

2984

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **NOV 21 1988**  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Alfred I. duPont Building

and or common Alfred I. duPont Building

**2. Location**

street & number 169 East Flagler Street

not for publication

city, town Miami

vicinity of

state Florida 33131 code FL

county Dade

code FL 025

**3. Classification**

**Category**

- district
- building(s)
- structure
- site
- object

**Ownership**

- public
- private
- both

**Public Acquisition**

- in process
- being considered

**Status**

- occupied
- unoccupied
- work in progress

**Accessible**

- yes: restricted
- yes: unrestricted
- no

**Present Use**

- agriculture
- commercial
- educational
- entertainment
- government
- industrial
- military
- museum
- park
- private residence
- religious
- scientific
- transportation
- other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name duPont Building Association

street & number 521 5th Avenue

city, town New York

vicinity of

state New York 10175

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dade County Courthouse

street & number 75 W. Flagler Street

city, town Miami

state Florida 33130

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title FMSF-Miami Multiple Resource  
Historic Preservation Survey

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date June, 1985

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Bureau of Historic Preservation

city, town Tallahassee

state Florida 32399-0250

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# 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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## 8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1939	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

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**Specific dates** 1939                      **Builder/Architect** Marsh and Saxelby

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**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see Bibliography for Cover Nomination

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Miami

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	7	5	8	1	1	5	0	2	1	8	5	0	7	4	0
Zone			Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone			Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone			Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone			Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone			Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Miami, Lots 18, 19, 20, and the easterly 35 feet of lot 17, less the easterly 10 feet of Lot 20, of Block 117 of the plat of MIAMA NORTH (PB B-41). Boundary follows historic and legal boundary.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sarah Eaton / Vicki L. Welcher, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation

date October, 1988

street & number 500 South Bronough Street

telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee

state Florida 32399-0250

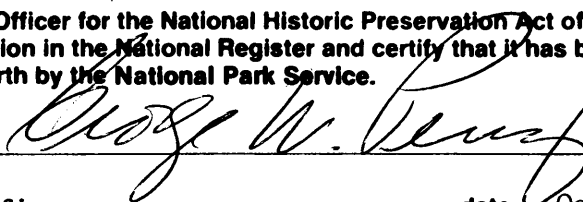
## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

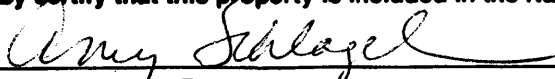


title State Historic Preservation Officer

date October 17, 1988

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register



date 1/3/89

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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National Park Service

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DESCRIPTION:

Condition: Good

The Alfred I. duPont Building is a rectangular 17-story structure executed in the Modern style of architecture and embellished with features derived from the Art Deco influences of the late 1920s. The construction of the building was carried out according to plans provided by the architectural firm of Marsh and Saxelby from Jacksonville, Florida.<sup>1</sup> The building's structure is comprised of a steel frame skeleton and its exterior walls are clad with stone. The building is situated at the corner of East Flagler Street and N. E. 2nd Avenue.

The exterior of the building follows the classic formula for "high-rise" construction. The building has a base, which in this case is a band of black granite wrapping around the building at the first story level. The base provides the support for a simple vertical shaft which emphasizes the height of the building, in this case, a repetitive fenestration pattern. Lastly, the shaft is topped by an articulated roofline, provided in the duPont Building by a series of setbacks facing N. E. 2nd Avenue.

The ground floor of the duPont Building is comprised of a series of storefronts set within the vertical band of black granite. These storefronts are entered at the sidewalk level and are delineated by a series of metal and glass doors and windows. The main entrances to the building are located at the center of each principal elevation and consist of double glass doors set within brass frames. Also located on the first story of the building are small octagonal windows set within the black granite cladding.

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The second story of the duPont Building is rather tall, to accommodate the bank lobby which was deliberately placed there when the building was constructed. The first story lobby merely serves as an elevator lobby and also contains escalators leading up to the second floor. The height of the second story is visible on the building's exterior by the placement of tall multi-pane casement-type windows set within metal frames. Decorative metal grille work is found at the transom level of the second story windows.

Above the second story windows is a masonry band that serves as a belt course around the building elevations. The band is characterized by stylized floral decoration derived from the Art Deco style. From the third to the fifteenth floor, the fenestration pattern of the building is repeated vertically. There are 14 bays across the eastern elevation and 12 bays across the southern elevation. On the eastern elevation, single windows are placed at the end bays and the center six bays. The remaining bays contain paired windows. The southern elevation contains single windows on the end bays and paired windows throughout the remaining bays. The sixteenth floor of the building is set back from the East Flagler Street side and occupies only eight bays across the N. E. 2nd Avenue side. The seventeenth story is further set back to a width of only six bays across.

The fenestration of the duPont Building contains the original windows which are comprised of two-over-two, double-hung sash set within metal frames. The paired windows are separated horizontally by spandrels flanked by stylized pilaster motifs. All the spandrels as well as the window mullions are tinted green.

The interiors of the duPont Building are some of the most ornate spaces in downtown Miami. The elevator doors are fashioned in brass and embellished with palm trees, flamingos, and other tropical motifs as "bas-relief" decoration. The walls of the first floor are clad in marble and continue the marble coloration to a portion of the second floor lobby. The ceiling of the

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entire second floor is comprised of primary and secondary wooden beams dividing the ceiling plane into numerous coffers. The primary and secondary beams are embellished with painted motifs derived from the ornaments used by the local Seminole Indians. The teller cages on the second floor bank lobby retain the majority of their original grille work forged out of wrought iron. The cages are delineated by alternating panels containing stylized floral motifs and lanterns above.

Except for minor alterations to some of the storefronts, the duPont Building remains virtually unaltered from the day it was completed.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Specific Date: 1939

Architects: Marsh and Saxelbye

The Alfred I. duPont Building is architecturally significant because it is one of the most representative Modern structures in Miami. Designed by the architectural firm of Marsh and Saxelbye, the building reflects an excellent local adaptation of a prevailing national style as evidenced in the decoration throughout the major interior spaces. The duPont Building also possesses important historical associations with the development of downtown Miami during the period of time between the World Wars.

The presence of the local flora and fauna, as well as the painted Seminole Indian motifs, throughout the interior surfaces of the building is indicative of the prevailing 1930s movement that emphasized "regionalism" in commercial architecture. The visual composition of the duPont Building makes it one of the most outstanding examples of the Modern style of architecture in Dade County.<sup>2</sup> The Modern style was popularized by way of the projects undertaken by the Works Progress Administration, but its presence is a rarity within Miami's built environment.<sup>3</sup> The duPont Building is architecturally noteworthy for the excellence of its design, materials, and detailing.

Begun in 1937, the duPont Building was the first skyscraper to be built in Miami since the completion of the Dade County Courthouse in 1928.<sup>4</sup> The building constituted the first major construction project privately undertaken in Miami after the Bust in 1926. As such, it signaled Miami's economic recovery from the Depression.

Completed at a cost of \$2.5 million in 1939, the building was the headquarters for the Florida National Bank.<sup>5</sup> The Florida National Bank of Miami was organized in 1931 by Alfred I. duPont. Originally located at 118 East Flagler Street, the bank steadily grew in assets, and bank officials in 1937 announced the construction of a new, modern banking facility. Dedicated to the memory of Alfred I. duPont, the building replaced the Halcyon Hotel, an early Miami landmark.<sup>6</sup>



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The building was a showcase of Miami when it opened in 1939 and displayed the innovative idea of placing the bank lobby on the second floor. Retail stores occupied the street level, while the bank claimed floors two through five. Office spaces on the remaining floors were leased to various tenants.

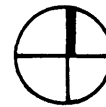
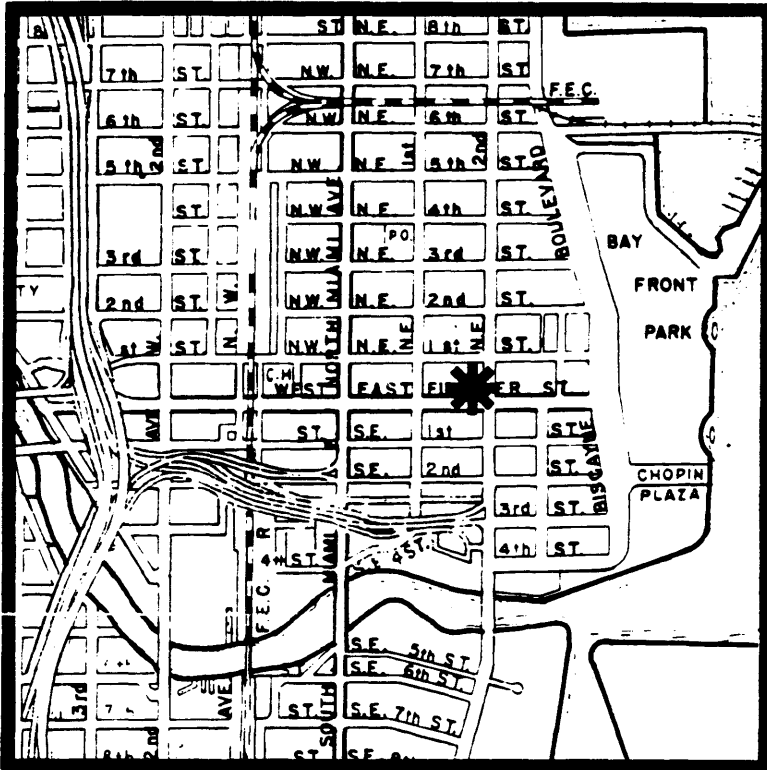
The Alfred I. duPont Building has important historical associations with the military activity present in South Florida during the Second World War. During the war, the duPont Building was commissioned by the United States Navy and served as the fleet headquarters for the 7th Naval District until 30 June 1946.<sup>7</sup> The Navy command took over two entire floors of the building and installed a huge map of the Gulf Sea Frontier territory.<sup>8</sup> During its occupation by the United States Navy, the building was dubbed the "U.S.S. Neversink."<sup>9</sup>

NOTES

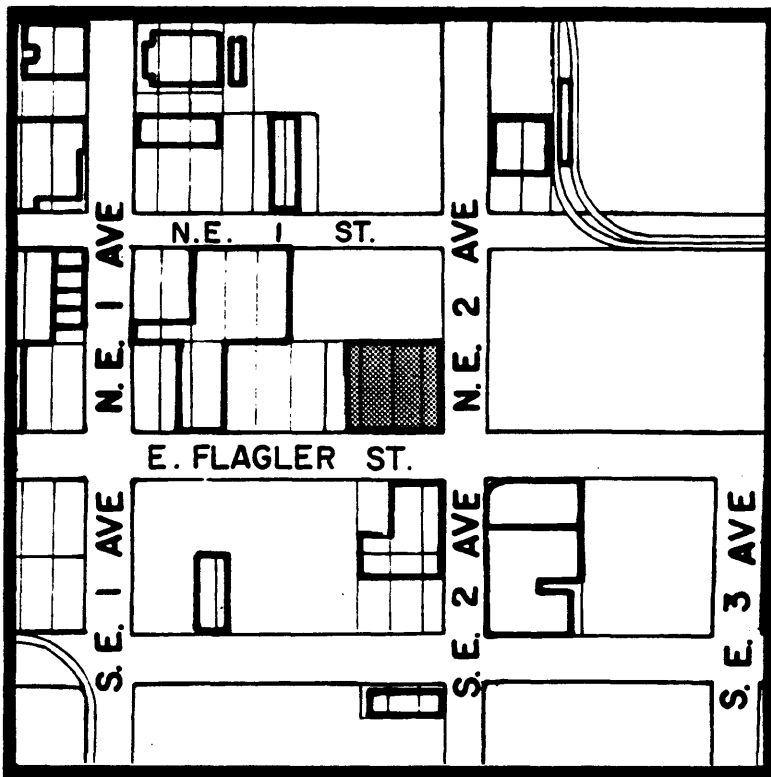
1. City of Miami Building and Zoning Department, Building Plans on Microfilm, Roll 17, Plans M-43-46.
2. Sarah E. Eaton, "Alfred I. duPont Building Designation Report" (prepared for the City of Miami Heritage Conservation Board), 8 June 1984.
3. See note 2 above.
4. See note 2 above.
5. "Bank Opening Draws Florida Leaders Here," Miami News, 23 October 1939.
6. Arva Moore Parks, Miami: The Magic City (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Continental Heritage Press, 1981), p. 190.
7. See note 7 above.
8. Parks, Miami: The Magic City, p. 136.
9. See note 8 above.

# ALFRED I. duPONT BUILDING

169 EAST FLAGLER STREET



location



site plan