UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED OCT 28 1981

DATE ENTERED MAR 22 1982

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Opa-Locka Thematic Resource Area
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
(See individual properties)　　　　　　　　N/A NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Opa-Locka	N/A VICINITY OF	13

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Florida	12	Dade	025

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
—DISTRICT	X PUBLIC *only public submittal*	X OCCUPIED	—AGRICULTURE	—MUSEUM
—BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	X UNOCCUPIED	X COMMERCIAL	—PARK
—STRUCTURE	—BOTH	—WORK IN PROGRESS	—EDUCATIONAL	—PRIVATE RESIDENCE
—SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	—ENTERTAINMENT	—RELIGIOUS
—OBJECT	N/A IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	X GOVERNMENT	—SCIENTIFIC
X Thematic group	—BEING CONSIDERED	X YES: UNRESTRICTED	—INDUSTRIAL	—TRANSPORTATION
		—NO	—MILITARY	X OTHER: vacant

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Multiple ownership (See individual properties)
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN	STATE
N/A VICINITY OF	

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.　Dade County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
73 W. Flagler Street

CITY, TOWN	STATE
Miami	Florida

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Dade County Survey　　　　　Property has not been determined eligible.

DATE
1980　　　　　　　　　—FEDERAL X STATE —COUNTY —LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS　Florida Division of Archives, History and Records Management

CITY, TOWN	STATE
Tallahassee	Florida

7 DESCRIPTION

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

See individual files.

The four buildings composing the Opa-Locka Thematic Resource Area (Opa-Locka Company Administration Building, Opa-Locka Bank Building, Opa-Locka Hotel Building, and Opa-Locka Railroad Depot) are significant because:

A) they are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; and

B) they are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; and

C) they embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.

The thematic aspects of this nomination are designed to include those buildings associated with Glenn Hammond Curtiss and the development of his planned city, Opa-Locka Florida. The buildings were designed by Bernhardt Muller and embody the distinctive architecture loosely described as the "Arabian Nights style," or more specifically but still rather loosely, the Moorish Revival Style. The buildings were identified in a survey of Dade County, Florida, conducted by the Historic Preservation Division, Office of Community and Economic Development of Metropolitan Dade County. The survey was partially funded by the Federal Community Development Block Grants program and by a grant from the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service in the U.S. Department of Interior. The latter grant was administered by the Florida Department of State's Bureau of Historic Sites and Properties (a discussion of the survey methods and criteria are contained in Appendix A).

The survey identified more than twenty historic sites (see Appendix B) in the City of Opa-Locka. It was the finding of the survey that Opa-Locka City Hall, Railroad Depot, Bank and Hotel buildings satisfied the criteria of the National Register. The remaining buildings were mostly residential and in such cases exhibited only superficial elements of the Moorish Style. In many cases, the residential buildings no longer retain original design features, having undergone substantial alteration. Another justification for the selection of these four buildings is that they are distinctive from the remaining predominantly residential buildings in both scale and function. They are larger and more elaborate in scale and design. The buildings are also oriented towards public rather than private usage.

The buildings are located in an urban residential community that helps form the greater Miami area. The buildings are not located in close proximity to each other. Although the architecture style of all the buildings is Moorish Revival, each building offers its own particular interpretation. Except for some common features and materials, the buildings have totally different appearances and characteristics (see the individual site forms for a more detailed discussion of each building).

To understand the architecture of these four Opa-Locka buildings, it is necessary to remove oneself from the constraints of architectural reality and view the buildings as what they represent, a fantasy, for whatever the motivation and result, that a

(See Continuation Sheet)

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CONTINUATION SHEET	ITEM NUMBER 7	PAGE 1

few men dared to make reality. The buildings have been commonly viewed with disdain, as absurd architectural trash, as "schlock" bordering on the outrageous. Nevertheless, they are the remnants of a fantasy, and fantasies are to be enjoyed.

The Opa-Locka buildings project many elements and motifs that conjur up the images from the Arabian Nights tales. These elements add to the illusion and enjoyment of the fantasy. Aside from the standard wood frame and stucco construction, each building offered many special features for the pleasures of the eye. The domes, minarets, crenelated parapets, balconies, Saracenic arches, watchtowers, battered walls, mosaic tile, and stuccoed exterior prematurely aged, were all designed to create the illusion of the Arabian Nights fantasy.

These buildings share the common bond that they are the manifestation of the dreams of Glenn Hammond Curtiss. The challenge was to escape the imposed realities of the larger, unimaginative society. The result is not important, nor the fantasy. The importance is in the trying. That is why these four buildings are significant.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

CRITERIA OF SIGNIFICANCE:

1) These sites are significant for their association with Glenn Hammond Curtiss, inventor, aviation pioneer and real estate developer.

2) These sites are significant for their interpretation of Moorish architecture, best described as an architectural fantasy conjuring up the tales of the Arabian Knights.

DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY:

"One thousand and one reasons," began an advertisement in a January, 1926, issue of the Miami Herald, could be given to encourage investors to "get in on the ground floor of a never to be repeated opportunity" - an opportunity to participate in the realization of a dream, a dream of the Arabian Knights.[1] The dream was Opa-Locka, a city designed to meet all of the needs of its residents, a city of beauty, a city of convenience, or as it was proudly advertised, the City Substantial. Its visionary was Glenn Hammond Curtiss.

Glenn Curtiss was an inventor who found his greatest enjoyment in inventing things that went faster, better. His fortune began to rise in the late 1890s when he modified a bicycle frame by attaching a motor. Although motorcycles were not a new concept, Curtiss diligently improved his motors until they far surpassed other motors being produced at that time. Soon he was established as one of the foremost cycle manufacturers in the world.[2] Racing his own motorcycles, Curtiss established speed records at Providence, Rhode Island, in 1905 and at Ormond Beach, Florida in 1907.[3]

Curtiss' success with motorcycle engines led him to develop an operable motor for a dirigible designed by Tom Baldwin. The motor worked successfully and also provided Curtiss his first contact with aviation. His interest in aviation continued and he was soon appointed Director of Experiments for the National Aerial Experiment Association. Under the auspices of the association, he designed the "June Bug", the airplane with which he won the first aviation prize offered in the United States.[4] In his airplane, Curtiss went on to win the James Gordon Bennett Cup and the Prix de la Vitesse. In 1910, he captured the New York "World" prize of $10,000, for a successful flight from Albany to New York City.[5]

After 1910, Curtiss devoted his energies to developing the hydroaeroplane and flying boat for naval service. After forming the Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company in 1910, he developed the JN type aircraft which became affectionately known as the "Jenny" by pilots during World War I. The Jenny was the plane most often used to train American and British pilots. Curtiss also developed the NC-4, the first flying boat to cross the Atlantic Ocean.[6]

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET one   **ITEM NUMBER** 8   **PAGE** 1

In addition to his interests in aviation, Curtiss designed or improved motor scooters, lifeboats, airboats (to get around Florida's wetlands), speedboats, and auto planes. He also developed a keen interest in real estate development.[7]

Curtiss came to Miami in 1916 for a vacation from a chilling northern climate that had adversely affected his health. By this time, he had established himself as a worldwide leader in the developing aviation industry and consequently had amassed a considerable fortune. Curtiss decided that the pleasant Florida climate and landscape were ideal for the location of a flying school. In his search for a suitable location, he met James H. Bright, a wealthy Missouri cattleman. Bright jointly owned with his brother a large amount of land around Miami. Curtiss purchased Bright's brother's interest in 1917, thus forming the Curtiss-Bright Ranch and introducing Curtiss to a new experience, real estate development.[8] It was the eve of the Florida land boom.

Recognizing the beginning of the Florida land boom, Curtiss and Bright began to divide portions of their land holdings into subdivisions and lots for public sale. Their earliest real estate venture became the City of Hialeah, a development planned along a Spanish architectural theme. At Hialeah, Curtiss introduced Jai Alai, the national game of Cuba, to the United States.[9]

Hialeah developed too rapidly in too uncontrolled a manner for Curtiss. Therefore he embarked on the development of Miami Springs, south of Hialeah. Curtiss intended Miami Springs to embody the Pueblo architectural style.[10]

Opa-Locka was Curtiss' last and most extravagant real estate venture. Curtiss intended Opa-Locka to be more than just another residential development, it was to be a total community. Areas were to be allotted for industry and business in addition to the residential sections. He envisioned a town where people would have room to grow their own gardens, raise chickens, and possibly generate an income. It was to be a border town, positioned between the rich agricultural mucklands of Dade County and the urbanized and industrial sections of Miami. In such a position, the town could grow with both agriculture and industry, and serve as a shipping and receiving station for both.[11]

Above all, Curtiss realized that to make his dream a reality, he had to give the new city a character, a focus. He had to make Opa-Locka inviting to potential residents. One way to accomplish this was through architecture. Curtiss decided that his city must possess architectural beauty and be architecturally unique. In his quest Curtiss turned to architect Bernhardt E. Muller and city planner Clinton McKenzie, both of New York.[12]

On an undeveloped hammock a few miles north of Miami, called Opatishawockalocka by the Seminole Indians, Curtiss embarked on the construction of his dream city. Together, Curtiss, Muller, and McKenzie designed and attempted to construct the perfect city, in plan, convenience, and beauty. The result resembled, as it was described in 1928 by the city's mayor, H. Sayre Wheeler, "pages torn from tales of the Arabian Knights."[13]

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

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CONTINUATION SHEET two   **ITEM NUMBER** 8   **PAGE** 2

Credit for the initial inspiration to use the Arabian Knights' tales as the theme for the city has been given to both Curtiss and Muller. Regardless, the middle eastern theme was adopted, plans were executed, and construction was started in January, 1926. Clinton McKenzie laid out the city plan. The plan was an abrupt departure from the grid system that had predominated in most Florida developments to that time. The streets, avenues, and boulevards were broad, and "where ever possible gently winding," and ample parking space was provided. "In planning the city," according to Muller, "our idea was to avoid the only too well known checker-board idea of development with the usual square boxes planted on each lot, making a composite of architecture abortions with which we are surrounded on all sides in America."[14] Muller went on to write:

> Mr. Curtiss was anxious to be able to give the world
> a city of beauty with homes expressing one's aesthetic
> yearnings. He felt that the public should be provided
> with something better than the stereotyped boxes in which
> it is accustomed to live, and his great desire was to give
> the man of modest means a home radiating charm and love-
> liness, as well as the man of wealth. This has been
> Mr. Curtiss' aim through out the entire development –
> to provide an artistic well-built home at no greater
> cost than the miserable architectural types generally
> offered to the public.[15]

The whole town developed in character with the Arabian Knights theme. Streets were given names like Alladin Street, Sharazad Avenue, Semame Street, Caliph Street, Ali Baba Avenue and Sinbad Avenue. Curtiss is said to have boasted on occasion that he was creating the "Baghdad of Dade County."[16]

The anchor of the new city was the Administration Building. It was designed by Muller for the Opa-Locka Company, Curtiss' development and sales company. The building was a dazzling array of domes, minarets, and arches, which combined to create a delightful oriental palace and afforded the appearance of a magical, fantasy city. The building was inspired by the palace of the Emperor Kosroushah from the tale of "The Talking Bird" and included a courtyard inspired by the "Garden of the Princess Periezade."[17]

The Harry Hurt building was the first major commercial building constructed in Opa-Locka. Also designed by Muller, the building embodied the theme of the Arabian Knights, having a large central dome, two smaller domes and minarets. The building was designed to be a central shopping and service center, housing a drug store, grocery story, novelty shop, and gasoline station. The Hurt building was inspired by the tale of "The Stone City."[18]

Another major building designed by Muller was the building for the Opa-Locka Bank. The bank was a challenge for Muller and inspiration for the design came from the "Tale of Layn al Asnam." He resolved the dilemma of whether to express security or fantasy by designing the bank to resemble an ancient Egyptian vault or mastaba. The building was designed to have columns with lotus capitals modeled after the Temple at Karnak, but the columns were never added and the building, as a result of the real estate bust,

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

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CONTINUATION SHEET three   **ITEM NUMBER** 8   **PAGE** 3

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was never used as a bank.[19] It was purchased by a Baptist Church soon after and converted
into a church facility.

One of the most important buildings constructed in Opa-Locka was the Seaboard
Airline railroad passenger station, for it heralded railway access to Opa-Locka and pro-
vided publicity to the city through people in transit. An impressive structure, the
passenger station was instrumental in attracting early residents and investment to the
new town. In 1926, Curtiss provided the railway right-of-way and persuaded the Seaboard
Airline Railway to curve its main line to pass through Opa-Locka as its first stop between
Palm Beach and Miami. Construction on the station was begun at the end of 1927 and was
completed four months later.[20]

The passenger station was also constructed according to the Arabian Knights theme.
It was based on the stories of "Alladin and His Lamps" and "Ali Baba and the Forty
Thieves." The one-story building had a variety of mosaic tile detailing and two small
domes on the roof.[21]

Muller, who had studied at the L'Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, designed eighty-six
buildings for the Opa-Locka development. Many are still standing, although somewhat
altered, and many more have been destroyed. The development eventually had an archery
club, swimming pool and pavilion, golf course, and several industrial buildings. Most
of these have disappeared with post World War II development.

For a while, though, Opa-Locka was truly a magical city and land of enchantment,
where visions of flying carpets and oriental splendor were easily conjured up. This
spirited fantasy found no better manifestation than in the celebration staged to herald
the arrival of the first train, the Orange Blossom Special to Opa-Locka, on January 7,
1927. The entire citizenry, dressed to the hilt in oriental costume, turned out to
welcome the Orange Blossom Special, which carried Florida Governor John W. Martin and
Seaboard Railway President S. Davies Warfield. The welcome was staged as a battle of
the Arab Kingdom of Opa-Locka against the Great Sheik Warfield and the coming of his
iron horse. The story is told, however, that a mighty Prophet spoke to the Grand
Vizier leading the attack and commanded him to do no harm to the Great Sheik or his iron
steed, for they came in peace. Opa-Locka and Miami papers seized the sensational event
and provided great advertising for the city. To add to the amusement, during the
commotion of the arrival of the train, reported the newspapers, tragedy struck, as the
Grand Viziers favorite wife chose the opportunity to escape from the harem; a "slight
loss compared to the gain of the iron horse."[22]

Even advertising could not save Opa-Locka from the declining fortunes of the
Florida real estate market. Construction activity was curtailed and plans were abandoned
beginning in 1927. The hurricane of 1926 had not helped either, although damage to
Opa-Locka was not as extensive as in other places.

The death of Curtiss, in 1930, however, did put an end to the dream of Opa-Locka.
He had planned to put Opa-Locka in a holding pattern until economic conditions improved
and resumption of construction could occur.[23] Plans had been considered to construct
Egyptian, Chinese and English architectural villages, also. These never became a reality.

In restrospect, the analogy of Mayor Wheeler was most appropriate, for Opa-Locka
was like a few pages torn from the tales of The Arabian Knights. In Opa-Locka we are

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CONTINUATION SHEET four   **ITEM NUMBER** 8   **PAGE** 4

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left, not with the whole book, but withonly a few torn pages.

FOOTNOTES

   [1] Miami Herald (Miami), January 10, 1926. Advertisement.

   [2] C.R. Roseberry, Glenn Curtiss: Pioneer of Flight, (Garden City, N.Y.: Double-
day and Company, 1972), National Cyclopaedia of American Biography Vol. 22 (New York:
James T. White, 1932), p. 195.

   [3] National Cyclopaedia, p. 195.

   [4] National Cyclopaedia, p. 195.

   [5] National Cyclopaedia, p. 195.

   [6] Roseberry, p. 397; National Cyclopaedia, p. 196.

   [7] National Cyclopaedia, p. 196.

   [8] Florida: The East Coast, Its Builders, Industries, and Resources. (Miami: The
Miami Herald, 1923), p. 149; Frank Fitzgerald Bush, A Dream of Araby. (Opa-Locka: South
Florida Archaeological Museum, 1976), p. 1; Scharff and Walter S. Taylor, Overland and
Sea. A Biography of Glenn Hammond Curtiss, (New York: David McKay and Co., Inc., 1968),
p. 294.

   [9] Scharff and Taylor, p. 295.

   [10] Ibid, p. 295; Len Klekner, "Florida Revival and 'Theme-Town' Architecture 1880-
1929," pamphlet published by University Art Gallery, Florida State University. 1977, p. 12;
Roseberry, p. 431; Bush, p. 2.

   [11] "Opa-Locka, Florida" (Brochure), published by Glenn H. Curtiss Properties, Inc.
ca. 1926; Roseberry, p. 432; Advertisement, n.d., no caption, on file at Florida Division
of Archives, History and Records Management.

   [12] Bush, p. 3.

   [13] H. Sayre Wheller, "Opa-Locka, Created from the Arabian Knight" in Journal of American
Institute of Architects (April, 1928), p. 157.

   [14] Bernhardt E. Muller, "Bernhardt E. Muller's Dream of Arabian City in Florida is
Reality," in Opa-Locka Times (February 23, 1927), p. 1.

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

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[15]Ibid.

[16]Roseberry, p. 432.

[17]Muller, p. 1, 2; Amalie Thomsen, "The Arabian Knights in America," in Country Life (November, 1928).

[18]Muller, p. 2; Wheller, p. 158.

[19]Thomsen; Wheeler, p. 158; Muller, p. 2; Bush, p. 10.

[20]Bush, p. 18.

[21]Wheeler, p. 158; Muller, p. 2.

[22]Opa-Locka Times (Opa-Locka), January 8, 1927.

[23]Bush, p. 24.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

SEE ATTACHMENT

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____ (See individual properties)

QUADRANGLE NAME _____   QUADRANGLE SCALE _____

UTM REFERENCES

A |__|__| |__|__|__|__|__|__| |__|__|__|__|__|__| B |__|__| |__|__|__|__|__|__| |__|__|__|__|__|__|
   ZONE EASTING   NORTHING   ZONE EASTING   NORTHING

C |__|__| |__|__|__|__|__|__| |__|__|__|__|__|__| D |__|__| |__|__|__|__|__|__| |__|__|__|__|__|__|

E |__|__| |__|__|__|__|__|__| |__|__|__|__|__|__| F |__|__| |__|__|__|__|__|__| |__|__|__|__|__|__|

G |__|__| |__|__|__|__|__|__| |__|__|__|__|__|__| H |__|__| |__|__|__|__|__|__| |__|__|__|__|__|__|

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See individual properties)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Rolla L. Queen, Historic Sites Specialist

ORGANIZATION   DATE

Florida Division of Archives, History and Records Management

STREET & NUMBER   TELEPHONE

The Capitol   (904) 487-2333

CITY OR TOWN   STATE

Tallahassee   Florida

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___   STATE _X__   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   DATE 10/16/81

GPO 921-803

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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    Hammond Curtiss New York: David McKay and Co., 1968.

Thomsen, Amalie. "The Arabian Knights in America" in Country Life (November, 1928)

Wheeler, H. Sayre. "Opa-Locka, Created from the Arabian Knights" in Journal of
    the American Institute of Architects (April, 1928)

A variety of advertisements were also used to prepare the Statement of Significance
There are too many to cite in this report. All are on file at the Florida
Division of Archives, History and Records Management.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received   JUL   6 1987

date entered

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

1. Name

historic   Opa-locka Thematic Group

and or common   N/A

2. Location

street & number   See individual inventory forms   N/A not for publication

city, town   Opa-locka   N/A vicinity of

state   Florida   code 12   county Dade   code 025

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	_X_ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
___ building(s)	___ private	_X_ commercial	___ park
___ structure	_X_ both	_X_ work in progress	___ educational	_x_ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	_X_ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
_x_ Thematic Group	_X_ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	_x_ other: Apartment

4. Owner of Property

name   See Individual Inventory Forms

street & number   See Individual Inventory Forms

city, town   See Inventory Forms   N/A vicinity of   state   See Inventory Forms

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.   Dade County Courthouse

street & number   73 West Flagler Street

city, town   state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title   Dade County Historic Survey   has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date   1981   ___ federal ___ state X county ___ local

depository for survey records   Division of Historical Resources

city, town   Tallahassee   state   Florida

7. Description

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

The Opa-locka thematic group consists of eighteen individual buildings associated with the 1925-1928 Miami suburb of Opa-locka. The development, a product of Glenn Hammond Curtiss and the Opa-locka Company is a planned, thematic architectural community in South Florida. The development follows a curvilinear street plan with its principal public buildings serving as axial focal points at major intersections. The eighteen buildings included in the thematic group are designed in the Moorish Revival style. Typical architectural elements characteristic of the style include textured stucco walls, flat roofs with irregular or crenelated parapets, minarets, domes, horseshoe and keyhole arch openings, rectangular casement windows and earth tone paint colors with pastel trim.

The Opa-locka development began in 1925 on level, sandy terrain in northwest Dade County. The development was envisioned as a planned, self-contained community with clearly defined residential, commercial and recreational sectors laid out according to the principles of the Garden City Movement. The present condition of the plan is little changed from its original street layout. The basic sectors of the city remain intact, save for the golf course recreation area which became a military airfield and subsequently an industrial park.

The Opa-locka thematic group of Moorish Revival buildings is an anomaly in South Florida. It is conjectured that Curtiss used its novelty as a marketing device to give his venture a unique, easily recognizable image. The eighteen buildings are one and two-story masonry structures with exterior walls of rough textured stucco and with blunt or rounded corners. Roofs are flat with irregularly rounded or crenelated parapet walls. Ornamentation consists of stylized Moorish elements including minarets, domes, keyhole and horseshoe arches, horizontal banding, Islamic cartouches and decorative tiles. The majority of the buildings are asymmetrical in composition, with doors frequently placed off center or at the sides. Fenestration is symmetrically placed on the facades, usually in groups of two. Original fenestration was wooden casements, often with striped cloth awnings. Original doors were decorative wood, with wrought iron hardware. Common alterations made to the buildings include the removal of the domes and minarets, infilled arches, and replacement of original fenestration with contemporary awning or jalousie windows. Recent additions have been made to several of the structures at the rear or side elevations, although they have not seriously compromised the architectural integrity of their parent structures. Detailed descriptive information on each of the buildings included in the nomination is available on the individual inventory forms.

METHODOLOGY

The Opa-locka thematic nomination was based on the findings of the Dade County Historic Survey and extensive research conducted by Michael Maxwell Associates, Inc. The Dade County Historical Survey, conducted between 1977-1980, identified approximately 5,000 historical sites and 300 archaeological sites throughout the county. The criteria used in evaluating surveyed properties was the same used in

NPS Form 10-900-a
(3-82)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form
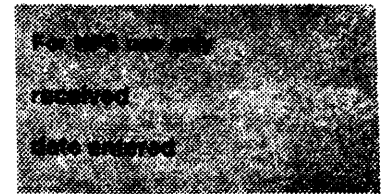
Continuation sheet 1   Item number 7   Page 1

the evaluation of National Register proposals with, however, more emphasis placed on local significance. The survey was funded by a Community Development Block Grant and the State of Florida Historic Preservation Grants-in-Aid from the Department of Interior and included professional architects, architectural historians and archaeologists. The survey was published as the book From Wilderness to Metropolis by Metro-Dade County in 1982. Opa-locka was identified as the county's only significant 1920s development to use the Moorish Revival style as an architectural theme. In addition to the Dade County survey, the University of Miami Library Special Collections Department has an extensive collection of Opa-locka architect Bernhardt Muller's drawings of the city's buildings. Maxwell Associates worked with the University to catalogue the drawings and then re-surveyed the city to compare the original drawings to actual site conditions.

The eighteen properties included in the nomination were selected for their comprehensive representation of Moorish Revival architecture and for their association with developer Glenn Curtiss and architect Bernhardt E. Muller. The eighteen buildings, out of approximately 105 structures built, represent the finest examples of Moorish Revival style still standing. Forty-eight remaining buildings, not part of this nomination, will be locally designated. Only those buildings retaining their original architectural and historical integrity have been included in the proposal as presented. The use of the thematic nomination was dictated by the strong architectural and historical relationship of the buildings. Due to the contemporary in-fill of Opa-locka's urban fabric, a cohesive historic district could not be substantiated.

BUILDING INVENTORY

OLTR 1   H.W. Baird House
           401 Dunad Avenue

OLTR 2   W.P. Tooker House
           811 Dunad Avenue

OLTR 3   H. Sayre Wheeler House
           1035 Dunad Avenue

OLTR 4   S.K. Haislip House
           1141 Jann Avenue

OLTR 5   W.A. Tinsman House
           1110 Peri Street

OLTR 6   J.W. Crouse House
           1156 Peri Street

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OLTR 7   E.E. Root Building
          111 Perviz Avenue

OLTR 8   Opa-locka Fire and Police Station
          124 Perviz Avenue

OLTR 9   A.H. Higgins Duplex
          1210/1212 Sesame Street

OLTR 10   L.M. Taber Duplex
          1214/1216 Sesame Street

OLTR 11   Frank Bush Apartment Building
          1240 Sesame Street

OLTR 12   C.E. Long House
          613 Sharar Avenue

OLTR 13   Roy Helms House
          721 Sharar Avenue

OLTR 14   Clarence Etheredge House
          915 Sharar Avenue

OLTR 15   George Cravero House
          1011 Sharar Avenue

OLTR 16   Helm Stores and Apartments
          1217 Sharazad Boulevard

OLTR 17   R.M. Griffiths House
          826 Superior Street

OLTR 18   King Trunk Factory and Showroom
          951 Superior Street

       Three historic Moorish Revival buildings in Opa-locka have previously been
listed in the National Register of Historic Places. These include the Harry Hurt
Building, 490 Ali-Baba Avenue; the Opa-locka Bank, 940 Caliph Street, and the Opa-
locka Company Administration Building (City Hall), 777 Sharazad Boulevard. A fourth
building, the Opa-locka Railroad Station, has been determined eligible for listing
and will likely be formally nominated following its acquisition by a consenting
owner.

RESOURCE INVENTORY: Contributing: 18 Buildings

                         Non-Contributing: 0

8. Significance

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The eighteen buildings comprising the Opa-locka thematic group are architecturally and historically related through their:

1. Association with the mid-1920s Land Boom in South Florida;
2. Use of the Moorish Revival architectural style;
3. Association with Glenn Curtiss, internationally renowned aviator, inventor, and Florida land developer;
4. Association with the Garden City Movement in urban planning.

Each of the buildings within the thematic group possess sufficient architectural integrity and historic association to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places through their association with the Opa-locka development.

LAND BOOM

Opa-locka is a product of Florida's mid-1920s Land Boom. The Boom, often noted for its wild fluctuations in real estate prices, produced some of the state's better-planned cities such as Coral Gables, Country Club Estates (Miami Springs) and Hollywood. At its height, developers used a variety of approaches to publicize their suburbs and attract buyers. One such method was the creation of the "thematic" community, that employed an architectural style or theme to unify the city appearance. The use of architectural themes as a promotional tool became a common practice in South Florida during the Boom period. Most notable of these were Glenn Curtiss' two earlier developments: the Spanish Mission-style town of Hialeah and the Pueblo revival community of Country Club Estates. Merrick's Mediterranean-style Coral Gables had successfully used a single unifying architectural style to provide an easily recognizable image. Opa-locka set itself apart from the rest of South Florida's other developments in 1926 through its use of Moorish Revival architecture and its incorporation (in plan) of Ebenezer Howard's Garden City approach to community design. No other community in the nation is known to have exclusively employed this theme and approach.[1] Opa-locka is believed to contain the largest single concentration of Moorish Revival buildings in the United States. Sixty-five structures presently remain out of an estimated one hundred originally constructed between 1925 and 1927.

Florida's speculative real estate ventures from 1920–1926 produced a frenzy of new construction, subdivisions and communities in what was once farm land or everglades. The Boom, primarily concentrated in South Florida, reached its pinnacle

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _See Individual Forms_
Quadrangle name _North Miami, Opa-Locka_   **Quadrangle scale** _1:24,000_
UTM References   See Individual Inventory Forms

A └┴┘ └┴┴┴┴┴┘ └┴┴┴┴┴┘   B └┴┘ └┴┴┴┴┴┘ └┴┴┴┴┴┘
  Zone   Easting   Northing   Zone   Easting   Northing

C └┴┘ └┴┴┴┴┴┘ └┴┴┴┴┴┘   D └┴┘ └┴┴┴┴┴┘ └┴┴┴┴┴┘

E └┴┘ └┴┴┴┴┴┘ └┴┴┴┴┴┘   F └┴┘ └┴┴┴┴┴┘ └┴┴┴┴┴┘

G └┴┘ └┴┴┴┴┴┘ └┴┴┴┴┴┘   H └┴┘ └┴┴┴┴┴┘ └┴┴┴┴┴┘

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Individual Inventory Forms

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

state N/A   **code** N/A   **county** N/A   **code** N/A

state N/A   **code** N/A   **county** N/A   **code** N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael Maxwell/Michael Zimny

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation   **date** June 1987

street & number Division of Historical Resources   **telephone** (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee   **state** Florida
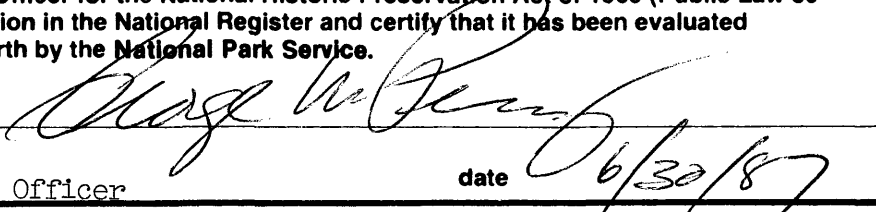
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national   ___ state   _X_ 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** 6/30/87

For NPS use only
   I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

                                  date 8/17/87
  Keeper of the National Register

  Attest: **date**
  Chief of Registration

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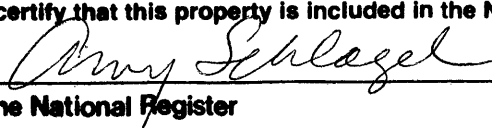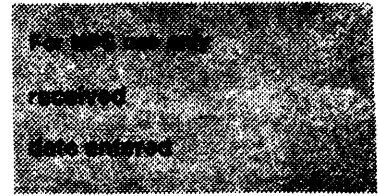Continuation sheet ___3___   Item number ___8___   Page ___1___

in Miami. Promotional brochures described the area as "an idyllic tropical setting with the potential for huge profits." Initially, wealthy winter tourists were enticed to make speculative land investments in Miami, a city that in the early 1920s was fast becoming one of America's most popular winter resorts. By 1924, the population had swelled with middle to lower middle income people who, by then, made up most of the new arrivals in South Florida.[2]

The Opa-locka development offered a variety of housing types to attract the growing middle and upper segments of the Miami metropolis. Unlike other typical Boom-time suburbs, Opa-locka was based upon Ebenezer Howard's Garden City concept which at that time had received widespread publicity in the United States.[3] Opa-locka epitomized what an American Garden City should be. It was a fully zoned community with distinct zoning for residential areas, shopping, industry and recreation. Each homeowner was given a garden plot on which to raise food. The community was intended to be self-contained and included such amenities as garden plots, an airport, country club, zoo, swimming pool, parks, a golf course, permanent fairgrounds and archery club. Opa-locka had employment opportunities in manufacturing, construction and the service industries. The town, incorporated in May 1926, was also one of Florida's first to have commuter train service to Miami. Although most Boom-time developments espoused grand plans, Opa-locka not only completed its overall town plan but also a significant portion of its public buildings and a sizable number of residential buildings as well.

DEVELOPER

Opa-locka was developed by Glenn Hammond Curtiss. Born on May 21, 1878 in Hammondsport, New York, Curtiss became one of America's pioneers of aviation and subsequently one of the nation's wealthiest men. Curtiss, like the Wright Brothers, began his career in a cycle shop, becoming involved in the early development of motorcycles. By age 25 he was a renowned motorcycle racer and manufacturer of engines. Alexander Graham Bell hired Curtiss to design engines for "lighter than air craft." In 1908 Scientific American sponsored a contest wherein the winner had to fly a man-powered aircraft at least one kilometer. Curtiss entered the contest and won it; the flight became the first officially recognized in America.[4] The Wright Brothers' claims were not officially recognized for several years, following a series of lawsuits.

Curtiss competed in numerous air races, and was known in the press as "the fastest man of the earth and skies." Curtiss' most publicized feat occurred in 1910 when he became the first person to fly between Albany and New York City in less than 24 hours, winning a prize of $10,000.[5]

Although Curtiss gained his public acclaim as a pilot, his most significant contributions were in aircraft and engine design. He and Hugh Robinson developed the first aircraft carrier for the U.S. Navy and built the first seaplane. Curtiss made his fortune building the "Jenny," America's only combat aircraft used in World War I.[6]

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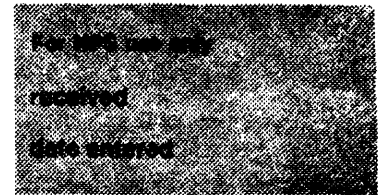
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By 1916, Curtiss was a millionaire and a leading figure in aviation industry. That year he came to Miami to locate a new flying school. During his stay he met James H. Bright, a west Dade County cattle rancher. Bright owned 17,000 acres northwest of Miami and offered to donate land for Curtiss' flying field. Curtiss and Bright subsequently formed a partnership in 1917, creating the Curtiss-Bright Ranch.[7]

Curtiss and Bright, both astute businessmen, saw the beginning of the Florida Land Boom. They drained their property and began to subdivide portions of it for sale. Their first real estate venture, in 1921, was Hialeah, the "Gateway to the Everglades."[8] Hialeah grew quickly as a community of large suburban lots and small acreages. It became a tremendous financial success. As the pace of the Boom quickened, the partners focused their attention on the creation of a second real estate project, Country Club Estates.

Country Club Estates (now Miami Springs) was begun in 1924 as a resort-oriented community, planned according to the best principles of Beaux Arts city design.[9] The town plan, created by Clinton McKenzie, the planner of Coral Gables, featured wide boulevards, a golf course, resort spa, commercial center, and extensive landscaping on wide boulevards. The development utilized strict zoning and design controls that mandated the use of Pueblo Revival architectural themes. Early buildings featured battered and roughly finished stucco walls, flat roofs with parapets and water spouts, projecting wooden roof beams (vigas) and an asymmetrical combination of one- and two-story masses resembling the Indian habitats of New Mexico and Arizona. The Miami Herald described Country Club Estates as a "high class residential section equipped with all the modern improvements: power lines, streets, white ways, water supply and telephones."[10] Strong sales and favorable public acceptance of Country Club Estates encouraged Curtiss to independently embark upon the development of Opa-locka.

ARCHITECT

The architect of record for virtually all of the buildings constructed in Opa-locka between 1926 and 1927 was Bernhardt E. Muller, AIA. At the time Muller was retained, his office was located at 527 Fifth Avenue in New York City. Members of early families who knew Glenn Curtiss have stated that Muller was retained at the suggestion of Curtiss' mother, who was familiar with his designs for Christian Science churches in upstate New York.[11]

Muller, born in Fremont, Nebraska on December 27, 1878, received his architectural training at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, graduating in 1905.[12] Between his graduation and 1906, Muller studied in France, Austria, and Germany. His first recorded employment was with the firm of Trowbridge and Livingston where he became a draftsman in 1906. He next worked for Robert J. Reiley from 1909 to 1911 as a designer. In 1911, Muller again changed positions to work for D. Everett Waid. In 1914 Muller started his own architectural firm, a practice that existed until 1942. Upon his retirement, Muller went to work for George G. Sharp, naval architect, where he was engaged, part-time, until 1955 in the design of interiors for luxury liners.

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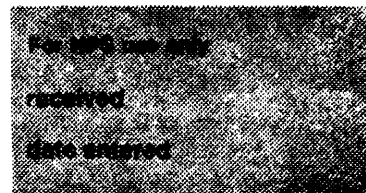
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The AIA 1962 Annual, written shortly before Muller's death, noted that his primary areas of expertise and specialty were "religious and residential structures," and that he had been engaged by Glenn Curtiss to design an "Arabian Fantasy Village" in 1926. Regions of his work were listed as New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

According to records at the University of Miami, Muller created a variety of speculative housing designs in the Miami area as early as 1923. The drawings show "Tudor, Moroccan, Spanish and Dutch" facade treatments for the same set of floor plan variations. The University's records also indicate that Muller may have been the architect for the Pueblo-style resort, Country Club Estates Hotel in Miami Springs.

Although little is presently known of Muller's life and career, it is documented that he designed at least 105 buildings for the Opa-locka Company. Muller, as the supervising architect for the company, exercised control over the design of the entire building program of the new community. Throughout the 1925-1927 building period, Muller is known to have created designs and plans for at least 44 commercial and institutional buildings as well as 61 residences. These designs included the pool, zoo, observation tower, administration building, fire/police station, exhibition grounds and halls, in addition to a bank, stores, apartments, and virtually every residence in Opa-locka. Correspondence and notations on plans at the University of Miami show that Muller created or personally approved each design, specified all finishes and paint colors, and suggested landscaping. To insure that his designs were carried out as planned, Carl Jensen, one of Muller's assistants, was dispatched to Opa-locka to provide on-site coordination and direct communication with Muller.

Muller, as was noted in the book A Dream of Araby, was particular about the detailing of his buildings, and is said to have personally supervised the mixing of the paint for the principal buildings owned by the Opa-locka Company. Plans at the University of Miami also indicate that Muller provided overall design control in the city. On several occasions, Muller was forwarded plans developed by several of the business and home owners and was charged by Curtiss with the task of making them fit into the Moorish Revival motif.

Muller was beginning to branch out architecturally in Opa-locka when building came to a halt. Sketches and site locations exist for a large Chinese-style hotel, and accounts in local newspapers announce that an Egyptian section of the city was planned. Like Coral Gables, which planned many different "villages" of international architecture, Opa-locka was also intended to become more than a single-theme city.

Muller died in September 1964 in Short Hills, New Jersey. The University of Miami purchased that portion of his collection of drawings dealing with Opa-locka in 1965. The cataloguing of the drawings was carried out concurrently with research for this nomination.

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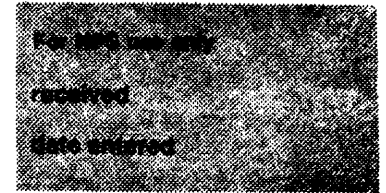
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MOORISH REVIVAL ARCHITECTURE

Bernhardt Muller's interpretation of Moorish Revival architecture in Opa-locka consisted of adapting specific elements of the style as applique to both commercial and residential buildings. Muller systematically used the same Moorish stylistic elements, including minarets, roof domes, crenelated parapets, pointed, key-hole, and horseshoe arches, rough textured stucco, exposed "distressed" brick, polychromed wooden spindles, antique barrel roof tiles, exterior stairs and earth-tone pastel colors.

Muller's residential designs are a re-interpretation of the flat-roofed, concrete block with stucco finish bungalow typical of the South Florida Land Boom. The bungalow was a low cost approach to home building that lent itself to easy modification for a variety of stylistic adaptations. This is evidenced by the use of similar plans in other communities, such as Coral Gables, where the bungalow was adapted to Mediterranean Revival style, and in Country Club Estates where Pueblo Revival style was applied.

Opa-locka was planned to have a range of housing types from modest bungalows to large expensive homes. In general, residences constructed during 1926 and 1927 are modest, under 1,100 square feet, and have similar floor plans of two or three bedrooms, one bath, a small kitchen, living room, dining room and a covered screened porch. Approximately half the houses have a porte cochere or an attached garage.

Commercial and institutional buildings were also embellished by Muller's adaptation of the Moorish Revival style. As with his residential designs, his commercial structures feature a similar palette of architectural elements applied in a manner that created a set-piece to frame entrances and views along commercial streets. Like the residential buildings, commercial structures have a harmonious appearance in design. The styles of the King Trunk Factory (see photo no. 18-1) and the Curtiss Aerocar building, now demolished (see photo no. 3), similarly employed low, single story massing, a curved corner with pedimented entrance, smooth parapet and similar window spacing and detailing. The Hurt Building (see photo no. 4), the earliest commercial building in Opa-locka, is the model for other commercial structures, particularly the E.E. Root (see photo no. 7-1) and Helms (see photo no. 16-1) buildings. All three buildings were a combination of two stores on the first floor with apartments on the second floor. Although each is specifically adapted to its individual lot, all three share the same stylistic elements of minarets, repeating arched openings, and flat roofs surmounted by domes. The buildings were usually painted in multiple pastel earth tones, with the body of the building usually in a dusty tan or rose color, the wooden casement windows painted a dark green or brown, the domes a pastel blue, green, or white, and the minarets painted the same color as the building, becoming a light pastel as it extended over the roof line. As with other commercial buildings of the era, these too are simple in form and detailing, built of low-cost concrete block covered in a stucco finish, based on a utilitarian program.

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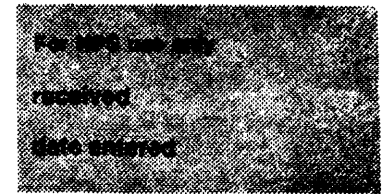
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Muller's adaptation of the Moorish Revival style reached its most elaborate realizations with the Administration Building (see photo no. 2) and the Bush Apartments (see photo no. 11-2). In the case of these two buildings, both employ all of his trademark Moorish elements to buildings that have both a series of modulated planes, angular footprints and a highly refined sense of detailing that included extensive use of decorative copper elements for roof minarets and finials; pecky cypress for lintels, beams, brackets and doors; stained glass windows; polychromed spindles; and antique Cuban clay barrel tiles, in addition to the use of multiple domes and minarets.

OPA-LOCKA

Opa-locka was developed in an area of northwest Dade County known as Cook's Hammock, or "Opatishawockalocka" to its Seminole Indian inhabitants.[13] Curtiss had previously shortened the Seminole word to Opa-locka for use as a street name in Hialeah. Curtiss, independent of Bright, formed the Opa-locka Company in 1925 as a division of Curtiss Properties. Curtiss, who by 1925 was focusing most of his energies in real estate, intended Opa-locka to be much more than an ordinary suburb. Opa-locka was to be "the most beautiful that the art of man could conceive," a complete community, based upon the city design principles of Ebenezer Howard's Garden Cities movement.[14] Curtiss envisioned a suburb where its residents could not only live in uncrowded conditions, surrounded by expansive open space, but also work, grow their own food and have a full complement of recreation amenities.

Curtiss employed Clinton McKenzie to create the town plan with engineer D.E. Clune. Construction of the development began in December of 1925 with the layout of streets and lots. McKenzie designed broad curving streets, avenues, and boulevards, with ample parking spaces to accommodate the growing presence of automobiles. Writing of the development in a 1927 Opa-locka Times article, architect Bernhardt Muller noted:

> In planning the city, our idea was to avoid the only
> too well-known checkerboard idea of development with
> the usual square boxes planted on each lot, making a
> composite of architectural abortions with which we are
> surrounded on all sides in America. Mr. Curtiss was
> anxious to be able to give the world a city of beauty
> with homes expressing aesthetic yearnings. He felt that
> the public should be provided with something better than
> the stereotyped boxes in which it is accustomed to live,
> and his great desire was to give the man of modest means,
> as well as the man of wealth, a home radiating with charm
> and loveliness. It has been Mr. Curtiss' aim throughout
> the entire development to provide an artistic well-built
> home at no greater cost than the miserable architectural
> types generally offered to the public.[16]

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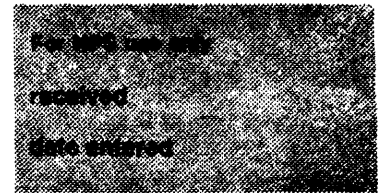
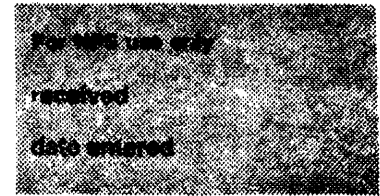Continuation sheet   8   Item number   8   Page   6

Moorish Revival style architecture, loosely based on the tales from One Thousand and One Tales from Arabian Nights, provided the city's theme. It was employed in all phases of the city's development, from the naming of streets, such as Alladin, Sharazad, Sesame, Ali Baba, and Sinbad, to the design of its buildings. The Administration building (City Hall) was the city's most elaborate example of the Arabian Nights theme. According to the architect, it was inspired by the Palace of the Emperor Kosroushah from the tale of "The Talking Bird."[17] The town's focal point, the building still stands as an architectural fantasy featuring domes, minarets, arches, walled courtyards, distress marks and muted desert colors.

Although the actual development of Opa-locka began in December 1925, the official announcement of the new community was not made in the press until January 14, 1926. Sales of lots commenced immediately upon announcement. The Opa-locka Company, like other local suburban developments, had sales offices in downtown Miami on Flagler Street. A fleet of buses took prospective buyers to see the new community rising from north Dade's sandy terrain. Amenities, including Miami's only zoo, a pool with aquatic shows, regular "aero rodeos" and aerial acrobatic shows at the airport, America's only "archery-golf" course (a game invented by Curtiss that combined archery and golf skills), riding stables and natural hammock park attracted large numbers of visitors and buyers.

Photographs from early 1926 show the first buildings constructed in Opa-locka were the Fire/Police Station, the City Hall (administration building), Archery/Golf Club, Observation Tower, and the Baird House. It is thought that the first building erected in town was the Cook's Hammock Park Observation Tower. From this vantage point, high over the hammock's oak trees, prospective purchasers could view the vast expanse of north Dade County that was rapidly emerging as Opa-locka.

In May 1926, a town meeting was held at the Fire/Police Station where twenty-eight registered voters elected to charter the Town of Opa-locka.[18] The city, only having been officially announced for five months, by then featured three stores, two apartment buildings, two gas stations, the fire/police station, administration building, observation tower, golf course and club house, stables, paved streets, numerous houses, and an elementary school.

Unlike other South Florida suburbs, Opa-locka continued to prosper even after the September 1926 hurricane spelled the end of Florida's Land Boom. Opa-locka suffered relatively little damage and received positive publicity as a result. The Miami Daily News even commissioned a model "hurricane proof" home in Opa-locka in 1927. The 1927 R.L. Polk City of Miami Directory reported : "Even the unprecedented September storm did not halt [Opa-locka's] forward march; 30 new homes went into construction during the ensuing 60 days."[19]

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A golf course, designed by nationally recognized golf course designer W.F. Flynn, creator of the famed Boca Raton golf course for Addison Mizner, was completed in 1926. The archery club and the Olympic-sized pool opened in December 1926, as did the Chamber of Commerce and a volunteer police force. A census taken in December 1926 listed 251 residents of Opa-locka.[20]

In 1926 Curtiss provided railway right-of-way and astutely persuaded the Seaboard Airline Railway to curve its main line to pass through Opa-locka and become the first stop between Palm Beach and Miami. Curtiss used the railroad's arrival on January 8, 1927 to his best promotional advantage. He staged the first "Arabian Nights Fantasy," making elaborate preparations to show off his new city.[21] He dressed many of the town's residents in elaborate Arabian costumes, rented from a theatrical company in New York, and dispatched a contingent of sheiks and harem girls on horseback to greet the Seaboard's new Orange Blossom Special, hailed as the most luxurious mode of travel between New York and Miami. Proclamations were presented to the on-board dignitaries, including Florida governor John W. Martin and Seaboard Airline Railway President S. Davies Warfield.

Opa-locka ceased to experience new construction after 1928, and its grand plans to develop into a large community passed away with the sudden death of Glenn Curtiss in 1930. When Curtiss died his dream of Opa-locka died with him. The proposed Egyptian, Chinese and English architectural sections were never realized. Opa-locka ceased to grow a year after the "land bust" of 1926, but fared better than most other speculative developments such as Coral Gables, which soon went bankrupt. The Opa-locka company remained solvent, owning and maintaining its properties in the community until the late 1930s when they were sold to the U.S. Navy for expansion of an airbase. The town's population of 319 remained relatively unchanged until the advent of World War II.[22]

World War II brought large-scale military aviation to Opa-locka and made it the town's economic mainstay for twenty years. The airport Curtiss built became a Naval aviation and airship mooring base in 1930. With the advent of World War II, the Navy purchased the remaining holdings of the Opa-locka company, changing the original park, golf course, archery club and swimming pool into military usage. Housing to accommodate the influx of military personnel brought the construction of numerous apartments and buildings not in keeping with the Moorish architectural theme. When the airbase was decommissioned in 1963, Opa-locka's economy again became depressed.

Opa-locka is presently witnessing an economic resurgence with a related growing interest in historic preservation. The city is presently restoring the City Hall and the Fire and Police Station, and the Hurt Building and railroad station are under study for restoration. Plans are also underway to designate 52 buildings on the local historic register.

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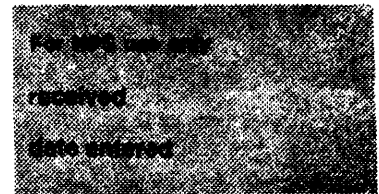
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[14] The Opa-locka Times, February 23, 1927, p. 1.

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[17] "The Arabian Nights in America," Directions Magazine, January/February 1975, p. 63.

[18] Bush, p. 10.

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[20]Bush, p. 14.

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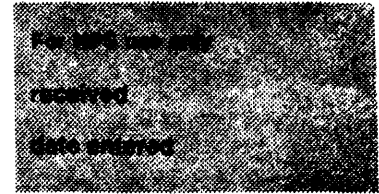Continuation sheet   12   Item number   9   Page   1

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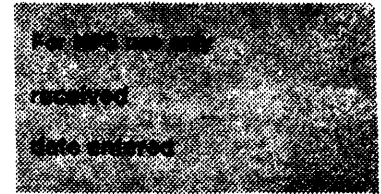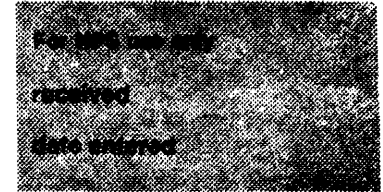Continuation sheet   13   Item number   9   Page   2

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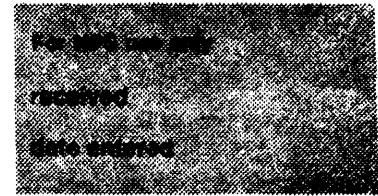Continuation sheet   14   Item number   9   Page   3

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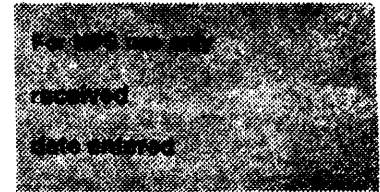
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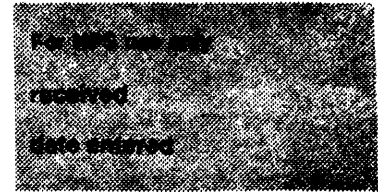
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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name _____ Opa-Locka TR _____ (Cover II) _____

State _____ Dade County, FLORIDA _____

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

Cover   Substantive Review   Keeper _A Schlagel_ 8/17/87

1. Baird House   Entered in the   Keeper _____ 8/17/87
                               National Register
                                                           Attest _____

2. Bush Apartments   Substantive Review   Keeper _Reject_ 8/17/87   S

                                                           Attest _____

3. Cravero House   Entered in the   Keeper _____ 8/17/87
                               National Register
                                                           Attest _____

4. Crouse House   Entered in the   Keeper _____ 8/17/87
                               National Register
                                                           Attest _____

5. Etheredge House   Entered in the   Keeper _____ 8/17/87
                               National Register
                                                           Attest _____

6. Griffiths House   Entered in the   Keeper _____ 8/17/87
                               National Register
                                                           Attest _____

7. Haislip   Entered in the   Keeper _____ 8/17/87
                               National Register
                                                           Attest _____

8. Helm Stores and Apartments Entered in the Keeper _____ 8/17/87
                               National Register
                                                           Attest _____

9. Helms House   Entered in the   Keeper _____ 8/17/87
                               National Register
                                                           Attest _____

10. Higgins Duplex   Entered in the   Keeper _____ 8/17/87
                               National Register
                                                           Attest _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____   Page _____

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name _____ Opa-Locka TR _____ (Cover II) _____
State _____ Dade County, FLORIDA _____

Nomination/Type of Review   Date/Signature

11. King Trunk Factory and   Entered in the   Keeper _Aubrey Byen_ 8/17/87
    Showroom   National Register
                                                        Attest _____

12. Long House   Entered in the   Keeper _Aubrey Byen_ 8/17/87
                            National Register
                                                        Attest _____

13. Opa-Locks Fire and Police   Keeper _Reject_   S
    Station   Substantive Review
                                                        Attest _____

14. Root Building   Entered in the   Keeper _Aubrey Byen_ 8/17/87
                            National Register
                                                        Attest _____

15. Taber Duplex   Entered in the   Keeper _Aubrey Byen_ 8/17/87
                            National Register
                                                        Attest _____

16. Tinsman House   Entered in the   Keeper _Aubrey Byen_ 8/17/87
                            National Register
                                                        Attest _____

17. Tooker House   Entered in the   Keeper _Aubrey Byen_ 8/17/87
                            National Register
                                                        Attest _____

18. Wheeler House   Keeper _____

                                                        Attest _____

19.   Keeper _____

                                                        Attest _____

20.   Keeper _____

                                                        Attest _____

Name   Opa-Locka Thematic Resource Area

State   Florida   Dade County

Nomination	Type of Review	Decision
③1. Hurt, Harry, Building	Substantive Review	ACCEPT 3/22 *Beth Grovena* 3/30
②2. Opa-Locka Company Administration Building	Substantive Review	ACCEPT 3/22 *Beth Grovens* 3/30/85
3.	-	
4. Opa-Locka Railroad Station	Substantive Review	*Secret Murphy* 11/17/82
5. DOE/OWNER OBJECTION		*attest Patrick Andrus* 11/16/82
6. Opa-Locka Railroad Station	-	
7. Owner objection withdrawn – new owner	-	*Amy Schlagel* 6/25/?
8.	-	
9.	-	
10.	-	
11.	-	
12.	-	
13.	-	
14.	-	
15.	-	
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17.	-	
18.	-	
19.	-	
20.	-	
21.	-	
22.	-	
23.	-	
24.	-	