

DADE BOULEVARD FIRE STATION

(2300 PINETREE DRIVE)

MIAMI BEACH HISTORIC SITE

DESIGNATION REPORT



Figure 1 Designed by Robert Law Weed and Edwin T. Reeder, the Dade Boulevard Fire Station was constructed as a Public Works Administration project in 1939.

PREPARED BY:

**CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

SEPTEMBER 9, 1999

(Revised September 28, 1999)

Adopted October 20, 1999 (Ordinance No. 99-3212)

**CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION REPORT
FOR THE
DADE BOULEVARD FIRE STATION**

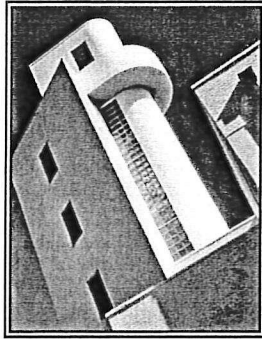


Figure 2 This 1939 photograph displays the fire station's unique drill tower.

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**DADE BOULEVARD FIRE STATION
CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION REPORT**



Figure 3 Note the unique diamond shaped window in the north wing's private residence for the fire chief in this 1999 photograph.

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DADE BOULEVARD FIRE STATION HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION REPORT

I. REQUEST

On June 8, 1999, the City of Miami Beach Planning Department requested the Historic Preservation Board to consider directing staff to prepare a preliminary evaluation report with recommendations regarding the possible designation of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station (now known as Fire Station #2), located at 2300 Pinetree Drive, as a local historic site. This request was believed appropriate by staff due to the unique design of the building; the high repute of its architect, Robert Law Weed; and the visual landmark character of the structure. At the same meeting, the Board reviewed said request and unanimously approved a motion (8 to 0; 1 vacancy) to direct staff to prepare a preliminary evaluation report with recommendations regarding the possible designation of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station as a local historic site.

At its July 13, 1999, meeting, the Historic Preservation Board reviewed the preliminary evaluation report with recommendations prepared by the staff of the Planning Department regarding the designation of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station as an historic site. The Board found the proposed historic site to be in compliance with the criteria for designation listed in Sections 118-591 through 118-593 in the Land Development Regulations of the City Code and unanimously approved a motion (5 to 0; 3 absences, 1 vacancy) to direct staff to prepare a designation report and schedule a public hearing in a timely manner relative to the designation of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station.

At its September 9, 1999, meeting, the Historic Preservation Board unanimously approved a motion (7 to 0; 1 absence, 1 vacancy) to recommend approval of the designation of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station as an historic site in accordance with staff recommendations, as reflected in this designation report.

On September 28, 1999, the Planning Board unanimously approved a motion (7 to 0) to recommend approval of the designation of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station as an historic site in accordance with staff recommendations, as reflected in this designation report.

On October 20, 1999, the City Commission unanimously approved the designation (7 to 0) of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station as a local historic site.

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II. DESIGNATION PROCESS

The process of historic designation is delineated in Sections 118-591 through 118-593 in Subpart B of the Land Development Regulations of the City Code (Chapter 118, Article X, Division 4). An outline of this process is delineated below.

Step One: A request for designation is made either by the City Commission, the Historic Preservation Board, other agencies and organizations as listed in the Land Development Regulations of the City Code, or the property owners involved. Proposals for designation shall include a completed application form available from the Planning Department.

Step Two: The Planning Department prepares a preliminary evaluation report with recommendations for consideration by the Board.

Step Three: The Historic Preservation Board considers the preliminary evaluation to determine if proceeding with a designation report is warranted.

The designation report is an historical and architectural analysis of the proposed district or site. The report:

- 1) describes the historic, architectural and/or archeological significance of the property or subject area proposed for Historical Site or District designation;
- 2) recommends Evaluation Guidelines to be used by the Board to evaluate the appropriateness and compatibility of proposed Developments affecting the designated Site or District; and
- 3) will serve as an attachment to the Land Development Regulations of the City Code.

Step Four: The designation report is presented to the Board at a public hearing. If the Board determines that the proposed site or district satisfies the requirements for designation as set forth in the Land

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Development Regulations of the City Code, the Board transmits a recommendation in favor of designation to the Planning Board and City Commission.

Step Five: The Planning Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed designation, and shall consider the proposed historic designation as an amendment to the Land Development Regulations of the City Code and, subsequently, transmit its recommendation to the City Commission.

Step Six: The City Commission may adopt an amendment to the Land Development Regulations of the City Code which thereby designates the Historic Preservation Site or Historic District after one (1) public hearing for a parcel of land less than ten (10) contiguous acres or after two (2) public hearings for a parcel of land which is more than ten (10) contiguous acres.

III. RELATION TO ORDINANCE CRITERIA

1. In accordance with Section 118-592 in the Land Development Regulations of the City Code, eligibility for designation is determined on the basis of compliance with the listed criteria set forth below.

(a) The Historic Preservation Board shall have the authority to recommend that properties be designated as historic buildings, historic structures, historic improvements, historic landscape features, historic interiors (architecturally significant public portions only), historic sites or historic districts if they are significant in the historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic or archeological heritage of the city, the county, state or nation. Such properties shall possess an integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling or association and meet at least one (1) of the following criteria:

(1) Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the history of the city, the county, state or nation;

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- (2) Association with the lives of persons significant in the city's past history;
 - (3) Embody the distinctive characteristics of an historical period, architectural or design style or method of construction;
 - (4) Possesses high artistic values;
 - (5) Represent the work of a master, serve as an outstanding or representative work of a master designer, architect or builder who contributed to our historical, aesthetic or architectural heritage;
 - (6) Have yielded, or are likely to yield information important in pre-history or history;
 - (7) Be listed in the National Register of Historic Places;
 - (8) Consist of a geographically definable area that possesses a significant concentration of sites, buildings or structures united by historically significant past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development, whose components may lack individual distinction.
- (b) A building, structure (including the public portions of the interior), improvement or landscape feature may be designated historic even if it has been altered if the alteration is reversible and the most significant architectural elements are intact and repairable.
2. The Dade Boulevard Fire Station is eligible for designation as it complies with the criteria as specified in Section 118-592 in the Land Development Regulations of the City Code outlined above.
- (a) Staff finds the Dade Boulevard Fire Station (now known as Fire Station #2), located at 2300 Pinetree Drive, to be eligible for historic designation and in conformance with the designation criteria for the following reasons:

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- (1) Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the history of the city, the county, state or nation;

The Dade Boulevard Fire Station was constructed as a Public Works Administration (PWA) project in 1939 under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's pledge to the American people for a New Deal. Located at the intersection of Dade Boulevard and Pinetree Drive and facing the bridge leading to 23rd Street, the building was designed to provide then modern fire fighting facilities to the community, a central training station, and a residence for the fire chief.

- (2) Association with the lives of persons significant in the city's past history;

In addition to his notable architectural career in the Miami area, Robert Law Weed served his country in World War I and World War II as a planner who provided architectural expertise to the Army Air Force. He was highly involved with many civic affairs through his public service, served on numerous juries for architectural awards, and participated in advisory committees for the discussion of problems relative to architecture and the building industry.

- (3) Embody the distinctive characteristics of an historical period, architectural or design style or method of construction;

Constructed in Miami Beach in the late 1930's prior to World War II, the Dade Boulevard Fire Station represents a highly unique example of a structure whose design is influenced by the Streamline Modern, International style, and Vernacular styles of architecture. In fact, the fire station is a remarkably well designed one of a kind hybrid.

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(4) Possess high artistic values:

Designed by architects Robert Law Weed and Edwin T. Reeder, the central block and tower of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station embody characteristics of both the Streamline Moderne style of architecture and evolving International style school of design, while the palladian flanking structures are highly simplistic and evocative of a Vernacular style. The original architectural design of the fire station was influenced by the residential character of the surrounding neighborhoods, as evidenced by its varied building heights, tri-block massing, wood shutters, brickwork, and classical central entrance with columns.

(5) Represent the work of a master, serve as an outstanding or representative work of a master designer, architect or builder who contributed to our historical, aesthetic or architectural heritage:

Florida's most renowned world's fair submission was probably Robert Law Weed's "Florida Tropical Home" for the 1933 U.S. World's Fair, "A Century of Progress," in Chicago, Illinois. Notable architectural works among his outstanding career include Miami Shores Elementary School (1930), the Royal Palm Club (1937), numerous buildings at the University of Miami, a residential aviation community near Miami's airport (1947), the Paramount Theater in Miami, and the Administration and Terminal Building at the Miami International Airport. His commissions in Miami Beach include the South Florida Art Center (originally known as Burdine's Department Store)(800 Lincoln Road) in 1935, Fire Station #4 (6860 Indian Creek Drive) in 1937, the current Burdine's Department Store (1675 Meridian Avenue) in 1937, and the Jorge B. Sanchez House (1700 Michigan Avenue) in 1948. Weed's architectural work was published in many national magazines which include Architectural Forum, Architectural Record, Progressive Architecture, Life, and the Saturday Evening Post.

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- (6) Have yielded, or are likely to yield information important in pre-history or history;

Retention of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station promotes the general welfare of the City by providing an opportunity for the study and appreciation of a highly unique example of the Streamline Moderne style of architecture with both International and Vernacular style influences. The fire station is representative of the evolutionary transition from an early architectural style to a new architectural style on the Beach.

- (7) Be listed in the National Register of Historic Places;

Currently, the Dade Boulevard Fire Station is neither listed individually as an historic site nor is it located within an historic district in the National Register of Historic Places, although it appears to have substantial potential to be determined to be eligible for individual historic site designation.

- (8) Consist of a geographically definable area that possesses a significant concentration of sites, buildings or structures united by historically significant past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development, whose components may lack individual distinction;

This criterion is not applicable to an individual historic site designation.

- (b) A building, structure (including the public portions of the interior), improvement or landscape feature may be designated historic even if it has been altered if the alteration is reversible and the most significant architectural elements are intact and repairable.

Although the Dade Boulevard Fire Station has been altered over the years, it maintains much of its original architectural integrity. Exterior restoration could be successfully completed by following original architectural plans and available excellent historical

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photographs. Despite alterations to this structure, it continues to be representative of the architectural and cultural history of Miami Beach.

IV. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF BOUNDARIES

The Dade Boulevard Fire Station is located at 2300 Pinetree Drive (see **Map 1**); a detailed legal description of the proposed historic site is as follows:

Commence at the point of intersection of the south Right-of-Way of 24th Street and the east Right-of-Way line of Pinetree Drive, as shown in DEDICATION OF PORTION OF LIBERTY AVENUE AND WEST 24TH STREET, recorded in Plat Book 26, at Page 13, Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida; thence South $11^{\circ} 33' 30''$ East, along the east Right-of-Way of Pinetree Drive for a distance of 100.00 feet; thence South $78^{\circ} 26' 30''$ West for a distance of 100.00 feet to the POINT OF BEGINNING of the tract of land herein described; thence continue South $78^{\circ} 26' 30''$ West for a distance of 256.02 feet; thence South $27^{\circ} 42' 00''$ West for a distance of 172.82 feet; thence South $41^{\circ} 20' 42''$ East for a distance of 253.53 feet to a point located on the north Right-of-Way line of Dade Boulevard; thence North $38^{\circ} 39' 55''$ East, along the north Right-of-Way line of Dade Boulevard for a distance of 157.02 feet to a point of tangency; thence run along the arc of a concave curve to the northwest, having a central angle of $50^{\circ} 13' 25''$ and a radius of 329.70 feet for a distance of 289.00 feet to the POINT OF BEGINNING. Said lands located, lying and being in the City of Miami Beach, Florida, and containing 80,949.47 square feet, more or less, or 1.8583 acres, more or less.

V. PRESENT OWNERS

The City of Miami Beach is the current and original sole owner of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station.

VI. PRESENT USE

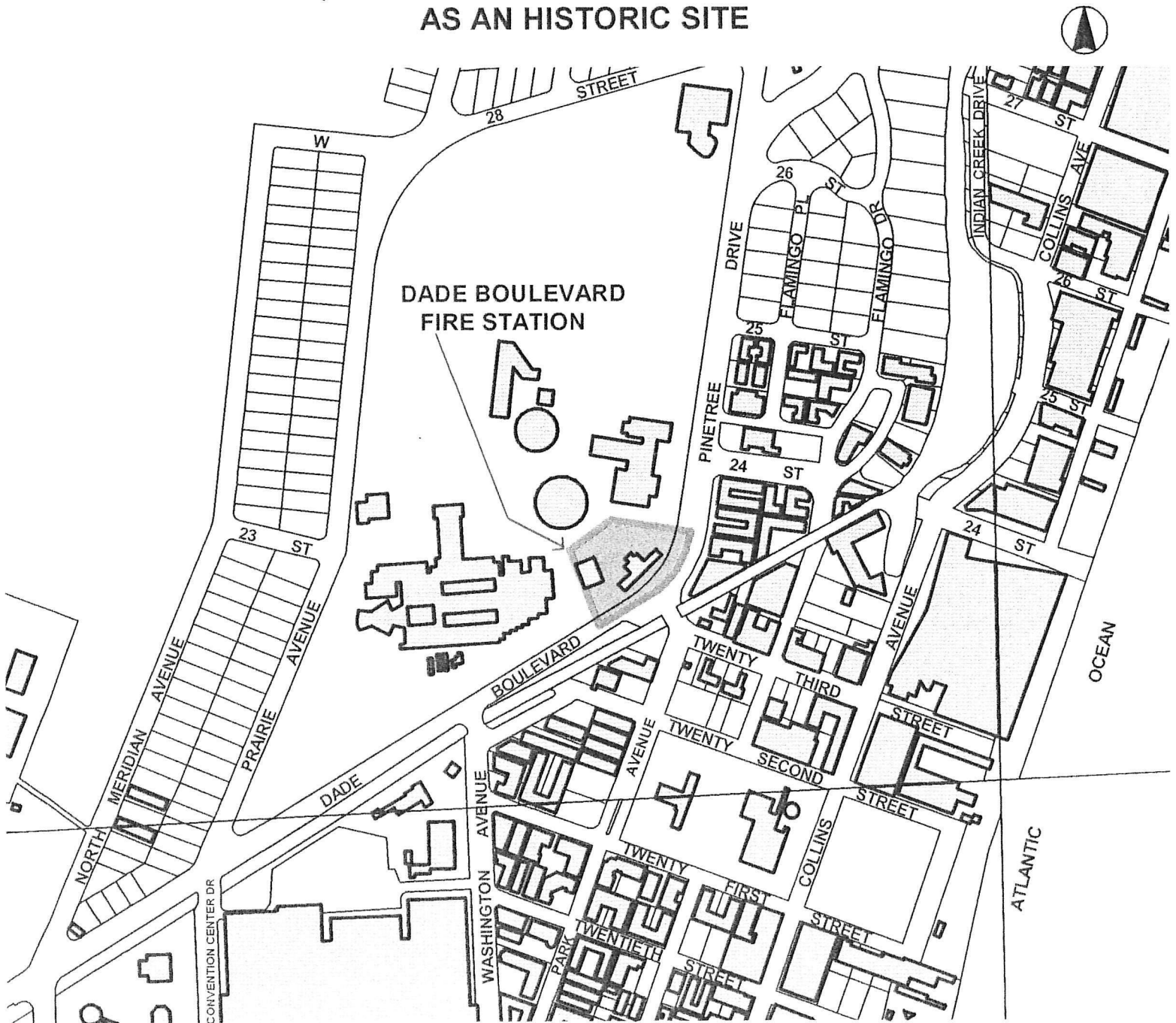
The structure has been continuously operated as a fire station since it was constructed in 1939.

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VII. PRESENT ZONING

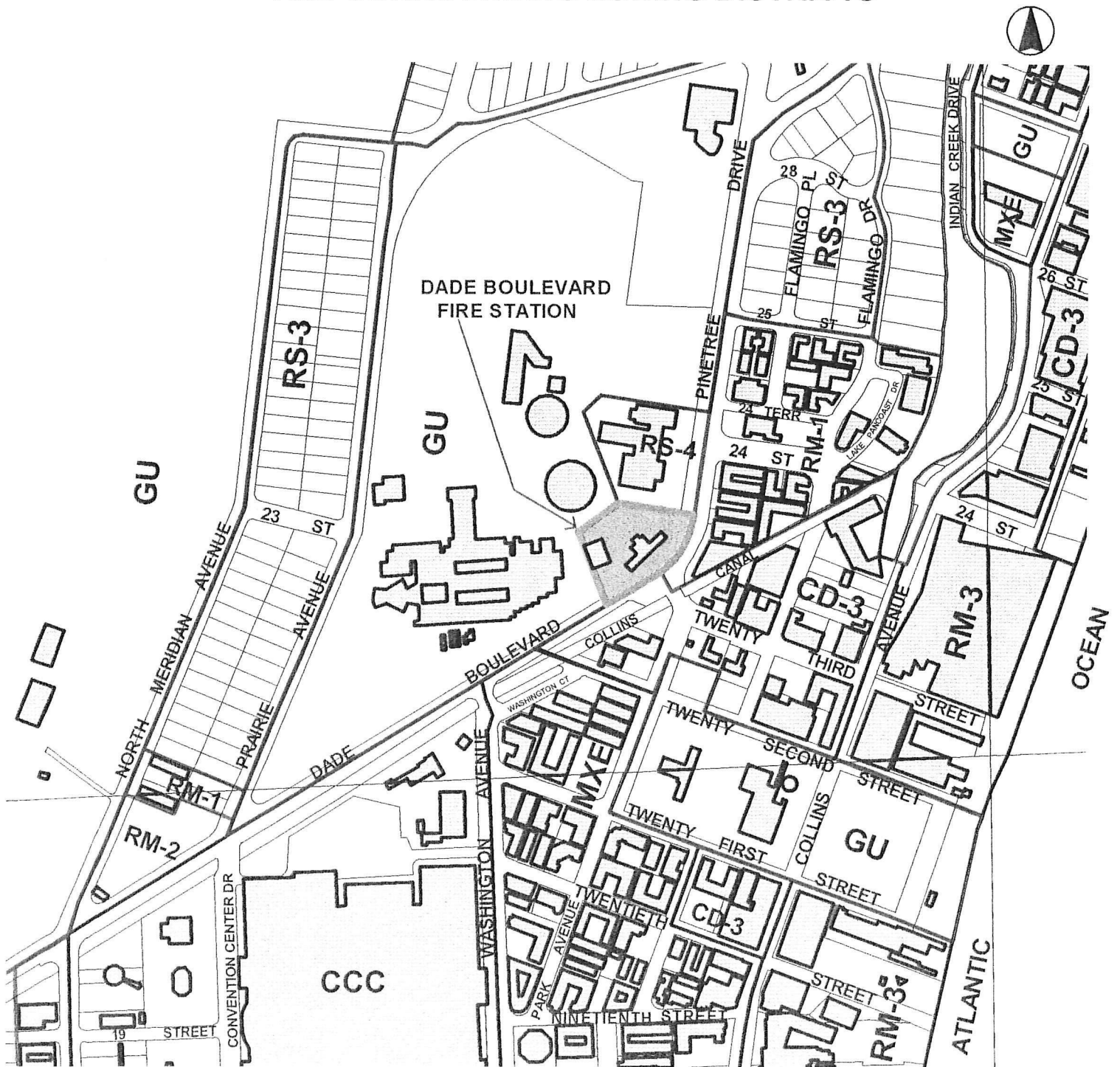
The proposed historic site is located within a GU or Municipal Use zoning district (refer to **Map 2**).

**PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF THE
DADE BOULEVARD FIRE STATION (2300 PINETREE DRIVE)
(NOW KNOWN AS FIRESTATION # 2)
AS AN HISTORIC SITE**



MAP 1

**DADE BOULEVARD FIRE STATION (2300 PINETREE DRIVE)
(NOW KNOWN AS FIRE STATION # 2)
AND SURROUNDING ZONING DISTRICTS**



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VIII. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's pledge to the American people for a New Deal, the National Industrial Recovery Act, passed by Congress on June 13, 1933, created the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works (the Public Works Administration - PWA), and thus enabled the construction of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station as a PWA project in 1939.¹ Designed by Robert Law Weed and Edwin T. Reeder, the fire station was constructed by C.F. Wheeler at a cost of \$67,000.²

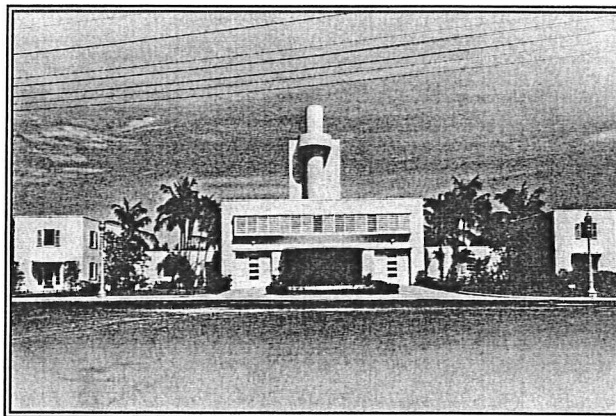


Figure 4 This circa 1939 photograph shows the original design of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station with its classical palladian plan.

According to a 1940 article from the *Architectural Record*, the Dade Boulevard Fire Station was designed to provide four (4) major services: (1) two fire companies, (2) the City's fire-alarm central, (3) a central training station, and (4) a residence for the fire chief. Located at the intersection of Dade Boulevard and Pinetree Drive and facing the bridge leading to 23rd Street, the site was strategically selected to meet these services. The original architectural design of the fire station was influenced by the residential character of the surrounding neighborhoods, as evidenced by its varied building heights, tri-block massing, wood shutters, brickwork, and classical central entrance with columns. Originally, the first floor of the central unit was occupied by the control office, apparatus rooms, and storage room. The second floor of the central unit consisted of the dormitory, captain's quarters, lounge room, and lockers. The six (6) story drill tower, located at the rear of the central unit, was specially designed for training. The south wing was occupied by the machine and repair

¹ Laurence Conway Gerkens, American City Planning Since 1900 (Hilliard, Ohio: On-Call Faculty Program, 1993), p. F-18.

² City of Miami Beach, Florida, Building Department. Building Permit Card No. 32: 2300 Pinetree Drive.

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shop on the first floor and the alarm room on the second floor. The north wing was a compact two (2) story residence for the fire department chief.³

The Dade Boulevard Fire Station has served the needs of the community for over 60 years. The visual landmark character of the structure has been an asset to the surrounding neighborhood. The building was specifically designed to meet the fire fighting needs of the community and to easily fit into the low-scale residential character of the area. The quality and detail of the structure illustrates a rapidly growing Miami Beach in the late 1930's which celebrated the advancements of technology during the Machine Age with its numerous public and private buildings designed in the Art Deco and Streamline Moderne styles of architecture.

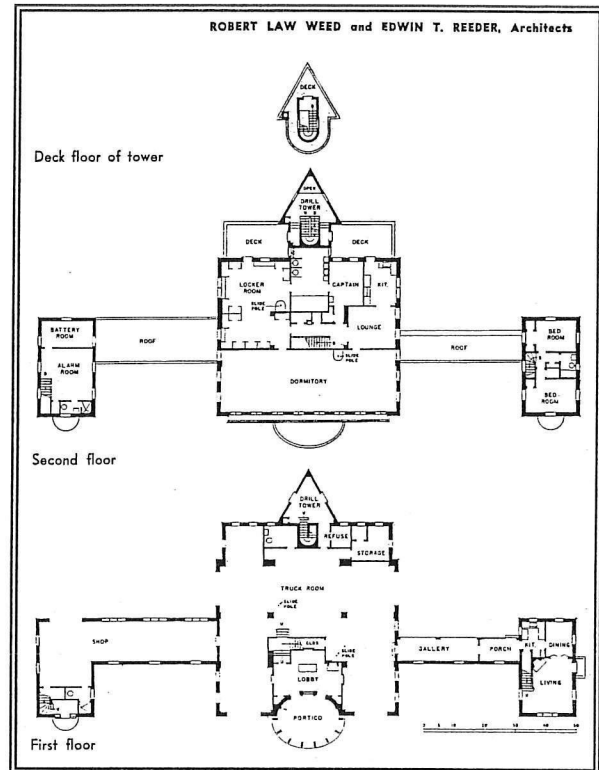


Figure 5 Original 1939 floor plan of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station.

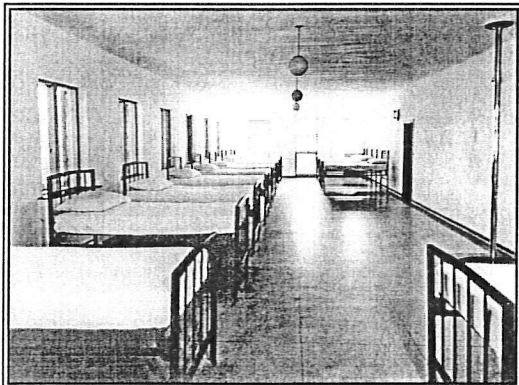


Figure 6 Circa 1939 interior photograph of the fire station's dormitory.

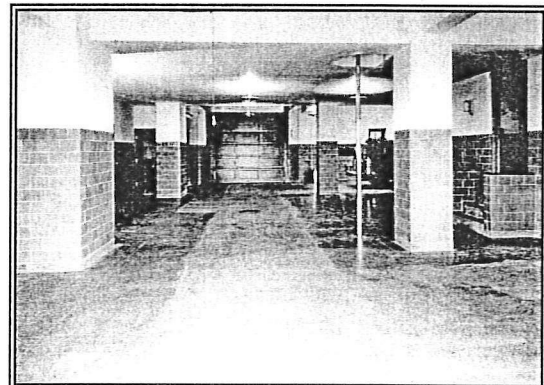


Figure 7 Circa 1939 photograph of the fire station's truck room.

³ "New Multi-Use Fire Station at Miami Beach," *Architectural Record*, p. 44-48, April 1940.

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IX. ARCHITECTURAL BACKGROUND

Designed by architects Robert Law Weed and Edwin T. Reeder, the central block and tower of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station embody characteristics of both the Streamline Moderne style of architecture and evolving International style school of design, while the palladian flanking structures are highly simplistic and evocative of a Vernacular style. Architectural features of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station which are typical of the Streamline Moderne style and evolving International style include a strong horizontal design emphasis, a central tower with rounded elements and glass block details, a flat roof with shallow coping, a continuous curved eyebrow, smooth wall surfaces, and a long ribbon of enframed louvered masonry openings; characteristics of the Vernacular style as evidenced in the flanking wings include wood shutters, brickwork, and simple block massing. Of special note is the diamond shaped window on the northern wing's front elevation

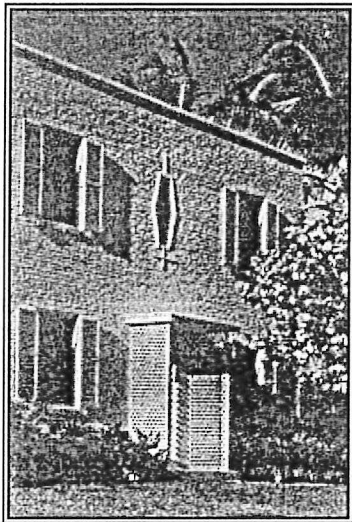


Figure 9 Note the unique diamond shaped window in the north wing's private residence for the fire chief in this 1940 photograph.

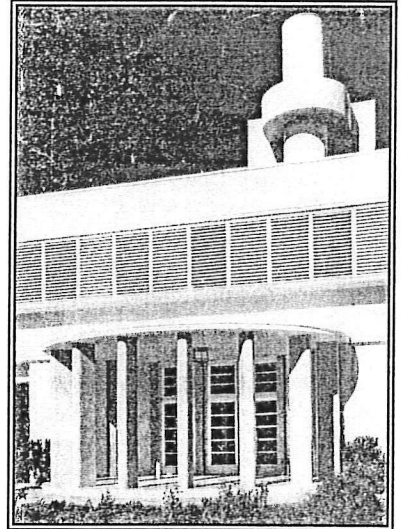


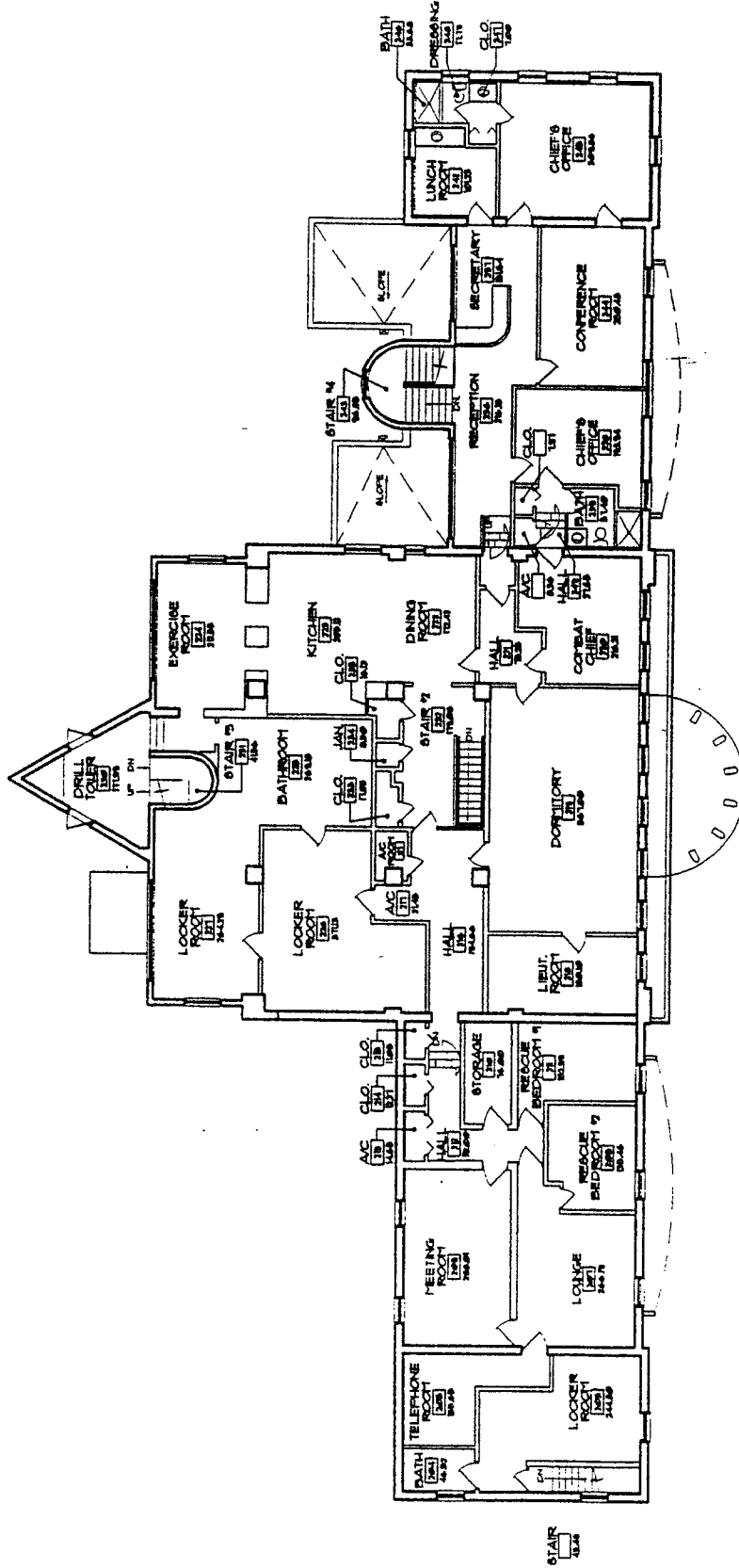
Figure 8 A 1941 photograph of the fire station's classical central entrance with columns.

which distinguishes its original use as the private residence for the fire chief.

The Dade Boulevard Fire Station is representative of the evolutionary transition from an early architectural style to a new architectural style on the Beach. While the cutting edge Streamline Moderne influence in the design of the fire station creates a strong presence on the street, the characteristics of the Vernacular style in the structure enable it to comfortably fit into the context of the surrounding low-scale residential neighborhood.

The fire station maintains much of its original architectural integrity even though it has been altered over the years (refer to **Sheets A2.01** and **A2.02** for floor plans showing the current existing conditions).

GROSS S.F. LESS VERT. S.F. REMAINING
 PENETRATIONS
 SECOND FLOOR 7,386.51 -218.52 7,167.99



1 SECOND LEVEL OVERALL - EXISTING
 SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

STA
 Robert L. Little
 Partnership Inc.
 1111 N. W. 11th St.
 Miami, FL 33136
 (305) 571-1111

Miami Beach Fire Station No. 2
 451 N. Beach Blvd.
 Miami Beach, Florida

FIRE
 STATION
 FLOOR PLAN
 2nd LEVEL

STANDARD/ALPHA 316
 1000
 A2.02

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In the early 1970's, two (2) small roof decks flanking the drill tower were enclosed with concrete block and stucco. In the early to mid 1980's, the classical central front entrance with columns was enclosed with glass, and two (2), two-story infill additions were constructed between the central block/drill tower and flanking wings.⁴ Restoration and appropriate renovation could be successfully completed by careful analysis of original architectural plans and available high-quality historical photographs. Despite alterations to this building, it continues to be representative of the evolution of the architectural and cultural history of Miami Beach.



Figure 10 This 1999 photograph shows the current existing condition of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station.

In addition to the original 1939 structure on the site, a detached two-story structure is located at the southwestern corner of the property. It was constructed in 1984 as a maintenance and training facility for the Fire Department. Although the detached structure is compatible in scale, it is more utilitarian in nature and does not possess any significant architectural characteristics. Therefore, staff believes it is a noncontributing structure on the site.

⁴ City of Miami Beach, Florida, Building Department. Building Permit Card No. 32: 2300 Pinetree Drive.

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Robert Law Weed (1897-1961) was the architect of the "Florida Tropical Home" for the 1933 U.S. World's Fair, "A Century of Progress," in Chicago, Illinois. Based in Miami, Weed began his career as an architect of extravagant Florida homes, but he eventually built his reputation on stripped Neoclassical, International style, and Streamline Moderne structures. Notable architectural works among his stellar career include Miami Shores Elementary School (1930), the Royal Palm Club (1937), numerous buildings at the University of Miami, a residential aviation community near Miami's airport (1947), the Paramount Theater in Miami, and the Administration and Terminal Building at the Miami International Airport. His commissions in Miami Beach include the South Florida Art Center (originally known as Burdine's Department Store)(800 Lincoln Road) in 1935, Fire Station #4 (6860 Indian Creek Drive) in 1937, the current Burdine's Department Store (1675 Meridian Avenue) in 1937, the Beach Theater (west end interior of 420 Lincoln Road) in 1940, and the Jorge B. Sanchez House (1700 Michigan Avenue) in 1948. Weed's Florida Tropical Home is probably Florida's most renowned world's fair submission. It was a modest reinterpretation of Europe's International style villa, equipped with eyebrows, large windows, rooftop decks, and a double-height living room suitable to Florida's tropical climate.⁵



Figure 11 Prior to designing the Dade Boulevard Fire Station in 1939, Robert Law Weed and Edwin T. Reeder designed Fire Station #4 (6860 Indian Creek Drive) in 1937.

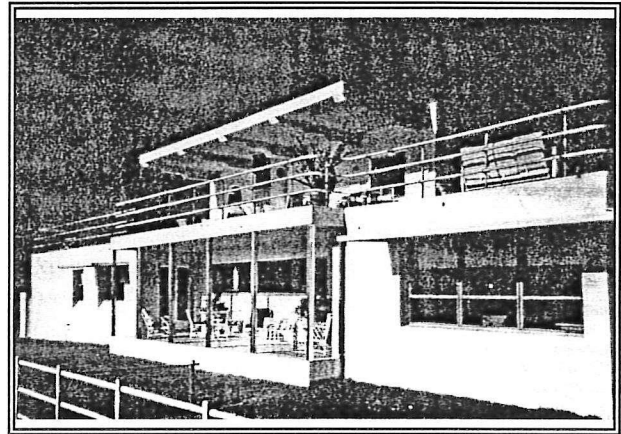


Figure 12 Florida's most renowned world's fair submission was probably Robert Law Weed's "Florida Tropical Home" for the 1933 U.S. World's Fair in Chicago, Illinois.

⁵ Joel M. Hoffman, "From Augustine to Tangerine: Florida at the U.S. World's Fairs," The Wolfsonian/Florida International University Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts, Volume 23, p. 64-66, 1998.

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After attending the Carnegie Institute of Technology, Weed studied under Florida architect Richard Kiehnel from 1921 until 1922. Kiehnel and his partner Elliot are recognized for designing the Carlyle Hotel (1250 Ocean Drive) in 1939 and the Shorecrest Hotel (1535 Collins Avenue) in 1940. Weed began to practice architecture in Florida in 1923. He temporarily gave up his professional pursuit when he served his country in World War I (1917-1919) and World War II (1942-1945) as a planner who provided architectural expertise to the Army Air Force. During his architectural practice in Miami, Weed was highly involved with many civic affairs; he served as chairman of the Greater Miami Emergency Housing Executive Committee after World War II, chairman of the Committee for Development of Airport Facilities (1946-1947), member of the City of Miami Board of Appeals (1950-1951), and member of the Dade County Planning Board (1935-1937). He also served on numerous juries for architectural awards and participated in advisory committees for the discussion of problems relative to architecture and the building industry. Weed's architectural work was published in many national magazines which include Architectural Forum, Architectural Record, Progressive Architecture, Life, and the Saturday Evening Post.⁶

X. PLANNING CONTEXT

Cities evolve and change over time due to an array of circumstances. Historic site designation will aid in the achievement of preserving the character and architectural integrity of historic buildings for future generations, and it will help to protect historic buildings, streetscape, and open space from inappropriate or undesirable alterations. The review and approval of projects for historic sites under the City's Design Guidelines and the Historic Preservation Ordinance will ensure smart development which is sensitive to the unique aesthetic character of the sites and respectful of their early origins. Miami Beach has one of the finest and most progressive historic preservation ordinances in the nation. It was custom designed to address the special needs of a rapidly redeveloping historic seaside resort community with a view toward wise management of historic resources in tandem with well controlled appropriate new development.

⁶ American Institute of Architects, Miami Chapter, Office Records. Biographical Statistics of Robert Law Weed, 1954.

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XI. PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Criteria for Designation:** The Planning Department finds the Dade Boulevard Fire Station to be in compliance with the Criteria for Designation listed in Section 118-592 in the Land Development Regulations of the City Code.
2. **Site Boundaries:** At its July 13, 1999, meeting, the Historic Preservation Board reviewed the preliminary evaluation report and adopted the site boundary recommendations of the Planning Department (which exclude the City of Miami Beach Public Works Yard) for the proposed designation of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station, as indicated in **Section IV, General Description of Boundaries**.

At its September 9, 1999, meeting, the Historic Preservation Board unanimously approved a motion (7 to 0; 1 absence, 1 vacancy) to recommend approval of the designation of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station as an historic site in accordance with staff recommendations, as reflected in this designation report.

On September 28, 1999, the Planning Board unanimously approved a motion (7 to 0) to recommend approval of the designation of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station as an historic site in accordance with staff recommendations, as reflected in this designation report.

On October 20, 1999, the City Commission unanimously approved the designation (7 to 0) of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station as a local historic site.

3. **Areas Subject to Review:** The Planning Department recommends that the areas subject to review shall include all exterior building elevations, public interior spaces, and site and landscape features included within the proposed site boundaries of the Dade Boulevard Fire Station.
4. **Review Guidelines:** The Planning Department recommends that a decision on an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be based upon compatibility of the physical alteration or improvement with surrounding properties and where deemed applicable in substantial compliance with the following:

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- a. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, as revised from time to time;
- b. Other guidelines/policies/plans adopted or approved by resolution or ordinance by the City Commission;
- c. All additional criteria as listed under Section 118-564 (b) in the Land Development Regulations of the City Code;
- d. City of Miami Beach Design Guidelines as adopted by the Joint Design Review/Historic Preservation Board on October 12, 1993, amended June 7, 1994, as may be revised from time to time.

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XII. FIGURE INDEX

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