 N. Bayshore Drive, Miami, Florida.

United States Department of Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places. Nomination Form for Miami Woman's Club.