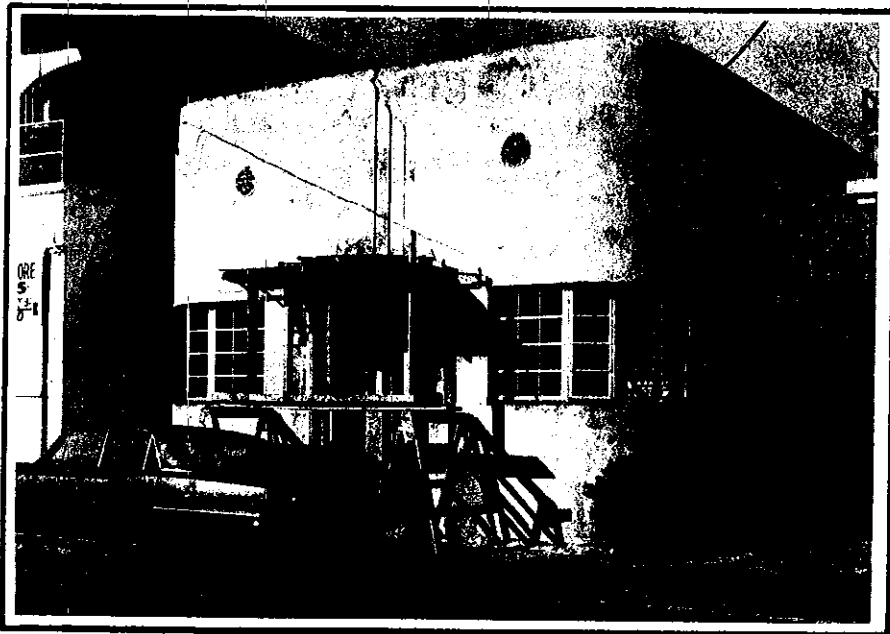

X-RAY CLINIC

171 N.W. 11 STREET

Designation Report



City of Miami

REPORT OF THE CITY OF MIAMI PLANNING DEPARTMENT
TO THE HERITAGE CONSERVATION BOARD
ON THE POTENTIAL DESIGNATION OF
X-RAY CLINIC
171 N.W. 11TH STREET
AS A HERITAGE CONSERVATION ZONING DISTRICT

Prepared by Sarah E. Eaton 1-6-84
Historic Preservation Date
Consultant

Accepted by John Ward Clark
Chairman, Heritage Date
Conservation Board

Designated by the Miami City Commission

Ordinance No. 9845

Date MAY 26 1984

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Historic Name:

X-Ray Clinic

Current Name:

X-Ray Clinic

Location:

171 N.W. 11th Street
Miami, Florida

Present Owner:

Black Archives, History and Research Foundation of South
Florida Inc.
5400 N.W. 22nd Avenue
Miami, Florida 33142

Present Occupant:

Vacant

Present Use:

Vacant

Present Zoning District:

CR-3/7

HC Zoning Overlay District:

HC-1

Tax Folio Number:

01-0100-50-1090

Boundary Description of HC Zoning District:

The westerly 24 feet of the easterly 74 feet of Lot 6, and the westerly 3 feet of the easterly 50 feet of Lot 6 of Block 5 of the plat of MIAMI NORTH, as recorded in Plat Book B at Page 41, of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida.

HC Zoning Classification:

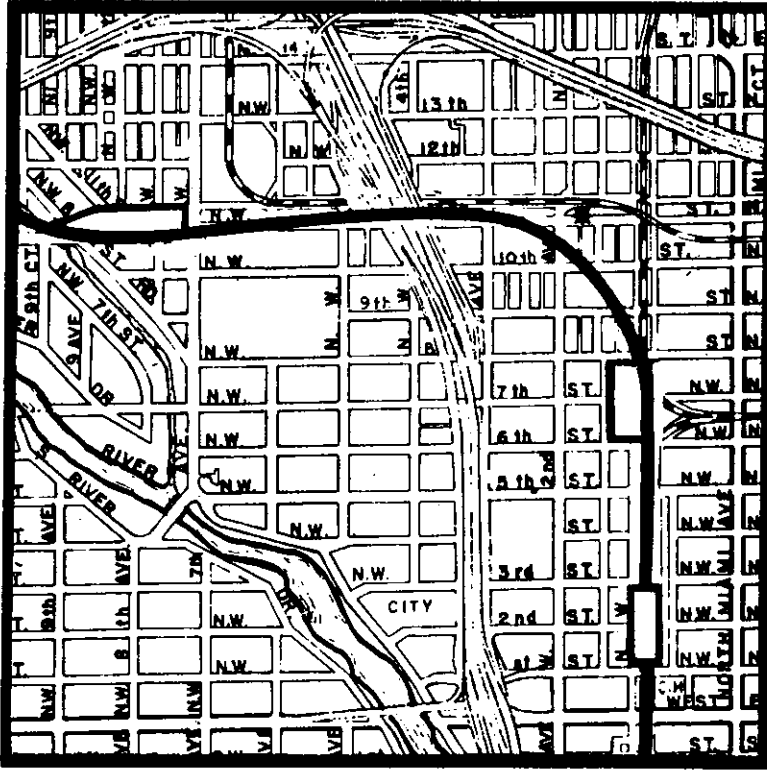
Historic Site

Dade County Historic Survey Rating:

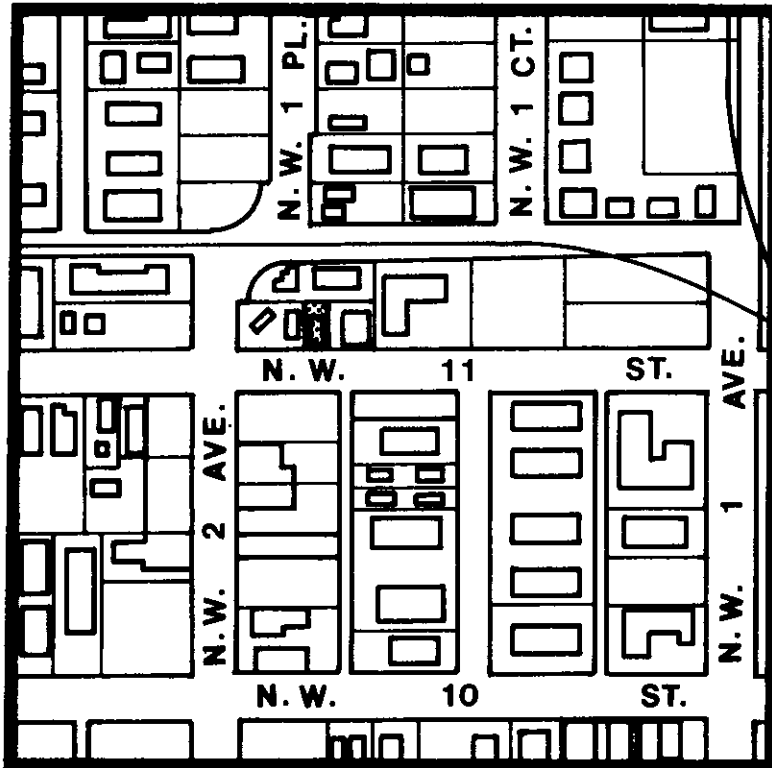
Architectural Significance - 2
Historical Significance - 1
Contextural Significance - 2

X-RAY CLINIC

171 N.W. 11 STREET



location



site plan

II. SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Significance:

The X-Ray Clinic is significant for its associations with a prominent physician in Miami's early black community and as a reflection of life in Overtown during the first half of the twentieth century. The building is also a typical example of Streamline Moderne style architecture during the 1930's.

Dr. Samuel H. Johnson came to Miami as a child in 1903 and began to practice medicine here in 1931. He later studied radiology and was the first black physician in South Florida to establish a radiological practice. The X-Ray Clinic was built to serve as his office because blacks were not allowed to be x-rayed at the City Hospital. Shortly after opening his clinic, Dr. Johnson is said to have amassed the most extensive x-ray equipment of any private black practitioner in the United States.

The construction of the X-Ray Clinic in 1939 reflects the reality of segregated life in Miami during the early decades of the twentieth century. Because Overtown, then known as "Colored Town," was forced to be virtually a self-sufficient community, black-owned businesses and professional services thrived. The X-Ray Clinic is one example of the types of services which were provided to meet the needs of this once-vibrant community.

The X-Ray Clinic is a good example of the application of Streamline Moderne style architecture to a modest commercial building. The elements of the style are particularly evident in the building's rounded corners, horizontal band of windows, use of glass block, and central relief details.

Relationship to Criteria for Designation:

The X-Ray Clinic 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.

The X-Ray Clinic is the most important structure associated with the life of South Florida's first black radiologist.

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

The X-Ray Clinic is a reflection of life in Overtown during the early twentieth century and of the self-sufficiency of the community.

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

The X-Ray Clinic is a good example of Streamline Moderne style architecture during the 1930's and is particularly noteworthy for its rounded corners, horizontal band or windows, and central relief details.

III. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Date of Erection:

1939

Architect:

The X-Ray Clinic was designed by a Mr. Barker, a mechanical drawing instructor at Booker T. Washington School.

Builder/Contractor:

The original contractor for the X-Ray Clinic was Godfrey C. Scovello. H. S. Braggs completed the building.

Historical Context:

Dr. Samuel H. Johnson was born in Key West in 1900 and moved to Miami with his parents and sister in 1903. The Johnsons were originally from Harbor Island in the Bahamas.

Johnson completed high school at Florida A&M College (University) in Tallahassee in 1919 and then taught school in Dade County for five years. After completing pre-medical training at Morehouse College in Atlanta, he received his medical degree from Meharry Medical College in Nashville in 1930. Dr. Johnson began his career as a general practitioner in Miami in 1931.

In 1936, Dr. Johnson returned to medical school for graduate work in radiology, studying at Cook County Hospital in Chicago. Upon completion, Dr. Johnson became South Florida's first black radiologist. He erected a new office building to house his x-ray clinic in 1939.

Dr. Johnson's brother John practiced law from the X-Ray Clinic between 1947 and 1955 and met there with Thurgood Marshall, who was to become the first black U. S. Supreme Court justice, to discuss a discrimination case in 1949. At that time, Marshall was legal counsel for the NAACP.

Dr. Johnson continued to operate the clinic until 1967, retiring in 1974. He deeded his former office building to Black Archives in 1981.

IV. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Description of Building:

The X-Ray Clinic is a one story rectangular structure with three bays across south (front) facade. This concrete-block building is covered with smooth stucco and is topped with a flat roof with parapet.

The building is symmetrical in composition and features a central entrance. The main doorway is surrounded by tinted pink keystone blocks, placed to resemble quoins, and by glass block sidelights. A semi-circular canopy, topped with the words "X-Ray Clinic," originally covered the entrance.

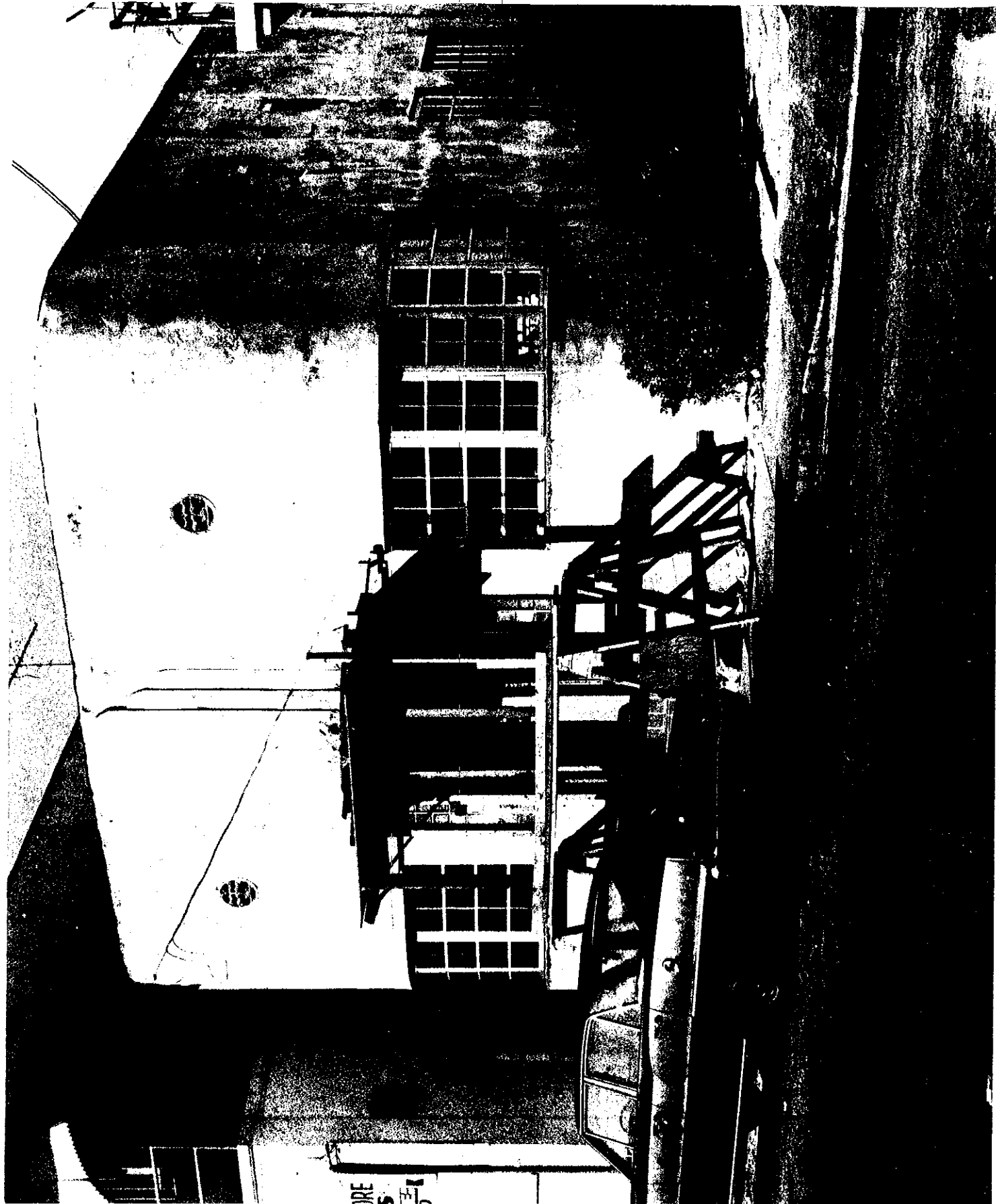
Above the entrance is a central low relief panel which features a rounded stepped motif with a strong vertical emphasis. On either side of this panel is a round, ornamental, concrete vent.

The streamlined look of the building is heightened by its rounded corners and horizontal band of windows. The original windows were metal casements, but these have been replaced with multi-light aluminum windows.

The X-Ray Clinic is currently undergoing rehabilitation.

Description of Site:

The X-Ray Clinic faces south and fronts directly on the street. The building occupies almost the entire lot.



X-Ray Clinic
171 N.W. 11th Street
South (front) facade
1984



X-Ray Clinic
171 N.W. 11th Street
South (front) facade
c. 1940's
(Courtesy of Black Archives, History & Research Foundation)

V. PLANNING CONTEXT

Present Trends and Conditions:

The X-Ray Clinic has been vacant since 1972 and was in a deteriorated condition when it was donated to the Black Archives in 1981. The building is located within Phase III of the Southeast Overtown/Park West Community Redevelopment Plan, an area not expected to be redeveloped for approximately eight to ten years.

In order to rehabilitate the building, Black Archives has received two grants from Metro-Dade Community Development. Rehabilitation is underway and should be completed by May 1984. Black Archives will rent or lease the building, possibly for use as an art gallery showcasing black art.

Conservation Objectives:

Rehabilitation should proceed according to schedule so the X-Ray Clinic can be dedicated as planned during National Historic Preservation Week in May. The completion of this project will focus community attention on the possibilities for historic preservation in Overtown.

Efforts should continue to identify appropriate businesses to rent or lease the space so the building can be put to an economically productive use, thus providing a sustaining income for Black Archives.

These conservation objectives can best be achieved by maintaining the present zoning of the property. An HC-1 zoning overlay district will maintain the existing 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 Black Archives.

Major Exterior Surfaces Subject to Review:

The south, east, and west 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.

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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