

VII. ARCHITECTURE: A HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Early Residences 1910-1944

Most commonly, early residences within the Sailboat Bend Historic District consist of small wood frame or masonry houses as well as several multi-family apartment buildings. They represent the Frame Vernacular and Masonry Vernacular Styles. Vernacular refers to the common wood frame construction techniques employed by lay or self-taught builders and utilized easily available building materials.

Smaller homes continued to be built before World War I and the western section of the district began to be developed. The house located at 1501 SW 1st Street is an example of the type of one-story masonry vernacular house commonly built during this time period and into the 1950s. Many of them represent a vernacular style, i.e. the use of familiar building forms and techniques and the use of locally sourced materials.

1945-1960

Following WWII Americans enjoyed new freedoms and opportunities. Thousands of soldiers returned to South Florida, many of whom had initially trained here. As a result, there was a great shortage of housing, and a need to build it quickly and economically. The "Baby Boom" population saw an increase from 140 million in 1945 to almost 192 million in 1964.⁶²

In 1934, under the Roosevelt Administration, the Federal government enacted the Federal Housing Act which provided federal loan guarantees for privately funded mortgages. In addition the Federal Government rewarded its Patriots with the passage of the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly known as the GI bill. With guaranteed loans, and a small earnest amount, veterans could afford to purchase homes.

The 1950s saw an unprecedented prosperity in the lives of Americans. Affordable homes, a national road system and an ever-increasing boom in technology, mass production and jobs led to a streamlined vision of the future. For home design it led to a profusion of ranch style homes--- efficient, built for comfort and family complete with a garage and a patio in the backyard.

The Characteristics of Style and its Evolution within the SBHD

The following lists the architectural designs and types of buildings that are represented within the District:

- Frame and Masonry Vernacular
- Late 19th and Early 20th Century Revivals
 - Colonial Revival
 - Mission Revival
 - Mediterranean Revival (Spanish Colonial)
- Bungalow
- Minimal Traditional
- Ranch
- Modern
 - Art Deco
 - Art Modern
 - Mid-Century Modern

⁶² Mark Gelernter, A History of American Architecture. (Hanover and London: University Press of New England) 1999. P.262

Frame or Masonry Vernacular

By definition, “vernacular” means: the speech of ordinary people spoken in a particular country or region. In architecture it translates to a type of design that is familiar to local builders and a product of its place. Normally vernacular buildings are constructed of locally sourced materials and reflect the specific character and practical considerations of the geographical place in which they were built. For example, in New England roofs are steeply pitched to keep snow off the roofs but in tropical and arid areas of the country flat roofs are both practicable as well as popular.

Sailboat Bend has a considerable number of this type of homes built in the late 30s through the 1940s built of both wood and masonry. Most are one-story in height and feature a low-sloped gable roof.

Late 19th and Early 20th Century Historicist Revivals

Late 19th and early 20th Century Americans relied on their own practical knowledge of building, but also looked to European precedents for an established pedigree and popularity. Nationally distributed magazines, including *Better Homes and Gardens*, *McCalls* and *House and Garden*, published examples of period-revival styles to its growing readership. Many of the designs illustrated were inspired by such popular models as English Tudor Revival, American Colonial, Dutch, French and Spanish styles.⁶³

Colonial Revival

While some one –story homes were built with their form and decoration reminiscent of the Colonial Revival style, two story homes allowed for the classic porch across the façade often supported by full height columns. The style called for an emphasis on the center bay, and a symmetrical balance of the flanking sides. The designs relate to the earlier Georgian and Adam prototypes.⁶⁴

Mission Revival

The regional nature of revival designs is the deciding factor in the nature and design for an “architecture of places.” Mission Revival designs in Florida, greatly popular in the 1920s -1940s, find their precedents in California, where the Mission style recalled the influence of Spanish missionaries in the 18th century, and its later Mexican period. The Panama-Pacific Exposition, held between 1915 and 1917 in San Diego, was a large-scale exhibition of Mission Revival, Pueblo Revival and Spanish Baroque as curated by famed New York architect Bertram Goodhue. The fair, held in celebration of the completion of the Panama Canal, had a great impact on the popularity of the style nationwide, in areas that had similar climate and a Hispanic past. The state of Florida could meet both in climate and history. The characteristics of Mission Revival designs include a flat roof, parapets and a symmetrical arrangement of its parts.

Mediterranean Revival

In Florida, the myth of Ponce de Leon’s search for the Fountain of Youth established the first reference to the Spanish exploration, an inspiration that found its expression in Florida’s architecture. Henry Flagler’s Florida East Coast Railway made its way down the east coast of Florida in the 1890s, and popularized a grand Spanish architecture beginning with the Hotel Ponce de Leon in Saint Augustine, the Royal Poinciana and the Breakers in Palm Beach and the Royal Palm Hotel in Miami.

⁶³ National Register Bulletin: “Historic Residential Suburbs” National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, Part 3. “The Design of the Suburban Home” p.2

⁶⁴ McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. Alfred A. Knoff, Inc. New York, New York. 2003. P.321

In more modest residential architecture, the design included flat roofs, parapets that extend beyond the roof lines, surface ornament, loggias, port cochere's and a combination of one and two stories. Homes were generally of masonry construction finished in stucco, and where there were roof slopes, clay barrel tiles were popular.

Bungalow

Bungalow design was influenced by the Prairie School movement in the Midwest, the California Arts and Crafts, and a variety of vernacular housing types. Its basic form is usually one or one and a half stories, with a wide, shallow-roofed porch that extends the width of the house. The bungalow's popularity was increased through its coverage in national magazines like *Ladies Home Journal* and *Bungalow magazine* which disseminated ideas about residential architecture. The bungalow fulfilled a niche as an affordable single-family home during the 1920s and into the 1960s.⁶⁵

Minimal Traditional

The Stock Market Collapse in 1929 and the ensuing Great Depression certainly affected the building industry, but these events also served as a catalyst for new and efficient designs in residential architecture. The federal government played a huge role in making houses affordable for mainstream America. The Federal Housing Administration created in 1934 assured lenders that should the homeowner default on the loan, it was insured by the government which would assume the debt. The FHA published minimal housing standards along with approved plans which greatly dictated the form the home would take. Generally, houses were one story, with a prominent central entrance, a low-sloped gable roof, and a symmetrical arrangements of the remaining mass. Exterior decoration was at a minimum, and if present, might simply be the use of a patterned brick, stone or other material often used in the construction of the home itself. The almost formulaic approach to home design led to building efficiencies like mass production and standardized building methods. There are a substantial number of examples within the SBHD, distinguished by their three-bay approach, with a central entrance and identically designed bays flanking that entrance.⁶⁶

Ranch

It had been a roller coaster as Americans suffered through the Depression and World War II. Following WWII, with Europe decimated and vast areas in rubble, the U.S. took full advantage in producing goods not only for the nation but Europe as well. The expanding industrialized base came with new jobs, and with it new opportunities for returning GIs. Never before could so many Americans find themselves with the means to purchase their own homes.

"In just four years between 1956 and 1960, 11 million new homes were built in the suburbs. Owning one's own single-family detached house on its own plot of land, close to nature and away from the now thoroughly evil cities; this is what many desired and could now possess."⁶⁷

The Ranch style for houses became increasingly popular after WW II as standardized parts were able to be mass-produced and as new building technologies offered expediency in construction. Their simple form originated in California, where once sprawling haciendas punctuated the

⁶⁵ National Register Bulletin: "Historic Residential Suburbs" National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, Part 3. "The Design of the Suburban Home" p.5

⁶⁶ National Register Bulletin: "Historic Residential Suburbs" National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, Part 3. "The Design of the Suburban Home" p.15

⁶⁷ Mark Gelernter, *A History of American Architecture*. (Hanover and London: University Press of New England) 1999. P.262

countryside. Haciendas characteristically were built with rooms on the ground floor and wings attached. The design emphasized horizontality, and typically early ranch homes were one-story. Ranch houses in the burgeoning suburbs were set well back from and parallel to the street. With their own plot of land accommodating a backyard, Americans now favored a patio and amenities in the rear rather than porches in the front of the house. Living rooms figured prominently on the interior and extended across much of the front while bedrooms were placed in the rear.

Before, when people lived in crowded cities, mass transportation did not require any personal transport. In the decades after the war, there was a huge demand for automobiles as America took to the road. President Eisenhower's "Interstate Highway Act" of 1956 led to the construction of highways linking many cities across the country, which then led to a new class-- tourists. A new requirement, for a single-car garage, changed the face of the Ranch house. The garage became a prominent feature, either as a bay that was flush with the line of the home, or as a projecting bay appended to the horizontal form of the house itself.

Modern

Art Deco

Art Deco and its similar type called Art Moderne are included in the Modern genre as they were distinctive unto themselves. Art Deco, as a decorative streamlined style, was a favored motif in jewelry, ceramics and interior design for its new "vocabulary" of ornament. In architecture it was expressed in applied ornament such as zigzags and other stylized geometric motifs. Projecting towers and other parts of the building extended over the parapet giving buildings a vertical emphasis.

Art Moderne

Similar in style to Art Deco, surface ornament was replaced by horizontal grooves in walls and often incised lines at the roof line. There are no towers or decorative pieces that break the roof lines. These horizontal grooves and horizontal balustrades create the horizontal emphasis.⁶⁸

Modern

In large part, the term modern is used for buildings favored by architects who paved new ground in American architectural history particularly in the 60s and 70s. These avant-garde prototypes used expanses of glass, asymmetrical composition and was devoid of surface ornament. Simultaneously, in residential construction, there was a resurgence of interest in historical architecture, as details, such as porches with piers or columns recall a Neo-Classical detail.

⁶⁸ McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. Alfred A. Knoff, Inc. New York, New York. 2003. P.46

The Following Photographs Illustrate the Styles as Represented by Examples in the SBHD

COLONIAL REVIVAL



1017 SW 4th Street

This Colonial Revival building expresses a symmetrical arrangement of its parts, e.g. the focus of the home is on the center bay, further emphasized by the shed roof overhang. The left and right bays are identical, completing the symmetrical arrangement. The second-story gable roof extends forward beyond the roof line, and a centrally placed chimney completes the design.

MEDITERRANEAN REVIVAL

Generally one to two stories, and constructed of concrete block or hollow clay tile with a stucco finish. This style was popular throughout Florida during the Boom of the 1920s and common materials and building features include barrel tile roofs, support brackets, balconies, and arched openings.



401 SW 9th Avenue

MISSION REVIVAL



828 W. Las Olas Boulevard

In Florida, this style gained popularity before the collapse of the land boom in 1926. Elements of the style include a balanced symmetrical façade, a stucco finish, flat roof, and curvilinear shaped parapets.

FRAME VERNACULAR

Vernacular refers to the common wood frame construction techniques employed by local builders utilizing easily available building materials. Typically, structures in this style are one to one and a half stories, clad with wood clapboard or constructed of masonry with a stucco finish. Roof slopes were most commonly gable or hip and feature double-hung windows. The plan shape is often an "L" created by the rectangular mass of the residence and a perpendicular projecting bay.



331 SW 9th Avenue

MASONRY VERNACULAR



1505 SW 1st Street

Again, a vernacular design acknowledges a familiarity with local building traditions and are generally simpler in plan and in exterior embellishments. These residences are typically one and two-story rectangular structures, ranging in size from small single-family residences to larger multi-family apartment buildings. They are constructed of concrete block with a stucco finish.

BUNGALOW

Most commonly Bungalows were one or one and a half stories having a wide shallow roof that overhangs and extends to provide cover for the porch, running the width of the home. The supporting columns of the roof often taper and rest on stone bases evenly spaced across the façade. The bungalow house type was very popular in Florida during the first three decades of the 20th century. Vernacular expressions of the style were widespread due to the availability of popular magazines such as *The Craftsman* and *Bungalow Magazine*.



931 W. Las Olas Boulevard

MINIMAL TRADITIONAL

Homes built during the Depression era and after WWII reveal a very simple plan with little embellishment. The designs reflected the model types that were funded and insured by the newly formed FHA. The homes generally feature the living quarters and kitchen in the front and bedrooms in the rear. Picture windows provide light to the living rooms. Typically, entrances occurred on the side closest to a projecting bay.



716 W Las Olas Boulevard

MID-CENTURY MODERN



1504 Argyle Drive

This style popular from the 1950s to the 1970, reflects the modernity of the time and the avoidance of any historical references. Surface ornament was eliminated in favor of the striking combination of mass.

Architects in the SBHD

The majority of the buildings were constructed by local builders, however there are examples of properties designed by noteworthy architects. A brief biography of those prominent architects (if bibliographic sources were available) is as follows:

Abreu, Francis Luis (1896-1969) was born in his grandparent's estate at Newburgh, New York in 1896. He entered Cornell University College of Architecture in 1916; he left school to join the Navy in WW I. After the war, he returned to the university and graduated in 1921. Following graduation Abreu joined his family at his father's home in Colee Hammock on the New River. He was a "society" architect who received many commissions from his social circle of friends. Abreu's beautiful homes, many of them built along the city's waterways gave the new community a distinctive style.

Approximately forty of Abreu's identified projects remain in the city to this day. One of his smaller homes in the Sailboat Bend District is the Georgian Revival, David E. Oliver House at 231 SW 8th Avenue. The West Side Fire Station at 1022 W. Las Olas Boulevard was designed in the Spanish Eclectic Style and built in 1927. Abreu later moved his practice to Georgia.

Avery, Lester (1891-1973) was born in Montana and graduated from St. John's Academy in British Honduras where he studied architecture. He was a Miami based architect who designed projects in Fort Lauderdale.

Evans, John Worked in William Bigoney's architecture firm. He co-designed the Police Station Building with Bigoney in 1957. Evans worked in the city until 1962. More research is needed since little documentation of his work survives.

Bigoney, William F., Jr. Bigoney received his education and architectural training at the Pratt Institute and Harvard. Bigoney is noted as working in Fort Lauderdale in the city directory of 1952. One of his homes, the Bonnie Heath House built on Fort Lauderdale beach in 1955, was for years an icon of South Florida's mid-century modern design; in 2005 it was gutted and redesigned by owners that destroyed the original of the house. Another of Bigoney's designs, that of a "three level" (e.g., "split level") "solar home" to be built for Mr. H. T. Hollwedel on Pelican Isle, Fort Lauderdale, was featured in the Fort Lauderdale Daily News in 1955. The design for his home in Sailboat Bend (1969) on 14th Way and the New River was the masterpiece of his career in home design. In 1957 he designed the International Style Police Station, also located in the Sailboat Bend Historic District.

Bradley, Paul M., Jr. (1950-2004) Born in Philadelphia, he was educated at the University of Pennsylvania and in 1950 Bradley came to Broward County and set up his architectural practice. His practice included designs for hotels and subdivisions across Florida. Bradley was fascinated by lighthouses and started an organization for their protection. As an artist Bradley achieved national prominence for his lighthouse paintings. The U.S. Post Office even issued a stamp based on a painting of a lighthouse by Mr. Bradley. Bradley passed away in 2014.⁶⁹

Gamble, Clinton M., FAIA graduated from the University of Miami in 1931 and enjoyed a highly successful career as a designer of residential and commercial buildings. Gamble is particularly known for his shopping center designs. In 1953 Gamble principal, of the firm of Gamble, Pownall

⁶⁹ "Paul Bradley, Architect and Lighthouse Architect Dies at 91." *South Florida Sun Sentinel*. Fort Lauderdale, Florida. 4 February 2014.

and Gilroy, was commissioned to design the “state of the art” shopping center -- Sunrise Mall.⁷⁰ The Mall was built on a tract of land formerly owned by Chicago attorney Hugh Taylor Birch. Working drawings were begun in 1953 and the mall opened on January 20, 1954, Gamble studied shopping mall designs from all over the country before committing to his design. Gamble was praised for his “Modern” designs across Miami-Dade and Broward counties. In 1958 the All Saints Episcopal Church opened to its congregation.⁷¹ This noteworthy Modern work was designed by prolific architect Gamble who was also a member of the congregation. Gamble died in 1994, after he moved to Naples, Florida. Gamble participated in many civic clubs and professional boards.⁷²

Ironmonger, Morton T. received his architectural degree at Cornell University, as did so many other local architects. He was first mentioned as an architect working in Fort Lauderdale in 1942 and last listed in the local telephone directory in 1962. He designed numerous homes in the Colee Hammock North and Beverly Heights neighborhoods and also in Sailboat Bend.

Jahelka, Robert G. (1906-1981) was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1906, graduated with a Bachelors of Arts from Columbia University in 1930 and Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture in 1932. He moved to Fort Lauderdale in 1935 setting up a firm with offices at 701 E. Broward Boulevard. His design for the First Presbyterian Church (1941) was his first church design and he became known for his church designs. He also designed the Education Center on the property in 1957. Other churches included his design for the Church-By-the-Sea on Mayan Drive in southeast Fort Lauderdale. He also designed the Dr. Kennedy Homes in Sailboat Bend for the Fort Lauderdale Housing Authority in 1940-41. He was chairman of Fort Lauderdale’s Housing Codes Committee and also served on the Deerfield Beach Planning and Zoning Board. He designed many smaller projects including the Floridian Restaurant on East Las Olas Boulevard in the Colee Hammock Historic District and residences throughout the city, including Sailboat Bend.

Guy Platt Johnson (May 20, 1888 – June 1958) was born in Tampa, Hillsborough County, Florida. When he was about 12, he is known to have lived for a time with his paternal grandparents in Michigan. He is later noted as working as an “engineering architect” for the “General Baking Co.” in Tampa on his draft registration form in 1917. In 1920 Johnson was living with his wife and son in Cleveland, Ohio, where he is listed as working as a structural engineer. By 1930, he was working as an architect for a rubber mill (Goodyear) in Akron, Ohio. Johnson is first mentioned as working as an architect in Fort Lauderdale in 1938. He is noted as the architect for the Maxwell Hotel in Fort Lauderdale in an article in the Fort Lauderdale Times in 1940. Johnson died in Fort Lauderdale.

Little, Robert Murray was born in Uniontown, Pennsylvania in 1903 and studied architecture at the prestigious Beaux Arts School of architecture in Philadelphia. He moved to Miami in 1925 to work at an architectural firm designing buildings during the Land Boom era. The modern Solomon G. Merrick Building on the University of Miami’s campus was one of his most significant achievements. In 1950, he designed this International style building around the frame of the proposed Mediterranean Revival building that was begun in 1926. He was instrumental in designing the Lowe Art Gallery and the Ring Theater in 1951 with Marion I. Manley. Little had a very practical and economical approach to design and function. His simple designs used bare concrete walls and inexpensive materials. For the University, Little also designed the Eaton Residence College, Varsity

⁷⁰ “How the Most Beautiful Shopping Center Was Built.” *Fort Lauderdale News*. Fort Lauderdale, Florida. 30 January 1955. p.7

⁷¹ All Saints Episcopal Church, Fort Lauderdale. <https://allsaintsfl.org/our-story/>. Accessed May 17, 2020.

⁷² Obituary for Clinton Gamble. *South Florida Sun Sentinel*. Fort Lauderdale, Florida. 12 March 1994. p.14.

Locker Room, School of Music Group, School of Law, Graduate School Dormitory, and Science Building, and renovated the Student Union and Student Health Center. Starting in the mid-1950s, local architect Frank Watson worked with Little on the University's projects.

In 1980, following a lifetime of design, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) awarded him their highest honor—the gold medal.⁷³

O'Neill, John B., AIA O'Neill appears on the local architectural scene in 1950.

Peterman, John M. (1886-1972) was born in Iowa in 1886. Peterman enrolled in the School of Architecture at the University of Colorado and had an apprenticeship with the Chicago architecture firm Graham and Burnham. Once qualified, Peterman specialized in designs for affordable housing in Columbus, Ohio. After ten years in Ohio, the Petermans came to Miami to take advantage of the work to be had in the 1920s housing boom; but, dissatisfied with Miami, they soon moved on the Fort Lauderdale. In 1922, Peterman was commissioned by the Broward County School Board to design the new South Side Elementary School, one of three commissions that Peterman received from the board that year. The second commission was for the West Side School and the third design was for Old Dillard School in the northwest section. The three commissions jump started Peterman's career in Fort Lauderdale. He was the first resident architect to open an office in Fort Lauderdale. Over the next five years, Peterman was the most successful architect of commercial buildings working in Broward County. Among his commissions was the second county courthouse built in 1927. John Peterman retired in 1962.

Stewart, Courtney, Jr. (1879-1964) Stewart graduated from the University of Florida in 1929. He was the youngest and first Florida trained architect in Broward County and opened an office in Fort Lauderdale in 1934. Stewart's early work contains many Mediterranean style buildings. He worked as a draftsman for the City of Fort Lauderdale on maps and drawings for the Schermerhorn 1926-27 City plan. He also has a property listed on the National Register, the Coca Cola Bottling Plant in Ocala, Marion County (identical to the one located in Fort Lauderdale).

Watson and Deutschman, an architectural firm, was responsible for at least one building found on the University of Miami (Coral Gables, Florida) campus, the Ashe Administration Building. Frank Edward Watson, a principal in the firm, worked with architects Robert M. Little and Robert Law Weed earlier in his career. Like Little, Watson studied architecture at the Beaux Art Institute in Philadelphia. Frank Watson had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work with the internationally known architect Louis Kahn. Kahn 's work had a profound effect on architects who interpreted his Modernist designs.. Besides the Ashe Administration Building, a later incarnation of Watson's firm, Watson, Deutschman, and Kruse, designed the Otto G. Richter Library and the Ungar Computing Center on the University of Miami (Coral Gables, campus).

⁷³ University of Miami. <https://www.fop.miami.edu/ref-departments/cpd/historical-resources/campus-architects/index.html>. Accessed May 5, 2020.