

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Miami Senior High School
other names/site number 8 DA 302

2. Location

street & number 2450 Southwest First Street N/A not for publication
city, town Miami N/A vicinity
state Florida code FL county Dade code FL 025 zip code 33135

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>12</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>12</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official State Historic Preservation Officer
Florida Dept. of State-Bureau of Historic Preservation

5/2/96
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

**SEE SITE FILE STAFF FOR
ORIGINAL PHOTO(S) OR MAP(S)**

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

SPANISH COLONIAL REVIVAL/Mediterranean
Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls METAL/steel

OTHER/hollow clay tile

roof OTHER/clay barrel tile

other STUCCO

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheet

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Miami Senior High School

SUMMARY

Miami Senior High School is an excellent example of the Mediterranean Revival style of architecture. The school is a massive four story, stuccoed masonry structure, rectangular in plan that encloses four interior courtyards. It was executed in 1927 by the architectural firm of Kiehnel and Elliott of Miami.

SETTING

The school was constructed between the rapidly expanding western suburbs of Miami and the booming new development of Coral Gables during the historic Florida Boom period. With a frontage of over 600 feet along the double street of Southwest First and West Flagler Streets, the complex, including play grounds, occupies nineteen acres. The main (north) facade runs east-west along S.W. First Street while West Flagler Street separates the school from the parking area, originally a park. The once grassy field, known as Columbia Park, has been reduced to a strip of landscape on axis with the central entrance block. The park contains several large oak trees and a rare baobob tree. Moved to its present location in 1939, the baobob tree was donated to the city by Dr. Major Schofield who claimed it had been planted a few years after the city's incorporation in 1896. The rest of the park was paved for a parking lot in 1968. To the rear of the buildings, the vast playing fields remain. Today, Miami Senior High School is in the heart of a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood, in the area generally known as Little Havana.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

EXTERIOR

The school is built of reinforced concrete and steel with hollow clay tile. Exterior surfaces are of light textured stucco, with cast stone and wrought iron ornamental details. The same material treatment is employed on interior walls.

Roofs are a combination of low pitched gables and hips, surfaced in barrel clay tile over the more prominent masses. These pitched roofs alternate with flat roofs covered in tar and gravel over interconnecting masses. Flat roofs are hidden from view by elaborate crenellated and corbeled parapets.

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Windows were originally metal, three light awnings. The fenestration is primarily arranged in groups with tall slender colonnades between the second and third story resting on a prominent, continuous string course above the ground story. The central block of the main facade has the most elaborate fenestration.

The spaces created by the central block and four symmetrical masses perpendicular to the main axis form four interior courtyards. These courtyards are graced by the arcaded loggias on the ground floor and breezeways on the second floor connecting the main buildings.

The four story main central block contains the main entrance to the school and the auditorium. Two, three story classroom wings run perpendicular to the central block. (See Photos 1, 2, 3, 28) At the end of these wings are two, two story classroom buildings running perpendicular to the main axis. These two classroom buildings, home economics to the east, sciences to the west, along with the central block of the auditorium, create a closure for the first set of interior courtyards. Additional end buildings, cafeteria and library to the east (See Photo 5) and music and arts to the west, again perpendicular to the street, are joined to the main mass of the complex by two story loggias, which define another set of interior courtyards. To the southwest of the main central block of the complex is the gymnasium. The gymnasium building, although detached from the main building, continues the axis of the westernmost wing. (See Photo 6)

MAIN BLOCK

The ground floor, defined by rusticated cast stone and a corbeled string course above, is punctuated by three sets of double doors deep set in compound recessed arches of distinctive French Romanesque inspiration. Three sets of heavy paneled, thick double doors are accented by large, iron strap hinges and studs. Above, the windows on the second and third stories of the central main entrance block are arranged in a central group of five flanked by groups of three. Slender colonnades join the second story flat arched windows, through the plain spandrels, with the round arched windows of the third story. This window arrangement is flanked by double arched windows on the second floor inset in

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a pointed arch opening of Gothic Inspiration. A heavily corbeled and intricately crenellated cornice tops the central mass. The cornice contains the inscription "Miami Senior High School" in relief letters. A recessed fourth story mass repeats the arched window patterns of the floors below. (See Photos 3, 4, 28, 29)

Most of the windows on the exterior surfaces of the building were removed and the openings filled with concrete block and stucco when air conditioning was installed in 1968. Despite this unsympathetic alteration, the basic fenestration pattern remains clearly visible, the masonry details, such as colonettes and window reveals, have not been violated, and so the enclosure of the window system can be considered a reversible, albeit costly, alteration. Windows on the central block of the facade were replaced with fixed glass.

INTERIOR COURTYARDS

Most of the windows that opened out to the courtyards on the second and third floors have been blocked in, like those around the exterior. The ground floor arcades however, have not been disturbed. In spite of the window enclosures, the architectural detailing around the openings has been retained, and enough of a window reveal has been left to indicate the original location and configuration of these openings. (See Photos 13-16)

The courtyards are each different. The easternmost courtyard has concrete floors and a cast stone and glazed ceramic tile fountain donated by the class of 1926. The other three courtyards are sodded and lushly landscaped. On the east inner courtyard is a bust of Cuban patriot Jose Marti, presented by the Cuban Ministry of Education in the late 1940s.

INTERIOR

The interior retains many of its original features, although the classrooms themselves have been altered over the years. The entrance lobby is well preserved. Beyond three sets of arched doors, floors of terra-cotta tile extend into all main corridors. Wrought iron and glass lanterns hang from the ceiling. The foyer and the main corridor are separated by three elliptical arches supported by octagonal columns. The bases and cushion capitals are reminiscent of impost blocks. Past this arched gateway, at

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the far wall directly across from the main entrance, another four columns of the same design support a wall decorated with a three part mural painted by Denman Fink, a prominent local artist in the area during the 1920s, and chief designer of the City of Coral Gables. The murals depict scenes allegorical of science and technology on the left; history, civics and government on the middle panel; and arts and sports on the right. Recessed below the mural walls are glass trophy cases flanking the main entrance to the auditorium. (See Photos 18-20)

AUDITORIUM

The auditorium is the most spectacular of the interior spaces and one of the least altered ones. The auditorium mass is three stories tall with a gable roof on the exterior and a vaulted ceiling inside. At the springing of the vault, arched openings on the second level of the side walls are further divided into two arches held by slender columns. At the springing of the two small arches, a rosette completes this typically Romanesque opening detail. These beautifully detailed openings are actually the balconies of the auditorium. Elaborate wrought iron chandeliers hang from the ceiling. The most outstanding feature of the space is the proscenium arch surrounding the stage. The perforated, precast masonry tracery detail on this arch resembles intricate, delicate lace. The arch rests on clustered slender columns and pilasters grouped together in Romanesque fashion. (See Photos 21-23)

CAFETERIA AND LIBRARY

The cafeteria and the library have been updated. Acoustical ceiling panels hide the original trusses embellished with pendants and gingerbread type ornamentation in the library. In the cafeteria, linoleum tile floors and dropped ceilings hide the original features. As in all the other buildings, the second story windows on the cafeteria have been blocked in, while retaining the location and configuration of the openings. The classrooms have been altered for the most part, by dropped acoustical ceilings and blocked-in openings from the time when air conditioning was installed. Wood floors remain in many classrooms, as do the original blackboards, or at least the wood moldings around them. (See Photos 24, 25, 33, 34)

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GYMNASIUM

The gymnasium building has had few alterations. It is a large two story, rectangular structure with a gable roof covered in clay barrel tile. The main mass is preceded by a two story entrance foyer, with flat roof and crenellated parapet, as in the rest of the complex. The entrance is accented by three, two story arches resting on two large columns of cast stone, imitation marble and Romanesque inspired capitals. The windows of the gymnasium have been retained. Windows on the second level are large, multipaned transom type, with semicircular fanlight transoms. The gymnasium is one of the finest, most intact structures in the school, both in its exterior and interior appearance. (See Photos 6, 26, 35)

ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS

For such a large, active school, the buildings have survived with relatively few major alterations, except for the enclosure of window openings and interior changes to accommodate modern functional requirements. In 1957, the western most wing was extended by the addition of wood and metal shops; and a one story non-contributing building was added to the south of the gymnasium, well to the rear of the main building. A new vocational school building was added in 1966 to the rear, in the space located diagonally between the auditorium and the gymnasium.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1928-1940

Significant Dates

1928

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Kiehnel and Elliott

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

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SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

Miami Senior High School is significant under Criterion C at the local level as an excellent example of the Mediterranean Revival style popular in Miami in the 1920s; for its association with architects Kiehnel and Elliott; and for its fine craftsmanship and details. The school was designed by the firm of Kiehnel and Elliott, one of the most influential architectural firms in Miami in the 1920s and 1930s. The firm was largely responsible for the introduction and popularity of the Mediterranean Revival style in the Miami area during this period. The building is also significant under Criterion A at the local level in the area of education as the permanent location of the first senior high school constructed in Dade County; it also reflects the rapid growth of the educational needs of the community during the Florida Boom Period of the 1920s.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The decade that followed World War I was a remarkable one for the United States. An expanding population and increasing national wealth marked the 1920s, often referred to as the Decade of Prosperity. The phenomenal development of the automobile industry boosted the nation's economy and the stock market soared. The national trend toward prosperity, coupled with the accessibility of automobiles, led to increased mobility, more money, and more leisure time.

Florida's mild climate and its abundance of available land lured many people to the state. The population of Miami more than doubled between 1920 and 1925, and the real estate business boomed. During these five years, millions of dollars worth of land changed hands and the assessed value of property skyrocketed by 560%. While many investors were simply real estate speculators, others came to South Florida to create the perfect city. Carl Fisher transformed a desolate strip of sand and mangroves into a tropical paradise known as Miami Beach, boasting luxury hotels and beachfront estates. George Merrick developed "The City Beautiful" of Coral Gables and a myriad of residential developments appeared throughout the area.

With the rapid expansion of population, Miami's existing school facilities were soon overloaded. This overcrowding, together

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with the increasing emphasis on secondary education prevailing throughout the country, created an unprecedented demand for an adequate, modern facility that would meet the educational needs of the city's youth and reflect the status of a prosperous, dynamic, twentieth century metropolis.

The rapidly developing City of Miami necessitated a substantially larger school facility. The School Board responded to the city's growth by purchasing ten acres for \$333,000 and planning a large school building which could accommodate up to 2,500 students. The firm of Kiehnel and Elliott were chosen to construct the new facility. In keeping with the School Board's desire for a progressive and ultra-modern complex, the firm chose the Mediterranean Revival style of architecture.

The Mediterranean Revival style had begun to gain popularity during the mid-1920s in Dade and Palm Beach Counties. The use of thick stuccoed walls and numerous arcaded loggias lent itself well to the humid subtropical climate of South Florida. Mediterranean Revival style architecture may be inspired by any one or combination of building styles found along the Mediterranean Sea over a period of several centuries. Thus, while some architects use medieval castles or French Gothic cathedrals as their sources of inspiration, others may follow more closely the models of the Italian Renaissance palace or the ornate Spanish Baroque. The intent is to recreate a state of mind, or ambience, rather than to imitate a historical period. Mediterranean Revival is whimsical and affected, and, unlike other revivalist styles typical of the nineteenth century, is fantasy rather than accurately reflecting an earlier architectural style., It is a manifestation of the lifestyle usually associated with the "Roaring Twenties."

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE
CRITERION A

Miami's first secondary education facility was established in 1902. The building was a two story wood frame building constructed on Northeast First Avenue. Located behind the first grammar school, it was built to accommodate the fifteen secondary school students enrolled in school who were without a classroom. By the time the doors were opened, however, enrollment had jumped to 264 students from the surrounding areas of Little River, Lemon

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City and Buena Vista. In 1911, the wood frame building was replaced with a three story masonry structure. In 1915, the upper grades of the school (9-12) separated from the middle grades and were relocated to a building at 275 N. W. Second Avenue, Miami. High school classes were relocated to several buildings until the construction on the present complex in the Central Park Subdivision at Southwest First Street and Twenty-fourth Avenue.

March 18, 1927, marked the occasion of the groundbreaking ceremony for the new school. The majority of the companies involved in building the school were local firms. National Construction Company served as the general contractor and other companies which supplied materials included Southern Steel Corporation, Cureton Lumber Company and the Miami Tile Company. All the companies were proud to have had the opportunity to participate in the project. Numerous advertisements were placed in The Miami New and Metropolis which boasted staggering statistics regarding the amount of materials used in the building: two million feet of rough lumber, 642 tons of steel, 12 carloads of interior tile, marble and slate blackboards and 20,000 barrels of cement, sand and rock.

The new school was ready for occupancy on February 14, 1928. Student enrollment reached a new high of 1,800. Erected and equipped at a cost of \$1,288,095.62, the school was hailed as "the most modern public school building in the south." The facility featured 79 classrooms and labs, 4 shops, 2 study halls, a library, administrative offices and a custodian's apartment. The auditorium had a 1,290 person seating capacity and the cafeteria could serve 600. The athletic field included a football field, baseball diamond and running track.

As Miami grew from a small town to a bustling urban center, the high school reflected the changes in everything from politics to fashion to the ethnic composition of the community. In 1903, the school was "free to all white children." By 1989, white Anglo students comprised only 3% of the school's enrollment while 89% were of hispanic origin. In 1919, the school year book, Miahi, was not published due to World War I and the prom was given up for the benefit of the Red Cross. In 1933, senior girls attended Class Day in long pastel organdy dresses. The school sponsored a "Bring the Scrap to Slap a Jap" campaign in 1943 which netted

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almost a half-million pounds of scrap metal, rubber and rags for recycling into war materials. By 1957, bermuda shorts and penny loafers were "in" while blue jeans and miniskirts were the norm in the 1970s. During the 1970s, the school held a voter registration drive for eighteen-year olds.

Since the influx of Cuban exiles in the 1960s, Miami Senior High School has played an increasingly important role in the hispanic community. As early as 1963, classes were established for spanish speaking students. The school has received numerous awards and commendations for achievement in bilingual education. In 1965, a Latin American student newspaper began publication. A Spanish National Honor Society was formed in 1972, and Hispanic Heritage Week has been celebrated since 1977. Located in the area known as Little Havana, the school serves as a Mecca for Latin youth.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE
CRITERION C

The School Board retained the nationally-known architectural firm of Kiehnel and Elliott to design the school. Established in Pittsburgh in 1906, the firm subsequently opened offices in Miami, Miami Beach and St. Petersburg, with Richard Kiehnel as the designer.

Among the firm's more notable works are several buildings already listed in the National Register of Historic Places: Coral Gables Congregational Church (listed 10/10/1978), Coral Gables Elementary School (listed 6/30/88) and "El Jardin" (listed 8/30/74). "El Jardin" is the earliest known example of full Mediterranean Revival style architecture remaining in Miami. The estate was commissioned in 1917 and is responsible for bringing the firm to the Miami area. Previously, Kiehnel had specialized in Neo-Tudor, Neo-Classical and Beaux Arts architecture executed in red brick. In Florida, he broke away from this pattern and made a concerted effort to introduce and design Mediterranean Revival style buildings. It was largely through Kiehnel's influence that this became a popular style, particularly in South Florida.

The firm was extremely versatile both in architectural style and type of project. Many private residences were designed by

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Kiehnel and Elliott, as well as hotels, office buildings, and the Players State Theater in Coconut Grove. The firm designed buildings in the Streamline Modern style as seen in the Carlyle Hotel, one of the finest structures in the Miami Beach Architectural District (Art Deco District). The Scottish Rite Temple is an unusual example of Egyptian-inspired Art Deco style in Miami. In addition to Miami Senior High School, the firm designed several other schools including Morningside Elementary, Coral Gables Elementary and the master plan for Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida.

For Miami Senior High School, the architects decided on an interpretation of what has been termed Norman Romanesque architecture. That places the source some time between the eleventh and thirteenth century, somewhere between France and England. Though perhaps not close to the Mediterranean, the romantic spirit of the old world is very much present. With its crenellated parapets, compound arches and clustered piers, the architecture is reminiscent of the French Romanesque castles and churches from the Normandy region. The same influence was found years later in England, as the Norman conquest spread across the English Channel.

The building is indeed eclectic. There are the battlements of medieval fortifications, compound arches of Romanesque churches, pointed arches and tracery of Gothic cathedrals, and arcades loggias and courtyards of Spanish and Italian palaces and villas.

One of the most outstanding functional features of the building is the adaptation of the interior courtyard as an aesthetic and functional element of the design. While classroom buildings have interior hallways in traditional school buildings, most of the circulation arteries of this school open on to the courtyards landscaped with large trees, fountains and sculpture and viewed through the gracious rhythm of arched openings. The courtyards and loggias are ideal for air circulation and shelter from direct sun, as the tall walls of the surrounding buildings protect these spaces and screen out the extreme heat. The scheme is an excellent environmental response to the tropical South Florida weather.

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CONCLUSION

Miami Senior High School is a tangible link to the history of secondary education in Dade County dating from the early part of the twentieth century. The school was the largest school constructed in Florida and possibly the southeast during the 1920s, and was equipped with all the most modern conveniences available. The new school was designed and constructed in the Mediterranean Revival style, reflecting the tastes and preferences of its community. When constructed, the promethean structure set a precedent in the use of the interior courtyard, arcaded loggias, and use of thick stuccoed walls to create a functional school building well suited to the sub-tropical South Florida weather.

Miami Senior High School has responded to the social, political and cultural changes in the rapidly developing City of Miami. As the city grew, so did the high school. When the need for vocational education became apparent, a new wing was built for this purpose. As the city became more Latin, the school offered spanish oriented classes and activities. Miami Senior High School continues to inspire high ideals in the minds of students and its standards of scholarship and prowess in athletics have set an example for other high schools.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Bureau of Historic Preservation

10. Geographical Data

Acres of property nineteen acres

UTM References:

A 17 5778100 2850550
Zone Easting Northing

C 17 5774200 2850120

B 17 5777600 2850140
Zone Easting Northing

D 17 5774800 2850550

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

BOSCOBLE PB 7-72
Lots 1 to 13 Inc. & Unnumbered S 1/2 of Blk 3 & All of Blk 7
Central Park PB 5-57 & Lots 153-159
Kenilworth PB 5-115
Lot size-irregular
Folio Number: 01 4103 041 0220

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary follows the legal description and the boundaries historically associated with the property. Boundaries include all green spaces historically associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ivan Rodriguez; Vicki L. Welcher-Historic Sites Specialist
organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date March 23, 1990 May 2, 1990
street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone 904 487-2333
city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

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Special Collections

Gleason Waite Romer Photographic Collection. Miami-Dade Public Library, Florida Collection, Miami, Florida.

Richard B. Hoit Photographic Collection. Historical Association of Southern Florida, Miami, Florida.

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 90000881

Date Listed: 6/21/90

Miami Senior High School

Dade

FL

Property Name

County

State

N/A

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Arny Edelman
Signature of the Keeper

7/5/90
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Since the school and the gym on the school's grounds were originally constructed as separate entities and only later linked together, they should be counted as separately as two contributing buildings, with a new total of two contributing properties.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)