
MASJID AL-ANSAR MOSQUE

5245 NW 7TH AVENUE

Designation Report



City of Miami

REPORT OF THE CITY OF MIAMI
PRESERVATION OFFICER
TO THE HISTORIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION BOARD
ON THE POTENTIAL DESIGNATION OF THE
MASJID AL-ANSAR MOSQUE
AS A HISTORIC SITE

Prepared by Michael Kenneally Janus Research,
Revised 10/06 Ellen J. Uguccioni

Prepared by Kathleen Slesnick Kauffman,
Preservation Officer

Passed and
Adopted on _____

Resolution No. _____

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Historic Name:

Seventh Avenue Church of Christ

Current Name:

Masjid Al-Ansar Mosque

Location:

5245 NW 7th Avenue
Miami, Florida 33127

Present Owner:

The Masjid Al-Ansar Mosque
5245 NW 7th Avenue
Miami, FL 33127

Present Use:

Institutional

Zoning District:

6100 Restricted Commercial

Tax Folio Number:

01-3124-013-2340

Boundary Description:

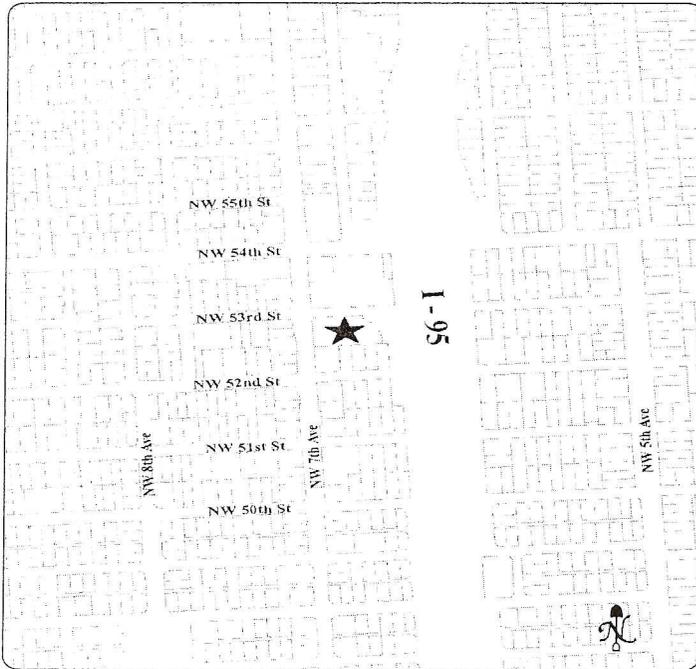
Lot 1, less the west 10 feet and lots 2-6 including less port for north and south of block 13 of the plat of Railway Shops Addition, 2nd Amended, as recorded in Plat Book 3 at Page 183, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Classification:

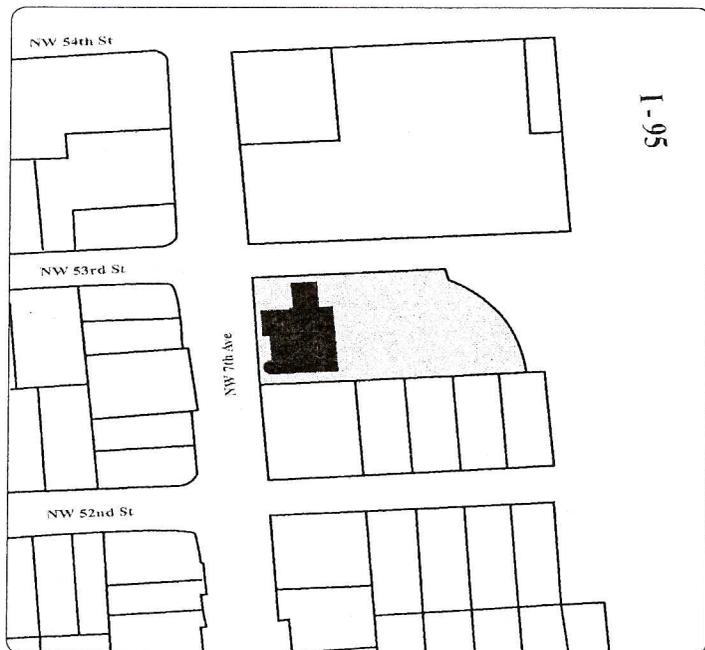
Historic Site

MASJID AL-ANSAR MOSQUE

5245 NW 7TH AVENUE




location




site plan

II. SIGNIFICANCE

Specific Dates:

1938-1942

Architect:

Unknown

Builder/Contractor:

Unknown

Statement of Significance:

This impressive building, constructed for worship by the Seventh Avenue Church of Christ, is located within the Model City (formerly known as Liberty City) neighborhood of Miami. Following World War II, Model City became a predominantly African-American enclave, and the building has significance within the social and historical fabric of the neighborhood.

The Central Church of Christ was established in 1911. In 1925 they formed the Seventh Avenue Church of Christ congregation. Initially their services were conducted in a wood frame building at the corner of NW 7th Court and NW 53rd Street. By 1931, the congregation was able to purchase the lots in the immediate area where their new church would be built. Under the direction of construction foreman T. C. Ellis, a member of the church, the congregation raised all the funds to completely pay for the building, and actually assisted in its construction. Because the congregation assumed both the financial and construction tasks associated with the building, it took a total of four years to complete.

This massive structure does not strictly belong to any particular style; its form was dictated by its use. However, there are a number of ornamental and design elements that clearly belong to the Art Deco/Art Moderne style popular during the period. These include the cast decorative panels and the curvilinear compound arch of the main entrance on NW 7th Avenue.

In 1966, the Seventh Avenue Church of Christ sold the building to the members of the Muhammad Mosque. The building has been in continuous use as a place of worship and assembly for its entire history. Masjid Al-Ansar is the oldest established Muslim mosque in Miami.

The Muhammad Mosque congregation had informally originated in the 1950s in Overtown under the influence of Clyde Rahman. Lacking an organized mosque, the congregation would meet at various members' houses throughout the area, until it purchased the building on the corner of NW 7th Avenue and NW 53rd Street from the Seventh Avenue Church of Christ. The Mosque changed its name to Masjid Al-Ansar in 1977 when it chose to remain orthodox Muslim, while other congregations in the area began following the tenets of the Nation of Islam.

Relationship to Criteria for Designation:

The former 7th Avenue Church of Christ/Masjid Al-Ansar Mosque has significance in the historical and architectural heritage of the City of Miami; possesses integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association; and is eligible for designation under the following criteria:

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

The Masjid Al-Ansar Mosque houses Miami's oldest established Muslim congregation, having moved into the present building in 1966. Historically, the building was associated with the Seventh Avenue Church of Christ, which had been a congregation in the area since 1925. This building has been a center for spiritual activity in the community since its construction.

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

This former church is monumental in its size and character. While it defies classification in any particular style, the building's design clearly owes a debt to the Mediterranean Revival and Art Deco/Art Moderne traditions. The building exhibits impressive ornamental detail, and has had minimal alterations over the course of its history.

III. DESCRIPTION

Present and Original Appearance:

Setting:

The Masjid Al-Ansar Mosque is situated on a one-and-a-half acre parcel of land that is located on the southeast corner of NW 7th Avenue and NW 53rd Street. The mosque faces west onto NW 7th Avenue. A parking lot and fenced playground are situated to the east of the mosque.

Exterior Description:

The Masjid Al-Ansar Mosque is a two-story masonry building measuring roughly 93 feet by 60 feet. The Masjid Al-Ansar Mosque is a rectangular shaped building supported by a masonry structural system reinforced by steel. The first floor is slightly below grade and the windows are located at ground level. The exterior walls are clad with stucco, and its hip roof is currently covered with composition roll.

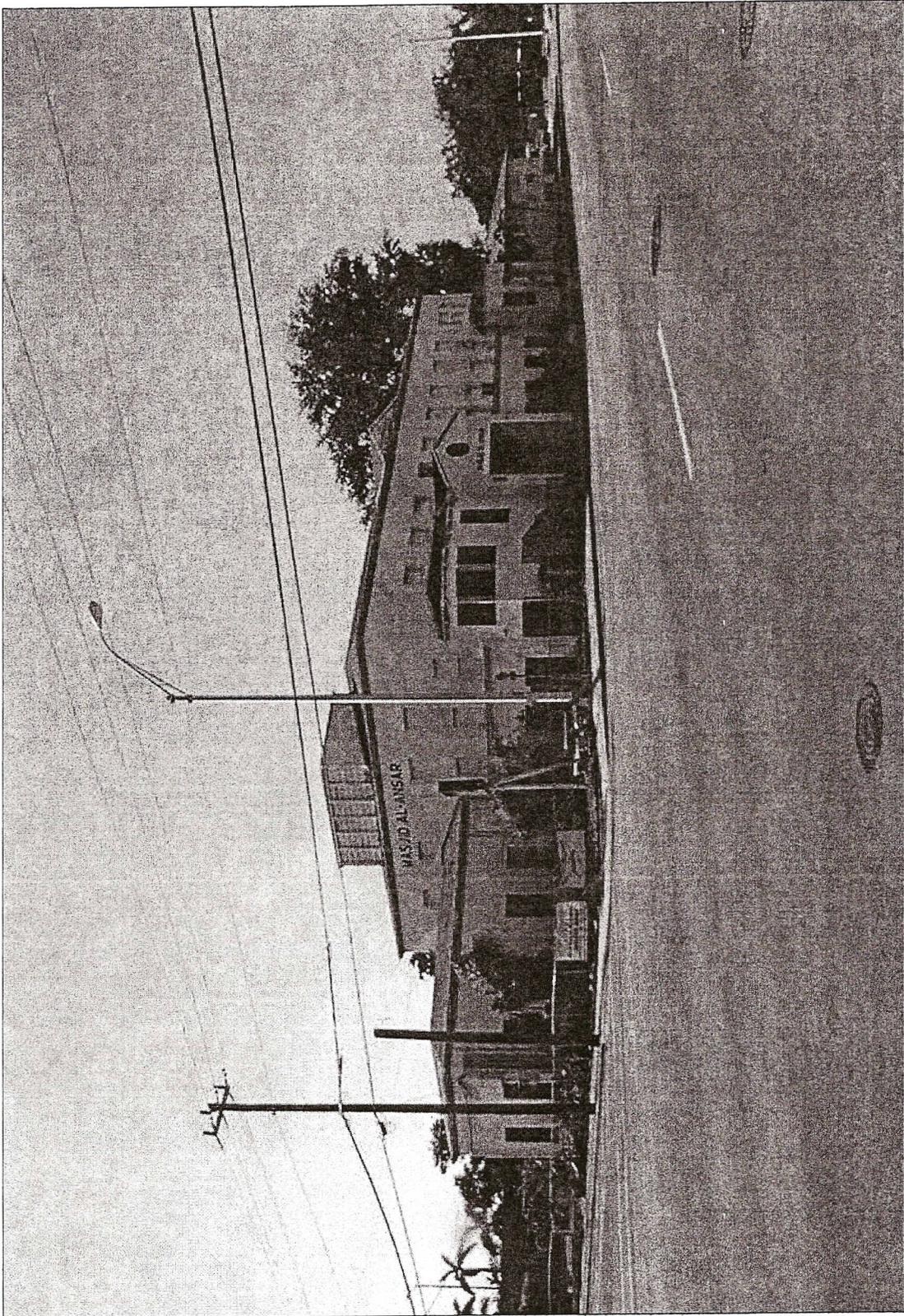
The main elevation, facing west onto NW 7th Avenue is characterized by a one story, gable roofed entrance bay that features a compound arch comprised of fluted rounded corners that leads to an exterior covered stairwell accessing the sanctuary on the second floor. This stairway is sheltered by a shallow-pitched hip roof with exposed rafter tails and features a clipped corner with openings separated by round stucco columns. A second projecting entrance is also located on this west elevation and features a hipped roof clad in Spanish tiles. A small hood covered in Spanish tile shelters the recessed door that is treated with rounded corners.

The hipped roof of the entire building mass is pierced by two gable dormer vents on the east and west sides, and a large shed roof dormer with louvered vents on the north side. Fenestration consists of symmetrical rows of narrow windows on the front (west) and rear (east) façade. The second story retains the original wood double-hung stained-glass windows, the exteriors of which have mostly been painted over or covered by plywood. The ground floor windows have been replaced and consist of six-over-six metal sash. Original narrow wood sash casement windows are present on the secondary entrance on the front façade. Decorative cast-concrete vents are present on the building, and the vents on the rear façade feature a floral motif executed in a stylized fashion typical of the Art Deco period. These prominent ornamental panels serve to vent an interior staircase that leads to the second story sanctuary.

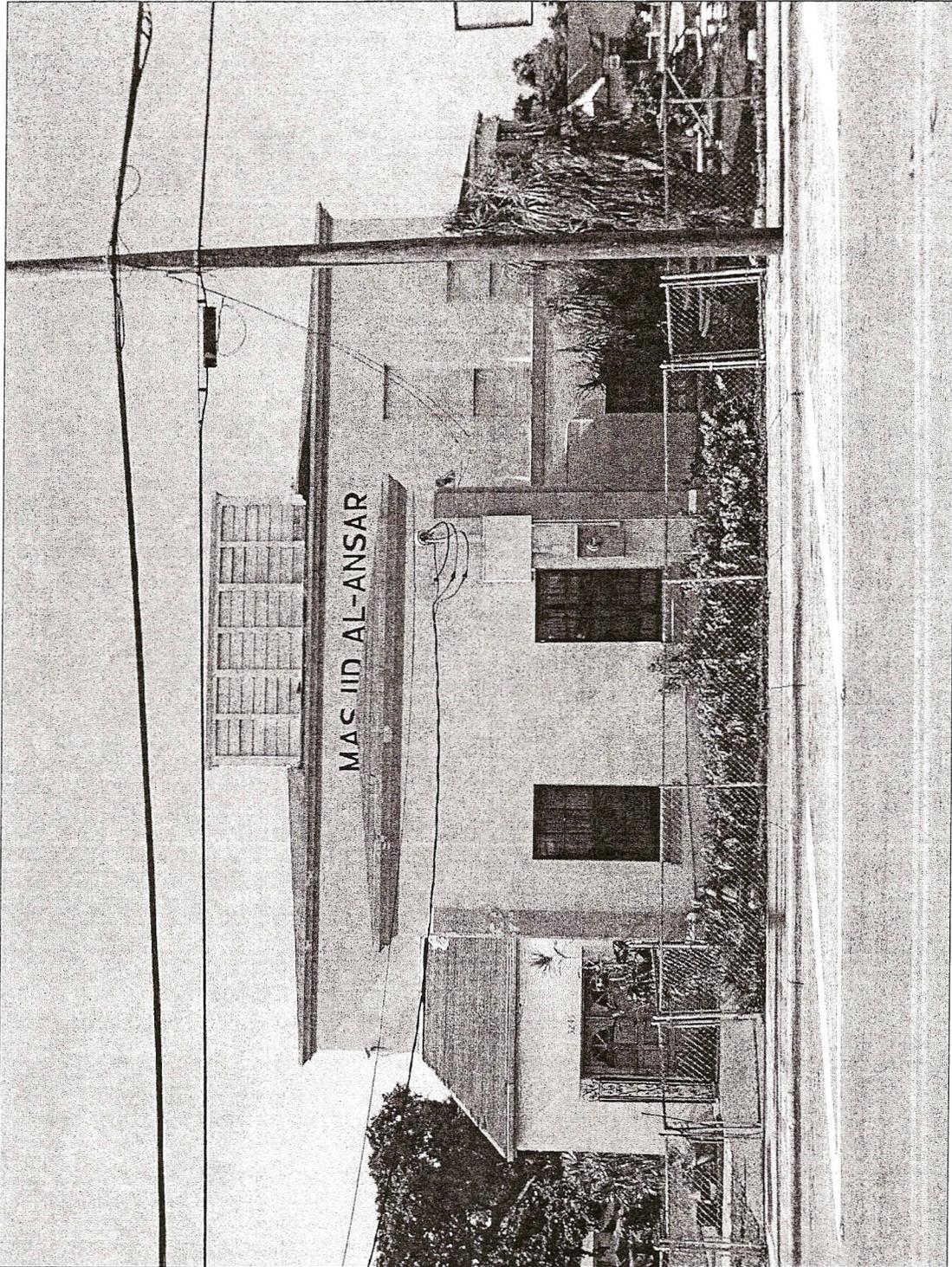
Other decorative elements consist of rounded corners on all of the inset windows, a stucco belt course separating the first and second floors, and stucco coping along the cornice. A single-story wing on the north side of the building features raised stucco on the corners.

Contributing Structures and/or Landscape Features:

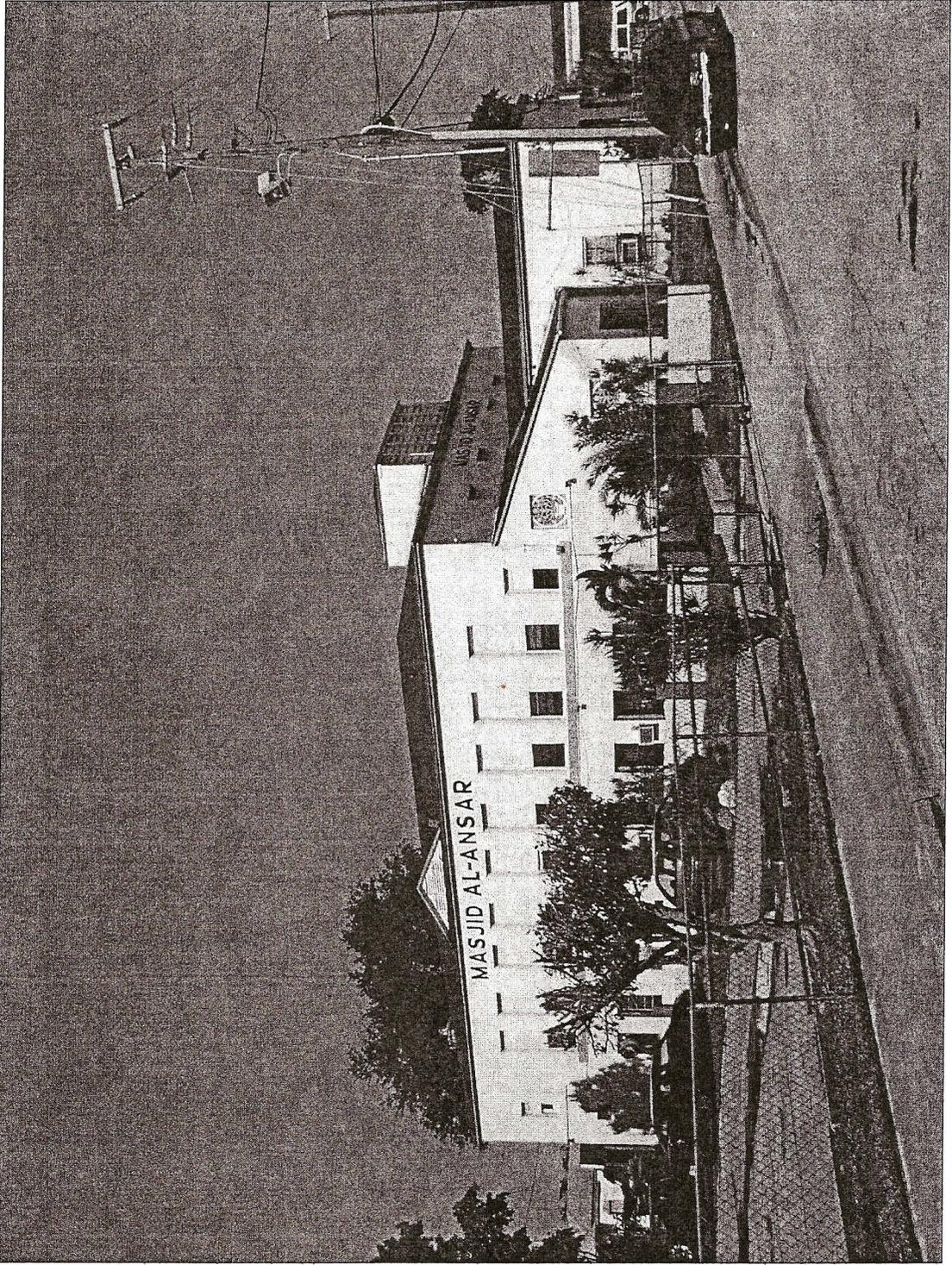
The contributing structure on the site is the Masjid Al-Ansar Mosque. There are no contributing landscape features present.



Masjid Al-Ansar Mosque
5245 NW 7th Avenue
West (front) façade and North (side) façade
2006



Masjid Al-Ansar Mosque
5245 NW 7th Avenue
North (side) façade
2006



Masjid Al-Ansar Mosque
5245 NW 7th Avenue
East (rear) façade
2006

III. PLANNING CONTEXT

Present Trends and Conditions:

The Masjid Al-Ansar Mosque is situated on a one-and-a-half acre parcel of land that is located between I-95 and NW 7th Avenue. The property was appraised at \$605,182 in 2005. Recently, the Mosque has begun to suffer water damage due to the deteriorated condition of the roof. Consequently, the long-term future of the church building is uncertain. The congregation is currently working on the physical condition of the building and trying to remedy the leaks in the roof.

Preservation Incentives:

The ongoing maintenance of the property encompassed by the Masjid Al-Ansar Mosque is a daunting financial burden for the members who comprise the congregation. The significance of the resource combined with the quality of its architecture and its important history of having continuously served religious functions within the community creates a rare opportunity to protect a most unique resource.

As a spiritual institution, having not-for-profit status, the congregation may be eligible to participate in grant programs offered through the Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State. Those grants range from a small-matching grant (usually not greater than \$50,000) that may be used for "bricks and mortar" projects, or for planning studies to determine the full extent of repairs needed; to the Special Category Grant program (ranging from \$50,000 to \$350,000) that may be used for construction activities, and is appropriated through the State legislature every budget cycle.

V. Bibliography

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