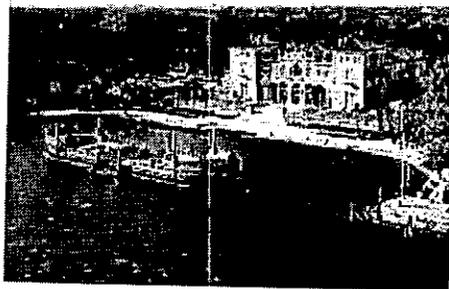




Vizcaya



Vizcaya (Florida Department of Commerce,
Division of Tourism)

Miami, Florida

County of Dade.

3251 South Miami Avenue

National Register Number: 78003193 Resource type: Building.

Property type: House/Residence.

Certified Local Government: NO

This NHL offers public access.

NPS Contact:

Southeast Support Office.

Atlanta Federal Center, 1924 Building, 100 Alabama St., SW, Atlanta, GA 30303, Ph.
404/562-3171

Statement of Significance (as of April 19, 1994):

Vizcaya, which means "an elevated place" in Basque, was completed in 1916 as the winter home for the industrialist James Deering (1859- 1925), who made this a showplace of personal fantasy. Deering's fortune was made in the production of farm machinery. A patron of the arts, Deering asked New York painter and designer Paul Chalfin to advise him on his plans for a Florida home; together, the two men created a melange of Baroque, Rococco, Mannerist, and Louis XIV, adapted to a beach house in South Florida.

The NHL Database was developed by [Heritage Preservation Services](#). Comments and questions about the database may be directed to NHL_info@nps.gov

[NHL Home Page](#)



NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: VIZCAYA

Other Name/Site Number: James Deering Estate

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 3251 South Miami Avenue

Not for publication:

City/Town: Miami

Vicinity:

State: Florida

County: Dade

Code: 025

Zip Code: 33129

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private:

Public-Local: X

Public-State:

Public-Federal:

Category of Property

Building(s):

District: X

Site:

Structure:

Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

14

8

24

277

323

Noncontributing

 buildings

 sites

 structures

 objects

0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 323

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

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.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

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 _____
 ___ Determined eligible for the National Register _____
 ___ Determined not eligible for the National Register _____
 ___ Removed from the National Register _____
 ___ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Domestic	Sub:	Single Dwelling Secondary Structure
	Landscape		Garden Street Furniture/Object
Current:	Recreation & Culture Landscape	Sub:	Museum Garden Street Furniture/Object

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Late 19th/Early 20th Century Revival:
Spanish Colonial Revival
Italian Renaissance

MATERIALS:

Foundation: Limestone
Walls: Stucco
Roof: Terra Cotta Tile (Red-Barrel)
Other: Trim: Coral Rock

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Page 4
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.**

Vizcaya, now operated by Dade County Park and Recreation Department as a decorative arts museum, was originally the home of the industrialist James Deering. The estate comprises a palatial 70-room mansion situated on the west shore of Biscayne Bay. The palace is approached by entering massive wrought iron gates beside the east gate lodge and traversing a roadway which winds through the native jungle hammock to the entrance plaza.

The main house is an Italian Renaissance-style palace. Architectural elements executed in native coral rock include open loggias and arcades and an interior courtyard with a peripheral gallery. The roof is red barrel tile and the basic construction of the building is reinforced concrete.

The interior of the palace is comprised of period rooms ranging in style from the Renaissance through the Neo-Classic. Entire ceilings, chimney pieces, mural paintings, carved paneling, and doorways were removed from foreign palaces and combined in Vizcaya with fine antique furniture, rare rugs, and tapestries. One has the impression that the palace has been occupied for a period of 400 years.

A brief description of the interior is as follows: See figures 1 and 2.

FIRST FLOOR:

1. Entrance Loggia
Marble fountain made from Roman sarcophagus
2. Entrance Hall and Coat Rooms
3. Adam Library
Late 18th century in style, after designs of Robert Adam (1728-1792).
4. Reception Room *Italian Rococo*
5. North Hall and Stair
6. Renaissance Hall *Italian furniture and Spanish rugs*
7. East Hall and Organ
8. East Loggia *great Italian room facing the Stone Barge*
9. Music Room *Italian Rococo*
Milanese paintings on the walls are decorated with shells and coral.
10. Banquet Hall *16th century Italian*
11. South Hall and Stair
12. Tea Room
Opens onto the terraces and gardens; stained glass windows with seahorses and caravels, symbols of Vizcaya.
13. Pantry
Adjacent Service Room with dumbwaiter; today this space is for the docents.
14. Arcades and Open Courtyard
The floors are old Cuban tile; the interior is filled with fountains, tropical plants, and flowers. There are two small rooms at the west corner of the South Arcade: a Client's Room for business transactions and a Flower Room where daily bouquets were arranged.

Main Stairway in the North Arcade is of early Renaissance design.

SECOND FLOOR:

15. Gallery
This open passage runs around three sides of the Courtyard.
16. Manin (who was the last Doge of Venice) furnished with early Biedermeier furnishings
The northeast tower has a narrow steep stair leading to a small foyer from which two small guest rooms are located. These are the Belgioioso and Lady Hamilton bedrooms.
17. Cathay 18th century Chinoiserie decorative style
18. Sitting room 18th century, Directoire Period
19. Master Bedroom French Empire
20. Master Bath
The tent-like ceiling resembles a Napoleonic campaign tent. A set of doors open to a loggia overlooking Biscayne Bay.
21. Espagnolette Venetian furniture
22. Galleon Salon Principal guest suite sitting room
23. Caravel Baroque guest bedroom
The Circular Stairs and Southeast Tower Rooms. These remarkably constructed, cantilevered stairs with their elegant wrought iron and brass balustrade lead to the Tower Rooms and down to the first floor. From the Tower landing a narrow hallway leads to the Venetian-style guest room Guidecca, named for the Guidecca Canal in Venice. A second room opening from the hall is called Goyesca and this room is decorated and furnished in the Neoclassic and Empire style.
24. Breakfast Room
Glass doors slide back into the wall, leaving garden side of the room open for a view of the main gardens.
25. Kitchens and Pantries *The food is delivered by dumbwaiters*
26. Servants' Dining room
This is now a lecture room.

The Basement level was originally a billiard room, bowling alley, and smoking room. Today it is a service area for museum visitors and consists of a tea room, bathrooms, and a museum shop.

More than two-thirds of the property remains in a virgin condition. This site is one of the few places where the old Brickell hammock is still visible. This hammock land, which originally extended to the Miami River, is a rare surviving natural area.

The surrounding hammock serves as a background for the formal main gardens to the south of the palace (see figure 3). Rows of live oak trees flanking the central pool lead the eye to the water stairway and up to the Casino (garden house) (12) on the mound. Statuary walks define the fan-shaped plan of this garden which was inspired by Italian Renaissance designs. Jasmine parterres embroider the ground. Australian pines display the art of topiary (fancy pruning.) Potted pines and podocarpus add their accents. This is a traditional green garden, but several varieties of bougainvillea, roses, and water lilies contribute color. The gardens

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are peopled with classical and pastoral statues most of which once stood in 18th-century European gardens. The grottos below the mound, the shell fountains, and the wrought iron gates are Baroque. Other gardens include the secret garden, nearest the palace and completely walled (19), the Theatre Garden (18), the Maze Garden (17), the Fountain Garden with its fountain from the town square of Bassano di Sutri, Italy (15), and the Pergola Garden (26).

Aside from the main house, the most important architectural feature is the Great Stone Barge (20) which serves as a breakwater. A Tea House (21), by the mangroves, terminates one end of the sea wall. Directly opposite is a landing dock (22) which is used every day by tour boats.

Near the main house are several out buildings. These are the East Gate Lodge, now used as an office; the Laundry which has been converted to public toilets and is connected to the main house; the Fire Station (29a), which housed equipment originally used at Vizcaya and today has fire fighting exhibits; and the Casino on the Mount (12) which is the focal point of the formal main gardens.

All of the Vizcaya outbuildings are built in 17th-century Italian style and are more or less ornate depending on their purpose. Their characteristic appearance derives from the use of stucco, carved stone, and red tile.

The Vizcaya property is surrounded by a protective wall decorated with graffiti work in the Tuscan manner and broken at intervals by wrought iron grills which offer glimpses of the grounds within.

The area known as Vizcaya Village (see figure 4) contains ten buildings, now modified to accommodate museum offices and Park and Recreation facilities. With the exception of pedestrian doorways cut through larger carriage and stable openings, some modifications are not visible on the exterior. The new doors are actually of the original fabric which has been cut and hinged to allow easier access for employees. Outbuildings within this Farm Garden complex on the west side of Miami Avenue comprise the West Gate Lodge, Machine Repair Shop, Superintendent's House, Carriage House, Wagon Sheds, Mule Stables, and Chicken Houses. Although these buildings are structurally sound, many have deteriorating stucco walls resulting from the lack of sufficient overhangs or gutters. What is perhaps significant is that without these accommodations to the Florida climate the buildings are stylistically pure but in need of extensive surface repair.

The most distinctive feature of the West Gate House (9), built in 1915, is the entrance arch. This semi-circular headed arch has been treated to give the appearance of rustication. This is done by the application of small stones to the face of the projecting members and keystone giving them the appearance of rough texturing. The remainder of the building, the end blocks, is stucco-surfaced and the windows are trimmed with imitation stone lintels, keystones, and sills. The roof is of tile. The two-story, small square addition (9a) was built in 1919 and is connected by a covered walk to the West Gate House.

The garage and blacksmith shop (5 & 6) are connected by a two-bay colonnade. Each building is a monumental one-story. There are surrounds, keystones, sills, and consoles simulating carved stone at the windows. The central feature of the garage is an arched, scored stucco bay which projects slightly from the main facade. There is a filled balustrade above this with spherical finials. Around the entire cornice is decorative corbelling. The roof is hipped with a tile surface. The blacksmith shop roof of tile is also hipped and the cornice features the same detail; however, there is no central pavillion.

The first staff residence (1) has a raised and monumental one-story central pavillion with gable end on the front facade. Here, the decorative feature is a loggia of three bays mounted on pilasters with semi-circular molded arches. These have been filled with glass doors in wood frames. There is a tile-covered ridge roof in this central section with tiled hipped roof wings of one-story extending to each side.

The second staff residence (4) is two stories in an L-shape and the tile roof is hipped. The major decorative features here are the rusticated quoins on each corner of the building as well as rustication in the porch arcade. Window openings are banded and around the deep eaves are carved wooden brackets.

The two-story section of the mule stable (2) is square and has a tile hipped roof which carries a louvered cupola. The facade of this portion of the building also features small cross-shaped ventilators. In the one-story wing, there are three, large, segmental arched openings. These arches are banded and spring from plain pilasters. Each archway is filled with horizontally panelled doors. The roof of this section is also of tile.

The Carriage House (8) originally housed farm machinery and fertilizers.

The dairy (3) has a three-bay central section of two stories with a hipped tile roof. On the first floor, there is a central semi-circular headed doorway flanked by semi-circular headed windows to each side. There are projecting one-story wings.

The long and narrow chicken coop (7) has a raised central roof with the ridge transverse to that of the remainder of the building. The central doorway is large with a semi-circular head and flanking square-headed windows, while the windows in the rest of the building are elliptical.

The two-story section of the paint shop (10) has a ridged tile roof with deep overhang. The gable ends are decorated with cross-shaped brick ventilators and brackets. The second floor features large panels of stacked tile serving also as ventilators. Below these ventilators, there were two square-headed windows which have been filled. The one-story portion of this building has a tile ridge roof with no overhang. Here the main feature is a semi-circular headed arch, the head of which is filled with cross-shaped brick ventilators. Below the ventilators are two more square-headed windows which have also been filled.

According to the Curator, Doris Littleton, repair and restoration has been an on-going program. Most recently, the 18th-century antique and Samuel Yellin iron work was restored (1990-1992), the fountains refurbished (1988-1991), and the interiors were finished in 1991.

The roof was completed in 1987. On August 24, 1992, Hurricane Andrew spared the house—except for 8½ feet of water in the basement, which is now restored—but there was \$4,000,000 damage to the grounds. The clean-up will go on for some time.

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

- Buildings:** Main House
 Casino
 East Gate Lodge
 Fire House
 Farm Villiage (10 buildings)
- Sites:** Main Garden
 Secret Garden
 Theatre Garden
 Maze Garden
 Fountain Garden
 North Pergola Garden
 Marine Pool Garden
 Garden for the Blind
- Structures:** Stone Barge
 Tea House
 Mount
 Yacht Landing
 Pool
 Four Gazebos
 North Garden Pergola
 Entrance Plaza Pergola
 3 Grottos in Mount
 Grotto in Secret Garden
 2 Arches
 Venetian Bridge to Tea House
 Venetian Bridge to Yacht Landing
 Marine Pool
 Peacock Bridge
 Seawall Promenade
 Water Cascades at approach to main house
 Gondola Landing on lagoon south of Mount
- Objects:** 151 Sculptures
 93 Urns
 21 Fountains
 12 Gates

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
 Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National
 Register Criteria:

A B C X D

Criteria Considerations
 (Exceptions):

A B C D E F G

NHL Criteria: 4

NHL Theme(s): XVI. Architecture
 M. Period Revivals
 7. Renaissance (Italian)

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1914-1916

Significant Dates:

Significant Person(s):

Cultural Affiliation:

Architect/Builder: F. Burrall Hoffman, Jr. (1884-1980)
 Paul Chalfin (1874-1959), Interiors
 Diego Suarez (1888-1974), Gardens

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Vizcaya, which means "an elevated place" in Basque,¹ is South Florida's greatest private estate. Originally a jungle in the village of Coconut Grove, this tract of land was transformed in 1914-1916 into one of the most marvelous houses on the Eastern Seaboard.

Vizcaya is the ultimate palace of James Deering (1859-1925), the self-made American tycoon who became a patron of the arts. The house, with its art collections and fine furniture, was created by the collaboration of four men, each gifted and each a connoisseur. James Deering, who had trained in Paris as a painter, made his South Florida retreat a showplace of personal fantasy. Deering, along with Paul Chalfin, also a painter, created a melange of Baroque, Rococco, Mannerist, and Louis XIV, adapted to a beach house in South Florida.

Water was needed as a design device as well and was

cleverly incorporated to interact with the terraces, and the plants were painstakingly chosen and tested for their ability to withstand the climate and pests of south Florida. Each historical epoch was further enhanced by such contrivances as a system of canals (reminding the visitor more of the Venetian scenes in the film *Top Hat* than of the Canal Grande), a splendid frescoed grotto pool on the north side, and an eighteenth-century casino at the far end of the main garden....

Indeed, costumed historical figures, like tableaux vivants, seem to beg to inhabit the rooms and gardens of this unique place. Not surprisingly, Vizcaya is one of the most popular film-making locations in the United States....

Throughout the estate antique remnants spelled out a myth, although there were occasional works by modern artists, such as the barge fountain carved by A. Stirling Calder. The interiors contained sublime fakery and architectural decoration so deftly integrated as to make one distrust the reality of it all, while still surrendering to the illusion, as in a film. As a connoisseur, artist, and collector of images, Chalfin successfully assembled pieces of the past into a rare composition. When compared to Julia Morgan's extraordinary and inventive efforts at synthesis at San Simeon, Chalfin's fantasy is the more convincing, suggesting that creative vision was more important to the house as hobby horse than architectural integrity.

As if to complete the *mise-en-scène*, Vizcaya opened its doors on Christmas of 1916, with a pageant arranged by Chalfin. As Deering stepped off his yacht onto the terrace, the lights of his villa came on in sequence, a line of servants emerged from

¹ Some believe it was the name of one of Ponce de Leon's ships.

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the loggia, and two cannons fired a salute. The evening's festivities were topped off by a masquerade ball peopled by Italian gypsies. Some twenty-one years after the opening of Biltmore, it was a scene even Edith Wharton could not have anticipated.²

Now part of greater Miami, the great house escaped storms, rampant real estate development, and neglect. When built, 180 acres were beautifully landscaped and included a working farm called the "village." Today the estate is much smaller, but many of the furnishings remain or have been given back to the house by the heirs of the Deering family.

Vizcaya was built in the years 1914 to 1916 as a winter home for the industrialist James Deering. Born November 12, 1859, in South Paris, Maine, James was the second son of William Deering, the developer of the Deering harvester machine. While James was still a boy, his father moved the family to Evanston, Illinois, where he built a factory for the production of farm machinery. James Deering was educated at Northwestern University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and entered the family business. In 1902 the firm merged with McCormick Harvester Company and other companies to form the International Harvester Company. James Deering was a vice-president of the firm until 1919 when he resigned, and he continued to serve as a director to the time of his death in 1925. After his retirement from active business, he pursued his artistic and philanthropic interests and traveled extensively.

For many years Deering maintained a residence at Neuilly, outside of Paris, in addition to his Chicago home. He was decorated by the French government with the Legion of Honor for his contribution to the development of farm machinery. During his lifetime Deering made substantial contributions to charities and endowments, often anonymously. He suffered from pernicious anemia, a disease little understood at that time; and his doctors advised him to spend the winter months in a warm climate. Deering's parents had a winter home in Coconut Grove, Florida; and his older brother Charles had extensive property in Cutler, an area of southern Dade County. After considering other warm weather locations, James Deering decided to build in Miami, just south of the city limits. In 1912 he purchased a large tract of land from Mrs. William Brickell of the pioneer Miami family; and with a subsequent purchase, his holdings comprised some 180 acres of shoreline, hammock and pineland. Deering asked Paul Chalfin, a young New York painter and designer, to advise him on his plans for a Florida house.

Paul Chalfin (1874-1959) attended Harvard College, trained as a painter at the New York Art Student's League and the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, and held for a short time the position of Curator of Asiatic Arts at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Leaving Boston in 1906, Chalfin studied and painted in France and Italy as the winner of the Lazarus Traveling Scholarship and was named a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome. On his return from Europe, he became associated with Elsie de Wolfe in her New York Studio of Interior Decoration; and it was through this connection that he met James Deering. Deering and Chalfin traveled to Europe to

² Hewitt, Mark Alan. *The Architect and the American Country House*. Yale University Press, 1990. New Haven. pp. 144-148.

observe domestic architecture and to consider possible plans and purchases for the Miami House. While the Spanish style of architecture had seemed the obvious choice because of Florida's Spanish heritage, it was the architecture of the country houses of the Italian Veneto that most interested the young designer and his patron.³

James Deering was not a collector in the manner of Henry Clay Frick or J.P. Morgan, but rather wanted to make his own final selections with advice from Chalfin. They traveled extensively before the house was built, but in this case, the structure had to keep the furniture in mind.

Paul Chalfin was not a trained architect, but he brought F. Burrall Hoffman into his association with James Deering for the architectural commission. Francis Burrall Hoffman, Jr. (1884-1980), a graduate of Harvard, received a diploma from the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris where he studied architecture with Henri-Adolphe Deglane. Hoffman began his career in the New York firm of Carrere and Hastings and in 1910 opened his own office in association with Harry Creighton Ingalls. After his accomplishments at Vizcaya, Hoffman conducted a distinguished career in New York and Paris. He designed many private homes and apartment buildings and at the age of ninety-eight was still working.

Hoffman began his drawings for the Deering house while visiting the site in 1913 and that year traveled to observe for himself the villas of Italy, for by this time Deering had decided that an Italian Mediterranean type of architecture would be suitable for his Florida house. Meanwhile the building site was being surveyed and prepared. Nothing of the size and scope of the proposed Vizcaya estate had been attempted in Florida before this time. Close to ten percent of the 1913 population of the young city of Miami, then about 10,500, were to work on the buildings and gardens.⁴

The fourth component to join this remarkable group of the Patron, the designer, and the architect was the garden designer.

In 1914 the young landscape architect Diego Suarez was commissioned to design the gardens. Born in Bogota, Colombia, Diego Suarez (1888-1974) was educated in Florence, Italy, as an architect. After his studies Suarez became interested in garden design and worked at the historic villa La Pietra near Florence where the garden was being restored by the owner, Arthur Acton of the distinguished English family. James Deering and Paul Chalfin visited Acton, and Suarez was asked to show them several villas and gardens in the vicinity. This meeting with Deering led to the commission for Vizcaya's gardens. With the interruption of World War I, it took seven years for these gardens to be completed to Suarez' designs.

³ Littlefield, Doris Bayley. *Vizcaya*. Martori Enterprises II, Inc. 1983, Miami p. 7-8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Suarez arranged Vizcaya's main garden in a fan-shaped plan with the central axis continuing the north-south axis of the house, leading the eye to a Baroque casino or garden house raised on an artificial hill or mount. Beyond the mount was a lagoon and the south garden, an area of tropically planted islands connected by decorative bridges. There, too was a large bathhouse with a roof garden and a small domed garden house called the Casba. These elements, as well as tennis courts, were connected with winding drives through groves of palms and other trees. The main gardens are based on Renaissance and Baroque designs inspired by Suarez' extensive knowledge of Italian gardens and their Roman antecedents in which there was a more conscious application of architectural design to the setting of the house. The various terraces and areas into which the garden scheme is divided are distinguished by walls, balustrades, sculpture, decorative urns as well as fountains, pools, and cascades. Trimmed hedges and trees repeat the balanced architectural features, while French influence is seen in the elaborate curvilinear parterres.

To the west of the main residence, across the road that was to become South Miami Avenue, lay the farm section of the estate with buildings designed by Hoffman to resemble a small northern Italian village. Here lived the resident estate superintendent, chief engineer, boat captain, boat engineer, garage supervisor, poultryman, and the fishing guide, as well as other key personnel. Along with garages and workshops, there were stables, a cow barn, a dairy and a poultry house. A pumphouse provided water for the extensive flower and vegetable gardens. There was a greenhouse and a large shadehouse for delicate plants. Pineapple, citrus and other fruit were grown. The estate could be nearly self-sufficient. Electricity for power and light came from Miami, and telephone service went to all parts of the estate through its own switchboard. The major buildings of the Farm Village remain today and are restored as part of Vizcaya's museum complex.⁵

The whole complex was to serve as a winter home fitted for entertaining and for recreation. The result was a beautifully planned interior that resembles an Italian Renaissance villa with rooms arranged around an airy garden courtyard and, from some rooms, views of the bay and gardens. There is a fascinating swimming pool half in the shade beneath the house and half-out-of-doors in the brilliant sun light. The house is also filled with every modern convenience including central heating and several elevators.

Other notable artists who contributed to the house and grounds were:

A. Stirling Calder (1870-1945), renowned sculptor, was responsible for the figures and decoration on the great Stone Barge; Gaston Lachaise (1882-1935), the designer of the stone peacocks for the Peacock Bridge leading to the south garden; Robert Chanler (1872-1930), painter and designer, fashioned the marine grotto of the swimming pool with its underwater effects; Charles Cary Rumsey (1879-1922), sculptor, created the lead lizards and frogs decorating the fountain basin on the south terrace; Ettore Pellagatta (1881-1966), sculptor of many of the figures of native limestone that embellish the garden architecture; Paul Thevenoz (1891-1921), Swiss

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

painter, restored and completed the ceiling painting of the Casino loggia; Samuel Yellin (1885-1940), a master craftsman and designer in wrought iron whose work at Vizcaya included gates, grills and minor pieces for both house and gardens.

The main house with its seventy rooms required a staff of thirty during the winters of James Deering's residency. The owner occupied the house for about four months of each winter season beginning at Christmas in 1916. He frequently had family visitors and other houseguests and added local friends with their guests for luncheon parties. Deering's eighty-foot yacht *Nepenthe* was often used for entertaining; he could comfortably accommodate twelve for luncheon. He enjoyed fishing on his forty-five-foot launch *Psyche*, and this boat could seat ten guests for a meal.⁶

After Vizcaya, Hoffman developed a successful career in New York, remembered for his glamorous theaters as well as many houses; Diego Suarez married the former Mrs. Marshall Field III; but Chalfin's star was in decline. His talents required a client with Deering's resources, personal and financial, to give them outlets but for him there would be only one Deering. Well may he have come to reflect that Vizcaya, evocation of the age of Tiepolo, was "Augustan," for to him at least it seemed that "such work would never be done again." His vision had not seemed always so lofty. Years earlier he had written to Deering: "It is the little details like gold braid that make one's life miserable." To some this will point to the inner triviality of a man preoccupied with soft furnishings. To others it will confirm his obsessive quest for perfection.⁷

For all of its eclecticism, Vizcaya most typifies the American Country House in its concept, its modern conveniences, and its integration into its surroundings.

What seems truly American is the heroic determination to overcome all natural and manmade obstacles, including world war, to see the house built, and, when all the labors of building were over and forgotten, the particular poetry with which the result is invested. It is an autumnal poetry, sensuous and fleeting, rich and muted at the same time. "Is this a dream made real, or a reality greater than a dream?" mused Paul Chalfin, the man who gathered all the different threads together—"this house where no uniform style is worn by the sweet and human objects within, but where a garment of beauty is spread over the things of centuries by the understanding of a single mind." Like Olana it became a work of art. The ingredients that make it so are peculiarly those of the American country house.⁸

James Deering died in September 1925 aboard ship returning from France. His brother's children inherited Vizcaya and sold off some of the original acreage. In 1952, Dade County purchased the house and gardens for \$1,000,000 in bonds, and the family donated the

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁷ Anslet, Clive. *The American Country House*. Yale University Press, 1990. New Haven. p. 280.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

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furnishings and art work. Vizcaya, once the site of a quiet fishing village, is today a well-known museum of decorative arts complete with its hammock forest and elaborate gardens surrounded by the burgeoning city of Miami.

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- Vanderbilt, Cornelius, Jr. *The Living Past of America*. Crown Publishing. New York. 1955.
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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register: September 29, 1970
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other (Specify Repository): Vizcaya Archives

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 43.03 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing

A	17	578860	2847870
B	17	579120	2847970
C	17	579370	2847660
D	17	579170	2847060
E	17	578850	2847490

Verbal Boundary Description:

Commencing at the intersection of the Southeasterly boundary line of South Miami Avenue with the Southwesterly boundary line of Southwest 32nd Road, run thence South 52° 47' 45" West along the Southeasterly boundary line of South Miami Avenue a distance of 1524.68 feet to a point in said boundary line, which is the point of beginning; run thence South 37° 12' 15" East at right angles to the Southeasterly boundary line of South Miami Avenue and along the Northeasterly boundary line of certain lands heretofore conveyed by deed from William Deering Howe and others to Joseph P. Hurly as Bishop of St. Augustine, recorded in Deed Book 2588, at page 382 of the public records of Dade County, Florida, a distance of 1068.13 feet to a concrete monument located on the mean high water line of the Southerly bank of the Entrance Channel to Lagoon and/or Southerly bank of Lagoon; run thence Easterly and Southeasterly meandering the mean high water line of the Southerly bank of the Entrance Channel to Lagoon, being also along the Northerly and Northeasterly boundary line of the lands conveyed by said deed aforesaid distance of 435 feet, more or less, to a point which is 1,443.56 feet Southeasterly from the Southeasterly boundary line of South Miami Avenue measured at right angles to said Southeasterly boundary line of South Miami Avenue and which point is also 75 feet Northeasterly from, measured at right angles to, the prolongation Southeasterly of the last preceding course; run thence South 37° 12' 15" East along the face of an existing concrete sea wall a distance of 282.96 feet, more or less, to the established United States Harbor Line in Biscayne Bay; run thence North 25° 22' 14" East along said Harbor Line in Biscayne Bay a distance of 1,001.2 feet, more or less, to a point in said Harbor Line which is 1,265.38 feet distant from the Southeasterly boundary line of South Miami Avenue, measured at right angles thereto, and which point is in the prolongation of a line commencing at a point in said Southeasterly boundary line of South Miami Avenue 342.5 feet Northeasterly of the point of beginning and extending Southeasterly from said Southeasterly boundary line of South Miami Avenue at right angles thereto; run thence North 37° 12' 15" West and at right angles to said Southeasterly boundary line of South Miami Avenue a distance of 985.38 feet to a point; run thence northeasterly and parallel to the Northeasterly boundary line of said South Miami Avenue a distance of 429 feet to a point; run thence Northwesterly and parallel to the Southwesterly boundary line of said Southwest 32nd Road a distance of 130 feet to a point run thence Northeasterly and parallel to the Southeasterly boundary line of South Miami Avenue a distance of 140 feet to a point which is the intersection of said line with the Southwesterly boundary line of Southeast 32nd Road; run thence Southeasterly along the Southwesterly boundary line of Southeast 32nd Road a distance of 330 feet to a point; run thence North-

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easterly and at right angles to the Southwesterly boundary line of Southeast 32nd Road a distance of 200 feet which is in part the Northwesterly boundary line of Brickell Avenue to a point; run thence Northwesterly and parallel to the Northeasterly boundary line of said Southeast 32nd Road a distance of 1181.54 feet more or less to a point in said Southerly boundary line of Southwest 1st Avenue (now known as South Dixie Highway); run thence Southwesterly along said Southerly boundary line of said Southwest 1st Avenue (now known as South Dixie Highway) a distance of 825.74 feet to a point; run thence Southeasterly and parallel to said Southeasterly boundary line of said Southwest 32nd Road a distance of 953 feet to a point which is a point in the said Northwesterly boundary line of South Miami Avenue; run thence Southwesterly along said Northwesterly boundary line of said South Miami Avenue a distance of 812.5 feet more or less to a point which is a part of the Northern extension of the Northeasterly boundary line of certain lands heretofore described as those conveyed by deed from William Deering Howe and others to Joseph P. Hurly, as Bishop of St. Augustine, recorded in Deed Book 2588, at page 382, of the public records of Dade County, Florida; run thence Southeasterly and at right angles to said Northwesterly boundary line of said South Miami Avenue and along the Northern extension of the Northeasterly boundary line of the said certain lands heretofore described as those conveyed by deed from William Deering Howe and others to Joseph P. Hurly, as Bishop of St. Augustine, recorded in Deed Book 2588 at page 382, of the public records of Dade County, Florida a distance of 70 feet more or less to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

The property includes the parcels historically associated with Vizcaya plus tracts A, 5x, 4x plus 1x, 2x, 3x, 6x, 7xa, 7xb, 8x.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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Date: October 27, 1993