# SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE
# 2740 North Bay Road

# HISTORIC STRUCTURE DESIGNATION REPORT

**PREPARED BY**


**CITY OF MIAMI BEACH PLANNING DEPARTMENT**
**DESIGN, PRESERVATION & NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING DIVISION**

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**(HPB File No. 7132)**

## I. REQUEST

The applicant, Delphine Dray, is requesting that the Historic Preservation Board approve a request for the designation of an existing single-family home as an historic structure.

## II. DESIGNATION PROCESS

The process of designation for historic structures is delineated in Section 118-591(f) in the Land Development Regulations of the City Code. An outline of this process is provided below:

Step One: An application for the individual designation of a single-family home as an historic structure is submitted by the property owner to the Planning Department for recommendation to the Historic Preservation Board. The Board will make a determination as to whether the single-family home may be designated as an historic structure based upon the requirements and criteria of Section 118-592 in the Land Development Regulations of the City Code.

Step Two: Upon receipt of a completed application package, the Planning Department prepares a Designation Report that will be presented to the Historic Preservation Board at a regularly scheduled meeting. The Designation Report is an historical and architectural analysis of the proposed historic structure.

Step Three: The Designation Report is presented to the Historic Preservation Board at a public hearing. If the Board finds that the proposed single-family designation application meets the criteria set forth in Section 118-592 of the Land Development Regulations in the City Code, it may formally adopt the single-family home as a local historic structure. No public hearing is required before the Planning Board or City Commission. Upon the designation of a single-family home as an historic structure, the structure is subject to the Certificate of Appropriateness requirements of Article X of the Land Development Regulations in the City Code, with the exception of the interior areas of the structure (which are not be subject to such regulations).

## III. RELATION TO ORDINANCE CRITERIA

1. In accordance with Section 118-592 in the Land Development Regulations of the City Code, eligibility for designation is determined on the basis of compliance with the listed criteria set forth below.

    (a) The Historic Preservation Board shall have the authority to recommend that properties be designated as historic buildings, historic structures, historic improvements, historic landscape features, historic interiors (architecturally significant public portions only), historic sites or historic districts if they are significant in the historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic or archeological heritage of the city, the county, state or nation. Such properties shall possess an integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling or association and meet at least one (1) of the following criteria:

        (1) Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the history of the city, the county, state or nation;

        (2) Association with the lives of persons significant in the city's past history;

(3) Embody the distinctive characteristics of an historical period, architectural or design style or method of construction;

(4) Possesses high artistic values;

(5) Represent the work of a master, serve as an outstanding or representative work of a master designer, architect or builder who contributed to our historical, aesthetic or architectural heritage;

(6) Have yielded, or are likely to yield information important in pre-history or history;

(7) Be listed in the National Register of Historic Places;

(8) Consist of a geographically definable area that possesses a significant concentration of sites, buildings or structures united by historically significant past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development, whose components may lack individual distinction.

(b) A building, structure (including the public portions of the interior), improvement or landscape feature may be designated historic even if it has been altered if the alteration is reversible and the most significant architectural elements are intact and repairable.

2. The single-family residence at 2740 North Bay Road is eligible for designation as an historic structure as it complies with the criteria as specified in Section 118-592 in the Land Development Regulations of the City Code outlined above.

**Staff finds that the proposed Historic Single Family Home located at 4343 North Bay Road possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association for the following reasons:**

**Satisfied;** *The construction of the home located at 2740 North Bay Road in 1929, at the end of the Florida Boom and the same year of the stock market crash, was clearly significant in the successful development history of the City of Miami Beach. The design and construction of the home brought a architectural style of high aesthetic appeal and stature to the neighborhood, as well as highly prominent local architect, August Geiger, who was qualified to execute it. The proposed historic home still possess the integrity of its original location at2740 North Bay Road, despite more than eighty years of hurricanes, storms, and economic crises. Further, the original building still retains many of its historic materials, details, and workmanship as well as the feeling of its late 1920s period of construction in Miami Beach.*

(a) Staff finds the proposed historic site to be eligible for historic designation and in conformance with the designation criteria for the following reasons:

(1) Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the history of the city, the county, state or nation;

*The single family residence located at 2740 North Bay Road, built on the brink of the Great Depression, is a last gasp of the Florida Boom of the*

*1920s, when wealthy northern industrialists flooded into Florida, building their palatial winter residences and investing in real estate speculation. Specific to Miami Beach, this house was an early component of Carl Fisher's Sunset Lake Subdivision.*

(2) Association with the lives of persons significant in the city's past history;

*The original owner Val Duttenhofer Jr. was not only a well known industrialist from Cincinnati, Ohio, but also became a prominent investor in properties in Miami and Miami Beach.*

(3) Embody the distinctive characteristics of an historical period, architectural or design style or method of construction;

*This house is a good example of the Mediterranean Revival style of architecture, the predominant style in Florida in the 1920s. Some of its characteristics seen here are the clay barrel tile gable roofs, round-arched doorways, balconies, decorative medallions and door surrounds. The later garage addition was designed to blend compatibly with the original house.*

(4) Possesses high artistic values;

*Valued at $30,000 in 1929 and designed by a prominent architect, this house was of high-quality design and construction with many fine details, and built in an upper-class neighborhood.*

(5) Represent the work of a master, serve as an outstanding or representative work of a master designer, architect or builder who contributed to our historical, aesthetic or architectural heritage;

*August Geiger was one of the City's finest architects, favored by Carl Fisher himself. He designed many prominent buildings in Miami Beach from the 1910s through the 1940s, although many have now been demolished. The Skinner brothers, who designed the garage addition, were well known for their work in Coral Gables, and later for their many civic buildings. They designed several Contributing buildings in Miami Beach's historic districts.*

(b) A building, structure (including the public portions of the interior), improvement or landscape feature may be designated historic even if it has been altered if the alteration is reversible and the most significant architectural elements are intact and repairable.

*The single-family residence at 2740 North Bay Road maintains high degree of architectural integrity with limited modifications. Restoration and appropriate renovation can be successfully completed of this fine residence by careful analysis of on-site conditions and available historic documentation.*

## IV. DESCRIPTION OF BOUNDARIES

The subject property is located at 2740 North Bay Road on Lot 10 in Block 12 of "AMENDED PLAT OF SUNSET LAKE SUBDIVISON," according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8 at Page 52, of the Public Records of Dade County, now known as Miami-Dade County, Florida, excepting the following described parcel of land: Beginning at the Northeasterly corner of Lot 10, in Block 12, at SUNSET LAKE SUBDIVISION, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded n Plat Book 8 at Page 52, of the Public Records of Dade County, now known as Miami-Dade County, Florida, said corner being in the Westerly line of North Bay Road at a distance of 80.1 feet South from the intersection of the Southerly line of West 29 Street and the Westerly line of North Bay Road, as measured along in said Block 12, for a distance of 258.75 feet more or less to the Northwesterly corner of said Lot 10; thence Northeasterly for a distance of 241.88 feet more or less to a point in the Westerly said North Bay Road, said point being 25 feet South, as measured along the Westerly line of said North Bay Road, from the Northeasterly corner of said Lot 10; thence Northerly along the Westerly line of said North Bay Road for a distance of 25 feet to the Point and Place of Beginning.

## V. PRESENT OWNER

The present owner of the subject property is

## VI. PRESENT USE

The original and current use of the subject property is single-family residential.

## VII. PRESENT ZONING DISTRICT

The subject property is located in the RS-2 or Residential Single-Family Zoning District.

## VIII. ARCHITECTURAL BACKGROUND

**Mediterranean Revival** (circa mid-1910s to early 1930s)
Mediterranean Revival architecture was the "style of choice" for the first major land development period in Miami Beach. Its connotation of Mediterranean resort architecture, combining expressions of Italian, Moorish, North African, and Southern Spanish themes, was found to be an appropriate and commercially appealing image for the new Floridian seaside resort; it was a style that was simultaneously being used expansively in California and other areas of similar climate.

During the mid-1910s through the early 1930s, the style was frequently applied to hotels, apartment buildings, commercial structures, and single-family residences. Its architectural vocabulary was characterized by stucco walls, low-pitched terra cotta and historic Cuban tile roofs, arches, scrolled or tile capped parapet walls, and articulated door surrounds, sometimes utilizing Spanish Baroque decorative motifs and Classical elements. Feature detailing was occasionally executed in keystone or patterned ceramic tile.

Application of the architectural vocabulary in Miami Beach ranged from sparing to modestly exuberant, and building massing varied from a simple rectangular form to stepped massing with recessed wall planes and tower-like corner features. Wooden casement or double-

hung windows of several configurations provided additional detail to the facades.

**2740 North Bay Road**

The subject house occupies Lot 10 in Block 8 of the Sunset Lake Subdivision of Miami Beach, platted by developer Carl G. Fisher's Miami Beach Bay Shore Company in April of 1923. This is a waterfront lot on Sunset Lake that Fisher dredged in order to isolate rival Stephen A. Lynch's land, which became the Sunset Islands.[1]

2740 North Bay Road is one of two houses for which permits were issued on the same day, October 7, 1929 (shortly before the stock market crash), to the same owner, Valentine Duttenhofer Jr. The other house was located directly north of 2740 at 2760 North Bay Road, Lot 11 in Block 8. Both residences were designed in the Mediterranean Revival style by architect August Geiger (see Biography following), each cost $30,000 to construct.

Duttenhofer himself had a winter residence located on Lot 9 in Block 8 at 2700 North Bay Road, built in 1925. He was one of the many northern industrialists who contributed to the Florida Boom of the 1920s. In 1905, Valentine Duttenhofer Jr. (1862-1939), together with his younger brother John, founded the Val Duttenhofer's Sons Company, well known shoe manufacturers in Cincinnatti, Ohio.[2] Val Jr.'s purchase of the Clyde Court Apartments in Miami for $500,000 in the 1920s was "the largest all-cash sale in Miami up to that point."[3] In later years his son Clifford owned both the Clyde Court and the Mildred Lee Apartments in Miami Beach (now demolished). Although the Florida Boom crashed after the 1926 hurricane, Duttenhofer continued to invest in building these two elegant homes in 1929. The subject house was occupied by James W. Eustis of Boston in the 1930s.[4]

August Geiger's plans for the residence were found on Microfilm #3292 in the City of Miami Beach Building Department records. The plans show an irregularly shaped, two-story house of reinforced concrete, with multiple gable roofs and one-story shed-roof elements. The front entry door, characterized by rounded arch and fan window, leads into a double-height living room and a loggia, also with rounded arches, overlooks Sunset Lake. The central section of the house has an east-west axis and contains a bedroom, stairway, kitchen, pantry, and dining room. The original garage is located at the north side of the property, set at an angle to the main house.

The original plans clearly show barrel tile roofs, and the windows appear to be six-pane casement with wooden frame details. Other exterior features include decorative medallions on the roof gables; second story balconies on the front and rear, with wood spindle railings and masonry door-surrounds; and a similar wood-spindle gate into an open entry porch.

An addition costing $2,500 is documented on the original Building Permit Card and plans for were located on Microfilm #9645. The addition was designed by brothers John and Coulton Skinner (see Biography following) and appears to be a one-story, three-car garage situated to the north of the main house. Its footprint can be seen in the 1952 plat map. When this new garage was constructed, the original attached garage was converted to living space.

[1] Kleinberg, Miami Beach: A History, Centennial Press, 1966, p. 94.
[2] Google Books online; Cincinnatti, the Queen City, vol. 4, pp. 214-215
[3] Ballinger, Miami Millions; Franklin Press, 1936, p. 26.
[4] Stearns, Along Greater Miami's Sun-Sea-Ara; 1932.

Later alterations to the residence documented on the Building Permit Card include the installation of central air-conditioning and other interior work in 1976, and the addition of a swimming pool in 1987.

While no archival photographs have been found to verify that the house and garage addition were built according to plan, site inspection of the building reveals that the property largely conforms to the plans by both Geiger and the Skinners, and most of the original features remain intact.

**Architect Biographies**

**August Geiger** (1888-1968) was from New Haven, Connecticut. He was educated at Boardman's Manual Training School, and by apprenticeship; he came to Miami in 1905 and became Florida's tenth registered architect. Geiger started his own practice in 1911, and in his early career designed a number of bungalow residences, the Bulmer Apartments in Miami (demolished), the Miami City Hospital (now "the Alamo" at Jackson Memorial Hospital), and public schools at Homestead, Arch Creek and Dania.

As a master of the Mediterranean Revival style with a strong Beaux-Arts influence, he became Miami Beach developer Carl Fisher's favorite architect, and designed both of Fisher's residences, one of which still stands at 5010 North Bay Road. Other buildings he designed for Fisher include the 1916 clubhouse for the Municipal Golf Course, now one of the oldest buildings in the City; the Lincoln Hotel (now demolished) and the Lincoln Building (now the Van Dyke) on Lincoln Road. His work also includes the Allison Hospital (later St. Francis) and the La Gorce Golf Clubhouse, both now demolished.

From 1935 to 1948, Geiger worked as architect for the Dade County School Board, and in this capacity worked on the Ida Fisher High School at 1410 Drexel Avenue, North Shore Elementary School at 711 41st Street, and Biscayne Bay Elementary School at 800 77th Street. His 1947 neoclassical-deco style Chase Federal Savings Bank Building at 1100 Lincoln Road has now been rehabilitated as a Banana Republic store.

In Miami, Geiger designed the Woman's Club at 1737 North Bayshore Drive; the grand neoclassical Christian Science church at 1836 Biscayne Boulevard; and, in 1925, he was one of the architects of the Dade County Courthouse on Flagler Street. In addition to architecture, Geiger was active in many civic organizations, and also was the developer of the Fairgreen Subdivision in Miami Beach.

**(William) Coulton Skinner** (1891-1963) and his brother **John L. Skinner** (1893-1972) were from Cleveland, Ohio. Both brothers graduated with degrees in architecture from the University of Toronto. Coulton went into practice in Toronto and Detroit, while John studied toward a Master's Degree at Harvard in 1920. After graduation, John headed the architecture department at Georgia Tech in Atlanta. In 1925 the brothers came to Miami to work on George Merrick's Coral Gables development, eventually designing 18 residences in the "Villages" section. From 1927 to 1932, John Skinner served as the first head of the architecture department at the newly created University of Miami.

In Miami Beach, the Skinner brothers designed two Mediterranean Revival style houses in the Palm View Historic District: 1835 Michigan Avenue (1931) and 1800 Jefferson Avenue (1936). In addition, they designed the Koulton Arms Apartments at 932 15th Street, the

Barbizon Hotel at 530 Ocean Drive and the Bentley Hotel at 500 Ocean Drive, all constructed in the 1930s.

In 1941 the Skinners joined architect Harold D. Steward as the firm of Stewart & Skinner. This firm worked on a number of civic and municipal buildings in the Miami area, including the retrofitting of the Nautilus, Pancoast, and Biltmore Hotels as military hospitals during World War II; several new buildings at the University of Miami; the Miami Seaquarium; parts of Miami International Airport; an addition to Jackson Memorial Hospital; the former Miami Public Library; and the Dade County Auditorium.

## X. PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Criteria for Designation:** Based upon the evidence presented and the historical and architectural significance of the single-family residence located at 2740 North Bay Road, and in accordance with Chapter 118, Article X, Division 4, of the Land Development Regulations of the City Code, the staff of the City of Miami Beach Planning Department recommends that the Historic Preservation Board adopt the subject property as a local historic structure.

2. **Site Boundaries:** The Planning Department recommends that the boundaries of the historic site consist of the entire property located on Lot 10 in Block 12 of Sunset Lake Subdivision, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8 at Page 52 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

3. **Areas Subject to Review:** The Planning Department recommends that the proposed historic site shall be subject to Section 118-591 (f) of the Land Development Regulations of the City Code.

4. **Review Guidelines:** The Planning Department recommends that a decision on an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be based upon Section 118-591 (f) of the Land Development Regulations of the City Code.