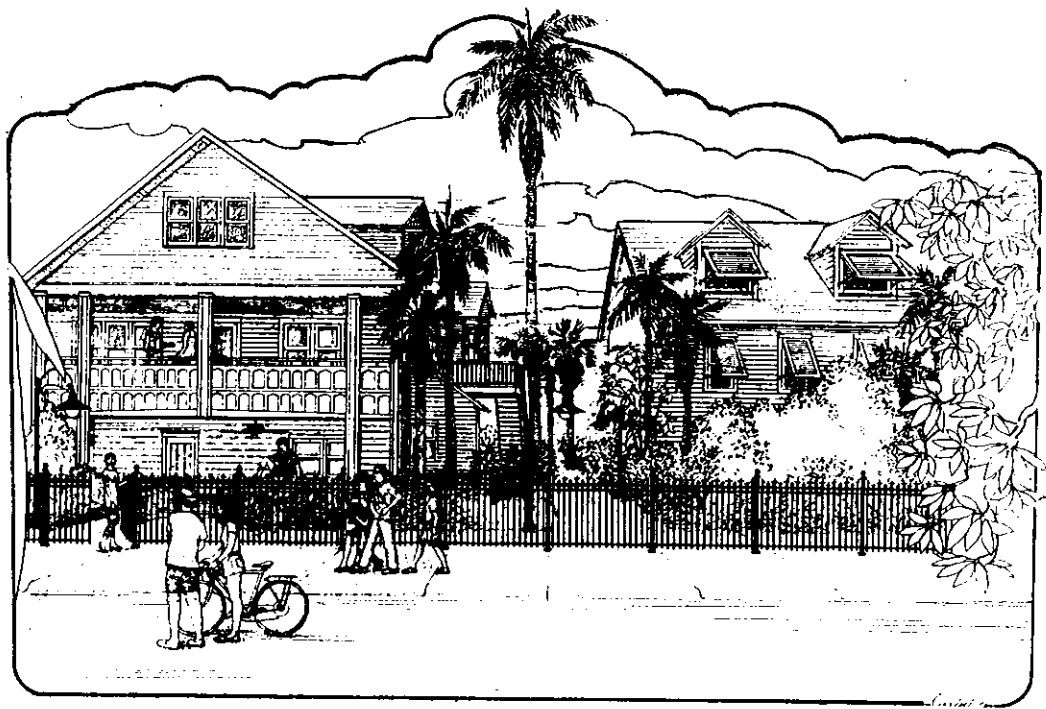


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# SOUTH RIVER DRIVE HISTORIC DISTRICT

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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  
SOUTH RIVER DRIVE HISTORIC DISTRICT  
AS A HERITAGE CONSERVATION ZONING DISTRICT

Prepared by

Sarah E. Eaton  
Historic Preservation  
Planner

9-17-86  
Date

Accepted by

Arthur H. King, Jr.  
Chairman, Heritage  
Conservation Board

9-30-86  
Date

Designated by the Miami City Commission

Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Historic Name:

South River Street

Current Name:

South River Drive Historic District

Location:

428, 438 S. W. 1 Street  
431, 433, 435, 437 S. W. 2 Street  
104, 109, 118, 124 S. W. South River Drive

Present Owner:

Magic City Enterprises	and	Lazaro A. Santana
111 S. W. 5 Avenue		420 S. W. 12 Avenue
Miami, FL 33130		Miami, FL 33130

Present Use:

Residential, vacant

Present Zoning District:

RG-2/5, CR-3/7

HC Zoning Overlay District:

HC-5

Tax Folio Number:

01-0201-80-1020  
01-0201-80-1021  
01-0201-80-1030  
01-0201-80-1040  
01-0201-80-1060  
01-0201-80-1160  
01-0201-80-1170  
01-0201-80-1180

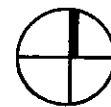
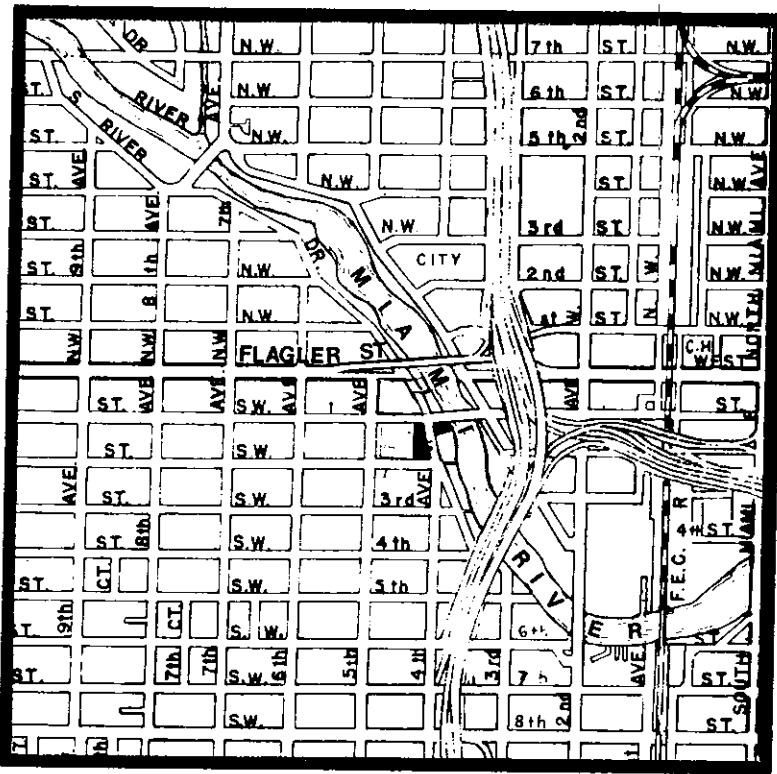
Boundary Description of HC Zoning District:

Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 15, 16, 17, and 18, less the Northerly 5 feet of Lots 3 and 4, of Block 18 of the plat of CITY OF MIAMI SOUTH, as recorded in Plat Book "B" at Page 41, of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida; together with that unplatted parcel of land fronting on the west bank of the Miami River, extending approximately 100 feet South of the S. W. 1 Street bridge, between the Miami River and S. W. South River Drive, further described as follows: Beginning at the point where the South line of 13 Street (now called S. W. 1 Street) as shown by the Map of Miami, Dade County, Florida, recorded in Plat Book "B" at Page 41, Public Records of Dade County, Florida, produced Easterly intersects the United States Harbor Line on the Westerly side of the Miami River; thence Northwesterly along said United States Harbor Line a distance of 15.5 feet more or less, to the South side of the S. W. 1 Street bridge as now constructed; thence with a deflection angle of  $68^{\circ}55'43''$ , more or less, to the left run along said South side of the S. W. 1 Street bridge as now constructed a distance of 35.58 feet more or less, thence continuing along said South side of the S. W. 1 Street bridge as now constructed along the arc of a curve to the right, having a radius of 889.92 feet, more or less, and a central angle of  $03^{\circ}30'18''$  more or less, a distance of 54.44 feet, more or less, to a point on the said South line of 13 Street (now called S. W. 1 Street) produced Easterly; thence East along said South line of 13 Street (now called S. W. 1 Street) produced Easterly a distance of 96.91 feet, more or less, to the point of beginning. Being the same property conveyed to the grantor and her deceased husband by the City of Miami by Quit Claim Deed dated April 21, 1931 and recorded in Deed Book 1442 at Page 303 of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida; and beginning at a point where the North line of Lot 3 of Block 18 South, according to Knowlton's Plat of Miami, Florida, produced East intersects the Easterly boundary of South River Street; thence Southerly along said Easterly line of South River Street to a point where a line drawn east and west through the center of Lot 2 if produced East intersects the Easterly line of South River Street; thence Easterly along said center line of Lot 2 produced east to the low mark of Miami River; thence Northerly along said low water line to a point where the North line of said Lot 3 produced east would intersect said low water line; thence Westerly along said line produced East to point of beginning; with all submerged land between this tract and the channel of the Miami River, together with all riparian rights. LESS that portion thereof conveyed to the City of Miami by deed dated February 6, 1931, recorded in Deed Book 1445 at Page 524 of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida, and also less that portion dedicated to the City of Miami by deed dated March 26, 1935, recorded in Deed Book 1622 at Page 342 of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida.

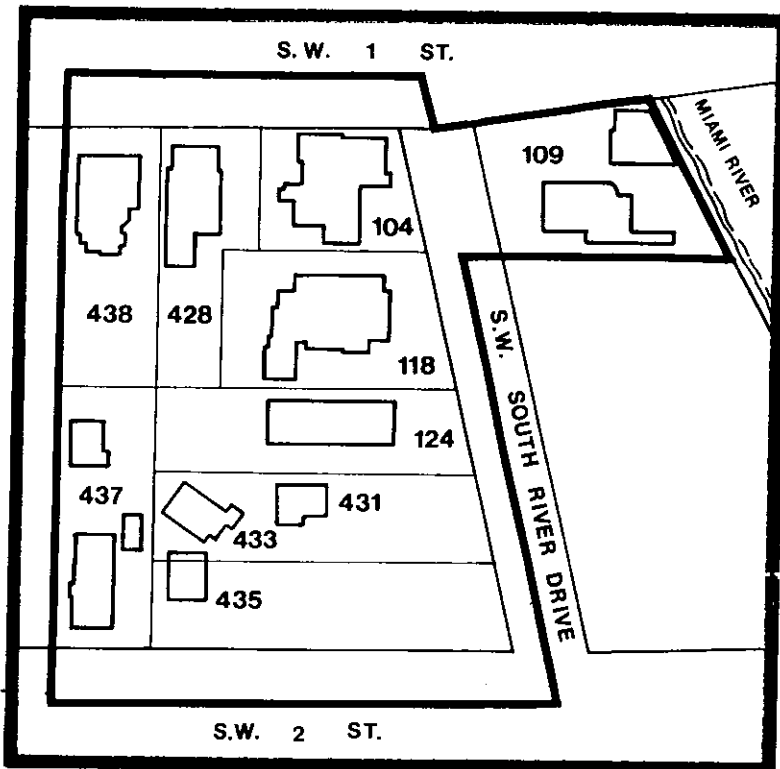
HC Zoning Classification:

Historic District

# SOUTH RIVER DRIVE HISTORIC DISTRICT



location



site plan

## II. SIGNIFICANCE

### Statement of Significance:

The South River Drive Historic District is significant to the history of architecture and community development in Miami. Developed primarily during the first two decades of the twentieth century, the district contains the City's oldest extant grouping of frame vernacular buildings in such close proximity to the Miami River. These buildings embody those characteristics of South Florida's frame vernacular architecture and exemplify the architectural trends in Miami prior to 1915. The district's location, period of construction, and use reflect the historical development of the City of Miami.

In the early years of the 1900's, suburban expansion in Miami extended only to the north and south of the City. It was not until 1906 that significant western expansion was possible. At that time, work began on the Everglades drainage project, and a bridge and short-lived trolley car line were constructed over the Miami River at the foot of Flagler Street. It was shortly after this, circa 1908, that the first building in the South River Drive Historic District was constructed. All six of the historic buildings within the district were completed by circa 1914.

It is unlikely that the buildings within the South River Drive Historic District were ever single family residences, with the exception of 437 S. W. 2 Street. If such was their original use, it was short-lived. The owners of these buildings soon began to take in boarders, and the buildings became rooming houses. The large size (two and two-and-one-half stories) of these buildings made them easily adaptable to such a use. In addition, their strategic location in proximity to the Miami River and the Flagler Street bridge, coupled with the events of the period, made the structures prime targets for this transformation.

The year 1896, which brought rapid change, development, and growth to the fledgling City of Miami, also brought with it an increase in population. New residents, as well as tourists, began arriving, literally, by the train load. While the Royal Palm Hotel attracted Rockefellers, Astors, and Vanderbilts, as well as U. S. Congressmen and European royalty, the less wealthy tourists and potential new residents also needed accommodations. Rooming houses such as the ones found in the South River Drive Historic District fulfilled this need. An advertisement for an establishment similar to these, but no longer standing, read: "Reasonable Rates, for Table, Board." Another proclaimed: "An ideal winter home for the tourist, an all-year hotel for the transient." The area west of the Miami River soon began to fill with comfortable, unassuming residences and rooming houses as the City of Miami rapidly expanded.

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

The South River Drive Historic District contains outstanding examples of frame vernacular style buildings.

8. By being part of or related to a subdivision, park, environmental feature, or other distinctive area, should be developed or preserved according to a plan based on a historic, cultural or architectural motif.

The South River Drive Historic District is one of the City's most unique groupings of historic buildings. The area's historic and architectural character should be preserved as a reminder of Miami's past.



The largest rooming house in the South River Drive Historic District is known as the Rose Arms and is located at 118 S. W. South River Drive. Its first owners were John C. Baile and his wife Rose. The Bailes may have operated a rooming house complex, for they also appear as the owners of 428 S. W. 1 Street and 104 and 109 S. W. South River Drive. While the Rose Arms remained under Baile proprietorship for several years, the other three properties were sold to Charles L. Gibbons and his wife, Isabella, as early as 1914. By 1918, Charles O. Sims and his wife, Winifred, appear as the owners of 428 S. W. 1 Street. Sims was employed by the Hagan Realty Company. In 1915, James C. Smith and his wife, Josephine, are recorded as owners of 438 S. W. 1 Street. James Smith was a physician. Although this structure may first have served as a single family residence, it was later referred to as the New Jersey Guest House. The structure located at 437 S. W. 2 Street, built circa 1913, seems to have always been a single family residence. Its first residents were the Eberwines. William C. Eberwine was a milliner who worked for the Chaffin Millinery Shop. In later years, he was employed by the Southern Feed Company as Secretary and Treasurer. This building is a typical example of the type of house constructed in this working class neighborhood.

The buildings within the South River Drive Historic District are representative of the early frame vernacular architecture of South Florida. The frame vernacular mode reflects the open, rural character of the area at that time and is well adapted to the local climate. The buildings retain a high degree of architectural intergrity.

The South River Drive Historic District is one of Miami's most unique groupings of historic buildings. The district has remained a cohesive unit, despite the presence of several non-contributing structures.

#### Relationship to Criteria for Designation:

The South River Drive Historic District is eligible for designation under the following criteria:

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

The South River Drive Historic District reflects Miami's early development patterns during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

4. Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by one or more distinctive architectural styles.

The South River Drive Historic District contains the City's oldest extant grouping of frame vernacular buildings in such close proximity to the Miami River and exemplifies the architectural trends of the early 1900's.

### III. DESCRIPTION

The South River Drive Historic District is a small grouping of historic buildings in East Little Havana. Located on the southwest bank of Miami River, the district encompasses approximately one half of a square block and includes ten buildings as well as several outbuildings. The majority of buildings are frame vernacular structures of balloon frame construction and are two or two-and-one-half stories. The primary use is single or multi-family residential.

Most of the buildings within the district were constructed between 1908 and 1914, the area's major period of significance. Four buildings in the district, however, fall outside the area's major period of significance and are considered non-contributing structures.

The six contributing buildings in the South River Drive Historic District are united by a strong architectural theme. These frame vernacular structures are rectangular in plan and are two or two-and-one-half stories tall. Four have gable roofs of medium pitch with gable roof dormers. The other two are topped with hipped roofs. Roof covering is of composition shingles, except for 438 S. W. 1 Street, which has been re-roofed with galvanized aluminum. Original roofing materials on all of the structures cannot be ascertained due to the lack of early photographs. However, similar buildings in the area from that period were known to have used composition shingles, wood shingles, and metal for roofing. All roofs have slightly projecting eaves and exposed rafter ends. Exterior wall covering on all buildings is horizontal weatherboards. Structures are raised off the ground on masonry foundation piers. Original windows were wood frame, double hung sash, with one-over-one lights. Many of these windows remain. The six buildings retain a high degree of architectural integrity and have not been significantly altered.

The buildings at 438 and 428 S. W. 1 Street are sited perpendicularly to the river, with their main access through a metal bridgeway on the second floor connected to the elevated S. W. 1 Street bridge over the Miami River. 104 S. W. South River Drive is located at the corner of S. W. South River Drive and S. W. 1 Street, immediately adjacent to the two previously mentioned structures, and directly across the street from the Miami River. 109 South River Drive stands on the west bank of the Miami River, across the street from the main group. The last contributing building, 437 S. W. 2 Street, is around the corner from the main group, perpendicular to the river, and related to the others through its backyard.

All non-contributing structures are located in the southeast corner of the district. The buildings include a three story apartment building on S. W. South River Drive and three small two story apartment buildings on S. W. 2 Street.

#### IV. PLANNING CONTEXT

##### Present Trends and Conditions:

The South River Drive Historic District is located in the easternmost part of East Little Havana, an area plagued by deterioration and crime. Problems in the area were recently addressed by the East Little Havana Task Force, and recommendations for improvement were presented to the City Commission.

All buildings within the district have been acquired (or are under contract) by Magic City Enterprises, the group responsible for the rehabilitation of the nearby J. W. Warner House. Magic City hopes to convert the district into a bed and breakfast inn. The group believes that the rehabilitation of these buildings will spur redevelopment in the neighborhood. Rehabilitation has been completed on one building and begun on a second. Completion is targeted for December 1986.

##### Conservation Objectives:

Historic district designation should be used as a tool to recognize the historic importance of the South River Drive area and promote its preservation. Magic City Enterprises is to be commended for its commitment to East Little Havana and should be encouraged in its efforts. Because existing zoning will not permit the proposed bed and breakfast inn, a change of use is necessary.

The proposed HC-5: Commercial-Residential Heritage Conservation Overlay District would provide the zoning incentives necessary to make the preservation of these buildings feasible. HC-5 would permit a change of use to allow hotels/tourist homes and would allow accessory uses not to exceed 20 percent of the total floor area. Certain retail uses compatible with the historic character of the district would also be permissible, as would modifications to off-street parking requirements. All alterations to the exterior of the buildings, as well as the change of use, would require the approval of the Heritage Conservation Board.

VI. HC ZONING ELEMENTS

Boundaries:

The boundaries of the South River Drive Historic District have been drawn to include all contiguous property owned or under contract to purchase by Magic City Enterprises. These boundaries encompass the neighborhood's largest concentration of buildings that were constructed during the 1900's and 1910's and that still retain their integrity. The four non-contributing buildings on lots 16, 17, and 18 were included because they are (or will be) under the same ownership, are functionally related to the proposed new use for the district, and need to be regulated to preserve the historic integrity of the adjacent buildings.

Major Exterior Surfaces Subject to Review:

All facades 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.

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