

## SECTION 2.1: ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

### BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CITY OF MIAMI

Before the first European settlers set foot in South Florida; the Tequesta people inhabited this land. The Tequesta's alongside other natives reached the astonishing number of 100,000 in population. Together they developed a complex society of living in communities that were planned and executed by early construction projects. The Tequesta people left behind a heritage in archaeological resources including the Miami Circle, Miami River Rapids, and the North Bank of the Miami River which all add greatly to the remarkable cultural patrimony of Miami.

The first permanent European settlers arrived to South Florida in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Two families with Bahamian roots, received land grants from the Spanish Government when they owned Florida. These settlers were joined by Bahamian immigrants looking for employment, the Seminole Indians, and runaway slaves. They ferociously disputed the non-native absorption of Seminole lands in three Seminole Wars (1817-1818, 1835-1842, and 1855-1858). Few United States soldiers stayed after the end of the third and last Seminole War. It wasn't until 1846 when South Florida was first surveyed the area flourished once the United States implemented the "Homestead Act" in 1862 which granted 160 acres of land to men willing to live on the land for at least five years. Important early residents included William Brickell and Julia Tuttle who brought the early Spanish grants. Together they convinced Henry Flagler to expand his rail line south to Miami.

With the railroad, progress came to Miami and the first building boom occurred in 1900s to 1930s. Many of Downtown's early high-rises such as the Seybold (1921-1925), the Freedom Tower (1925), the Huntington (1926), the Security Building (1926), the Olympia Theater (1925), and the Dade County Courthouse (1929), were constructed in this time period. The City had gone through periods of growth, experiencing multiple periods of booms and busts, but did not suffer as much as the rest of the country during the Great Depression years. Many say that the strong appeal of this tourist destination as well as the legal and illegal gambling activities were the reason for Miami's nonstop prosperity. World War II also brought growth to the City and many military men and women settled within the Miami-Dade County after the war ended. Yet another boom ensued when Fidel Castro and his regime took over Cuba with the arrival of an extraordinary 125,000 refugees in Miami into the City's population within only a period of four months. These Cuban refugees made Miami their home and have played an important role in the development of the City ever since.

Not always glamorous, Miami experienced dark days in the 1980s and 1990s including race riots, drug wars, and Hurricane Andrew all of which caused distress within the region. Today Miami is considered an international center of culture, finance, and recreation which attracts people from all over the world.

Protecting this vibrant history and culture, the City of Miami's Historic and Environmental Review Board has designated 11 historic districts, including over 1600 structures, and currently has over 150 individually listed historic resources and sites.

Edited by Arva Moore Parks



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An Architectural Style is characterized by the features which make a building or structure notable and historically identifiable. A style may include such elements as form, method of construction, building materials, and regional character. Miami has a broad collection of architectural styles. The ones most commonly found within the City are listed below.



**2.1 Palm Cottage (Flagler Worker's House), 60 SE 4 Street, Built 1897-1899**

### **FRAME VERNACULAR** (Late 19<sup>th</sup>, Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century)

Frame Vernacular refers to a simple wood frame building, which is the product of the builder's construction experience, available resources at the time, and the surrounding environment. These structures are typically rectangular, of balloon frame construction, and rest on piers. They are one or two stories in height, with one-story front porches, and gabled or hipped roofs with overhanging eaves. Horizontal weatherboard and drop siding are the most common exterior wall materials. Some early buildings feature vertical board and batten siding or wood shingles, while asbestos shingles are common to post-1930s construction. Wood double-hung sash windows are typical. Ornamentation is sparse, but may include shingles, corner boards, porch columns, brackets, rafter tails, vents in the gable ends, and oolitic limestone detailing.

### **BAHAMIAN OR CONCH** (Late 19<sup>th</sup>, Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century)

Found mostly within Overtown and along Charles Avenue in Coconut Grove, this vernacular architecture was typically the work of shipbuilder-turned-carpenters from the Bahamas and Key West. These "conch" houses feature a one-and-one-half or two-story rectangular mass, with broad gabled or low, hipped roofs. The construction was usually balloon frame, rather than the original cross-braced system using heavy timbers based on shipbuilding techniques. Foundations are raised off the ground and set on wood posts or masonry piers, allowing air circulation underneath the house. Exterior surfaces are of horizontal weather boards and windows are double-hung sash type. The most prominent feature of these buildings is the balustrade front porch, sometimes wrapping around the sides on both stories.



**2.2 Stirrup House, 3242 Charles Avenue, Built 1897**

*Style definitions provided by Janus Research, Historic Preservation Consultant for the development of <http://www.historicpreservationmiami.com/>*

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**2.3 Waddell Building, 24 N Miami Avenue, Built 1916**

### **VERNACULAR COMMERCIAL** (Late 19<sup>th</sup>, Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century)

These buildings are recognized by their form and not by their architectural features although they may have some ornamentations and detailing taken from other architectural styles, such as Italianate or Classical.

Main Streets were developed in response to the community's need for a concentrated focus of public buildings and Vernacular Commercial buildings are typical of earlier commercial areas. Side elevations usually abut one to another providing a continuous streetscape and are usually in relative scale to adjacent commercial buildings. Their facades are typically composed of three parts: storefront, upper stories, and cornice or parapet. Architectural details feature prism glass in the transoms above storefronts, cast iron supports, and pressed metal cornices.



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2.4 Residence in the Palm Grove Historic District, 421 NE 70 Street, Built 1929

### **BUNGALOW** (Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century)

Bungalows were one of the most popular residential styles in the nation during the first three decades of the twentieth century. These modest, comfortable houses were built primarily from mail-order house plans. South Florida bungalows are often one or one-and-one-half story wood frame houses with porch railing walls and oolitic limestone chimneys. Bungalows suit the local climate, with broadly pitched gable roofs and wide, overhanging eaves, deep porches, large sash windows, and dormer windows or louvered attic vents. Horizontal weatherboards and wood shingles are the most common exterior surfacing materials. Porch supports are often tapered masonry piers topped by wood posts. The most commonly found type of bungalow in Miami has a gable roof, its ridge parallel to the street, and an off-center gabled front porch.

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2.5 J. Jacob Hubbard House, 138 NW 16 Ave, Built c. 1921

### **BELVEDERE BUNGALOW** (Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century)

The Belvedere Bungalow style includes intersecting gabled roof planes, wide overhanging eaves, exposed rafter ends, beams, decorative timbers, wood shingle cladding, casement windows with Prairie style light configurations, and a second-story belvedere, or windowed top of the structure.

The prominent front porch, which usually extends across the façade features flared oolitic limestone piers topped with concrete caps and short wood post supports.



2.6 Mission Style House in Morningside, 549 NE 59 Street, Built 1925

### **MISSION** (Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century)

The simple Mission-style buildings were inspired by the early Spanish mission churches in California. Exterior walls are usually covered with stucco, although oolitic limestone is also used. The most distinctive features of the style are tiled roofs and arches. Roofs are commonly low in pitch or flat, featuring curvilinear parapets or pent roof sections. The same parapet lines are often repeated over the front porch. Parapets may be topped with simple stucco molding, or with a single row of sloping flat or s-shaped clay tiles with scuppers, to drain rainwater. Windows may be single-hung or casement type. Arches and curved lines are also typical on openings throughout the façade. The front porch may extend over the carport or garage entrance to one side of the main building mass. Applied decoration is kept to a minimum.



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2.7 Dr. William Chapman House, 1376 NW 6 Avenue, Built 1923

### MASONRY VERNACULAR (Late 19<sup>th</sup>, Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century)

Three main types of masonry construction date to the early days of Miami-Dade County: hollow clay tile, concrete block, and oolitic limestone. Hollow clay tile, lighter than concrete block, was used up to the 1920s in large construction projects. Concrete blocks were easily manufactured from local materials. Rusticated concrete blocks, molded to resemble rough-cut stone, were popular prior to 1920 and are still seen in Little Havana. Oolitic limestone is the most typical masonry material in South Florida and is unique to the area. Quarried in southern Miami-Dade County since the mid-nineteenth century, it consists of small rock particles and is used in rubble form. Coral-like keystone from the Florida Keys was also popular during the 1930s and 1940s. Commercial buildings in the Masonry Vernacular style are generally two stories in height, feature simple rectilinear plans, parapets and arcades.



2.8 Coconut Grove Playhouse, 3508 Main Hwy., Built 1926

### MEDITERRANEAN (Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century)

The Mediterranean Style defined Miami during the Boom of the 1920s. The style reflects the architectural influences of the Mediterranean coast: Italian, Byzantine, Moorish themes from southern Spain and France. Applied Spanish Baroque decoration is generously used around openings, balconies, and cornices. Parapets, twisted columns, pediments, and other classical details also are frequently used. Arches are often featured. The most common materials are stucco walls, red tile roofs, wrought iron grilles and railings, wood brackets and balconies, and oolitic limestone, ceramic tile and terracotta for ornament. Patios, courtyards, balconies, and loggias replace the front porch. Fenestration is usually the casement type.

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2.9 George E. Nolan House, 1548 Brickell Avenue, Built 1925

### NEO-CLASSICAL (Late 19<sup>th</sup>, Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century)

The Neo-Classical style is an eclectic revival of Georgian, Adam, early Classical Revival, and Greek Revival architectural styles. The style is based mostly on the Greek, rather than Roman, architectural orders. Because of this, windows and doorways are commonly spanned by lintels rather than by arches. Another hallmark of the Neo-Classical style is a full-height entry porch on the principal facade supported by classical columns in the Ionic or Corinthian orders. The arrangement of windows is commonly symmetrical about a central door. Other features of the style may include monumental proportions, large (sometimes triple-hung) sash windows, pilasters, attic stories or parapets, and simple rooflines.

### ART DECO (Early to Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century)

The Art Deco style first arrived in America after the Paris Exposition of 1925, where it was promoted as a fusion of the decorative arts and industry and technology. Art Deco was a relaxed precursor of the International style. The style features applied decoration based on organic forms and geometric patterns, executed in the latest construction materials and methods. Forms are angular, and facades often stepped back, especially in taller buildings. Decorative elements range from industrial to Egyptian, Mayan, and American Indian themes. Building forms and decoration generally have a vertical orientation. In South Florida, nautical and tropical motifs, such as palm trees, flamingos, pelicans, the moon, and the ocean, are reflected in bas-relief stucco panels, etched glass, and murals. The related "Moderne" style evolved from Art Deco.



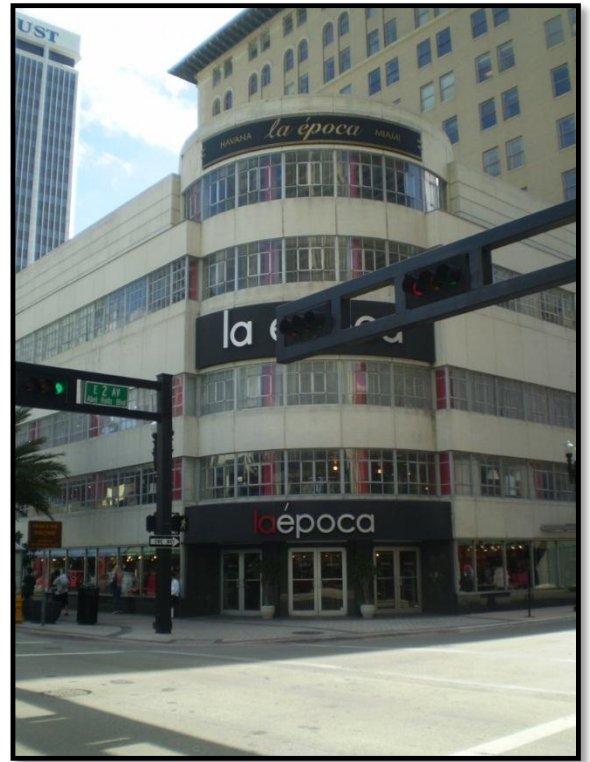
2.10 Shrine Building, 1401 Biscayne Blvd, Built 1930



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### STREAMLINE AND DEPRESSION MODERNE (Early to Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century)

Streamline Moderne, which depicted the laws of aerodynamics in architecture, reflected the growth of speed and travel in the 1930s. Building forms evoke automobiles, trains, ocean liners, and airplanes. Massing reflects abstract, simplified forms with rounded corners devoid of much applied decoration. Horizontal compositions, bands of windows, racing stripes, and flat roofs are featured, as well as new materials such as vitrolite, glass block, chrome, stainless steel, terrazzo, and neon. Features of these buildings typical to the Miami area are "eyebrow" ledges over the windows, front porches, nautical motifs like porthole windows, and bas-relief panels depicting tropical scenes. Streamline Moderne buildings commissioned by the Public Works Administration (Depression Moderne) reflect a greater use of conservative and classical elements.



2.11 Walgreens Drugstore, 200 E. Flagler, Built 1936



2.13 Alfred I. Dupont Building, 169 E. Flagler, Built 1939

### DEPRESSION MODERNE (Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century)

In the midst of the Great Depression the United States government started a series of programs aimed at giving jobs to the nation's thousands of unemployed. The Public Works Administration (P.W.A.) commissioned the construction of new roads, government buildings, and other public improvements. The Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.) created work for artists, commissioning murals, sculptures and other embellishments for public buildings. The architecture these programs produced has the distinctive traits of the Streamline Moderne, but there is a return to more conservative, traditional vocabulary, that is befitting of the governmental nature of these works creating the Depression Moderne style. Classical elements are thus reintroduced, replacing the more playful forms and details of earlier years with decoration used primarily as a vehicle for political and social commentary. This style became influential and extended beyond government projects, with many fine examples of Depression Moderne also built by the private sector.



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**2.14 The Vagabond Motel, 7301 Biscayne Boulevard, Built 1953**

### MIAMI MODERN (MIMO) (Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century)

The prosperity of post-World War II America is reflected in the inventive designs of the Miami Modern style. The Miami Modern style evolved from Art Deco and Streamline Moderne designs, reflecting greater modern functional simplicity. Although the style was used on various types of buildings, it is typified by futuristic-looking hotels and motels. Characteristics include the use of geometric patterns, kidney and oval shapes, curves, stylized sculpture, cast concrete decorative panels and stonework depicting marine and nautical themes, particularly at the entrances. Overhanging roof plates and projecting floor slabs with paired or clustered supporting pipe columns, as well as open-air verandas and symmetrical staircases are also typical design features.

### ARCHITECTURAL FEATURE

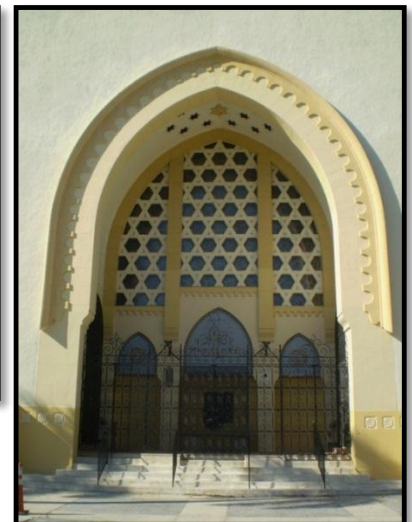
An architectural feature is any distinct or outstanding component or characteristic of a building that defines its style. A combination of elements such as windows, doors, parapets, chimneys, roofs, moldings, materials, colors, craftsmanship, design, porches, balconies, wall openings, and ornamentations will distinguish one style from another.



**2.15 Olympia Theater**



**2.16 Vizcaya**



**2.17 Temple Israel**