

---

# PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH 3429 DEVON ROAD

---

## Designation Report





City of Miami

REPORT OF THE CITY OF MIAMI PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
TO THE HERITAGE CONSERVATION BOARD  
ON THE POTENTIAL DESIGNATION OF  
PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
3429 DEVON ROAD  
AS A HERITAGE CONSERVATION ZONING DISTRICT

Amendment

Prepared by

Sarah E. Eaton, 11/19/82  
Historic Preservation Date  
Consultant

Approved by

Charles Edwin Chase 11/30/82  
Chairman, Historic Date  
Environmental Preservation Board

Designated by the Miami City Commission

Ordinance No. 9620

Date \_\_\_\_\_

5/31/83

<u>CONTENTS</u>	Page
I. General Information	4
II. Significance	7
III. Historical Information	8
IV. Architectural Information	9
V. Planning Context	11
VI.	HC Zoning Elements 12
VII. Bibliography	13

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

Historic Name:

Plymouth Congregational Church

Current Name:

Plymouth Congregational Church

Location:

3429 Devon Road  
Miami, Florida 33133

Present Owner:

Plymouth Congregational Church  
C/o William C. Lewis  
401 Miracle Mile  
Coral Gables, Florida 33134

Present Occupant:

Plymouth Congregational Church  
3429 Devon Road  
Miami, Florida 33133

Present Use:

Religious

Present Zoning District:

R-1

Present Overlay District:

Boundary Description of HC Zoning District:

The lot shown as "Church" on the amended plat of PLYMOUTH COURT, as recorded in Plat Book 4 at page 78, of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida; and the southwesterly 50 feet of the southeasterly 200 feet of that portion of Lot "A" of the plat of EWANTON HEIGHTS, as recorded in Plat Book B at Page 52 of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida, lying northwesterly of Main Highway, Miami, Florida.

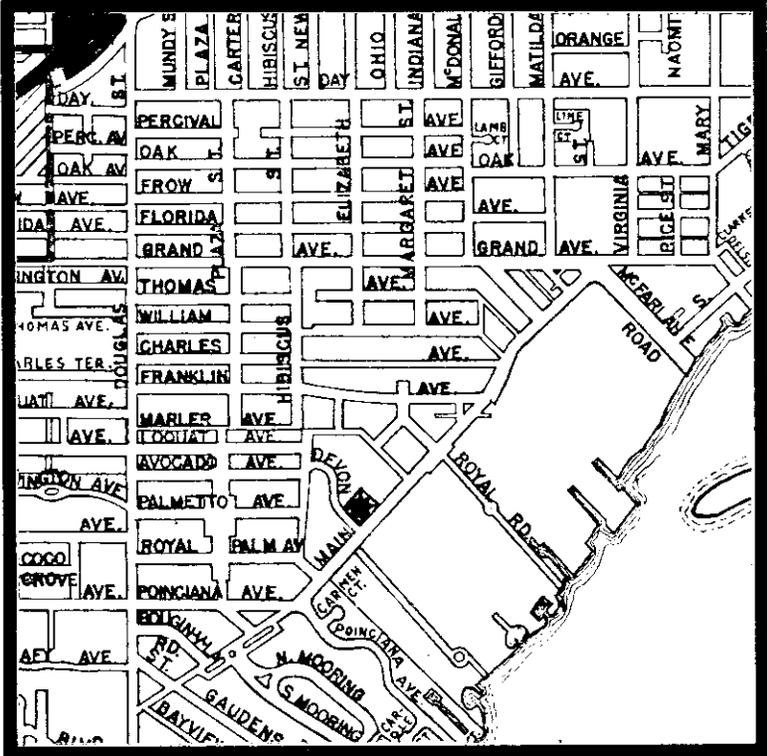
HC Zoning Classification:

Historic Site

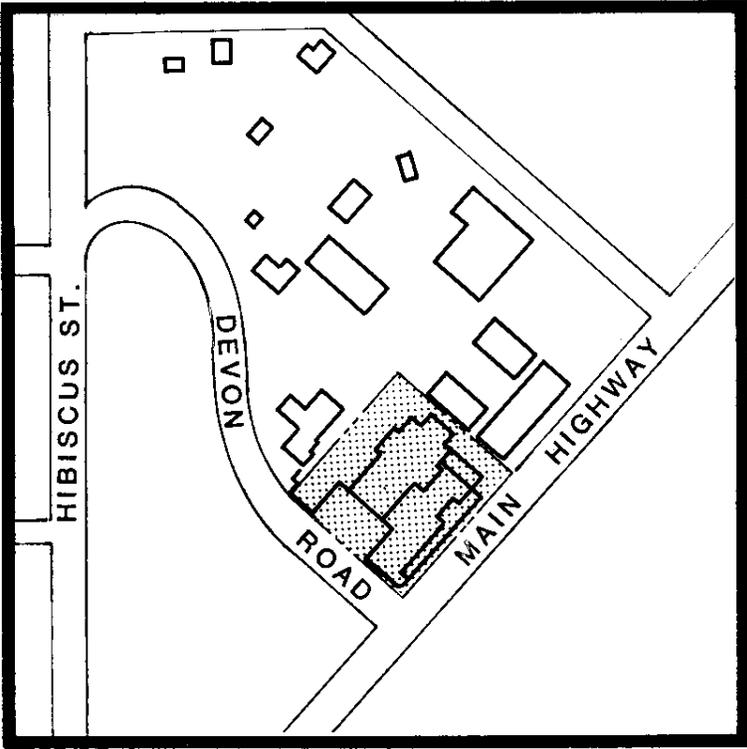
Dade County Historic Survey Rating:

Architectural Significance	-1
Historical Significance	-1
Contextural Significance	-1

# PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH 3429 DEVON ROAD



location



site plan

## II. SIGNIFICANCE

### Statement of Significance:

Plymouth Congregational Church is significant for its association with the early development of Coconut Grove. In addition, the church is an outstanding example of Spanish Mission style architecture and is particularly noteworthy for the excellence of its design, details, materials, and craftsmanship.

Organized in 1897, Plymouth Congregational Church was founded by some of the most influential pioneer citizens of Coconut Grove. Solomon G. Merrick, father of George Merrick who developed Coral Gables, became pastor in 1901 and was the first Congregationalist minister to serve the Church. Plymouth Church expanded rapidly as Coconut Grove developed and outgrew two chapels before erecting the present structure in 1916.

Plymouth Congregational Church is also significant as an outstanding example of Spanish Mission style architecture. The building's twin bell towers, curvilinear gable roof, and elaborate front entrance are important elements of the entire composition. Also noteworthy is the building's stonework, laid by a single stonemason, a Spaniard named Felix Rebom.

### Relationship to Criteria for Designation:

Plymouth Congregational Church is eligible for designation under the following criteria.

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

Plymouth Congregational Church is a reflection of the development of Coconut Grove from its pioneer days and has served as one of the most significant religious institutions in that community.

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

Plymouth Congregational Church is an outstanding example of Spanish Mission style architecture, particularly evident in its twin bell towers, curvilinear gable roof, and side arcades.

7. Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship of outstanding quality or which represent a significant innovation or adaptation to the South Florida environment.

Plymouth Congregational Church is especially noteworthy for its outstanding stonework, enriched classical door surround, elaborate front door, and twin bell towers.

### III. **HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

#### Date of Erection:

1916-1917

#### Architect:

The architect for Plymouth Congregational Church was Clinton McKenzie of New York, a nationally-known church architect.

#### Builder/Contractor:

The stonemason for Plymouth Congregational Church was Felix Rebom.

#### Historical Context:

Plymouth Congregational Church had its start in 1897 when the Union Congregational Church was founded by Rev. James Bolton. During the first three years, a small chapel was erected on what is now Grand Avenue and Virginia Street on land donated by Commodore Ralph Munroe. A larger structure was built on McFarlane Road, now the site of the American Legion hall, during Solomon Merrick's pastorate.

In 1915, Rev. George Spaulding urged the membership to invest in real estate. The church purchased a tract of land in Coconut Grove, subdivided it, and sold enough lots to begin construction of the present church building on a portion of the land. The original part of the church was begun in June, 1916, and completed in August, 1917.

The major period of growth for the church occurred between 1947 and 1971, when membership increased from under 100 to nearly 2,000. The church also expanded physically to meet its growing needs. A major addition to the church was completed in 1954, and additional buildings, including educational units, a church office building, and a fellowship hall, were added in 1959. Plymouth

Congregational Church continues to function as a major institution in Coconut Grove.

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

##### Description of Building:

Plymouth Congregational Church was constructed as a one story rectangular structure. Topped with a gable roof covered with corrugated clay tiles, the building is constructed of native oolitic limestone.

The southeast (front) façade is highlighted by a curvilinear gable surmounted by twin bell towers. The main entrance is located in the center bay and features an enriched classical door surround. The door itself is approximately 375 years old and came from a monastery in the Pyrenees Mountains. Made of hand carved walnut backed with oak, it still retains its original hand wrought iron fittings. Smaller doorways on either side of the main entrance lead to side loggias which enclose the interior. Round arches supported by piers comprise these side elevations.

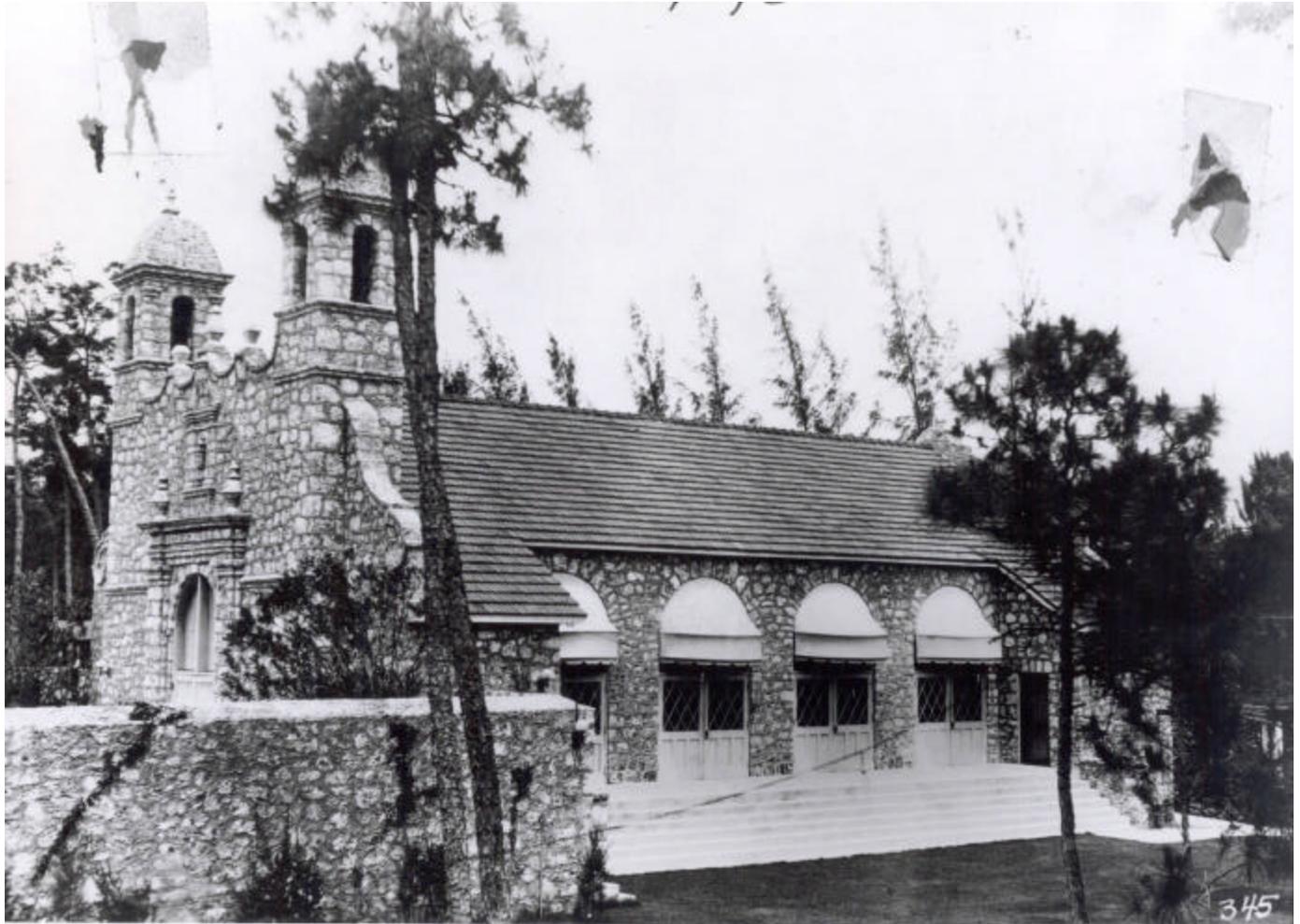
The church was enlarged in 1954 by the addition of two transepts and a new chancel. This addition, designed by Robert Law Weed, changed the plan of the church from rectangular to cross-shaped.

##### Description of Site:

Plymouth Congregational Church is located on the corner of Devon Road and Main Highway, and the lot is enclosed by a wall of oolitic limestone. A garden on the east side of the sanctuary is walled on three sides and enclosed on the fourth by the church. Loggias around the walls present the effect of a cloistered courtyard. An open garden is located to the west of the church.



Plymouth Congregational Church  
3429 Devon Road  
Southwest (front) facade  
1982



Plymouth Congregational Church  
3429 Devon Road  
Southwest (front) and southeast façade  
C 1920

(Historical Association of Southern Florida)

## V. PLANNING CONTEXT

### Present Trends and Conditions:

Plymouth Congregational Church is situated in the midst of a stable single family residential neighborhood. The church has a large congregation, which values the historic significance of the buildings. No significant change is anticipated within the boundaries of the proposed HC-1 zoning overlay.

The church also owns several acres of land in addition to the area included within the proposed HC-1 zoning overlay boundaries. This additional area is not fully utilized by church related facilities, and may be subject to future development. Such development should be in accord with the existing R-1 zoning height and bulk regulations to avoid negative impacts on the historic site.

## **VI. HC ZONING ELEMENTS**

### Boundaries:

The boundaries of the HC zoning district have been drawn to include only that tract of land immediately surrounding Plymouth Congregational Church. Although other portions of the property are historically related to the church building, it was the decision of the Heritage Conservation Board to maintain the boundaries of the Interim Heritage Conservation Zoning District. This should not be construed as a precedent-setting decision, but rather as the grandfathering of a previous decision.

### Major Exterior Surfaces Subject to Review:

All four facades of Plymouth Congregational Church and all surfaces of all other existing improvements or structures (walls, loggias, etc.) on the site 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**

Ash, Agnes. "A Vine Place to Get Married, " The Miami News, June 12, 1966.

Dade County, Florida. Community and Economic Development, Historic Preservation Division. Dade County Historic Survey, Site Inventory File for 3429 Devon Road.

"The History of Plymouth Congregational Church." Brochure, Plymouth Congregational Church, Miami, Florida.

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, Nomination Form for Plymouth Congregational Church.