
Water Pump House

5808 NE 4th Court

Designation Report



Historic and Environmental Preservation Board



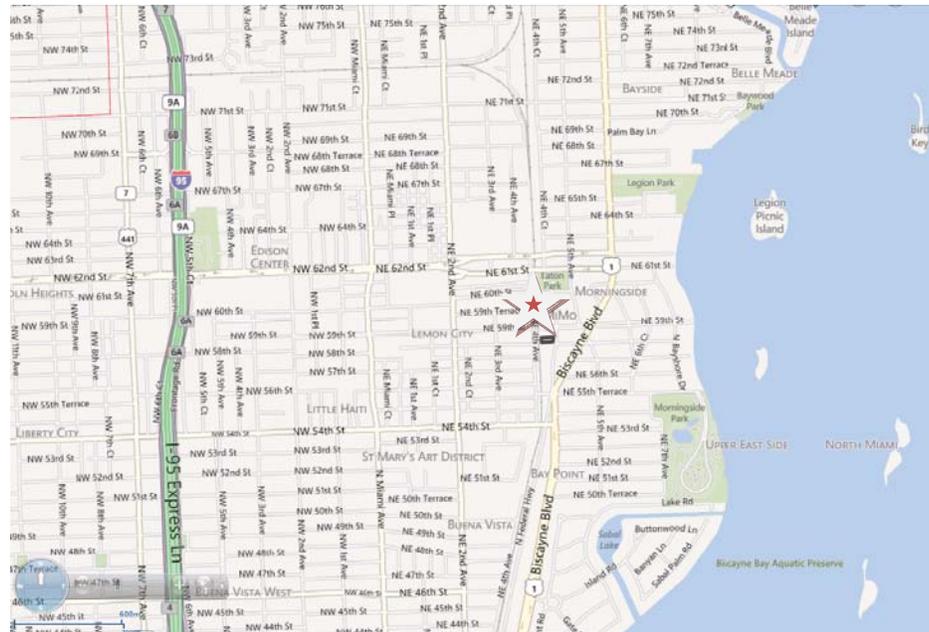
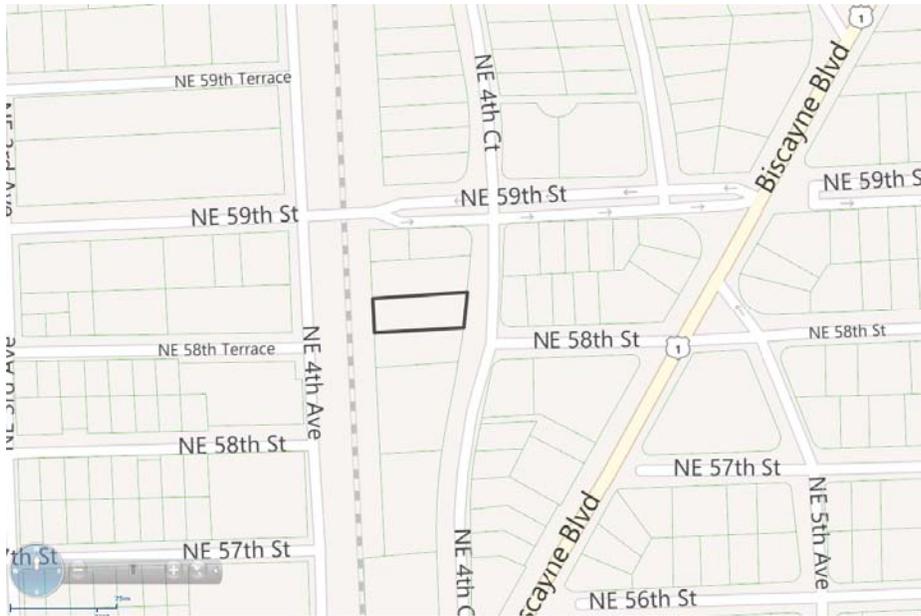
City of Miami

REPORT OF THE CITY OF MIAMI
PRESERVATION OFFICER
TO THE HISTORIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION BOARD
ON THE POTENTIAL DESIGNATION OF THE
WATER PUMP HOUSE
AS A HISTORIC SITE

WRITTEN BY MARINA NOVAES

JUNE 2012

Location and site maps



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I- General Information

Historic Name: BAY SHORE PUMP HOUSE

Current Name: WATER PUMP HOUSE

Date of Construction: c.1923

Location: 5808 NE 4TH COURT

Present Owner: AL D'ECA & ASSOCIATES INVESTMENTS INC

Present use: BEAUTY SALON, SPA

Zoning: T5-R

Folio No.: 01-3218-038-0170

Boundary (Legal Description): BAYSHORE UNIT No. 4, PB 16-30 LOTS 7 & 8, BLK- 14, LOT SIZE 14486 SQ FT OR 18791-2198 09 1999 6 OR 18791-2198 0999 03

Setting: The property is located in the Palm Grove Historic District. It sits on the third lot south of NE 59th Street at 5808 NE 4th Court on the west side of the road; the property's rear faces the railroad and NE 4th Avenue. The adjacent lot on the south is currently a parking lot and a building apartment is found on the adjoining lot on the north.

Integrity: Even though the Water Pump House has suffered several adaptations and had been in such disrepair to the point of losing its roof, the structure did not lose its most significant architectural features and integrity. The Water Pump House has integrity of location, design, material, setting, and feeling.

II- Statement of Significance

The Water Pump House is located in Palm Grove Historic District, Bay Shore Unit No. 4 subdivision (1925) which was platted by the Bay Shore Investment Company, a body corporate under the laws of the State of Delaware but authorized to perform business in the State of Florida.

The Bay Shore subdivisions, as many others from the same period, followed the Miami boom development pattern; like no other era in South Florida, the beginning of the Twentieth Century was quite unique and forever changed the region's landscape.

When the World War I came to an end in 1919, the whole world entered a decade of wealth and euphoria "The Roaring Twenties" was a period of sustained economic prosperity that emphasized social, artistic, and cultural trends. The economic recovery program of President Harding (1921) turned around America's economy that culminated with the "Coolidge prosperity" years when the American people experienced unprecedented prosperity.

Miami Beach and Miami were already considered eccentric touristic destinations and local developers did not delay in promoting the area to attract portion of this overflow of cash, promotional advertisement was largely used for this purpose and soon the city got an influx of people from all over, the population of Miami more than doubled in a five years span from 1920 to 1925, and the prices of plots of land could double or triple in a day during the height of the boom.¹

Many out of state developers rushed into Miami's real estate staggering market craving a slice of the pie; James H. Nunnally a candy company owner in Delaware and the founder of the Bay Shore Investment Company is an example of business man turning into the real estate market to take advantage of the boom era in South Florida.

Nunnally plated a large area north of downtown Miami in phases between 1922 and 1925 which today encompasses mostly of Morningside Historic District and the southern part of Palm Grove Historic District where the Water Pump House is located. Nunnally's subdivisions were meticulously planned and superior to any other offering paved roads, sidewalks, swales, medians, underground wiring for telephones and electric lights, storm sewers, sanitary sewers, gas lines, street

¹ Metropolitan Dade County. "From Wilderness to Metropolis – The History and Architecture of Dade County, Florida 1825-1940." 1982. 76.

lights, and fresh water through underground conduits from its wells and pumping station.²

The Bay Shore Investment Company platted Bay Shore Unit No. 4 in 1925 between today's NE 55th Terrace and NE 59th Street (south/north) and the railroad and Biscayne Boulevard (west/east), back then the streets had names such as Pedimont Drive, Pierce Ave, Hibiscus Ave, Biscayne Ave, and Dixie Blvd.

The Water Pump House is an imposing building constructed of native coral-rock and wood with an unusual arched cathedral recessed entrance and heavy wide wooden doors with large iron strap hinges, it was probably built prior to 1923 by Nunnally when developing his subdivisions as shown in a 1923 sales brochure, the brochure states:

**"Bay Shore's own Wells
Supply Pure Water**

Residents of Bay Shore are assured of an ample supply of pure drinking water and are not dependent upon the city's supply. Two six-inch wells have been drilled 60 feet deep on the top of the high ridge at the west end of Bay Shore, and the tests show it is as pure as any water on the East Coast of Florida.

A Fairbanks Morse engine of 38 horsepower drives a Gould pump which draws the water from these wells to an 8,000 gallon tank, the largest of any subdivision in Miami. The capacity of the engine and pump is sufficient for a 32,000 gallon plant. Every mechanical device for the proper regulation of pressure for a continued supply has been installed.

An ornate pump-house of natural rock, with its premises elaborately beautified is situated on the west end of the property near the wells. A wide lawn, Italian cypress, creeping ficus repens and crimson bougainvillea give it a distinctive appearance that prove a complete deception as to the building's purpose.

Gas and Electric Service

Few Miami subdivisions have been able to supply gas for their home owners. The mains for this utility were installed at the expense of the developers tapping onto the Miami Gas Company's mains at Buena Vista.

² Meadows, Gail and Hopper Jr., William E. "Morningside and Bay Point" in Miami's Historic Neighborhoods: A History of Community. San Antonio: Historical Publications Network. 2001. 38.

Complete electric service is also available. No unsightly poles however, mar the landscape. Conduits for street lighting are underground, while poles which carry the lines to the houses are installed in the alleys at the rear of the residences.

The Water Plant at Bay Shore”

The year that Nunnally’s last subdivision was platted (1925) coincides with the beginning of the real estate decline period which culminated with the devastating hurricane of 1926 that plunged South Florida into a depression three years before the rest of the country.³ That may have been the reason for the abandonment of the Water Pump House since the water supply service was taken over by the City and Palm Grove Historic District (where the pump house is located) development did not get vigor until 1936 when the local economy started to heat up again.

A decade later, the property was purchased by Nadine Casperson in 1935; she was an office secretary and bookkeeper for Duncan McDonald insurance agency⁴ and probably the first to use the property as a home. Ever since, the property has gone through periods of occupancy and complete abandonment; local pianist Marvin Maher appears in a Terence Cantarella’s article as being the one who converted the building into a private home even giving music lessons there for many years, the fact is that there are very few documentation on the building in the period from 1925 through 1976 when Robert Brent Bowman bought the house.

The notorious murderer of fourteen-year-old Eileen Adams in 1967 (Ohio), Robert Brent Bowman was reported to police by his ex-wife in 1981 and tracked down to Miami in 1982 where he was found living in an “abandoned restaurant near Miami wearing a tattered shirt, jeans and a scruffy beard.” Inside Bowman’s house dolls tied up in a similar manner to how Miss Adams was found were discovered. Apparently, he became involved in an offbeat religion and given up all of his material things.⁵

³ Metropolitan Dade County. “From Wilderness to Metropolis – The History and Architecture of Dade County, Florida 1825-1940.” 1982. 83.

⁴ Rodriguez, Ivan. Dade County Historic Survey Site Inventory Form 8DA2127. 1979.

⁵ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2026370/Ex-wife-75-year-old-trial-horrific-murder-schoolgirl-1967-says-saw-victim-death-hanging-naked-like-Jesus-basement.html>

According to Terence Cantarella's article, Bowman used LSD, slept inside a glass pyramid, and talked about being spiritually connected to John the Baptist and around the same time; ads began to appear in local newspapers announcing meetings at the pump house hosted by an outfit called "Cornucopia Centers". The meetings explored things like "multi-sense awakening and cosmic rites."⁶ At that time, Bowman got away for lack of evidence but new DNA technology was able to provide the missing evidence and Bowman was arrested again in 2008 near Palm Springs, CA, he pleaded not guilty and faces life in prison if convicted.

The house was passed ownership to the Veterans' Administration in 1978 (Bowman was a veteran with default mortgage); sold in 1980, it was partitioned and transformed into a cheap residential rental units for women and only three years later it was sold again to Everett Gum, a retired art teacher that bought the property as an investment but couldn't keep up in maintaining the house that fell in disrepair by 1988.

Years of abandonment passed by until the building was found unsafe and condemned for demolition by the City of Miami in 1995.

A Miami Herald's article from April 1995 says: "Time has been cruel. Today, the old pump house is vacant, occupied by a homeless man named Jim and his two dogs. Other humans camp out there. The roof is gone, burned, although heavy 2 by 4 doors of native Dade pine remain. Hundreds of abandoned tires, three gutted cars and dozens of auto gasoline tanks litter its overgrown once elaborate grounds."⁷

By the same time, The Morningside Civic Association wrote a letter directed to the Deputy Secretary and Chief Enforcement Officer of Dade County, Mr. Robert Martin stating: "The board of directors of the Morningside Civic Association is very disturbed by this action and wishes to go on record as being strongly opposed to the demolition of this historic structure, which traces its history to the original development of our neighborhood in 1923." The Morningside Civic Association was awarded a certificate of acknowledgment for its "Outstanding Contribution Saving the Coral Rock Pump House" on June 13, 1996 by Dade Heritage Trust, INC.

⁶ <http://terencecantarella.com/tag/bayshore-pumphouse/>

⁷ Tomb, Geoffrey. "The silent Passing of Lemon City". The Herald, April 11, 1995. Section B

In September, 1995, Keith Edward Soto, an architect and member of the City of Miami Historic and Environmental Preservation Board at that time wrote a memorandum stating the importance of saving the structure and that he was working with Sarah Eaton (then historic preservation officer) on writing a designation report for the building and urging the City Zoning Board and/or any other jurisdictional authorities involved to do whatever necessary to release the liens on the property and ensure it was viable for investment and therefore being saved.

Soto wrote on his designation report draft: "The building is currently unoccupied and was recently deemed an unsafe structure by Dade County. Through the intervention of a concerned preservationist, Mark Greene, its unique structural characteristics were brought to the attention of Miami Mayor Steven Clark and he, along with City staff, lifted the demolition order which had been placed on the structure. Dade Heritage Trust is currently working with the building owner to secure and stabilize the structure and to assist him in finding a buyer who is committed to restoring the building and adapting it for a new use."

The commotion brought public and authority awareness and Gum that rather had had the house demolished, agreed on allowing the Dade Heritage Trust securing the house and trying to find a buyer willing to restore the building.

Salvatore Patronaggio acquired the property for only \$16,500 in 1996. With the intention to restore the building, he recorded a covenant with the City of Miami in June 10, 1996 on which the city agreed in waiving the code enforcement liens in the amount of \$245,750 in exchange for the property's restoration. In September 1999 the City of Miami formally released the liens on the property.

J. B. Kipatrick, former actor and beauty salon owner, and his wife Sabrina D'eca fell in love with the property and decided to make Patronaggio an offer when searching a location for their new beauty salon and SPA. They bought the property in 1999 and even though it was in better shape, there was still a lot to be done.

After a lot of hard work and a few scary moments with people trying to invade the building, things started to get better when the neighborhood (Palm Grove) and Biscayne Blvd (MiMo) became Historic Districts and the zoning code which was restricted in that location changed attracting this way more new business to the area.

Today, the building is “a fully restored sanctuary with a cathedral ceiling, glazed concrete floors, dark interior woodwork, and lush tropical landscaping. The crowning jewel: an elaborate, coral-rock water feature that took three years to chisel out of the ground. Spread halfway across the back garden, its water cascades from an upper pool into a larger lagoon, where hand-carved stone steps descend like a Roman bath beneath the glimmering surface.”⁸

⁸ <http://terencecantarella.com/tag/bayshore-pumphouse/>

III- Description

The Water Pump House is a coral-rock and wood structure with composition shingle gable roof. The building has an arched recessed cathedral main entrance with double wooden doors surrounded by wood siding and topped by an arched wood and glass transom that fits inside the coral-rock arched entrance opening. A secondary entrance is found on the south side of the façade which seems to have been an open porch that was enclosed with wood siding. A narrow window opening is found in each side of the main door on the coral-rock wall façade with a rustic metal sconce in between them.

The building has a non-original elaborated metal gate and fence on top of approximately 2' high coral-rock wall with piers. Another recessed double ornate metal gate is found at the southern property line.

According to Keith Soto's 1995 designation report draft:

"The Bay Shore Pump-house was originally square in plan, built of oolitic limestone rubble laid in a random pattern, designed in a Mediterranean Revival style. The original building was constructed circa 1922 and its front (east) façade is distinguished by a large step-recessed arched entry with small vertical slit windows to either side. The arch, constructed of stone, consists of four arches, each being of smaller radius and inset from the next. Originally the front roof line was characterized by a large arched parapet which eased to a flat parapet at north and south sides of the building. On the north elevation a chimney constructed of oolitic limestone projects above the roof line. This chimney appears to be decorative in nature as there is no flue.

The building was altered in 1936, taking on its present appearance with the addition of a porch structure composed of three bays with oolitic limestone columns along its south façade. The roof line of the front façade was also altered at this time taking on the shape of a gable roof with its ridge centered on the entry arch. The south side of the gable roof extends over the porch lending a shed appearance to that addition. The rear of the building appears to be greatly altered from original with a bare cast-in-place concrete gable dominating this façade. The north, east and south walls of the structure appear to be of solid stone construction with oolitic limestone occurring inside as well as out. Inside, a wood mezzanine structure occurs at the rear (west) half of the building. The

gable roof is constructed of large scale wood trussed rafters with wood tongue-and-groove sheathing.

Sometime after hurricane Andrew in 1992, a fire greatly damaged the roof and mezzanine at the rear of the building leaving this portion of the structure exposed to the elements. The roof over the center bay of the South porch addition is also missing."

IV- Application of Criteria for Designation

The Water Pump House located at 5808 NE 4th Court has significance as it relates to the historic heritage of Miami and possesses integrity of setting, materials, feeling, design, and location. The property is eligible for designation as a historic site under the criteria (3), (5), and (7) as numbered in Sec. 23-4 (a), of Chapter 23 of the City Code.

(3) exemplify the historical, cultural, political, economical, or social trends of the community;

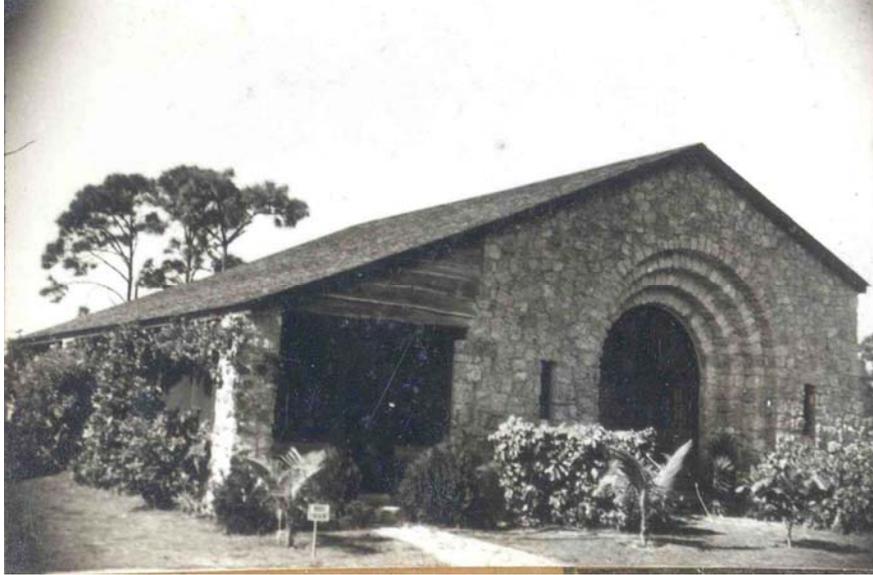
(5) embody those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or method of construction;

(7) contain elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship of outstanding quality or which represent a significant innovation or adaptation to the South Florida environment;

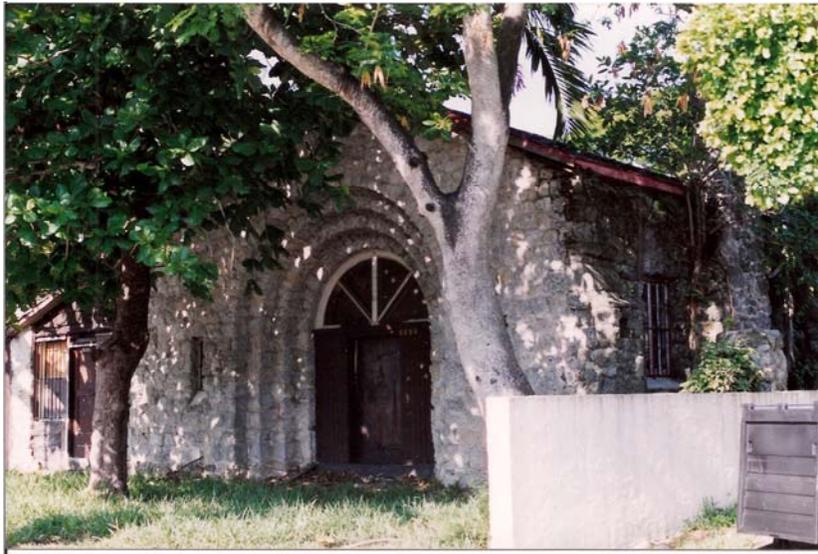
V- Bibliography

- http://www.calvin-coolidge.org/html/the_harding_coolidge_prosperit.html
- <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2026370/Ex-wife-75-year-old-trial-horrific-murder-schoolgirl-1967-says-saw-victim-death-hanging-naked-like-Jesus-basement.html>
- <http://terencecantarella.com/tag/bayshore-pumphouse/>
- Eaton, Sarah E. and Taylor, Tulie W. "Bay Shore Historic District" NRHP nomination, 8DA5201. 1992
- Eaton, Sarah E. "Morningside Historic District" designation report. 1984.
- Meadows, Gail and Hopper Jr., William E. "Morningside and Bay Point" in Miami's Historic Neighborhoods: A History of Community. San Antonio: Historical Publications Network. 2001.
- Metropolitan Dade County. "From Wilderness to Metropolis – The History and Architecture of Dade County, Florida 1825-1940." 1982.
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- Soto, Keith Edward. "Bay Shore Pump-House". Designation Report Draft. 1995.
- Tomb, Geoffrey." The Silent Passing of Lemon City". The Miami Herald, April 11, 1995 – Section B
- Thomason and Associates. "Palm Grove Historic District" report prepared for the City of Miami, FL and The National Trust for Historic Preservation. May 2008.

IV- Photographs



Tax card picture



c. 1995



c. 2005

Bay Shore
"ON THE SHORE OF BISCAYNE BAY"

UNIT NO. 4
PLAT SHOWING
BLOCKS 13, 14 AND 15
W.C. BLISS, ENGINEER
SCALE - 1" = 100'-0"

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS That we, the undersigned BAY SHORE INVESTMENT COMPANY, a body corporate under the laws of the State of Delaware, but authorized to transact business in Florida, have caused the plat shown by the annexed plat to be surveyed, planned and subdivided under the name of BAY SHORE, UNIT NO. 4, and have kept a part of Section of Tract 54 South of Range 42 East, Choke Creek Range being a part of Section of Tract 54 South of Range 42 East, Choke Creek Range, in the northern part of the Miami-Dade County, Florida, which will more largely appear by the said plat or map annexed as aforesaid, and that the said plat or map, as shown as aforesaid, is hereby dedicated to the perpetual use of the Public for broader purposes of streets, thoroughfares and boulevards, as shown on said plat, reserving only to itself and its successors the reservation or reservations thereof if ever discontinued by operation of law.

Wherefore it is prayed, that the said plat or map be admitted to record in the proper book kept in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Miami-Dade County, Florida, and be recorded and remain of record in accordance with the laws of said State.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the said Bay Shore Investment Company has hereunto set its corporate name and affixed its corporate seal by and through its President and Secretary of Miami, Florida, this 27th day of June, A.D. 1928.

Signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of:

James H. [Signature] President
E.S. Bliss Secretary

STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF DADE)
I, the undersigned Notary Public, do hereby certify that on this 27th day of June, 1928, before me personally appeared *E.S. Bliss*, Secretary of the Bay Shore Investment Company, a body corporate under the laws of the State of Florida, and they and each of them did declare to me that they executed the foregoing plat of subdivision by and with the authority of the Board of Directors of said Corporation, and that the annexed plat is the true and correct one of said Corporation, and was lawfully affixed and attached to and with the said authority of said Board of Directors, and that the same is and was the free act and deed of said Corporation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and official seal of Miami, Dade County, Florida, this 27th day of June, A.D. 1928.

James H. [Signature] Notary Public, State of Florida
My commission expires Dec. 22, 1928.

This map was approved by the City Commissioners of Miami, Miami, Florida, by Ordinance No. 559 passed and adopted this 27th day of June, A.D. 1928.

Approved *James H. [Signature]*
City Clerk

Approved *E.S. Bliss*
Secretary of Public Service

This map was approved by the County Engineer of Dade County, Florida.

Robert [Signature]
County Engineer

I hereby certify that the attached plat of BAY SHORE, UNIT NO. 4, is a true and correct copy thereof as actually surveyed and plotted under my direction.

W.C. Bliss
Licensed Civil Engineer No. 285