



**REQUEST:** Historic Landmark Designation of New River Castle at 625 SW 5th Place

<b>Case Number</b>	UDP-HPD21001	<b>FMSF#</b>	BD01197
<b>Owner</b>	Cole Properties & Land, LLC		
<b>Applicant</b>	Broward Trust for Historic Preservation, Michaela Conca, President		
<b>Address</b>	625 SW 5th Place		
<b>General Location</b>	Located at the northeast corner of SW 7th Avenue and SW 5th Place on the south bank of the New River		
<b>Legal Description</b>	RESUB BLK 36 FT LAUDERDALE 2-11 B LOT 11,12 BLK 36 TOG WITH POR OF ABUTTING SOUTH RIVER DR PER CASE NO 80-14749		
<b>Existing Use</b>	Residential		
<b>Zoning</b>	RD-15		
<b>Applicable ULDR Sections</b>	47-24.11.C.		
<b>Authored By</b>	Trisha Logan, AICP, Historic Preservation Planner		

Within this staff report there are select excerpts from the attached designation report that was prepared by Michaela Conca of the Broward Trust for Historic Preservation which provides further information on the history and significance of this property.

**Property Background:**

The New River Castle is located at 625 SW 5th Place on the south bank of the New River in the neighborhood of Tarpon River. The New River Castle was first documented in the Florida Master Site File as BD01197 in 1985, subsequently documented in 1995, and again in 2020 as part of an architectural resource survey of Tarpon River.<sup>1</sup> Records from 1995 and 2020 indicate that the residential structure is potentially eligible for individual listing at the local level (1995) and in the National Register of Historic Places (2020). In addition, this location along the banks of the New River is located within an archaeologically significant zone with multiple archaeological sites identified throughout the immediate area.



Location Map



Photo of 625 SW 5th Place

<sup>1</sup> Intensive Level Architectural Resource Survey: Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Erica Mollon Consulting. City of Fort Lauderdale, Department of Sustainable Development. 2020.

### The Chronology of Ownership

With the exception of the indigenous peoples who occupied this area along the New River, the land on which the New River Castle was built begins in the waning years of the 19th century. The first known non-native settlers appeared in 1788 and this property is within the vicinity of the Charles and Frankee Lewis Family Plantation, an early Bahamian family who settled in the area along with the Robbins family who were located on the north bank of the New River. The present-day Lewis Landing Park is located just southwest of this parcel and the Lewis family home was located further east.

*As part of the Donation Act of 1824, Frankee Lewis received full title to 640 acres which encompassed present day Colee Hammock. In 1830, Richard Fitzpatrick of Key West purchased Frankee Lewis' Donation and established a plantation, primarily growing tropical plants. William and Mary Brickell then purchased the land in 1873, and later subdivided the parcels.<sup>2</sup>*

In 1895, the Town of Fort Lauderdale was surveyed by A.L. Knowlton which included the New River Castle parcel in Block 36, Lots 11 and 12. A re-subdivision was recorded in 1921 for the sale of parcels within Block 36 which referred to the Town of Fort Lauderdale and Carlton Marshall's Subdivision. Carlton Marshall's Subdivision plat could not be located, but according to newspaper classified advertisements at this time, Carlton Marshall resided in Pompano and was a pineapple farmer. It is unclear if there is a relation between Carlton and William H. Marshall who served as the first mayor of Fort Lauderdale.

In 1921, the re-subdivision of land identified Fred A. Barrett and W. B. Snyder as having undivided half interest in lots 11 and 12 of Block 36. Both Barrett and Snyder were active early pioneers in the City of Fort Lauderdale. Barrett advocated for a shipping harbor in Fort Lauderdale to coincide with plans for the drainage of the Everglades in 1913; active within a group of local businessmen who formed a company to connect the beach to the town, primarily to attract tourists in 1914; and served as the first President of the First National Bank located on Brickell Avenue in 1921.<sup>3</sup> Barrett also served as Vice President of the Dade-Broward Realty Company.<sup>4</sup> Snyder worked alongside M.A. Hott in their real estate partnership that developed several early subdivisions including Idlewyld and Colee Hammock.

Also noted in 1921 was the sale of this land to George E. Miller, owner of the Las Olas Hotel. Miller then sold the property to C.R. Geraghty who is noted as the owner of record in building permits between 1937 until at least 1965. Following the ownership by Geraghty, the property was then purchased by Charles Norman who owned the property by 1973 but had sold it to Hamilton C. Forman by 1979. Forman, identified as a native of Fort Lauderdale and World War II veteran, served an active role in the community through multiple volunteer positions.<sup>5</sup> He was also noted as having multiple real estate investments throughout the State of Florida.

Following Forman, the property was then sold to Sally Joyner by 2007. It was then inherited by members of her family who held the property until 2021 when it was sold to Cole Properties & Land, LLC.

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<sup>2</sup> Logan, Trisha and Uguccioni, Ellen. "Sailboat Bend Historic District Architectural Resource Survey Update." City of Fort Lauderdale, Department of Sustainable Development. Fort Lauderdale, Florida. 2020. Page 14.

<sup>3</sup> Weidling, Philip, and Burghard, August. Checkered Sunshine: The Story of Fort Lauderdale 1793-1955. Wake-Brooke House. Fort Lauderdale, Florida. 1974. p. 50, 70, and 86.

<sup>4</sup> *The Miami News*. Miami, Florida. September 20, 1921. Page 11.

<sup>5</sup> "The Birth of a Federal." *Fort Lauderdale News*. Fort Lauderdale, Florida. June 30, 1968. Page 138.



### Historic and Architectural Context

Located at the corner of SW 7th Avenue (Colee Avenue) and SW 5th Place (Smith) the subject property was originally used as a bridge tender "hut."<sup>6</sup> In 1927, a bascule bridge, referred to as the Colee Avenue Bridge, was constructed to connect the north and south banks of Colee Avenue, now SW 7th Avenue. This was the third bascule bridge constructed in the 1920s for the practical purposes of connecting the north and south banks of the New River but all also significant in contributing to the growth and development of the city's transportation network.<sup>7</sup> Even with the hurricane of 1926 that caused destruction throughout the city, population within Fort Lauderdale grew between 1920 and 1930. The first Federal Census of Fort Lauderdale was taken in 1920 and counted 2,065 inhabitants. By 1930, the city experienced a 319.7% increase in population, to a total of 8,666.<sup>8</sup>

The bridge tender's quarters was most likely constructed around the same time as the bridge and was located at the southeast corner of the bridge approach. The footprint of the bridge tender's quarters and Colee Avenue Bridge can be seen in the 1947 aerial photo of this location. Although the location of the bridge was changed in the 1960s, the residential structure that remains and its setting is a reminder of the early development within the City of Fort Lauderdale and transportation patterns at that time.



**1947 Broward County Aerial Photo**



**1974 Photograph of New River Castle<sup>9</sup>**

An original photograph or drawing of the bridge tender's quarters could not be located to determine its appearance at the time of construction. In 1973, a permit application for exterior modifications was filed; however other than the permit application, there are not any additional documents available on record.

<sup>6</sup> "Craftsman Uses Ancient Art For Creations With Stone." Fort Lauderdale News. Fort Lauderdale, Florida. May 4, 1974. Page 94.

<sup>7</sup> A bascule bridge is a bridge that contains a counterweight system that allows the bridge to swing upward or to the side to allow passage of boats.

<sup>8</sup> Intensive Level Architectural Resource Survey: Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Erica Mollon Consulting. City of Fort Lauderdale, Department of Sustainable Development. 2020.

<sup>9</sup> Hoffer, Glenn. "Building Industry Honors Quality Work: Craftsmanship Not Dead." Fort Lauderdale News. Fort Lauderdale, Florida. May 4, 1974. Page 77.



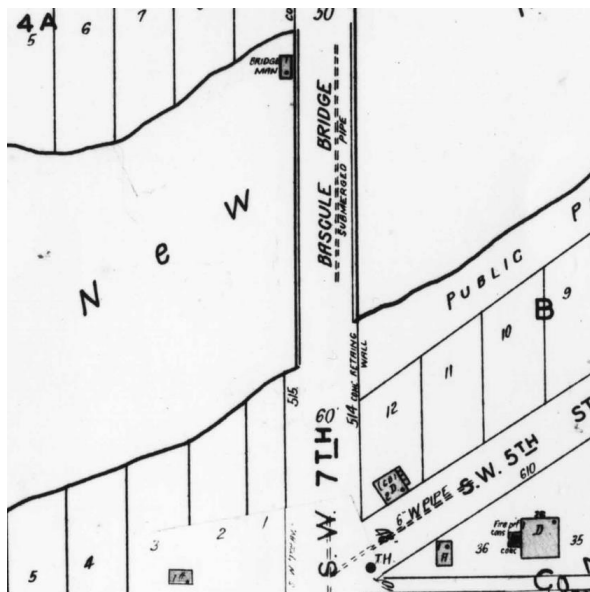
In 1974, a newspaper article announcing Broward County's 18th Annual Craftsmanship Award's, this structure is "...recognized for excellence of its coral work."<sup>10</sup> Sawed coral and coral rubble was utilized on the exterior façade by craftsman W. Leroy Cameron of Craftsman Masonry, Inc.<sup>11</sup> The craftsmanship awards were held by the Broward Builders Exchange, the Broward County chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and the Broward chapter of the Florida Engineering Society.

### **Request for Historic Landmark Designation**

The applicant is requesting historic landmark designation of this property under Criterion (a) and Criterion (f) under Section 47-24.11.C.7 of the Unified Land Development Regulations (ULDR). The proposed Period of Significance outlined in the attached designation report is between 1890 to 1928.

Within the most recent Architectural Resource Survey where the subject property was identified as potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its significant association with community planning and Criterion C for its significance for architecture and design. These criteria are comparable with Criterion (a) and Criterion (f) within the City of Fort Lauderdale's ULDR.

This property maintains significance as a reminder of the cultural heritage within the City of Fort Lauderdale under Criterion (a), specifically of its early community planning and development, and as a physical reminder of its association with one of the three early bascule bridges that were constructed along the New River connecting the north and south banks. The footprint of the original bridge tender's quarters remains the same as shown on early Sanborn Maps where it is indicated that the structure is a two-story concrete block dwelling.



1937 Sanborn Map



1966 Sanborn Map

<sup>10</sup> Hoffer, Glenn. "Building Industry Honors Quality Work: Craftsmanship Not Dead." Fort Lauderdale News. Fort Lauderdale, Florida. May 4, 1974. Page 77.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

In this case, in addition to the documentation provided by the applicant, further research concerning the history of the property was conducted. That research discovered that the building was altered in 1973. The general measure applied to property to be deemed "historic" is that they be fifty years or older. The alterations in this case are forty-eight years old, just shy of the fifty-year mark, meaning that the structure must also meet Criterion Consideration (g) where it states, "a property achieving significance within the past fifty (50) years if it is of exceptional importance."

The design of the New River Castle refers directly to the Medieval Architecture of Europe roughly from the 9th through 12th centuries. A castle was defined as both a residence for nobility and as a physical barrier designed to repel invaders. As such, the castle dominated the cityscape as an impenetrable fortress, usually at least two-stories tall. The designs of early castles are described as Romanesque, which follows the Roman domination of Europe, until its permutation into Gothic Architecture.

The New River Castle is based on the vocabulary of castle design. The coral rock craftsmanship which defines the building expresses the fortification of the space; and its entry on the second story approached by a staircase, emphasizes the restrictions in the number of entries that needed to be defended from any foes. The use of minarets (tall, slender towers, usually associated with Muslim architecture), extends the height of the building further underscoring the strategic advantages afforded its occupants. The physical dimensions of the New River Castle were defined by the course of the river as it snakes its way through the city. At this location the parcel is trapezoidal which dictated the proportions of the castle.

The overall architectural character and the craftsmanship implored through the application of a local of the bridge tender's quarters is an anomaly and does not follow the imperatives of local architecture. Its character is a departure of its immediate surroundings in Tarpon River which include a mixture of residential housing types constructed from the 1910s through the 1960s, representing a variety of architectural styles including Craftsman, Mission, Minimal Traditional, Vernacular, Art Moderne, Transitional Ranch, Contemporary, and Ranch.

It is *this departure* from these characteristics that makes the architecture of the New River Castle unique and causes it to meet Criterion (f). In addition, due to the high level of craftsmanship using locally sourced materials applied in a way that is unique to this building, it is found that this structure possesses exceptional importance and the alterations that have occurred to the original structure have become significant in their own right meeting Criterion Consideration (g).

This structure maintains a high level of integrity when taking into consideration the significance of the later alteration. "Integrity" as used in the framework of historic preservation refers to whether or not certain physical characteristics that were present in the original building, are still visible, or have there been significant alterations or additions that have obscured the architect's original intent – or in this case if the alterations have become significant over time in their own right. To assist in that determination, the National Register of Historic Places (the Federal Government's Guidelines originating in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 [as amended] published National Register Bulletin #15 that described the "Seven Aspects of Integrity." They are: Location; Design; Setting; Material; Workmanship; Feeling; and Association.

Within the historic designation application, the Period of Significance identified was 1890 to 1928. Due to alterations that have occurred at the site and the presumed date of construction, a more appropriate Period of Significance for this structure would be from 1927 to 1974.



**Criteria for Historic Designation**

Pursuant Section 47-24.11.C.7 of the ULDR, the criteria for the designation of property as a landmark, landmark site or historic district shall be based on one (1) or more of the criteria and evaluated in conjunction with guidance provided within the National Register Bulletin series published by the National Park Service.

**ULDR, Section 47-24.11.C.7**

*a. Its value as a significant reminder of the Cultural or archeological heritage of the city, state, or nation;*

**Applicant Response**

The New River has always been a significant part of Fort Lauderdale's early settlement and eventual growth as a county (1911), Broward (1915), to township and city.

The Tequesta Nation, Seminoles, and Miccosukee Nation established themselves on the banks of the New River because of its contributions to the tribes' people and its life-sustaining waters. In 1896 Henry Flagler's railway arrived along the New River. Agriculture is all-important to the economy, and the food source for the early pioneers now had a way to get the food to market. The river contributed to our boating community. We watched many boats and yachts that traveled east and west to make their way to the ocean's mouth. Tourism soon followed with the help of the East Coast Railway System. The Boom Times in the 20's also contributed to the growth and development of new homes.

One needs to look at the pictorial story the New River teaches us with the historical postcards Figures 19 – 22. You will soon feel the remarkable way The New River fits into the lifestyle of Fort Lauderdale, whether today or yesteryear. "The New River Castle," also sitting by the shore's edge of the New River. This unique structure built in 1921 is part of our history, story, and culture of what makes up Fort Lauderdale, 2021.

**Staff Response**

This property maintains significance as a reminder of the cultural heritage within the City of Fort Lauderdale under Criterion (a), specifically of its early community planning and development and as a physical reminder of its association with one of the three early bascule bridges that were constructed along the New River connecting the north and south banks. Although the exterior of the structure has been altered, the footprint of the original bridge tender building remains the same as shown on early Sanborn Maps.

**Application meets this criterion.**

*f. Its value as a significant reminder of the Cultural or archeological heritage of the city, state, or nation;*

**Applicant Response**

This castle is enduring, unique, and is a simple example of a method of construction utilizing indigenous materials—specifically Coral Rock Limestone. The Romanesque/Gothic style of architecture captures the essence of this historic building design. Although its characteristics are not a common form of architecture used, it is essential to focus on its unusual and imaginative design. Therefore, it brings a sense of time and Place associated with the structure that captures the people's imagination.

Indigenous materials are the ability to use a product that is accessible and, in this case, conveys an overall feeling, which gives this building its visual character. Based on the subject criteria, the building deserves a historic landmark designation.



### **Staff Response**

The overall architectural character and the craftsmanship implored through the application of a local of the bridge tender's quarters is an anomaly and does not follow the imperatives of local architecture. Its character is a departure of its immediate surroundings in Tarpon River which include a mixture of residential housing types constructed from the 1910s through the 1960s, representing a variety of architectural styles including Craftsman, Mission, Minimal Traditional, Vernacular, Art Moderne, Transitional Ranch, Contemporary, and Ranch.

It is this departure from these characteristics that makes the architecture of the New River Castle unique and causes it to meet Criterion (f). In addition, due to the high level of craftsmanship using locally sourced materials applied in a way that is unique to this building, it is found that this structure possesses exceptional importance and the alterations that have occurred to the original structure have become significant in their own right meeting Criterion Consideration (g).

**Application meets this criterion.**

Attached to this staff report are two newspaper articles from 1974 that are referenced within this staff report:

- "Craftsman Uses Ancient Art For Creations With Stone." Fort Lauderdale News. Fort Lauderdale, Florida. May 4, 1974. Page 94.
- Hoffer, Glenn. "Building Industry Honors Quality Work: Craftsmanship Not Dead." Fort Lauderdale News. Fort Lauderdale, Florida. May 4, 1974. Page 77.

### **Summary Conclusion:**

In accordance with Section 47-24.11.C of the ULDR, staff finds that the application for Historic Landmark Designation of New River Castle located at 625 NE 5th Place under case number UDP-HPD21001 meets criterion (a) and criterion (f) as outlined in Section 47-24.11.C.7 of the ULDR and meets criterion exception (g) as outlined in Section 47-24.11.C.8 of the ULDR.

The following condition is provided for the board to take into consideration as part of their recommendation to the City Commission:

1. Update the Historic Designation Report prior to scheduling this item for the City Commission to include the additional information concerning the later exterior alterations and update the Period of Significance to be 1927 to 1974.

### **Historic Preservation Board Suggested Motion:**

I move to recommend to **(approve) (deny) (approve with conditions) (continue)** the request for Historic Landmark Designation of New River Castle located at 625 NE 5th Place to the City Commission under case number UDP-HPD21001 based on a finding this request **(meets) (does not meet)** criterion (a) and criterion (f) as outlined in Section 47-24.11.C.7. of the ULDR.

