
THE ALAMO

1611 N.W. 12 AVENUE

Designation Report



City of Miami

REPORT OF THE CITY OF MIAMI
PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT
TO THE HISTORIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION BOARD
ON THE POTENTIAL DESIGNATION OF
THE ALAMO
AS A HERITAGE CONSERVATION ZONING DISTRICT

Prepared by Sarah E. Eaton 9/15/82
Historic Preservation Date
Consultant

Accepted by Charles Edwin Chase 9/28/82
Chairman Date

Designated by the Miami City Commission
Ordinance No. 9562
Date 1/13/83

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Historic Name:

Miami City Hospital Building No. 1; The Alamo

Current Name:

The Alamo

Location:

1611 N.W. 12 Avenue
Miami, Florida

Present Owner:

Mr. Fred Cowell, President
Public Health Trust
1611 N.W. 12 Avenue
Miami, Florida 33136

Present Occupant:

Vacant – Under Restoration

Present Use:

Vacant – Under Restoration

Zoning District:

O-I/8

HC Zoning Overlay District:

HC-1

Boundary Description:

The east 371 feet of the west 730 feet of the south 220 feet of Tract 1 of the plat of JACKSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL TRACTS, as recorded in Plat Book 55 at Page 5, of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida, less the south 40 feet thereof.

HC Zoning Classification:

Historic Site

Dade County Historic Survey Rating:

Architectural Significance - 1

Historical Significance - 2

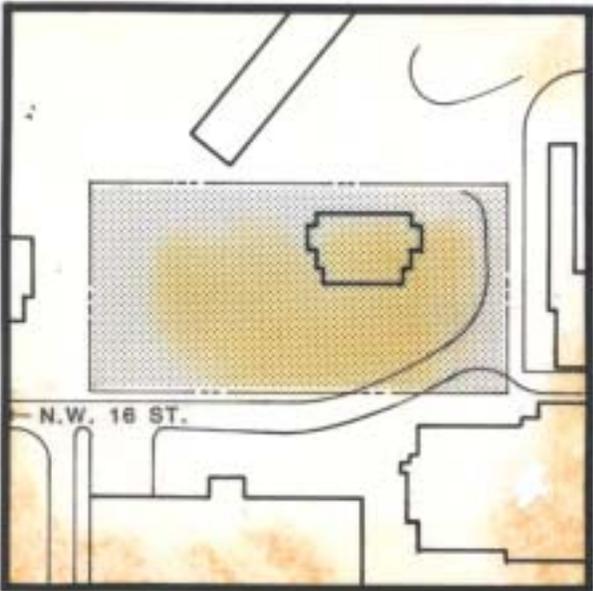
Contextural Significance - 3

THE ALAMO

1611 N.W. 12 AVENUE



location



site plan

II. SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Significance:

The Alamo, Miami's oldest surviving hospital building, is significant for its place in the history of medicine in Miami and as a reflection of urban growth in the City before 1920. In addition, the building, designed by a prominent South Florida architect, is an excellent example of Mediterranean Revival style architecture and is particularly noteworthy for the excellence of its craftsmanship and detailing.

The construction of The Alamo between 1916 and 1918 reflects the City's response to the ever-increasing demand for municipal services resulting from Miami's rapid growth. The City's first hospital building, constructed in 1909, had quickly proven inadequate to meet the area's growing population. The City's decision to locate a new facility on a site which then was "way out in the country" to provide room for future expansion foreshadowed the growth of both the hospital and the City.

The Alamo is an excellent example of Mediterranean Revival style architecture in a City noted for this particular style. The excellence of its design, craftsmanship, and detailing is particularly evident in the building's arcaded veranda; ornate, low-relief carvings; octagonal cupola; parapet gable roof and wall dormers; and entrance corridor.

The Alamo was designed by August Geiger, one of Miami's outstanding early architects. Geiger also designed the Miami Woman's Club and La Gorce Country Club and was the associate architect for the Dade County Courthouse.

Relationship to Criteria for Designation:

The Alamo is eligible for designation under the following criteria:

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

The Alamo is a reflection of urban growth in Miami before 1920. Its construction represents the City's response to the ever-increasing demand for municipal services which began during this period. As the City's oldest surviving hospital building, The Alamo also reflects the early history of medicine in Miami.

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

The Alamo is an excellent example of Mediterranean Revival style architecture and is particularly noteworthy for its arcaded veranda and

ornate low-relief carvings.⁶ Is an outstanding work of a prominent designer or builder.

The Alamo was designed by August Geiger, a prominent local architect who produced many of Miami's outstanding structures.

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.

The Alamo is particularly noteworthy for the excellence of its craftsmanship and detailing embodied in such features as its octagonal cupola, parapet gable roof and wall dormers, ornate low-relief carvings, and entrance corridor.



The Alamo
1611 N.W. 12 Avenue

III.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Date of Erection:

1916-1918

Architect:

The architect for The Alamo was August Geiger, a prominent local architect. Other significant works by Geiger include the Miami Woman's Club, La Gorce Country Club, and, as associate architect, the Dade County Courthouse.

Builder/Contractor:

St. John Construction Company

Historical Context:

Miami's first hospital, located on the corner of Biscayne Boulevard and N.E. 8 Street, was built in 1909 as the private Friendly Hospital. When the City assumed responsibility for the hospital in 1911, the name was changed to "The City Hospital."

As Miami's population grew, the hospital became inadequate, and the City decided to erect a new facility. The City Board of Health recommended the hospital's present day site, despite cries from some that the site was "way out in the country." Architects were invited to submit proposals for the new hospital, and on December 20, 1915, August Geiger's plans were accepted by the City Commission. Construction began in 1916 and the building opened in June 1918. The hospital was renamed "The James M. Jackson Memorial Hospital" in 1924 to honor Miami's pioneer physician.

As the City of Miami continued to grow, so did Jackson Memorial Hospital. By the 1970's, The Alamo was dwarfed by modern hospital buildings. When the building was threatened by demolition in 1977, local citizens mounted a campaign to raise funds to move the building. The Alamo was moved in 1970 and is currently being restored to serve as a visitor and information center for Jackson Memorial Hospital.

IV. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Description of Building:

The Alamo is a two-and-one-half story structure with seven bays across the south (front) façade. This rectangular building is topped with a parapet gable roof covered with Spanish tiles. The building is of reinforced concrete construction, and its exterior walls are covered with smooth stucco.

A one story arcaded veranda extends across the length of the south façade. The central arch, with its detailed archivolt and keystone, serves as the main entrance to the building. Seven pairs of French doors open into the south rooms on the first floor.

The majority of windows on the building are twelve over two single or double-hung sash, flanked by louvered shutters. Three wall dormer windows punctuate the roof on the south façade. Each dormer features a molded archivolt which contains a bas-relief spandrel separating a semi-circular fanlight and rectangular window. Dormers are topped by parapet gables roofs with decorative friezes.

A number of decorative features embellish the building, including an octagonal cupola with a copper-shedded dome and sarched, louvered windows. Panels of ornate, low-relief carvings decorate the frieze on the south façade. Additional carvings are located along the parapets on the east and west facades.

The exterior of The Alamo has been restored to its 1918 appearance, and the interior is currently undergoing an accurate reconstruction.

Description of the Site:

The Alamo is located within the Jackson Memorial Hospital Complex and sits in a small landscaped park, known as "Alamo Park." Although moved from its original site, the building continues to face south, thus retaining its north-south orientation.

V. PLANNING CONTEXT

Present Trends and Conditions:

In 1977, employees at Jackson Memorial Hospital learned that future plans for hospital expansion called for the demolition of The Alamo to make way for the construction of a new Maternal Child Care Tower. Although moving a historic structure from its original site is considered a last resort for preservation, no other alternative existed in this situation. In 1979, the building was moved 475 feet from its original site to a new location within the hospital complex. The new site is a small park designed for use by employees and patients of the medical center.

Restoration of The Alamo has been carried out in three phases: (1) stabilization, utility connections, and exterior façade restoration, completed in December, 1982; (2) interior remodeling and construction of an exterior elevator and stair tower; and (3) interior finishes. Phases II and III were begun in October, 1984, and are expected to be completed in May, 1985.

Restoration plans prepared by Herschel Shepard, AIA, an experienced restoration architect from Jacksonville, Florida, reflect an historically accurate restoration of most exterior building features, an accurate reconstruction of most interior features, and an addition of a contemporary elevator and stair tower at the rear of the building. Detailed plans for all three phases of construction were approved by the Urban Development Review Board on December 16, 1981, under the provisions of the Interim Heritage Conservation Ordinance.

The exterior of the building was recommended for designation by the Heritage Conservation Board in September, 1982, and was designated by the City Commission on January 13, 1983.

Conservation Objectives:

The restoration of The Alamo is an outstanding example of historic preservation resulting from grassroots concern, hard work, and contributions of employees and associates of the medical center. Long term preservation of The Alamo is now assured through commitment of the Public Health Trust. Future objectives should be to promote the project county wide, to encourage public usage, and to provide interpretive information concerning the building's history, architecture and preservation process.

Accurate reconstruction of the interior may require certain modifications to the South Florida Building Code. These exemptions should be granted because of the importance of the interior features to the total project. The Public Health Trust has undertaken one of the few accurate restoration projects in Miami and should be given whatever assistance, if possible.

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 Alamo and that portion of land currently known as Alamo Park, immediately surrounding the building. The entire tract of land contains modern hospital buildings which are visually unrelated to the historic site.

Major Exterior Surfaces Subject to Review:

All four facades of The Alamo 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.

Major Interior Surfaces Subject to Review:

The interior surfaces subject to review shall include the main entrance corridor and rotunda, hallways, and stairways.

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dade County, Florida. Community and Economic Development, Historic Preservation Division. Dade County Historic Survey, Site Inventory File for 1611 N.W. 12 Avenue, Miami, Florida.

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Straight, William M. "Jackson Memorial Hospital: A Half Century of Community Service." Reprint. The Journal of the Florida Medical Association, Vol. 54, August 1967, pp. 785-795.

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