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# FLAGLER WORKER'S HOUSE

## FORT DALLAS PARK 60-64 S.E. 4 STREET

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### Designation Report



City of Miami

REPORT OF THE CITY OF MIAMI PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
TO THE HERITAGE CONSERVATION BOARD  
ON THE POTENTIAL DESIGNATION OF  
FLAGLER WORKER'S HOUSE  
FORT DALLAS PARK, 60-64 S.E. 4 STREET  
AS A HERITAGE CONSERVATION ZONING DISTRICT

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Historic Preservation Date  
Consultant

Accepted by Charles Edwin Chase 2/28/83  
Chairman, Heritage Date  
Conservation Board

Designated by Miami City Commission  
Ordinance No. 9645  
Date 6/15/83

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**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

Historic Name:

Flagler Worker's House

Current Name:

Flagler Worker's House  
Butler Building

Location:

Fort Dallas Park  
60-64 S.E. 4 Street

Present Owner:

City of Miami  
3500 Pan American Drive  
Miami, Florida 33133

Present Use:

Vacant

Present Zoning District:

PR

HC Zoning Overlay District:

HC-1

Tax Folio Numbers:

01-0115-00-1080  
01-0115-00-1090

Boundary Description of HC Zoning District:

Lots 17, 18, and 19, less street, of the plat of FORT DALLAS PARK, as recorded in Plat Book 4 at Page 85, of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida.

HC Zoning Classification:

Historic Site

Dade County Historic Survey Rating:

Architectural Significance - 2

Historical Significance - 1

Contextural Significance - 1

# FLAGLER WORKER'S HOUSE

FORT DALLAS PARK 60-64 S.E. 4 STREET



location



site plan

## II. SIGNIFICANCE

### Statement of Significance:

Flagler Worker's House is significant for its association with Henry Flagler and Miami's early development at the turn of the century. A one-of-a-kind structure in downtown Miami, it is the only building of its type, age and size still standing in the downtown area.

Flagler Worker's House was one of at least thirty houses built for people working on the construction of the Royal Palm Hotel. A row of identical houses was built along what was then 14<sup>th</sup> Street (now S.E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street) between S.E. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenues. Similar houses, although slightly larger, were constructed along 13<sup>th</sup> Street (now S.E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street). Henry Flagler, who built the Florida East Coast Railroad and brought development to Miami, ordered the construction of these houses on a site he had personally selected after seeing his workers and their families living in tents. The present house is the only one of these houses that has survived twentieth century development. Furthermore, it is the last known structure in Miami directly associated with Henry Flagler and the City's development in the last years of the nineteenth century.

Flagler Worker's House is also an excellent example of a modest frame house constructed at the turn-of-the-century as workers' housing. Although these structures lined residential working class developments throughout the United States, a house of this type and age is rare today in Miami.

### Relationship to Criteria for Designation:

Flagler Worker's House is eligible for designation under the following criteria:

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

Flagler Worker's House is the last known structure in Miami directly associated with Henry Flagler and the early years of Miami's development.

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

Flagler Worker's House is the earliest known residence remaining in downtown Miami. The house reflects the City's development in the last years of the nineteenth century.

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

Flagler Worker's House is an excellent example of a modest frame house constructed at the turn-of-the-century as workers' housing. Although common throughout the United States, its type is rare in Miami.

### III. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Date of Erection:

c. 1897-1899

Architect:

Unknown

Builder:

Florida East Coast Railroad

Historical Context:

While the Royal Palm Hotel was under construction, Henry Flagler visited Miami on inspection trips. During one of his visits, Flagler noticed that the workers were living in crudely built tents. When Flagler was told that most could not afford to build houses because they had lost everything in the freeze that killed most of the citrus crop in North and Central Florida, he ordered that housing be built for them. Flagler personally selected a site near the hotel on what are now S.E. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets.

Monthly rents for these houses ranged from \$15 to \$22, depending on the size and indoor plumbing facilities. Houses could also be purchased for \$1,300 to \$3,000 each.

By the mid-1970's, only one of these houses still remained. When this house was also scheduled for demolition to make way for a parking garage, it was moved in 1980 to Fort Dallas Park.

#### **IV. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION**

##### Description of Building:

Flagler Worker's House is a two story rectangular structure with three bays across the front façade. The building, topped with a gable roof, is of balloon frame construction and is covered with shiplap siding. The gable end of the building is faced with decorative wood shingles.

The main entrance was originally located in the far right bay of the front façade but was moved to the center bay during the 1950's. The original one story porch which extended across the entire façade, was also removed at this time.

Windows on the front façade are wooden double hung sash with six-over-six lights, while those on the side façade feature two-over-two lights. Wood shutters flank the second story windows. Windows on the first story are presently boarded up.

The building was moved to its present site in 1980. At that time, later additions including a two story front porch and a concrete rear wing were removed. The building will be restored to its original appearance.

##### Description of Site:

Flagler Worker's House faces east and is located in Fort Dallas Park. Although the area is presently undeveloped, designs have been formulated to transform the property into a downtown plaza and riverwalk.



Flagler Worker's House  
Fort Dallas Park, 60-64 S.E. 4 Street  
East (front) and south facades  
1983



Palm Cottage  
60 S.E. 4 Street



Flagler Worker's House  
South side of present S.E. 2 Street between S.E. 1 & 2 Avenues  
Row of identical worker's houses with Royal Palm Hotel in background c. 1900  
(Historical Association of Southern Florida)

## V. PLANNING CONTEXT

### Present Trends and Conditions:

In the late 1970's, Flagler Worker's House (then known as the Raymond W. Butler Insurance Building) was located in a rapidly developing area in the heart of downtown Miami. In 1978, the City of Miami announced plans to acquire the property for the construction of a World Trade Center and parking facility serving the new convention center. Although moving a historic structure from its original site is considered a last resort for preservation, no other alternative existed in this situation.

An ad hoc committee of representatives from local preservation groups and the City Planning Department and Parks Department studied all feasible locations. The Fort Dallas Park site was chosen because of its proximity to the original site and its potential for public exposure and education along the Miami Riverwalk. The building was moved in 1980 utilizing funds from the convention center project.

Designs for development of Fort Dallas Park and restoration of Flagler Worker's House have been prepared, but lack of funding has prevented implementation. Construction, however, is scheduled to start this year.

### Conservation Objectives:

Flagler Worker's House should be accurately restored on the exterior as planned by the City of Miami Parks Department. The interior should be adapted for a small restaurant or "take-out" café on the first floor and office space on the second floor.

The park itself should be developed as designed with benches, paved walkways, heavy landscaping, and a continuation of the Miami Riverwalk. The area surrounding the building should simulate its original streetscape setting. Interpretive information about the building's history, architecture, and preservation process should also be provided.

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

## VI. HC ZONING ELEMENTS

### Boundaries:

The boundaries of the HC zoning district have been drawn to include the tract of land owned by the City of Miami and known as Fort Dallas Park.

### Major Exterior Surfaces Subject to Review:

All four facades of Flagler Worker's House shall be considered major exterior surfaces subject to review.

### Major Landscape Features Subject to Review:

The major landscape features subject to review shall include all features which are subject to requirements for tree removal permits, as set forth in Chapter 17 of the City Code.

## VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Blackman, E.V. Miami and Dade County, Florida: Its Settlement, Progress, and Achievement. Victor Rainbolt: Washington, D.C., 1921.

Dade County, Florida. Community and Economic Development, Historic Preservation Division, Dade County Historic Survey, Site Inventory File for 134 S.E. 2 Street, Miami, Florida.

Lassman, Valerie Fisher. "A History of a Residence of Early Miami." Unpublished Research Report, Miami, Florida, 1978.