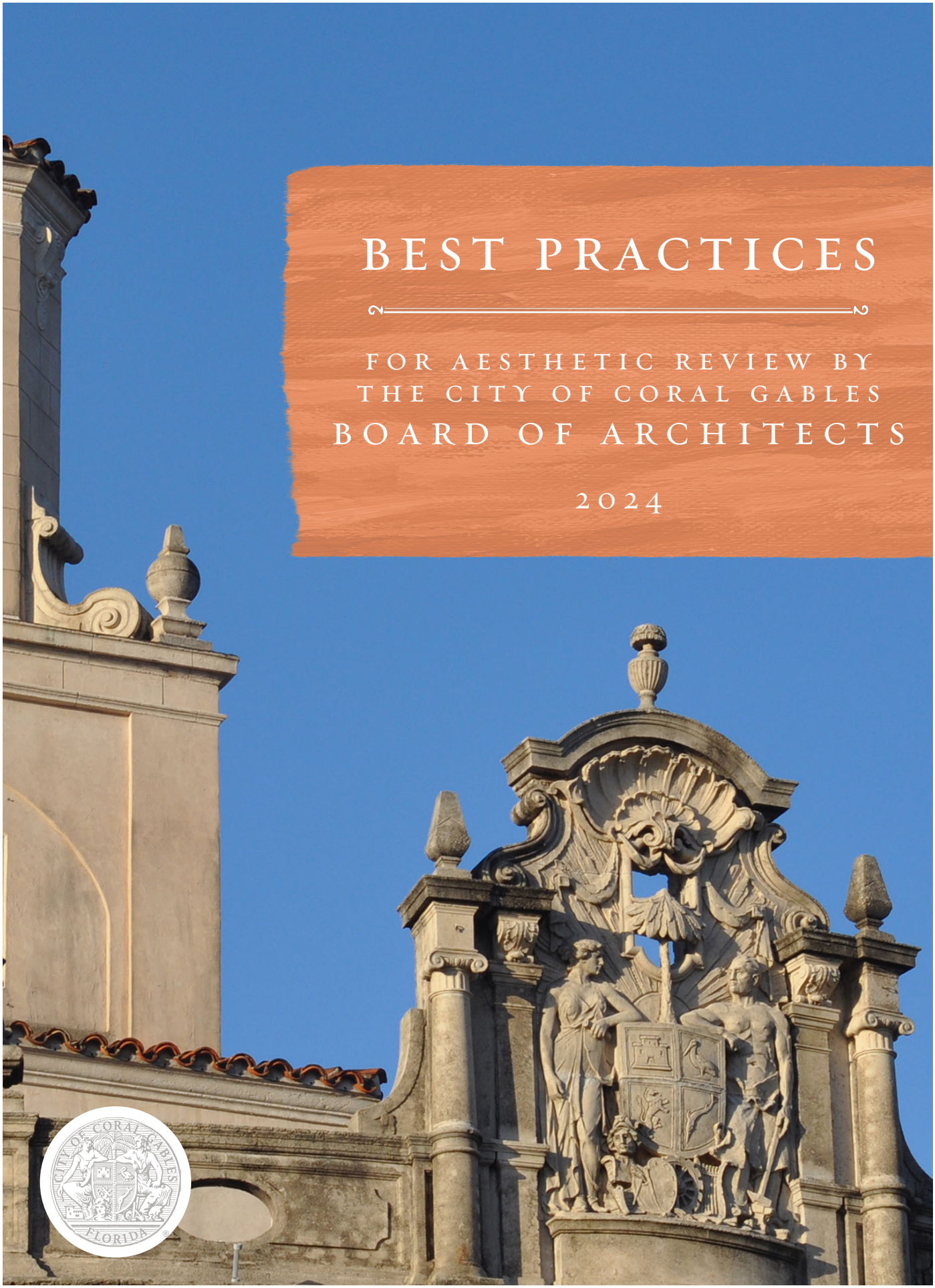

BEST PRACTICES

FOR AESTHETIC REVIEW BY
THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES
BOARD OF ARCHITECTS

2024

"People of this city dream that they are living in a community that is fixed in character, the character that made it world renowned.

But it is only a dream.

The character of this city is changing rapidly, and unless the citizens are awakened very soon, they will find that Coral Gables, the City Beautiful, has become just another town."

- Walter De Garmo

1948

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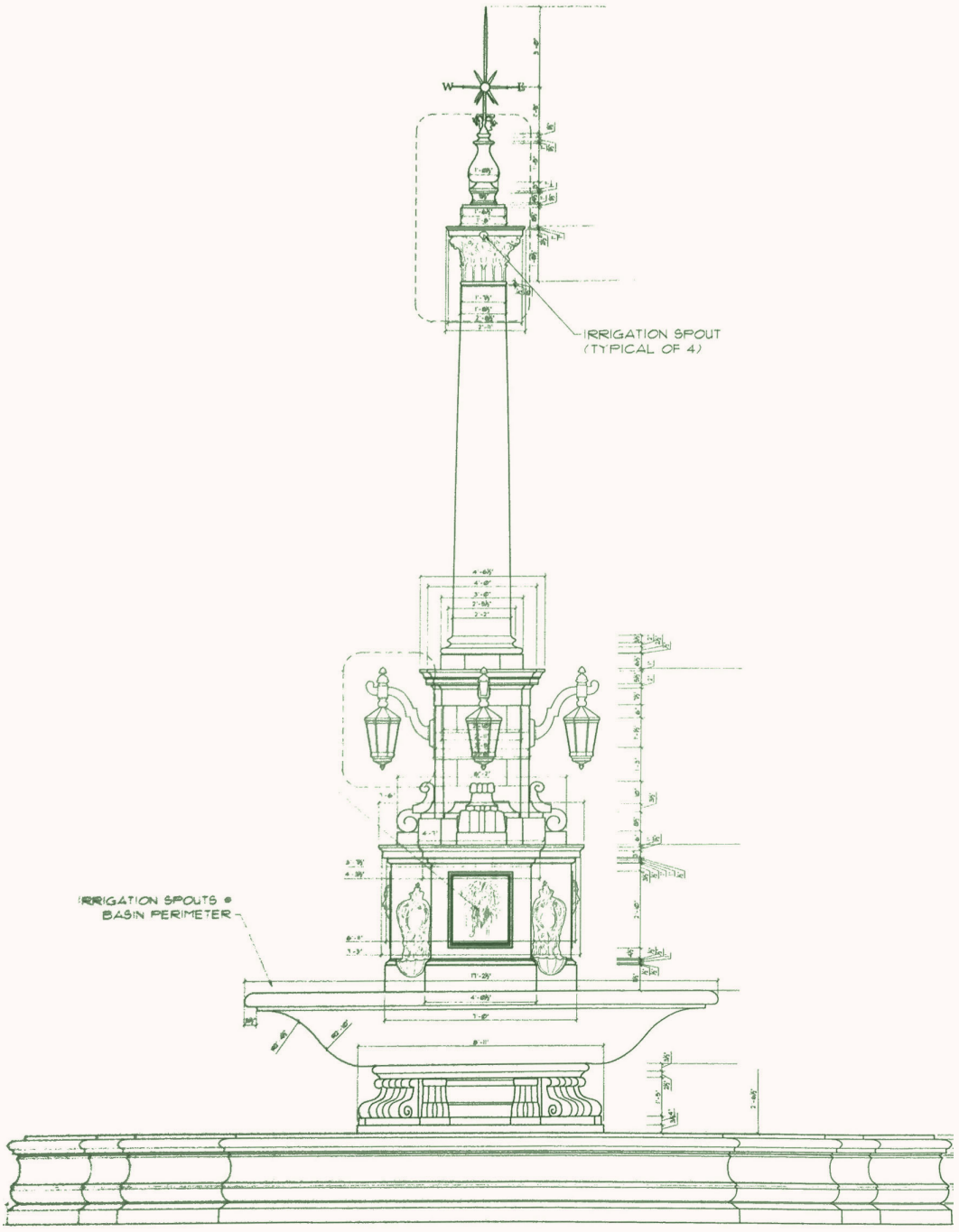

IRRIGATION SPOUT
(TYPICAL OF 4)
IRRIGATION SPOUTS @
BASIN PERIMETER

INTRODUCTION

Coral Gables is a city founded to be memorable, and the past 100 years have fulfilled George Merrick's original intent. At first, the city was imagined as a collection of well-defined neighborhoods and districts, inspired by the architecture of Spain and the Mediterranean, in terms of aesthetics and form. Moreover, landscape was reinvented to expand Merrick's concept. In time, the initial idea inspired architects and builders to create a community renowned for its beauty and quality of life. Today, every new building aspires to contribute to this timeless tradition of excellence.

This booklet collects early drawings and texts that illustrate the best practices of town planning, urban design and architecture used to build Coral Gables. The drawings document a proud history of design, but also exemplify a living tradition of architecture of place and context. The content of this booklet should be used as a source of ideas, in the manner that the architects of the early 20th century used picture books as references for design. That was the way Coral Gables was first built.

Coral Gables was the product of thoughtful research. Books published in the 1910's and 20's set a high standard for architecture, and Walter de Garmo, Phineas Paist, the architects at Shultz and Weaver and others used them to learn about harmony, proportion and detailing. Now, the work of the early designers of Coral Gables is readily available to guide the present and future of the City. The following best practices should serve as the starting point for a permanent standard of outstanding design and vision.

FOUNDING ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS

Frank Button – Landscape Architect

Phineas Paist – Supervising Architect

Denman Fink – Artistic Director

W.C. Bliss – Civil Engineer

H. George Fink – Architect

Walter DeGarmo – Architect

Harold Steward – Architect

Paul Chalfin – Architect

Richard Kiehnel – Architect

M. L. Hampton – Architect

Harold Hastings Mundy – Architect

L. D. Brumm - Architect

Schultze and Weaver - Architects

ZONING CODE

The first stated purpose of the Coral Gables Zoning Code is:

"To protect the distinctive historic and architectural character of the City which is unique throughout South Florida and the world."

~ Zoning Code Section 1-103.A.

Zoning Code Purpose

Zoning Code Section 1-103. Purpose of the City of Coral Gables Zoning Code.

***

A. To *protect the distinctive historic and architectural character* of the City which is unique throughout South Florida and the world.

***

C. To preserve the basic comprehensive plan and layout of the City by its forefathers, more specifically George Merrick.

D. Insure the application and administration of these regulations imposed herein continue to improve the overall quality of life and promote development of the City as has been guided since its establishment.

E. To preserve residential properties to *assure that future development will be in conformity with the foregoing distinctive character,* with respect to type, intensity, design, and appearance.

Board of Architects Authority

Section 14-100 - Decision Making and Administrative Bodies

Section 14-103. Board of Architects.

Section 14-103.1. Powers and Duties

A. Purpose and applicability. *A Board of Architects is created to ensure that the City's architecture is consistent with the City's regulations and to preserve the traditional aesthetic character of the community.* In addition to any power or duty delegated by the City Commission or the City Manager, the Board of Architects shall act as a recommending and a decision making Board for the following:

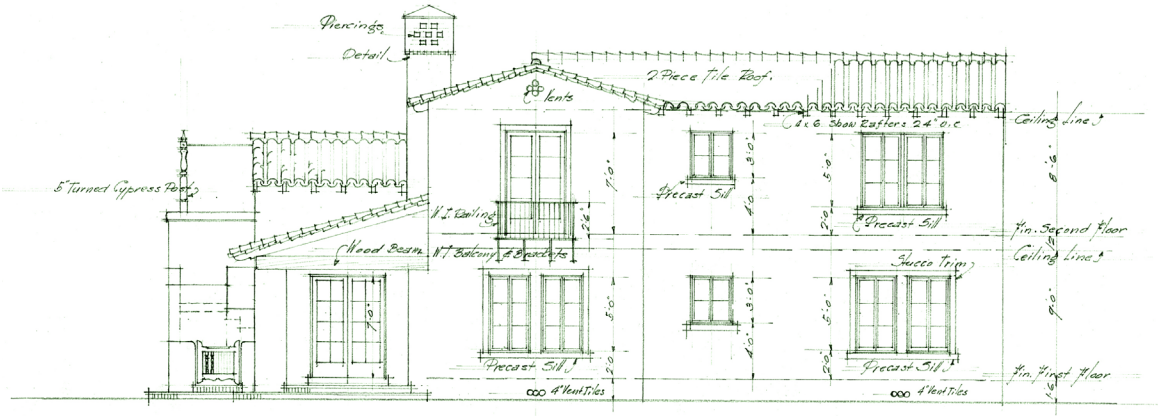
- Appeals from Decisions of the City Architect
- Building Permit Review / Architectural Design Standards Compliance
- Conditional Use Review
- Recommend Historic Designations to Historic Preservation Board

Single-Family Neighborhoods

Article 2 - Zoning Districts

Section 2-101 Single-Family Residential District.

A. Purpose and applicability. ... *The intent of the Code is to protect the distinctive character of the City, while encouraging excellent architectural design that is responsible and responsive to the individual context of the City's diverse neighborhoods.* ... By preserving the community character of the Gables, the Zoning Code safeguards both individual property values, as well as the quality of life that best serves the collective interest.



Design Review Standards

Article 5 - Architecture

Section 5-102. Design Review Standards

***

B. In applying the standards set forth in Section 5-102 above, the Board of Architects shall review each of the following items of an application:

1. Aesthetics
2. Architectural compatibility with neighboring properties and uses.
3. Architecture.
4. Building and building components including, but not limited to:
    a. Accessory structures
    b. Arcades, loggias, porte cocheres, passages and similar covered areas
    c. Building appendages
    d. Building entrances / exits
    e. Building height
    f. Building materials, texture, fenestration and surfaces
    g. Building openings
    h. Building scale and mass
    i. Building facade step-backs
    j. Building rooflines
    k. Design
    l. Lighting
    m. Parking and paved surfaces
    n. Signage
    o. Stairs, ramps, escalators, moving sidewalks, elevators or down spouts on the exterior buildings
    p. Window coverage, casings/depth and proportion.
5. Colors.

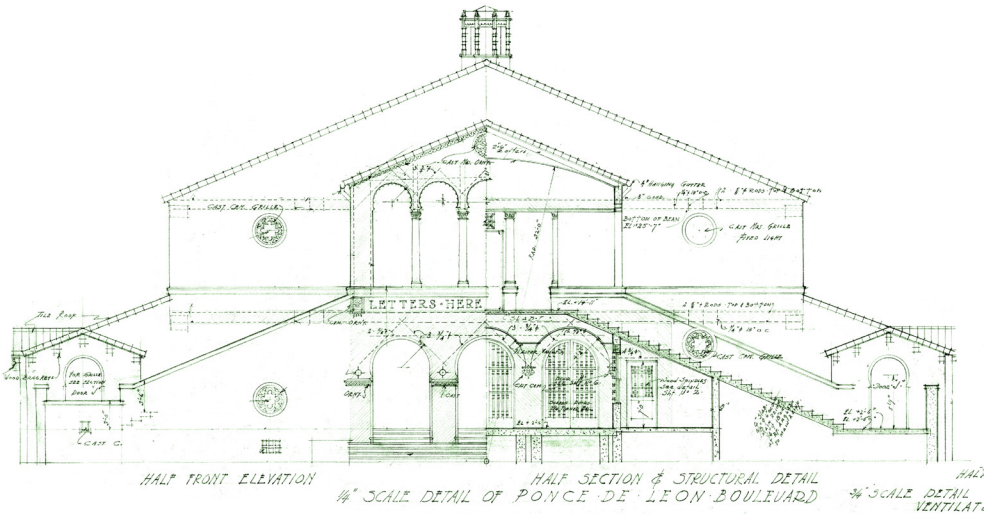
Architectural Style

Article 5 - Architecture

Section 5 - 103. Architectural style.

A. ... The Board of Architects shall require such changes in the design of the structure so as to preserve traditional aesthetic treatments and promote design excellence in the community. In considering the design of the building, the Board of Architects shall consider and render a decision as to the adequacy of the following elements in the design concept: ...

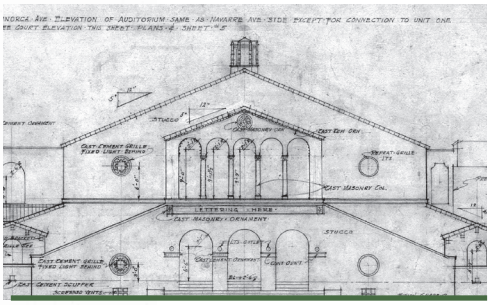
B. The architectural style for a given location, unless specified to the contrary, shall be in harmony with the architecture of its particular neighborhood....



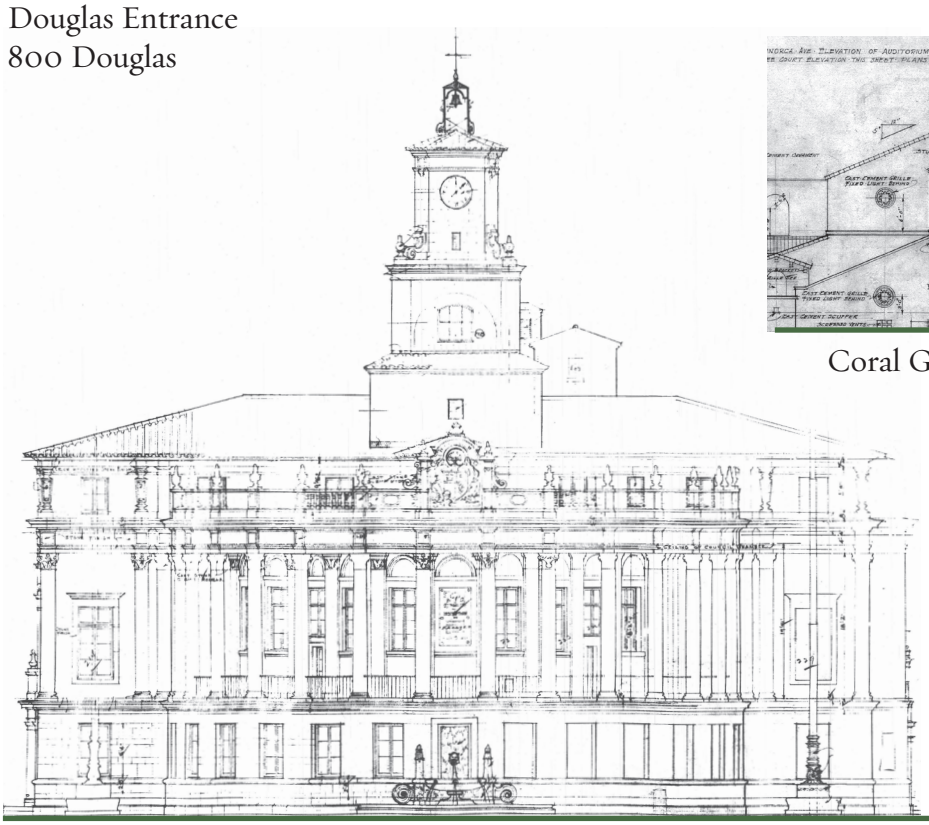
Mediterranean Architecture

The buildings identified in Section 5-202 of the Zoning Code represent a range of urban contexts, building scales, and building functions that can serve as inspiration for a variety of Mediterranean architectural projects in modern times. The examples range from more Vernacular Mediterranean to more ″Beaux Arts″ Mediterranean.

Douglas Entrance
800 Douglas



Coral Gables Elementary School
105 Minorca



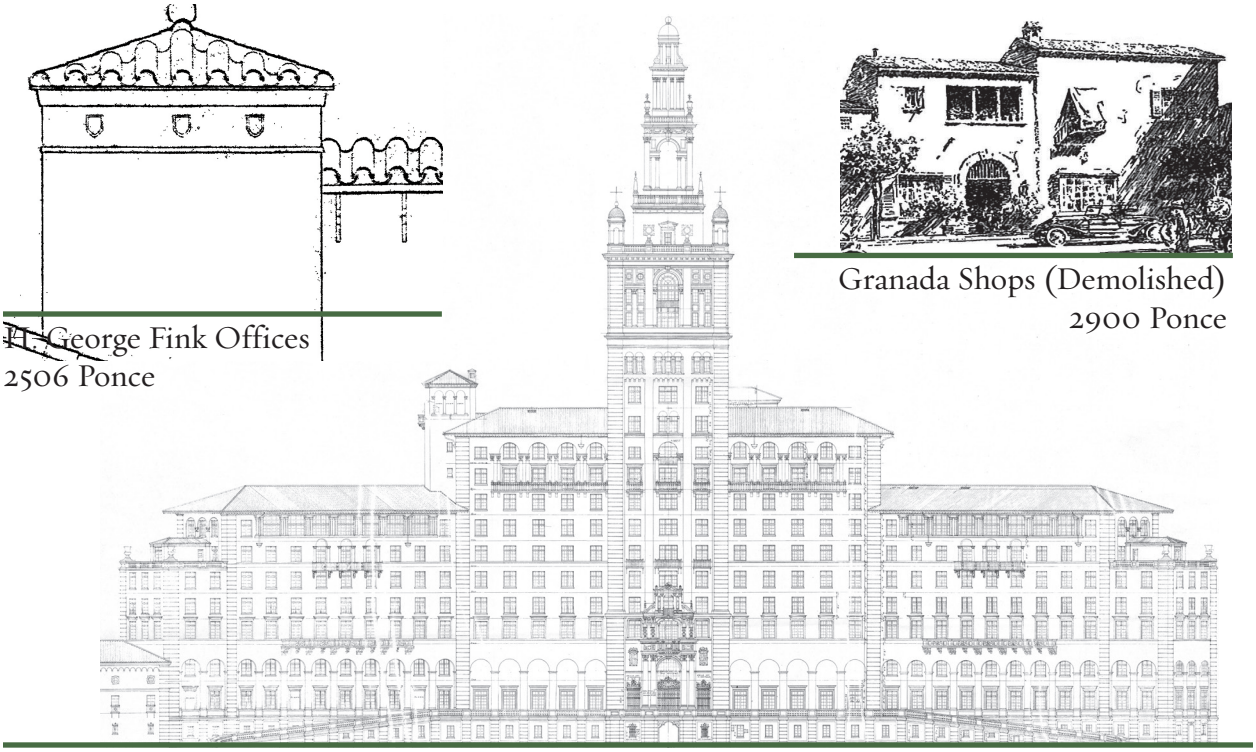
Coral Gables City Hall
405 Biltmore Way

Mediterranean Architecture

San Sebastian Apartments
333 University Drive

H. George Fink Offices
2506 Ponce

Granada Shops (Demolished)
2900 Ponce



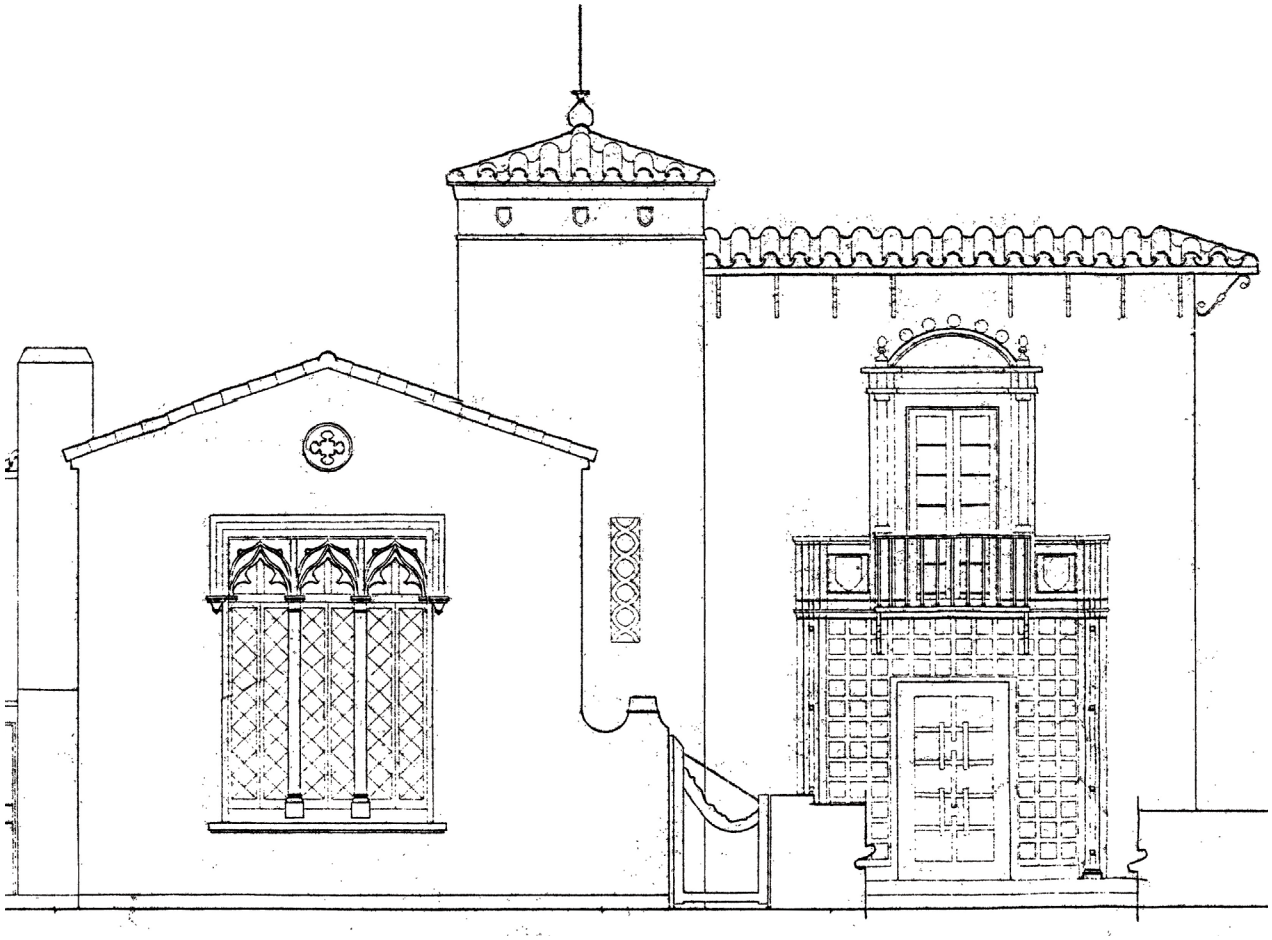
Biltmore Hotel
1200 Anastasia

The Colonnade Building
169 Miracle Mile

H. George Fink Offices

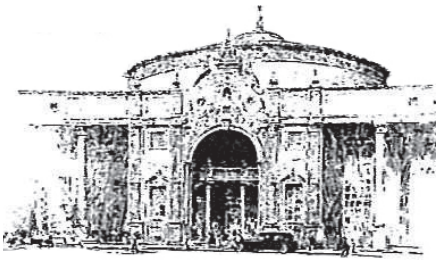
Promotional Sketch
Image Credit: Arva Moore Parks Collection

H. George Fink Offices



East Elevation

The Colonnade Building



Promotional Sketch
Image Credit: Florida State Archives

Ponce de Leon Elevation

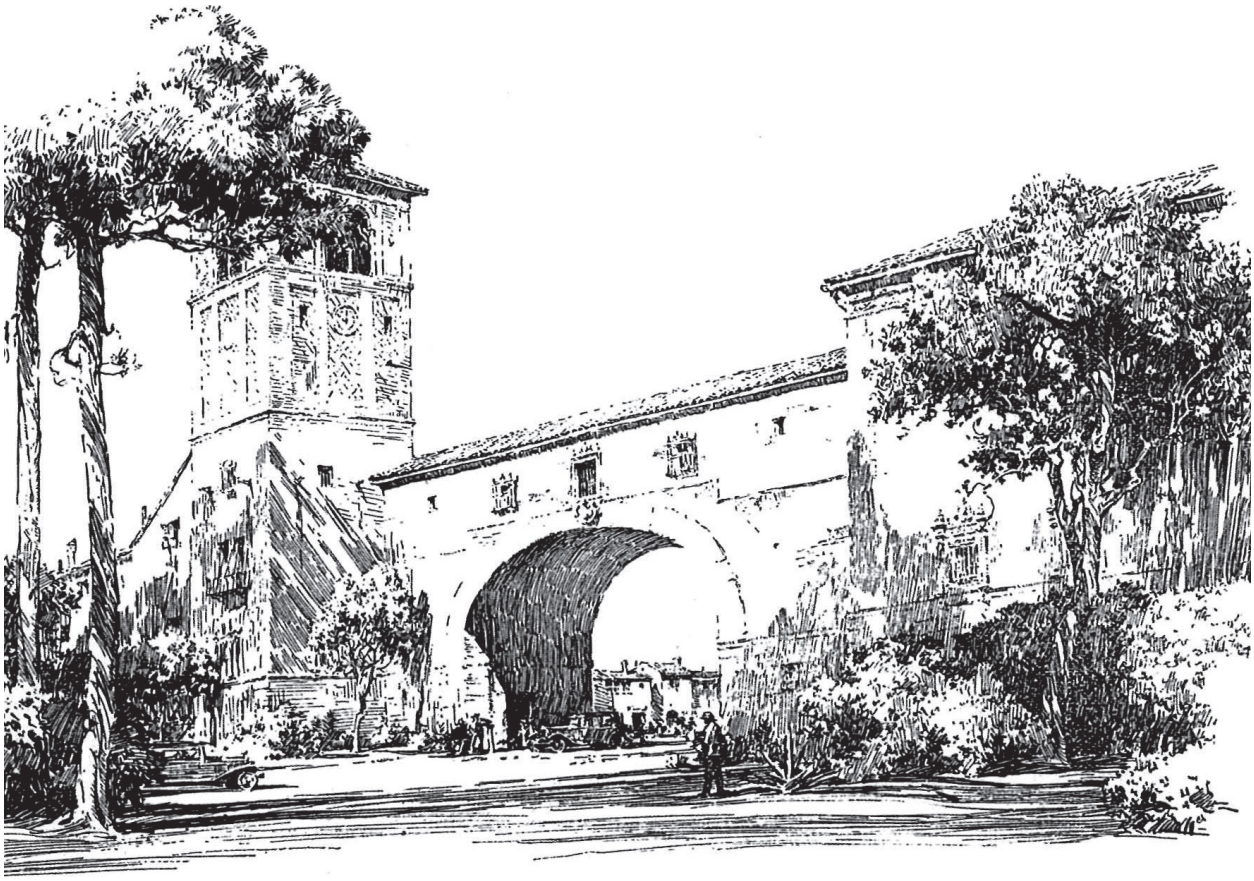
Miracle Mile Elevation

The Colonnade Building

Miracle Mile Elevation

Miracle Mile Elevation

Douglas Entrance

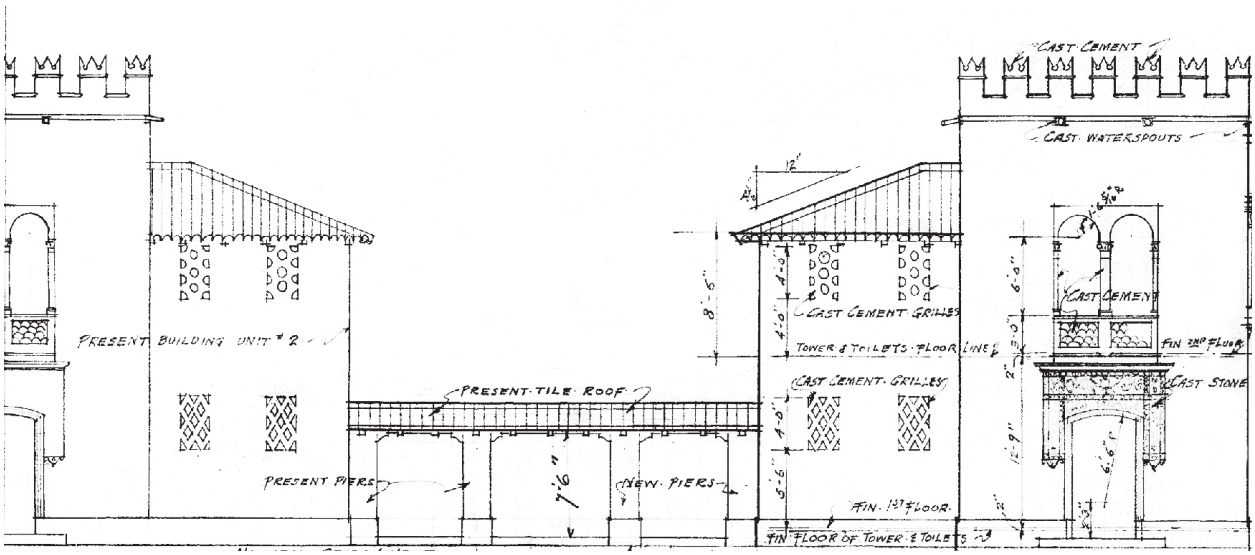


1926 Promotional Rendering
Image Credit:Arva Moore Parks Collection

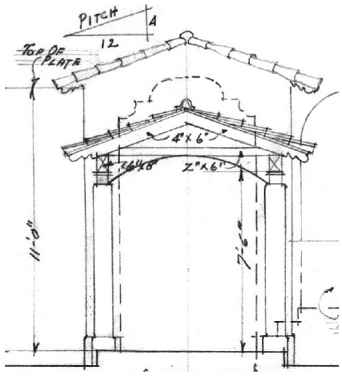
Douglas Entrance

1926 Promotional Rendering

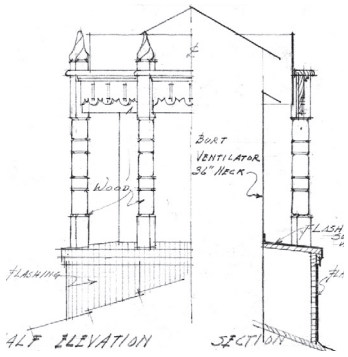
Coral Gables Elementary School



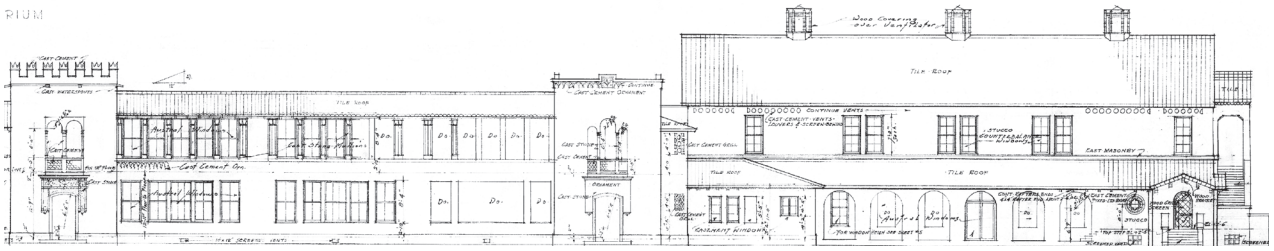
Navarre Avenue Elevation



Covered Passage Section

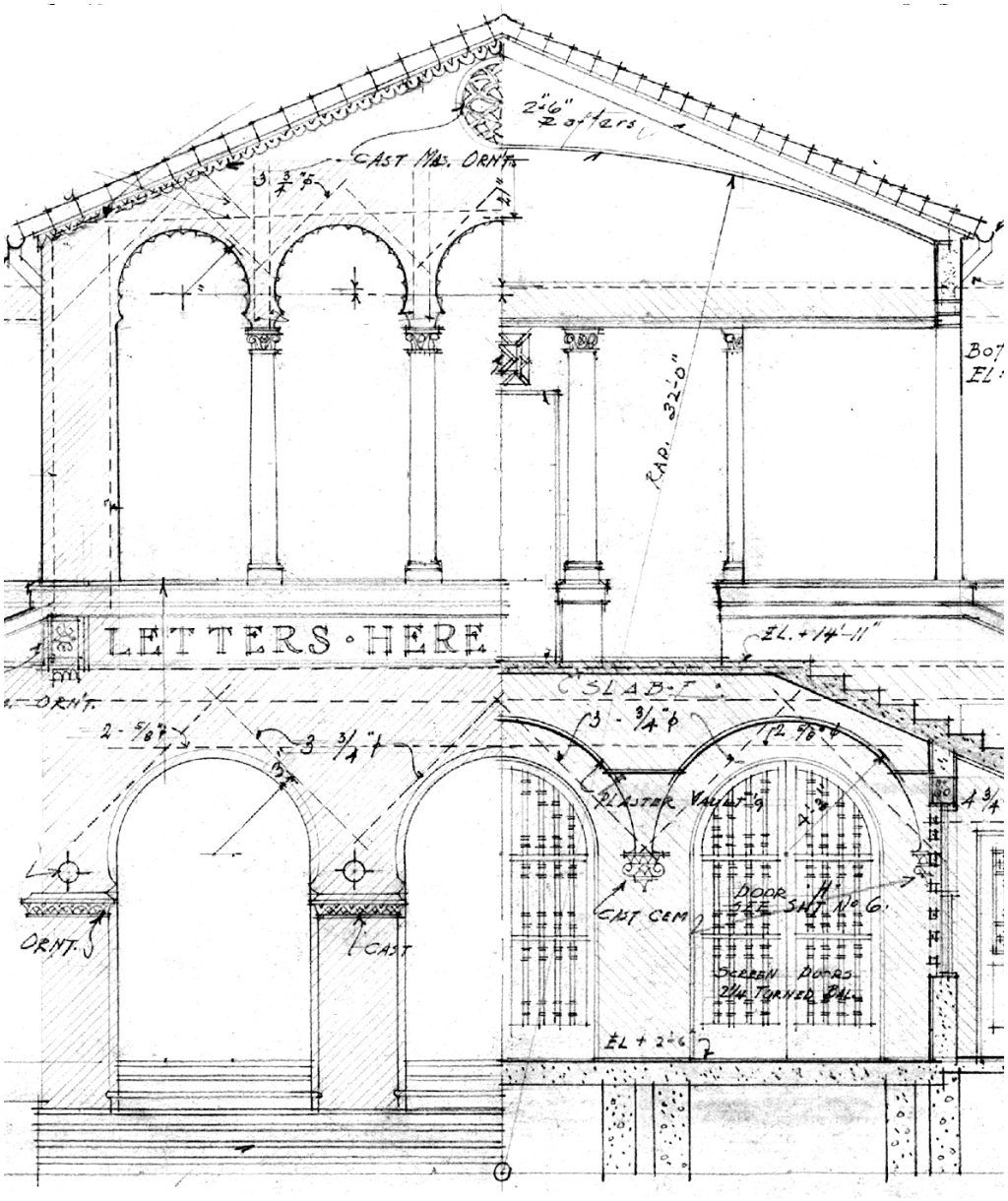


Lantern Elevation / Section



Navarre Avenue Elevation

Coral Gables Elementary School



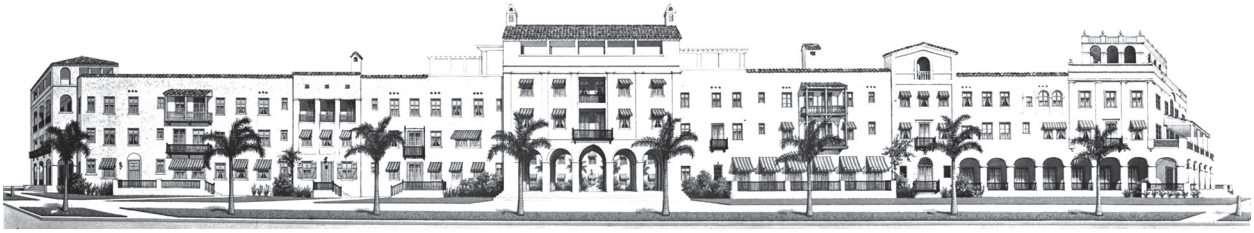
Ponce de Leon Boulevard Elevation / Section

Granada Shops

Promotional Rendering
Image Credit: Arva Moore Parks Collection

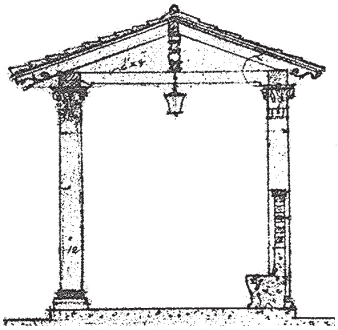
San Sebastian Apartments

Detail, Eastern Arcade
Image Credit: Florida Memory



University Drive Elevation
Image Credit: Florida Memory

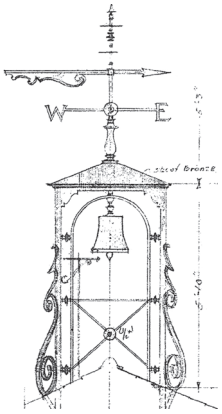
City Hall



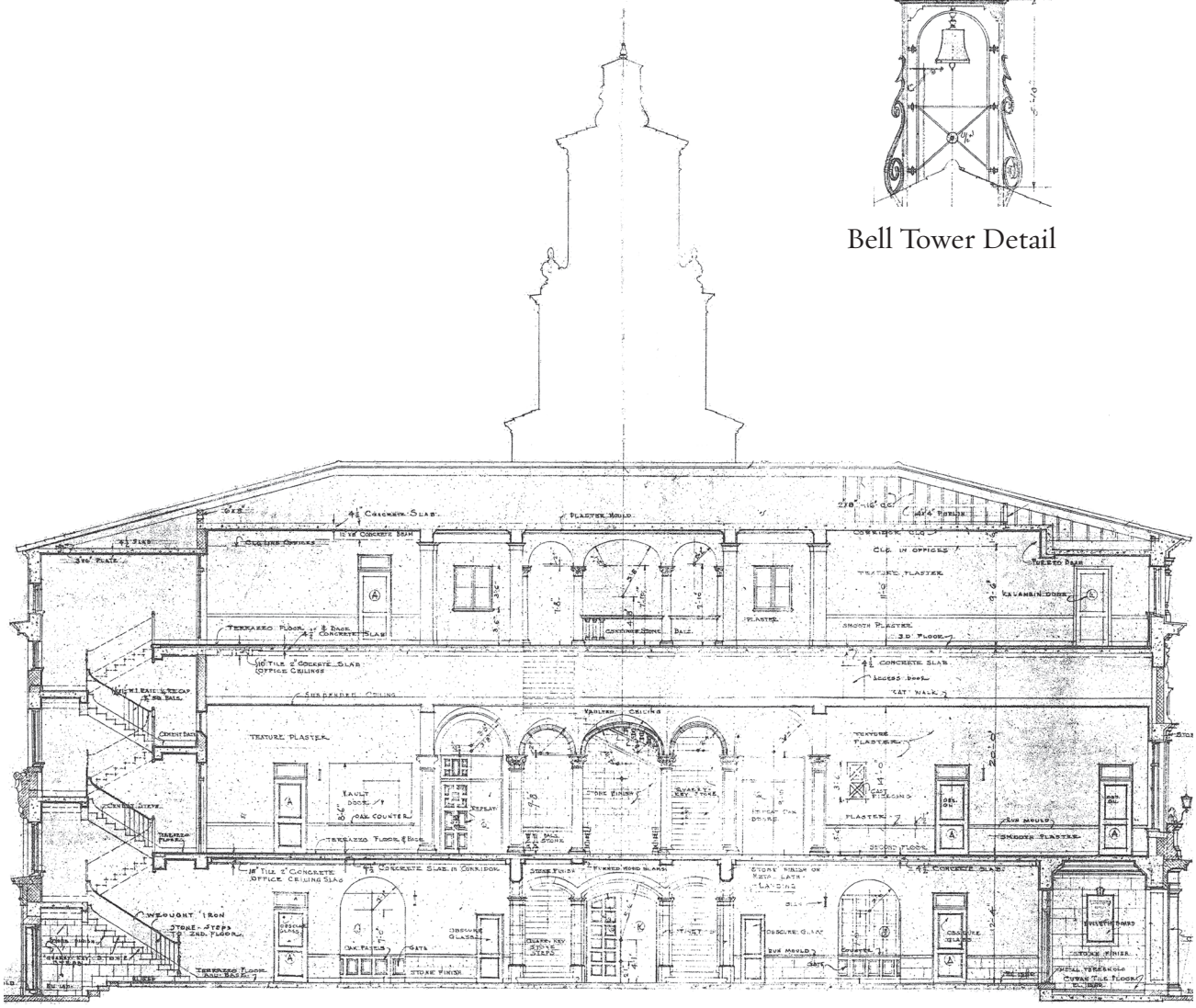
Porch Section

West Elevation

City Hall

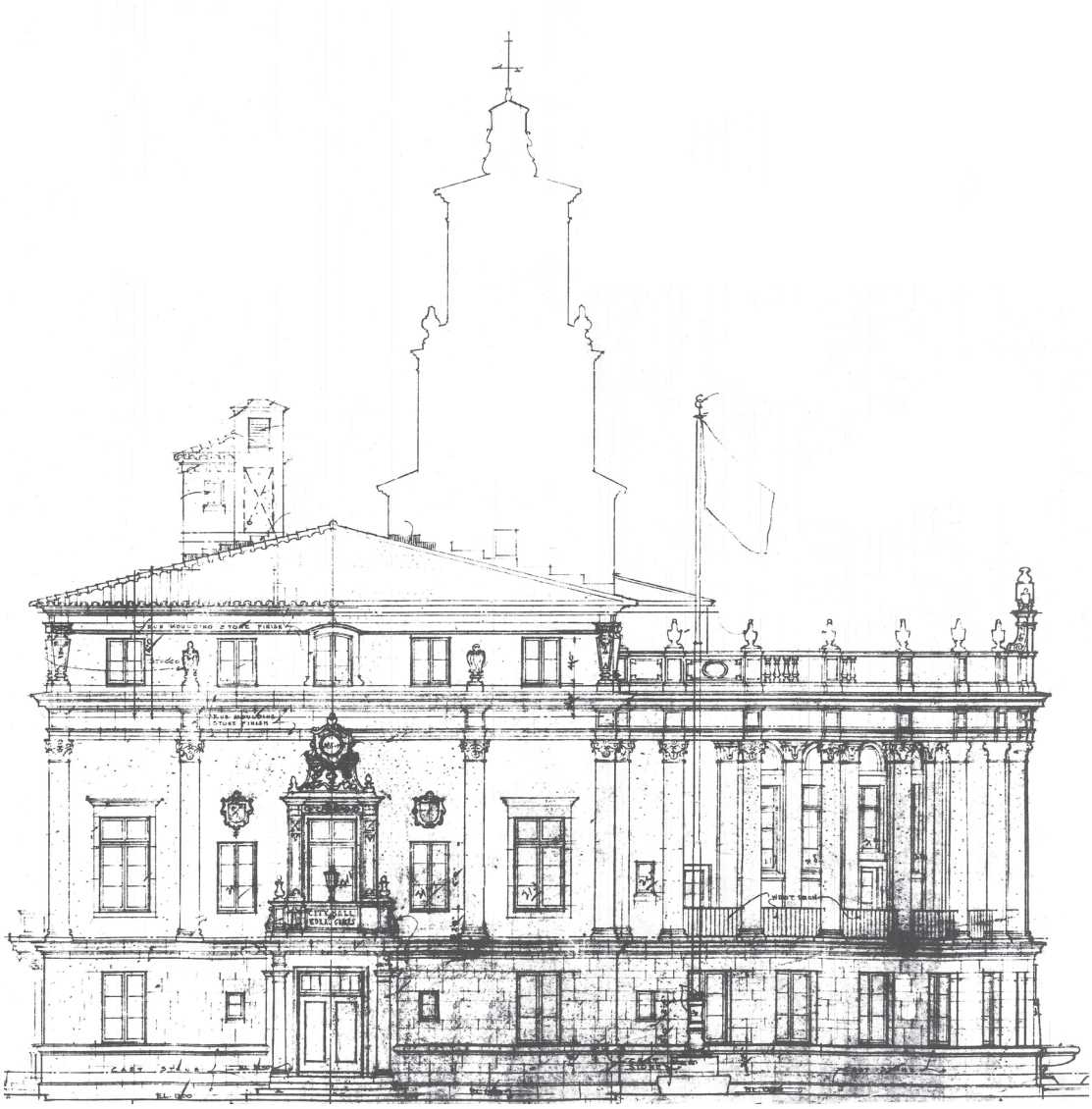


Bell Tower Detail



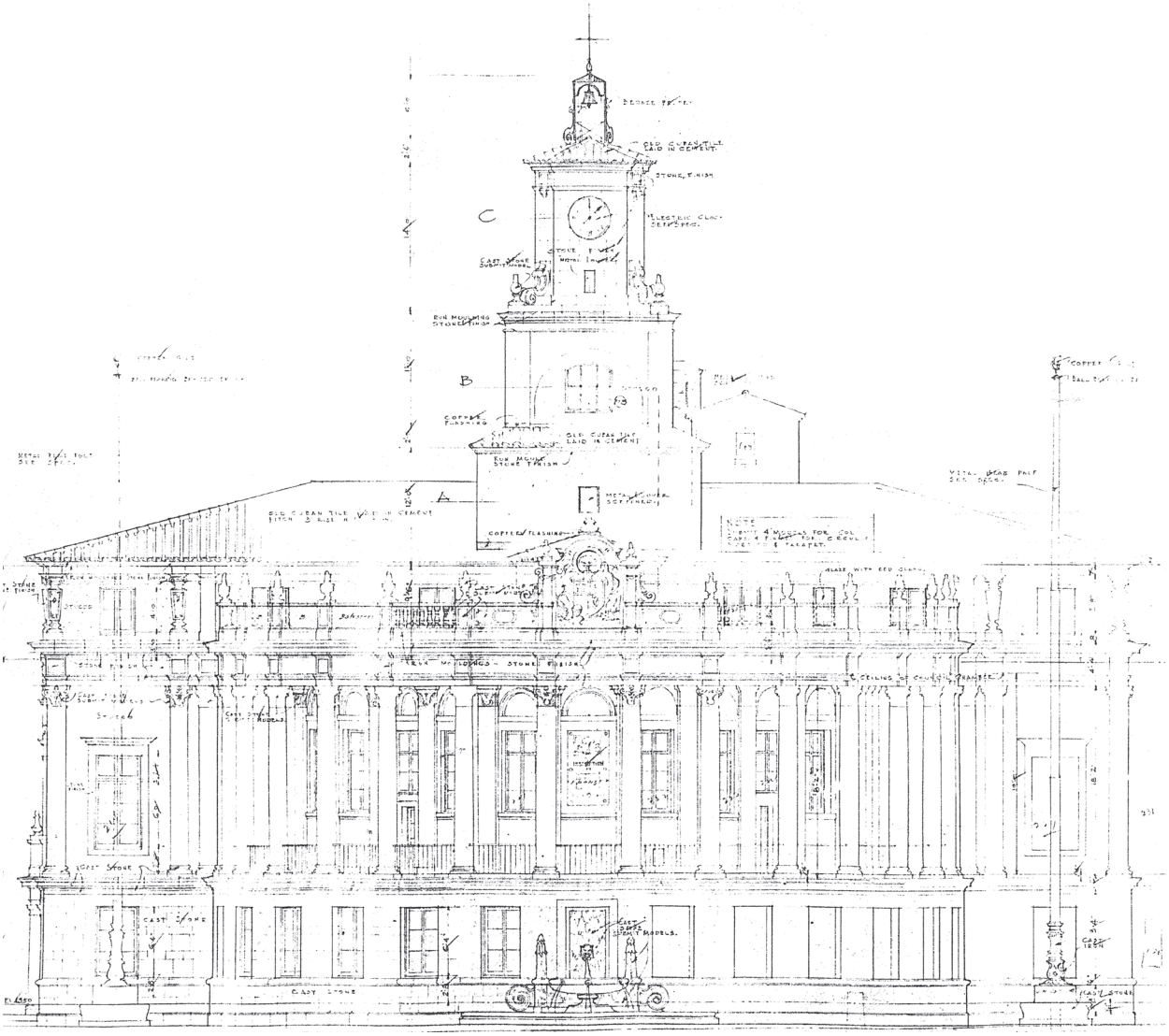
Longitudinal Section

City Hall



South Elevation

City Hall

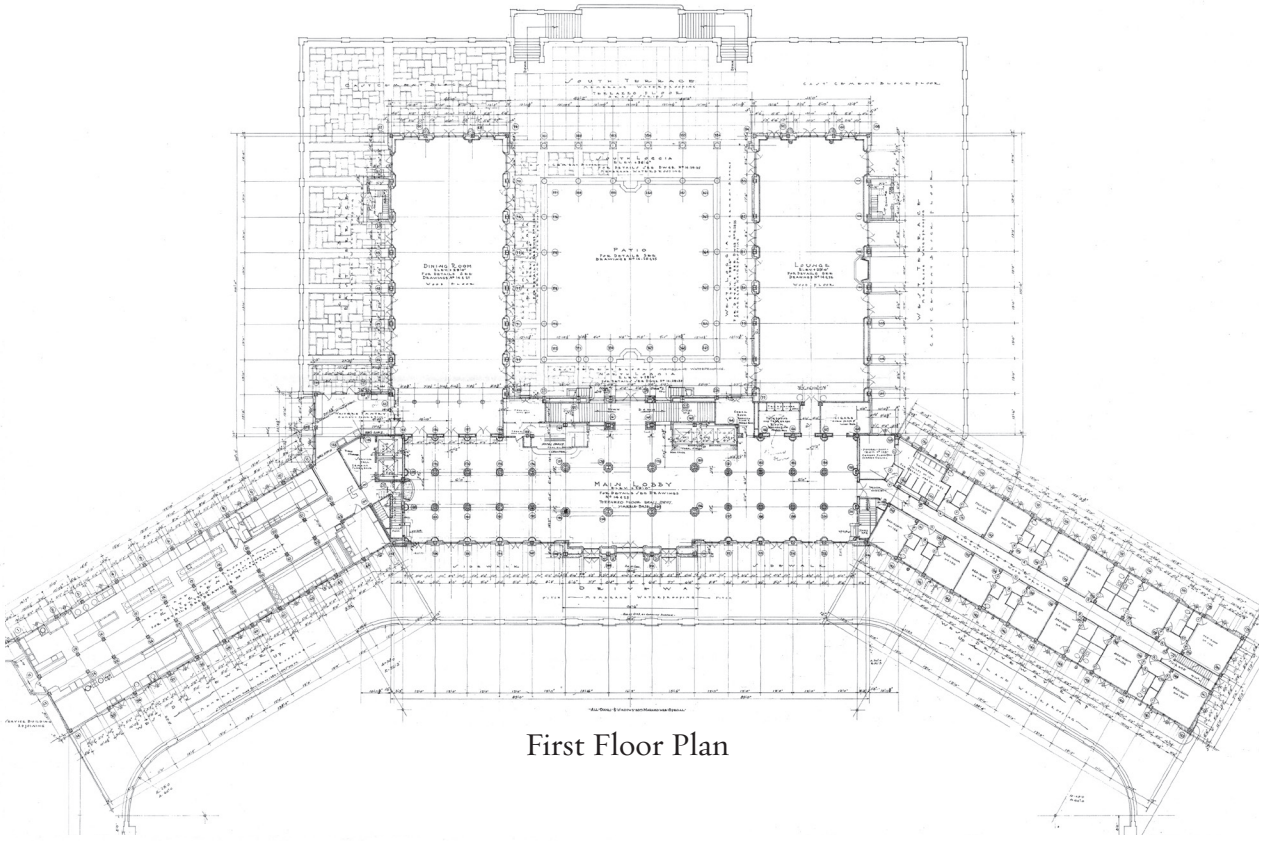


East Elevation

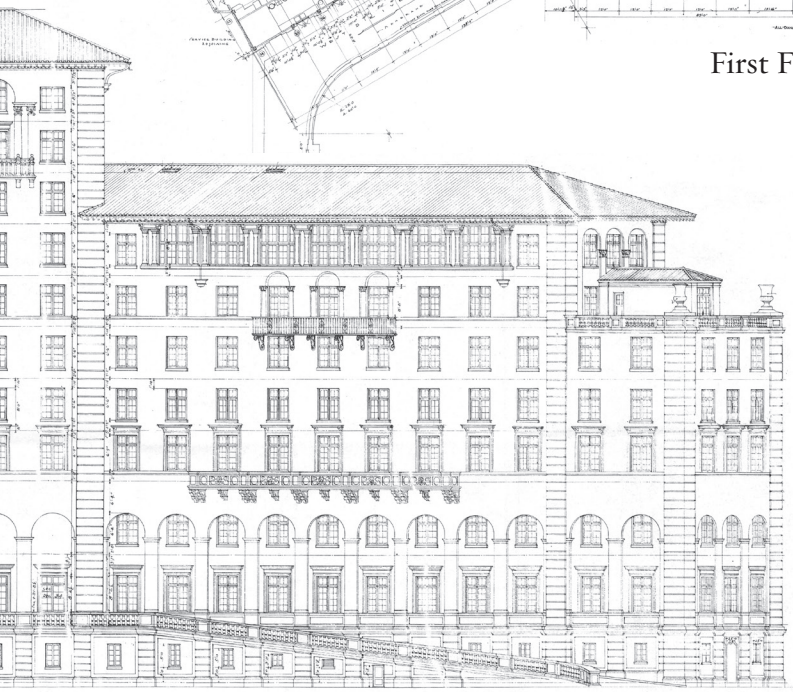
Biltmore Hotel

North Elevation

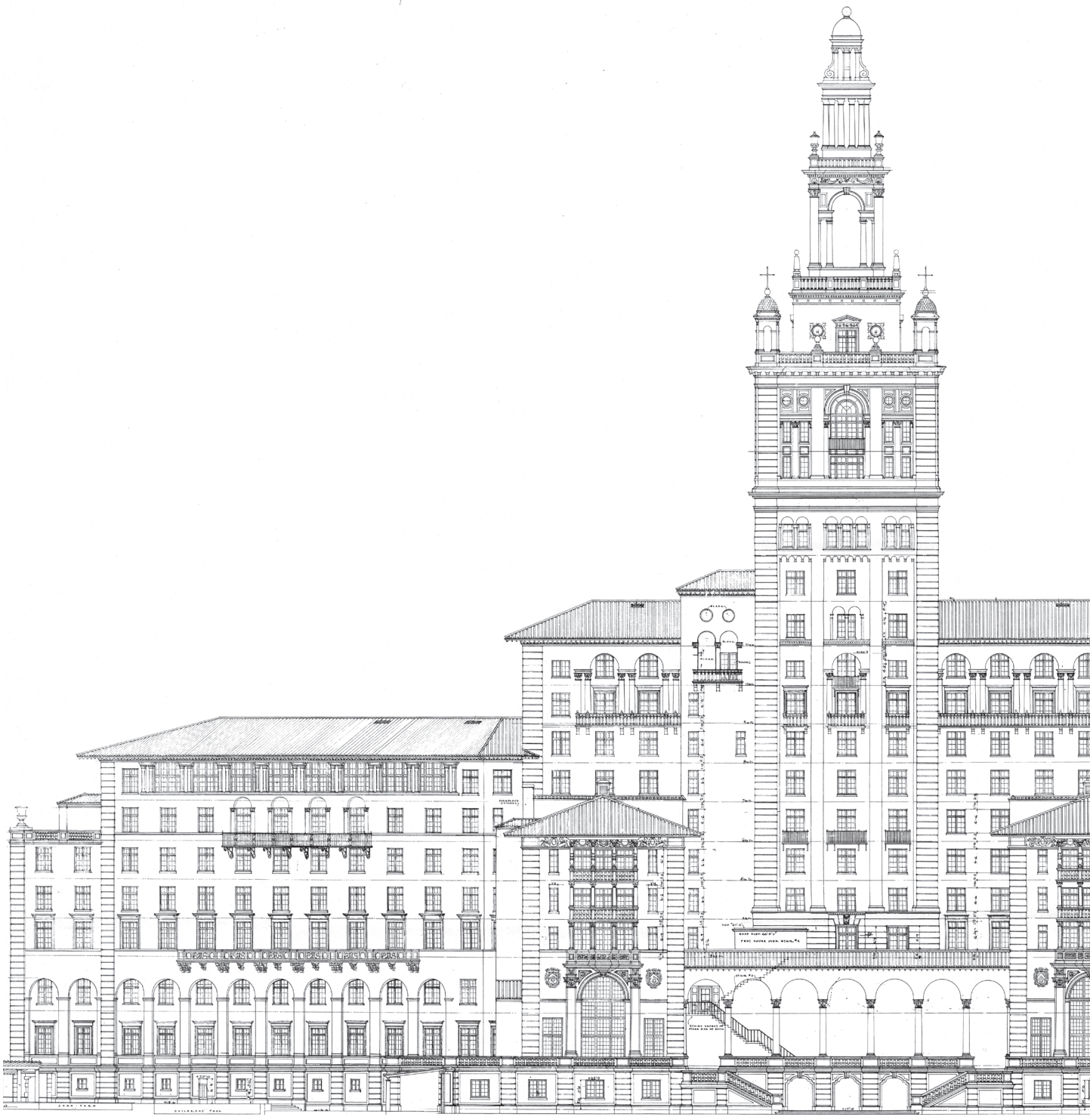
Biltmore Hotel



First Floor Plan

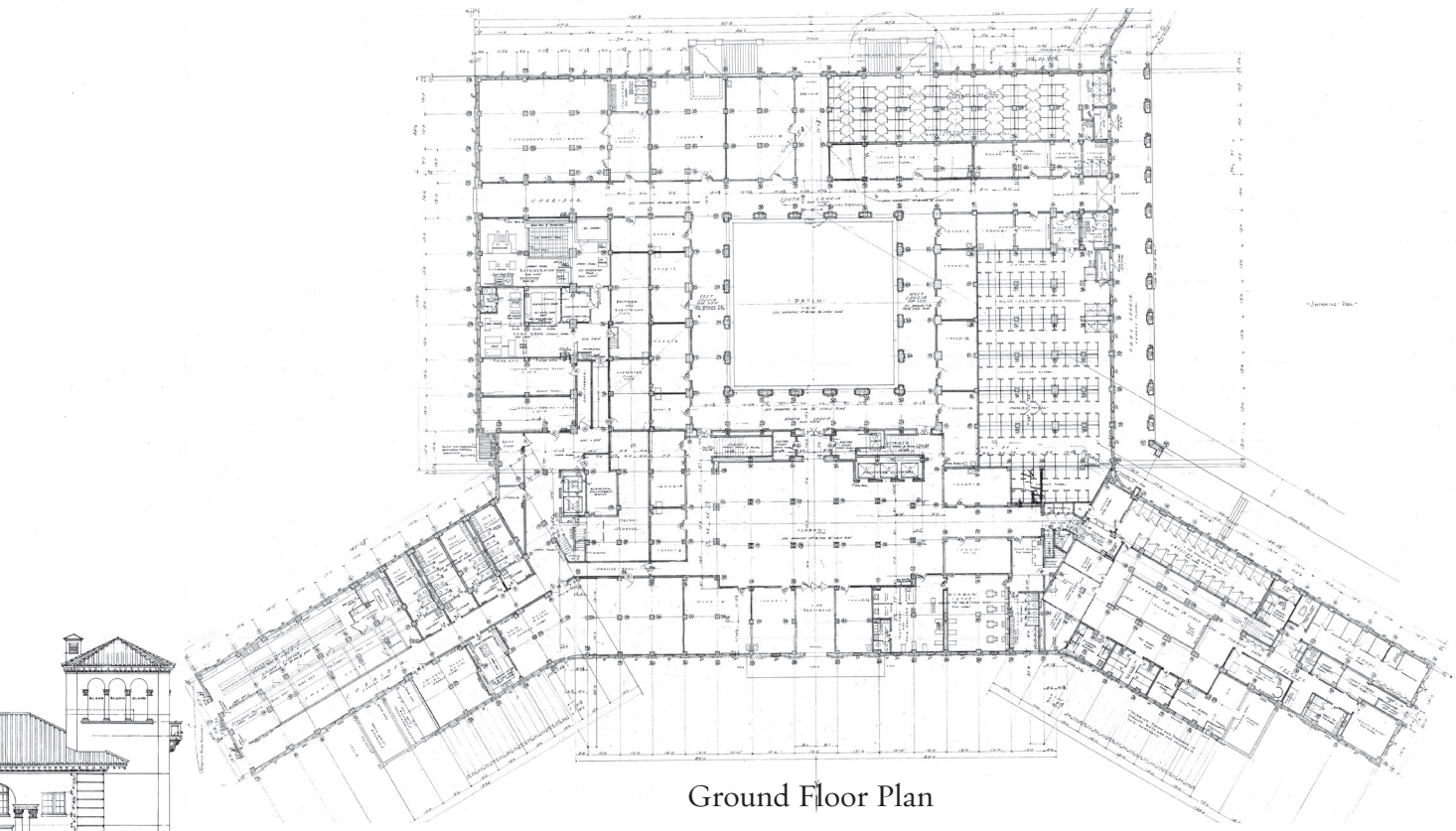


Biltmore Hotel

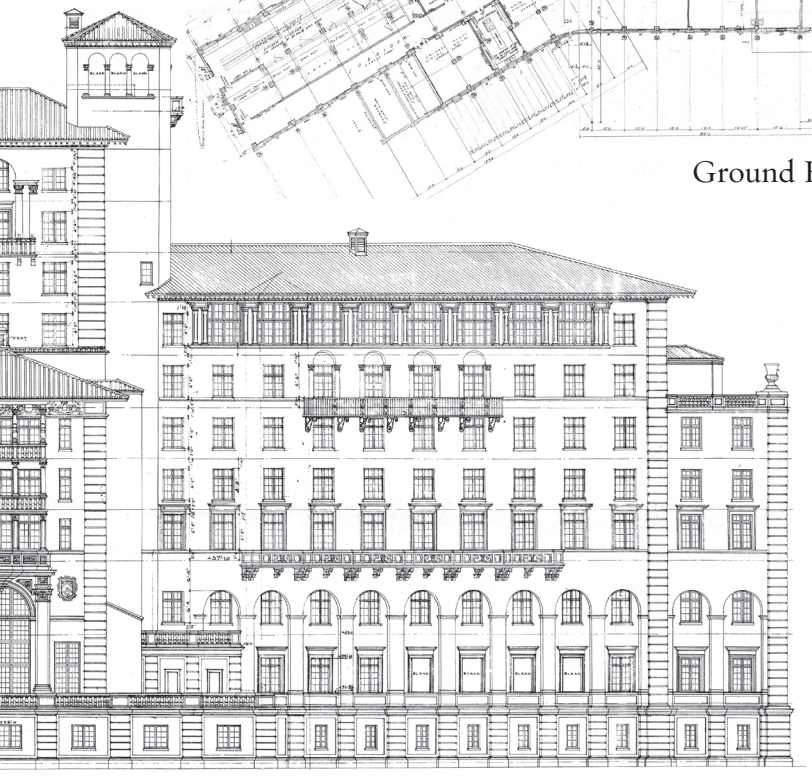


Biltmore Hotel: South Elevation

Biltmore Hotel



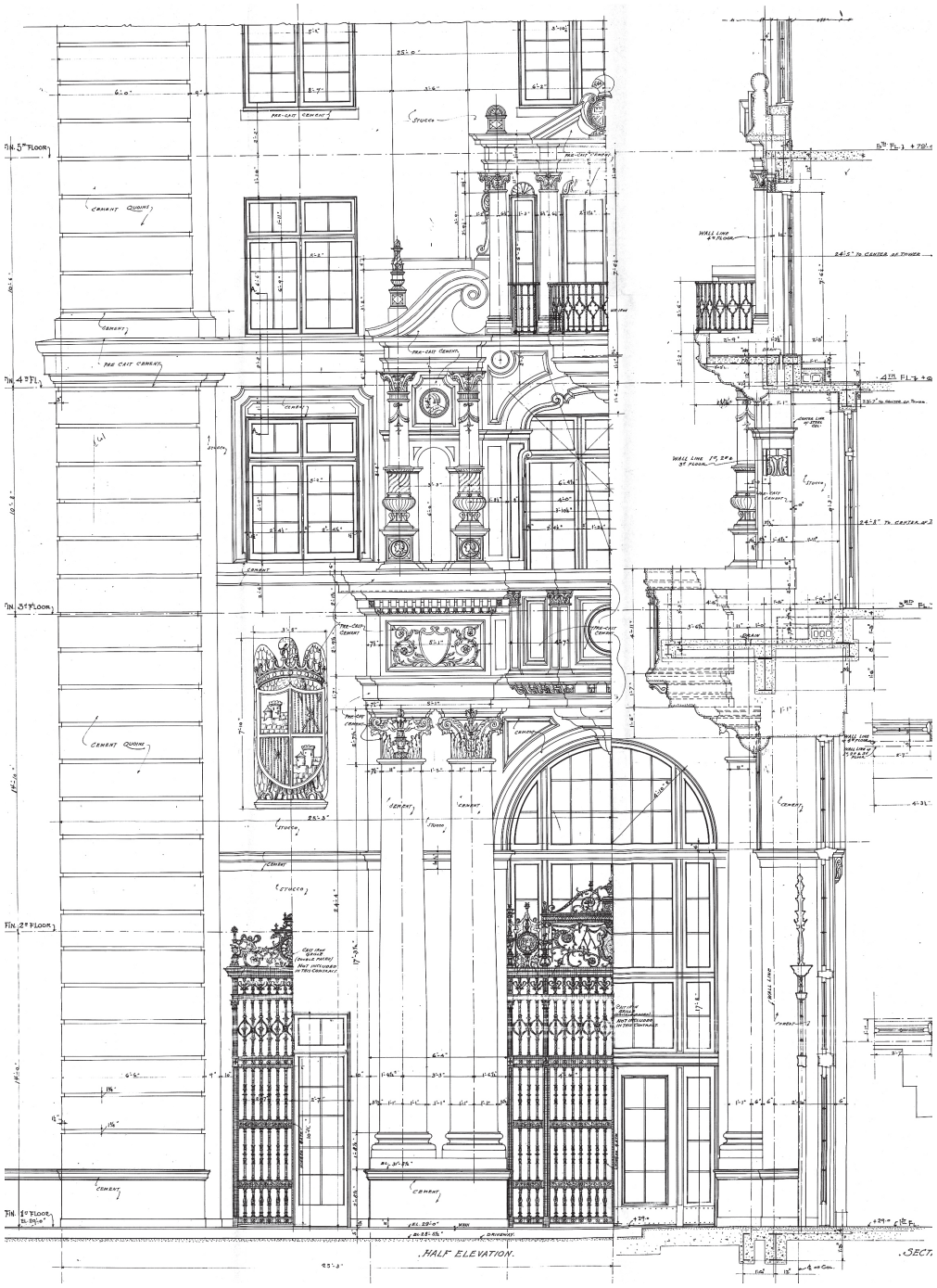
Ground Floor Plan



Biltmore Hotel

Side Elevation and Section Detail, Wing

Biltmore Hotel

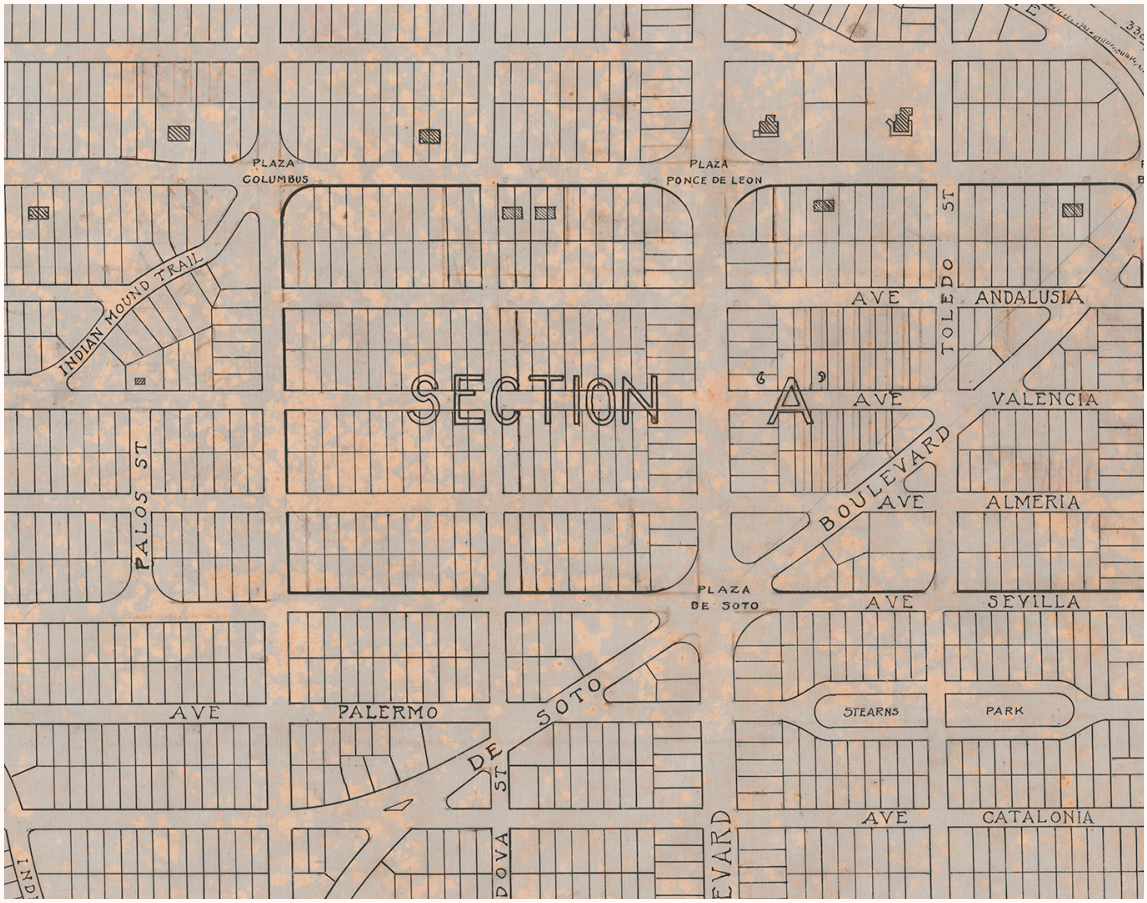


Main Entrance Detail

TOWN PLANNING

"Coral Gables is, perhaps, the most notable example of a modern city planned and built according to one concept and unified design. Growth and development have meant here only a constant enlargement and progressive expansion of the original ideal."

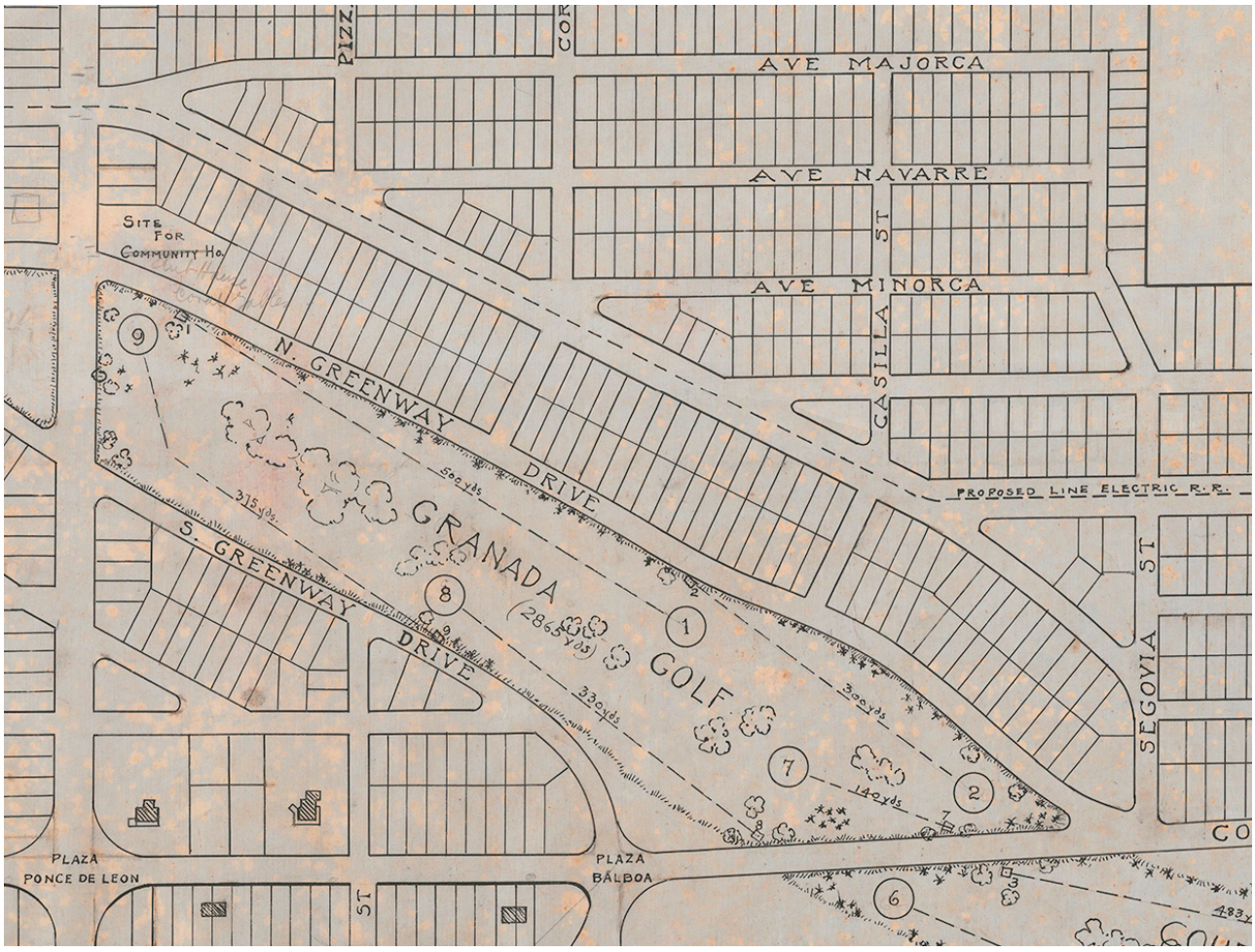
Coral Gables: its Advantages for good living for healthful recreation for the enjoyment of rest or vacation -- or for profitable business or industry" Complied for the Chamber of Commerce, Coral Gables, Miami, Florida, 1927



Coral Gables, "Miami's Master Suburb" Town Plan, showing original design of plazas October 1921. Image Credit: HistoryMiami

Town Planning Principles

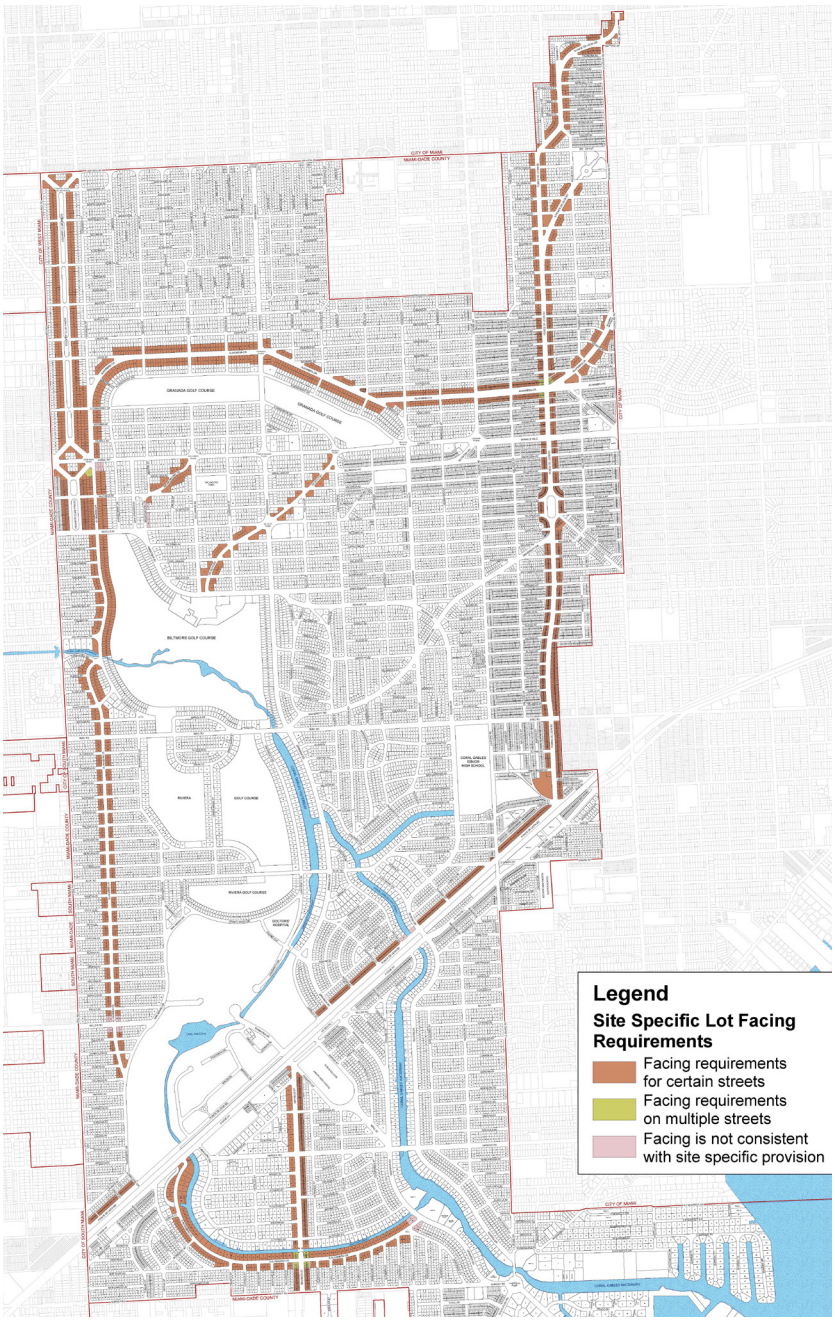
Early town plans for the design of Coral Gables addressed the need for open space, civic space, and a variety of street types. This 1921 drawing by W.C. Bliss and Frank Button shows plans for a proposed "electric railroad," or streetcar, running along Alhambra Circle, the Granada Golf Course fronted by home sites, and the Coral Gables Club House at the corner of North Greenway Drive and Granada Boulevard. It also shows the plazas along Coral Way, which remain a notable part of Coral Gables today.



Coral Gables, "Miami's Master Suburb" Town Plan, showing original design of plazas October 1921. Image Credit: HistoryMiami

Street Frontage

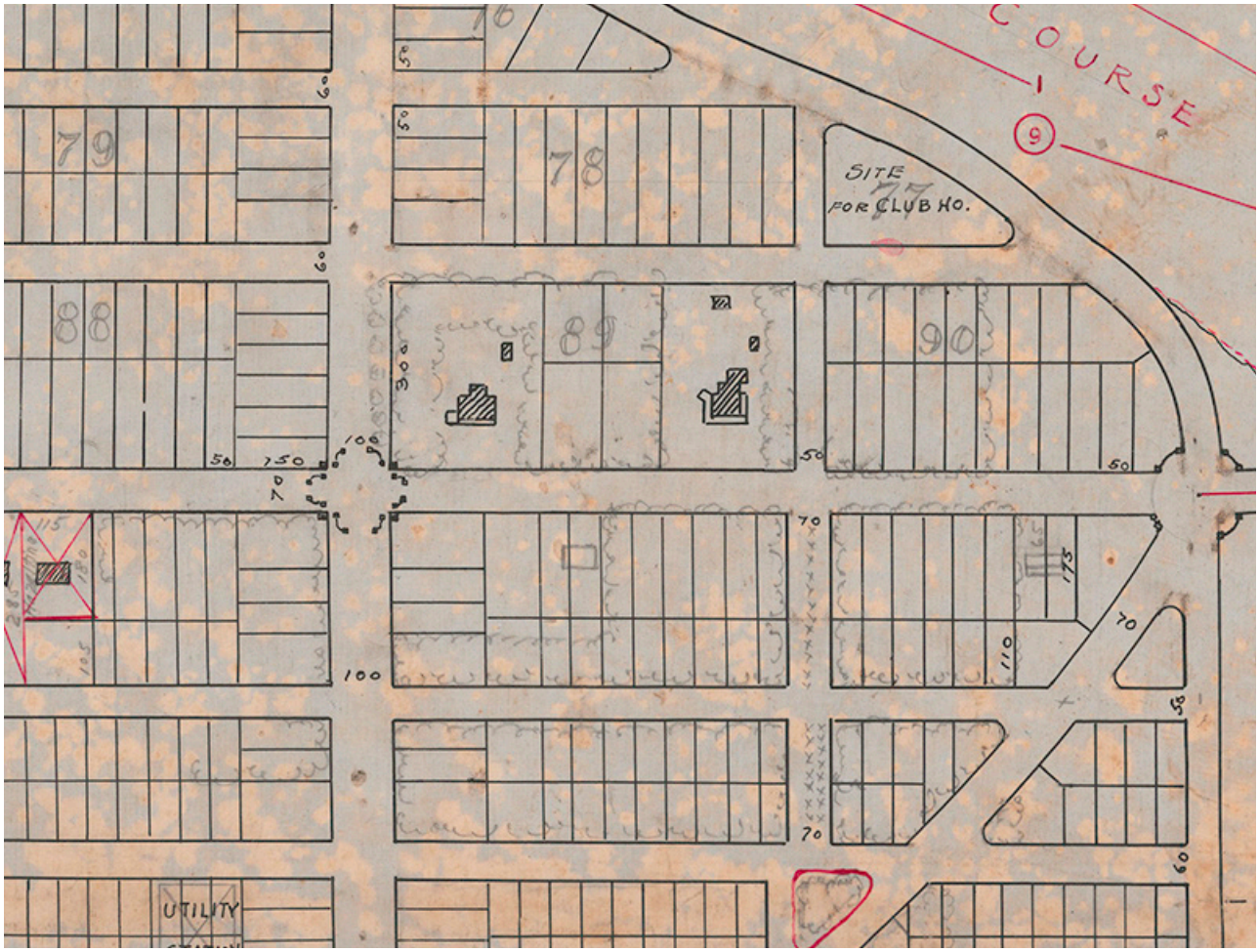
The original deeds to the lots in Coral Gables included numerous restrictions, including architectural style, building setbacks, fence types, and street frontage. Many of these restrictions were incorporated into the Zoning Code, and today they are located in Appendix A, Site Specific Regulations. (Other regulations have also been incorporated into Appendix A over the years.) The map below shows how George Merrick controlled the street frontage of buildings along major streets in order to create a consistant character for pedestrians and motorists passing by.



Street Design and Landscape

The character of public space in Coral Gables was carefully considered, from the width of streets to the creation of unique plazas, parks, and civic buildings. The drawing below shows the original design for Ponce de Leon Plaza on Coral Way, just a block west of the Merrick House. Note the concept of simple curved walls anchored by piers. The design was further refined in the October 1921 plan, which includes a wider right-of-way around Ponce de Leon Plaza to create a greater feeling of openness.

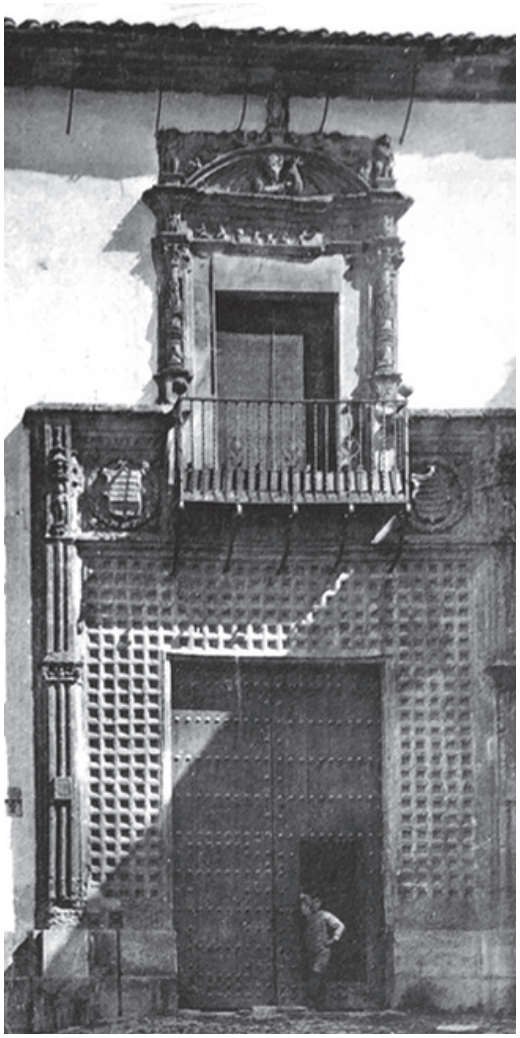
The drawing below also shows the careful consideration of street widths, creating a hierarchy of grand 100′ wide boulevards for circulation and for displaying big house on large lots, to smaller 60′ wide streets fronted by lots with more modest homes.



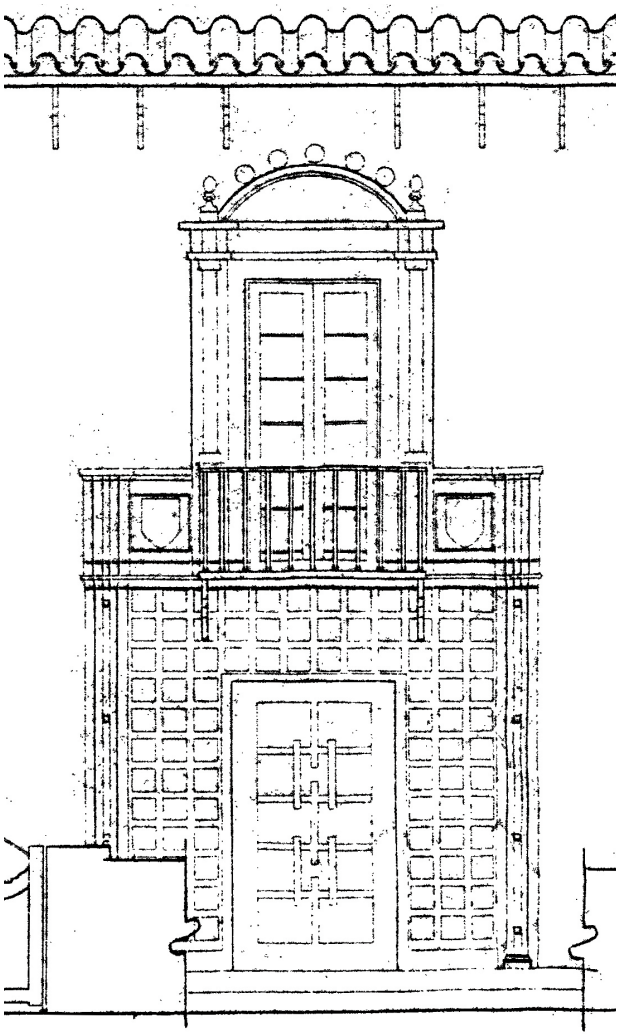
Coral Gables, ″Miami′s Suburb Distinctive″ Town Plan
July 1921. Image Credit: HistoryMiami

A Spanish Village

The architects of the 1920s drew their inspiration from travel and from books. George Merrick and his team of architects decided that Spanish, and later Mediterranean architecture, adapted to the South Florida climate, was the ideal character for the new town of Coral Gables. In order to develop a new architecture that evoked the character of Spain, architects relied on books of photos and drawings of Spain and the Mediterranean. These books were a standard part of an architect's library during this time. A bibliography of common books on Spanish and Mediterranean architecture is included in this Best Practices manual.

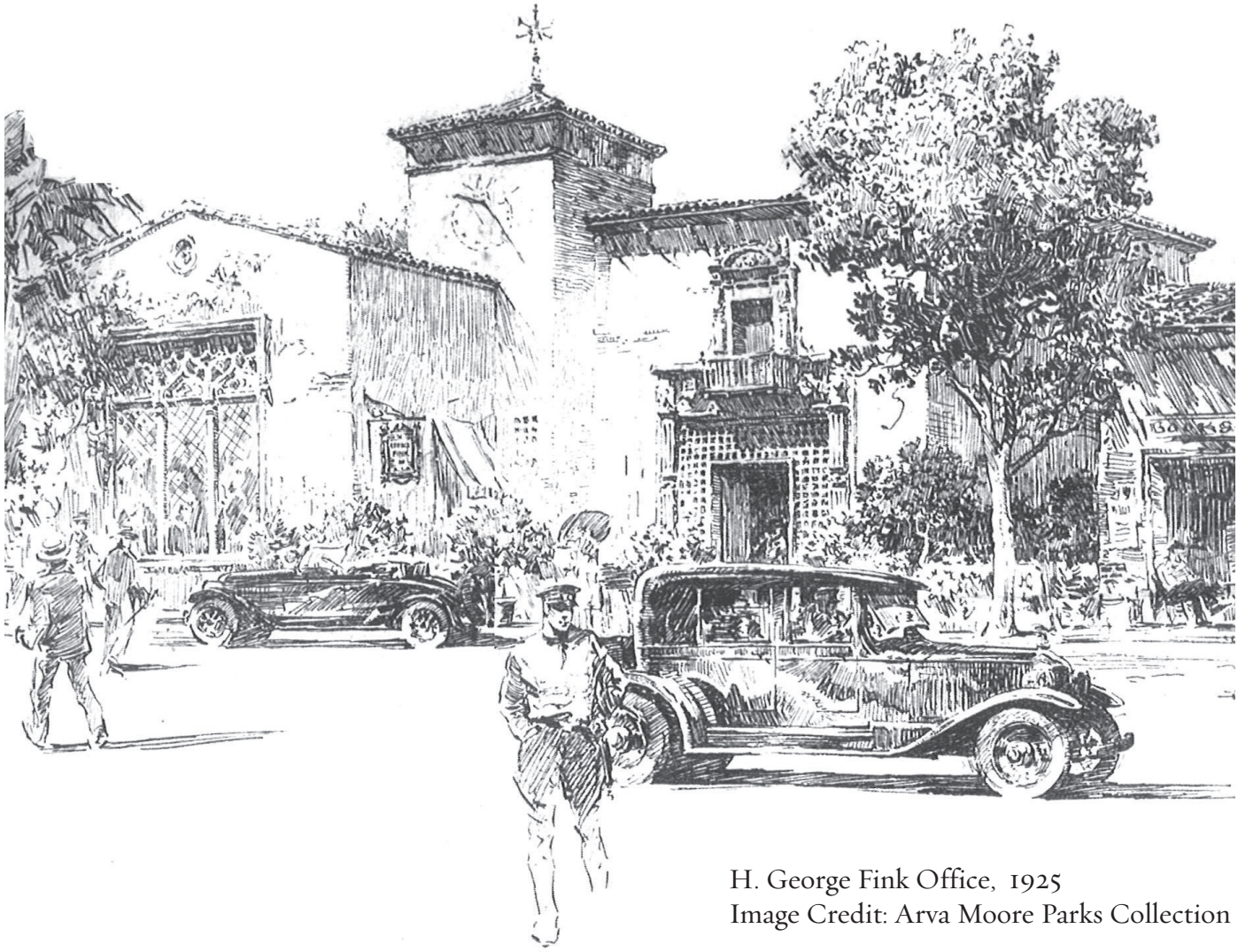


"Cordova, An Old Palace"
Lesser Known Architecture of Spain, 1925



H. George Fink Office, 1925

A Spanish Village

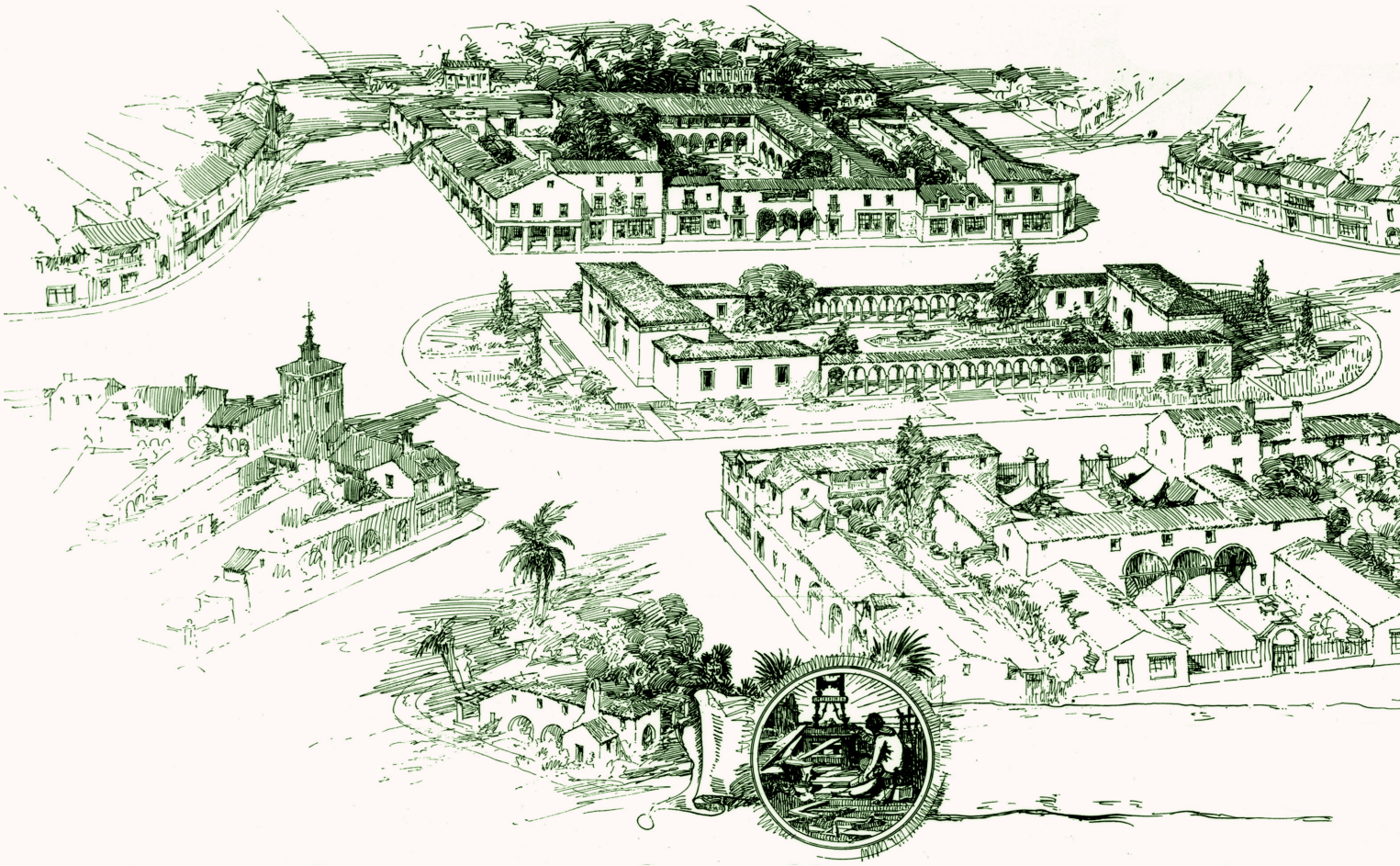


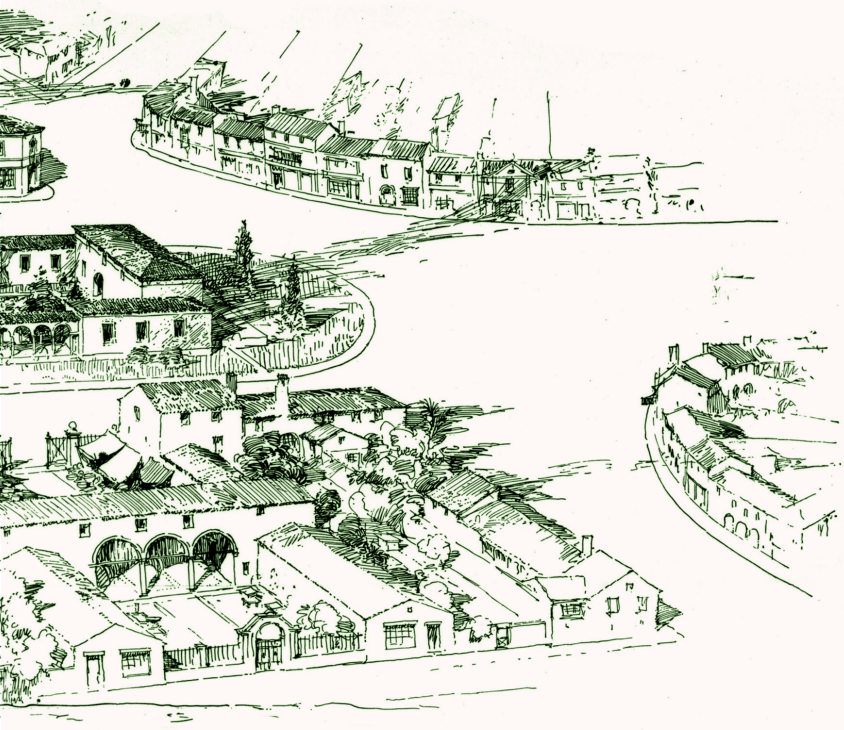
H. George Fink Office, 1925
Image Credit: Arva Moore Parks Collection

URBAN DESIGN

In beautiful and simple construction, in arches and in masses, in design which makes everything harmonious, the architects of Coral Gables have followed the great masters, have rooted their work in with the roots of the greatest.

- Coral Gables Miami Riviera, 1923





Building Form - Single Family Residence

Lot Occupation*	
Building Site Street Frontage	50' min
Ground Area Coverage	35% max Principal Building 45% max all structures
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	Building Site < 5,000sf = 0.48 max Building Site 5,000 - 10,000sf = 0.35 max Building Site > 10,000sf = 0.3 max
Open Space	40% min
Building Configuration	1 Principal Building / Building Site

Building Setback*	
Principal Front	25' min
Secondary Front	15' min or Principal Front Setback of Street
Side	5' min Combined total: 20% of Bldg Site Width
Rear	10' min

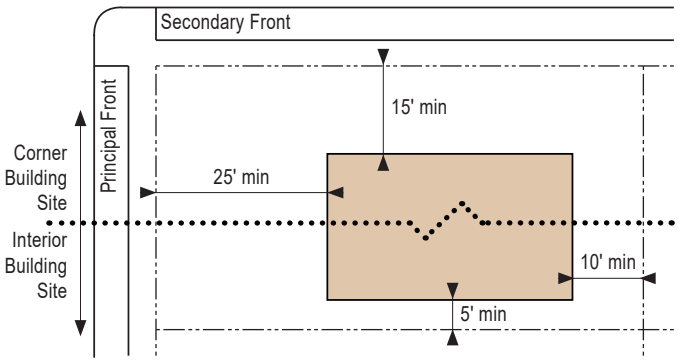
Accessory Building Setback*	
Principal Front	> Principal Building Location
Secondary Front	> Principal Building Location
Side	5' min Combined total: 20% of Bldg Site Width min
Rear	10' min

Parking Placement	
Principal Front Facade Width	30% max
Secondary Front Facade Width	30% max

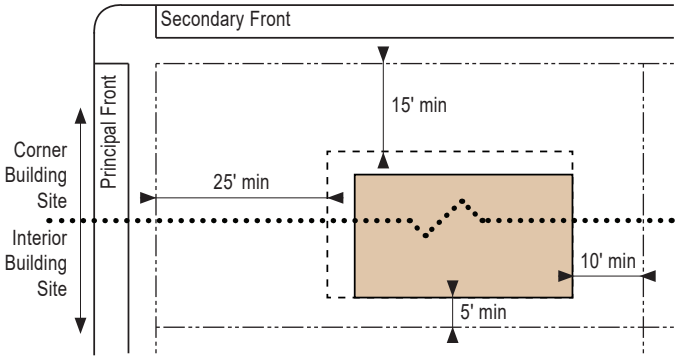
Building Height*	
Principal Building	2 Floors and 29' max
Accessory Building	may not exceed Principal Bldg Height

* Additional regulations may apply. Always consult **Zoning Code Appendix A: Site Specifics** before designing your project.

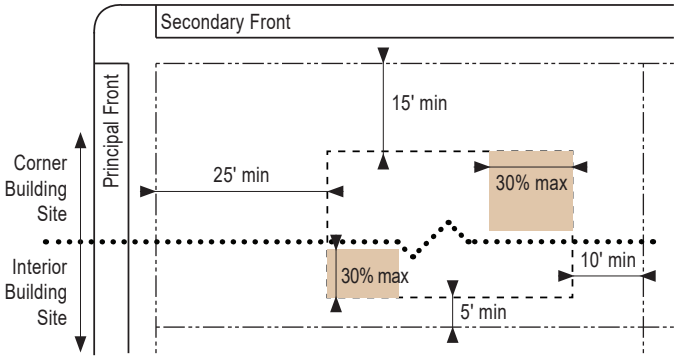
Building Placement



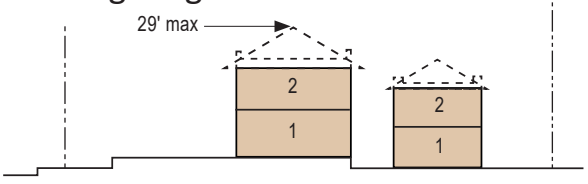
Accessory Building Placement



Parking Placement

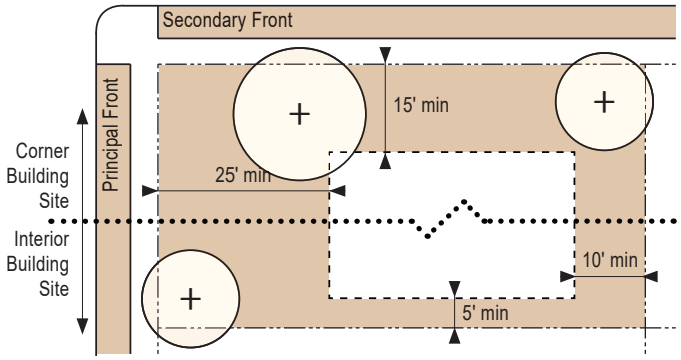


Building Height



Landscape - Single Family Residence

Landscape Placement



Landscaped Open Space	
Open Space	40% min Building Site

Plants		
Large Shade Tree	1 / 5,000 sf Building Site	+
Medium Tree / Palm (pick one)		
Medium Shade Tree	2 / 5,000 sf Building Site	+
Palm Tree	2 / 5,000 sf Building Site	
Shrub	15 / 5,000 sf Building Site	
Grass	60% max Building Site	

Front Yard		
Open Space	20% min of required Open Space	
Trees	2 trees min of required Trees	+
Shrubs	66% min of required Shrubs	

Right-of-Way		
Planting	Grass	

Pavers, Walkways & Driveways

Pavers
Moveable pavers shall be permitted in the required setback area, but shall only be allowed to serve as walkways or approved driveways, and not for patios or off-street parking.

Walkways
A walkway is an aggregated width of pavers not exceeding five (5) feet in setback areas of ten (10) feet or greater. In all cases a minimum of eighteen (18) inches shall be provided between a walkway and the property line.

Driveways
1. Driveways and driveway approaches required. All vehicular use areas shall have a driveway or driveway approach connection to the street.
All parts of parking spaces shall be set back from building entrances and exits a distance of at least three (3) feet from the outside edge of the open door. Vehicular use areas shall be set back:
a. Sufficient distance to comply with perimeter landscaping and sight triangle requirements; or
b. If no perimeter landscaping requirement or sight triangle applies: Eighteen (18) inches from all property lines.

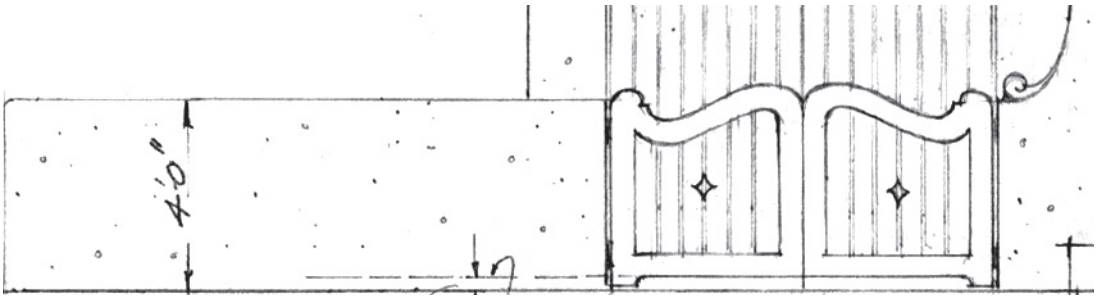
Materials
Surfacing of all access aisles, driveways and off-street parking areas shall be composed of one or more of the following:
1. Asphalt.
2. Chattahoochee gravel laid in asphalt with all loose gravel removed.
3. Clay or cement brick.
4. Concrete.
5. Decorative concrete pavers.
6. Loose gravel, provided that areas of loose gravel are set back five (5) feet from all property lines and bordered by another permitted driveway material.
7. Rock laid in asphalt with all loose gravel removed.
8. Wood block.

Fences & Walls

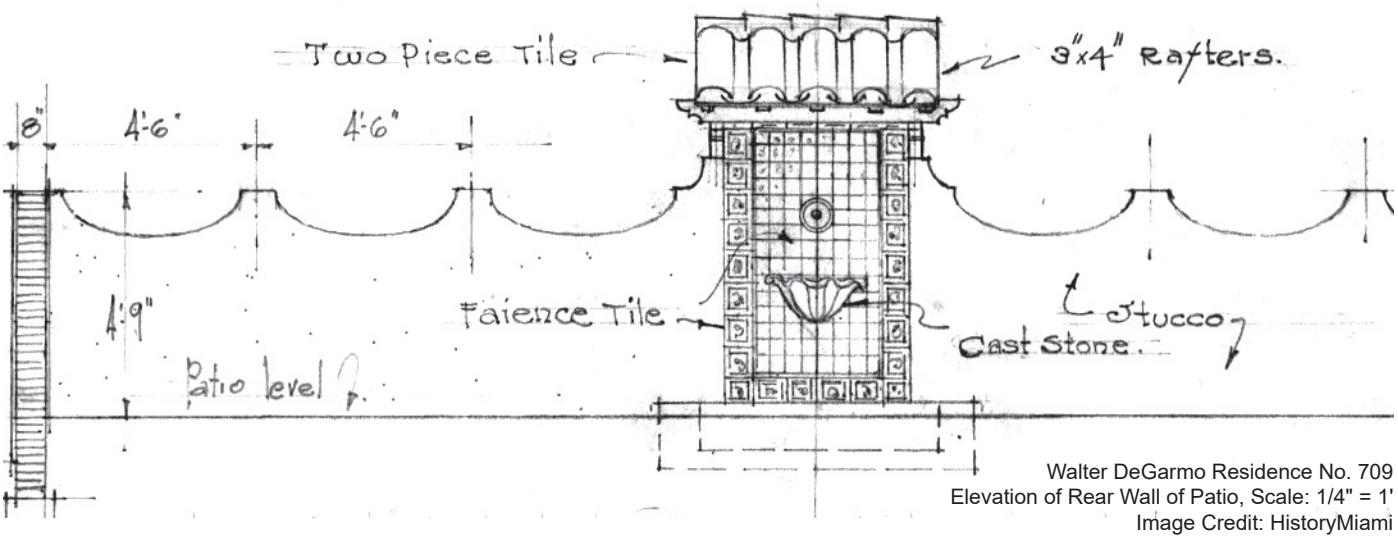
Section 5-400. Walls and fences
Section 5-401. Materials and specifications.
A. Walls may be constructed of the following materials:

1. Coral rock.
2. Concrete block stuccoed on both sides with concrete cap.
3. Slump or adobe brick.
4. Precast concrete.
5. Used red brick, limed red brick or cement brick painted white.

B. Wire fences may be constructed of the following materials:
1. Aluminum chain link.
2. Galvanized steel chain link.
3. Vinyl coated galvanized steel chain link in the following colors only: black, dark green, forest green, turf green and aqua.



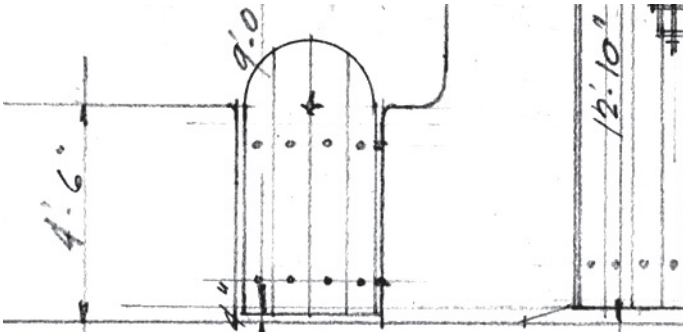
Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 722
South Elevation, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami



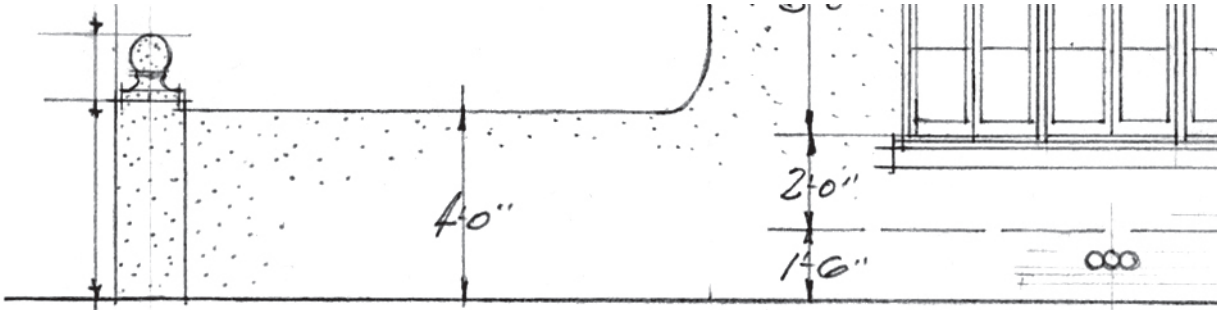
Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 709
Elevation of Rear Wall of Patio, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami

Fences & Walls

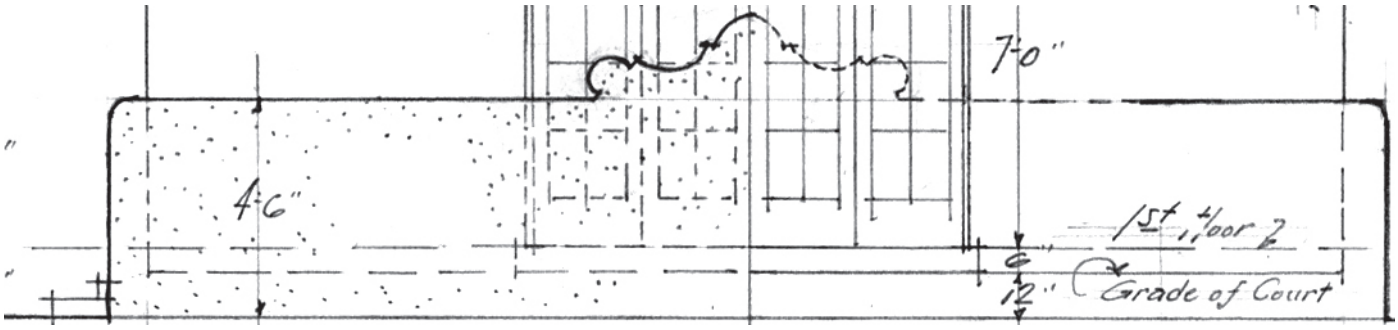
4. Aluminum or galvanized steel single or double looped ornamental type fence. The construction of such wire fences shall meet the following specifications:
a. The wire used in construction of such fences shall be of not less than eleven (11) gauge or equal, except that one (1) inch chain link fences may be twelve and one-half (12½) gauge.
b. Terminal posts shall be aluminum or galvanized steel pipe of not less than two (2) inches outside diameter or reinforced masonry columns of not less than four (4) inches square.
c. Aluminum or galvanized steel angles may be used as intermediate supports.



Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 611
West Elevation, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami



Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 615
East Elevation, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami



Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 615
West Elevation, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami

Permitted Uses - Single Family Residence

	Residential	
	SFR	MF1
Residential uses		
Accessory uses, buildings, and structures (see Table for list of permitted accessory uses)	P	P
Single-family dwellings	P	P
Non-Residential Uses		
Accessory uses, buildings, and structures (see Table for list of permitted accessory uses)	P	P
Family day care	P	P
Private yacht basin	C	C
Utility / infrastructure facilities	P	P
Accessory Uses		
Accessory dwelling	P	
Antennas and associated telecommunication uses	See Division 20.	
Awnings and Canopies	P	P
Boathouse and/or boat slip	P	
Cabana	P	
Docks, davits and floating boat lifts	See Division 8.	
Emergency preparedness shelter	P	P
Flagpoles	P	P
Fountains	P	P
Garage and/or porte-cochere	P	P
Gazebo	P	P
Greenhouse	P	P
Permanently installed stand-by generators	P	P
Planters	P	P
Playhouse	P	P
Recreational Equipment	P	P
Reflecting pool or fish pond	P	P
Screened enclosures	P	P
Storage building and/or utility room	P	P
Swimming pool and/or spa	P	P
Tennis courts	P	P
Trellises	P	P
Wood decks	P	P

P - Permitted Use
C - Conditional Use

Parking Requirements - Single Family Residence

Use	Minimum # of parking spaces required
Detached dwellings.	1 / unit consisting of a roofed structure, which utilizes the same materials as the principle structure and that is a garage, carport, or porte-cochere.
Single-family.	1 / house consisting of a roofed structure, which utilizes the same materials as the principle structure and that is a garage, carport, or porte-cochere.
Private yacht basin.	3 /4 yacht slips.
Utility / infrastructure Facilities.	0

Building Alterations.

a. Any building or structure which existed as of March 11, 1964, may be altered -- including renovations, remodels, repairs, and changes in use -- without providing off-street parking facilities or additional off-street parking facilities if there is no more than a twenty-five (25%) percent total increase in floor area, based on conditions as of March 10, 1964, and if there is no change in zoning to a zoning district requiring more off-street parking than the existing zoning district.

~ Zoning Code Section 10-110

Design Elements

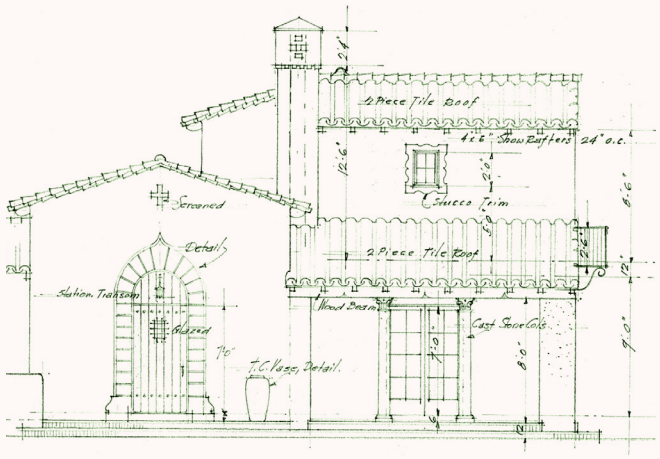
"The homes of Coral Gables then are noteworthy as a new development of American architecture. They represent the solution of an unique problem.

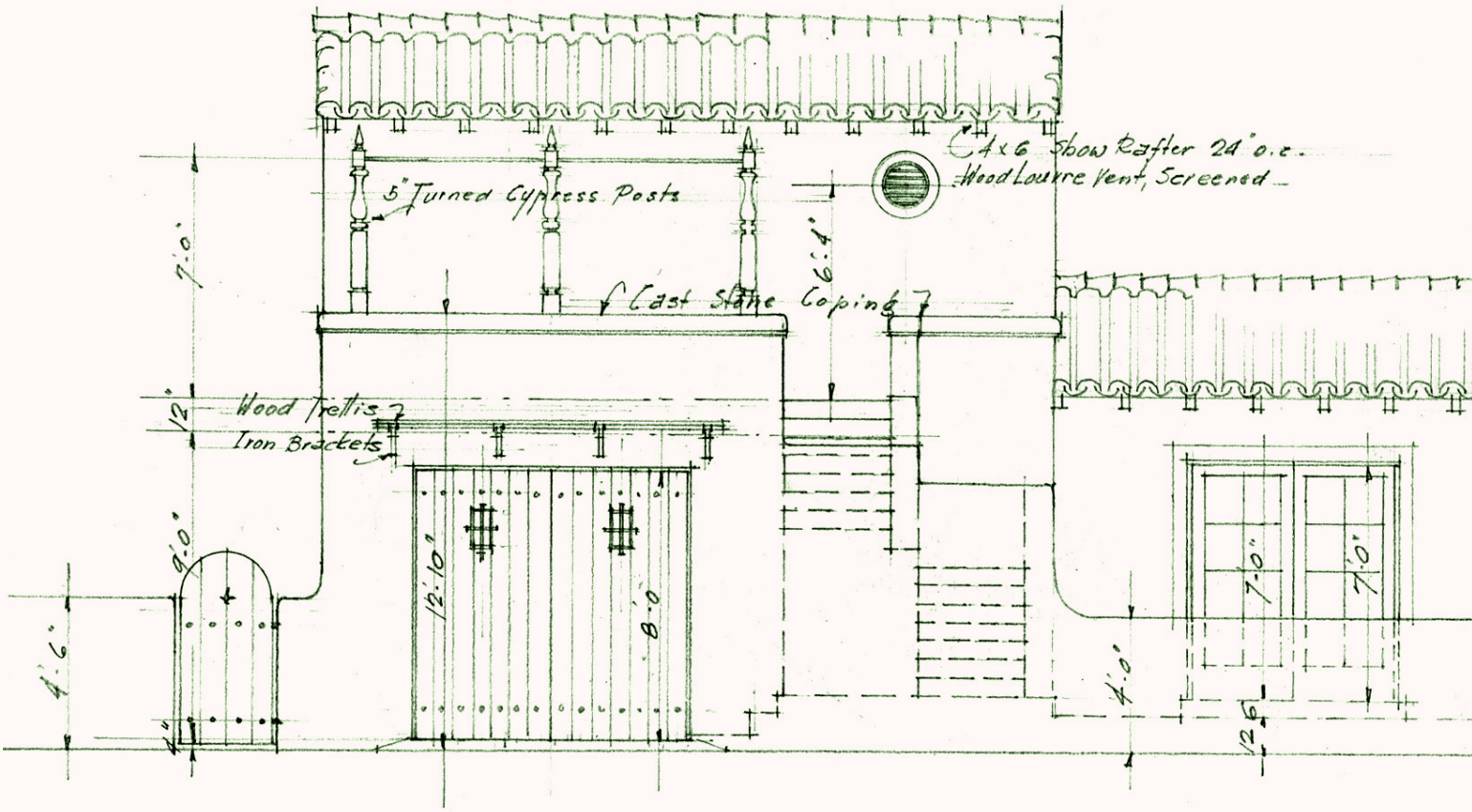
It would have been easier for their architects to have copied lavishly good things which have been built in more ancient places. They could have set the Colonial porticos of New England next to Swiss chalets suited to some craggy Alpine ledge. They could have jumbled together squat California bungalows with pillars made massive against possible earthquakes and half-timbered Elizabethan cottages from Stratford by way of Philadelphia suburbs, and alternated the whole hodge-podge with the ugly square cement packing bosed which have been the habit of the cheap Florida builder.

Coral Gables by that method could have been made a dime museum of architectural abnormalities, a glorified architectural zoo. But by that method it could never have been Coral Gables.

For the directing intelligence behind the whole creation of Coral Gables wisely and rightly understood that in its future lay the opportunity of developing a great new architecture, American because it was living and original, unique because it could express the most unique region in America, sub-tropical Florida."

- Coral Gables Miami Riviera, 1923




4x6 Show Rafter 24" o.c.
Wood Louvre Vent, Screened
5" Turned Cypress Posts
7'-0"
6'-4"
Cast Stone Coping
12"
Wood Trellis
Iron Brackets
9'-0"
12'-10"
8'-0"
4'-6"
4'-0"
1'-0"
1'-0"
12"

Restrictions

"What Wall Street Thinks of Coral Gables", 1926 article by F.H. Lamon, staff reporter of Watertown, N. Y. Standard.

"Not a home in Coral Gables; not a business structure of any kind, but is passed upon, its plans designed or approved by a master of his craft. Even the color of the stucco on the houses, even the style of the roof, of the window casements - even the color of the awnings set out to shed the noonday sun, all of these things must be passed upon by architect and artist so that there may be no clash against the general scheme of things."

"Coral Gables Homes," Coral Gables Miami Riviera

"Coral Gables' greatest pride is manifested in its thousands of fine homes...they reveal careful artistic design, and wise protective restrictions not only as to cost and building lines, but even to color and awnings, have produced harmonious, delightful effects which mean so much not only to the individual owner but also to the entire community."

"Careful and Wise Building Restrictions" Coral Gables: Miami's Master Suburb, George Merrick, 1924

"Every section of the suburb has building restrictions which protect homeowners in every way. These will be found to cover not only the minimum cost of houses, but building lines as well. On many of the principal avenues it is necessary to own more than one lot in order to build. All houses must be constructed of coral rock or stucco....[these restrictions] insure also a high standard of building which can never be secured without restrictions."

"Coral Gables Today: The Miami Riviera, George E. Merrick, 1926

"The skill of American's nationally known architects and the consummate, deft assurance of master-artists has been applied to the preservation of stability, utility and beauty. Rigid restrictions ensure structural strength, climatic comfort, harmony of type and color and landscape. Thus it is that Coral Gables attracts to itself of America's best."

Stucco - Color, Phineas E. Paist, A.I.A.

"George Merrick... deserves commendation from architects, builders and material men for the opportunity of building a town, a designed town, architecturally harmonious, and a town intelligently different from the average horribly discordant aberrations that are usual in new developments. He has ... obtained results by holding control of all architecture...

Design Review Standards

The City of Coral Gables is unique throughout South Florida for its high standards for architectural design. George Merrick's original vision for the City included high-quality architecture and attention to design. In the early 1920s, Merrick implemented this vision by hiring Coral Gables' first "Supervising Architect," the visionary designer Phineas Paist. Paist established the review process for all buildings constructed in the City. Today this process is known as the Board of Architects.

Pursuant to the City Charter, and subject to those provisions, a Board of Architects is created to ensure that the City's architecture is consistent with the City's regulations and to preserve the traditional aesthetic character of the community. In addition to any power or duty delegated by the City Commission or the City Manager, the Board of Architects shall act as a recommending and a decision making Board for the following:

- Appeals from decisions of the City Architect
- Building Permit Review/Architectural Design Standards Compliance
- Conditional Use Review
- Recommend Historic Designations to Historic Preservation Board

~ Zoning Code Section 14-103, Board of Architects.

The Board of Architects shall determine if an application satisfies the following design review standards:

1. Whether the color, design, finishes, fenestration, texture, selection of architectural elements of exterior surfaces of the structure are compatible and the relationships of these items in comparison to building base, middle and top with the hierarchy of importance being the base, top and middle.
2. Whether the planning and siting of the various function and structures on-site provides the following:
   - Creates an intrinsic sense of order between buildings, streets and pedestrian movements and activities.
   - Provides a desirable environment for occupants, visitors and the general community.
3. Whether adjacent existing historic features, natural features and street level pedestrian view corridors are appropriately integrated or otherwise protected.
4. Whether the amount and arrangement of open/green space [including urban open space (i.e. plazas) or unimproved areas (i.e. open lawns, etc.)] are appropriate to the design, function and location in relationship to the function of the structures and surrounding properties.
5. Whether sufficient buffering (including hard and softscape) is provided when non-compatible uses abut or adjoin one another.
6. Whether the proposed lighting provides for the safe movement of persons and vehicles, provides security, and minimizes glare and reflection on adjacent properties.
7. Whether access to the property and circulation is safe and convenient for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, and is designed to interfere as little as possible with traffic flow on these roads and to permit vehicles a prompt and safe ingress/egress to the site.
8. Whether waste disposal facilities adversely affect adjacent properties.
9. Whether the application provides improvements, public open space, pedestrian amenities which benefit the public.
10. Whether the proposed application is in conformity with provisions of this Division.

~ Zoning Code Section 5-102, Design Review Standards

Context

The architectural style for a given location, unless specified to the contrary, shall be in harmony with the architecture of its particular neighborhood. The Board of Architects shall review a new building or structure or a substantial addition to an existing building or structure that is to be constructed in context within an area that includes both sides of the street, on the block where it is located and surrounding properties. The Board of Architects shall require that photographs of both sides of the street, on the block where a new building or structure or a substantial addition to an existing building or structure is to be constructed and surrounding properties, is submitted for their review.

The architectural context of an area includes the height, scale, massing, separation between buildings, and style, in regard to how buildings and structures relate to each other within a specified area. Architectural context allows for differences in height, scale, massing, and separation between building and style, when such differences contribute to the overall harmony and character of the area....

~ Zoning Code Section 5-103 Architectural style.

Mediterranean Style Houses in Context
Image Credit: Coral Gables Historical Resources Department

Colonial Style Houses in Context
Image Credit: Get Your House Right

"Every structure in the city has had its plans approved by Mr. Paist, who has studied the building not only as an entity, but as a unit in the group which surrounds it." - "Phineas E. Paist, National Figure" Newspaper article, November 12, 1926

Style

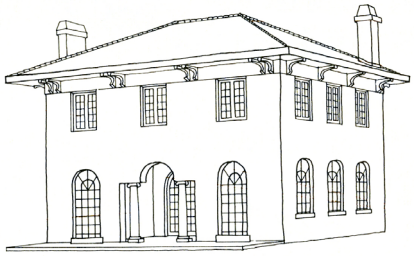
Except as provided for in Section 5-103(I) all buildings hereinafter constructed or reconstructed, shall be designed in a specific architectural style such as but not limited to Colonial, Venetian, Mediterranean, Italian, French, Bahamian or other identifiable architectural style. All buildings hereinafter altered or added to shall conform to the architectural design of the existing building provided, however, that if the architectural style of the building is being altered then the building shall be designed in a specific architectural style such as but not limited to Colonial, Venetian, Mediterranean, Italian, French, Bahamian or other identifiable architectural style.

The Architect shall include a page or pages in the plan which defines the architectural style with text and photographs and provide a statement on how the proposed building complies with the style. It shall be the duty and responsibility of the Board of Architects to determine in each and every case whether or not the submitted plans comply with the type and scale of architecture set forth hereinabove and require from the designing architect such changes as would bring the design into conformity. The Board of Architects shall require such changes in the design of the structure so as to preserve traditional aesthetic treatments and promote design excellence in the community. In considering the design of the building, the Board of Architects shall consider and render a decision as to the adequacy of the following elements in the design concept.

~ Zoning Code Section 5-103 Architectural style.

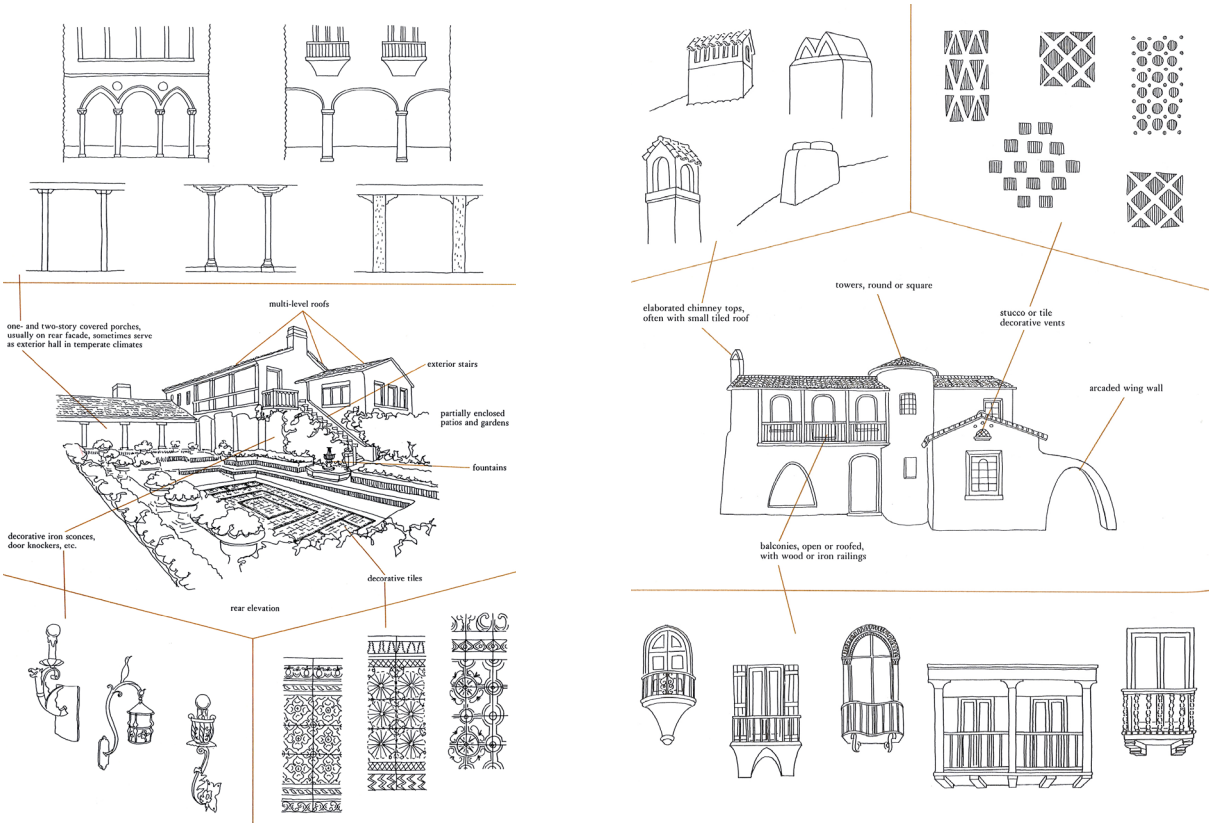
Mediterranean Style House
Image Credit: A Field Guide to American Houses

French Country Style House
Image Credit: A Field Guide to American Houses



Italian Style House
Image Credit: A Field Guide to American Houses

Style



Sample Diagrams Demonstrating Architectural Style
(Mediterranean Architecture shown as an example)
Image Credit: A Field Guide to American Houses

Style

″What Wall Street Thinks of Coral Gables″, 1926 article by F.H. Lamon, staff reporter of Watertown, N. Y. Standard.

″The architecture of the Mediterranean predominates in all that has been built. The best that Venice boasts is blended with the choice structural and decorative art of Spain, while here and there the influence of the Moorish manifests itself. There is no deviation from these types in certain sections and yet, with all the buildings that are, there is no monotony, no sameness, no duplication of exterior form or treatment.″

″Coral Gables Facts,″ Coral Gables Corporation, January 7, 1927

″Type and design are also regulated with the result that Coral Gables has been built into an astonishing old-world city, veritably transplanted into a new-world setting, with all the utility, comfort, convenience, and rugged strength required to meet every exigency.″

″It is a city in which has been captured the glories of the art and architecture and beauty of the old world, miraculously transplanted to this new world of America, the newest frontier of which is Florida, America′s tropic wonderland.″

″A home? The charm, seclusion, the hospitality, the color, of old Spain.″

Style

"Coral Gables Homes," Coral Gables Miami Riviera

"It would not have been enough to have known the unique quality of Coral Gables and the opportunities of its development, to have made it at once beautiful and remarkable. It was necessary that its architects should know intimately the finest things that have been built by great builders in approximately like conditions, to have utilized the sound and wise things of the old as the stepping stones to the new. Without a right understanding of the principles, architecture becomes not original but merely freakish."

"A note of real distinction is struck in Coral Gables homes with their rich, mellow walls, tile roofs, spacious lawns and tropical flowers."

Coral Gables: Miami's Master Suburb, George Merrick, 1924

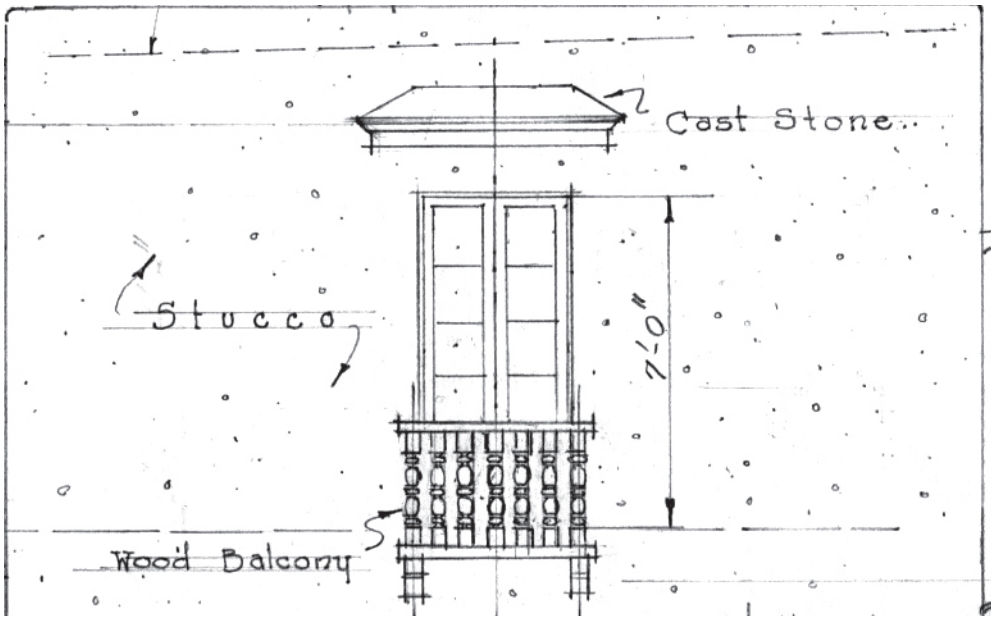
"Much of the beauty of these delightful Coral Gables homes is found in the rare fidelity to Spanish style in which they have been rendered by Miami's best architects. Much of it is found in their luxurious and harmonious settings. Much of it is due to the native coral stone of which so many are built. But the result of all combined certainly has given to Coral Gables an assemblage of homes which for uniform quality, attractiveness and permanence cannot be surpassed."

"In history and tradition, climate and foliage, Florida is more closely allied with Spain than with any other country, and Spanish architecture rightfully belongs here...Our architects have incorporated them in Coral Gables homes of the most pleasing Spanish type, and the fine old Spanish tile roofs add a final note of distinction."

Wall Materials

"The characteristics of the architecture of Coral Gables, then, are these. Walls of tinted stucco, where also the native rock, warmed to cream and soft brown and old amber in the sun, is used as occasional window trim or ledge or wall finish, are raised to enclose rooms open at every side to the air. The rough surface of the walls catches the changing light, the shadows of decoration or leaf, until they seem a very part of the earth on which they were built."

- Coral Gables, Miami Riviera, 1923



Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 722
North Elevation Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami

All exterior walls of all buildings shall be constructed of concrete, glass block, poured concrete, stone, hollow tile, coral rock or clay brick.

All exterior masonry surfaces shall be stuccoed and painted except those of coral rock, stone, glass, clay brick, slump brick, pebble-faced block, pebble-faced panels, pre-cast panels, and architectural concrete.

Wood facings shall be permitted on the exterior walls of single-family residences in that area of Coral Gables lying south of the Coral Gables Deep Waterway and east of Old Cutler Road, subject to certain conditions.

New products not specifically identified in this section may be permitted subject to review and approval by the City Architect and the entire Board of Architects.

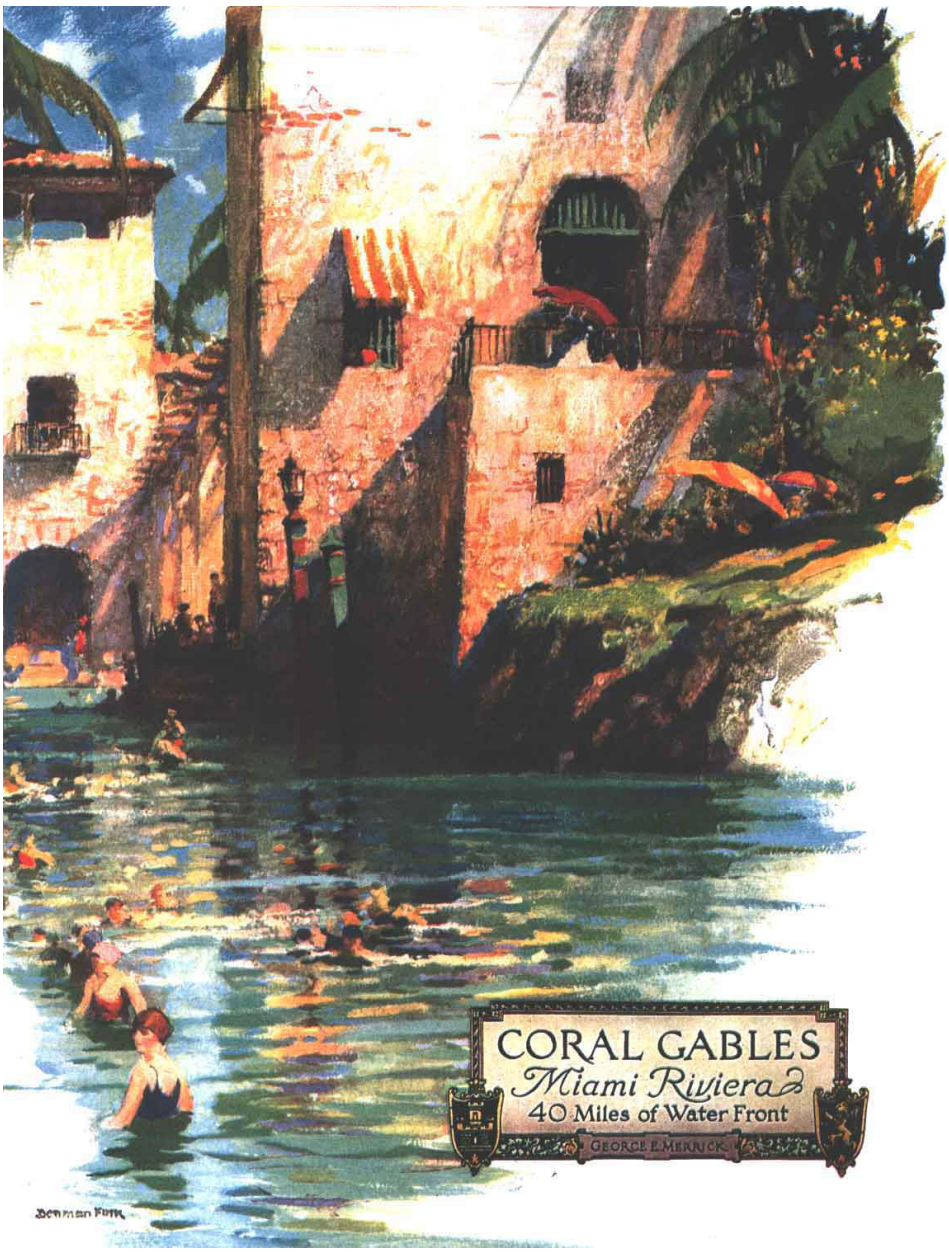
~ Zoning Code Section 5-301: Exterior Walls - material and color.

Wall Materials

"And in the final consideration of what makes architectural style, the architects of Coral Gables found the unique local material called "coral rock, the very bony structure of South Florida itself, easily workable, fascinating and mellow in use. They did not try to import alien materials. They knew that houses are most harmonious when built with the materials of their locality. Native rock, then, and stucco on cement tile blocks made in Coral Gables, are the fundamentals of its construction."

- Coral Gables, Miami Riviera, 1923

Color



Venetian Pool Promotional Painting by Denman Fink
Image Credit: Arva Moore Parks Collection

Color

A controlled color palette is an essential ingredient of the Coral Gables brand.

In the 1920s, before Coral Gables had a Board of Architects, it had a "Supervisor of Color." The early promotional images of the City were full color paintings with a palette that evoked weathered Mediterranean villages. The early homes were built with walls of tinted stucco, frequently rough textured so that they caught changing light and shadow.

Today, the Coral Gables Mediterranean brand is carried forward by the Board of Architects through their pre-approved color palette and their review of any colors outside of that palette. The official list of pre-approved colors is available on the Board of Architects website.

1. A pre-approved color palette is available on the Board of Architects website.
2. Special color requests outside of the pre-approved color palette shall be approved by the Board of Architects.
3. Colors should reflect the warm Mediterranean palette reflected in the original paintings of Coral Gables.
4. White should be used sparingly; if used, it should be softened with various techniques such as the use of textured stucco, accent awnings, accent roof tiles, and/or varied building massing that creates a play of shadow and light.
5. Bright hues and primary colors shall not be permitted on structures.
6. Colors should be harmonious with their surroundings.
7. No one color may be applied to the entire structure; there should be at a minimum one main body color and one trim color.
8. The color palette should be restrained; no more than four different colors should be applied to a structure.
9. Dark hues shall only be permitted sparingly as trimwork.
10. At no time should stone or brick be painted.
11. Trim should contrast with the main color of the structure; lighter or darker trim is permitted.

Color

Stucco - Color, Phineas E. Paist, A.I.A., National Builder, October 1924

"In Coral Gables we have endeavored to use zone coloring; that is, certain portions of the development will have full rich coloring, quite to the limit of our palette, while others will have grey zones; some streets have been worked from an almost pure white color, at one end, flushed up into the rich coloring of interior zones at the other end. Streets have been studied house against house, so as to lead in what may be called 'a tone symphony from cold to warm colors.'"

"What Wall Street Thinks of Coral Gables", F. H. Lamon, 1926

"In coloring, all the rainbow hues are found - and even primary colors, bright as may be, as softened, seemingly, by the very brilliancy of the atmosphere itself.

"Consider Coral Gables" by Mery Helm Clarke, 1948

The lyric quality appears in the use of color. In the tinted stucco and bright colored roofs there are many hues, but none in discord.

"Coral Gables Facts," Coral Gables Corporation, January 7, 1927

"Art and color, even to the types and colors of awnings and shrubs, is regulated and supervised."

Color

Stucco - Color, Phineas E. Paist, A.I.A., National Builder, October 1924

"George Merrick.... has had the vision and has obtained results by holding control of all architectural and landscape schemes and finally of all of the local color of the town."

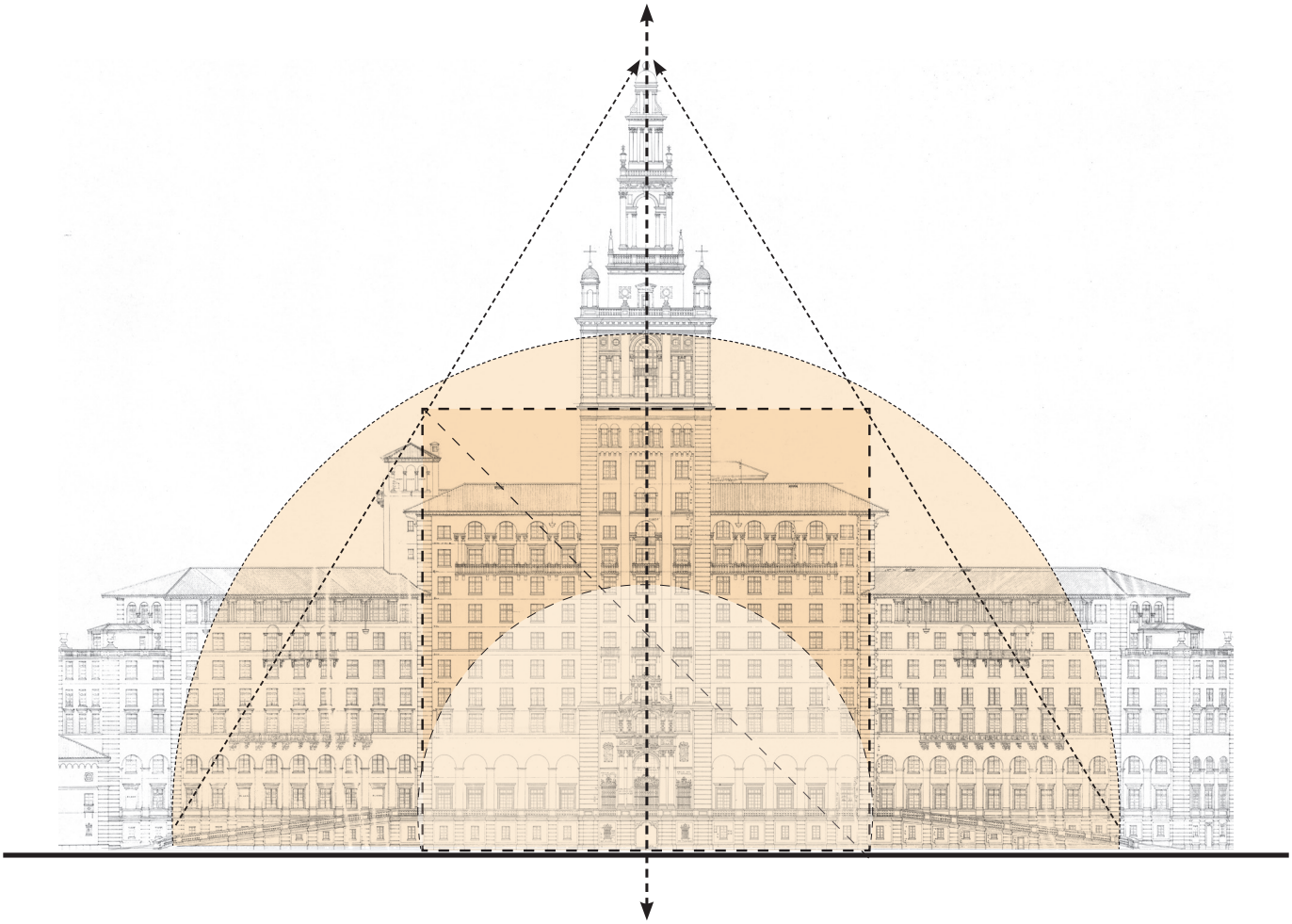
"To obtain the various modulated or weathered effects in stucco color, it is essential that the stucco itself shall have some natural texture, surface movement, or be applied with a genuine plastic technique."

"Stucco as applied in Coral Gables is unusually of a so-called "Spanish effect," which means that the scratch coat has been quickly and roughly troweled on about 1/2-inch thick, followed almost immediately with a texture finish applied as a second coat troweled upon with accidental thicknesses and surfaces uneven in effect. Sometimes this second coat is knocked down or brushed to give an old weather worn texture. In applying color to this stucco the effect tried for is that of an old building that has been colored many times and through time, or weathering, retains fragments of all of its old age colorings. Usually the first coast of color is of some deep rich color, well waterproofed and completely covering and filling all of the stucco. This is followed by half tone colorings either grey or possible subsequent stucco coloring, then by a high light color wash. The general effect of the building will show in the deepest interstices of the stucco the deep rich coloring, in the slightly higher spots, the half-tone color and, on the very high spots, or points of the stucco a high light color that will give the effect of a bleached or weathered color."

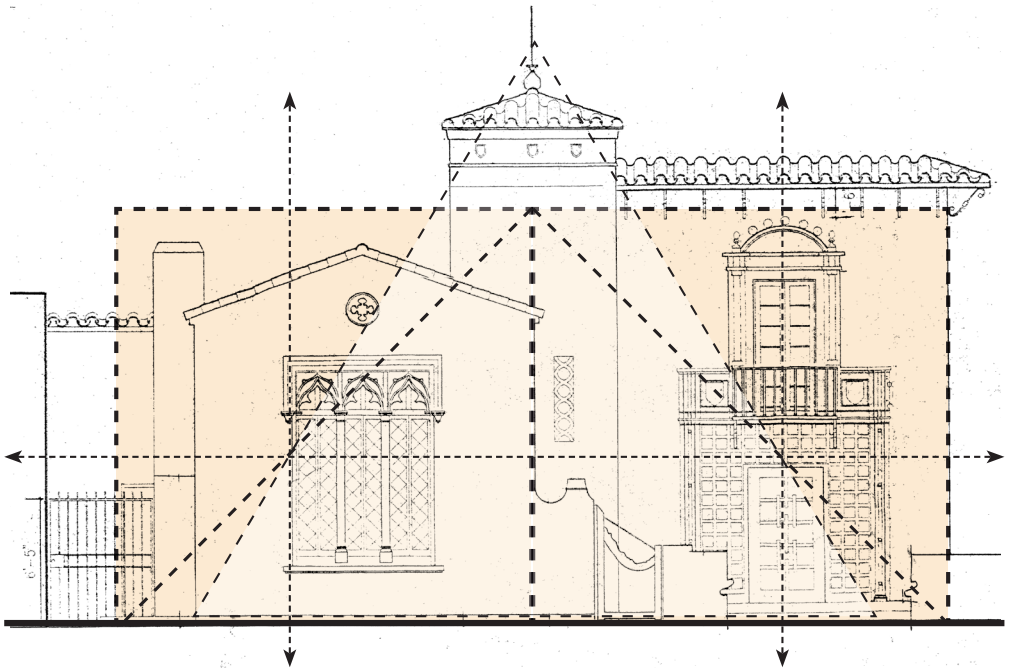
Proportion

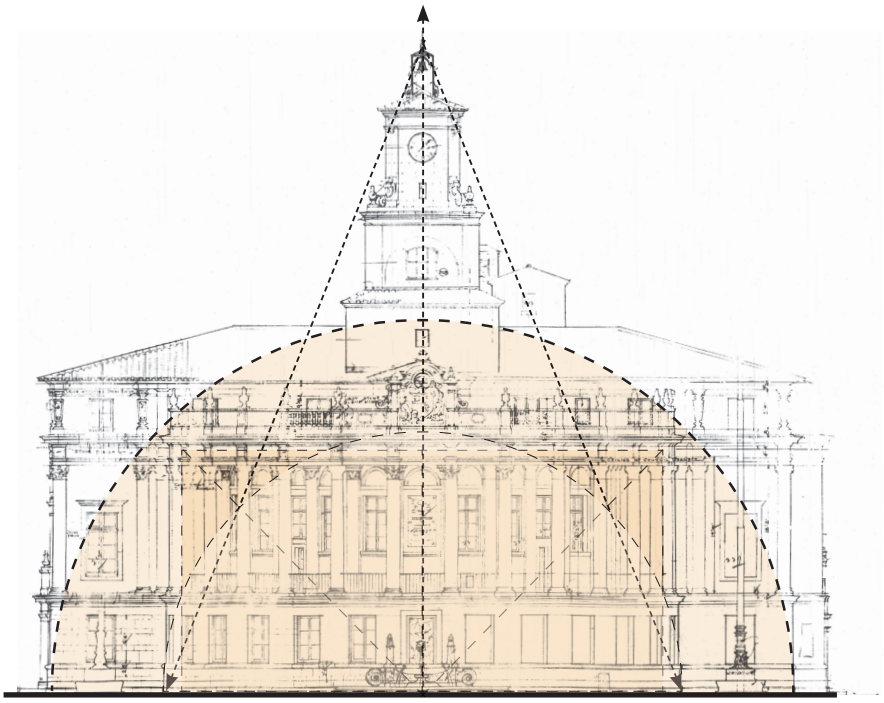
Classical Proportion

All buildings shall be designed according to the rules of Classical Proportion. The golden section, squares, circles, inscribed arcs, and time-tested ratios shall be used to determine overall building form, massing, roof lines, and the location and scale of architectural features such as Towers, Cornice lines, water tables, and entrance features. Architectural elements such as Arches, Columns, and Windows shall also be designed in accordance with the rules of Classical Proportion.



Proportion



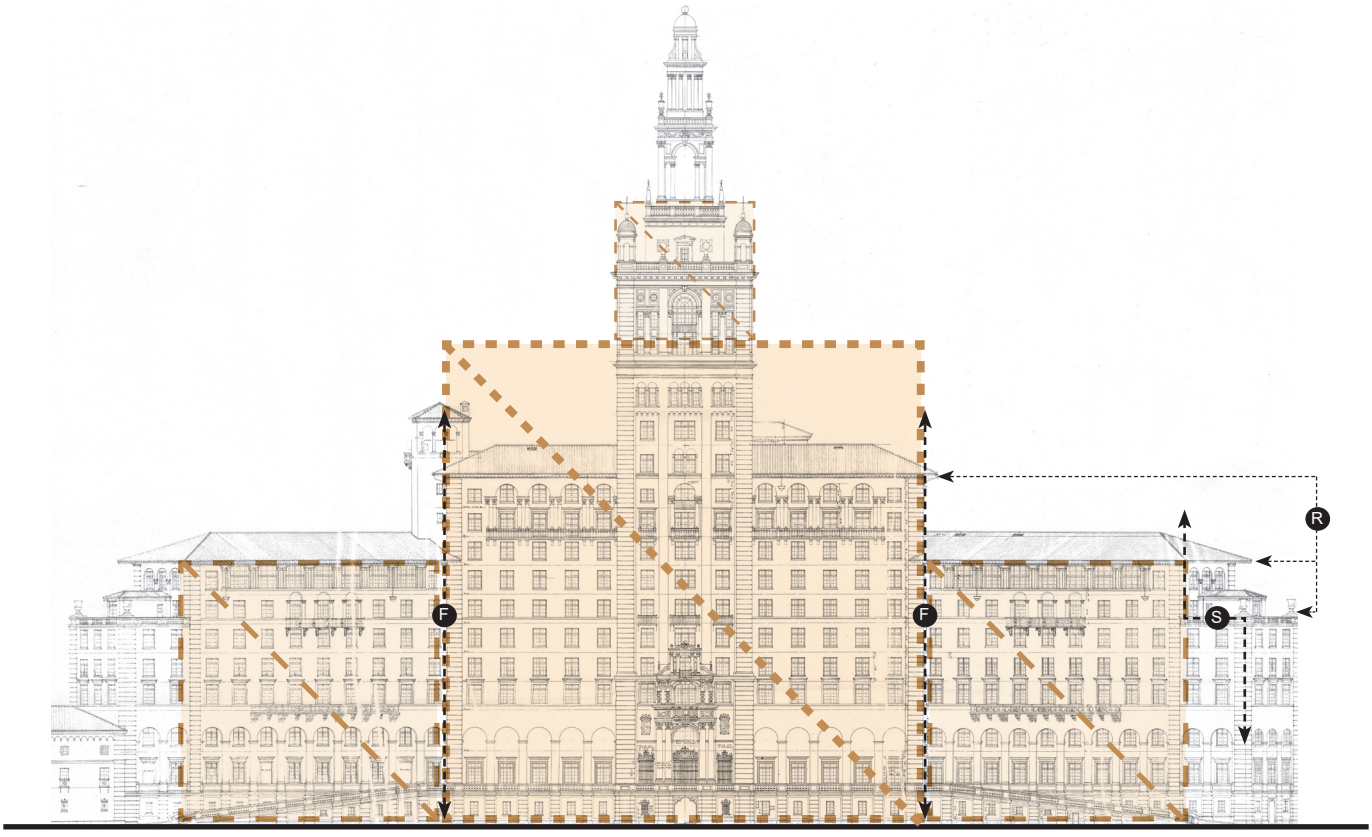


Massing

Massing

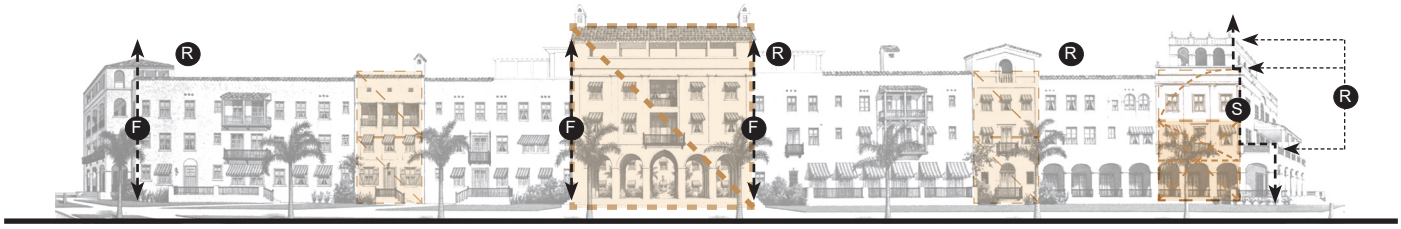
Building mass shall be broken down into basic forms and shapes that follow the rules of Classical Proportion. The building mass shall include meaningful changes in roof height, facade depth, materials, and articulation used to express important elements in the building such as a Primary Pedestrian Entrance, a Civic space, or a Tower.

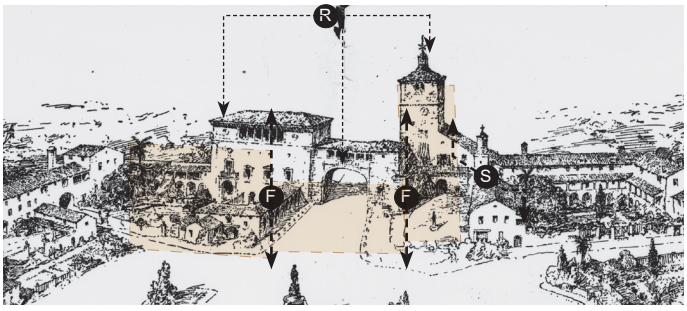
In the case of asymmetric buildings, it is recommended that individual masses follow the rules of symmetry.

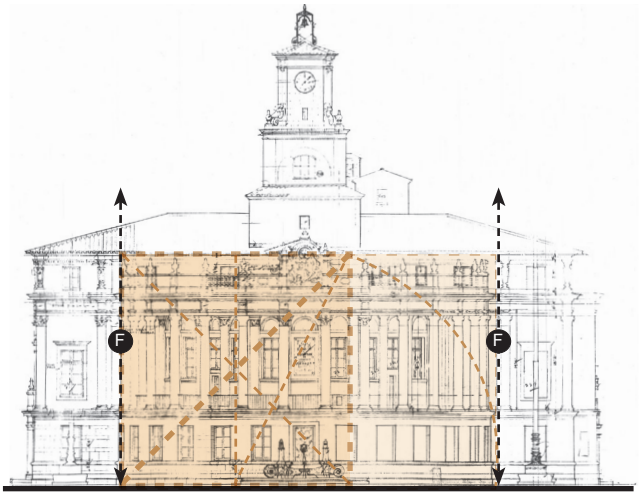


Massing

Massing		
Stepbacks	Used to emphasize Primary Building Mass and Vertical Hierarchy	S
Roofline Height Change	Used to emphasize Primary Building Mass 3' min	R
Facade Depth Change	Used to emphasize Primary Building Mass 1' min	F







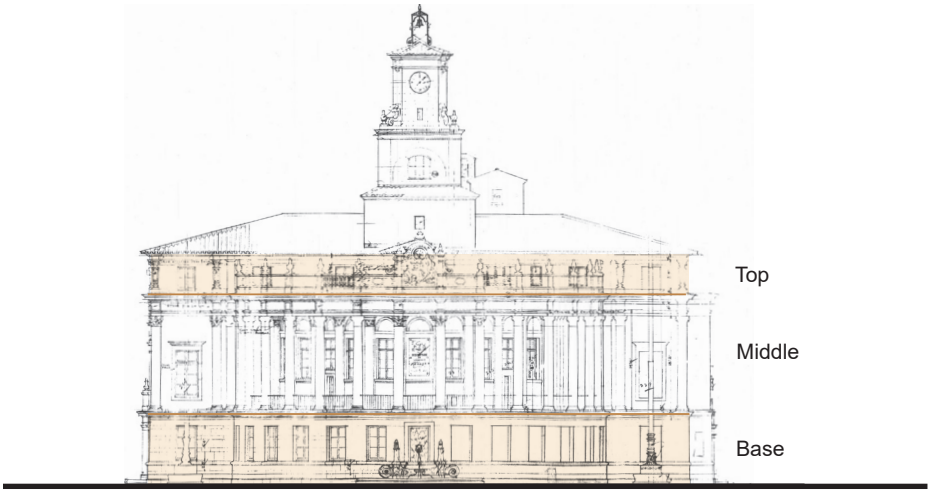
Vertical Hierarchy

Vertical Hierarchy

All buildings shall have a clearly articulated base, middle, and top. The base of the building shall express a load-bearing function and shall be designed at the scale of the pedestrian. The middle shall be designed with a simple rhythm and pattern that expresses the function of the building. The top shall express the special location where the building meets the sky, and shall be designed at the scale of the City. The transition between each vertical layer shall be marked by a Cornice line, Balcony, or Stepback.

Vertical Hierarchy

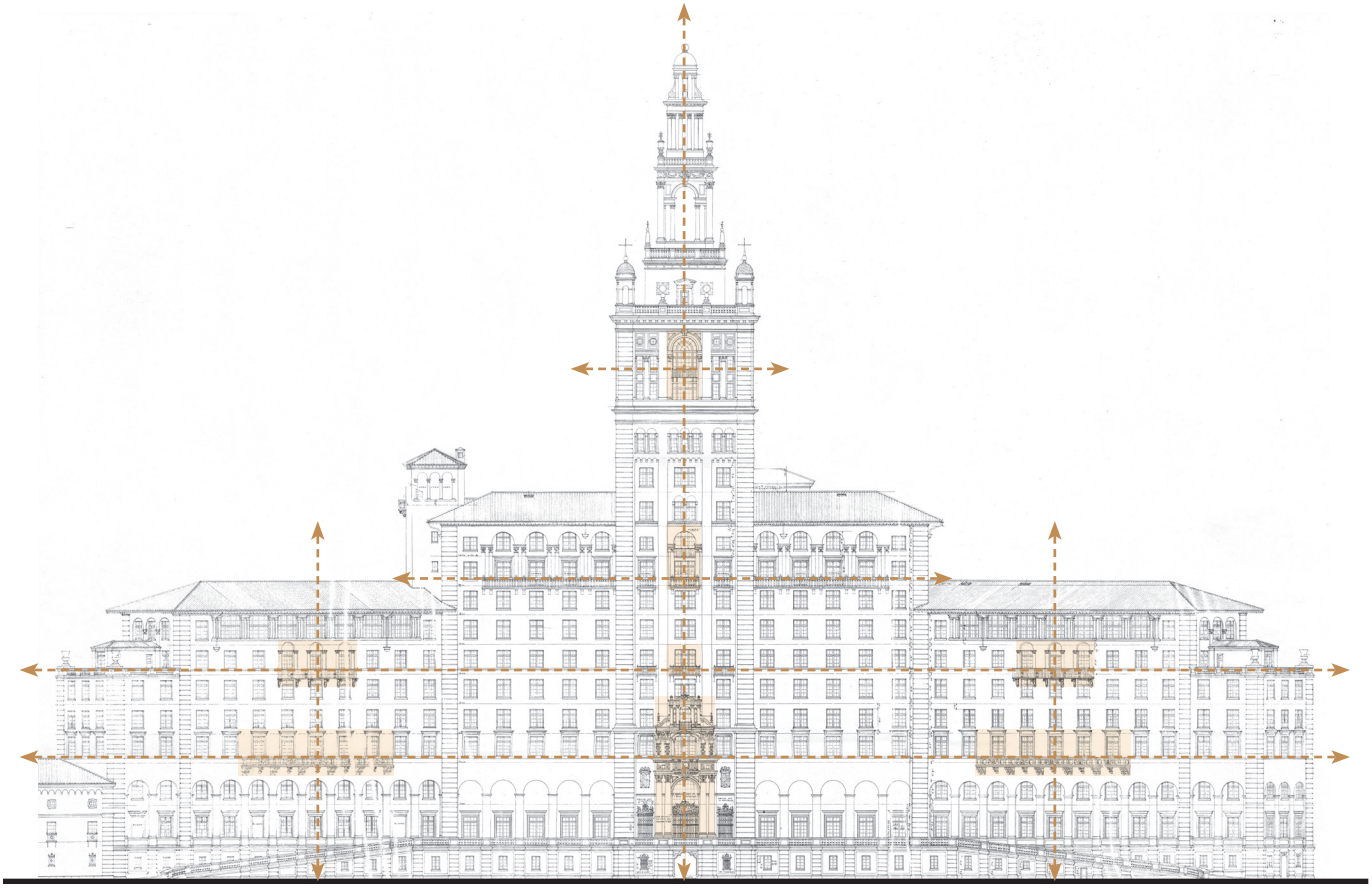
Vertical Hierarchy	
Top Architectural Elements	
■ Ornate Columns	■ Arches
■ Ornate Windows	■ Cornice Line
■ City Scale Design	■ Window Surround
Middle Architectural Elements	
■ Repetitive Bays	■ Simple, Single Fenestration
■ Ornate Architectural Elements at focal points (see Emphasis, 5.7)	
Base Architectural Elements	
■ Single, Heavy Columns	■ Arches
■ Window Surround	■ Rustication
■ Pedestrian Scale Design	■ Water Table
■ Shopfront	■ Cornice Line



Emphasis

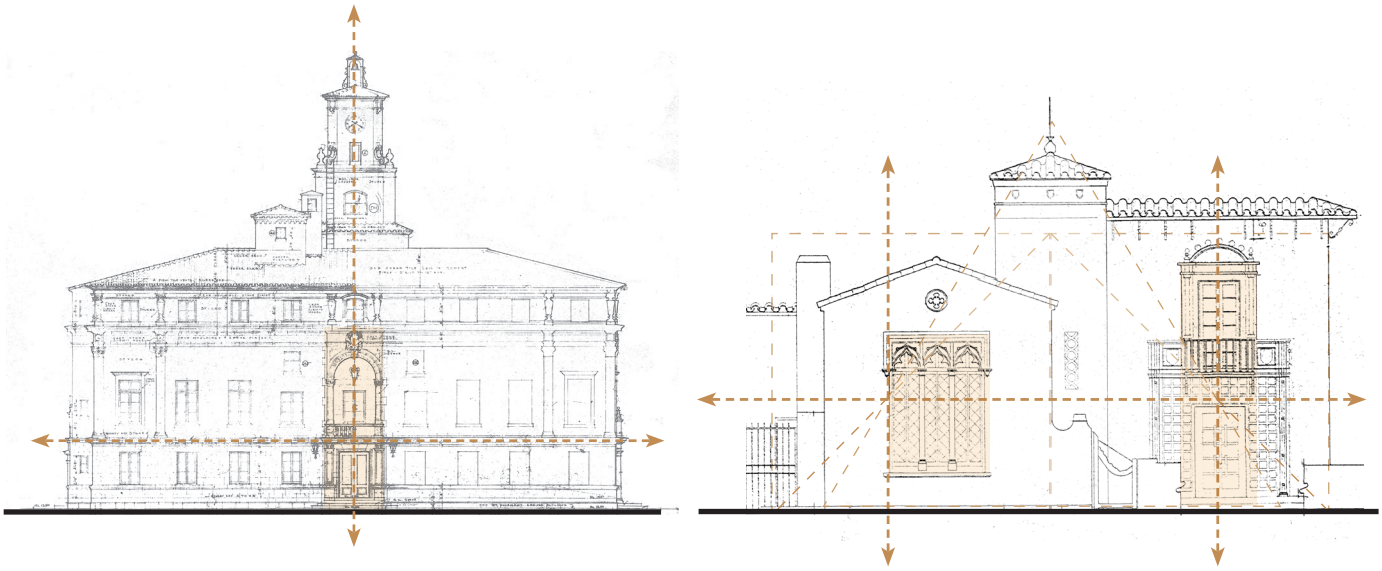
Emphasis

The facades of large buildings can be articulated through the application of special architectural elements. These elements shall be located to emphasize the principles of Base, Middle, Top, Massing, and Hierarchy. The Principal Entrance of a Building is recommended be located on these emphasis axis. The diagrams on this page illustrate how more elaborate architectural elements are placed at intersections of axis in the building mass.



Emphasis

Emphasis, Table 5.7	
Architectural Elements	Arches, Columns, Balconies, Awnings, Canopies, Ornate Windows
Location on Building	Primary Pedestrian Entrances Towers Building Base Building Top Intersection of Axis in Building Mass



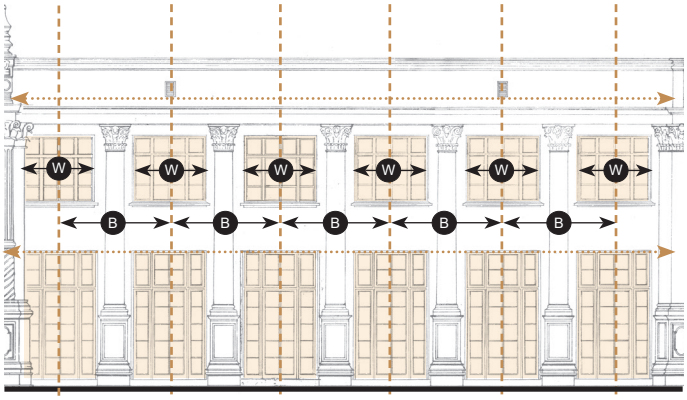
Fenestration

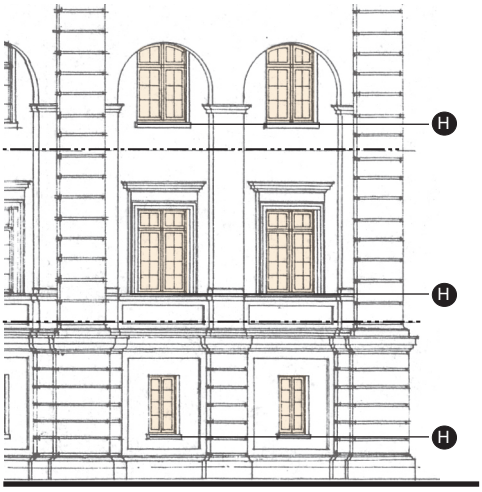
Fenestration

The rhythm and spacing of openings in the building facade, and the Proportion of opening to wall shall relate to the overall Proportion, Massing, style, formality, and function of the building itself. Fenestration includes Windows, Doors, and Garage Openings. Fenestration shall express each Floor of the Building.

The centerline of opening bays may differ depending on the mass hierarchy. To create an emphasis on a Building Mass, such as a principal entrance or tower, an odd number of opening bays is recommended. To de-emphasize a Building Mass, such as in a secondary mass or linking multiple primary masses, an even number of opening bays is recommended.

Similar to the alignment of openings, the visual weight of the building shall align from roof to base.



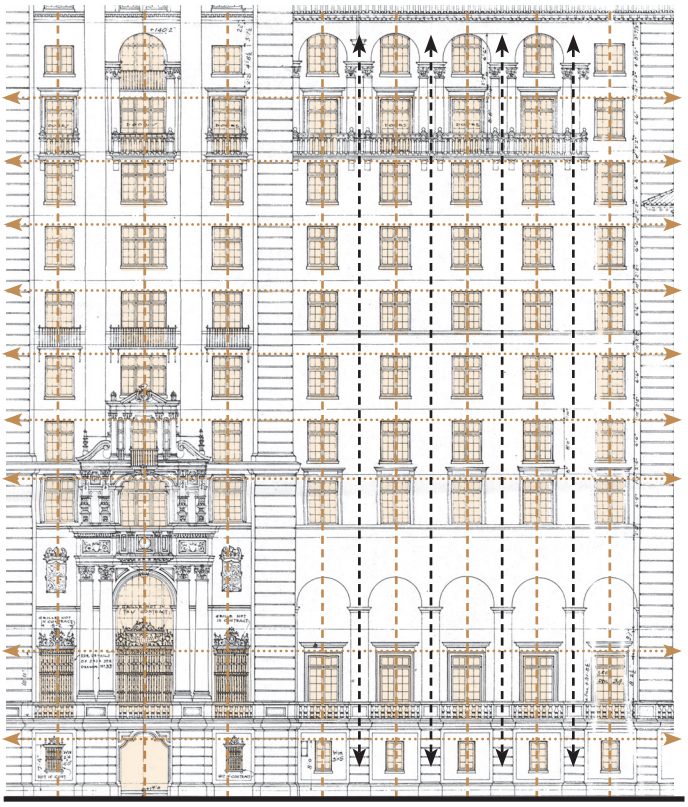


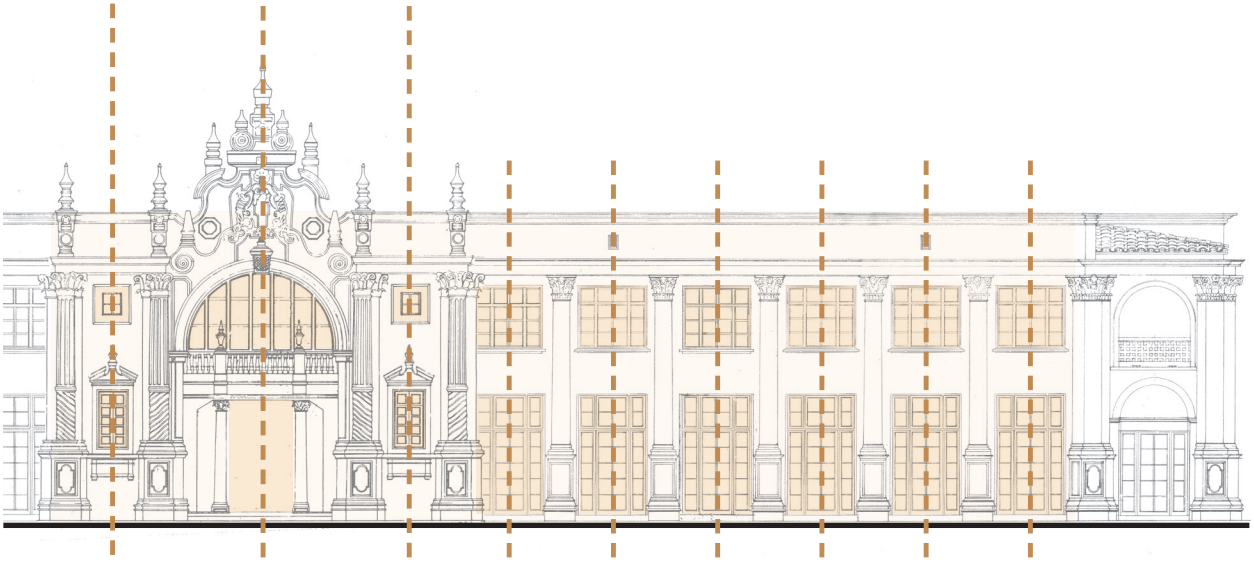
Facade Transparency		
Opening to Wall Ratio* (measured for each Floor)	1/5 min 1/3 max	
Floor Line		
Opening Sill Height above Floor Line	2'-6" max	H

* Exceptions to the maximum Opening to Wall Ratio may be granted for the Top of a Building.

Fenestration Rhythm and Proportioning		
Opening Width	See Table 5.9 and Table 5.10	W
Bay Width	1.5x Opening Width min 3x Opening Width max	B
Opening Centerline	Aligns Vertically	
Opening Head Height	Aligns Horizontally	

Fenestration





Windows and Doors

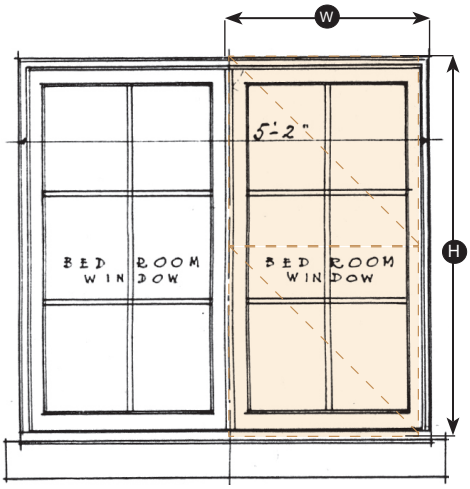
Windows and Doors

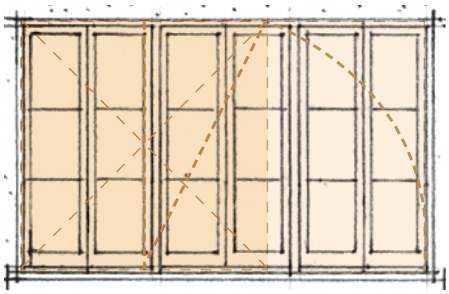
"Everywhere, breaking the plain practicalities of walls and roofs, windows and doors in Coral Gables are made not only important in the practical living plan, but parts of the whole decoration. A group of arched windows finely breaks the plain square of a wall."

- Coral Gables Miami Riviera, 1923

Coral Gables Biscayne Bay Section Promotional Brochure:

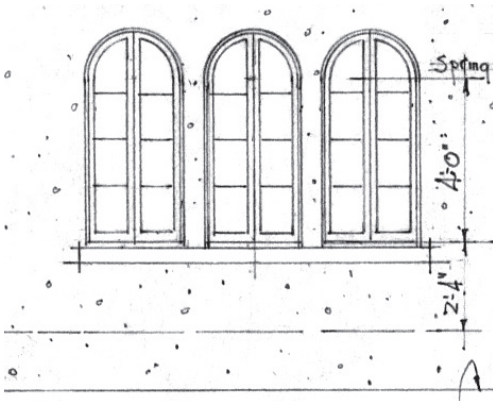
"All buildings shall have all casement windows."





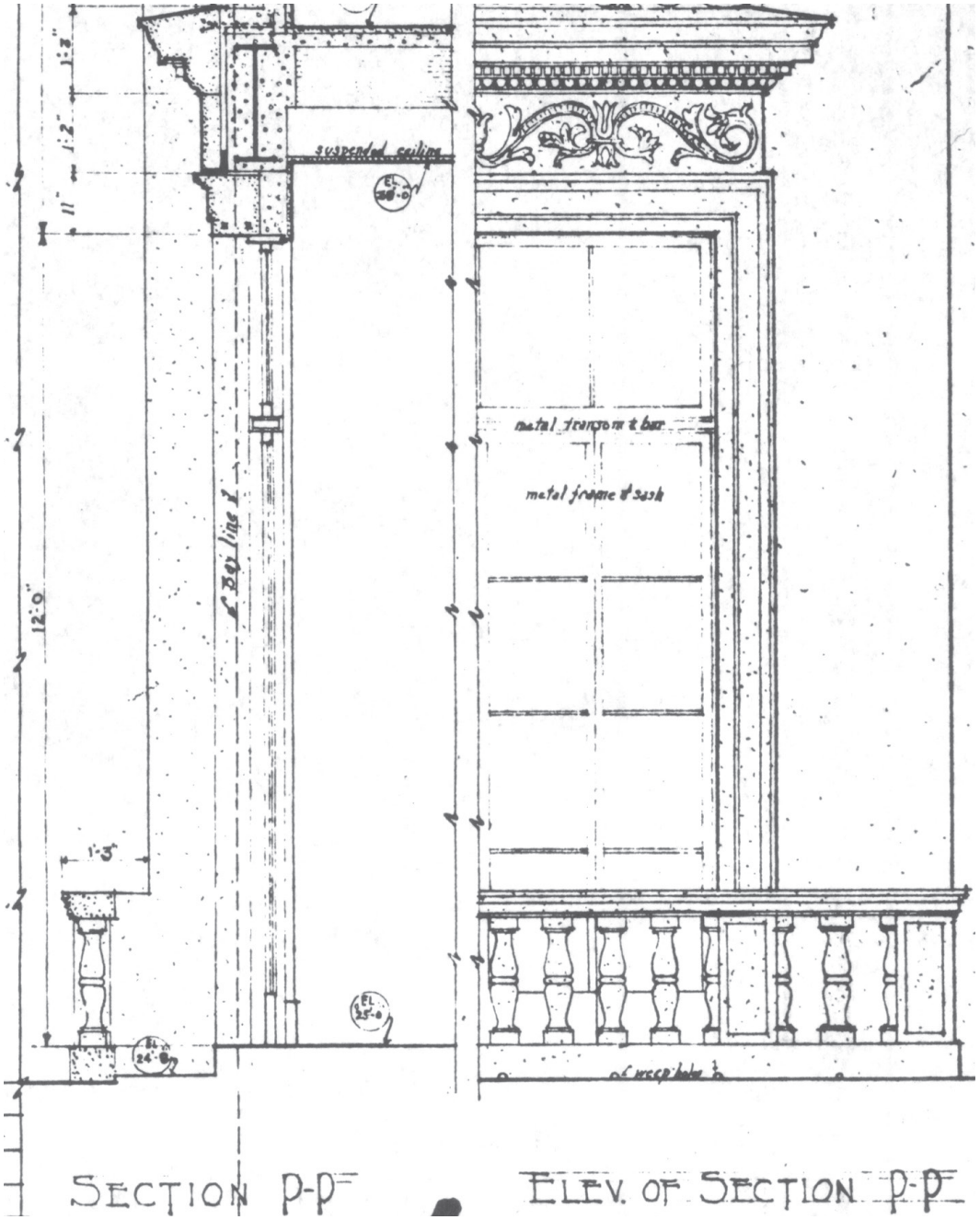
Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 615
East Elevation Detail, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami

Windows and Doors		
Height:Width Ratio	Classical Proportion Height > Width	H W
Material	Solid Wood, Wood Veneer, Painted, Stained Anodized Metal	
Door Color	varies	
Window Frame Color	Black, Bronze, White	
Shopfront Frame Color	Bronze	
Glass Color	Clear, non-reflective	
Permitted Window Types	Sash, Casement, Fixed, Transom	
Permitted Door Types	Solid, French Doors	
Window Grouping	Paired Windows, Horizontal bands of vertically-proportioned Windows	
Lights	Divided Lights with Vertical Proportion	
Frame Setback from Facade	4" min	S



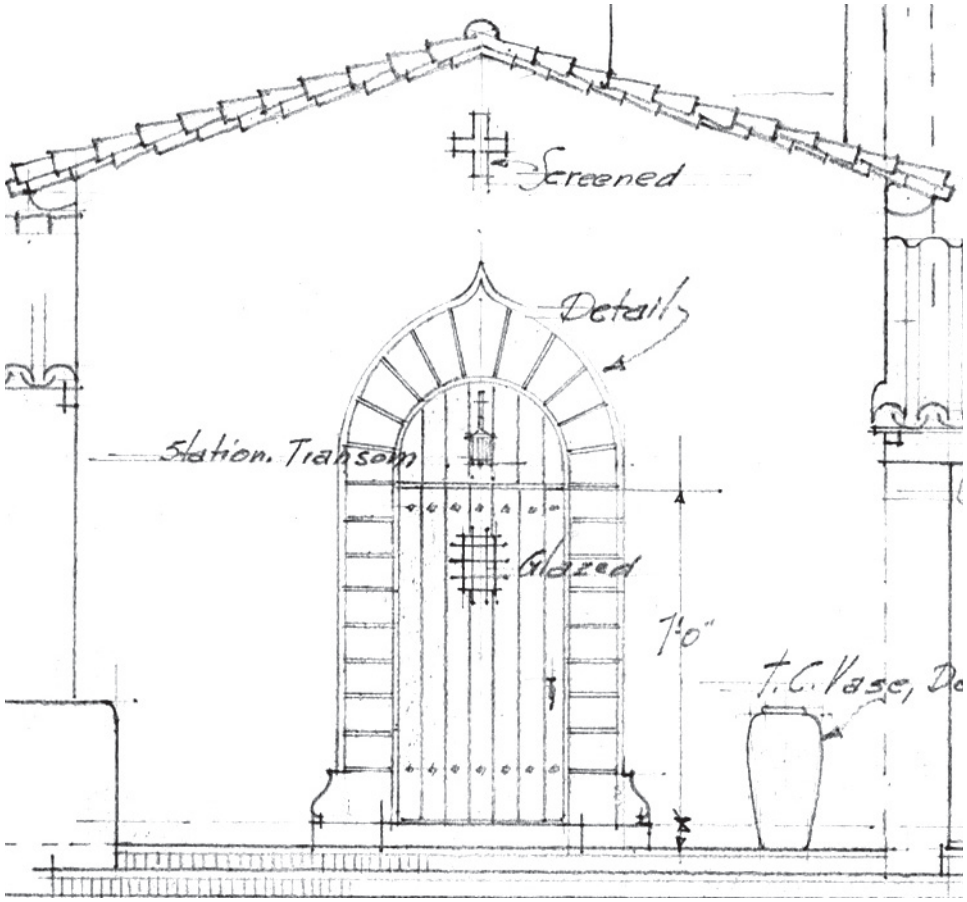
Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 722
North Elevation Detail, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami

Windows and Doors



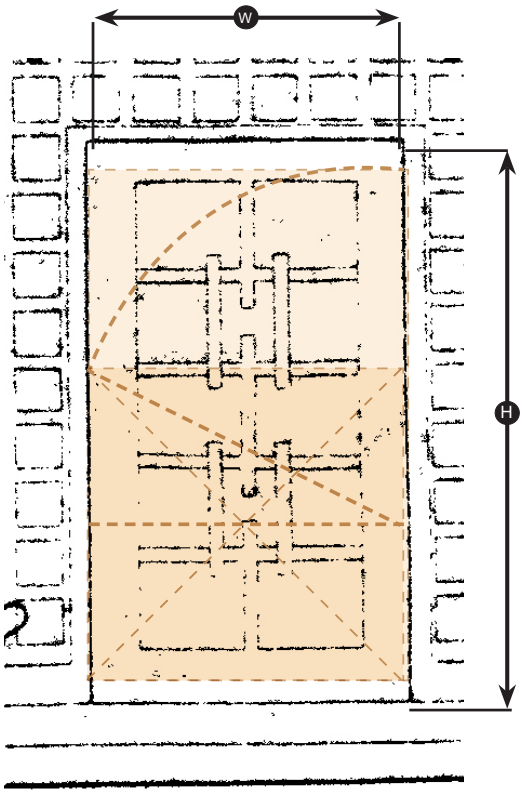
Windows and Doors

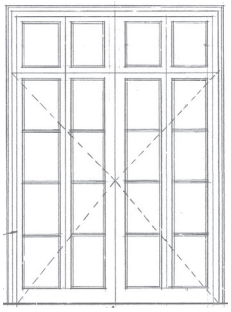
Windows and Doors are important character-defining features of a building. Proportions, materials, and style shall reflect Mediterranean Architectural precedent.

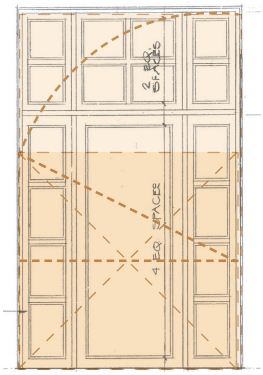


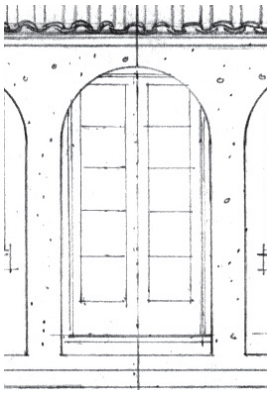
Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 709
Southwest Elevation Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami

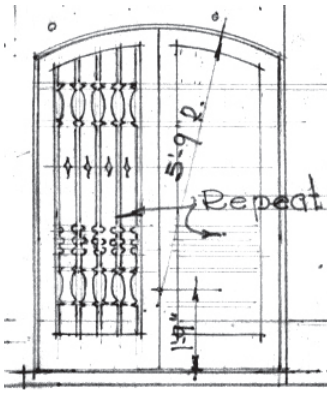
Windows and Doors

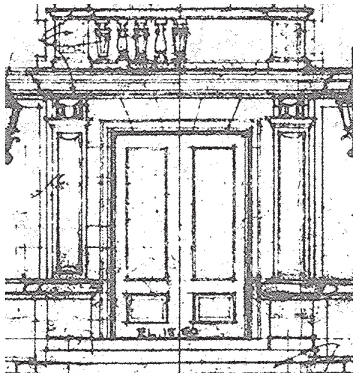










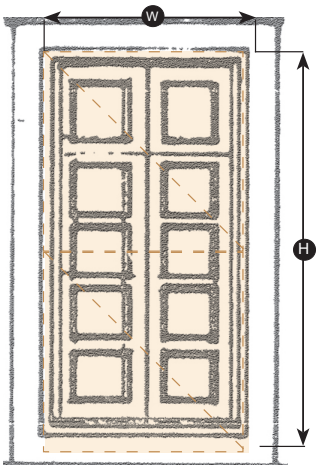


Garage Openings

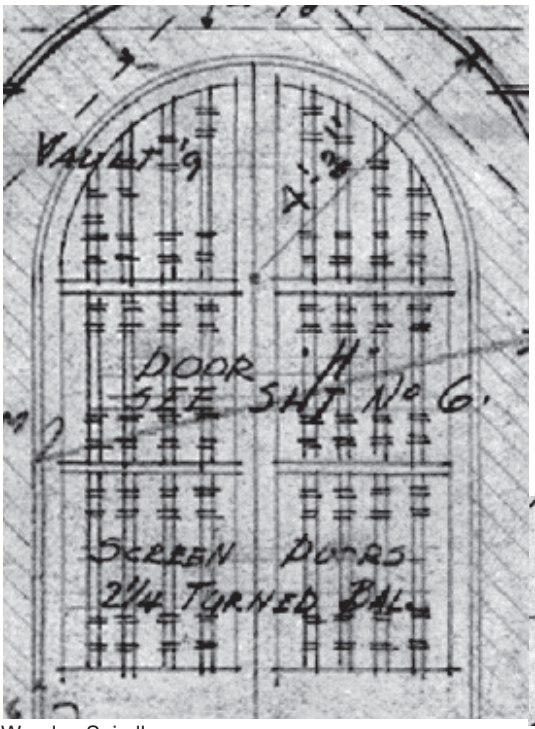
Garage Openings

Parking garage facades shall be designed according to the rules of Fenestration. Garage Openings shall be designed to be compatible with the overall Mediterranean Architectural style and Window design of the building, but with a simplified treatment that expresses the utilitarian parking use. Garage Openings shall be screened to hide the garage structure, garage lighting, and vehicle headlights from view. Architectural screening treatment shall derive from Mediterranean Architectural precedent in Coral Gables, as shown in the examples on this page. Ramping shall be internalized wherever possible.

Garage Openings		
Opening Height:Width Ratio	Classical Proportion Height > Width	H W
Architectural Screening Setback from Facade	4" min	
Garage screening materials may include wood, wrought iron, cast cement, terra cotta, or architectural quality pre-cast glass fiber reinforced concrete panels.		

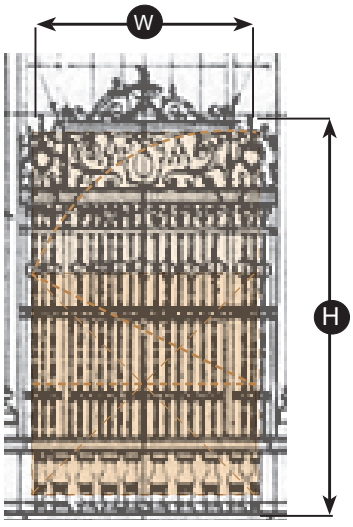


Cast Cement Grille



Wooden Spindles

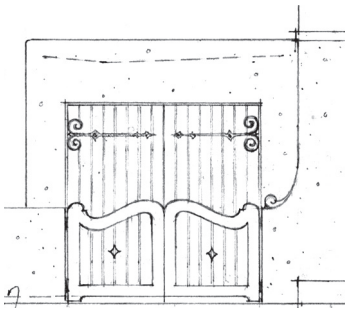

Cast Cement Grille



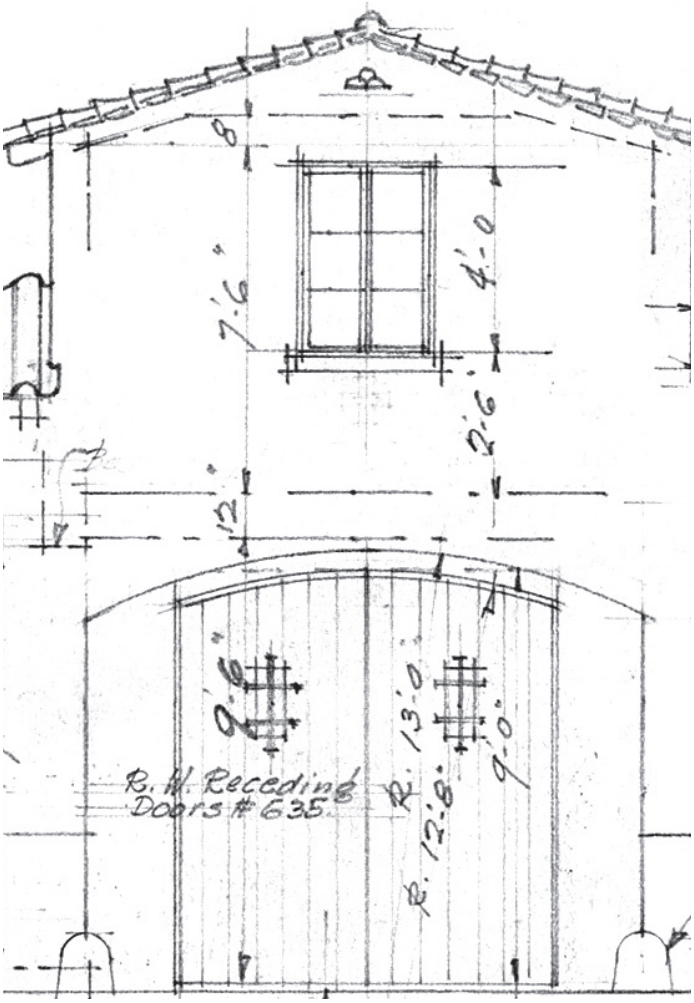
Ornamental Wrought Iron Grille

Garage Openings

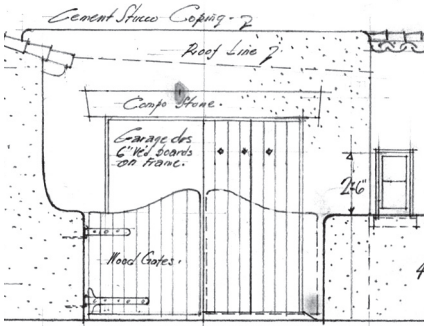
A garage that faces upon a street shall not exceed one-third (1/3) of the width of the facade of the residence that faces upon a street and the remaining two-third (2/3) of the facade shall not include other garage areas or detached garages visible from the front of the street. In the event a building site has less than fifty (50) feet of street frontage or does not have sufficient depth on a side street to provide a garage, then a one (1) car garage with a maximum interior dimension of twelve (12) feet by twenty-five (25) feet deep shall be permitted to face upon the front street.



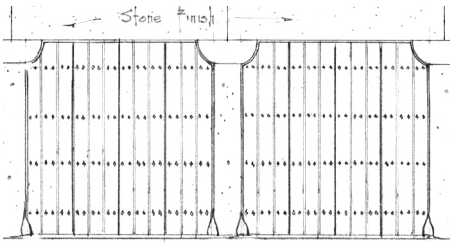
Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 722
South Elevation Detail, Scale: 1/8" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami



Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 615
East Elevation Detail, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami

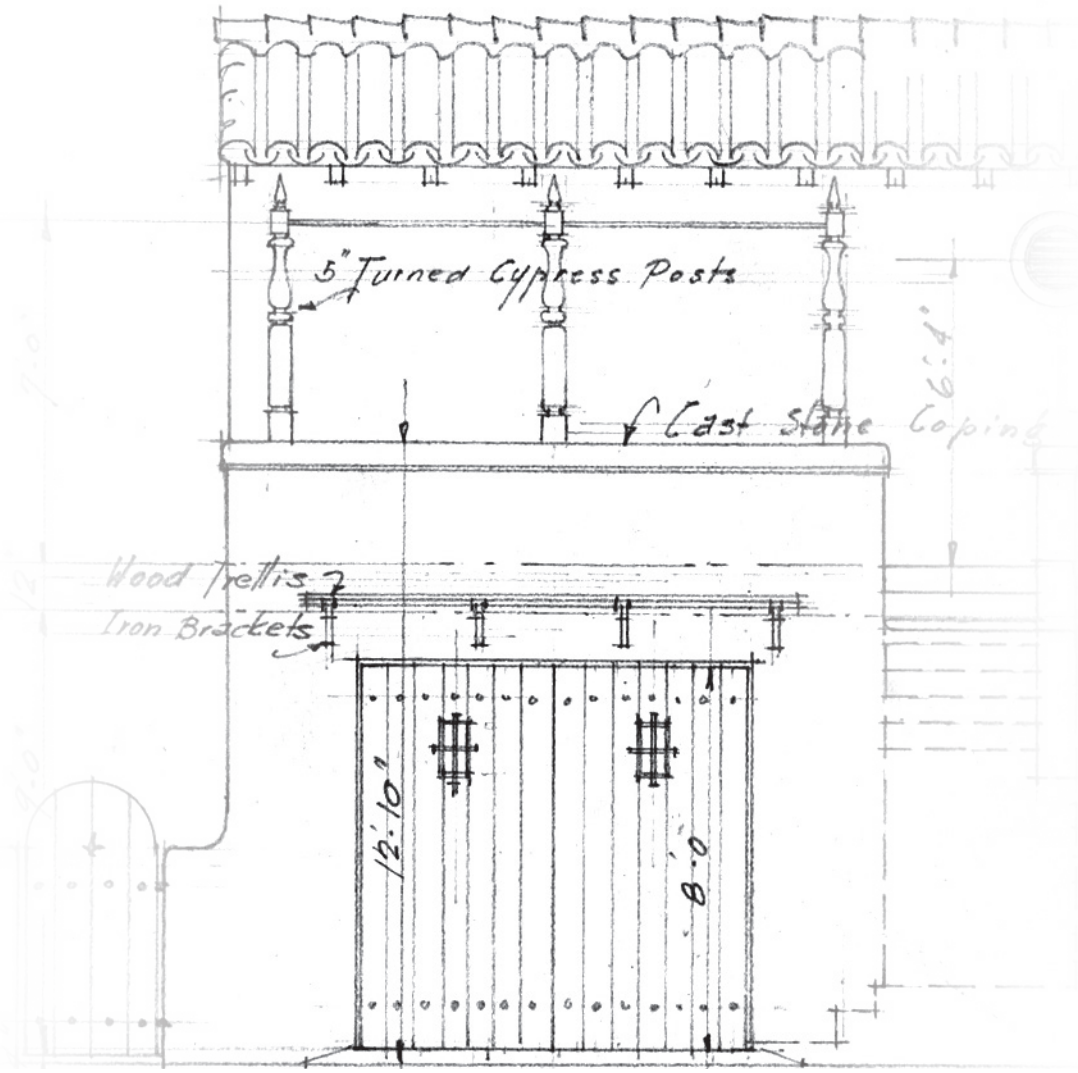


Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 615
East Elevation Detail, Scale: 1/8" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami



Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 709
Northwest Elevation Detail, Scale: 1/8" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami

Garage Openings



Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 611
West Elevation Detail, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami

Awnings, Canopies & Balconies

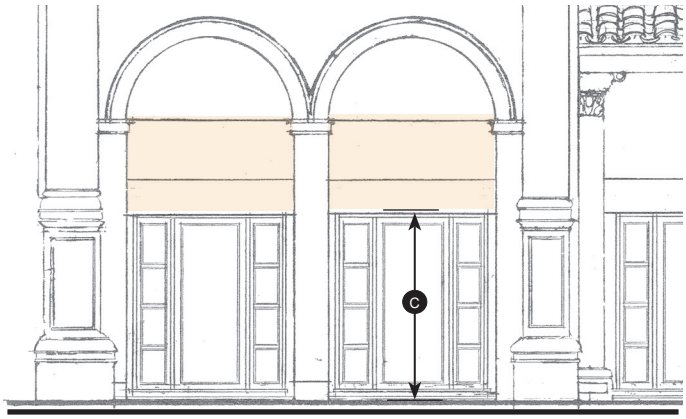
Awnings, Canopies, and Balconies

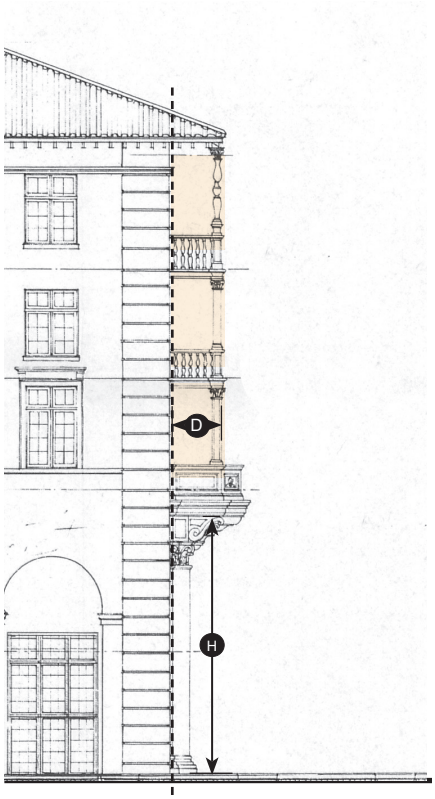
"Their colors lead to the splendid harmonies of the awnings which shade the windows, awnings chosen by artists to blend not only with the whole picture of the house, but with the whole picture of the street, olive green and brown and mahogany and cream and orange and black - masterpieces, every one."

- Coral Gables, Miami Riviera, 1923

Awnings, Canopies, and Balconies provide Emphasis to the Facade, and have the utility of providing shade and rain protection. Awnings and Canopies enhance the Fenestration of the Building. The shape shall relate to the window or door opening. Barrel shaped Awnings should be used to complement arched windows and square Awnings on rectangular windows. When placed above ground level Shopfronts, Awnings and Canopies are permitted to encroach across the sidewalk in order to provide generous protection for pedestrians.

Awnings, Canopies & Balconies





Awnings and Canopies		
Awning and Canopy Depth	2' min Residential 6' min Ground Floor Retail	
Ground Floor Encroachment into ROW	up to 18" from edge of curb	
Upper Floor Encroachment into ROW	6' max	
Ground Floor Clearance from Sidewalk	7.5' min for structure 6.5' min for loose fabric	C
Awning Percent Slope	100% min Residential 40% max Ground Floor Retail	

The design of Awnings and Canopies shall relate to the size, shape, materials, and style of the Opening.

Awnings shall be constructed with a metal frame and cloth or canvas covering. Cloth in an awning shall be or look like natural fabric and be limited to two (2) colors.

Canopies shall be either supported from below by brackets, or from above by suspension cables or chains.

Balconies		
Build-to Line		- - -
Balcony Depth	2' min	D
Balcony Underside Clearance from Sidewalk	10' min	H

Balconies may occur forward of the Build-To-Line, Setback, and/or Build-To-Zone.

Balconies shall be designed with visible support such as brackets.

A line of Balconies is recommended to be used with Expression Lines to mark the transition between the Base, Middle and Top of the Building.

Railings shall be compatible with other trim elements, such as door/window frames.

Columns and Piers

Columns and Piers

″The whole front of one house, with exquisitely simple roof lines and wall mass, is opened by a tripled arched verandah topped by a loggia whose delicate columns repeat the decoration of the capital of the arches below.″

″A small house, in which every detail is a joy, is made beautiful with a cloistered entrance whose slightly pointed arched and carved columns lead to an open patio, as finely thought out and executed as a Renaissance palace, and as beautiful in its setting.″

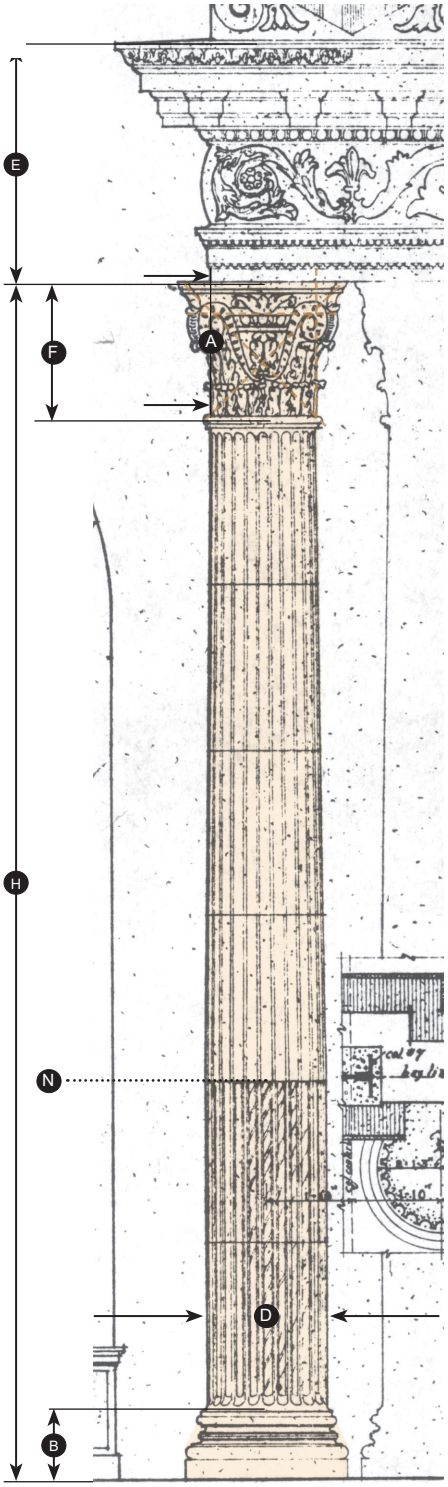
″Another small house whose wall spaces are unusually simple, has as its chief decoration an entrance loggia with a group of three round arches, the middle slightly higher than the other two, separated by twisted columns so delicate and right that no other decoration is necessary.″

- Coral Gables, Miami Riviera, 1923

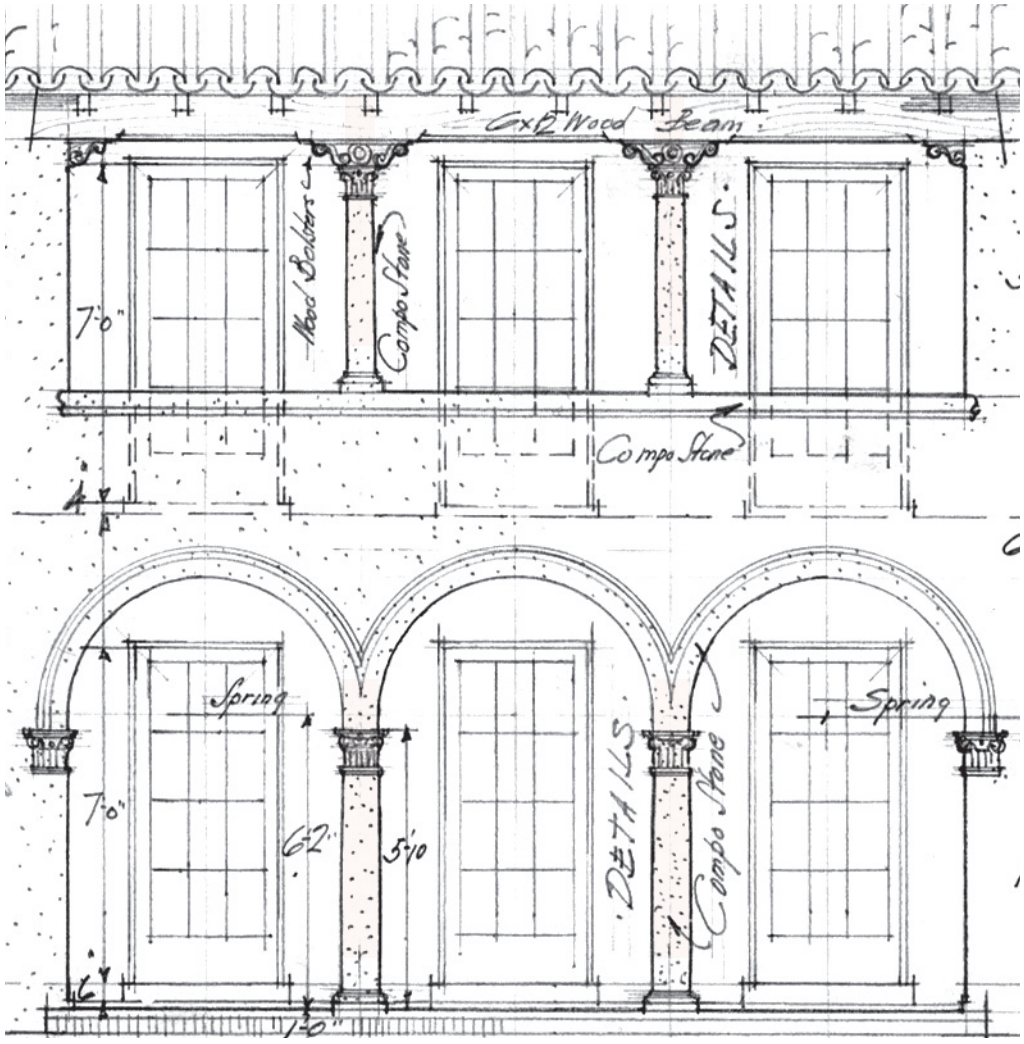
Coral Gables Zoning Code provisions:
″Where wood or metal columns are used, the same shall be well proportioned.″

Columns and Piers		
The Neck of the Column or Pier aligns with the Architrave (Outside edge of Beam or Arch).		D C
Column or Pier Diameter	Varies	E
Column Height*	10x the Column Diameter	B
Entablature Height*	2x the Column Diameter	F
Base Height*	1/2 the Column Diameter	N
Capital Height*	7/6 the Column Diameter	
Entasis	1/3 of Column Height above Base	

*Composite Order Rules outlined in this Table.
Classical Column Orders shall meet the correct proportion of the chosen order, including the Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and/or Composite order.



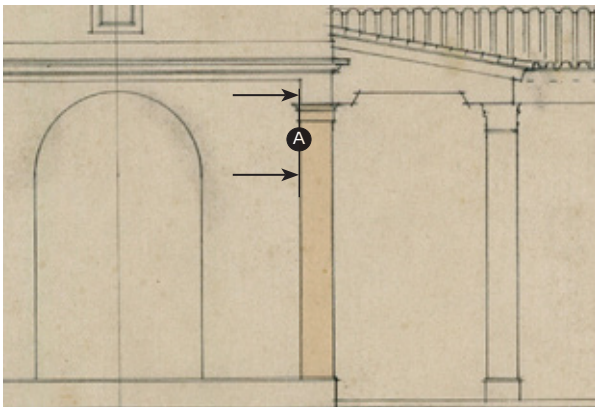
Columns and Piers

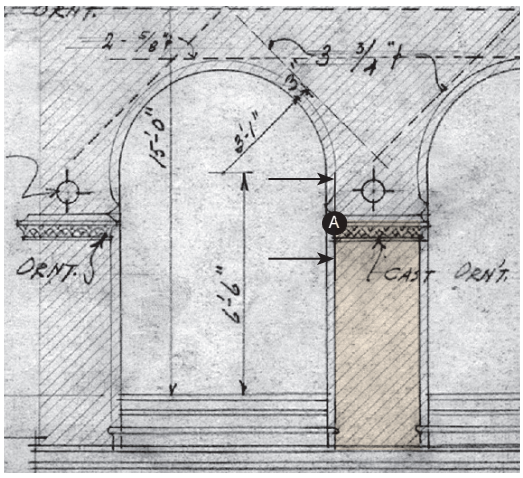


Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 615
East Elevation Detail, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami

Columns and Piers

The design of Columns and Piers shall relate to the overall design of the building, including scale, proportion, function, formality, and materials. All Columns and Piers shall be designed to appear to be load bearing according to the rules of tectonics. Columns and Piers shall have an expressed Base, Middle (Shaft), and Top (Capital). When using Columns from a Classical Order, the correct elements and proportions of that Order shall be used.

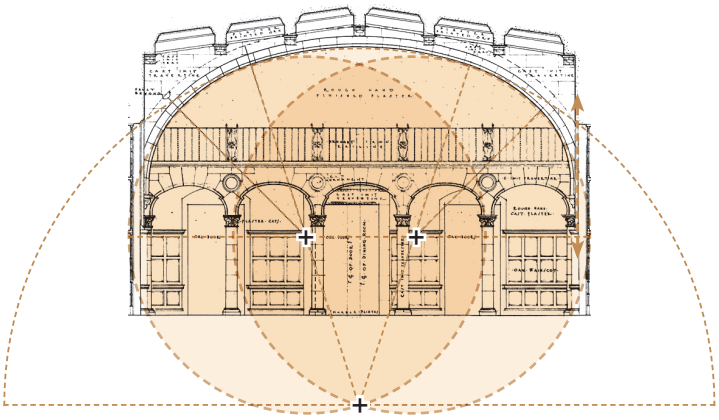




Arches

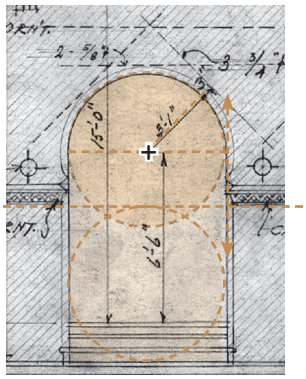
Arches

Arches shall be used sparingly to emphasize important elements on a building, such as Primary Pedestrian Entrances and Terminated Vistas that can be seen from a distance, and Civic spaces. Arches shall be designed with Classical Proportion and according to the common sense rules of tectonics. All elements of the Arch shall align to a center point and the springing of the Arch shall align with its means of support, as shown in the illustrations on this page.

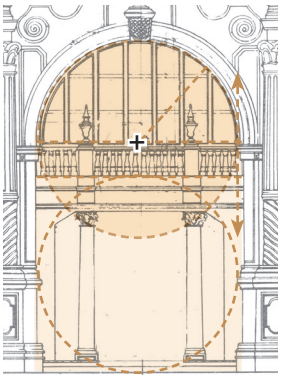


Elliptical Arch

Elliptical Arch



Semi-Circular Arch



Semi-Circular Arch

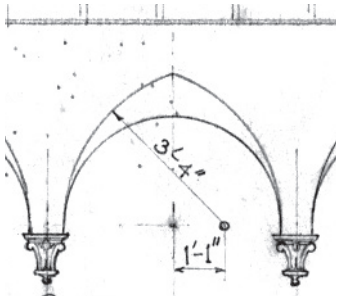
Arches

"The Roman arch, the greatest achievement of the Romans, with it noble relation of thrust to supporting mass, which is repeated constantly in later Italian and Spanish building, the architects of Coral Gables use over and over again with a most satisfying sweep and breadth and effectiveness. It was the Romans who first developed the use of concrete, too, making the arch one solid unit, which foreshadowed the Coral Gables use of stucco over cement tile blocks, by which arches could be lifted without too great a bulk of masonry or without the supporting piers and buttresses of the Gothic. The pointed arches of the Gothic, or rather as developed in the Saracenic, are used often in Coral Gables for their grace and lightness, but not so much as a structural necessity. In all the larger colonnades, the breadth and bigness, the mass and simplicity of the Romans, whether derived through Italian or Spanish, are marvelously adapted to the fine far spaces, the great vistas, of Coral Gables."

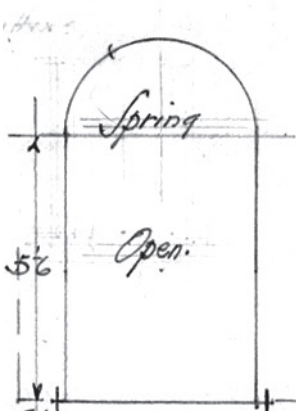
"Another small house whose wall spaces are unusually simple, has as its chief decoration an entrance loggia with a group of three round arches, the middle slightly higher than the other two, separated by twisted columns so delicate and right that no other decoration is necessary."

- Coral Gables Miami Riviera, 1923

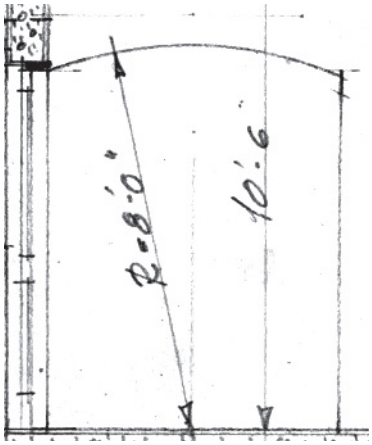
Arches		
Arch Center point	Elements of Arch point towards Center	+
Arch Springing	Aligns with Support Column or Pier	←--→
A stilt, no shorter than the width of the window casement, shall be added to the Arch to insure true half circle transom windows		



Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 709
Section BB Detail, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami

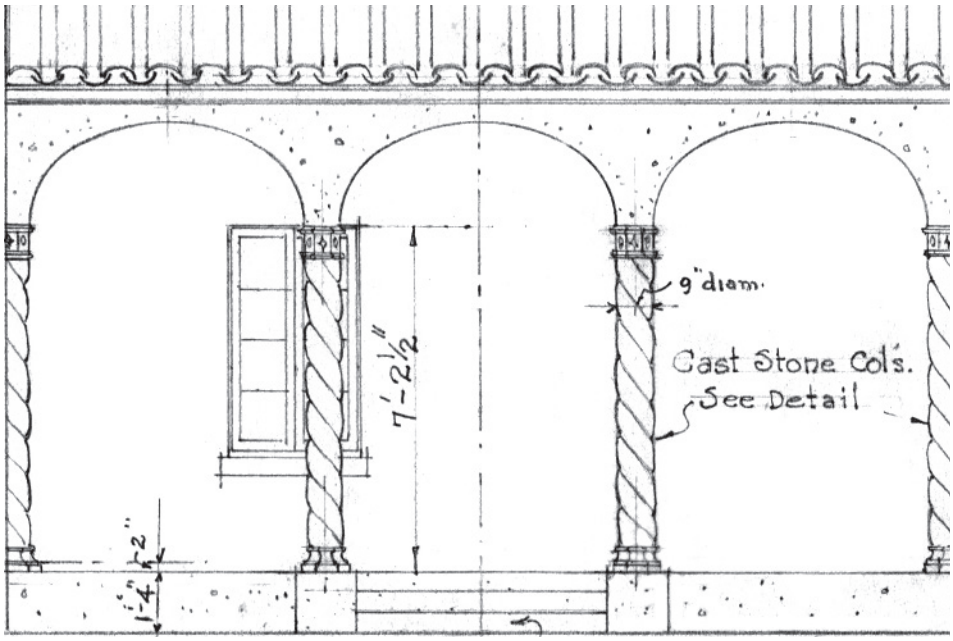


Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 615
North Elevation, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami

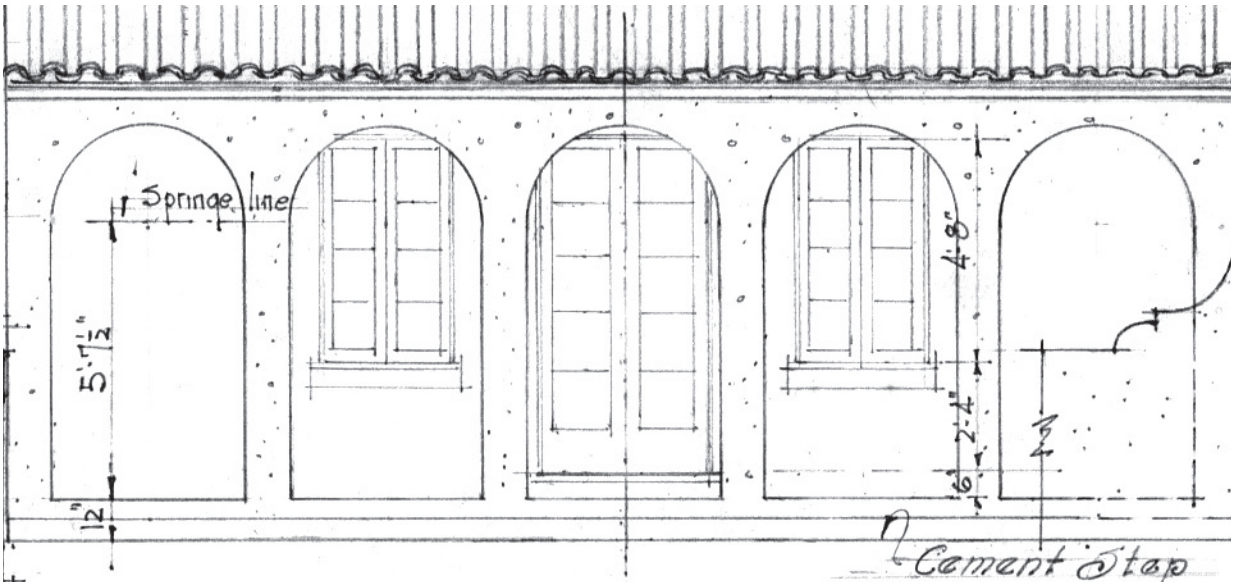


Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 613
Section Detail, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami

Arches



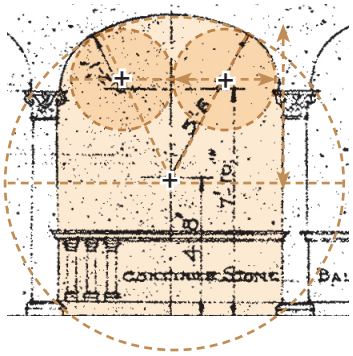
Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 709
Northeast Elevation Detail, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami



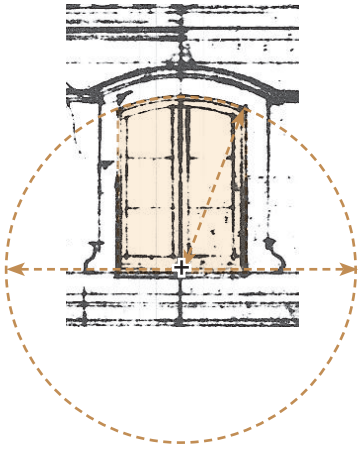
Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 722
North Elevation Detail, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami

Arches

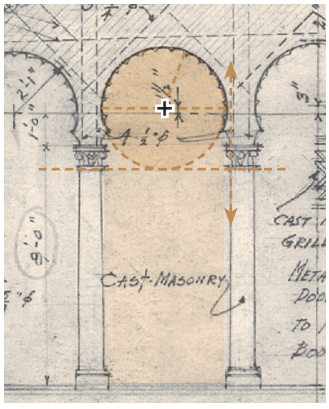
Arches shall be used sparingly to emphasize important elements on a building. Arches shall be designed with Classical Proportion and according to the common sense rules of tectonics. All elements of the Arch shall align to a center point and the springing of the Arch shall align with its means of support, as shown in the illustrations on this page.



Elliptical Arch



Segmental Arch

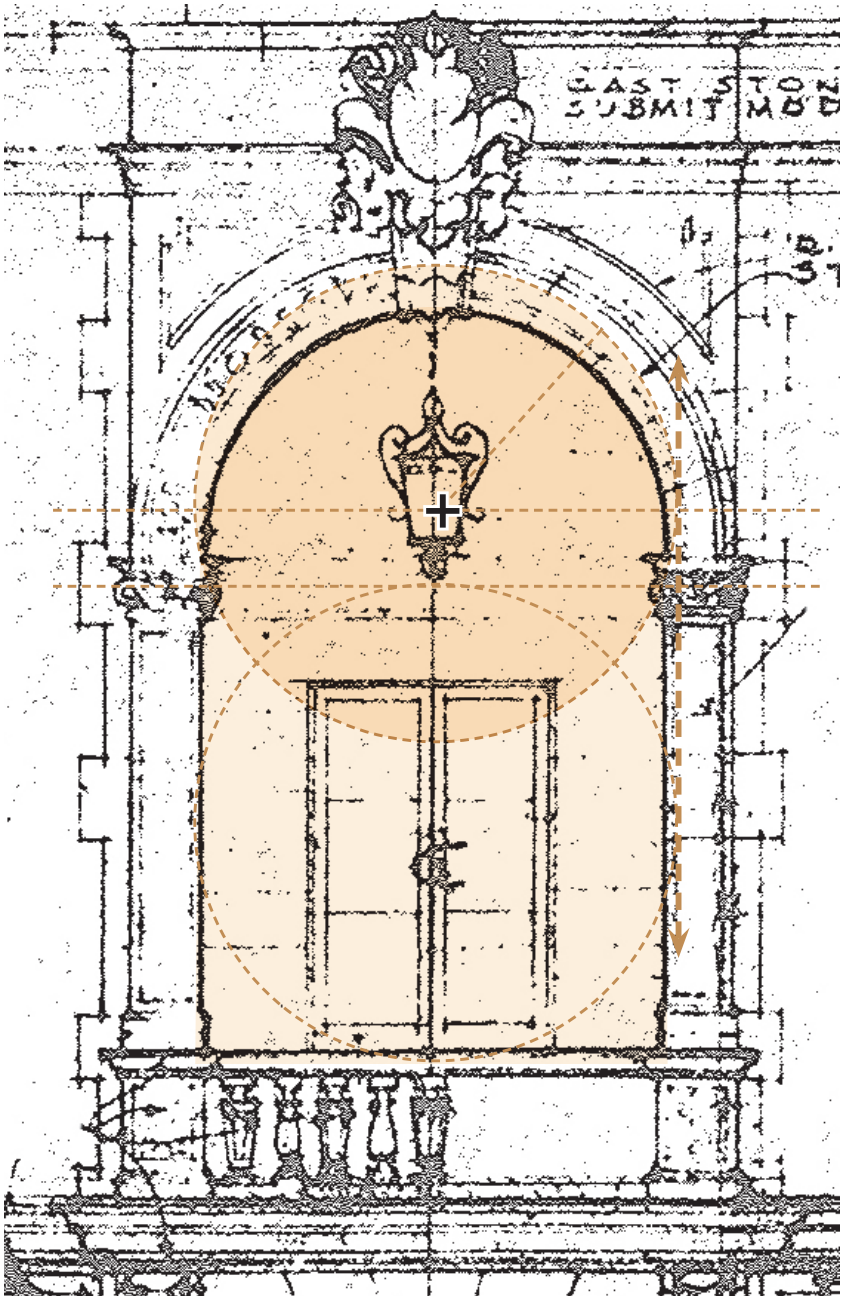


Horseshoe Arch

Arches		
Arch Center point	Elements of Arch point towards Center	+
Arch Springing	Aligns with Support Column or Pier	←--→

A stilt, no shorter than the width of the window casement, shall be added to the Arch to insure true half circle transom windows

Arches

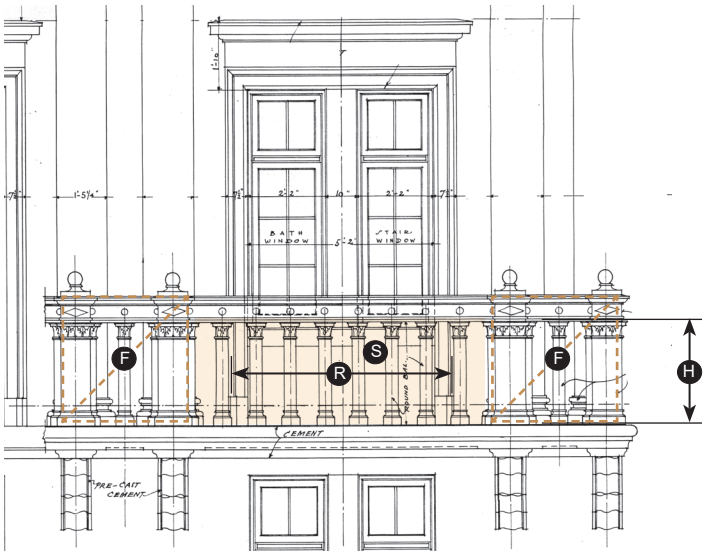


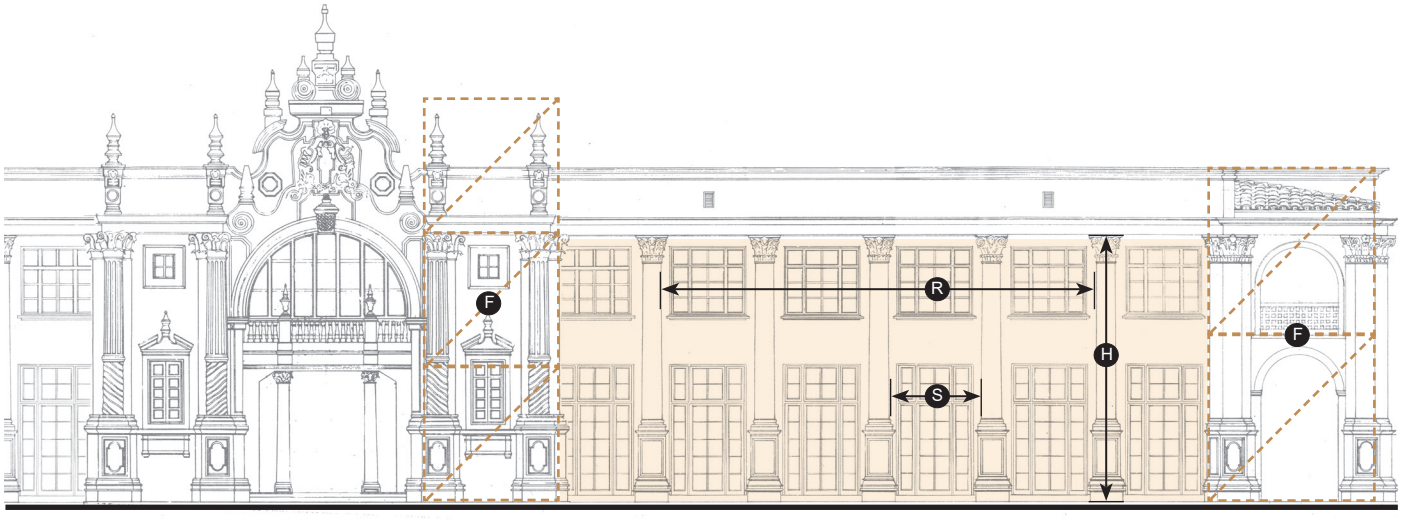
Semi-Circular Arch

Intercolumniation

Intercolumniation

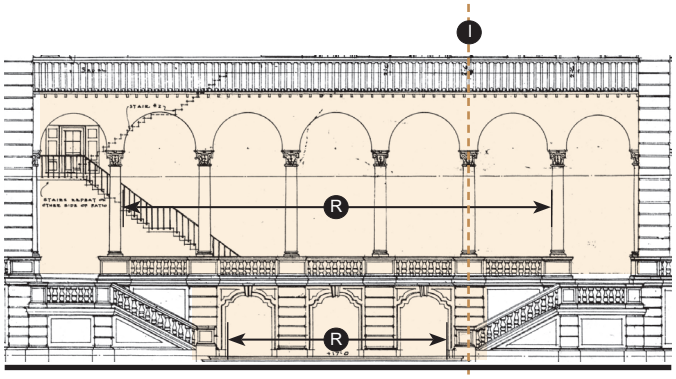
The design of Columns and Piers shall relate to the overall design of the building, including scale, proportion, function, formality, and materials. All Columns and Piers shall be designed to appear to be load bearing according to the rules of tectonics. Columns and Piers shall have an expressed Base, Middle (Shaft), and Top (Capital). When using Columns from a Classical Order, the correct elements and proportions of that Order shall be used.

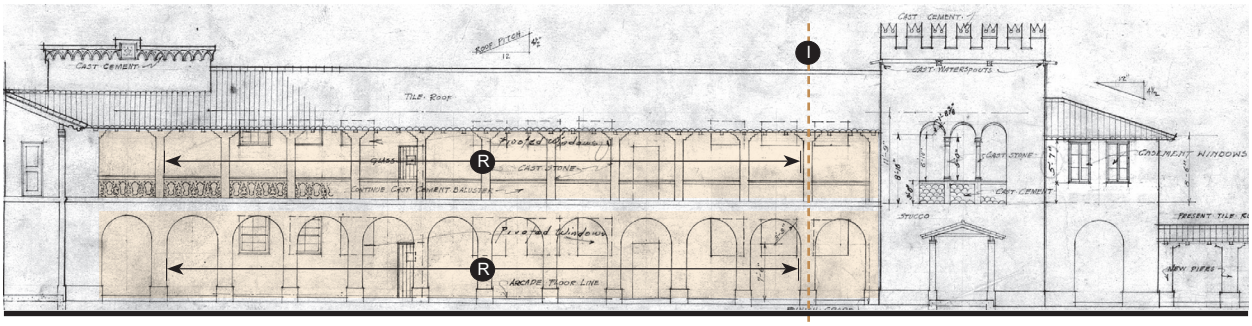




Intercolumniation

Intercolumniation		
Column Height	See Table 5.9	H
Column Spacing	4/5-1/5 the Column Height	S
Rhythm	Equal Spacing of Columns and/or Arches	R
End Bay	Optional; heavier Piers, Columns, or solid wall caps the end of a Colonnade or Arcade. Follows rules of Classical Proportion	F
Superimposition (One Colonnade or Arcade on top of another)	The bottom Colonnade or Arcade shall be heavier and express a load-bearing function. Columns shall align one on top of another along a center line.	I

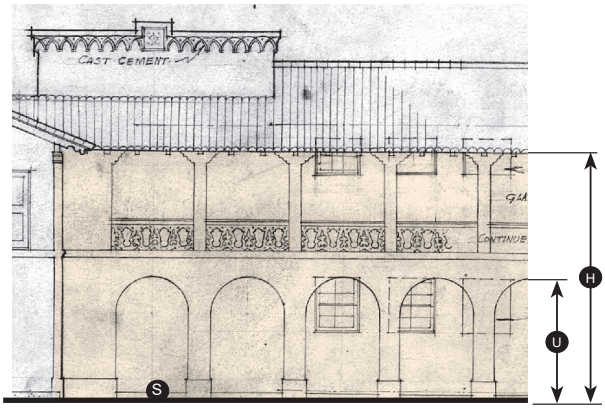




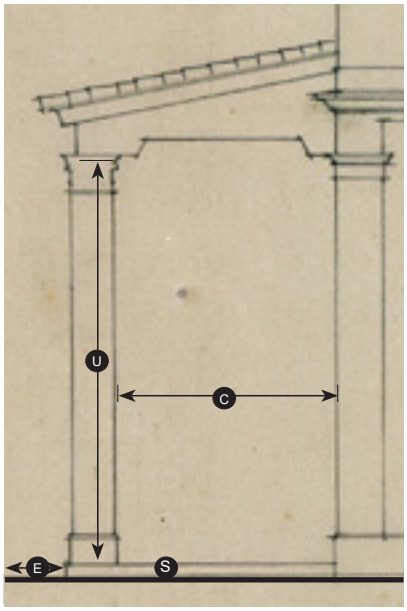
Arcades and Loggias

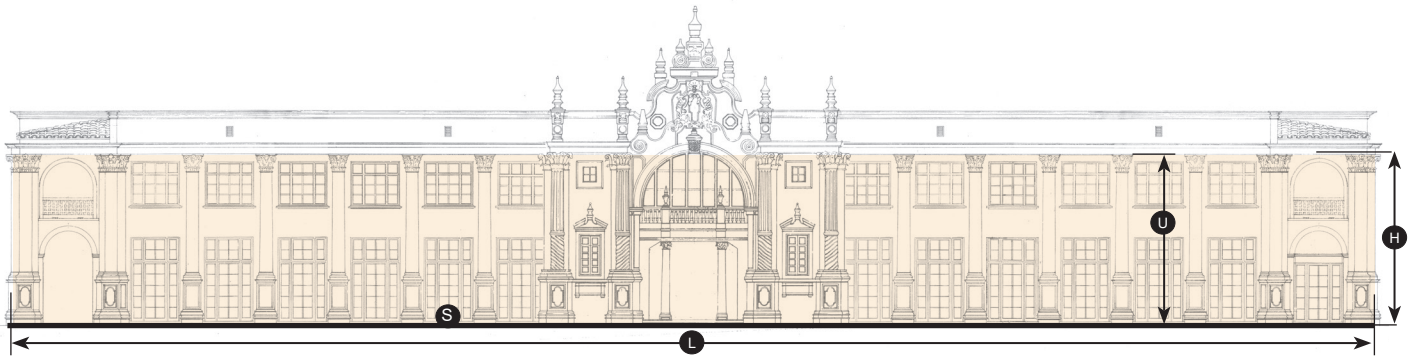
Arcades and Loggias

Arcades and Loggias shall be open-air spaces that connect the ground floor of the street-facing facade of a building to the right-of-way, providing a publicly accessible, comfortable pedestrian space along the ground floor of the building. Arcades shall be designed to be consistent with the proportion, scale, architectural style, and materials of the main building. Each bay of the Arcade shall be vertically proportioned in order to allow sufficient light and visibility to the Ground Floor facade of the building.



Arcades and Loggias		
Height	1 or 2 Floors; Optional Upper Level Walkway	H
Clearance	10' min	C
Underside Clearance at Sidewalk	1.6 x Depth min	U
Length of Facade	80% min	L
Distance from Edge of Curb	18" min	E
Ground Floor height above sidewalk	6" max	S
A continuous Pedestrian Zone shall be maintained within the Arcade or Loggia along the Building Face, and shall not be obstructed by protruding Storefronts, Stairs, Escalators, Elevators and other building elements.		
Arcades and Loggias may occur forward of BTL and/or setback, and may encroach within the sidewalk upon City approval.		
Habitable Space, walkways and/or Terraces above Arcades and Loggias may occur forward of BTL upon City approval.		

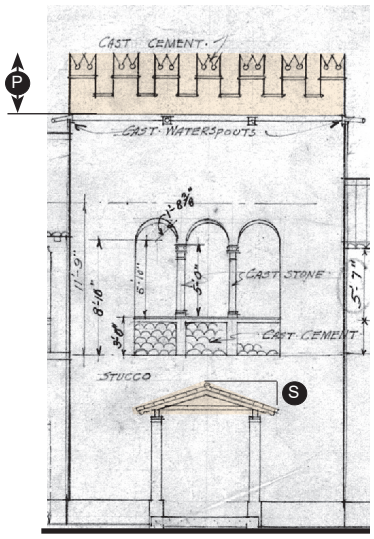




Roofs

Roofs

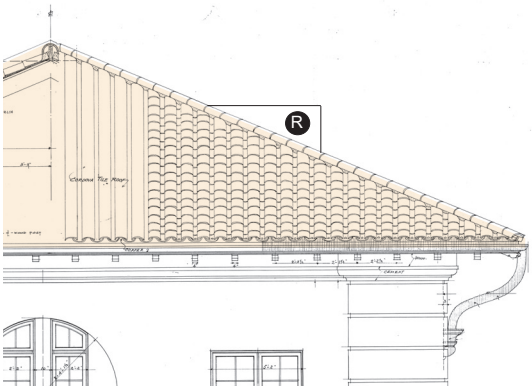
Roofs are an important character-defining feature, marking the moment where the building meets the sky. Roof shapes shall be simple and shall relate to the Massing of the building. Mediterranean Village Roofs shall be Gable, Hip, or Parapet, in keeping with the Mediterranean Architectural precedents. Shed roofs may be used sparingly. The scale and slope of the Roof and the elements of the Roof (Eave overhang, bracket size, Parapet detailing) shall relate to the height of the Building and the visibility of the Roof from the sidewalk.

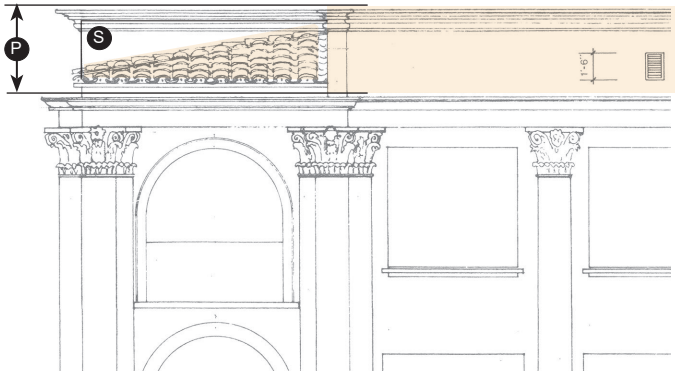


Roofs

Sloped Roofs		
Main Building Roof Slope	5:12 Slope min	R
Arcade, Loggia, Porch, Stoop Slope	2:12 Slope min	S
Roofs shall be symmetrically sloped where visible from streets and public spaces.		
Roof materials on pitched roofs shall be terra-cotta color barrel tile, of clay, cement, or concrete material.		

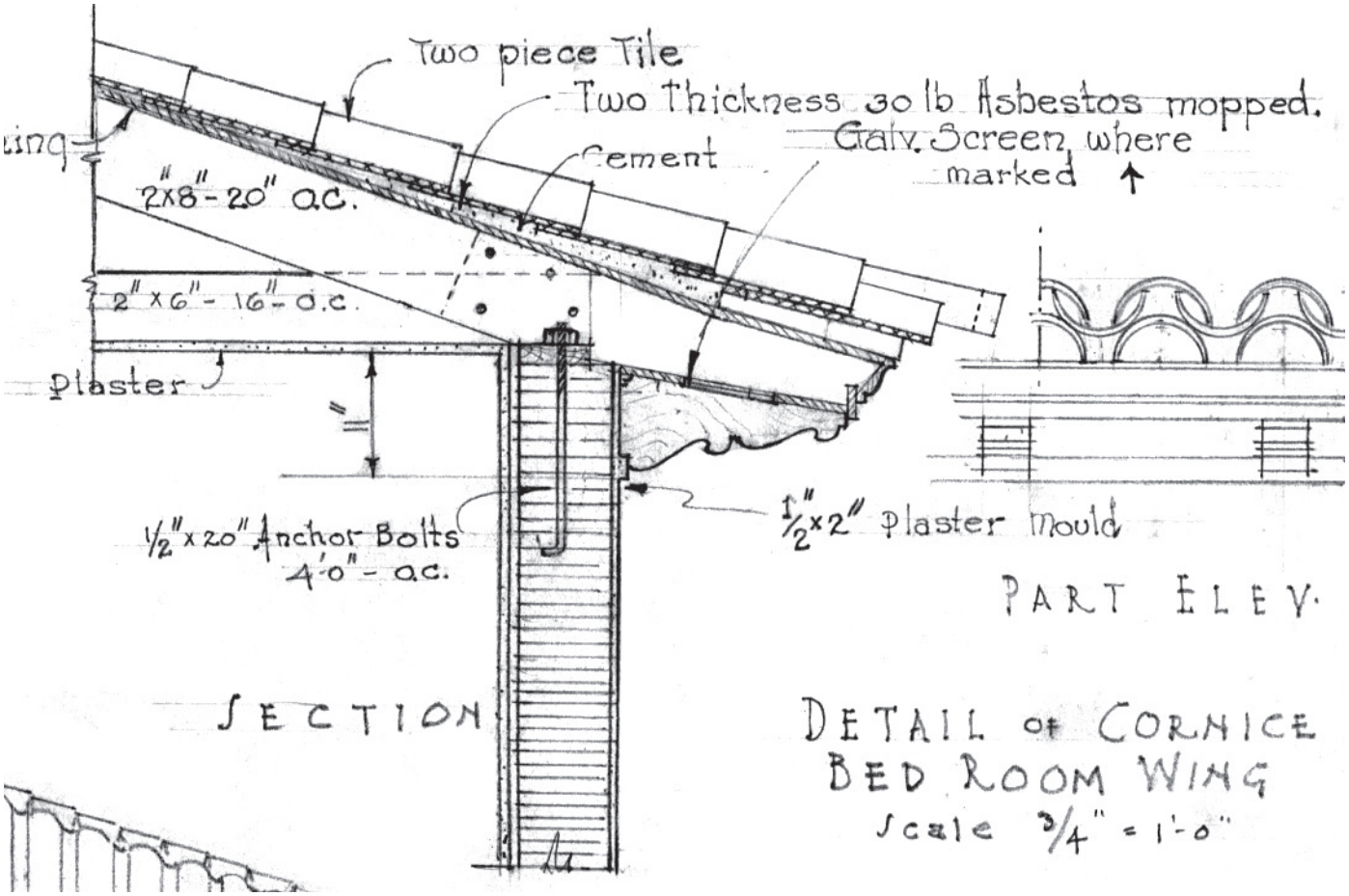
Parapets		
Parapet Height	3' 6" min	P
Parapet Wall Thickness	8" min	
Parapets may have decorative detailing with an irregular silhouette, may have Classical detailing with an applied Cornice Line, or may be a simple extension of the wall.		
Parapets shall be designed with visible means of water runoff, and these functions shall be incorporated as decorative elements.		





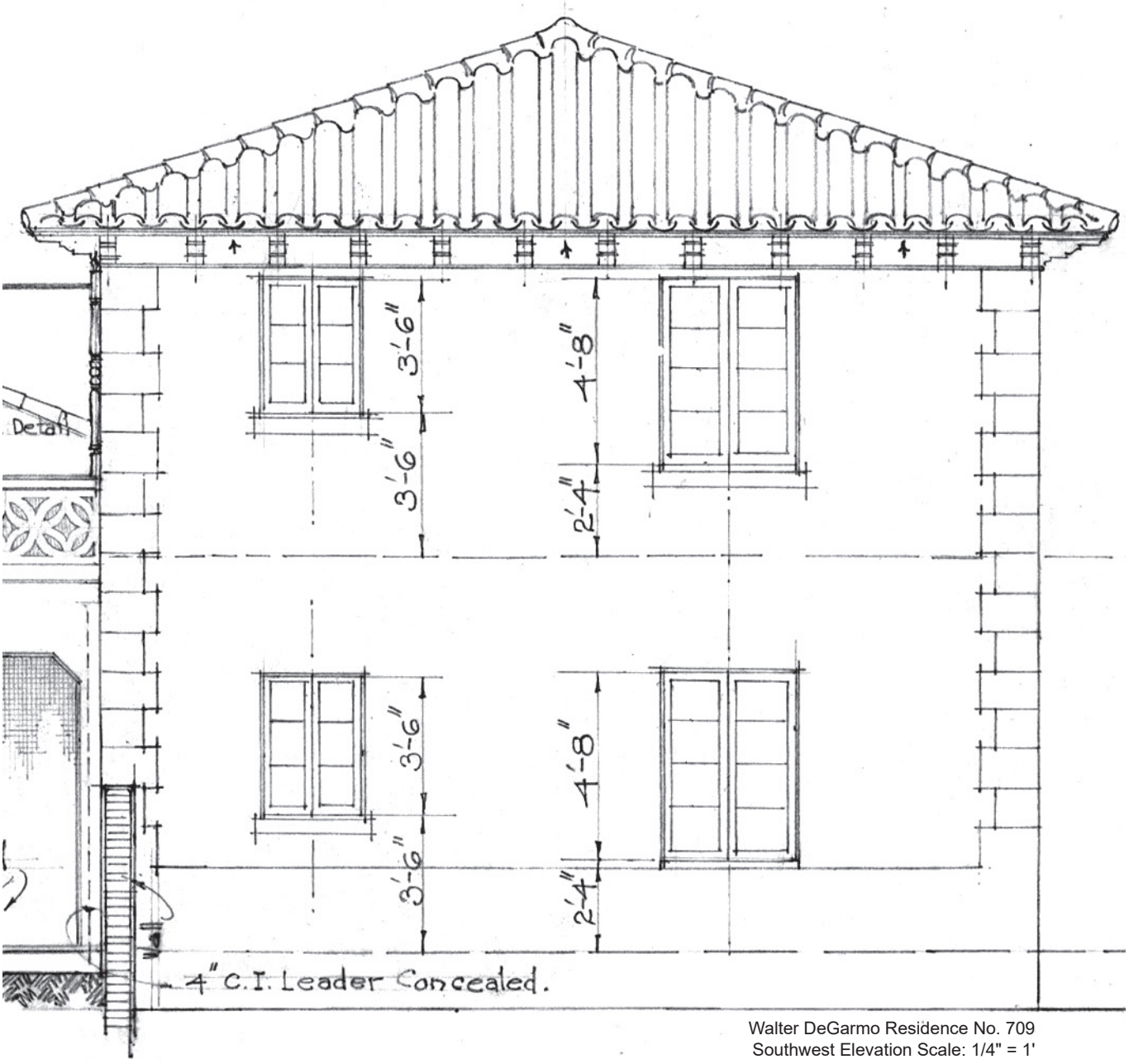
Roofs

"Highly glazed, cheap commercial tiles, slate or shingles are here highly impossible. Old hand-made Spanish tiles, soft glazed, blended in the loveliest browns and dull reds and ochres and siennas in the world, top the mellow walls with exactly the right emphasis. The sun is not harsh upon them, only infinitely at home."



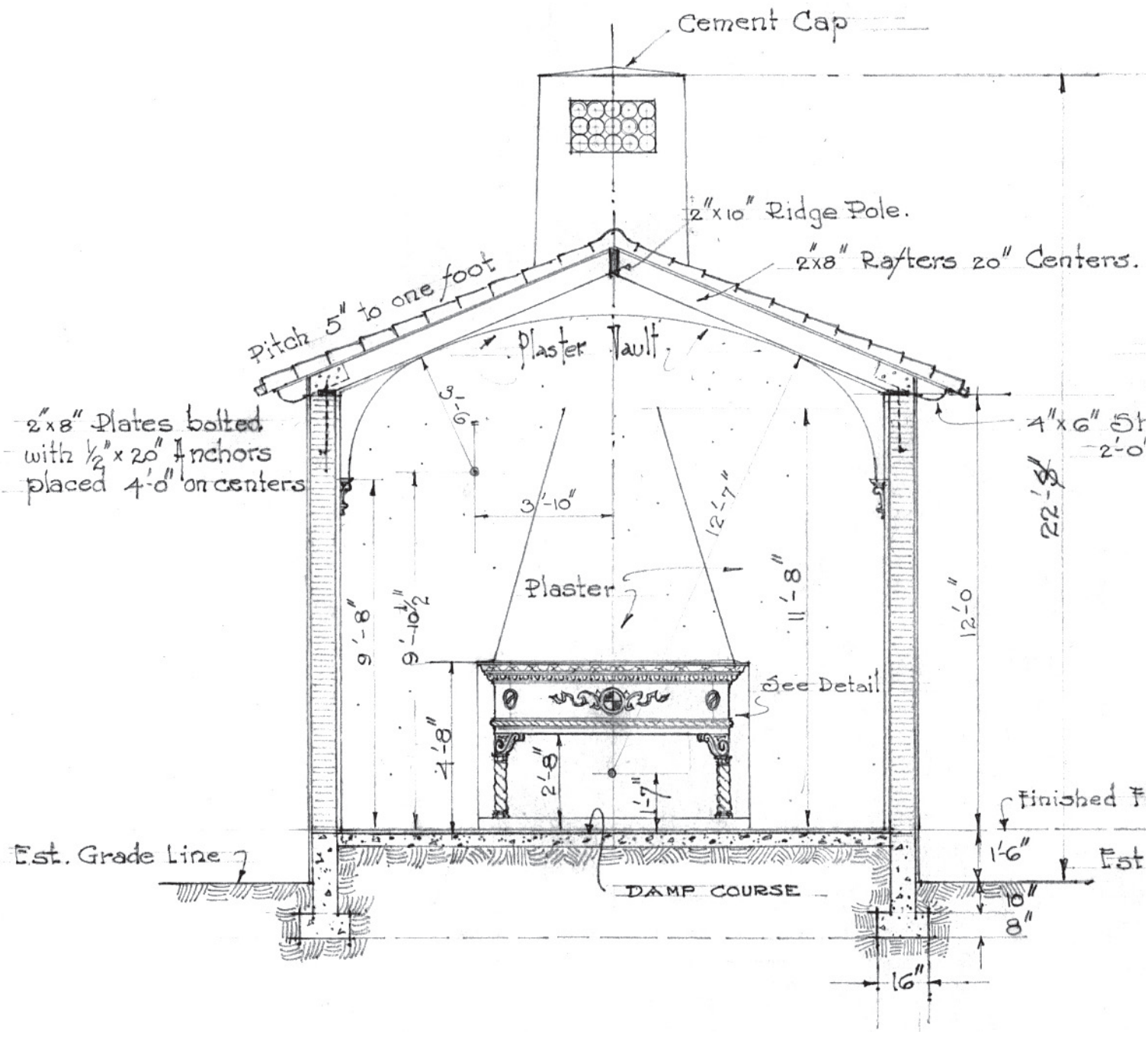
Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 709
Detail of Cornice, Scale: 3/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami

Roofs



Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 709
Southwest Elevation Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami

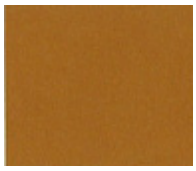
Roofs

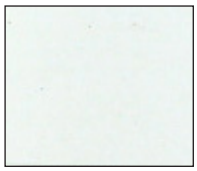

Cement Cap
2"x10" Ridge Pole.
2"x8" Rafters 20" Centers.
Pitch 5" to one foot
Plaster Vault
2"x8" Plates bolted with ½"x 20" T anchors placed 4'-0" on centers
4"x6" St
2'-0"
22'-
3'-6"
3'-10"
12'-7"
Plaster
9'-8"
9'-10½"
11'-8"
12'-0"
See Detail
4'-8"
2'-8"
1'-7"
Finished F
Est. Grade Line
1'-6"
Est
DAMP COURSE
10"
8"
16"

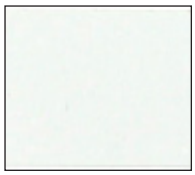
Roofs

Although metal is not a traditional roof material in the history of Coral Gables, it can be an acceptable option in certain areas of the City, upon Board of Architects review, for reasons of sustainability, durability, and economy. Metal roofs may be permitted for the new construction of single-family homes in the areas southeast of US1, with certain conditions. Special care should be taken for aesthetic compatibility with the neighborhood character. The following design best practices should be observed when selecting a metal roof for a home :

1. The architectural style of the home should be High Modern, Post-War Modern, Ranch, or Key West / Florida Vernacular.
2. The design of the roof, including pitch, form (gable, hip, etc), style, etc shall be harmonious with the architectural style of the structure, and with the context and character of the surrounding area.
3. Metal roofs shall be 24-gauge standing seam.
4. Metal roofs may not replicate traditionally non-metal roofing, such as barrel tile or cedar shakes.
5. Allowable colors are limited as follows:


Copper


White 1


White 2


Gray 1

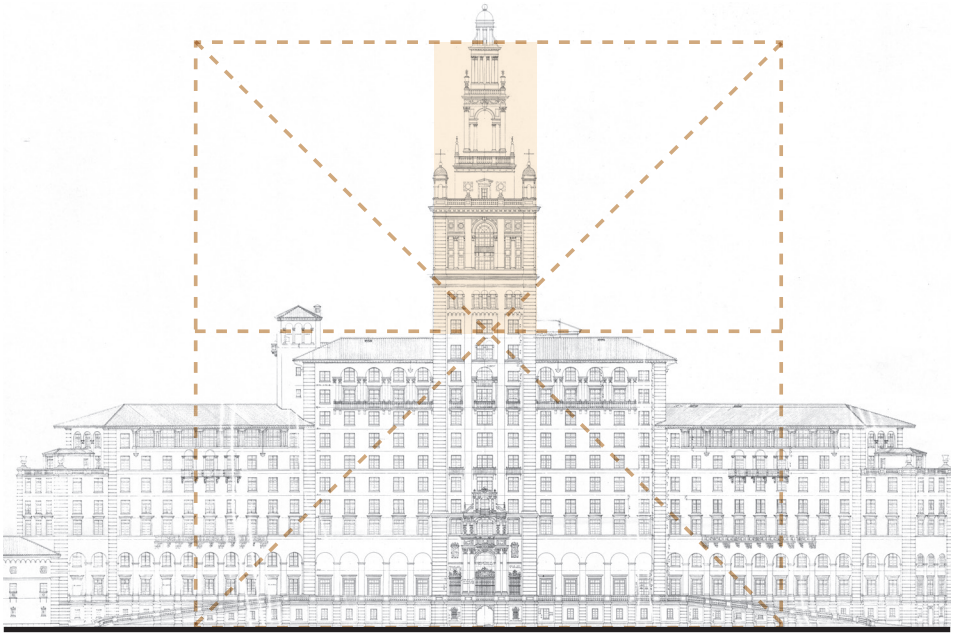

Gray 2

6. Metal roofs shall not be painted once installed.
7. Historically significant homes built in the Mediterranean / Mission style are prohibited from having metal roofs.

Rooftop Architectural Elements

Rooftop Architectural Elements

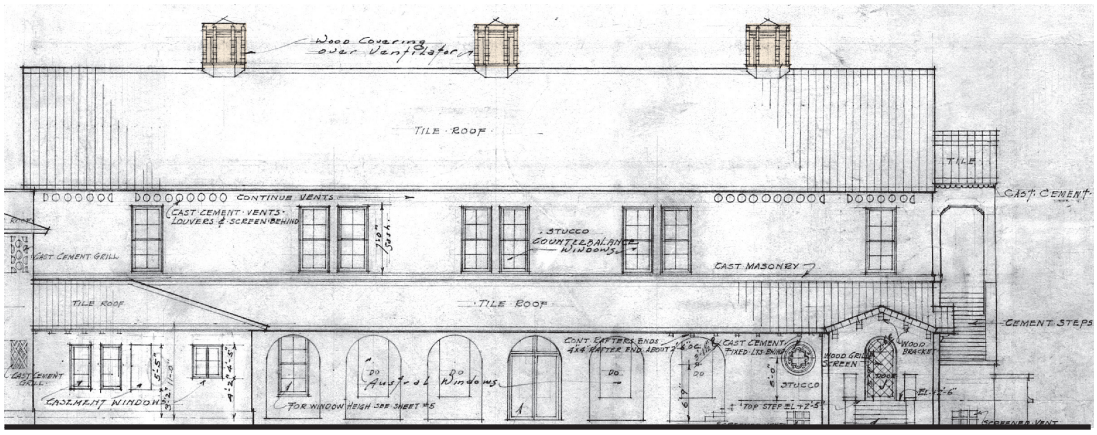
Rooftop Architectural Elements are non-air conditioned features located above the primary mass of the building. Rooftop Architectural Elements are excluded from the Building Height calculation. Rooftop Architectural Elements shall relate to the overall proportion and design of the building, and shall be used to emphasize Building Massing. The scale of the Rooftop Architectural Element shall relate to its Height on the Building and its visibility from the Sidewalk level.

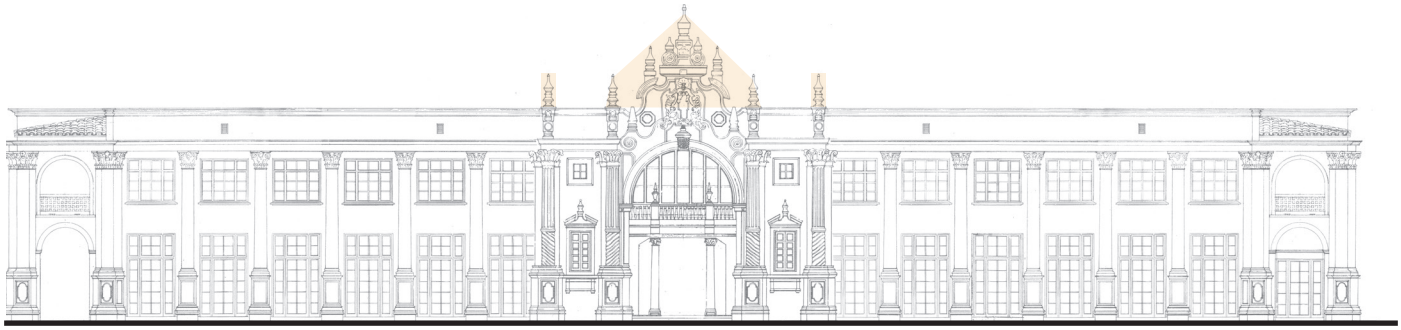


Rooftop Architectural Elements

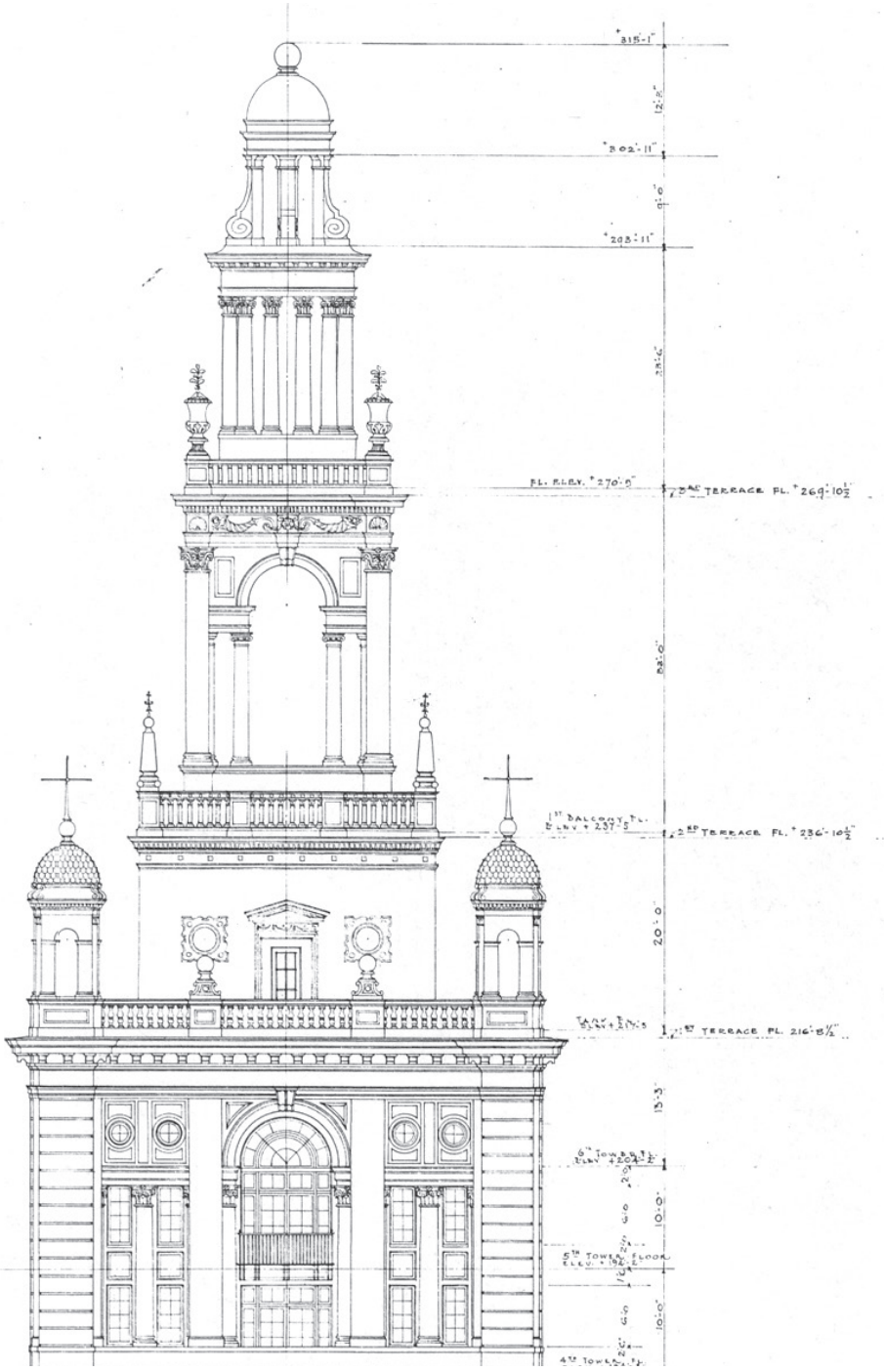
Rooftop Architectural Elements	
Elements Excluded From Building Height Calculation	Lanterns, Cupolas, Parapets, Chimneys, Towers, Rooftop Loggias, Belvederes, Screened Mechanical Areas
Roofing Materials	Terracotta-color Barrel Tile or Copper

Refer to Building Form Standards for provisions of Rooftop Architectural Elements based on Street Types.

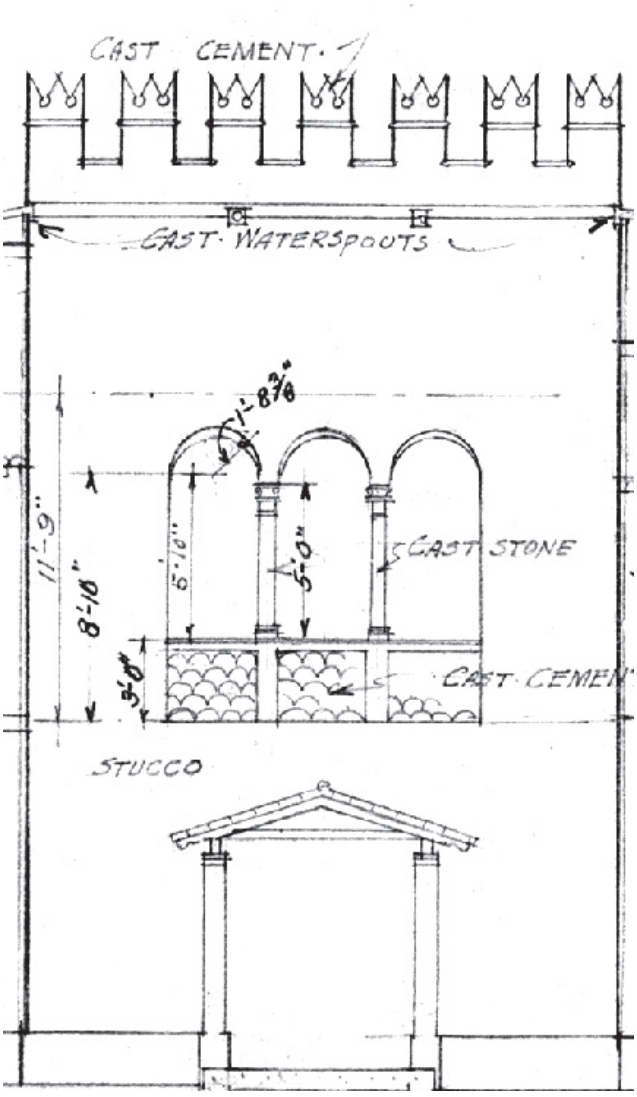




Rooftop Architectural Elements



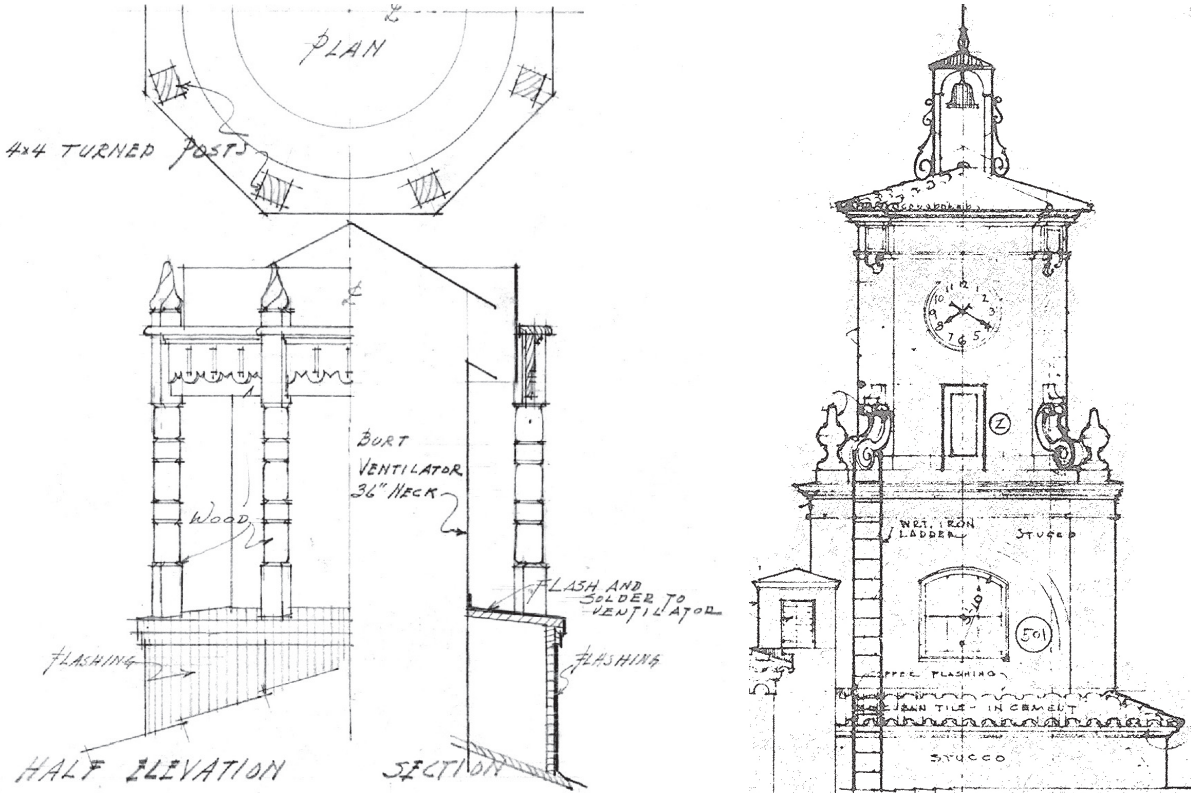
Rooftop Architectural Elements



Coral Gables Elementary School

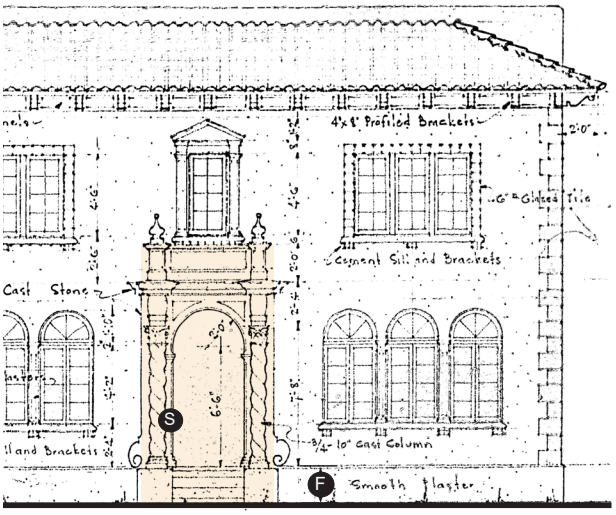
Rooftop Architectural Elements

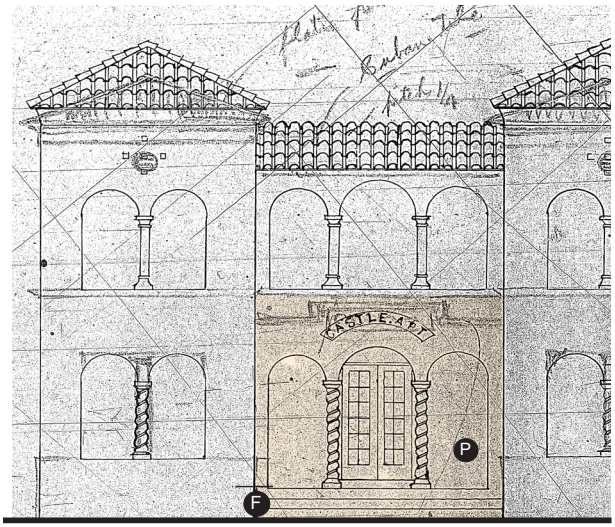
Rooftop Architectural Elements are non-air conditioned features located above the primary mass of the building. Rooftop Architectural Elements are excluded from the Building Height calculation. Rooftop Architectural Elements shall relate to the overall proportion and design of the building, and shall be used to emphasize Building Massing. The scale of the Rooftop Architectural Element shall relate to its Height on the Building and its visibility from the Sidewalk level.



Ground floor design

For multi-family buildings, the ground floor should be provide pedestrian activity and open-air frontages. These frontages shall be designed with the proportions, materials, and architectural style of the main building, and shall be Mediterranean in character.
A porch depth shall be 8 feet minimum to allow interior movement, furniture, and usability.
The stoop depth shall be 3 feet minimum. Porches and stoops may encroach a maximum of 5 feet into the front setback.
The finished floor height shall be 18 inches minimum above the sidewalk to provide privacy for ground floor residential units.



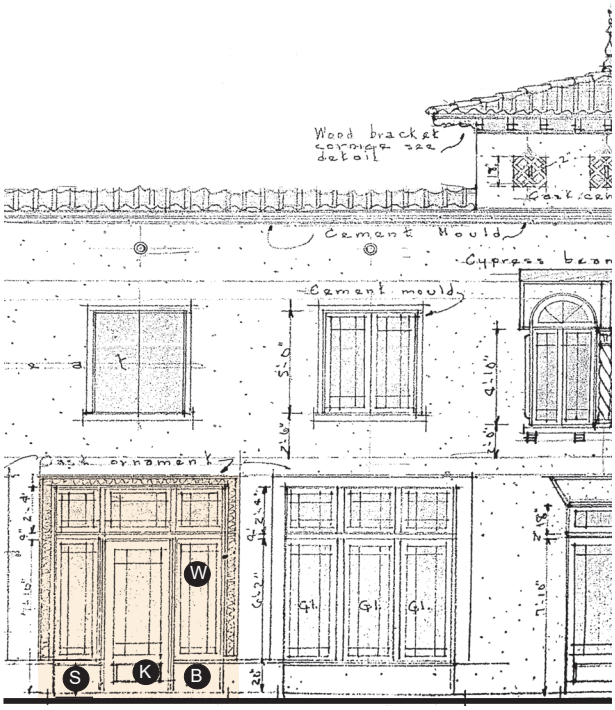


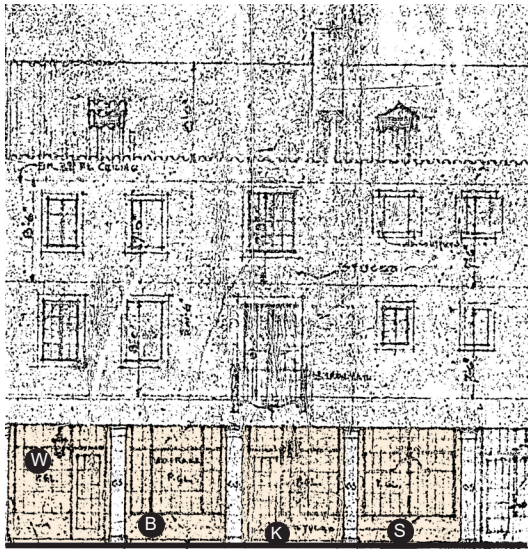
Ground floor multi-family		
Porch depth	8'	P
Stoop depth	3'	S
Finished floor	18"	F
Porches and stoops may encroach up to 5 feet into the front setback.		
Stoop stairs may run to the front or to the side.		
Railings shall be compatible with other trim elements, such as door/window frames.		

Ground floor design

Ground floor design

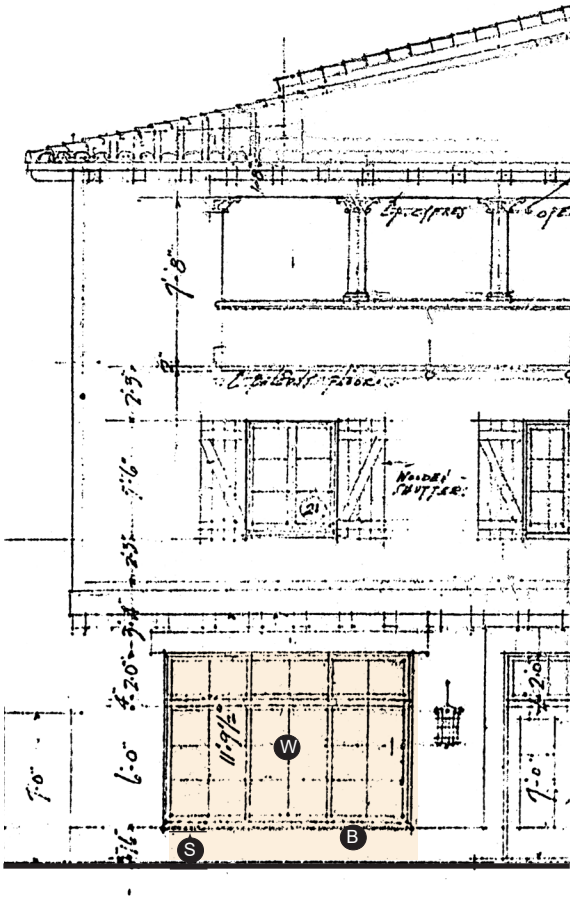
For mixed-use buildings, shopfronts should be included on the ground floor.
The shopfront shall be distinguished from the remaining facade of the building, with an emphasis on the display windows. At least 60 percent of the ground floor shopfront shall be glass and be clear.
Sill height shall be a minimum of 18 inches, and of stone or metal material.
Any louver facing a street shall be designed with ornate grilles.

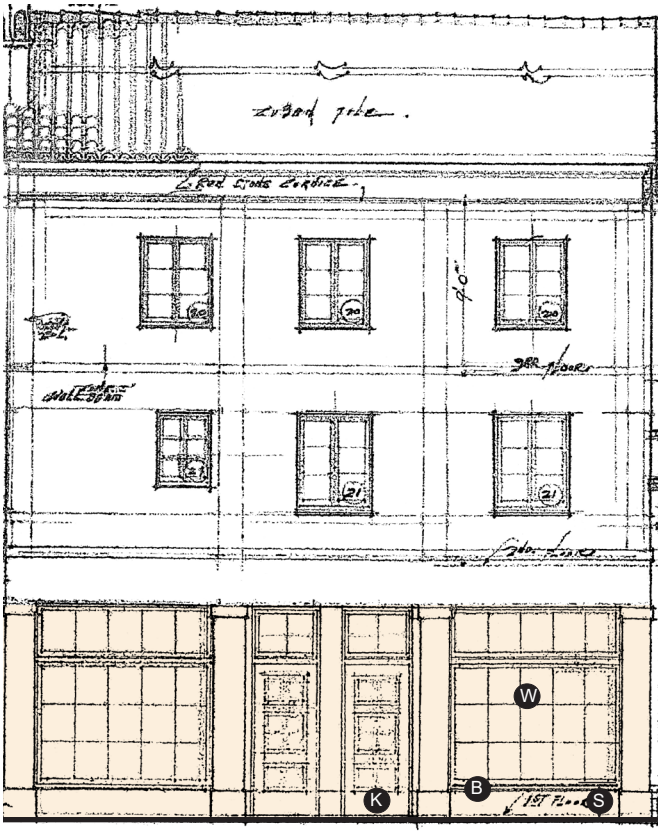




Shopfronts		
Shopfront Windowsill Height above Ground Line	18" min 36" max	S
Sill material	Stone or Metal	B
Shopfront Windows	Clear Glass (88% light transmission)	W
Kickplate shall be of durable material (wood, masonry, stone)		K
Permanent, fixed security grates or grilles in front of windows are prohibited.		
The Expression Line shall be placed above the Sign Panel and provide a strong definition to the top of the Shopfront.		

Ground floor design





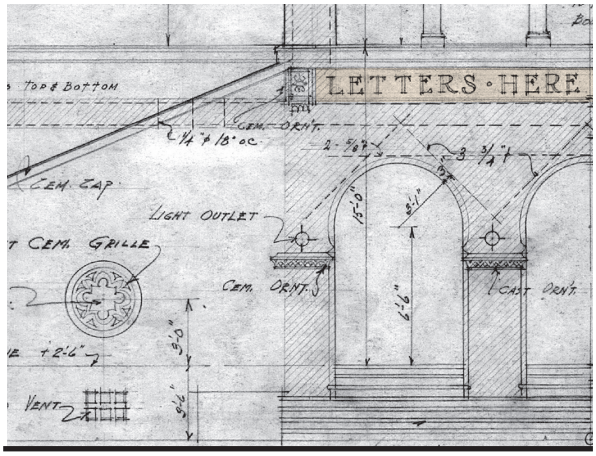
Shopfronts and Signage

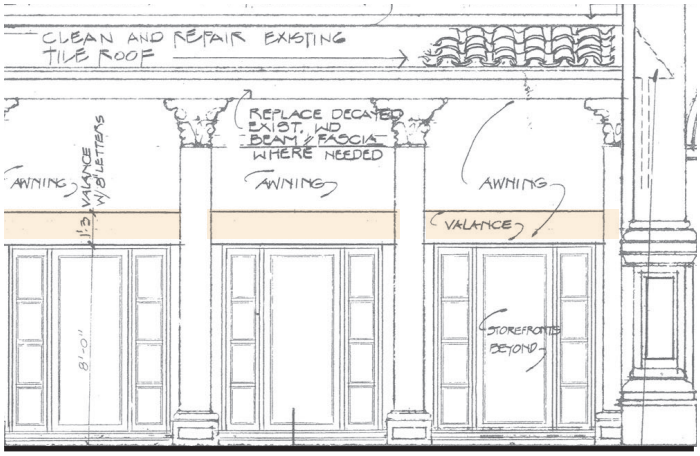
Shopfronts and Signage

Signs shall enhance the Mediterranean character of the building, and shall be designed as part of a uniform Signage Plan approved by the City. Outdoor advertising signs, automatic electric changing signs, and entrance features are not permitted as part of a Mediterranean Village. All signs shall not obstruct sight visibility triangles at street intersections.

All signage for applications under this section shall conform to Section 5 Division 19, Signs, of the Zoning Code and shall be reviewed by the Board of Architects.

Wayfinding Signage shall:
Provide directional and information signs that are attractive, clear and consistent in theme, location and design.
Identify key civic areas, or public destinations and facilities, e.g. public parking structures, shopping facilities, transit routes and stops, etc.
Be coordinated with other streetscape furniture (e.g., light posts, transit/trolley shelters) where possible to reduce visual clutter in the public realm.



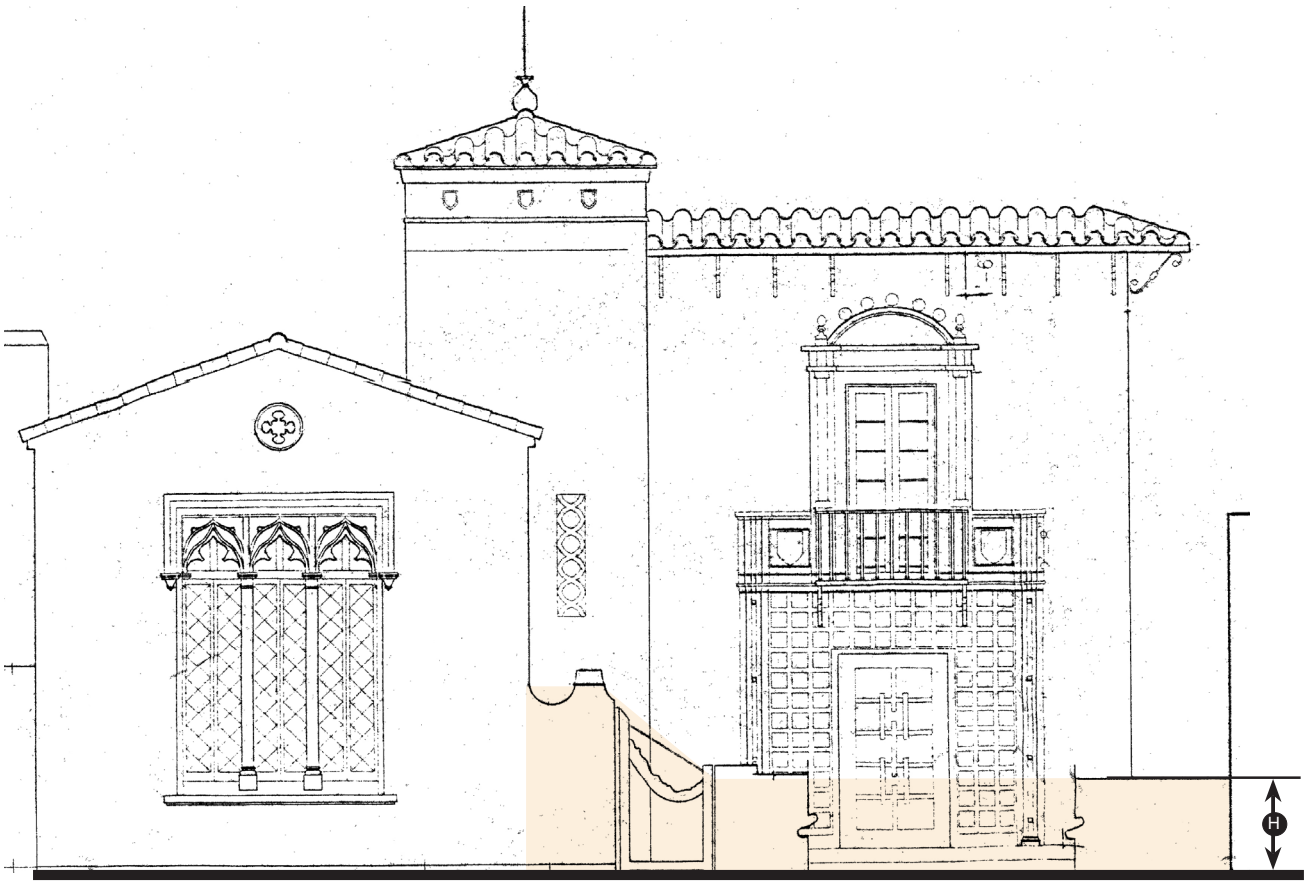


Garden Walls

Garden Walls

Garden Walls are recommended Frontages for small apartment buildings and townhouses. These walls shall be designed with the proportions, materials, and architectural style of the main building, and shall be Mediterranean in character.

Garden Walls		
Garden Wall Height	2' min 4' max	H
Interior/Rear Garden Wall	8' max	
Materials	Constructed of Masonry; Stucco finish	
Where Garden Walls and Fences occur along street frontages, they shall be located parallel to adjacent sidewalks, and typically within 2 feet of the property line.		
Garden Walls may also act as low retaining walls along a property's edge.		



Cornice and Expression Lines

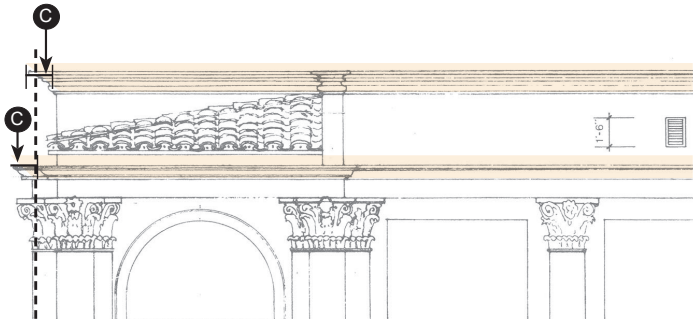
Cornice and Expression Lines

Cornice Lines and Expression Lines can be used to mark the transition between the Base, Middle, and Top of the Building. The single mass of a building may be divided by means of mouldings, or Expression Lines. In each Base, Middle, or Top subdivision, windows of different sizes and shapes, and in different numbers, shall be grouped together.
Horizontal subdivision shall be achieved in two ways:

1. Offset the plane of the facade by stepping back, permitted only on elements such as towers.
2. Lines upon the facade created via shadows from moldings.

The size and proportion of height to width of a building are primary aspects of its character. A building facade's perceived scale combines with that of adjacent buildings and those across the street to provide a sense of shape, enclosure, and proportion of the street or public space.

Cornices and Expression Lines		
Build-to Line		- - -
Cornice Extension	6" min	C
Expression Line Extension	12" max	E
A Cornice is recommended to crown the Top of a Building or Masses of a Building.		
An Expression Line is recommended to mark the transition between the Base, Middle and Top of the Building.		
An Expression Line shall not protrude further than the Cornice extension.		
Cornice Lines shall follow the Building Mass and not columns or other architectural elements.		
The scale of the Cornice shall relate to its Height on the Building and its visibility from the Sidewalk.		

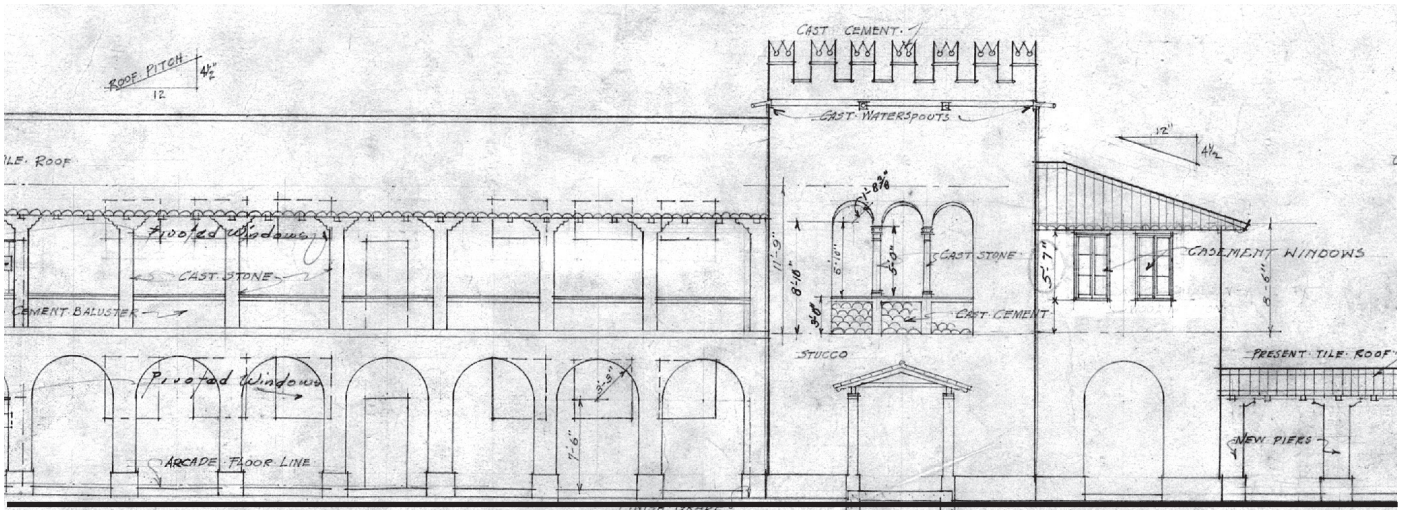


Cornice and Expression Lines

Materials

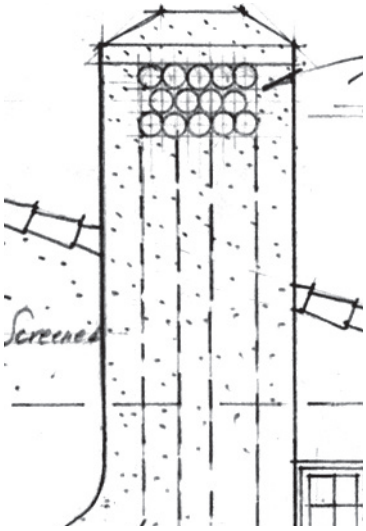
All exterior walls of all buildings shall exceed the requirements of Section 5-606, "Exterior Wall - Material and Color" and shall incorporate superior quality materials designed to be compatible with the Mediterranean Architectural examples. Building wall materials on each facade shall be designed so that visually heavier materials are below visually lighter materials.

Materials	
Stucco Finish over CMU	
Smooth or hand trowelled in texture and painted.	
Masonry - Load-bearing or Veneer	
Permitted Masonry: Brick, coral rock, keystone, granite, marble, travertine, limestone, manufactured or cultured stone, cast stone, decorative CMU, or products of similar quality of manufacture.	
Masonry Veneer depth	4" min
Porcelain - Decorative Tile or Enamel Panels	
Prohibited Materials	
Sprayed-on stucco finishes, stucco panels, Exterior Insulation Finishing Systems (E.I.F.S.) similar to Dryvit, cementitious siding, metal panels, and glass block.	

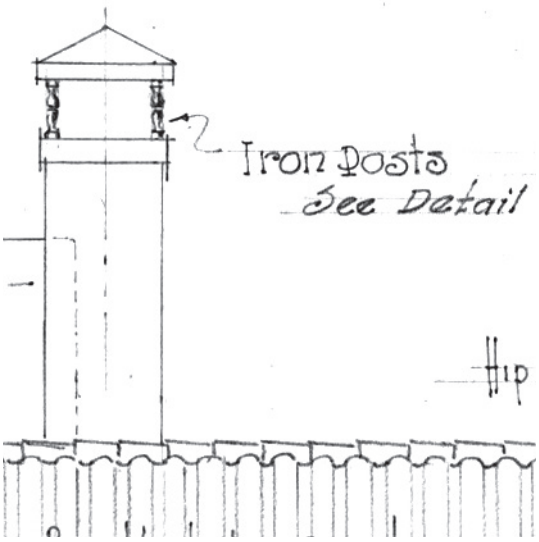


Chimneys

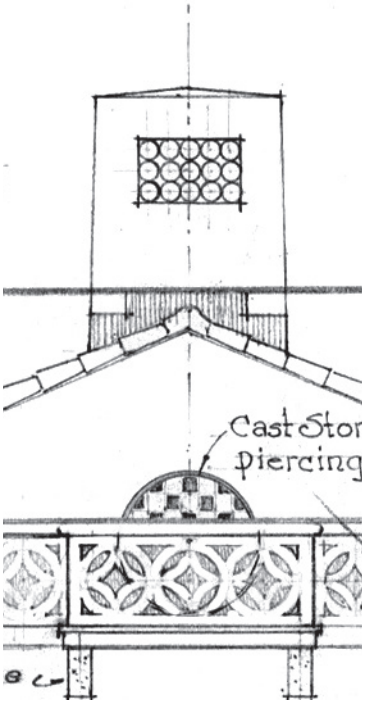
Chimneys



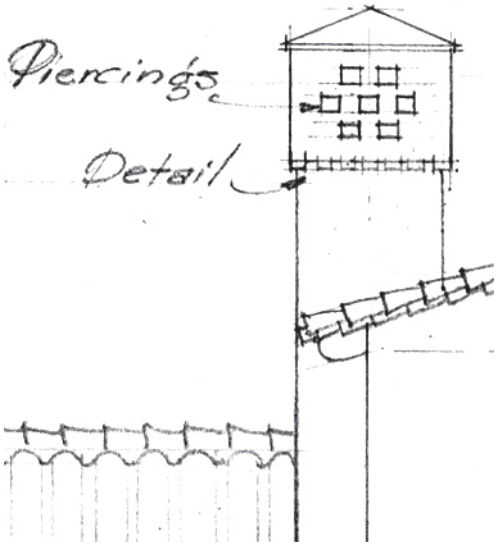
Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 615
North Elevation Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami



Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 722
South Elevation Detail, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami



Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 709
Southwest Elevation Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami



Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 611
South Elevation Detail, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami

Structure

Structure

1925 Charter: ″Wooden buildings shall not be constructed, removed, added to or enlarged, and to direct that any or all future buildings within such limits shall be constructed of stone, natural or artificial, concrete, brick, iron or other fireproof material.

1925 Building Code: ″Height of Load Bearing Walls. No part of an eight inch wall shall be of greater height than fourteen feet between horizontal supports.″

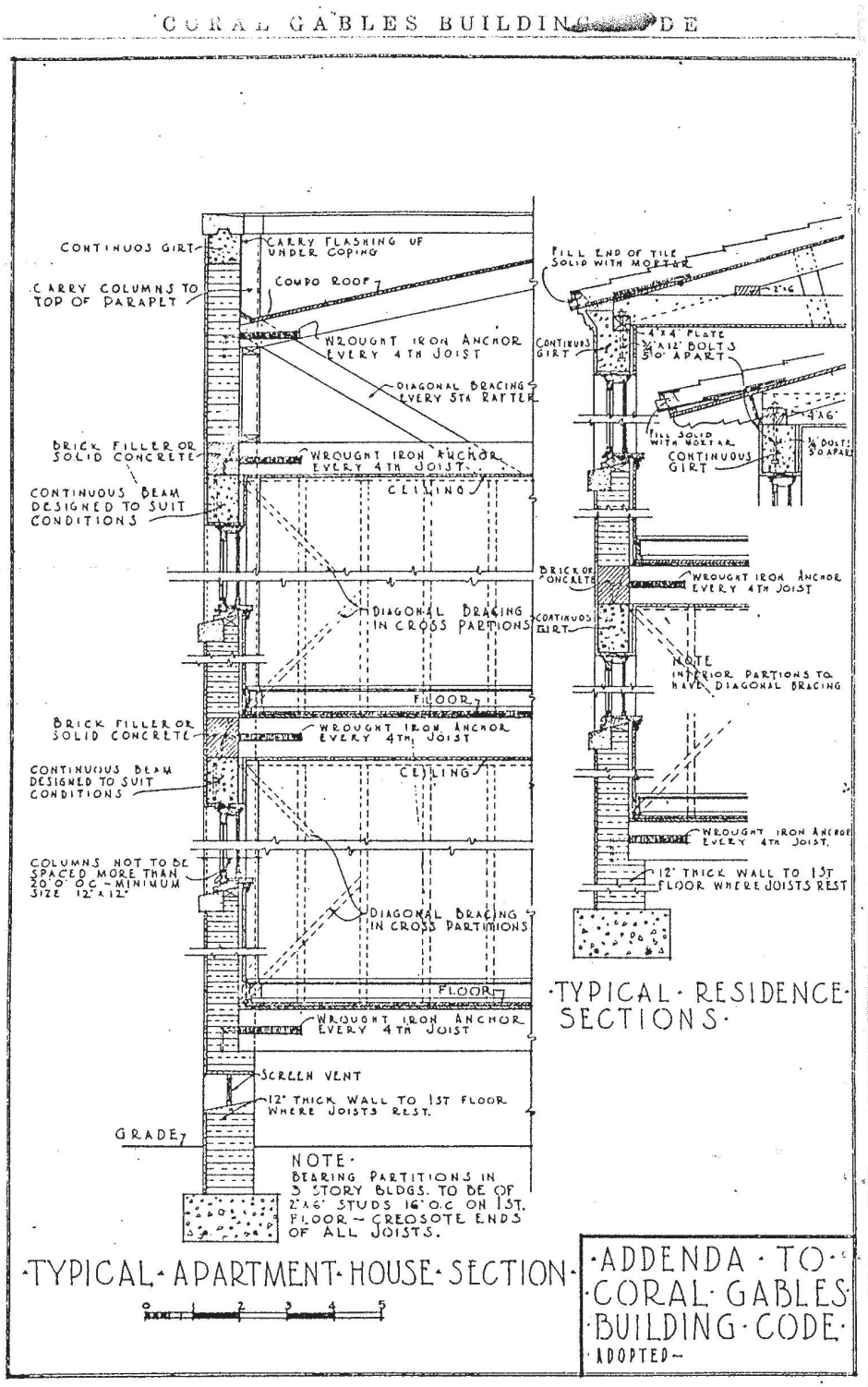
1925 Building Code: ″Reinforced Concrete. Reinforced concrete will be approved for all types of building construction, provided the design conforms with good engineering practices, and the working stresses do not exceed those herein specified.″

1925 Building Code: ″Arches. Opening for all doors, windows or vents shall have arches of masonry or lintels of reinforced concrete or metal, which shall have a bearing at end of not less than eight inches on the wall. Tie-rods shall be used in all arches where necessary to resist the thrust.″

1925 Building Code: ″Length of Columns. The length of columns shall be taken as the maximum unsupported length. The unsupported length of columns shall not exceed fifteen times the least side or diameter, and in no case shall the least side or diameter be less than 12 inches. The length shall include any corbel or knee brace attached to the column.″

1925 Building Code: ″Facing. Stone or architectural terra cotta ashlar, or other approved material used for the facing of any building or structure, shall be not less than 4 inches thick... No wall faced with ashlar shall be less than 12 inches thick.″

Structure



1925 Coral Gables Building Code Illustration

Railings & Ironwork

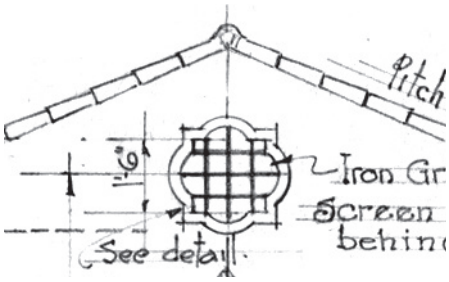
Railings & Ironwork

"Such inconspicuous details as the ironwork of a window... are harmonious, stylized, architecturally right."

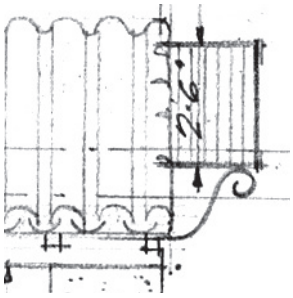
- Coral Gables, Miami Riviera, 1923

Section 5-303. Railings on exterior balconies.

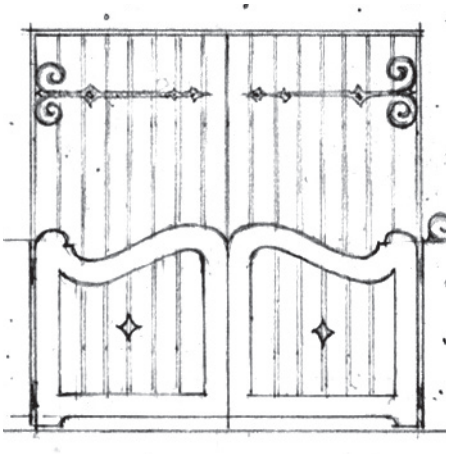
The use of redwood, cedar or cypress wood on single-family and duplex-residence buildings fastened to a continuous metal support shall be permitted as the top handrail only of railings on exterior balconies. Except as provided above, the use of wood for railings or any part of railings on exterior balconies is hereby prohibited.



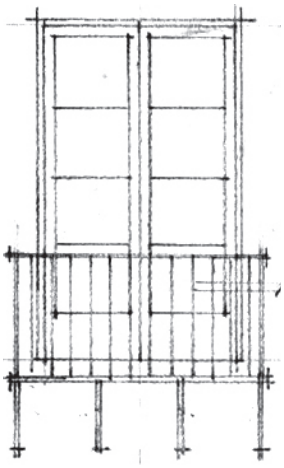
Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 722
South Elevation Detail, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami



Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 611
West Elevation Detail, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami



Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 722
South Elevation Detail, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami



Walter DeGarmo Residence No. 611
West Elevation Detail, Scale: 1/4" = 1'
Image Credit: HistoryMiami

Shutters

Shutters

Shutters shall be architecturally designed to enhance the structure and all tracts and housings shall be concealed from view to the maximum extent practicable when not in use.

a. Plans for all new construction shall incorporate or make provisions for hurricane shutters.

b. Storm panels with removable horizontal tracks shall be permitted on all structures without Board of Architects review and approval.

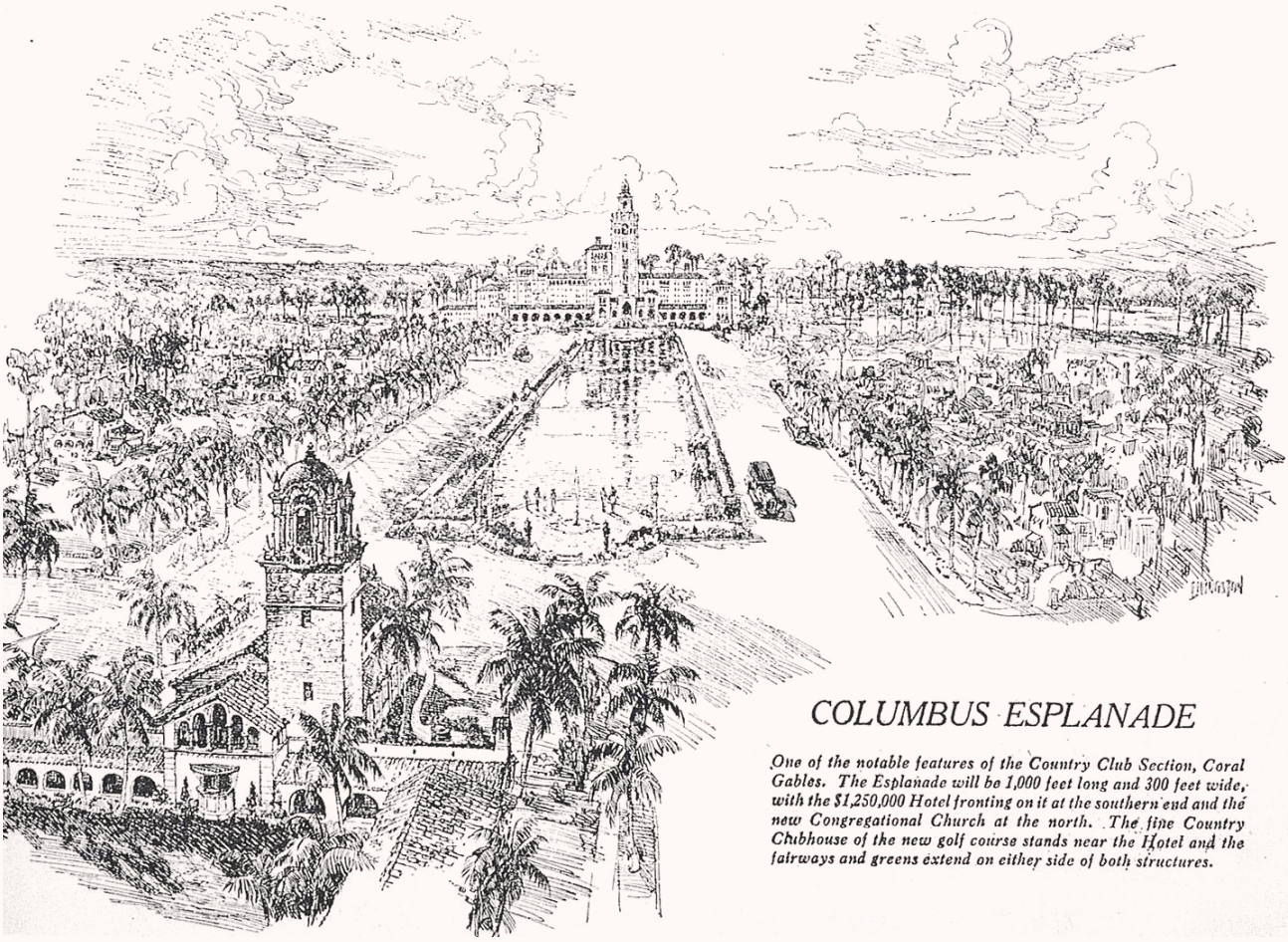
c. The Board of Architects may approve a hurricane shutter type or system for multi-unit buildings (residential and commercial) as a whole, thereby allowing individual owners or tenants to install pre-approved hurricane shutters without additional Board of Architects review and approval.

d. No shutter shall be placed on a structure so that it will alter or conceal architectural features or details of a structure.

e. Shutters shall not be installed in such a way as to prevent the intended or normal operation of any window or door.

In every area of a structure required by the Florida Building Code to have egress, there shall be at least one (1) manually operable (non-electric) method of egress when completely enclosed by hurricane shutters.

LANDSCAPE



COLUMBUS ESPLANADE

One of the notable features of the Country Club Section, Coral Gables. The Esplanade will be 1,000 feet long and 300 feet wide, with the $1,250,000 Hotel fronting on it at the southern end and the new Congregational Church at the north. The fine Country Clubhouse of the new golf course stands near the Hotel and the fairways and greens extend on either side of both structures.

The Suburb Beautiful—

By Mr. Frank M. Button, F. A. S. L. A.

Note—Mr. Button is a landscape architect of national repute, a graduate of the University of Vermont with the degree of Civil Engineer, and a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects. His work has been country-wide in scope, having been in charge of landscape development at Glenview, Indian Hill and Midlothian Golf Clubs, the most famous of golf links near Chicago; the beautiful grounds of Lincoln Park and of the Municipal Tuberculosis Hospital, Chicago; the magnificent 4,000-acre estate of ex-Governor Lowden, Oregon, Ill.; the estate of ex-Governor Smith of St. Albans, Vt.; the Charles Deering estate, Miami, and numerous parks, estates and subdivisions of note throughout the country.

CORAL GABLES, with its immense acreage of gently rolling and undulating land, offers rare advantages for the best that the landscape architect can produce. Its broad vistas invite the greatest freedom in planning spacious boulevards, delightful parks, charming recreational centers and many other features which are possible under exceptional conditions. With splendid natural advantages it combines the most appropriate settings of tropical and sub-tropical foliage, and permits the lover of harmonious landscape a field for work and an opportunity for achievement that is not often enjoyed in the most ambitious projects of this country.

It has been my privilege for the past year to work all of these delightful elements into a harmonious setting. In planning the extensive system of avenues and streets all favorable conditions were utilized to the utmost. The imposing entrance to the property at Southwest Eighth Street (Tamiami Trail) has been beautifully developed, with careful preservation of trees and full advantage taken of hills and hollows. This splendid boulevard, one hundred feet wide, which has been named Granada Boulevard, extends in one unbroken line for two miles through Coral Gables, with delightful plazas at Coral Way and Avenue Sevilla, terminating in another imposing gateway to be built at the Coconut Grove entrance on Bird Road.

The first half mile of Granada Boulevard forms an unbroken parkway 240 feet wide, planted with a great variety of rubber, acacia, pithecolobium, royal poincianas and eucalyptus trees, making an informal botanical collection of unrivalled beauty along the parkway, and setting off the broad boulevard most attractively. The entrance at Southwest Eighth Street and Granada Boulevard is of the most imposing Spanish type, 240 feet in width, offering a most cordial welcome to the visitor.

Another of these most excellent boulevards which add to the crowning beauty of Coral Gables is Alhambra Circle. One hundred feet wide, with a parked area in center for the electric trolley to be built on the property, this fine boulevard circles practically the entire length of Coral Gables. Perhaps no better idea of the size of this development can be given than the mere statement of fact that Alhambra Circle is three and one-half miles in length.

On all of the principal boulevards at Coral Gables have been laid out delightful parks, plazas and rest spots, one-half to five acres in area, that break the vista of the avenues and provide the most charming possibilities for landscape work of the most effective kind.

A large portion of Coral Gables is now covered with bearing avocado, grapefruit, mango and other tropical fruit trees, presenting a delightful background for the extensive improvements carried out in parkways and boulevards. Whenever possible fruit trees in parkways between sidewalks and streets have been preserved, and for miles the visitor to Coral Gables walks through veritable bowers laden with delectable fruit.

The two golf courses offer advantages of other kinds that will appeal strongly to future residents of Coral Gables. These are bordered with native palms, pines, live oaks, wild figs, ferns and other tropical shrubbery that delight the nature lover and make ideal surroundings for golf. The nine-hole course is well under way now, and is 2,900 yards in length, with a 500-yard hole which will be a test for even the par golfer. The 18-hole course will have three holes of over 500 yards, and the entire course will be 5,574 yards, with good fairways, grass greens and traps and hazards of the most modern kind. Imposing club houses with every convenience for members are part of the work planned for the delightful social life at Coral Gables.

The Golf Club house at Greenway Drive and Boulevard Granada will also be a recreation center for all of the residents of Coral Gables, with tennis courts and other amusement features inseparably linked with the happiness and enjoyment of all well-ordered communities today.

Large plots have been set aside in prominent locations for churches, schools, library and other community centers. And even the business section on the Plaza Augustine has been made attractive by parked boulevard and inviting rest spots.

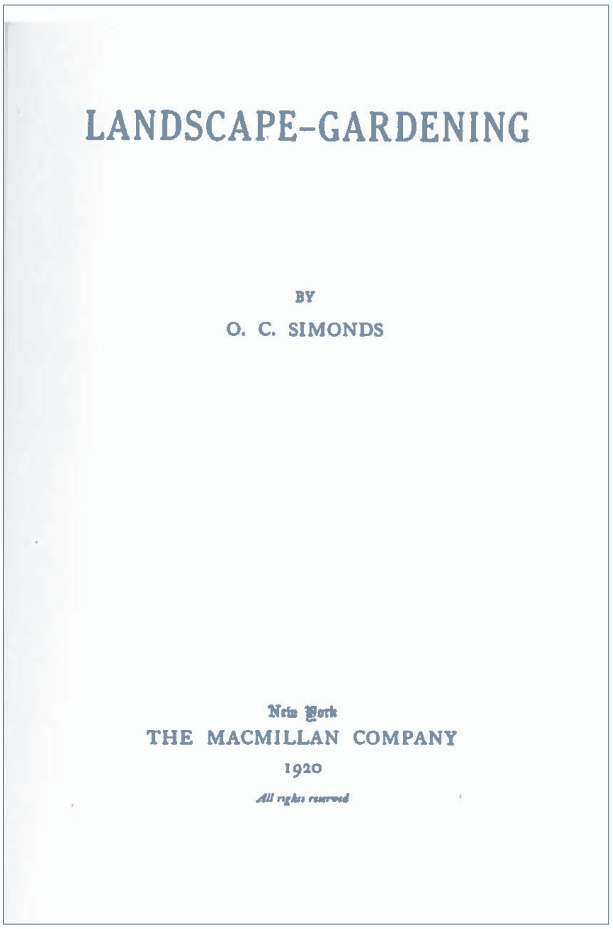
The splendid soil conditions at Coral Gables permit of the most varied gardening operations. The famous plantations operated so successfully here for years are a sufficient guarantee of the possibilities of the land, while the flora of Southern Florida, more varied than that of any other part of the United States, will be utilized to the utmost to add to the attractiveness of plazas and boulevards and make most pleasing rest-spots amid delightful surroundings.

From even the most conservative viewpoint, Coral Gables offers possibilities for beauty that make it distinctive among developments of this kind. Winding boulevards encircle the entire tract; diagonal streets make every part accessible; broad vistas and charming hammocks of pine, oak and palm delight the eye on every side, and with the extensive planting of cocoanut, rubber, royal poincians, grevilla, pithecolobium and bamboo trees, and shrubbery such as acalypha, hibiscus, oleander and jasmine, with alamanda, bougainvillea and many other varieties of vines, Coral Gables will present a homesite development unsurpassed for ideal living conditions.

This is the second of a most interesting series of articles prepared and written especially by the famous men who are molding CORAL GABLES into MIAMI'S MASTER SUBURB. The next of the series will be by Mr. Denman Fink, an artist of international fame and a recognized authority on Spanish art and architecture. Mr. Fink's designs are a notable feature of Coral Gables. The Grand Opening Sale at Coral Gables will soon be announced. It will be the event extraordinary of the year! Watch—wait—for the date of the first offering.

Landscape - Gardening

Frank Button was the landscape architect for Coral Gables, and beginning in 1921 he played an instrumental role in the design and planning of the garden city. Button lead the design of Coral Gables' picturesque parkways, golf courses, and canals, such as Alhambra Circle, the Granada Golf Course, and the Coral Gables Waterway. From 1903 to 1920, before he joined the Coral Gables design team, Button practiced landscape architecture with O.C. Simonds in Chicago, where the two designers collaborated on Chicago's Lincoln Park and Charles Deering's estate at Buena Vista, north of Miami, as well as many other notable public spaces around the country. In 1920, the year that Button resigned from Simonds' practice, O.C. Simonds wrote an influential book called Landscape-Gardening that was used by many design professionals of the time. It is likely that Button contributed to this book, was influenced by its principles, and used its practical guidance in the design and implementation of Coral Gables. The book is available today for purchase online.



LANDSCAPE-GARDENING

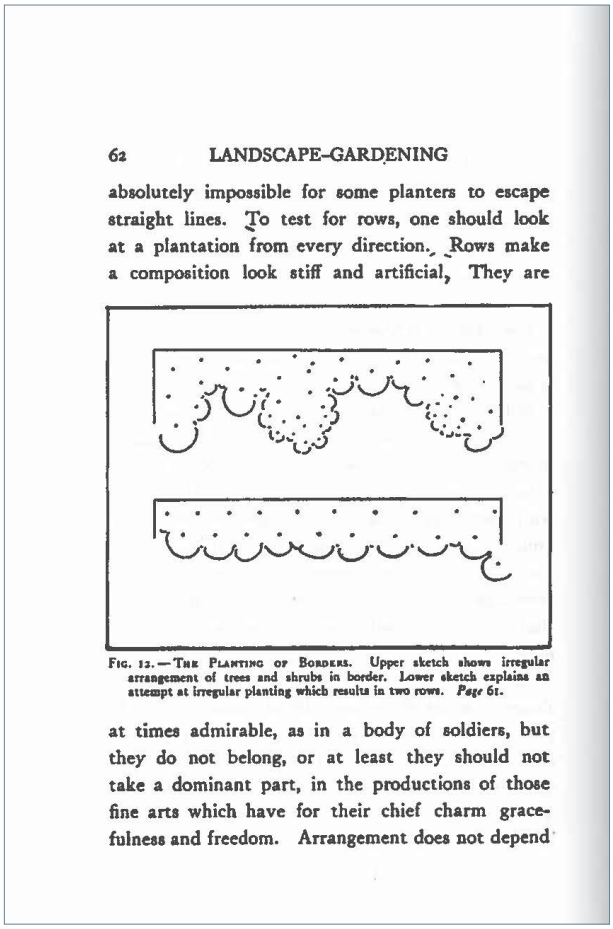
BY

O. C. SIMONDS

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1920



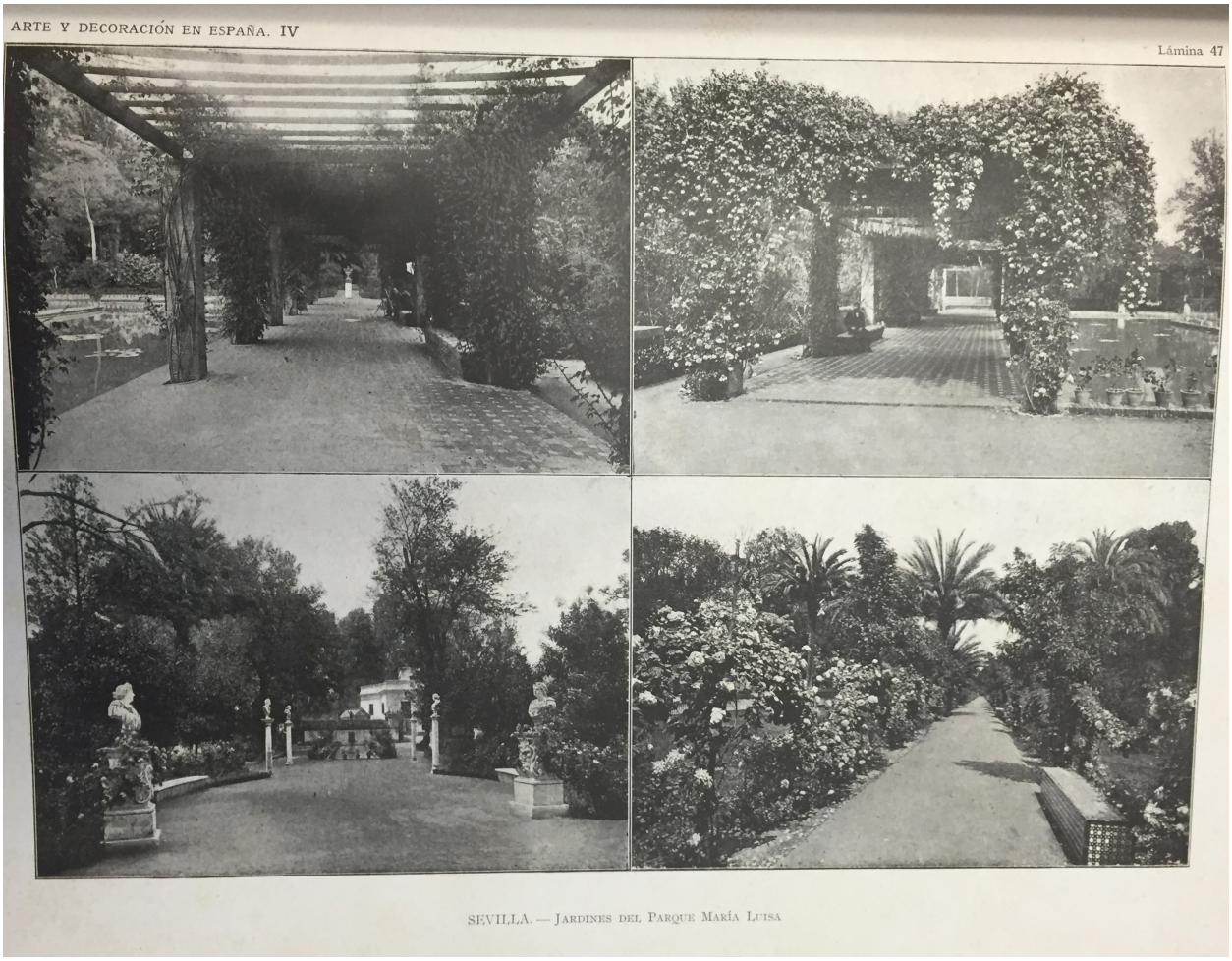
absolutely impossible for some planters to escape straight lines. To test for rows, one should look at a plantation from every direction. Rows make a composition look stiff and artificial, They are

FIG. 12.—THE PLANTING OF BORDERS. Upper sketch shows irregular arrangement of trees and shrubs in border. Lower sketch explains an attempt at irregular planting which results in two rows. *Page* 61.

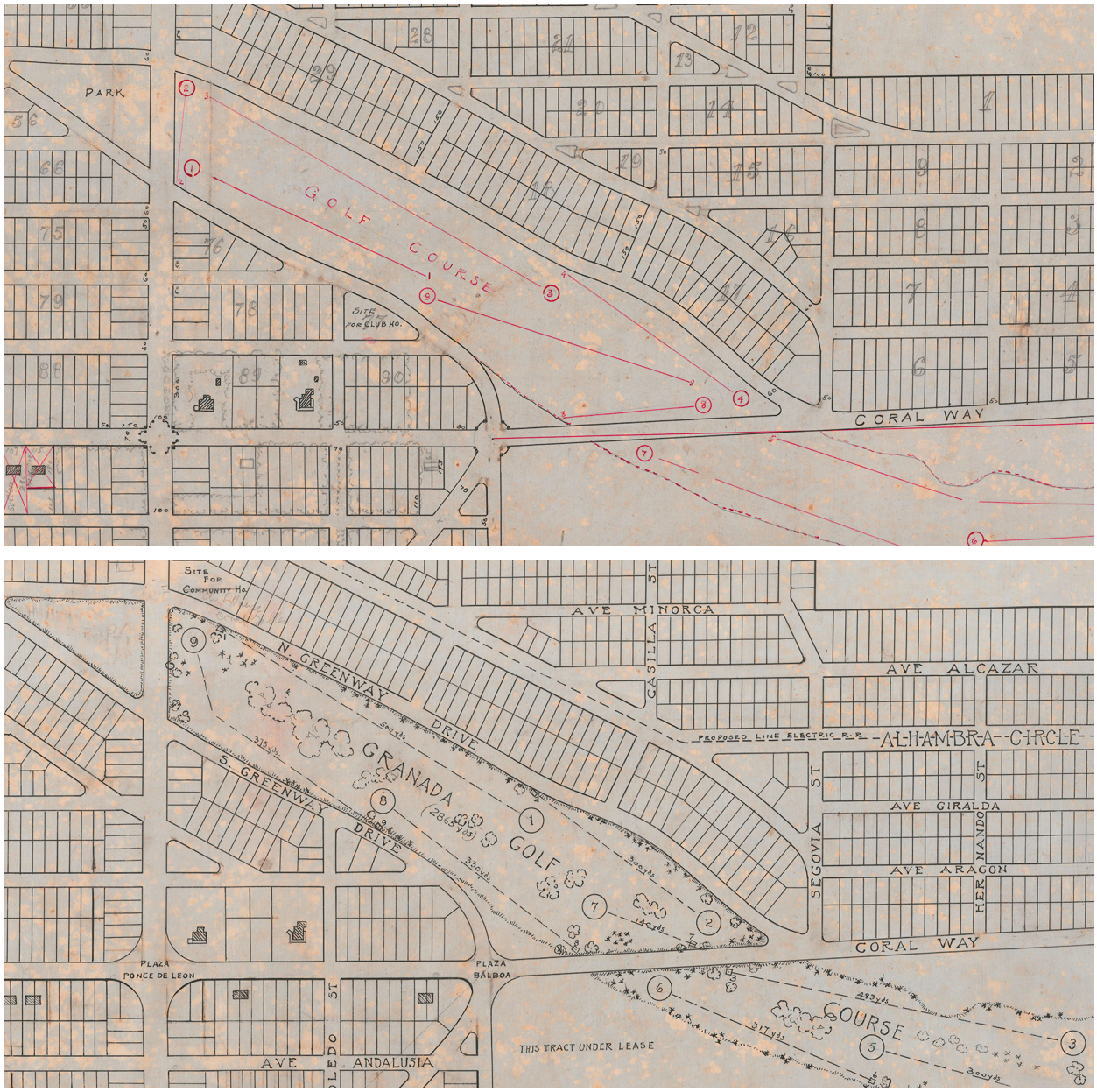
at times admirable, as in a body of soldiers, but they do not belong, or at least they should not take a dominant part, in the productions of those fine arts which have for their chief charm gracefulness and freedom. Arrangement does not depend

Historical Precedent

The pictures on this page are taken from the book *Arte y Decoracion en Espana, Tomo IV,* published in 1920. The book was part of a popular series that was found in the library of most notable architects and landscape designers of the 1920s, including Harold Steward and Walter De Garmo.. Coral Gables' gateways and entrances, such as the Country Club Prado Entrance and Granada Plaza were inspired by these photographs and other similar books published at the time.

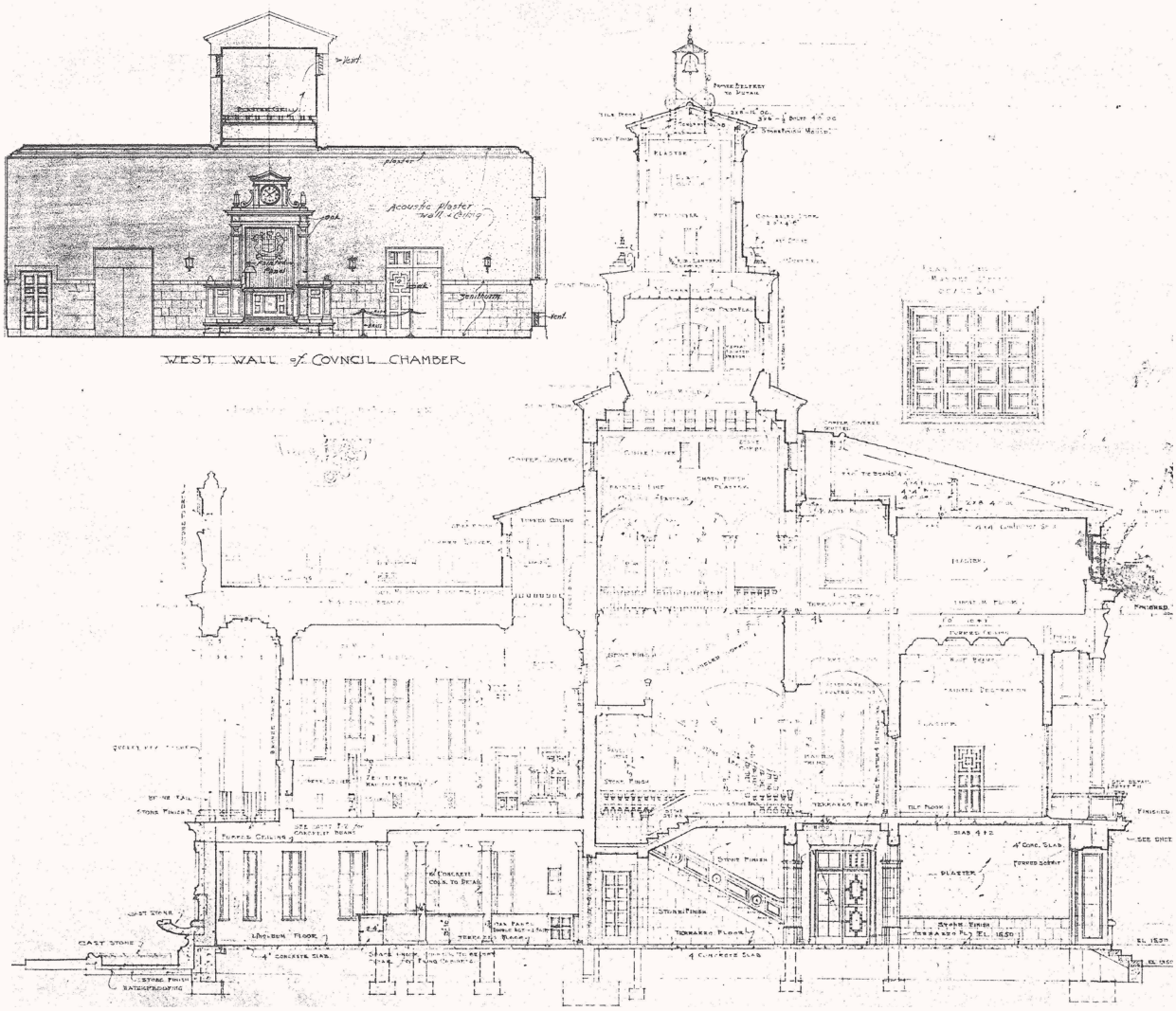


Public Spaces



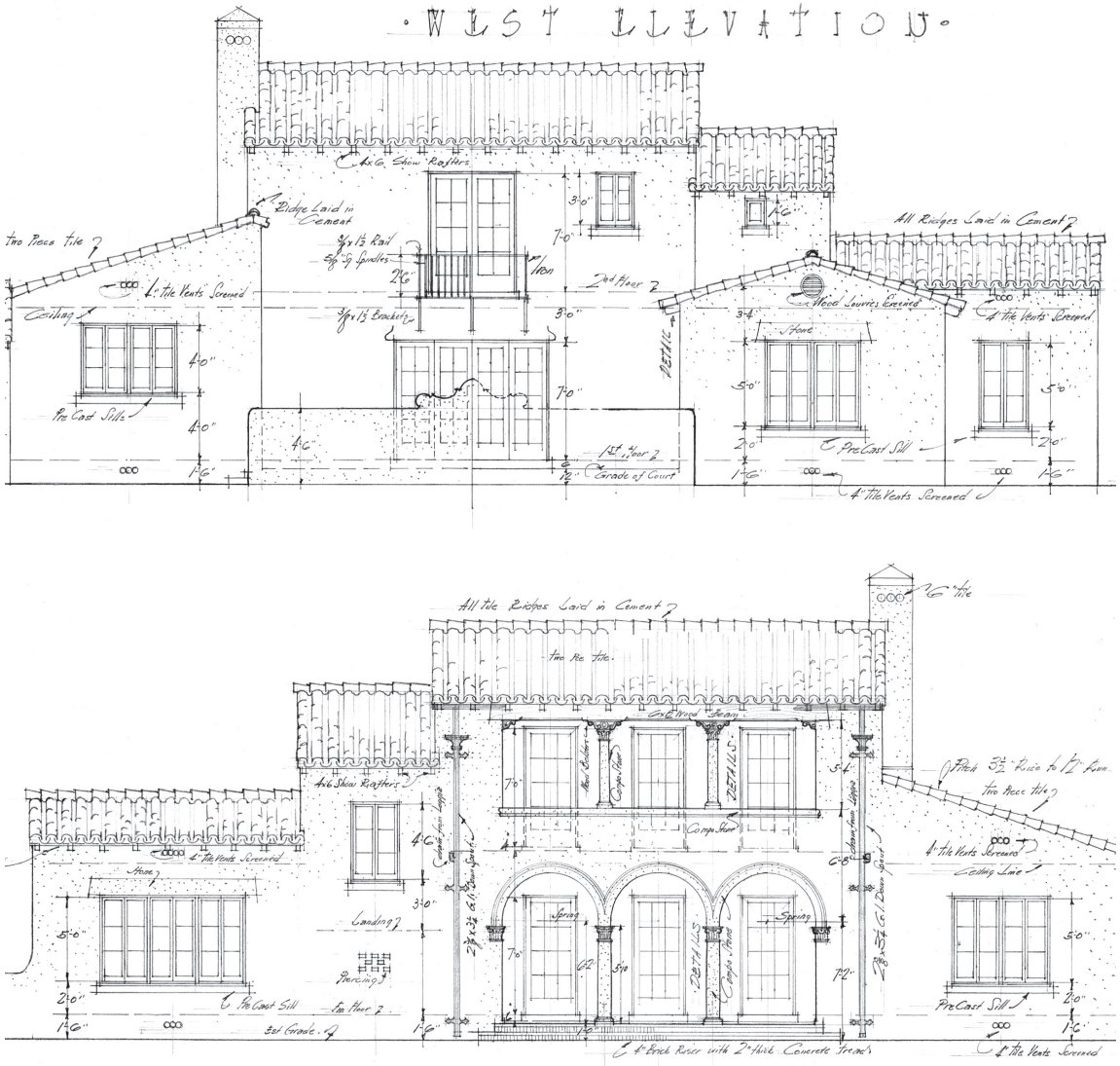
Frank Button, landscape architect and W.C.Bliss, civil engineer, worked on the above drawings as the initial plans for Coral Gables around today's Granada Golf Course and the Merrick House. The top drawing is dated July 1921 and the bottom drawing was completed in October 1921. Note the refinements to the design of public spaces over the course of three months. Many of these initial public space designs were constructed as drawn, and are preserved today as beloved Coral Gables landmarks.

SUSTAINABILITY



Cross Sections of Coral Gables City Hall, showing a method of natural ventilation of the Commission Chambers before air conditioning.

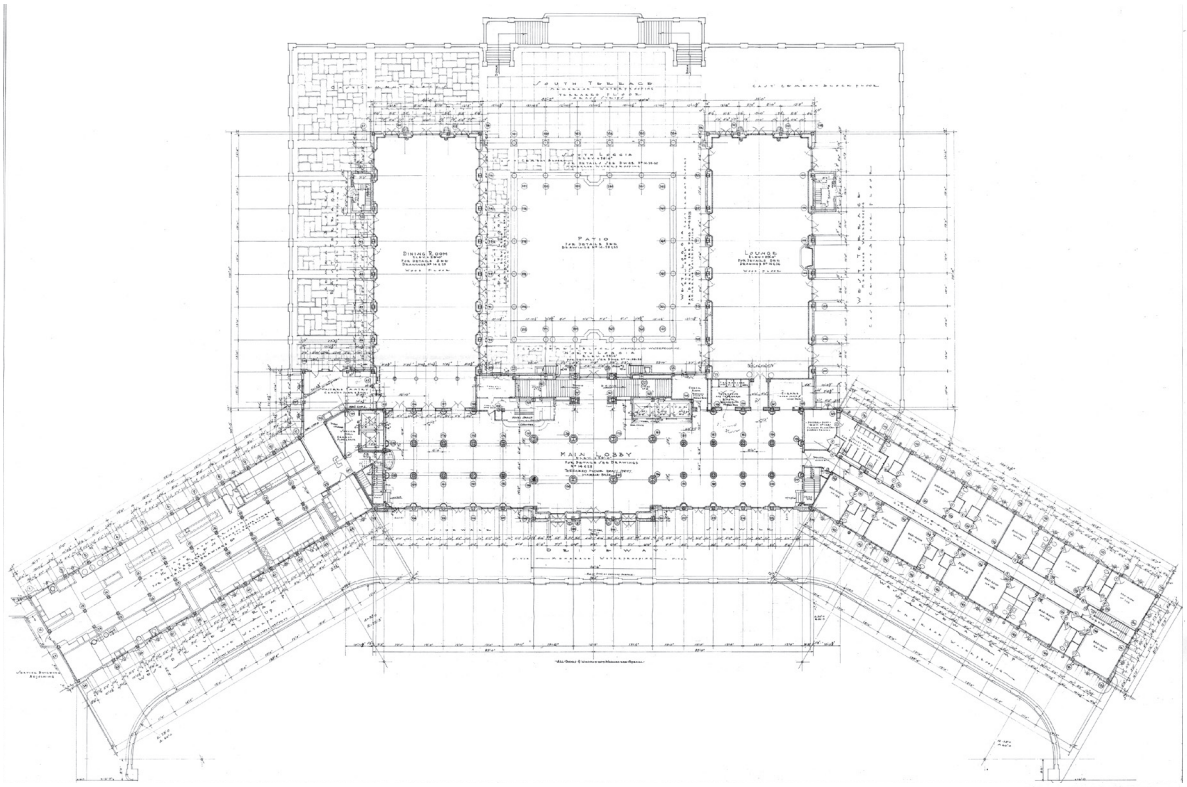
Environmental by Design

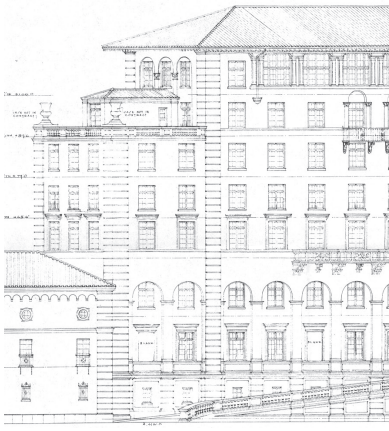


Coral Gables' original Mediterranean - designed homes and public buildings were environmentally-sustainable by design. There is an extensive body of writing about Coral Gables architects' unique adaptation of Mediterranean architecture to the tropical climate, creating a new "American Architecture". Extensive use of covered porches, arcades, loggias, and courtyards provided ventilation, shade and rain protection, in keeping with the tropical climate.

LEED Principles

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is one of the most popular green building certification programs used worldwide, and it is increasingly incorporated into development projects in the City of Coral Gables. The following three pages illustrate how LEED design criteria are fulfilled in some of Coral Gables' original Mediterranean landmarks, by design.





The Biltmore Hotel

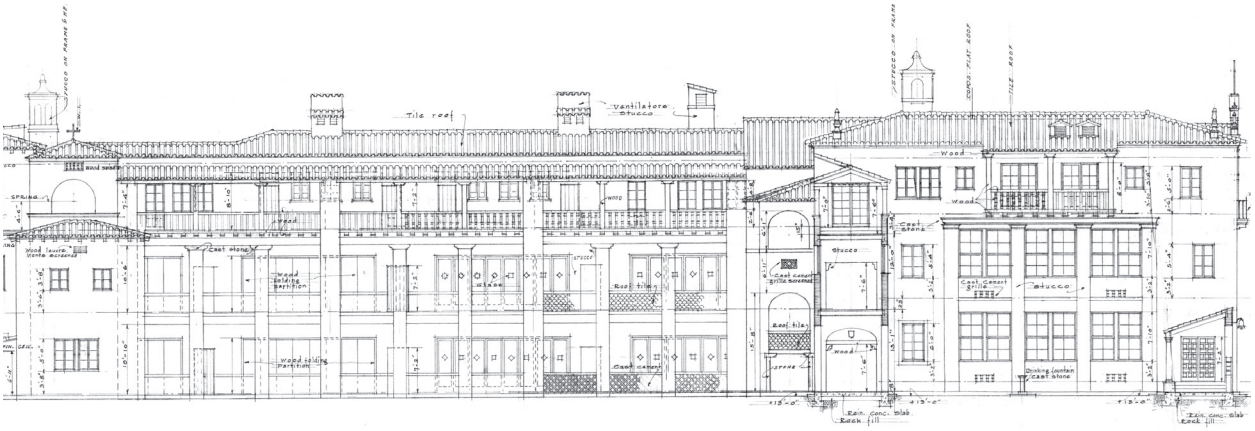
LEED Criteria

- Open Space
- Building product disclosure and optimization - sourcing of raw materials
- Enhanced indoor air quality strategies (operable windows / cross ventilation)
- Low-emitting materials
- Thermal comfort (shaded courtyards, arcades, and loggias)
- Interior lighting (large windows, thin floorplate)
- Daylight
- Quality views
- Walkable project site
- Design for active occupants (beautifully-designed staircases)

Convent School (St. Theresa)

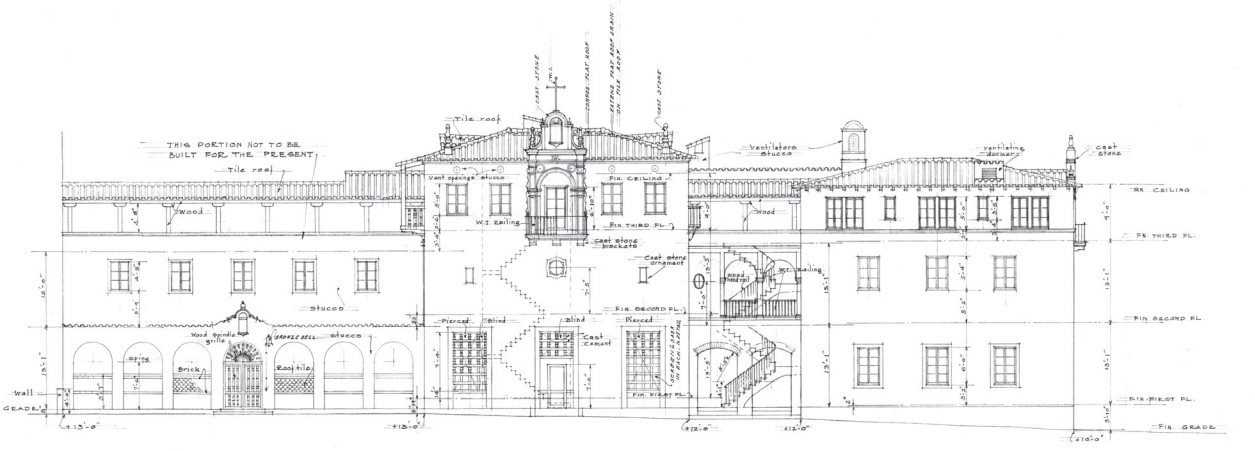
LEED Criteria

- Bicycle Facilities
- Reduced Parking Footprint
- Open Space
- Building product disclosure and optimization - sourcing of raw materials
- Enhanced indoor air quality strategies (operable windows / cross ventilation)
- Low-emitting materials
- Thermal comfort (arcades and loggias)
- Interior lighting (large windows, thin floorplate)
- Daylight
- Quality views
- Walkable project site
- Design for active occupants



SECTION "A-A"

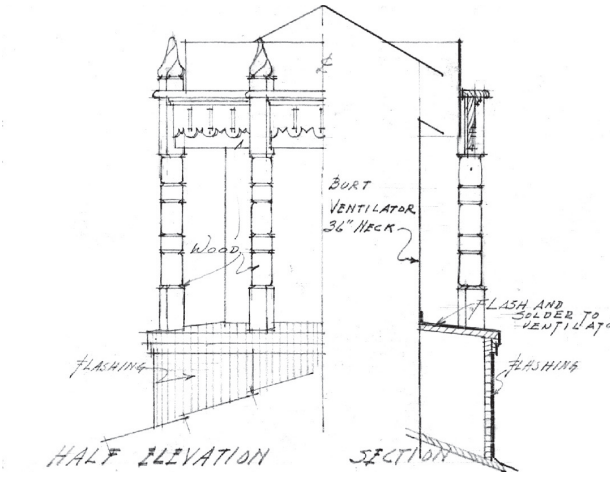
NOTE: ALL CAST CEMENT GRILLES TO HAVE SCREENED LOUVERS IN BACK

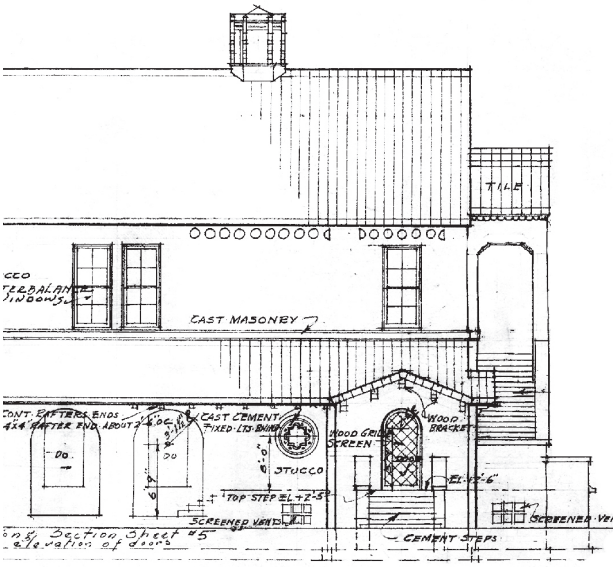


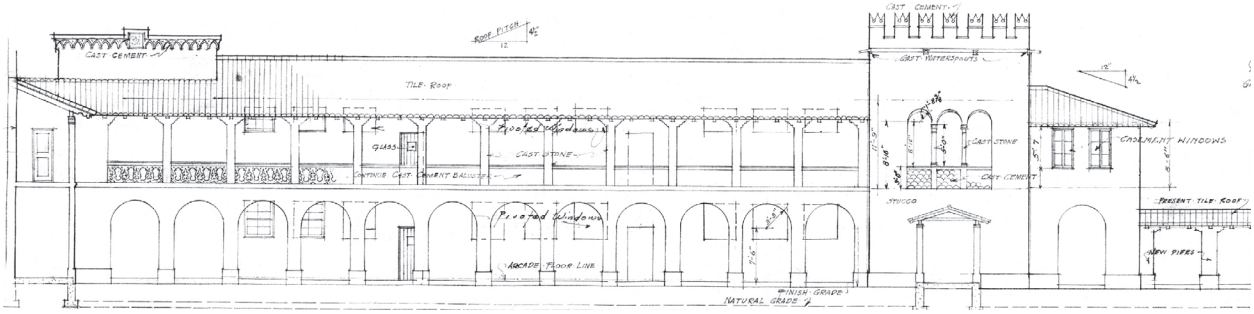
Coral Gables Elementary

LEED Criteria

- Surrounding density and diverse uses
- Access to quality transit
- Bicycle Facilities
- Reduced Parking Footprint
- Open Space
- Building product disclosure and optimization - sourcing of raw materials
- Enhanced indoor air quality strategies (operable windows / cross ventilation)
- Low-emitting materials
- Thermal comfort (arcades and loggias)
- Interior lighting (large windows, thin floor-plate)
- Daylight
- Quality views
- Walkable project site
- Design for active occupants







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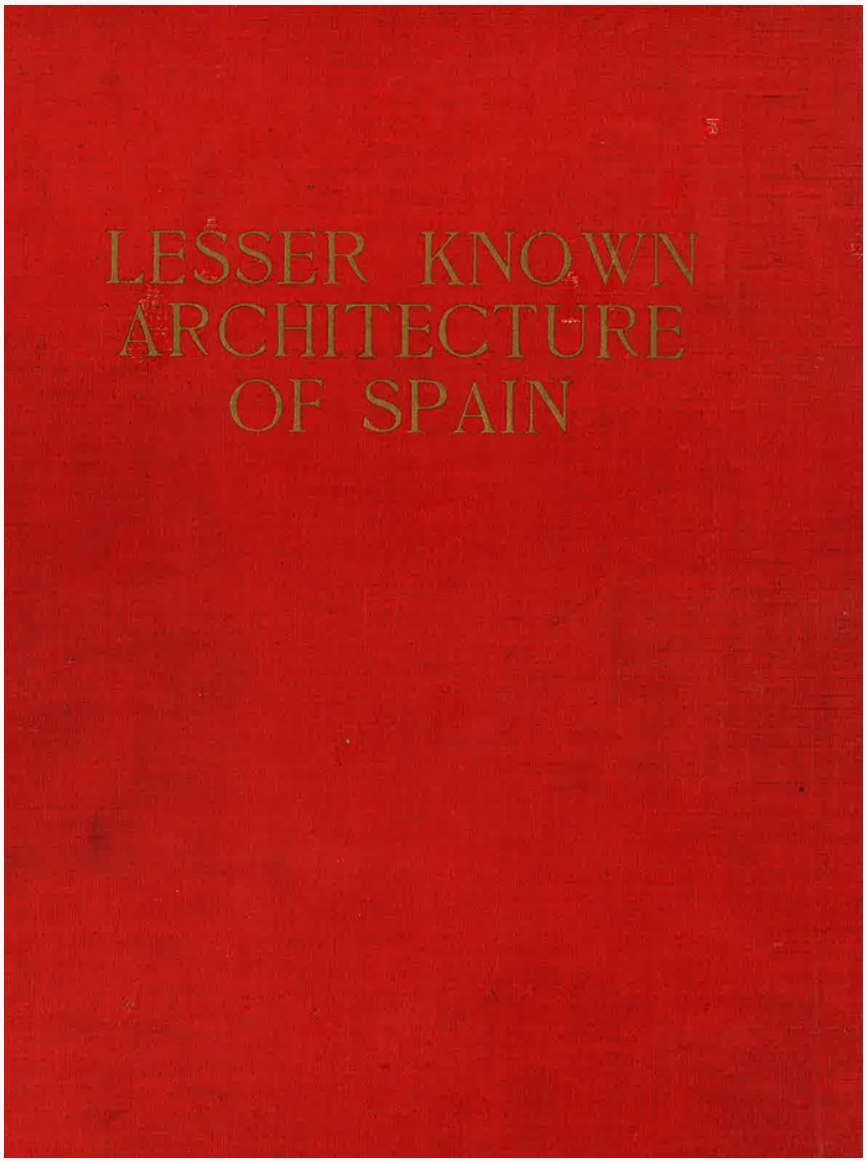
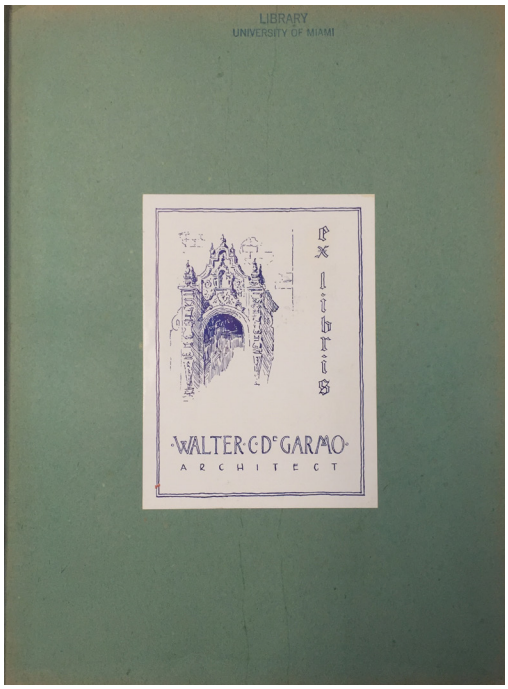


Cover of Lesser Known Architecture of Spain, a book in Walter de Garmo´s library with photos of buildings that informed Coral Gables´ Mediterranean style.



The series *Arte y Decoracion en Espana* was published in Barcelona between 1917 and 1926, and consists of 10 volumes of photos, drawings, and colored plates. It is known that Walter De Garmo and Harold Steward, two important architects in the development of Coral Gables, had these books in their library.

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Coral Gables Architectural Library

Books played an important role in bringing George Merrick's dream of a Mediterranean city to fruition. In the 1920s, most architects and designers relied on a well-stocked library of architectural books to inspire and implement beautiful thematic designs. Coral Gables' leading architects, including Phineas Paist and Walter De Garmo, had an extensive collection of books on Spanish and Italian architecture that were heavily illustrated with photographs and measured drawings. At the time, photographs of "lesser-known" villages and farm houses were in vogue, and for the first time, American architects were exposed to these vernacular, exotic building types. There were also many books on architectural details that were published, which provided measured elevation, section, and plan drawings of doors, balconies, fountains, columns, and arches, which aided American architects in implementing authentic architecture that evoked the same feeling as more antique examples in Europe.

Some examples of the books that were used to design the original landmark public building, plazas, and houses in Coral Gables are provided in this bibliography. These books are still available for the use of architects today, and can be an invaluable tool for architects to implement authentic Mediterranean design in modern times.

Photograph of a clock tower from *Spanish Farm Houses and Minor Public Buildings*, 1924

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Availability:

- City of Coral Gables Planning and Zoning Division
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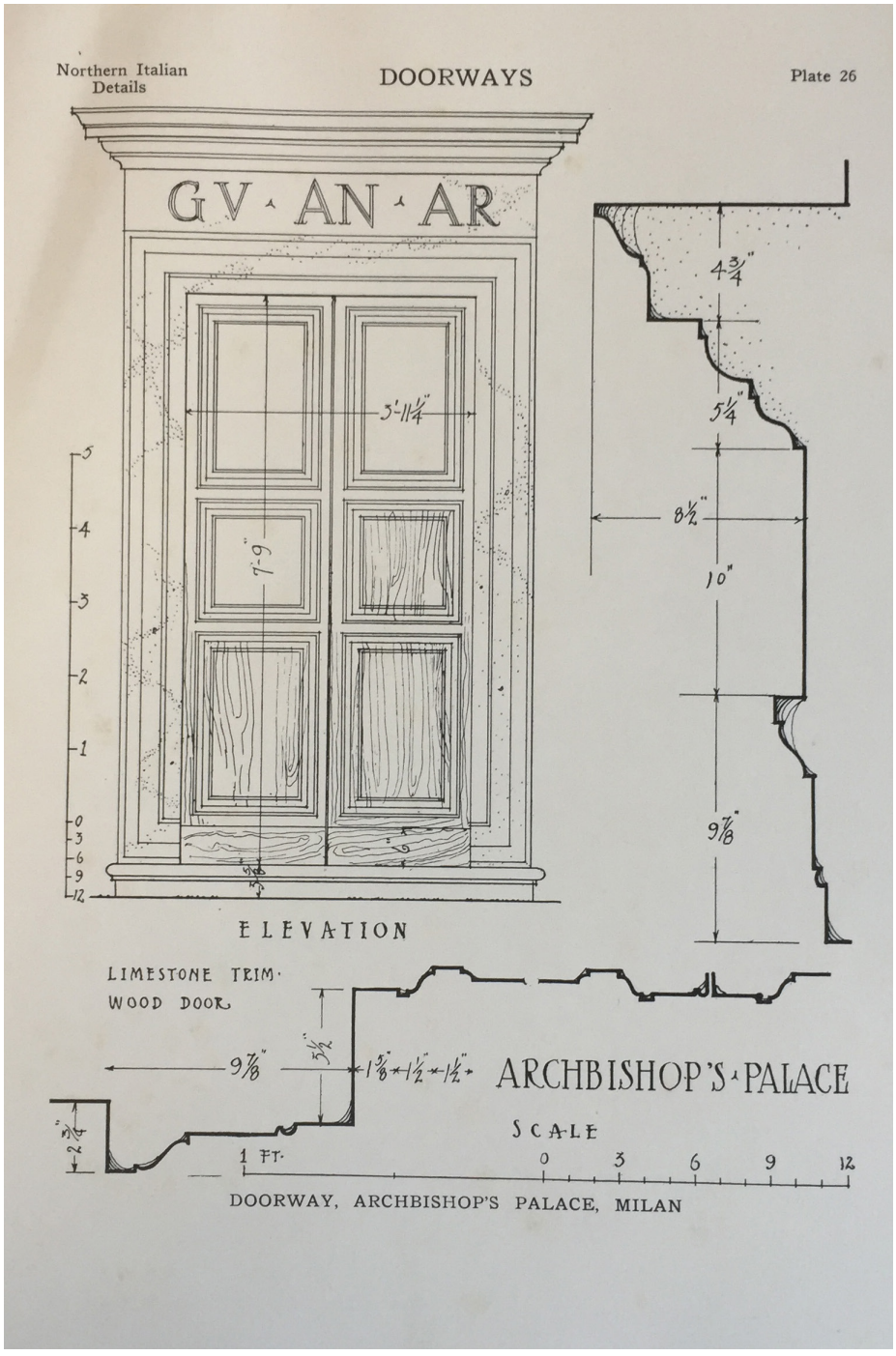

Measured drawings from *Northern Italian Details*, 1922

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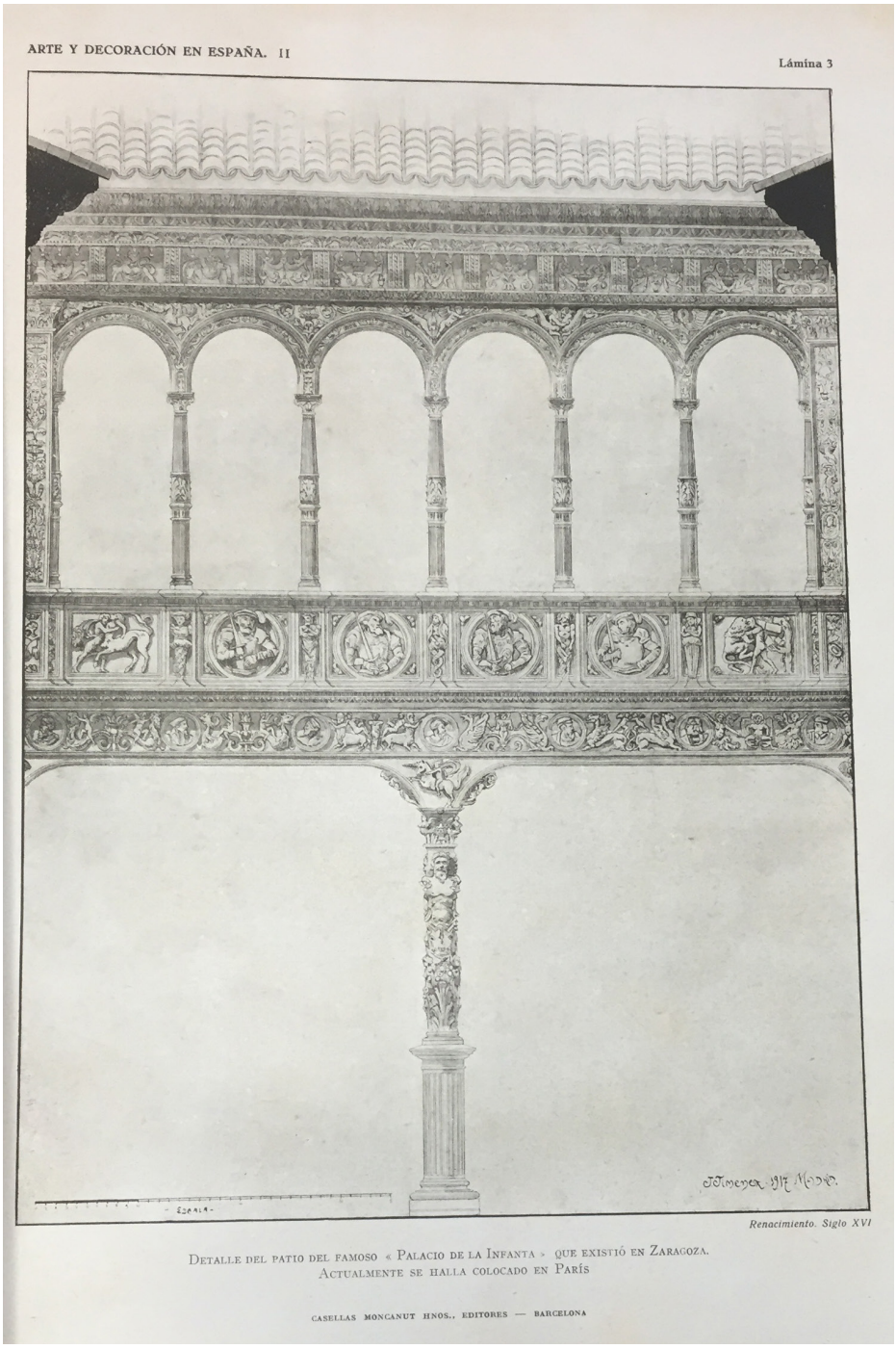

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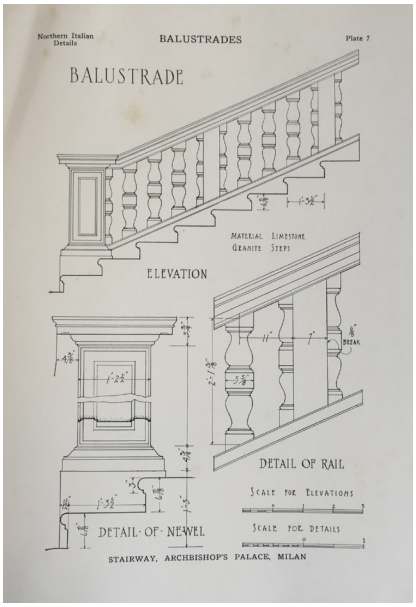

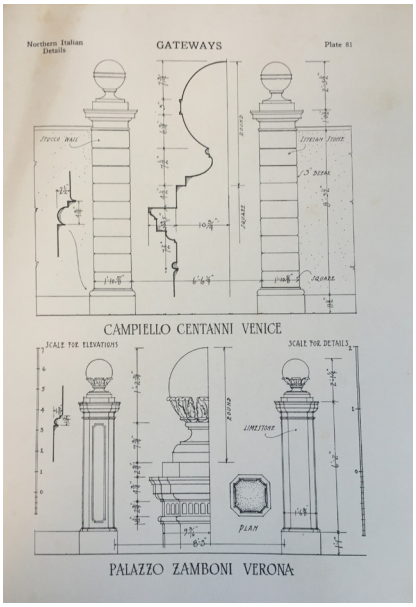

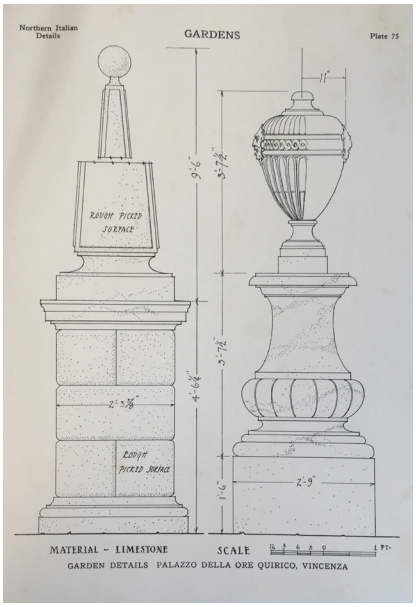

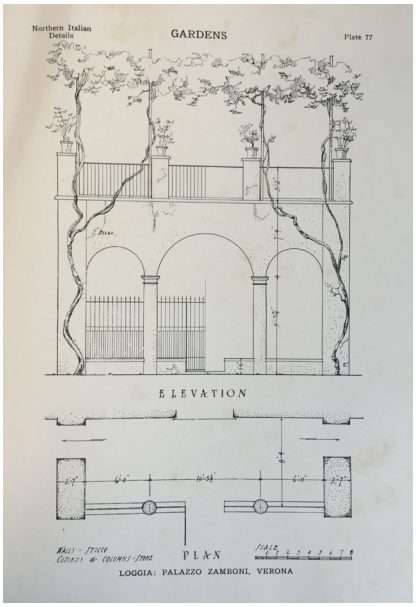

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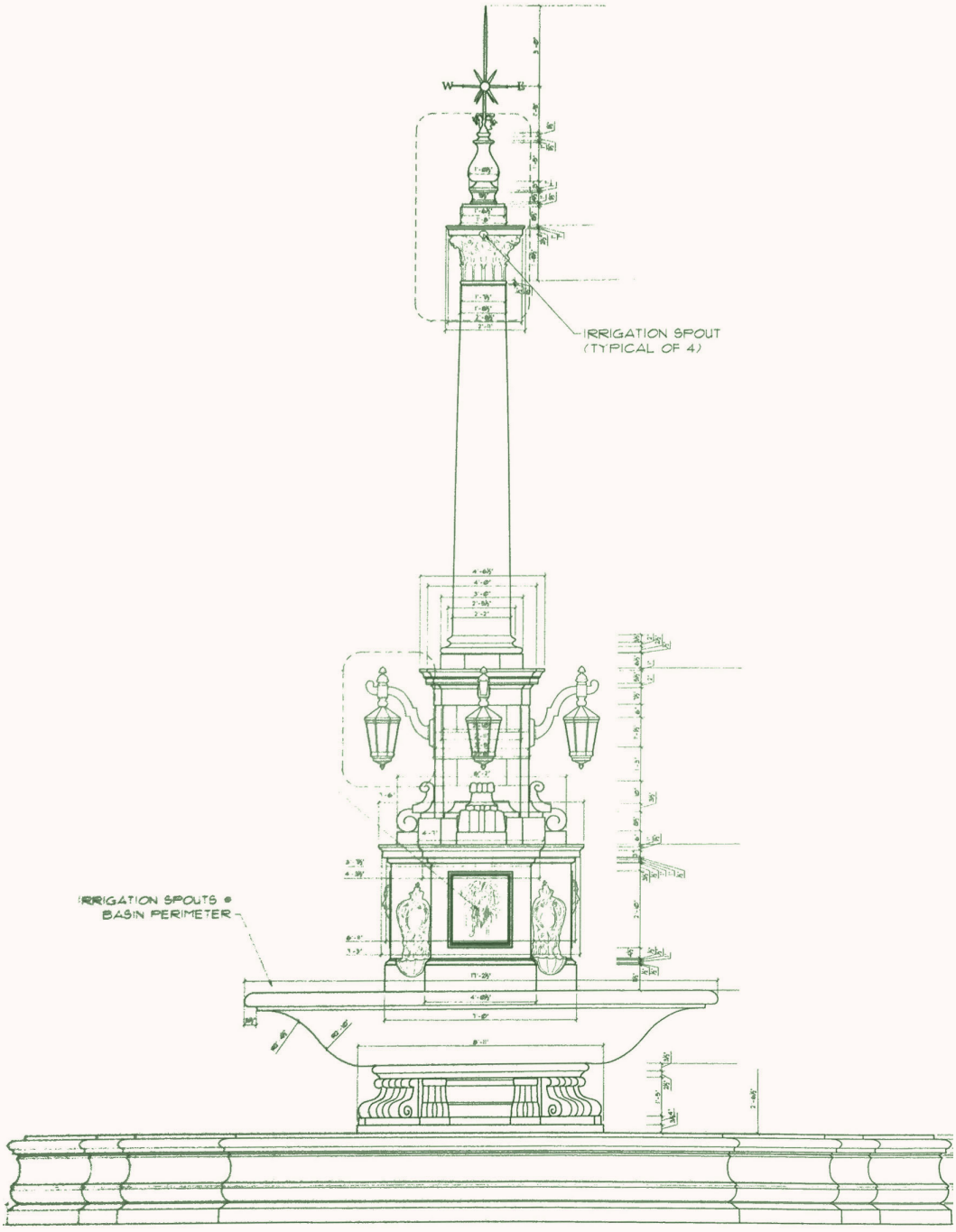

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

PLANNING AND ZONING DIVISION

2024