
THE BARNACLE

3485 MAIN HIGHWAY

Designation Report



City of Miami

REPORT OF THE CITY OF MIAMI
PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT
TO THE HISTORIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION BOARD
ON THE POTENTIAL DESIGNATION OF
THE BARNACLE
3485 MAIN HIGHWAY
AS A HERITAGE CONSERVATION ZONING DISTRICT

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Accepted by Charles Edwin Chase 09/28/82
Chairman

Designated by Miami City Commission
Ordinance No. 9564
Date 01/13/83

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Historic Name:

The Barnacle

Current Name:

The Barnacle State Historic Site

Location:

3485 Main Highway
Main, Florida

Present Owner:

Department of Natural Resources
Division of Recreation and Parks
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32303

Present Use:

Museum

Zoning District:

R-1B

HC Zoning Overlay District:

HC-1

Boundary Description:

Lot 8 lying southeast of County Road of the plat of MUNROE ET AL PLAT, as recorded in Deed Book D at Page 253, of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida.

HC Zoning Classification:

Historic Site

Dade County Historic Survey Rating:

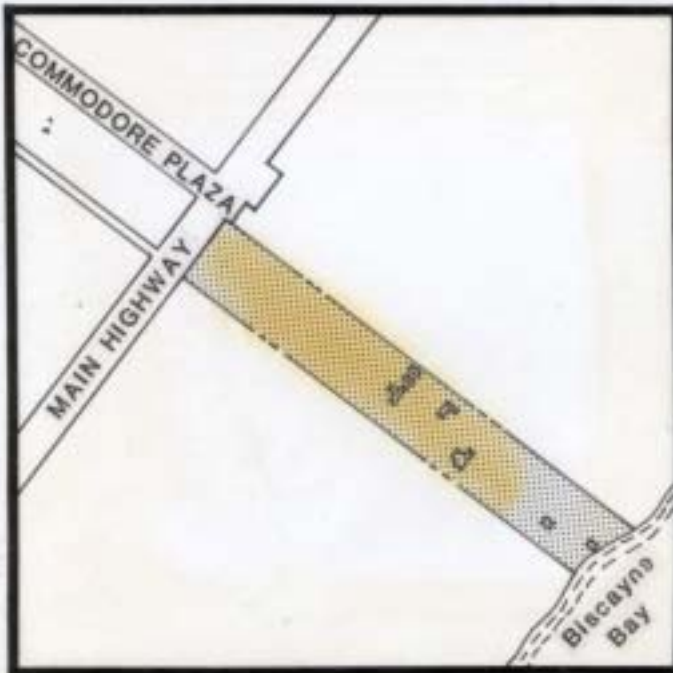
Architectural Significance - 1
Historical Significance - 1
Contextural Significance - 1

THE BARNACLE

3485 MAIN HIGHWAY



location



site plan

II. SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Significance:

The Barnacle is significant for its association with Ralph Middleton Munroe, one of Coconut Grove's earliest pioneers, and as a reflection of this early era of Coconut Grove's history. The building is an outstanding example of vernacular architecture in Dade County at the turn of the century and is particularly noteworthy for its adaptability to the South Florida environment.

Ralph Munroe first visited South Florida in 1877 and returned many times before finally deciding to settle permanently in 1889. Munroe helped to found the community of Coconut Grove and spent the rest of his life watching over and contributing to its growth and development. In addition to his role as one of Coconut Grove's pioneers, Munroe was also nationally recognized as a designer of shallow draft boats that could navigate the shoals, bars, and reefs along Florida's coast. He was also a noted environmentalist, naturalist and photographer.

As one of the oldest structures to survive in Coconut Grove, The Barnacle reflects the early era in the community's development. It is one of the most important structures associated with the history of Coconut Grove. The Barnacle is an outstanding example of the type of indigenous architecture constructed in Dade County during this early period of development. The building reflects Munroe's strong ideas of adapting his home to the South Florida environment. This is particularly evident in the building's wide veranda, originally built on three sides of the house, and in the interior layout which was designed to provide natural ventilation.

Relationship to Criteria for Designation:

The Barnacle is eligible for designation under the following criteria:

1. Is associated in a significant way with the life of a person important in the past.

The Barnacle is the most important structure associated with Ralph Middleton Munroe, one of Coconut Grove's earliest pioneers. Munroe lived in the house from the time of its construction in 1891 until his death in 1933.

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

The Barnacle is one of the oldest structures to survive in Coconut Grove and reflects the pioneer era and subsequent development of this community.

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

The Barnacle is an outstanding example of vernacular architecture in Dade County at the turn of the century. It is particularly noteworthy for its details, use of materials, and construction methods.

4. Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship of outstanding quality or which represent a significant innovation or adaptation to the South Florida environment.

The Barnacle is particularly noteworthy for its craftsmanship and detailing, embodied in such features as its broad, hipped roof and wide porches. Built high above the ground, with wide, encircling verandas and an interior layout designed to provide natural ventilation, The Barnacle is indigenously designed for the South Florida climate and site.

III. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Date of Erection:

1891

Architect:

The Barnacle was designed by Ralph Middleton Munroe.

Builder/Contractor:

The Barnacle was built by C.J. Peacock, Joe Frow, and Ben Newbold.

Historical Context:

Ralph Middleton Munroe was born in New York in 1851. Although he fell in love with Biscayne Bay on his first visit to South Florida in 1877, he returned to New York where he married and started to raise a family. Munroe returned to Florida in 1881, however, in a futile attempt to restore the health of his wife, who had contracted tuberculosis. Eva Munroe died in 1882.

Munroe encouraged Charles and Isabella Peacock to build the first hotel on the South Florida mainland, and it was around this hotel that Coconut Grove began to develop. Munroe settled permanently in Coconut Grove in 1889 and built The Barnacle in 1891.

Munroe had chosen Coconut Grove as his home because of what it was, not for what it would be. His views on protecting and living in harmony with the area's unique environment often pitted him against progress, and he spent his entire life trying to retain the beauty of the land and the bay as he had found them.

Munroe lived in The Barnacle until his death in 1933 and altered and added to the house to accommodate his growing family. The Barnacle remained in the Munroe family until 1972, when the State of Florida acquired the property.

IV. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Description of Building:

The Barnacle is a two story structure featuring a two tier veranda. This square shaped building, with five bays across the east (front) façade, is topped with a hipped roof covered with corrugated clay tiles. The building is of wood frame construction and is presently covered with stucco.

The main entrance is located in the center bay of the east façade. The majority of windows are one over one or two over two double hung sash or wooden casements.

At the time of its construction in 1891, The Barnacle was a one story structure built approximately six feet above grade. The building was covered with horizontal weatherboards and featured a one story veranda on three facades. Natural ventilation of the interior was achieved by a central room open to the roof.

The configuration of the house greatly changed in 1908, when the entire building was jacked up and a new first story installed underneath. This new first story was constructed of molded, faceted, concrete blocks. A new library wing was added on the northeast corner of the building several years later.

Other major alterations to the building included the application of a rough-trowled stucco finish to the exterior in 1928 and the enclosure of the verandas on the north and south facades.

These alterations are evidence of the history and development of the building and reflect the adaptation of the residence to meet the needs of a growing family. These changes have acquired significance in their own right and contribute to the significance of the entire structure.

Description of Site:

The Barnacle is located on a five-acre lot and sits high on a ridge overlooking Biscayne Bay. The area between the house and the bay is a deep grassy lawn, while the portion to the west, or rear, of the house preserves portions of the original hammock.

Other significant structures on the property include the Boat House, rebuilt after the 1926 hurricane, and a garage apartment. An open structure sheltering the ketch Micco and a reconstructed pioneer cabin are also located on the property.

Also included on the property is an archeological site, designated by Dade County as Site 8Da10. This midden area is more fully described in the Dade County Historic Survey Archeological Site Inventory Form.



The Barnacle
3485 Main Highway
Southeast (front) façade
1982



The Barnacle
3485 Main Highway
Southeast (front) façade
c. 1908
(Historical Museum of South Florida)



The Barnacle
3485 Main Highway
Southeast (front) façade
c. 1892
(Historical Museum of South Florida)

V. PLANNING CONTEXT

Present Trends and Conditions:

The Barnacle was acquired by the State of Florida in 1973 as a State Historic Site. The building has been fully restored and is currently operated and maintained by the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Recreation and Parks. The property is open to the public for guided tours only, scheduled four times per day Wednesday through Sunday.

Conservation Objectives:

The Barnacle is well protected and maintained by the Florida Department of Natural Resources. In the future, operational funding must be provided by the State to maintain at least the current level of service. Improvements should be made in the public accessibility of the site through advertising and greater frequency of tours.

Current zoning regulations should be strictly enforced to prevent additional visual encroachment from adjacent development.

Continued preservation of the interior spaces at The Barnacle is considered as important as preservation of the exterior. Despite the significance of the interior, however, regulation of this space is not recommended at this time because of the expertise of the professional staff at the Department of Natural Resources. If such staff should cease to exist, designation of interior spaces may be recommended at that time.

Conservation objectives can best be achieved by maintaining the present zoning of the property. An HC-1 zoning overlay district will maintain the current zoning, requiring only the review of physical changes to the property.

VI. HC ZONING ELEMENTS

Boundaries:

The boundaries of the HC zoning district have been drawn to include the entire tract of land owned by the State of Florida.

Major Exterior Surfaces Subject to Review:

All four facades of The Barnacle and all surfaces of all other existing improvements on the site shall be considered major exterior surfaces subject to review.

Major Landscape Features Subject to Review:

The major landscape features subject to review shall include all existing landscape features on the site.

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dade County, Florida. Community and Economic Development, Historic Preservation Division. Dade County Historic Survey, Site Inventory File for 3485 Main Highway

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Parks, Arva Moore. "The Commodore." Update, June 1977, pp. 2-3.

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places. Nomination Form for The Barnacle.