

# WEST RIVER CROISSANT PARK

## 07e

*The district represents a local example of the minimal housing design typology established by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) in post World War II development.*

### **OVERVIEW AND BOUNDARY**

#### **DESCRIPTION**

West River Croissant Park is identified as a potential historic district located within the Croissant Park neighborhood in the southwest quadrant of Fort Lauderdale. The boundaries of the Croissant Park West follow the rectilinear boundaries of the north side of Southwest 12th Court to the north, Southwest 4th Avenue to the east, the south side of Southwest 14th Street to the south, and Southwest 8th Avenue to the west. The potential West River Croissant Park Historic District was located outside of the town limits of Fort Lauderdale which was then in Dade County. Eventually this area was annexed into Broward County and the City of Fort Lauderdale.

#### **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The proposed West River Croissant Park historic district appears eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of community development as an intact example of early suburban development in Fort Lauderdale and under Criterion C in the area of architecture as a cohesive neighborhood of mid-twentieth century residential design. The district represents a local example of the minimal housing

design typology established by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) in post World War II development and the beginnings of an evolution in home design through representations of a Transitional Ranch Style. The structures retain a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The period of significance is from 1946 to 1958.

### **DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT**

#### **EARLY PLATTING OF FORT LAUDERDALE AND PALM CITY**

Arthur T. Williams, originally from Fernandina, Florida, was the son of Marcellus A. Williams, a Deputy United States Surveyor for the State of Florida. In 1870, Marcellus A. Williams was assigned to survey southeast Florida “from the North end of Biscayne Bay to the South end of Lake Worth and between the Everglades and the Atlantic Ocean.”<sup>1</sup> While Arthur T. Williams traveled throughout South Florida with his father, Williams recalls staying in a “very pretty tropical hammock which lay between the [New River] Sound and the present Lake Mabel [located to east of Port Everglades].”<sup>2</sup> In the 1870s, Lake Mabel was unnamed but later became Lake Mabel, in a tribute to Williams’ wife.



Later, in 1887, Williams and James A. Harris, purchased land within the present Croissant Park and Poinciana Park Neighborhoods in Fort Lauderdale from the Florida Land and Improvement Company. From this purchase, Williams and Harris platted an early residential development called “Palm City” consisting of 500 city blocks. At the time, “a 50’ by 100’ lot had a \$10 price estate tag, and one could buy a whole block, 200’ by 400’, for \$200.”<sup>3</sup>

Between 1926 and the end of World War II, there was very little development activity within this area with only a few reminders of pre-1926 development left. Croissant Park and Poinciana Park would wait until the late 1940s to again see growth.

**CROISSANT PARK**

In 1925, five hundred and seventy acres of the former Placidena development was purchased and replatted by Gilbert F. Woods, Thomas E. Hoskins, and Joseph P. Young. The area was renamed “Croissant Park” for G. Frank Croissant. Croissant was then the general manager of Woods, Hoskins, and Young, a large land development firm in Chicago. Croissant was selected to lead the development of this area.

Woods, Hoskins, and Young were active in South Florida and purchased areas surrounding Croissant Park, although the Croissant Park plat was the largest. Re-plats were aptly named variations of the name Croissant Park including “River Section of Croissant Park,” “Park Section of Croissant Park,” “South River

Section of Croissant Park,” and “West River Section of Croissant Park.” The West River Croissant Park Historic District contains portions of two of these plats - the West River Section of Croissant Park and the South River Section of Croissant Park. At the time, this location was home to a large nursery that provided plants to other parts of Croissant Park.

#### POST WORLD WAR II DEVELOPMENT

In 1946, the West River Section of Croissant Park was replatted as the Revised Plat of the West River Section of Croissant Park. This replat included multiple parties including: W.T. Kennedy and Dora M. Kennedy; John D. Kennedy and Elma R. Kennedy; James F. Kirk and Dorothy Noble Kirk; and D.W. Dunworth and Mary E. Dunworth.

Majority of the homes within the West River Croissant Park Historic District were designed by architect Guy Platt Johnson. A large portion of the homes within the district did not have an architect of record listed and were most likely constructed by local builders.

### **ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT**

#### ARCHITECTURAL STYLE DESCRIPTIONS

Within West River Croissant Park all of the properties are residential. Each residence was originally constructed as a single-family home and is one-story in height. Clad in stucco, each residence is constructed using concrete masonry units and sits on a poured concrete slab foundation with some embellishments which most often included brick veneer framing openings, presence of simple columns supporting small entrance porticos, and wide roof eaves.

Architectural styles represented within West River Croissant Park include Mid-Century Modern, Minimal Traditional, and Transitional Ranch. Below these Architectural Styles are defined for West River Croissant Park. These architectural style descriptions are from the Intensive Level Architectural Resource Survey of Fort Lauderdale completed in 2020 and edited to identify specific stylistic features found within the Croissant Park and Poinciana Park neighborhoods.<sup>4</sup>



517 SW 12 CT

**MID-CENTURY MODERN:** The architecture of the period, which spans the years directly after WWII and the beginning of the 1970s (1945-1970) began a new aesthetic which capitalized on minimalism and the rejection of ornament. In its place, architects turned to the design of geometric and angular forms and their relationship to one another and the illusion of the outdoors brought inside. To do this architects employed large expanses of glass and open floor plan to maximize the interior light.

Following on the heels of the likes of Frank Lloyd Wright and Mies van der Rohe flat planes and clean lines became the desirable aesthetic. In Florida’s domestic architecture there was a proliferation of ranch style and Minimal Traditional homes which emphasized the connection between the interior and exterior spaces, acknowledging that living included backyard space.

Raw materials such as brick and wood were featured in many of the designs, sometimes in geometric patterns, and often in abstract patterns. Mass production standardized many of the

options in house design and led to an affordability in home ownership illustrating the prosperity of the new middle class.



521 SW 13 ST

**MINIMAL TRADITIONAL:** The Minimal Traditional style exemplified the Depression-era and Post World War II 'instant communities.' During the 1930s and 1940s, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) limited the maximum sales price of houses they would insure. The houses, defined by simplicity, needed to maximize floor plans and minimize ornamentation, as both of these impacted costs. The style often featured a small house, typically one-story, with minimal architectural details, and often featured a gabled roof and was popularized by a flood of house plans and pattern books published between 1935 and 1950.



621 SW 12 Ct

**TRANSITIONAL RANCH:** The Transitional Ranch (sometimes "minimal Ranch") style is represented by the earlier houses in the neighborhood built in the late 1940s and early 1950s. They bridge the gap between the small Minimal Traditional style of the 1930s and 1940s and the sprawling Ranch homes of the 1950s and 1960s. Their small scale is a vestige of the planning and financing guidelines developed by the FHA during the Great Depression

and World War II, but incorporate modern design elements of the Ranch style. The Transitional Ranch is one story high with a low-pitched or flat roof and typically features moderate or wide eave overhangs, large picture windows, and sheltered entrances. The type does not typically have a garage, but is often accompanied by a carport which is frequently integrated into the roofline of the house.

### **SELECT ARCHITECTS BIOGRAPHIES**

**LESTER AVERY (1891-1973)** Avery was born in Montana and graduated from St. John's Academy in British Honduras where he studied architecture. His career began in Clearwater, Florida, but later moved to South Florida, actively designing in building types within various modern styles. He is primarily known for single-family residences in the modern vernacular and minimal traditional styles, and later in his career, he designed several mid-century modern and modern vernacular motels, hotels, and apartment buildings, including the Carmen Apartments located in the Birch Estates survey area.<sup>5</sup>

**ROBERT JAHELKA (1906-1981)** Jahelka was born in New York City and graduated from Columbia University in 1934. He moved to Fort Lauderdale in 1935. Jahelka designed the Church-By-The-sea on Mayan Drive in southeast Fort Lauderdale but was also notable for his architectural contributions in Deerfield Beach. He was chairman of Fort Lauderdale's Housing Codes Committee and also served on the Deerfield Beach Planning and Zoning Board.<sup>6</sup>

**GUY PLATT JOHNSON (1888-1958)** Johnson 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, Fort Lauderdale, in an article in the Fort Lauderdale Times in 1940. Johnson died in Fort Lauderdale.<sup>7</sup>

WILLIAM T. VAUGHN, AIA Vaughn is noted as having opened an architecture office in Fort Lauderdale in 1940.<sup>8</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

1 Williams, Arthur T. “Memories: Surveying South Florida in the late 1870s.” Broward Legacy. Winter/Spring 1986. Pages 2-10.

2 Ibid.

3 Wiley, Eugene E. “G. Frank Croissant ‘America’s Greatest Salesman’” by Eugene E. Wiley. New River News. Summer 1982. Pages 4-12.

4 Intensive Level Architectural Resource Survey: Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Erica Mallon Consulting. City of Fort Lauderdale, Department of Sustainable Development. 2020.

5 Ibid.

6 Logan, Trisha and Ugucconi, Ellen. “Central Beach Architectural Resource Survey.” City of Fort Lauderdale, Department of Sustainable Development. Fort Lauderdale, Florida. 2017.

7 Intensive Level Architectural Resource Survey: Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Erica Mallon Consulting. City of Fort Lauderdale, Department of Sustainable Development. 2020.

8 Logan, Trisha and Ugucconi, Ellen. “Sailboat Bend Historic District Architectural Resource Survey Update.” Fort Lauderdale, Florida. 2020.

**FLOOD ZONE ANALYSIS**

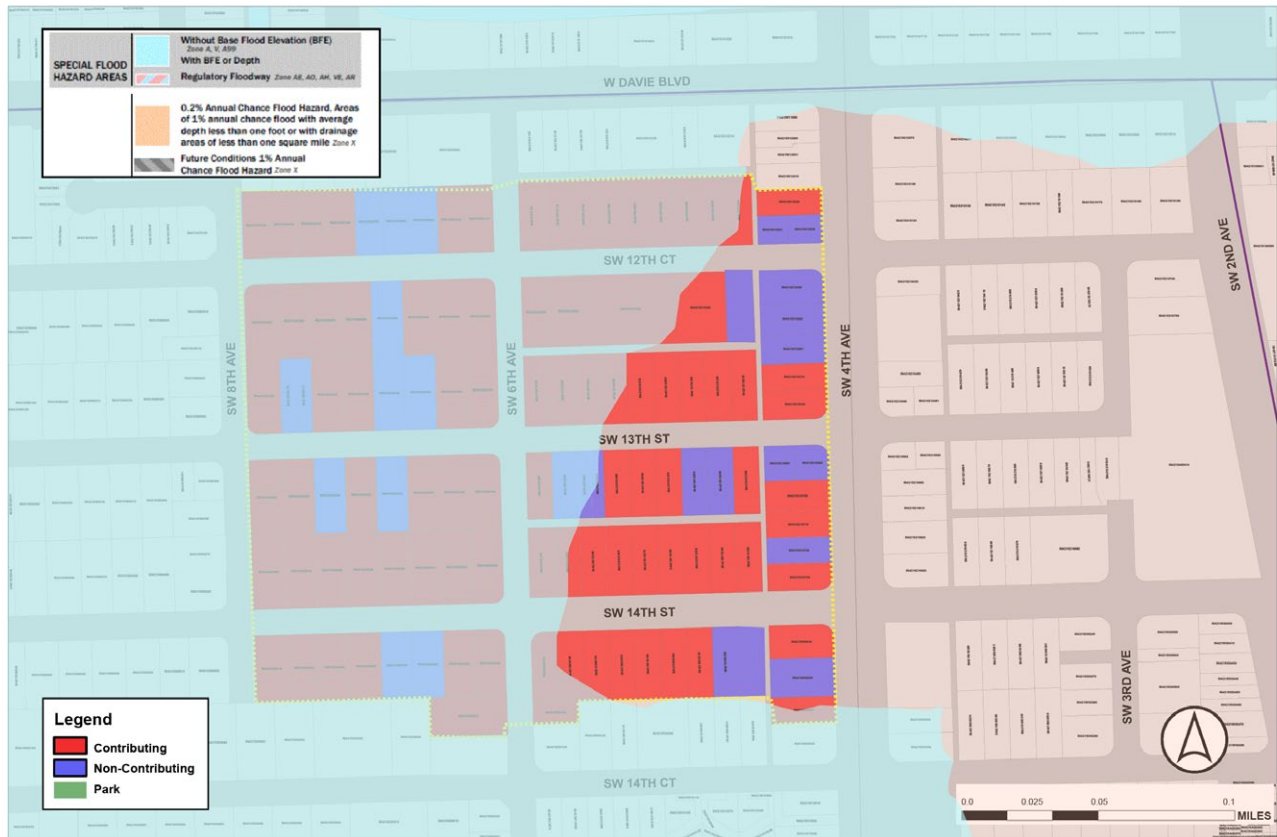
Flood hazard areas identified on the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) are identified as a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). SFHA is defined as the area that will be inundated by the flood event having a 1-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year.

Of the 104 total properties, a majority of 70 properties are within the 100-year flood SFHA, labeled as the AH flood zone. There are 34 properties within the 0.2-percent flood zone, with 6 of these properties also within the SFHA, labeled as the AH flood zone.

The 1-percent annual chance flood is also referred to as the base flood or 100-year flood. SFHAs are labeled as Zone A, Zone AO, Zone AH, Zones A1-A30, Zone AE, Zone A99, Zone AR, Zone AR/AE, Zone AR/

AO, Zone AR/A1-A30, Zone AR/A, Zone V, Zone VE, and Zones V1-V30. Areas subject to inundation by 1 percent annual chance shallow flooding where average depths are between one and three feet. Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) derived from detailed hydraulic analyses are shown in this zone. Mandatory flood insurance purchase requirements and floodplain management standards apply.

Moderate flood hazard areas, labeled Zone B or Zone X (shaded) are also shown on the FIRM, and are the areas between the limits of the base flood and the 0.2-percent-annual-chance (or 500-year) flood. The areas of minimal flood hazard, which are the areas outside the SFHA and higher than the elevation of the 0.2-percent-annual-chance flood, are labeled Zone C or Zone X (unshaded).



**CONTRIBUTING STATUS MAP AND PROPERTY INFORMATION**



SITE NUMBER	ADDRESS	ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	CONTRIBUTING STATUS	FOLIO
BD07820	1217 SW 4 AVE	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012020
BD07821	400 SW 12 CT #1-2	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215210200
None	1231 SW 4 AVE	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215210202
BD07822	1237 SW 4 AVE #1-2	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215210201
None	403 SW 12 CT	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215012030
None	407 SW 12 CT	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215012031
None	412 SW 12 CT	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215210360
BD07823	413 SW 12 CT	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012040
BD07824	416 SW 12 CT #1-2	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215210350
BD07825	417 SW 12 CT	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215012050
BD07826	421 SW 12 CT	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012060
BD07827	500 SW 12 CT	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215210340
BD07828	501 SW 12 CT	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012070
BD07829	505 SW 12 CT	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012080
BD07830	509 SW 12 CT	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012090
BD07831	513 SW 12 CT	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215012100

SITE NUMBER	ADDRESS	ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	CONTRIBUTING STATUS	FOLIO
BD07832	516 SW 12 CT	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215210330
BD07833	517 SW 12 CT	Mid-Century Modern	CONTRIBUTING	504215012110
BD07834	520 SW 12 CT	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215210320
BD07835	521 SW 12 CT	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012120
BD07836	600 SW 12 CT	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240020
BD07837	601 SW 12 CT	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215230110
BD07838	604 SW 12 CT	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240030
BD07839	605 SW 12 CT	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215230100
BD07840	608 SW 12 CT	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240040
BD07841	609 SW 12 CT	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215230090
BD07842	612 SW 12 CT	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240050
BD07843	613 SW 12 CT	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215230080
BD07844	617 SW 12 CT	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215230070
BD07845	621 SW 12 CT	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215230150
BD07846	700 SW 12 CT	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240060
BD07847	701 SW 12 CT	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215230140
BD07848	704 SW 12 CT	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240070
BD07849	705 SW 12 CT	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215230130
BD07850	708 SW 12 CT	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240080
BD07851	709 SW 12 CT	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215230120
BD07852	712 SW 12 CT	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240090
BD07853	1243 SW 4 AVE	Mid-Century Modern	CONTRIBUTING	504215210210
BD07854	1247 SW 4 AVE	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215210220
None	400 SW 13 ST	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215210690
None	404 SW 13 ST	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215210691
BD07855	1307 SW 4 AVE	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215210700
BD07856	1311 SW 4 AVE	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215210710
BD07857	412 SW 13 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012500
BD07858	413 SW 13 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215210230
BD07859	417 SW 13 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215210240
BD07860	420 SW 13 ST	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215012480
BD07861	421 SW 13 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215210250
BD07862	500 SW 13 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012470
BD07863	501 SW 13 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215210260
BD07864	504 SW 13 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012460
BD07865	505 SW 13 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215210270
BD07866	508 SW 13 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012450
BD07867	509 SW 13 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215210280
None	512 SW 13 ST	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215012440
BD07868	513 SW 13 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215210290



SITE NUMBER	ADDRESS	ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	CONTRIBUTING STATUS	FOLIO
None	514 SW 13 ST	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215012441
BD07869	516 SW 13 ST	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215012430
BD07870	517 SW 13 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215210300
BD07871	520 SW 13 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012420
BD07872	521 SW 13 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215210310
BD07873	600 SW 13 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240180
BD07874	601 SW 13 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240170
BD07875	604 SW 13 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240190
BD07876	605 SW 13 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240160
BD07877	608 SW 13 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240200
BD07878	609 SW 13 ST	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215240150
BD07879	612 SW 13 ST	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215240210
BD07880	613 SW 13 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240140
BD07881	700 SW 13 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240220
BD07882	701 SW 13 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240130
BD07883	704 SW 13 ST	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215240230
BD07884	705 SW 13 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240120
BD07885	708 SW 13 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240240
None	709A SW 13 ST	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215240110
None	709B SW 13 ST	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215240111
BD07886	711 SW 13 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240100
BD07887	712 SW 13 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240250
BD07888	1315 SW 4 AVE	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215210720
BD07889	1407 SW 4 AVE #1-2	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215030020
BD07890	400 SW 14 ST #1-2	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215030010
BD07891	401 SW 14 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215210730
None	412 SW 14 ST	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215030230
BD07892	413 SW 14 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012330
BD07893	416 SW 14 ST	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215030220
BD07894	417 SW 14 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012340
BD07895	420 SW 14 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215030210
BD07896	421 SW 14 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012350
BD07897	500 SW 14 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215030200
BD07898	501 SW 14 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012360
BD07899	504 SW 14 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215030190
BD07900	505 SW 14 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012370
BD07901	509 SW 14 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012380
BD07902	510 SW 14 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215030180
BD07903	512 SW 14 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215030170
BD07904	513 SW 14 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012390
BD02089	516 SW 14 ST	Mission	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215030160
BD07905	517 SW 14 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012400
BD07906	520 SW 14 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215030150
BD07907	521 SW 14 ST	Minimal Traditional	CONTRIBUTING	504215012410
BD07908	1313 SW 6 AVE	Mid-Century Modern	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215240331
BD07909	600 SW 14 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240340
BD07910	601 SW 14 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240330

SITE NUMBER	ADDRESS	ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	CONTRIBUTING STATUS	FOLIO
BD07911	604 SW 14 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240350
BD07912	605 SW 14 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240320
None	608 SW 14 ST	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215240360
BD07913	609 SW 14 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240310
BD07914	612 SW 14 ST	No Style	NON-CONTRIBUTING	504215240370
BD07915	613 SW 14 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240300
BD07916	700 SW 14 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240380
BD07917	701 SW 14 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240290
BD07918	704 SW 14 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240390
BD07919	705 SW 14 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240280
BD07920	708 SW 14 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240400
BD07921	709 SW 14 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240270
BD07922	712 SW 14 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240410
BD07923	713 SW 14 ST	Transitional Ranch	CONTRIBUTING	504215240260

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Davis, H.C. Lauderdale Pines. Scale 1" = 100'. Fort Lauderdale, Broward County, Florida. Plat Book 8, Page 27. August 1925.

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