

NOMINATION PROPOSAL - FLORIDA

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

79112 1997

DIVISION OF ARCHIVES, HISTORY AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT - FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE ALL SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Wheeler House

AND/OR COMMON

Riopelle House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1035 Dunad Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Opa-Locka

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Florida

COUNTY

Dade

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
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Ronald and Marta Riopelle

STREET & NUMBER

1035 Dunad Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Opa-Locka

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Florida

ZIP CODE

33054

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Dade County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

73 West Flagler Street

CITY, TOWN

Miami

STATE

Florida

ZIP CODE

33131

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Dade County Historic Survey

DATE

1981

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Division of Historical Resources

CITY, TOWN

Tallahassee

STATE

Florida

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED. DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

H. SAYRE WHEELER HOUSE (OLTR #3)

ORIGINAL PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The front elevation of the Wheeler House was divided into a three part composition consisting of a garage, entrance and bedroom wing. The entrance featured an open porch with a central doorway flanked by two open bays. Wooden columns divided the bays with pecky cypress lintels supporting a roof of pecky cypress joists that formed a projecting eaves covered with antique Cuban tile which intersected a smooth parapet wall with symmetrically placed wall tiles at the roof line. The two-story garage had double arched door openings on the front facade with two casement windows asymmetrically placed at the second floor and ornamented by tile vents placed at the ceiling line. A decorative polychrome band above the windows served to visually separate the parapet from the wall and decorative plinth for the surmounting dome. The walls of the garage were formed by a slanted line that met an oolitic limestone end wall. The garage was punctuated on its three open sides by symmetrically placed casement windows. Contrasting with the smooth stucco wall finish of the garage and the entrance, the facade of the bedroom wing was comprised of an exposed oolitic limestone wall that featured slanted ends, a large pointed arch opening with a deep-set casement window whose jambs were decorated by dressed limestone that angled inward to meet the window, capped by a centrally placed bellcote. The facade merged into a garden wall of matching stone that featured an arch duplicating the line of the bedroom wing window. The wall opened to a driveway and continued to the end of the garage where it turned to meet the facade. The bedroom wing was partially roofed in Cuban tiles that intersected a parapet of smooth stucco featuring a curved central pediment offset from the bellcote.

PRESENT PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Modern changes to the facade include the replacement of windows with contemporary awning type and enclosure of the porch with windows. A small addition was made to the front of the garage replacing the original arches with a single rectangular opening and a side window. Although the Cuban tile roof has survived, the dome above the garage has not.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1926

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Opa-Locka Co./B. E. Muller

SIGNIFICANCE

The Wheeler House was the third private residence built in Opa-locka and the first residence in Opa-locka known to be entirely designed by Bernhardt E. Muller. Its construction began in March 1926 and was completed by that July. The house is noteworthy for its extensive use of "coral rock," which was used to unify the design of the front facade. Although having the floor plan of a large, ranch-style house, it also had a dome, awnings, and Moorish Revival detailing to remain in context with Opa-locka's other buildings.

The property was originally owned by H. Sayre Wheeler, one of Opa-locka's town founders and most prominent citizens. Wheeler had been a friend of Curtiss' in Hammondsport, New York, and came to South Florida when he became a successful realtor and insurance broker. He was involved in many local civic organizations and held several positions in Opa-locka's first government. The first meeting of the Opa-locka Town Council was held in Wheeler's dining room after the town was incorporated in May 1926, and he was selected as the council's president. His visibility in government increased as he became the council's director of finance in November 1926. Subsequently, Wheeler became acting mayor of Opa-locka on October 14, 1926, following J.C. Secord's resignation. Following elections held on October 26, Wheeler was chosen as Opa-locka's second mayor and held this office until April 1934. Wheeler's civic activities included membership in the Opa-locka Optimist Club, chairman of the membership committee of the Opa-locka Chamber of Commerce, and President of the Opa-locka Archery Club, which was formed in January 1927.

Wheeler was an independent realtor in the firm of Michael and Wheeler, with offices in Hialeah and Country Club Estates, selling property for the Curtiss-Bright Company. This association brought Wheeler to Opa-locka where he and his partner, J. Alden Michael, became the new town's first real estate brokers, with offices in the Hurt Building. Subsequently, Michael and Wheeler were placed in charge of all home sales for the Opa-locka Company in November 1926. Wheeler was also president of Sunnyland Properties.

After Glenn Curtiss' death in 1930, Wheeler became Mrs. Curtiss' principal financial advisor, marrying her soon after. Subsequently, he became President of both Curtiss-Bright Properties and the Opa-locka Company. After his term as mayor, Wheeler moved into the Curtiss home in Country Club Estates, but maintained ownership of his Opa-locka house until July, 1937.

9 BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Bibliographical Continuation Sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Site Size (Approx. Acreage of Property):

.31 acre

UTM Coordinates:

17 | 575080 | 28654110
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

Township	Range	Section
52 S	41 W	21

LOCATION SKETCH OR MAP N

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Block 37, Lots 10 and 11

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

N/A
STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

N/A

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Michael Maxwell, AICP

ORGANIZATION

Michael Maxwell Associates

STREET & NUMBER

Post Office Box 140906

CITY OR TOWN

Coral Gables

DATE

February, 1987

TELEPHONE

(305) 446-2206

STATE

Florida

ZIP CODE

33146