

FINAL

October 04, 2011

Christ Episcopal Church

Coconut Grove, Florida

Designation Report

"The Old Pink Church"

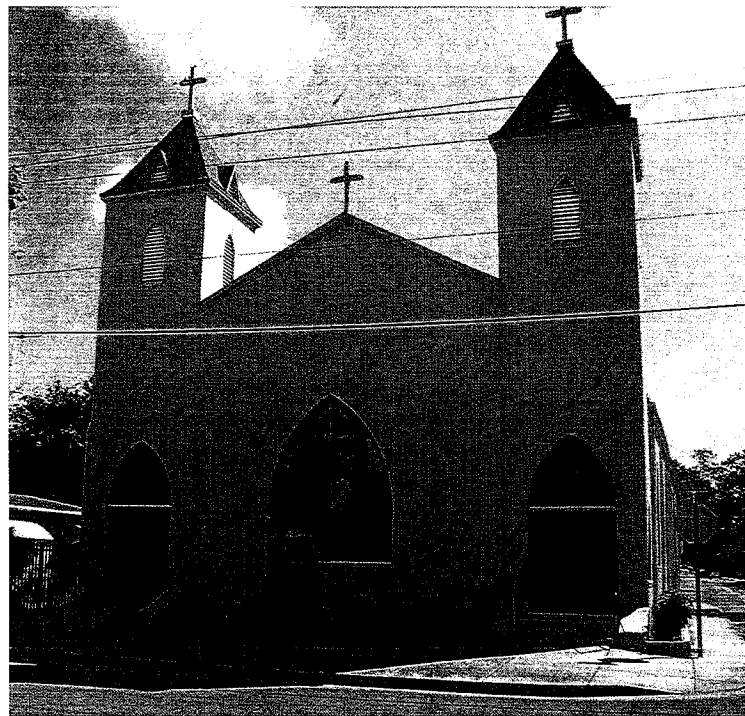


Figure 1: Front Elevation of Christ Episcopal Church

Prepared By:
Sebastian Eilert, AIA

AR 92953
ID 5054



Sebastian Eilert Architecture

SUSTAINABLE
ARCHITECTURE
AND CONSULTING

9840 SW 85 ST
Miami, Florida 33173
T:(786) 556 - 3118
sebastian@sebastianeilert.com

www.sebastianeilert.com



Contents

- I. Preface
- II. General Information
- III. Significance
- IV. Description
- V. Designation
- VI. Summary

I. Preface

This designation report is submitted by the Vestry, The Gala Committee, Leona Cooper-Baker and Thelma A. Gibson on behalf of Christ Episcopal Church to the Historic and Environmental Preservation Board of the City of Miami to consider the matter of designating the Christ Episcopal Church and its environs as a historic structure. In accordance with the intent and purpose of the Miami City Code Chapter 23, the designation of the Christ Episcopal Church will "preserve and protect the heritage of the city through the identification, evaluation, rehabilitation, adaptive use, restoration and public awareness of Miami's historic (and) architectural...resources."

(Sec. 23-1)

II. General Information

Name of Resource or Historic Name:

Christ Episcopal Church

Present Owner:

Christ Episcopal Church, Inc

Address

3481 Hibiscus Street, Miami, FL 33133-5717

Tax Folio Number (Per Property Appraiser):

01-4121-007-4760

Boundary Description:

From homestead PB b-106 lot 35 BLK 28 lot size 50.000 x 100 74r 113121

Present Use:

Church-Assembly, The structure is in full use by the community and as an assembly hall.

Zoning Classification:

T3-R Single Family Residential



Figure 2: Site Location

Source: Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser, 2011

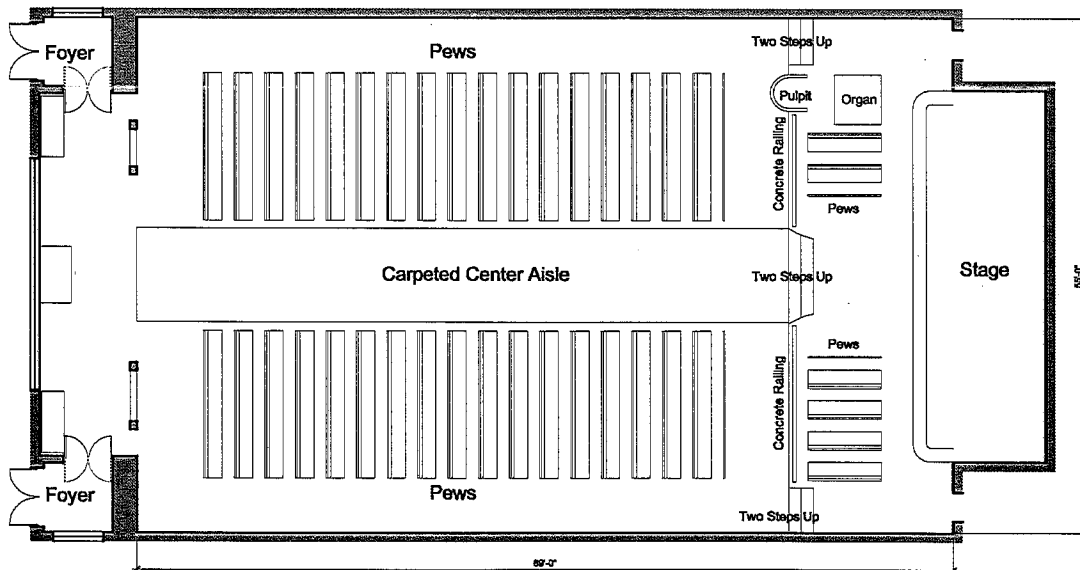


Figure 3: Floor Plan of Christ Church

III. Significance

Christ Episcopal Church is and has been a significant part of the Coconut Grove community as a historical social and cultural center for the neighborhood, as well as, an architecturally significant example of Bahamian immigrant craftsmanship, innovation and adaptation to their South Florida environment.

The founding members were a group of hard working West Indian immigrant churchmen who were seeking a place to worship and to be part of the Christian community in what was the colored section of Coconut Grove in the early 20th century. Coconut Grove is one of the oldest settlements in South Florida founded before the City of Miami. The Village West Grove is full of Bahamian history and culture reflecting these early settlers. The Church was founded in 1901 with the first meeting of the church's founders held at the home of David and Rebecca Clark on Charles Avenue on March 24, 1901. Mr. David Clark, Sr. was appointed lay-reader and conducted the evening services for many years. Most of the founding members came from meager hard working beginnings. Through their faith and commitment they were able to start Christ Episcopal Church and a new beginning.

Founding members (1901):

- Catherine Anderson
- Rebecca Clarke
- David Clarke, Sr.
- Lula Reddick
- Margaret Roberts
- Azariah Sawyer
- Charlotte Jane Stirrup
- E.W.F. Stirrup, Sr.

Some prominent founding members were:

- Mr. E.W.F. Stirrup; a successful Coconut Grove land-owner and most prominent founding member. An elementary school was named after him and the commentary in Coconut Grove was named in memory of his wife, showing the importance of his influence beyond the founding of Christ Episcopal Church.
- Mrs. Lula Reddick was one of the daughters of Mariah Brown, who was the first Black

Bahamian Pioneer Hostess who worked for Charles and Isabella Peacock. The Peacocks were large land owners in Coconut Grove.

- Mrs. Margaret Roberts was responsible for the delivery of many of the children in Coconut Grove. She was known as “Maggie the Midwife”.

The oldest traceable portion of the current structure can be dated back to 1912, as noted by the inscription on the Southwest corner of the original structure (see figure 4). Additionally, the bells in both bell towers bears the date 1912.

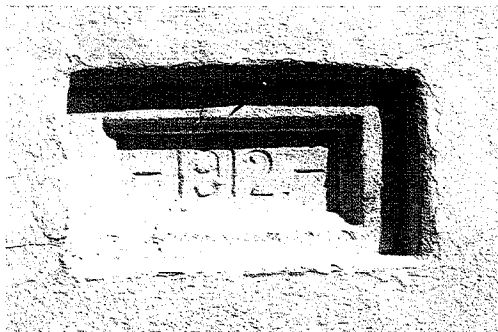


Figure 4: Datum imprint on Southwest Corner Tower

The original wood structure was lost in a fire in the 1920's and the current building was completed in 1930. The Exterior masonry walls feature large windows to allow maximized use of natural light and cross ventilation before air conditioning. An HVAC system was not added until the 1980's and fully respected the internal and external architectural features. Some of the features include a number of locally appropriate features and materials are the large exposed wood trusses, likely to be Dade County Pine, above a large open worship space. The church was designed in a rectilinear shape as an early example of a simple construction method using all local materials.

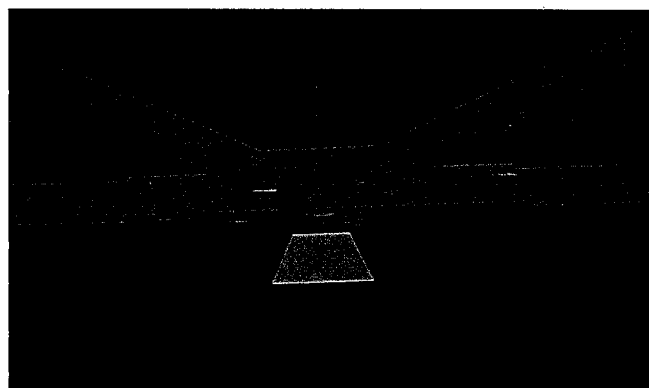


Figure 5 and 6: Interior View and wood truss detail

Christ Episcopal Church has been documented in use by the congregation since March 24, 1901 meets the criteria set forth by the National Register Bulletin of the Department of the Interior for designation within the past fifty years.

Chronological milestones of Historic Events:

- March 24, 1901 - First meeting of the founding families held at Charles Avenue, homestead of David and Rebecca Clark with Rev. G.I. Smith
- December 20, 1901 - Bishop William Gray officially organized the mission congregation know as Christ Episcopal Church
- 1904 - 1906 - Father Fuller and Dwight Cameron
- September 1904 - Bishop Gray celebrates the first service in a wooden edifice constructed on the corner of Hibiscus Street and Williams Avenue
- March 1906 - Rev. H.A. Parris is installed as Vicar
- October 1910- Rev. Charles Percival Jackson serves as Vicar
- 1916 - Father Benjamin Soper becomes part-time priest
- 1919 - Rev. John Samuel Simmons becomes the first black full time resident priest
- 1926 - Church and Parish house are destroyed by hurricane
- 1930 - restoration of church completed
- July 1937 - Rev. Theophilus Boyden becomes second black vicar
- October 1945 - Fr. Theodore Roosevelt Gibson comes to Christ Church
- April 1982 - Rev. Ronald N. Fox serves the church
- 1992 - Rev. Henry Stein serves as Interim Priest
- 1992-1994 - Fr. Bernardo Tomas serves as Interim Priest
- November 1994 - Rev. Bernard M. Griffith is called to Christ Episcopal Church.

Christ Episcopal Church is a unique cultural resource of South Florida. The church and its congregation represent one of the oldest operating assemblies in the City of Miami. The church shows significance as a cultural center for the community as well as an architectural importance for enduring local construction and materials, as well as, regionally appropriate methods and materials, still visible in the exterior and the interior of the church. The church is a great example of simple vernacular building methods.

IV. Description

Architectural history:

The Christ Episcopal Church was originally a wooden structure that was destroyed in the hurricane of 1926. The current building was completed in 1930 integrating some of the remnants from the original wood and stone building including the original footprint. The bell towers bear the date of 1912. Both bell towers were struck by lightning in 1998 and 2000 and were restored to their original form in line with the 1930 construction. The towers have access to the working church bells and show the original brick construction of the building. The style of construction of the church shows the founders Bahamian background as sailors visible along the elevations through raised masonry columns representative of a ship's ribs to hold a wooden vessel in place. Further careful details can be observed through the exterior indicating the attention to detail and simple playfulness of the elevation. There are a number of craftsman details still visible in the structure today such as the inscriptions on the Southwest and Northwest corners (see figure 40 and 41).

The pointed arch windows show influence of Moorish design as well as deep understanding of the local climate by allowing light into the space and creating opportunity for cross ventilation. An influence of other architectural styles can be observed in the peaked twin towers and the pointed shape of the roof. The dual front entrances face Hibiscus Street and are virtually located inside the street as evidence to the original placement of the church as close to the street as possible. The craftsmanship can also be observed on the interior of the church (see figures 5, 6, 15, and 16).

The front doors are detailed in an intricate pattern of steel craftsmanship. The Baptismal Font is a marble statute carved with extraordinary skill and beauty of construction. The main hall features exposed fluted dovetailed trusses where the trusses are anchored to the masonry wall. The perimeter windows are large pointed arches hinting towards more elaborate churches of the early 20th century. The church has been careful in its remodeling and upgrades respecting the structural integrity of the trusses, keeping terrazzo flooring, adding stained glass windows in the original openings, adding a sound system and additional lighting along beams and adding an HVAC.

In 1976 the first stained glass was installed over the altar respecting the existing arched openings. A central air conditioning system was added to the building in 1984/85. The members began to replace the main windows in 2004 with the currently installed stained glass murals

completed in 2008. In 2010 new tile was added at the altar. The original structure remains intact and well cared for by the community. The church is an example of appropriate climate design with features high windows for natural light and cross ventilation as well as solid masonry and timber roof member framing. The high roof, twin towers and open space design are further enhanced by the above noted masonry and craftsman features.

The interior of the church shows exposed timber framing which appears original and intact. The worship space and the nave have been lovingly maintained by the church and the community. A retrofit HVAC system fully respected the original components, as do alterations to the interior by the congregation and the church (see figures 33, 43, and 44). The organ has been integrated over the secondary exits (see figure 45 and 46). Many original construction details remain visible and in use today such as the altar, speakers' podium and masonry interior railing with carvings (see figures 15, 42,).

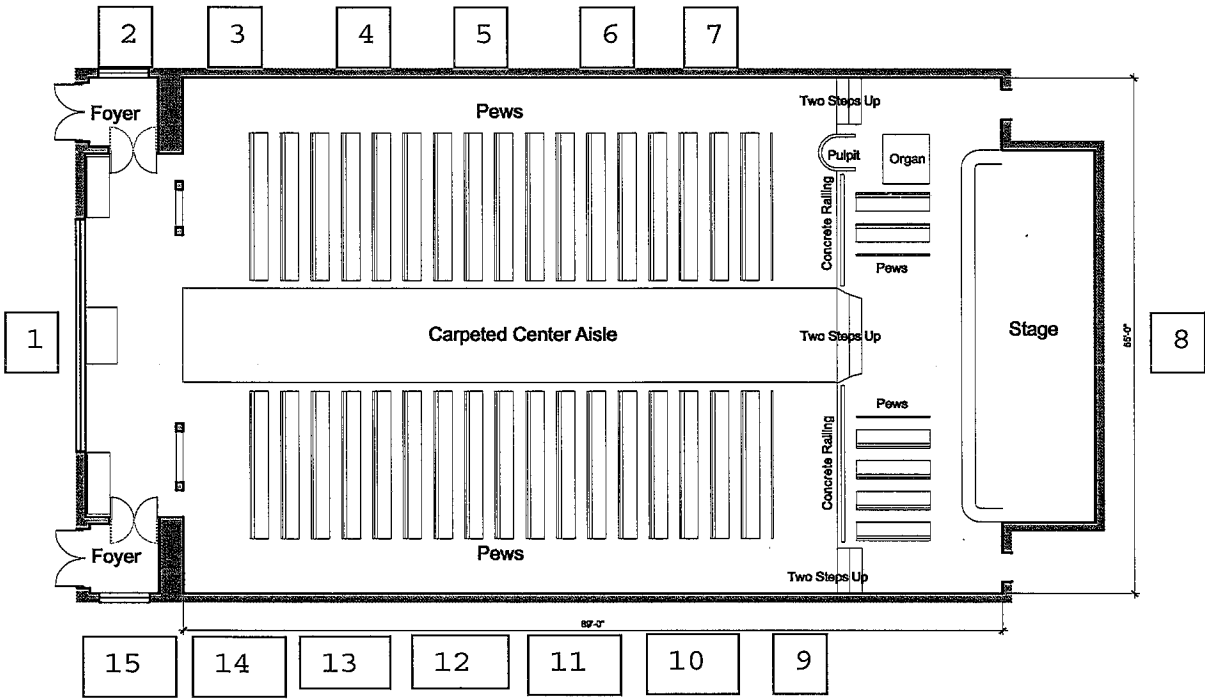


Figure 7: Floor Plan of Christ Church and Windows (Numbers refer to Stain Glass Windows pictured below)

Chronologic View of all External Windows

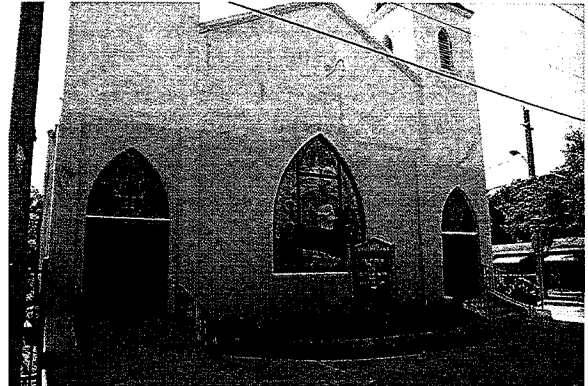


Figure 8/9: Front (West) Elevation of Christ Episcopal Church (#1)

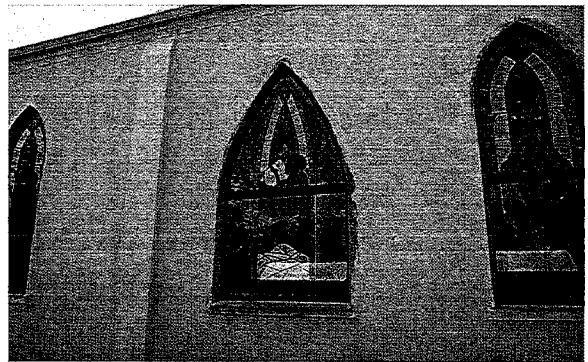
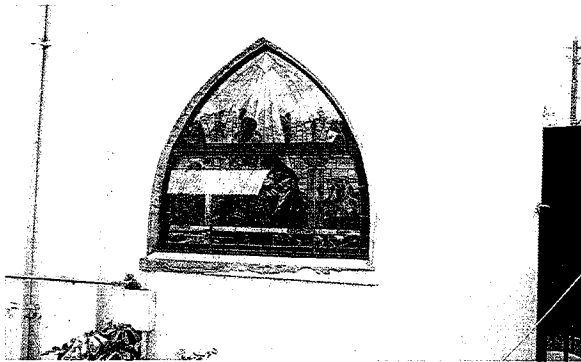


Figure 10/11: Stained Glass Details (#2, 3 and 4)



Figure 12/13: Stained Glass Details (#5 and 6)

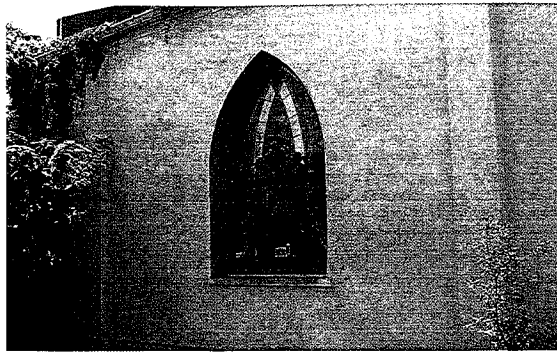


Figure 14: Stained Glass Details (#7)

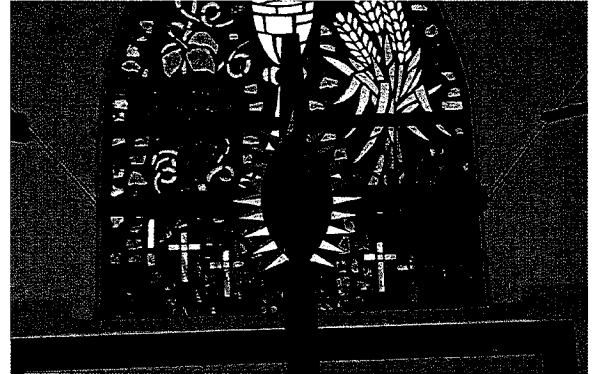
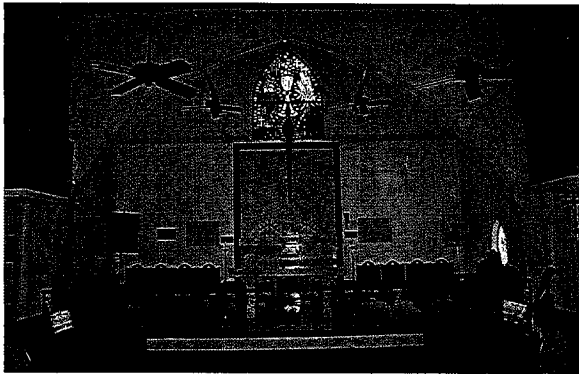


Figure 15/16: Nave and detail of Stain Glass Window (#8)

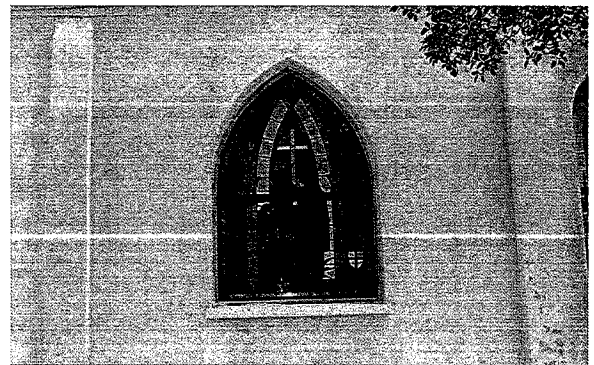
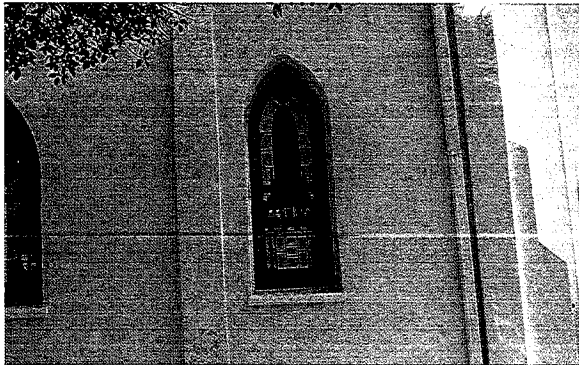


Figure 17/18: Stained Glass Details (#9 and 10)

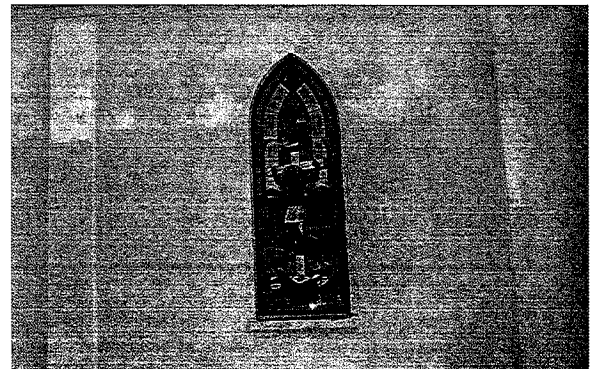
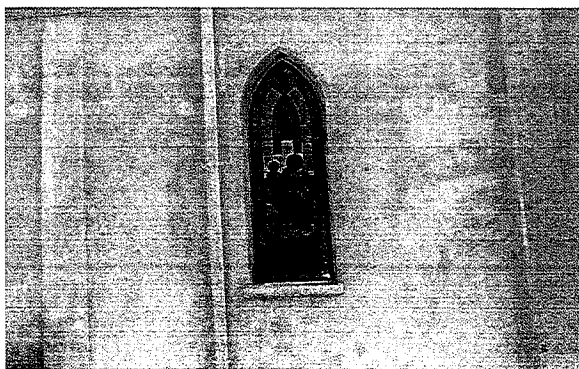


Figure 19/20: Stained Glass Details (#11 and 12)

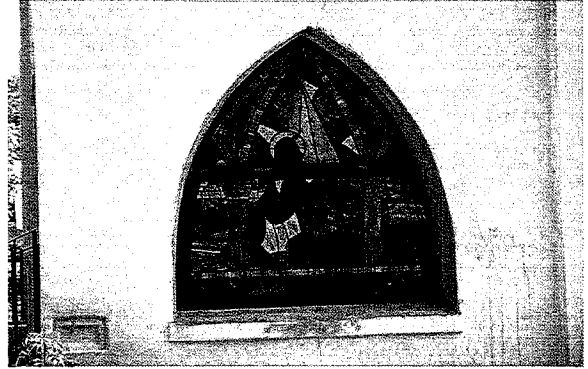
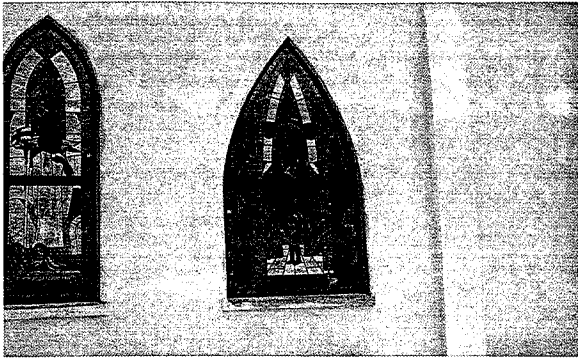


Figure 21/22: Stained Glass Details (#14 and 13, 15)

Additional Exterior and Interior Photos



Figure 23/24: Bell Tower Detail and North Elevation



Figure 25/26: South and East Elevation

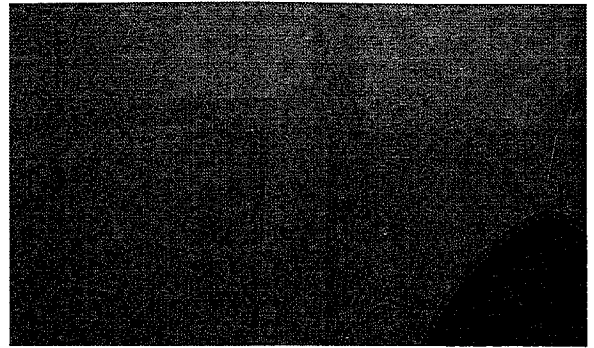


Figure 27/28: Church Sign at Front Doors and Detail of exterior column reveal

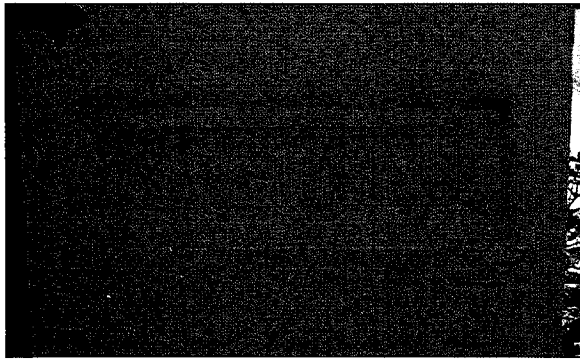


Figure 29/30: Church Name imprint on Structure and Founders Stained Glass Window (1)

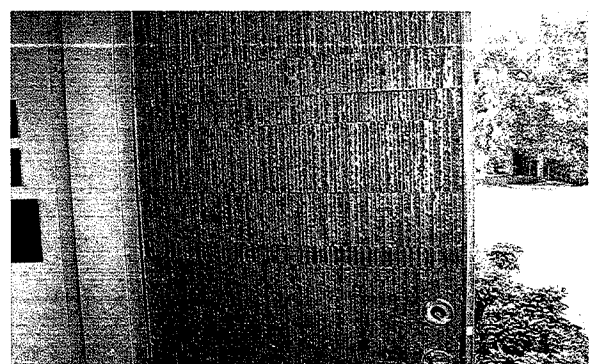
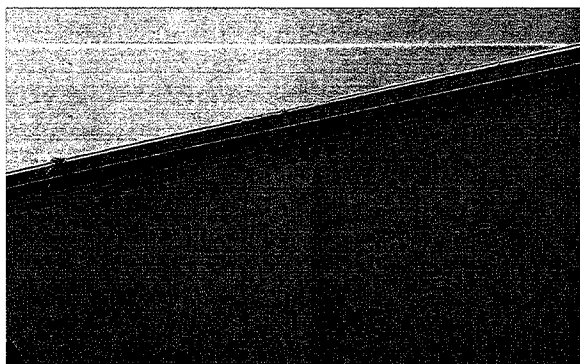


Figure 31/32: Detail of Exterior Column and band & Detail of Interior Metal Door finish

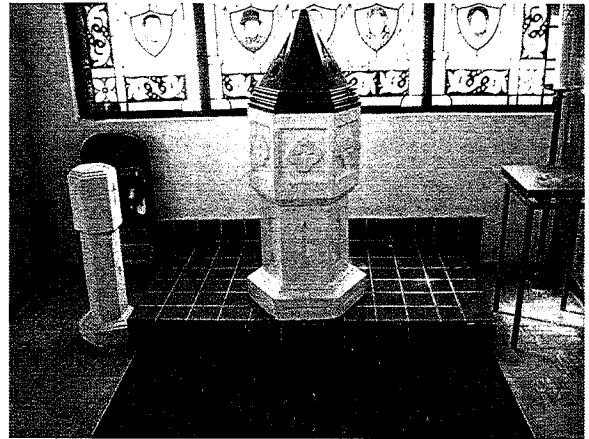
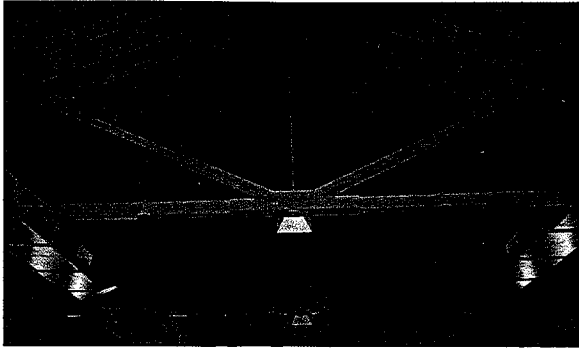


Figure 33/34: Wooden Truss details at Interior of Church

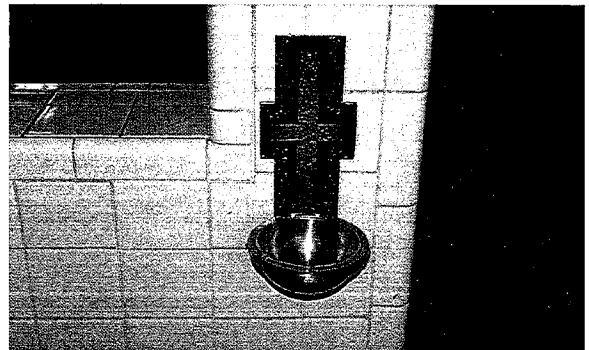


Figure 35/36: Detail of Truss anchoring and Craftsman detail

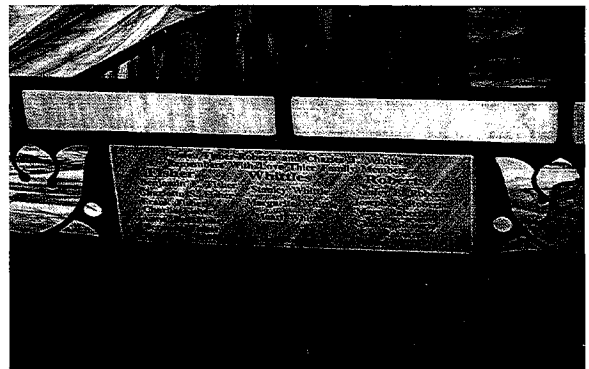
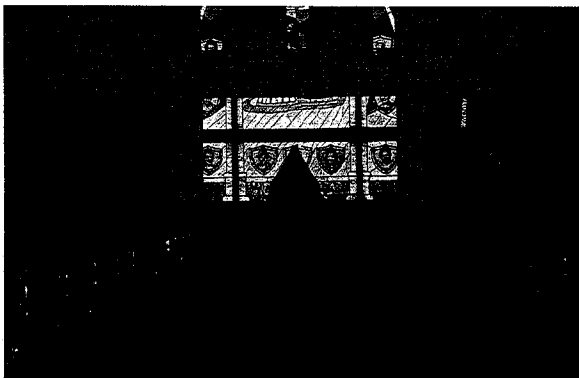


Figure 37/38: View of Baptismal Font and detail of Founders Window

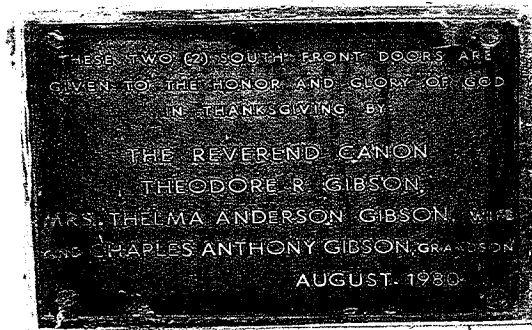


Figure 39/40: Craftsman Detail and Designation Plaque

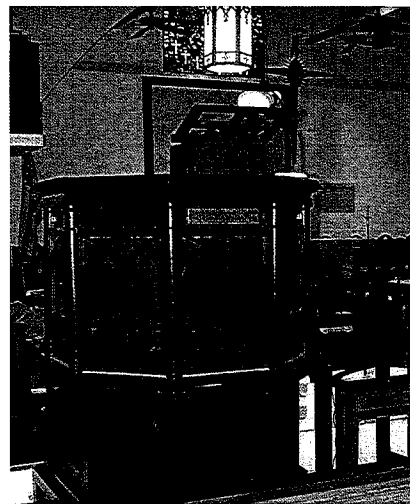
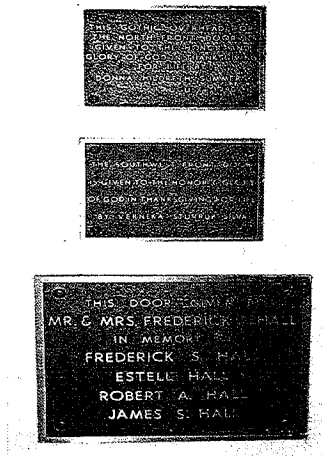


Figure 41/42: Designation plaque and Pulpit



Figure 43/44: HVAC units at Entry; respecting the original space



Figure 45/46: Organ and Organ pipes

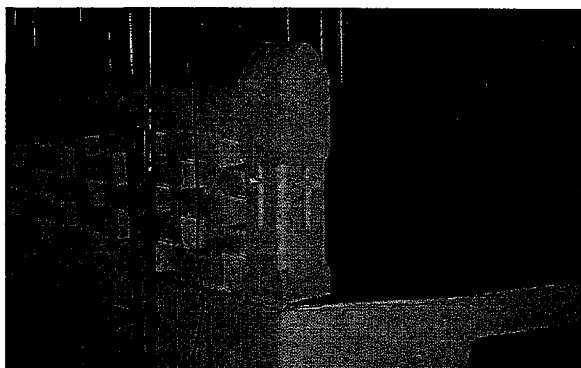


Figure 47/48: Craftsman details

All figures are authored by and property of Sebastian Eilert

As you enter the church and look towards the east, a beautiful stained glass window captures your view. It is located over the altar, and was installed in 1976. This window depicts the "Last Supper" which includes a gold chalice and three small crosses. As the sun shines through, colors change, thus enhancing the aesthetic pleasure of such beauty. This window was donated in "Memory" of the late Sweetlon Vernell Anderson by her children: Joyce, Thomas, Thelma, William, Percy, Doris, Donald, Hubert, Herman, Frederick and Alvin. One of the elements of worship is "adoration" and we find that the linguistic origin has in it the idea of giving a gift. Therefore, in 2001, our Rector, Rev. Bernard M. Griffith, unfolded his dream; which was to encourage members to purchase a stained glass window. This would be quite fitting as we observed the 100th anniversary of the founding of this parish.

The members were enthusiastic about the project, and agreed to sponsor the windows as noted on each inscription. The first meeting with the architect, Mrs. Anna Vitale, was held in 2001. It was then learned that impact windows must be installed to protect the stained glass. In 2004, the "Founders Stained Glass Window" was installed. It is located in the Vestibule of the church. It was

designed by Mrs. Nadine Griffith. It depicts the Baptismal Font, and honors the Founders with their engraved portraits which will forever remind us of their existence. The Baptismal Font is located in the center of the window, and it is used regularly for the appropriate ceremony. In order to complete the "project" (stained glass windows), a committee was organized so that funds could be obtained. The Gala Golf Tournament Committee successfully implemented tournaments in 2005 and 2006, obtaining the money for the installation of the impact windows. In 2007, seven stained glass windows were installed, and in 2008, the remaining seven were installed. Proceeds were also placed in the scholarship fund. The members of the Gala Golf Committee described their tireless efforts as a "Labor of Love." Each stained glass windows depicts patron saints from the Bible, and each window represents a guild or organization in the church. Please note that additional information which is pertinent to this facet of our church's history has been included in this report.

IV. Designation

Christ Episcopal Church seeks designation as a historic structure and cultural importance. Included in the designation shall be the building and its interior. Based on the history of the building and the documented use of the building and impact on the community, it is the opinion of the author that the designation as a historic structure is justified.

Application of Criteria for Designation:

The Christ Episcopal Church has significance insofar as it relates to the historic, cultural, aesthetic and architectural heritage of the city and state. It possesses integrity of design setting, materials workmanship, feeling and association. The property is eligible under the following criteria (as numbered in section 23-4 (a) of the Miami City Code):

Chapter 23-4 Designation of historic resources criteria:

(1) *Are associated in a significant way with the life of a person important in the past;*

Several prominent members of the Coconut Grove community listed in this report include Charlotte Jane Stirrup and E.W.F. Stirrup, Sr.. Other founding members were locally significant as ancestors of original Bahamian immigrant families who provided significant efforts to the community surrounding Christ Episcopal Church.

(2) *Are the site of a historic event with significant effect upon the community, city, state, or nation;*

Christ Episcopal Church has been a cultural and civic meeting place for the community for almost

100 years. The people who are members of this church primarily grew up in Coconut Grove and have made countless small investments of time, culture and building construction creating the Bahamian Village of which we see remnants today.

(3) Exemplify the historical, cultural, political, economical, or social trends of the community;

The people of Christ Episcopal Church and other churches in Coconut Grove were created by the original inhabitants of the area. In order to maintain that prominent place in the Community, we must commit to work closely on a number of projects at the church as well as other projects that are supported by the church and community. Current projects held and organized at the church are:

1. The Food Pantry Program
2. Support of the Endowment Fund
3. Sponsorship of Cultural Events (Concerts, lectures, etc.)
4. Support of the Scholarship Fund
5. Distribute the ministry of the printed word; (church periodicals)
6. Award grants for missionary work
7. Continue to promote health education
8. Visit, call and pray for the sick and shut in of the parish
9. Assist all women and men in the church as they carry on the work of Christ in the world, and take their places as leaders in all aspects of Church life.

V. Summary

Through the years, Christ Church has always played an important role in the life of the community of Coconut Grove and in the life not only of the Episcopal Church, but also in its relationship with other churches in its ecumenical endeavor and outreach programs.

We dedicate ourselves to follow in the footsteps of the founders who were instrumental in assisting with the building of the present sanctuary, by continuing to assist with the maintenance of the church's physical structure and its fabric.

Finally, the ultimate goal is to bridge the gap between the young children, teens and young adults with adult parishioners in this church. We will encourage their involvement because we recognize the need to assist them with their spiritual growth. Therefore, as they become more knowledgeable about the Christian way of life, they will become more committed to the work of the church.

It is only through our abiding faith in God, diligent work, and financial support that Christ Episcopal Church will continue to serve Christ and Community for generations to come. It is our prayer that "The Old Pink Church" which is located on the corner of William Avenue and Hibiscus Street will forever remain!

--- End of Report ---