
PETIT DOUY 1500 BRICKELL AVENUE

Designation Report



City of Miami

REPORT OF THE CITY OF MIAMI PLANNING DEPARTMENT
TO THE HERITAGE CONSERVATION BOARD
ON THE POTENTIAL DESIGNATION OF
PETIT DOUY
1500 BRICKELL AVENUE
AS A HERITAGE CONSERVATION ZONING DISTRICT

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

Approved by Charles Edwin Chase 12/14/82
Chairman, Heritage Date
Environmental Preservation Board

Designated by the Miami City Commission

Ordinance No. 9628

Date 05/31/83

CONTENTS

Page

I. General Information	4
II. Significance	7
III. Historical Information	9
IV. Architectural Information	10
V. Planning Context	13
VI. HC Zoning Elements	14
VII. Bibliography	15

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Historic Name:

Petit Douy

Current Name:

Petit Douy

Location:

1500 Brickell Avenue
Miami, Florida

Present Owner:

John M. & Ethel Murrell
1500 Brickell Avenue
Miami, Florida 33129

Present Occupant:

Ethel Murrell

Present Use:

Residential

Present Zoning District:

R-3B, with SPD-5 overlay

Present Overlay District:

HC-3

Tax Folio Number:

01-4139-01-0270

Boundary Description of HC Zoning District:

Lots 41 and 42 of Block 55 in the plat of FLAGLER (Mary Brickell), as recorded in Plat Book 5 at Page 44, of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida.

HC Zoning Classification:

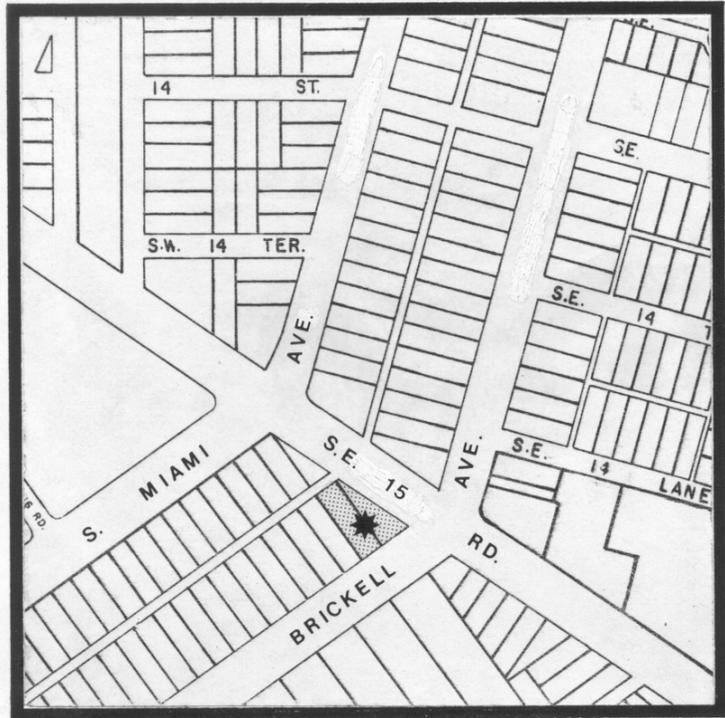
Historic Site

Dade County Historic Survey Rating:

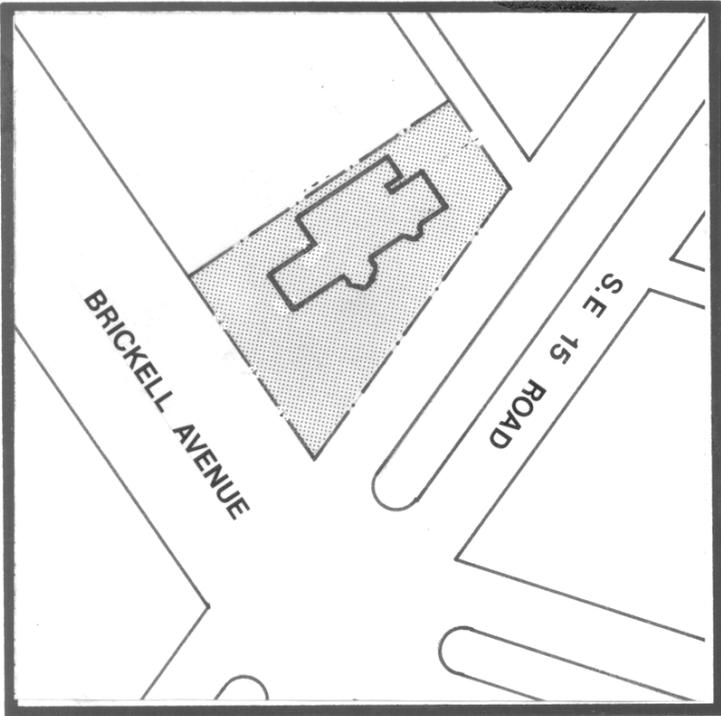
Architectural Significance	-1
Historical Significance	-1
Contextural Significance	-1

PETIT DOUY

1500 BRICKELL AVENUE




location




site plan

II. SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Significance:

Petit Douy is significant as a unique example of Period Revival style architecture in Miami and is particularly noteworthy for the excellence of its craftsmanship and detailing. The house is also significant for its close association with John and Ethel Murrel, both prominent local attorneys and community activists.

Petit Douy is a reflection of the widespread American penchant during the first third of the twentieth century for the architecture of an earlier period. In Miami, this trend can be seen most typically in the Spanish and Mediterranean Revival buildings which reflect the City's heritage. There are also examples of other styles which had never been seen in South Florida, such as English Tudor and Dutch Colonial. Petit Douy, however, is unique in the City's collection of Period Revival style residences. Patterned after the fourteenth century Priory, St. Julienne in Douy, France, Petit Douy is Miami's only known French chateau.

The outstanding craftsmanship and detailing of Petit Douy are evident throughout the building. Of particular note are the two octagonal towers with tent roofs, parapet gable roof and dormers, crenellated garage roof, and trefoil arch windows with leaded or stained glass.

Petit Douy is also significant for its association with John and Ethel Murrel. John Murrell, who came to Miami in 1921 served as George Merrick's attorney and also represented other pioneer families, including the Brickells. Mr. Murrell founded the Miami Humane Society and instigated the successful use of teams of black and white officers in the Miami Police Department.

Ethel Murrell, and attorney, author, and lecturer, is best known as one of Florida's leading feminists. Mrs. Murrell drafted the Married Women's Emancipation Bill which was passed in Florida in 1943 and was elected president of the National Women's Party in 1951. She was also instrumental in forming the Soroptimist Club of Miami and in founding the Soroptimist Home of Miami, a shelter for indigent, elderly persons.

Relationship to Criteria for Designation:

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

Petit Douy was the residence of John Murrell from the time of its construction in 1931 until his death in 1982. Mrs. Murrell continues to live in the house. Both John and Ethel Murrell are recognized as prominent local attorneys, known for their strong community activism.

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

Petit Douy is an outstanding example of Period Revival style architecture and is Miami's only known example of a French chateau.

7. Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship of outstanding quality or which represent a significant innovation or adaptation to the South Florida environment.

Petit Douy is particularly noteworthy for the excellence of its craftsmanship and detailing, embodied in such features as its two octagonal towers with tent roofs, parapet roof and dormers, crenellated garage roof, and trefoil arch windows with leaded or stained glass.

III. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Date of Erection:

1931

Architect:

The architect for Petit Douy was Martin L. Hampton, a noted Miami architect. Hampton was part of a group of architects collaborating with George Merrick in the creation of Coral Gables. Hampton also had an extensive practice in Miami Beach and designed such buildings as the Old Miami Beach City Hall, the Embassy Hotel, and numerous private residences.

Building/Contractor:

The contractor for Petit Douy was J. W. Hunt.

Historical Context:

John M. Murrell came to Miami in 1921 after receiving his law degree from John B. Stetson University. After the death of his first wife, Harriet Clark, he married Ethel Ernest in 1931. Mrs. Murrell received her law degree from the University of Miami in 1934.

Mr. and Mrs. Murrell visited France after their marriage and selected a chateau near Douy, France, as a model for their new house in Miami. The house, known as Petit Douy (or little Douy), was constructed at a cost of \$365,000. Mr. Murrell died in 1982, and Mrs. Murrell continues to live in the house.

IV. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Description of Building:

Petit Douy is a two story structure with an irregular plan and asymmetrical façade. The building is topped with a steeply pitched parapet gable roof which is stepped at the ends. The roof is covered with asbestos sheeting. The building is of concrete block construction, and its exterior walls are covered with smooth stucco.

Two octagonal towers with tent roofs are located on the building's northeast (front) façade. The central and larger of the two towers contains the building's main entrance. This entrance is topped with a plain lintel and is surrounded by quoins. The doorway itself is recessed behind the building's façade.

The majority of windows in the building are wooden casements and are flanked by quoins. The towers and gable end also contain trefoil arch windows with leaded glass. Slightly projecting wall dormers with parapet gable roofs which are stepped at the ends punctuate the roofline. A coat of arms decorates the gable end of each dormer. Aluminum hurricane shutters have been added to most windows. A number of decorative features embellish the building, including quoins and a rusticated watertable. Projecting brick headers form a cornice along the main roofline of the house and along the towers. Similar headers decorate the tall chimney caps and form a string course on the west tower.

A two car garage, with a crenellated roofline, is located on the northwest façade. The garage is original to the building.

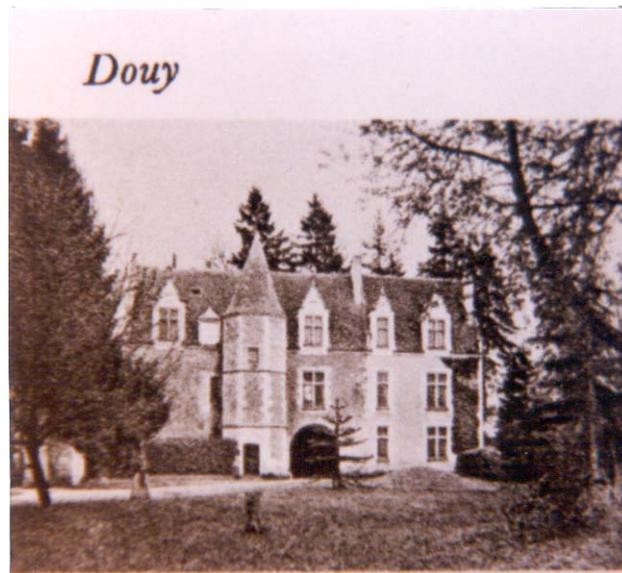
Several additions and alterations, most of which are minor, have been made to the building. These include the enclosure of rear second story deck and the addition of an awning canopy on the building's southeast façade.

Description of Site:

Petit Douy faces northeast and is located on the west corner of Brickell Avenue and S.E. 15 Road. The lot sits above the street level on a rock outcropping and the house is practically hidden from view by heavy vegetation. A swimming pool, added in 1962, is located on the southwest corner of the lot.



Petit Douy
1500 Brickell Avenue
Northeast (front) facade
1982



Chateau, Douy France
(From Fregnac, Claude, Les Chateaux de L'Ile de France, p. 301)

V. PLANNING CONTEXT

Present Trends and Conditions:

Petit Douy is located on Brickell Avenue in an area which is rapidly being developed with expensive townhouses and condominiums. Because the value of the land is worth more than the value of a single-family house, it will not be economically feasible to retain Petit Douy as a single-family residence when the current owners decide to sell the property.

In order to prevent demolition of the house for townhouses or apartments, an SPD-5 overlay district was applied to the property in April, 1982. SPD-5 provides zoning incentives which allow a change in use from residential to professional offices. Certain modifications to off-street parking requirements are also provided. It was determined that a change in land use was the key incentive to promote a privately-funded preservation project.

Conservation Objectives:

Petit Douy is being proposed for HC zoning because the current SPD-5 zoning overlay district will expire on April 6, 1983, when the new zoning ordinance (No. 9500) goes in effect. An HC zoning district would preserve the same zoning incentives.

An HC-3 Residential-Office Heritage Conservation Overlay District would replace SPD-5, but would contain the same provisions of the earlier overlay district. HC-3, however, would provide for design review by the Heritage Conservation Board, not the Urban Development Review Board.

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 Murrell family.

Major Exterior Surfaces Subject to Review:

All four facades of Petit Douy 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

Chiu, Melanio J. "Historic Preservation Study on Petit Douy, 1500 Brickell Avenue, Miami, Florida," Unpublished Research Report, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, 1978.

Dade County, Florida. Community and Economic Development, Historic Preservation Division. Dade County Historic Survey, Site Inventory File for 1500 Brickell Avenue, Miami, Florida

Gabriel, Patricia. Book of Outstanding Homes of Miami. Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1975.