

Monday, May 30, 2005 12:41 PM

Dear Mr. Parrish,

Thank you so much for your help on my Coconut Grove paper. You (and your Website) gave me so much information that I couldn't have written it without you. I have attached the (very long!) paper.

I did my best to accurately portray what is going on in the neighborhood, but I apologize for any errors or omissions. I had the luxury of adopting an academic rather than a practical approach, and I analyzed the topic through the lens of historic preservation. This is not to say that I ignored the viewpoints of others in considering the problems but only that my final product was necessarily geared toward the topic of my seminar, historic preservation law. I certainly admire all the work being done in the West Grove and sincerely hope that my paper is a small contribution to the study of the neighborhood and its development.

Sincerely,

Molly Cummins

Making the Case for Historic Preservation in the Village West, Coconut Grove, Florida

By: Molly Cummins '06
Historic Preservation Law
Professor Wenger
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Introduction

Tourists flock to the Coconut Grove section of Miami, Florida each year between November and March. They stay at upscale hotels like the Ritz-Carlton, the Sonesta, and the Wyndham Grand Bay. They shop at fancy malls such as the Mayfair and CocoWalk. Yet, few venture a mere six blocks from the heart of Coconut Grove's commercial district into a neighborhood commonly known as the Black Grove or the West Grove, and recently renamed the Village West.¹ Few visitors know of the existence of this unique and historically significant community. Until I moved to the edge of it in August, 2002, I too was completely unfamiliar with it.

The Black Grove, as its nickname indicates, is a historically black neighborhood. Inhabited by descendants of Bahamian settlers, approximately 95% of the area's population of 3,000 is black.² While a "viable and stable community,"³ most of the area's residents are low- or middle-income. The West Grove has faced problems with crime and drugs. The neighborhood is located directly west of central Coconut Grove between it and Coral Gables. The West Grove covers approximately half of a square mile, or 60 city blocks.⁴ Its main thoroughfares are Grand Avenue and Douglas Road. Its boundaries are McDonald Street to the east, U.S. 1 to the north and west, and Marler Avenue to the south.⁵

Over the last five years, the West Grove has undergone tremendous change. As Dade County's population and surface area have grown exponentially, it has reached its

¹ I will use these names interchangeably.

² Andy Parrish, *Out of the Wind and Rain*, ST. ANDREW'S MAGAZINE, Fall 2001, at 26. This estimate is accurate as of 2001, but it is likely that the percentage has decreased in recent years.

³ Marvin Dunn, BLACK MIAMI IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY 339 (Univ. Press of Fla., 1997).

⁴ Samina Quraeshi, *The Spirit of Place*, in THE LIVING TRADITIONS OF COCONUT GROVE 17 (The Univ. of Miami Sch. of Architecture and Initiative for Urban and Soc. Ecology, 2002).

⁵ Andy Parrish, *Inside Wind and Rain*, at <http://www.windandrain.com/inside.html>.

natural boundary at the Everglades. The metropolis of Miami has reached its peak of urban sprawl. Because of the resulting shortage of land, rising property values, and traffic congestion, developers have started to look for areas within the city limits to revitalize and improve.⁶ The West Grove has become a popular target because of its prime location between the central Grove and Coral Gables, near the waterfront and downtown Miami. “It’s being gentrified very quickly,” explained Miami historian Dr. Paul George.⁷ As developers tear down old homes and replace them with high-end condominiums and apartments, property values are skyrocketing. Some estimate that land values have quadrupled in the last few years,⁸ while housing values have nearly tripled.⁹ For example, a home at 3146 Indiana Street valued at \$160,153 in early 2001 sold for \$401,000 in late 2002.¹⁰ Increased property values have two potential effects: they increase property taxes to the point that residents are forced out, and they make selling so attractive that residents choose to leave.¹¹ Either way, the West Grove’s people, places, and traditions are at great risk of destruction.

Historic preservation can play a vital role in stemming the tide of demolition in the West Grove. Many different groups have taken impressive initiative to save the neighborhood, but they must do more in the immediate future before the entire area is re-developed. They can save the West Grove by formally designating more properties as historic or creating an official historic preservation district. Using the Miami historic preservation ordinance as its springboard, Part I explores the historical, architectural, and

⁶ Jimmy Morales, County Comm’r, *Gentrification*, THE URBAN FORUM, Spring 2003.

⁷ Interview with Dr. Paul George, Historian, in Miami, Fla. (Mar. 8, 2005).

⁸ Samantha Joseph, *Western Coconut Grove Leaders Eye Revitalization*, MIAMI TODAY NEWS, July 7, 2004.

⁹ Carolyn Salazar, *Claiming Their Part of Grove’s Prosperity*, THE MIAMI HERALD, Feb. 3, 2003.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ Morales, *supra* note 6.

cultural features of the West Grove worth preserving. Part II assesses current attempts – through official designation, zoning overlay districts, and maintenance and construction of traditional-style homes – to preserve the neighborhood. Part III critiques the opportunities and obstacles for preservation in the West Grove. Part IV derives lessons from the preservation efforts in the adjoining section of Coral Gables, known as the MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision Historic District.

I. Reasons to Save the West Grove

The City of Miami has the legal framework in place to save the West Grove’s unique history, architecture, and culture. The City of Miami passed its preservation ordinance in 1981.¹² Like many state and local preservation ordinances, it states its goals in broad terms: “The intent of this chapter is to preserve and protect the heritage of the city through the identification, evaluation, rehabilitation, adaptive use, restoration, and public awareness of Miami’s historic, architectural, and archaeological resources.”¹³ To that end, the ordinance sets three criteria for designation of historic sites and districts: (A) “significance in the historical, cultural, archaeological, paleontological, aesthetic, or architectural heritage of the city, state, or nation,” (B) “integrity of design, workmanship, feeling, and association,” and (C) satisfaction of one or more of several other listed criteria, which will be detailed below.¹⁴ Factor A overlaps with many of the specific criteria listed in Factor C, which are satisfied because the West Grove is central to Miami’s historical, architectural, and cultural heritage. Factor B requires purity of

¹² Kirk Semple, *Dade’s Greatest Hits: A Requiem for Some Heavyweights that have Tussled with the Wrecking Ball and Lost*, MIAMI NEW TIMES, July 27, 1995.

¹³ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 23-1(a) (1981).

¹⁴ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 23-4(a) (1981). Please note that I have labeled these factors with letters and that they do not appear that way in the ordinance.

architectural design, which some contend has been lost in Grove houses through modifications over the years.¹⁵ However, many of homes have the same basic frames and the same locations as they did when they were built in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Depending on how rigorously Factor B is applied, these structures can satisfy it. Because the anecdotal evidence available cannot adequately address Factor B, it will not be considered in depth here. Significant evidence indicates that the West Grove satisfies Factors A and C, however.

A. The Unique History of the West Grove

In a city little more than a century old, the West Grove stands out as an enclave with a rich and lengthy history that should be saved through historic preservation. Factor A requires that a site or district have significance in the “historical” heritage of Miami.¹⁶ Similarly, Factor C includes properties or districts that “(3) exemplify the historical ... trends of the community.”¹⁷ The West Grove’s unique history satisfies Factors A and C of the Miami historic preservation ordinance.

Known as the city’s oldest neighborhood, Coconut Grove was founded before the City of Miami. According to Florida historian Arva Moore Parks, it is “South Florida’s most historic place.”¹⁸ The first homesteaders settled in the area in the late 1860’s,¹⁹ and Dr. Horace P. Porter applied for and was granted a license for a post office for “Cocoanut

¹⁵ Telephone Interview with Richard Shepard, Director, Ctr. for Urban and Cmty. Design, Univ. of Miami Sch. of Architecture (Apr. 13, 2005); Telephone Interview with Tucker Gibbs, attorney and Coconut Grove community activist (Mar. 23, 2005).

¹⁶ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 23-4(a) (1981).

¹⁷ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 23-4(a)(3) (1981).

¹⁸ Arva Moore Parks, *History of West Coconut Grove in the Context of Miami*, in THE LIVING TRADITIONS OF COCONUT GROVE 39 (The Univ. of Miami Sch. of Architecture and Initiative for Urban and Soc. Ecology, 2002).

¹⁹ Laura Pincus and Arva Moore Parks, HONOR AND EXCELLENCE: A CENTURY OF RANSOM EVERGLADES SCH. 21 (Arva Parks and Co. and Centennial Press, 2003).

Grove” in 1873.²⁰ Though the post office closed one year later, the area began booming again in the early 1880’s with the construction of the Bay View House, later known as the Peacock Inn, on Biscayne Bay. English immigrants Charles and Isabella Peacock hosted a steady stream of visitors at the only hotel between Lake Worth and Key West,²¹ and the post office re-opened in 1883.²² Other white families, such as Ralph Munroe, Kirk and Mary Munroe, and Joseph and Euphemia Frow, settled nearby.²³ Many whites moved to Coconut Grove from the Bahamas.

The white settlers hired black Bahamians to work in their businesses and homes. Some made their way to Coconut Grove via the Keys, and others came directly from the Bahamas on their own or at the behest of their employers. They were Miami’s first black residents. Mariah Brown was one of the first black Bahamian settlers in Coconut Grove. Hired by Charles Peacock to work at the Peacock Inn, she initially lived there, and she then purchased land from white homesteader Frow and built a small wooden home a short distance away. Her home became the nucleus of a growing black community called Kebo, after the African mountain.²⁴ Other blacks built wooden homes along its main street, then called Evangelist Street, now called Charles Avenue. Reverend Samuel Sampson founded the first black church, called the Fifty-Six Baptist for its original fifty-six members, in Coconut Grove in 1894,²⁵ and others founded Christ Episcopal Church in

²⁰ Howard Kleinberg, *The Grove’s Coconuts Came Later*, in MIAMI: THE WAY WE WERE 24 (Surfside Publishing, 1989).

²¹ Dunn, *supra* note 3, at 34.

²² Kleinberg, *supra* note 20.

²³ Col. J.W. Ewan, *Early Days in Dade County and at Cocanut Grove*, THE MIAMI METROPOLIS, July 27, 1906, reprinted in MIAMI: THE WAY WE WERE 21 (Surfside Publishing, 1989).

²⁴ Parks, *supra* note 18, at 40.

²⁵ Howard Kleinberg, *Black Church in Grove as early as 1894*, in MIAMI: THE WAY WE WERE 54 (Surfside Publishing, 1989). The congregation met in someone’s home until 1903, when its first building was constructed on Charles Avenue. *Id.*

1901.²⁶ The immigrants possessed invaluable knowledge about cultivating the hard coral rock soil and fishing the waters of the Biscayne Bay, and they formed a “remarkably congenial settlement of black and white in the small community south of Miami.”²⁷

From the turn-of-the-century into the 1920’s, the black Grove grew up alongside, and in the service to, the white Grove. A black Bahamian immigrant named E.W.F. (Ebenezer Woodbury Franklin) Stirrup purchased land from Joseph Frow, and he and his wife personally constructed more than 100 small wooden homes from Dade County pine. Stirrup grew wealthy renting and selling the homes to members of the black community. Stirrup also built the neighborhood cemetery and named it for his wife. Other black-owned businesses, including an ice cream parlor, a bakery, a dry goods store, and a grocery, flourished in the area.²⁸ At times, the area was called “Colored Town.”

The character of the West Grove began to change towards the end of the 1920’s. When people migrated there from Georgia and neighboring Coral Gables, “more and more people were frozen into a small area with insufficient food and few jobs, bringing about change from a black settlement to an area in which a people were confined.”²⁹ By the 1940’s, residents were crowded into small homes, many of which lacked running water and indoor toilets. The City of Miami failed to provide municipal services such as sewers, garbage collection, water supply, and police protection.³⁰ In 1946, the City of Miami attempted to alleviate overcrowding by constructing low-rent apartment buildings for blacks. To calm the protests of white residents, the city constructed a 1300-foot

²⁶ Pincus and Parks, *supra* note 19.

²⁷ Julie Allen Field with Walter Green, *History of Black Grove: A Planning Model for America*, MIAMI INTERACTION MAGAZINE, Winter 1973, at 25.

²⁸ Dunn, *supra* note 3, at 37-42. See Appendix, p. 5 to get a sense of a typical Grove street, named after the Frow family.

²⁹ Field and Green, *supra* note 27, at 26.

³⁰ Raymond A. Mohl, *Elizabeth Virrick and the ‘Concrete Monsters:’ Housing Reform in Postwar Miami*, in TEQUESTA 11 (Historical Ass’n of S. Fla., 2001).

concrete wall³¹ to separate the housing project from the adjoining section of the Grove. Part of the wall still stands, and it represents the racial animus that existed at one point in the Grove's history.³²

By 1948, community activist Reverend Theodore Gibson was moved to describe the West Grove's plight in these powerful words: "'My people are living seven deep.'"³³ In response to Gibson's oration, a diminutive white woman named Elizabeth Virrick joined his cause. Gibson and Virrick formed the Coconut Grove Citizens Committee for Slum Clearance to improve the West Grove.³⁴ They achieved widespread results. The city passed ordinances requiring running water, flush toilets, and septic tanks. The Committee procured funds for residents to comply with the ordinances, and it effectively pressured the city health department to enforce them. The Committee created community organizations, such as a health clinic and day care center, and ensured improved law enforcement by black policemen. "Within a year, through persistent local action, Virrick's Citizen Committee had sparked a remarkable transformation of Black Coconut Grove," observed historian Raymond Mohl.³⁵ Throughout the 1950's and 1960's, Virrick and Gibson continued to push for slum clearance and housing reform legislation. They opposed the construction of so-called 'concrete monsters,' or multiple-unit apartment buildings financed by federal loans. While powerful realtors constructed some sub-standard apartment buildings along Douglas and Grand Avenues, Virrick and Gibson achieved many other victories.³⁶

³¹ Kirk Neilsen, *The Wall; How You Can Tell Where White Coconut Grove Ends and Black Coconut Grove Begins? Just Look for the Barbed Wire*, MIAMI NEW TIMES, Feb. 5, 1998.

³² Dunn, *supra* note 3, at 207.

³³ Mohl, *supra* note 30, at 12.

³⁴ *Id.* at 12-13.

³⁵ *Id.* at 14.

³⁶ *Id.* at 16, 23-27.

Even as the West Grove deteriorated in the mid-1900's, it spawned activism that impacted the City of Miami. Reverend Gibson went on to become the leading figure in Miami-Dade's civil rights movement,³⁷ and Elizabeth Virrick became "Miami's trusted voice on housing matters."³⁸ The City of Miami honored Virrick by establishing the Elizabeth Virrick Park in the West Grove in 1963.³⁹ The living conditions in the homes and streets of the West Grove had sparked an important campaign of civic reform.⁴⁰

While not always uplifting, West Coconut Grove has had a long and varied history dating back to immigrant Mariah Brown. Many of the still-existing churches, houses, and streets in the West Grove played a pivotal role in that history. Some with particular historic significance could be individually designated, or the entire district could be designated as historic to recognize its importance in the history of Miami. The Miami historic preservation ordinance, through Factors A and C, includes an area so significant to the City's history.

B. The Architecture of the West Grove

For the architectural styles it embodies, the West Grove should receive more formal historic preservation status. Factor A of the Miami historic preservation ordinance recognizes properties with significance in the "aesthetic or architectural heritage of the city."⁴¹ Similarly, Factor C of the ordinance includes properties that: "(4) portray the environment in an era of history characterized by one or more distinctive

³⁷ Dunn, *supra* note 3, at 192.

³⁸ Mohl, *supra* note 30, at 32.

³⁹ Carita Swanson Vonk, *THEODORE R. GIBSON: PRIEST, PROPHET, AND POLITICIAN 57* (The Little River Press, 1997).

⁴⁰ After the 1960's, the area experienced more decline due to "job scarcity, underemployment, poverty, wide-spread use of drugs, substandard housing, inadequate plumbing, littered streets and too many people." Field and Green, *supra* note 27, at 26.

⁴¹ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 23-4(a) (1981).

architectural styles,” and/or “(5) embody those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or method of construction.”⁴² The black Bahamians who settled in the West Grove in the early 20th Century built their homes in two distinct architectural styles: frame vernacular (or shotgun) and Bahamian (or Conch). Both styles stem from African and West Indian traditions,⁴³ and both fit the architectural requirements of the ordinance.

The frame vernacular, or shotgun, style was popular in the southeastern United States between 1880 and 1930,⁴⁴ and “Coconut Grove has South Florida’s best – and most significant – collection of early frame architecture, too little appreciated and too little protected.”⁴⁵ The style is called “frame vernacular,” because owners built the simple wood frame homes in the local style without the assistance of architects.⁴⁶ Builders employed personal experience and available resources to meet the needs of the environment.⁴⁷ The style is also called “shotgun” because the houses are long and one-room wide, so one could shoot a shotgun in the front door and it would exit the rear without obstruction. Homes of this style are characterized by rectangular, balloon frame construction on piers. They are usually one story in height, sometimes two, with front porches one story in height. Their roofs are gabled or hipped with overhanging eaves, originally shingled in wood but shingled in asbestos since the 1930’s. The exterior walls are made of horizontal wooden weatherboard, and exterior ornamentation is usually sparse. The houses originally had wooden double-hung sash windows, but now often

⁴² MIAMI, FLA., CODE §§ 23-4(a)(4)(5) (1981).

⁴³ Beth Dunlop, *Saving West Grove’s History*, THE MIAMI HERALD, May 23, 2003, at 3M.

⁴⁴ Dona M. Lubin, Coral Gables Historical Res. Dep’t, *Amendment to the Designation Report for the MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision Historic District*, Jan. 15, 2004, at 1.

⁴⁵ Dunlop, *supra* note 43.

⁴⁶ Lubin, *supra* note 44, at 3.

⁴⁷ City of Miami Website, Historic Pres. Section, *Architectural Style: Frame Vernacular (1840’s-present)*, at <http://www.historicpreservationmiami.com/frame.html>.

have aluminum awning windows or jalousies.⁴⁸ Frame vernacular is a distinct architectural style, recognized for its Bahamian roots and its predominance in the American South around the turn-of-the-century. Architect Richard Shepard describes the Grove's frame vernacular homes as "original structures ... unique to the southern part of the United States."⁴⁹

Shipbuilders-turned-carpenters from the Bahamas and Key West built homes in the fittingly named Bahamian, or Conch, style between the 1890's and 1920's. Conch homes are less common in the West Grove than shotgun homes, while prevalent in Key West, Florida. The homes are one to two stories in height with broad gabled or low hipped roofs. Their most distinguishing characteristic is a balustraded front porch, which sometimes wraps around the sides of the house on both stories. Like shotguns, Conch houses have a basic balloon frame construction elevated on wood posts or masonry piers for air circulation. They also commonly have wooden weatherboard exteriors with double-hung sash windows.⁵⁰ The Bahamian or Conch style, also referred to as bungalow, is a unique architectural style characterizing a distinct period in West Grove's, Miami's, and America's history.

The West Grove has many homes and buildings in the frame vernacular and Bahamian styles. These are distinct, recognized architectural styles tied to the neighborhood's heyday in the late 1890's-1920's. The City of Miami has recognized both styles as important to Miami's history on its historic preservation Website.⁵¹

⁴⁸ *Id.*

⁴⁹ Shepard Interview, *supra* note 15.

⁵⁰ City of Miami Website, Historic Pres. Section, *Architectural Style: Bahamian or Conch (1890's-1920's)*, at <http://www.historicpreservationmiami.com/bahamian.html>. See Appendix p. 1 for an example of a wooden exterior of Dade County pine.

⁵¹ *Id.*; City of Miami Website, *supra* note 47.

Because they fit within Factors A and C of the Miami historic preservation ordinance on architectural significance, more Village West structures could be designated as historic or the area could be designated as a historic district.

C. The Culture of the West Grove

The West Grove is a tightly-knit community with its own traditions, for whom historic preservation can serve an important protective function. Factor A of the Miami historic preservation ordinance includes properties or districts with “cultural” importance in the city’s heritage.⁵² Similarly, Factor C recognizes properties that “(3) exemplify the ... cultural ... or social trends of the community.”⁵³ The West Grove can meet both prongs of the ordinance because of its unique cultural traits and traditions.

The West Grove is a longstanding community of working- and middle-class African-American Caribbeans. With its high rate of homeownership and strong social cohesion, it has “singular importance” in the history of Miami.⁵⁴ Many families in the Village West are descendants of the original Bahamian settlers, and they have lived in the neighborhood for six generations.⁵⁵ They have often even lived in the same homes, thanks to a pattern of black homeownership established by E.W.F. Stirrup in the early 1900’s. In 1997, nearly 80% of the black residents owned their own homes, while others rented from black landlords.⁵⁶ As a result, the neighborhood is very socially unified.⁵⁷

“The community is also more intact and, in a sense, I think, cohesive than Liberty City or

⁵² MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 23-4(a) (1981).

⁵³ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 23-4(a)(3) (1981). This is the same prong of (C) analyzed when considering the city’s history in I. above.

⁵⁴ Telephone Interview with Anthony V. Alfieri, Dir., Ctr. for Ethics and Pub. Serv., Univ. of Miami Sch. of Law (Apr. 13, 2005).

⁵⁵ Quareshi, *supra* note 4.

⁵⁶ Dunn, *supra* note 3, at 339.

⁵⁷ *Id.*

Overtown, which have highways blasted through them,” concluded Tony Alfieri, Director of the Center for Ethics and Public Service at the University of Miami School of Law. In distinguishing the West Grove from the two other historically black communities in Miami, Alfieri signals its unique importance in Miami’s cultural life.

The Village West has unique traditions derived from its Bahamian roots. Every year in June, the neighborhood hosts the Goombay Festival. “Goombay” is a name for indigenous Bahamian music, influenced by the Africans and Europeans who settled there. At the festival, a Bahamian band often plays while street vendors sell Bahamian, Caribbean, and black American dishes. The festival has been held since at least the early 1900’s, with one of the early celebrations at Odd Fellows Hall on Charles Avenue.⁵⁸ In late December, the black Grove also celebrates a street festival called Jonkonnu. The origin of its name is uncertain, but its street performances are of African descent.⁵⁹ As the only area in the city that celebrates Miami’s African heritage, the Black Grove contributes to its historical heritage.

Due to its current vibrancy and Bahamian roots, the West Grove is an important part of the cultural heritage of Miami, especially black Miami. Historic preservation of more sites or of an entire district can help keep this community and its traditions intact. The Miami historic preservation ordinance fits the task of cultural preservation.

II. Current Preservation Efforts

In recognition of the historical, architectural, and cultural assets of the West Grove, several different elements of the community have initiated preservation efforts.

⁵⁸ *Id.* at 17-19.

⁵⁹ *Id.* at 16-17.

The City government, neighborhood organizations, the University of Miami, private developers, and local banks have collaborated to fashion unique solutions for the area. Through formal designation, the creation of an overlay zoning district, and neighborhood-conscious home construction and remodeling, they have advanced the cause of preservation. In focusing on the spirit rather than the letter of historic preservation, they have often employed a form of neighborhood preservation. While impressive, this does not go far enough. Gentrification and demolition can only be stopped by more formal historic preservation.

Important to note here are other comprehensive efforts to improve the West Grove. They have revitalized the neighborhood in many ways, but they will not be discussed in depth because they are not focused on preservation. First, City Commissioner Johnny Winton cleaned up the Grove block-by-block by enforcing the city code and increasing the presence of law enforcement soon after his election in 2000.⁶⁰ Winton is still very involved in the area, and he is credited with making the neighborhood more attractive for development.⁶¹ Second, in 1999, Samina Quraeshi, Henry R. Luce Professor in Family and Community at the University of Miami, launched an interactive, multi-disciplinary university program called the Initiative for Urban and Social Ecology (INUSE). INUSE began its outreach to the city of Miami with an in-depth, multi-disciplinary study of West Coconut Grove. In the process, INUSE strengthened university-community bonds, publicized difficulties facing the West Grove, and

⁶⁰ Tony Doris, *Sweeping Changes in the Works; Blighted Areas Can Bounce Back*, DAILY BUSINESS REVIEW, June 5, 2000.

⁶¹ Telephone Interview with Andy Parrish, Founder and President, Wind and Rain Prop., Inc. (Mar. 23, 2005).

developed unique solutions for the area.⁶² INUSE's study has served as a springboard for the University of Miami's ongoing involvement in the community. Third, as part of that involvement, the legal outreach arm of the University of Miami School of Law, called the Community Economic Development and Design Project, worked with community members to establish the Coconut Grove "Village West" Community Land Trust in late 2003.⁶³ The land trust is a national concept, by which a community establishes a non-profit organization to conserve land by purchasing or accepting donations of it.⁶⁴ The Coconut Grove Trust is currently encouraging the city, county, and individual landowners to donate land to it.⁶⁵ It intends to use the land acquired to protect the character of the community through affordable housing, natural conservation, economic rehabilitation, and – possibly – historic preservation.⁶⁶ The Land Trust has enormous potential to contribute to the preservation of the Village West. Much is being done on all fronts to preserve the West Grove, and the following examines three efforts at neighborhood/historic preservation.

A. Formal Historic Designation

The City of Miami has engaged in limited formal historic preservation in the West Grove. The Historic Preservation Section (HPS) of the City Planning Department and the citizen-staffed Historic and Environmental Preservation Board (HEPB) confer official historic status on properties. The Miami historic preservation ordinance details the

⁶² Quareshi, *supra* note 4, at 14-24.

⁶³ 2003-2004 CMTY. ECON. DEV. AND DESIGN PROJECT, CTR. FOR ETHICS AND PUB. SERV., UNIV. OF MIAMI SCH. OF LAW, REPORT 34.

⁶⁴ Land Trust Alliance, *Frequently Asked Questions*, at <http://www.lta.org.faq>.

⁶⁵ Telephone Interview with Yvonne McDonald, Dir., Urban Empowerment Corp. (Apr. 13, 2005).

⁶⁶ 2003-2004 REPORT, *supra* note 63, at 22-23.

following designation procedure: 1) the HEPB, a property owner, or a neighborhood organization proposes historic designation to the HEPB, 2) the HEPB conducts a preliminary evaluation to determine if a property seems to meet the designation criteria, 3) if so, the HEPB requests a designation report from the HPS, 4) the HEPB conducts a public hearing, and 5) the HEPB approves or denies historic designation based on the report.⁶⁷ However, as a variation on step three of the process, “the HEPB may require that the person initiating the request for designation conduct the necessary research to document the history and significance of the property.”⁶⁸ The HPS still puts its stamp of approval on a third party designation report, by reviewing the report and supporting documentation, verifying its conclusions and compliance with the criteria, making any corrections or additions, and then presenting the report to the HEPB under its name and that of the preparer.⁶⁹ According to Preservation Officer Sarah Eaton, the HEPB often takes this route because the HPS lacks the money and manpower to complete designation reports.⁷⁰

In accordance with this process, the HEPB has made two recent designations in the West Grove. In 1995, the HEPB designated the Mariah Brown House at 3298 Charles Avenue as a City of Miami historic landmark. It was built in 1897 for Kebo’s first resident. The house remained in poor condition for several years, but the City has

⁶⁷ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 23-4(b)(1) (1981); City of Miami Website, Historic Pres. Section, *Designating a Property*, at <http://www.historicpreservationmiami.com/designationInfo.html>. Again, I have assigned numbers to these steps. They do not appear in the ordinance.

⁶⁸ *Id.*

⁶⁹ E-mail from Sarah Eaton, Pres. Officer, Historic Pres. Section, City of Miami Planning Dep’t, to Molly Cummins (Apr. 19, 2005 09:33:04 EST) (on file with author).

⁷⁰ Telephone Interview with Sarah Eaton, Pres. Officer, Historic Pres. Section, City of Miami Planning Dep’t (Mar. 23, 2005).

recently started renovating it.⁷¹ In 2004, the HPS received a grant from the state to complete 20-25 designation reports, according to Eaton. Included among those properties reported on and designated as historic by the HEPB⁷² was the E.W.F. Stirrup House at 3242 Charles Avenue. It was the original home of the black Grove's major landowner and builder.⁷³ On its Website, the HPS cites both the Mariah Brown and E.W.F. Stirrup Houses as the best examples of the Bahamian style of architecture in Miami.⁷⁴ The City also erected a sign on Charles Avenue to highlight its historic character.

Furthermore, the HPS assisted a Village West community organization in applying for state funding for preliminary evaluations and designation reports.⁷⁵ Yvonne McDonald, Executive Director of the Urban Empowerment Corporation, recently received a small grant from the Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation to study and register more Village West properties as historic. Between July and December of this year, she hopes to register up to twenty area homes.⁷⁶

The City of Miami HPS has taken initiative to designate properties in the West Grove, but it has not gone far enough. Much of Charles Avenue has historical value, as indicated by the city's own historical marker, yet most of it remains undesignated. More structures, especially area churches, could be designated as historic. It is not ideal that the HPS cannot follow the letter of the historic preservation ordinance, but instead must rely on interested parties for proposals and designation reports. As Sarah Eaton said, her

⁷¹ City of Miami Website, Historic Pres. Section, *Mariah Brown House*, at <http://www.historicpreservationmiami.com/brown.html>.

⁷² Eaton Interview, *supra* note 70.

⁷³ City of Miami Website, Historic Pres. Section, *E.W.F. Stirrup House*, at <http://www.historicpreservationmiami.com/ewf.html>.

⁷⁴ City of Miami Website, *supra* note 50.

⁷⁵ Eaton Interview, *supra* note 70.

⁷⁶ McDonald Interview, *supra* note 65.

office lacks money and manpower more than it lacks desire or willpower. In fact, the Historic Preservation Section only has two employees to address preservation issues for a city of four million people. The overarching City government should make historic preservation, particularly of the Village West, a higher priority. The City should commit more funds to the HPS before historic properties are lost to gentrification.

B. SD-28/NCD-2: The Village West Island District

Through the use of city overlay zoning designations, the West Grove recently re-named itself the “Village West” and dubbed its main commercial district the “Village West Island District.”⁷⁷ As the pressures of gentrification mounted, community residents took the opportunity to unify area zoning and present their neighborhood with a Caribbean flair.⁷⁸ The neighborhood’s new name now appears on maps and the local Metrorail station.⁷⁹ The zoning modification process began in 2003, when the City Commission designated the Grand Avenue Corridor as a Neighborhood Conservation District, or NCD-2. Earlier this year, the City Commission changed the designation of the commercial and residential properties within the original NCD-2 to a Special District, called SD-28. The NCD-2 shifted to cover exclusively Charles Avenue.⁸⁰ The SD and NCD overlay zoning designations promote neighborhood and historic preservation, so they are a very important community and city effort to preserve the area. However, because they recommend more than require preservation, they do not go far enough.

⁷⁷ *Id.*

⁷⁸ Telephone Interview with Jihad Rashid, President, Coconut Grove Collaborative, Inc. (Apr. 18, 2005).

⁷⁹ Parrish Interview, *supra* note 61.

⁸⁰ Telephone Interview with Patrick Hood-Daniel, City of Miami Planning Dep’t, Urban Design Div. (May 11, 2005).

The original NCD was the product of many years of planning by a variety of organizations. Its exact evolution is slightly unclear, but ideas for revitalizing Grand Avenue were circulating among West Grove community groups as early as 1991.⁸¹ In 1996, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Miami, highlighted key local issues in a comprehensive planning study on Coconut Grove.⁸² Andy Parrish of Wind and Rain Developers, the Village West Homeowners' and Tenants' Association, and the former Local Development Corporation launched efforts towards the NCD in 2001.⁸³ In 2002, community activists and organizations involved in the project formed an umbrella organization, called the Coconut Grove Collaborative, Inc. (CGC), to coordinate their efforts. Jihad Rashid, President of the CGC, explained that the NCD was a pre-emptive attempt to control the development of the area.⁸⁴ The CGC and others proposed the NCD to the City Planning Department, and the City hired architects from the University of Miami to survey the area.⁸⁵ Richard Shepard, Director for the Center for Urban and Community Design in the School of Architecture, and Samina Quraeshi, leader of the Initiative for Urban and Social Ecology, became involved with the project. Shepard, Quraeshi, and the CGC conducted a series of charettes, or informal design studies, to solidify the focus of the NCD.⁸⁶ They released a

⁸¹ William Labbee, *Black Grove Feature; There Goes the Neighborhood*, MIAMI NEW TIMES, Aug. 7, 1991.

⁸² Jan Stucker, *Redevelopment of Grand Avenue Imminent*, BISCAYNE BAY TRIBUNE, Jul. 24-Aug. 22, 2002, at 1.

⁸³ E-mail from Andy Parrish, Founder and President, Wind and Rain Prop., Inc., to Molly Cummins (Apr. 18, 2005 16:55:38 EST) (on file with author).

⁸⁴ Rashid Interview, *supra* note 78.

⁸⁵ Hood-Daniel Interview, *supra* note 80.

⁸⁶ *Id.*

“Grand Avenue Vision Plan” and a blueprint for the NCD.⁸⁷ City of Miami Commissioner Johnny Winton’s office was involved in the process, as well.⁸⁸

The intent of the original NCD was to recognize and “conserve” the character of the neighborhood. The City decided to change the NCD to an SD-28, because it determined that much of the area lacked the historical integrity to be conserved.⁸⁹ The SD-28 controls the character of new development in the commercial and residential properties of the Village West.⁹⁰ For commercial properties, the SD-28 employs height and spacing restrictions to maintain the Caribbean feel of the neighborhood. For example, despite much debate among community members and developers, the SD-28 includes a height restriction of five stories for properties along Douglas and Grand Avenues.⁹¹ As a result, Grand Avenue is currently in the process of being widened and enhanced with new lighting and landscaping.⁹² New colorful commercial buildings are being built at the intersection of Grand and Douglas. “This is a major project for our community,” commented McDonald.⁹³

For residential properties, the SD-28 promotes an “anti-McMansion” policy.⁹⁴ It reserves an R-1 area for single-family homes⁹⁵ and establishes minimum front, side, and rear setbacks for those homes.⁹⁶ It sets height restrictions for “non-habitable architectural

⁸⁷ *Id.*

⁸⁸ Leslie Kraft, *Grove Developers Hope to Submit Plans Before Zoning Changes*, MIAMI TODAY, Aug. 28, 2003, at 3.

⁸⁹ Hood-Daniel Interview, *supra* note 80.

⁹⁰ See Appendix, p. 2 for a map of the area.

⁹¹ Rashid Interview, *supra* note 78.

⁹² *Id.*

⁹³ McDonald Interview, *supra* note 65.

⁹⁴ Hood-Daniel Interview, *supra* note 80.

⁹⁵ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 628.2.1 (2005).

⁹⁶ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 628.2.1.1.1 (2005).

features”⁹⁷ and determines the appropriate proportion of greenspace on home lots.⁹⁸ The SD-28 dictates the setbacks for all varieties of driveways and garages.⁹⁹ Developers must request Class II Special Permits from the City Zoning Department to deviate from the height, bulk, location, or exterior configuration restrictions,¹⁰⁰ so the commercial and residential zoning restrictions carry the force of law.¹⁰¹ By requiring new development to fit the Caribbean feel of the neighborhood, these zoning restrictions enhance neighborhood preservation.

The SD-28 also applies a set of architecture and urban design guidelines to its commercial and residential properties.¹⁰² The guidelines have a remarkable mission: “to protect and reinforce the Village West Island District’s unique aesthetic character, new building and rebuilding design should be compatible with Caribbean vernacular architectural styles.”¹⁰³ The guidelines detail and promote all aspects of Caribbean architecture, from wall material to color palette to railing design to window shutters.¹⁰⁴ For example, they specify that “trim should be of highest-grade lumber, and should be 3.5” to 6” in width around openings, except at the front door, which may be any size of configuration.”¹⁰⁵ By setting a priority and a roadmap for building in the Bahamian style, the architecture and urban design guidelines are an impressive feature of the SD-28. They lay a strong foundation for neighborhood preservation. However, they do not carry the same legal force as the overlay zoning restrictions. They are “guidelines,” not laws,

⁹⁷ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 628.8.2.1.1.3 (2005).

⁹⁸ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 628.8.2.1.1.4 (2005).

⁹⁹ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 628.8.2.1.1.5 (2005).

¹⁰⁰ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 628.3 (2005).

¹⁰¹ Hood-Daniel Interview, *supra* note 80.

¹⁰² MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 628.9 (2005).

¹⁰³ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 628.9.1.1 (2005).

¹⁰⁴ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 628.9 (2005). See Appendix, pp. 3-4 for examples of architectural elements recommended in the architecture and urban design guidelines.

¹⁰⁵ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 628.1.1.1.1 (2005).

so they do not require Class II Special Permits for deviation. While their intent is often adhered to in the commercial context, they serve as mere suggestions in the residential context. In fact, the City Planning Department removed any strict components of the guidelines due to local opposition to their residential application.¹⁰⁶ Because the guidelines are elective rather than mandatory, they cannot achieve their immense potential for preserving the Village West.

The NCD-2 now applies to Charles Avenue, and it attempts to preserve the original heart of the Black Grove. The City Planning Department shifted its focus there because it believes that it has more buildings worth conserving than other sections of the Grove.¹⁰⁷ To preserve Charles Avenue’s historic character, the NCD-2 will: “*identify* and *recognize* the historical significance,” “*promote* gateways, gathering places, and activities corresponding to its culture and heritage,” “*define* the uses and designs of buildings,” “*maintain* the scale and character of the existing neighborhood,” and “*identify* and *encourage* preservation of historic sites on Charles Avenue.”¹⁰⁸ Beyond requiring a Class II Special Permit for changes, the City code offers few details on the operation of the NCD.¹⁰⁹ As the italicized words indicate, it does not have any real legal force behind it. “It’s not really a strong NCD. It’s just an intent,” explained city planner Patrick Daniel-Hood. “It’s a lot lighter (restriction) than with historic preservation,” he added.¹¹⁰ In other words, the NCD has a noble goal of historic preservation, but it does not require or enforce it in the same way as formal historic preservation would. It is significant that

¹⁰⁶ Hood-Daniel Interview, *supra* note 80.

¹⁰⁷ *Id.*

¹⁰⁸ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 802.1 (2005).

¹⁰⁹ *Id.*

¹¹⁰ Hood-Daniel Interview, *supra* note 80.

the City has set aside part of the Village West for historic preservation, but it ultimately fails to protect local properties.

The zoning overlay districts are an excellent approach to maintaining the historical, architectural, and cultural character of the Village West. They are comprehensive in scope, and they were requested by local residents. Their zoning elements have real force for new commercial and residential properties. In recognizing cohesive districts, they offer a unique form of neighborhood preservation. However, they do not do enough to further the cause of historic preservation. First, the SD-28 focuses far more on new construction than on historic preservation, as its substitution for the original NCD indicates. While that shift may be appropriate considering the rapidly changing face of the neighborhood, it likely underestimates the number and value of historic properties in existence. Furthermore, the City cannot enforce the SD-28's most compelling assurance of construction in the Bahamian style – the architecture and urban design guidelines. Second, the NCD-2 slightly raises the bar for historic preservation, but it applies only to the small area of Charles Avenue. Again, the City cannot implement the NCD-2's preservation suggestions. Between the two zoning overlay districts, there is no guarantee of historic preservation. Historic preservation is done in spirit, rather than following the same strictures as official designation by the HEPB. As Andy Parrish indicated, the NCD offers primarily “cultural preservation.”¹¹¹ While that is certainly desirable, more formal designation is necessary to save properties from major remodeling or demolition.

¹¹¹ Parrish Interview, *supra* note 61.

C. Home Construction and Remodeling in the Character of the Community

Well before the implementation of the NCD, but in the same vein, private developers have built and remodeled homes in the architectural style of the Village West. Andy Parrish is the juggernaut in this arena, and he has been followed by people like Gordon Fales and Wally Wilson. A non-profit venture has recently entered the field, as well. These efforts offer a form of neighborhood preservation – and some historic preservation – to the West Grove.

Andy Parrish, Founder and President of Wind and Rain Properties, Inc., has been a champion of the West Grove. He is involved in the community in a myriad of capacities, and he is dedicated to its preservation. As the only for-profit developer who has built Caribbean-style homes for low-income residents, he has personally advanced its preservation. Parrish founded Wind and Rain in 1994 “to revitalize communities by promoting affordable housing and providing innovative commercial solutions through our development, brokerage, and management services.”¹¹² Parrish was living in the North Grove at the time, and his home was burglarized. When he drove through the adjoining area of West Grove with a police officer, he saw many vacant lots and enormous potential for change.¹¹³ Parrish is motivated by a few core beliefs: 1) every hard-working American should have the opportunity to own their own home, 2) that home should appreciate in value over time, 3) the mortgage payments on it should be the equivalent of rent, and 4) homeownership improves the quality of neighborhoods.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Andy Parrish, *Our Resume*, at <http://www.windandrain.com/resume.html>.

¹¹³ Andy Parrish, *History of Wind and Rain*, at <http://www.windandrain.com/history.html>.

¹¹⁴ Andy Parrish, *Concept*, at <http://www.windandrain.com/article4.html>.

Parrish began buying up vacant infill lots for small sums before the real estate boom in the West Grove. With the City of Miami's "soft-second" mortgage program,¹¹⁵ the University of Miami's Center for Urban and Community Design (CUCD) in the School of Architecture, and the local development corporation, he built affordable three-bedroom, two-bath homes for low-income residents of the West Grove.¹¹⁶ Parrish completed approximately fifteen homes¹¹⁷ for an average purchase price of \$85,000 and an average profit of \$8,000 between 1994 and 2002.¹¹⁸ None of his homeowners have sold to developers,¹¹⁹ and Parrish believes that the stability they have provided to the neighborhood has contributed to its renaissance.¹²⁰

By building homes for local residents, Parrish has preserved the history and culture of the neighborhood. By using traditional area building types as the foundation and inspiration for his homes, he has preserved the architectural style of the West Grove. Parrish's architectural prototype is a square home with a large, open front porch. He calls it a "Caribbean" design, and it is much like the traditional Bahamian or Conch-style homes in the West Grove.¹²¹ Parrish has adapted his prototype to the needs of each project. For example, in 1999, he worked with CUCD students to design a J-shaped addition to a historic shotgun home on 3576 Florida Avenue. Though Parrish could have demolished the small home and started over for less money, he insisted upon renovating

¹¹⁵ The city offers "soft-second" mortgages to low-income homebuyers to enable them to secure bank financing and keep their mortgage payments close to the price of rent. The mortgages provide up to \$40,000 of the home's financing at interest rates of 0-3%. At least a dozen homebuyers have taken advantage of the city's "soft-second" mortgage program to purchase their first homes in the West Grove. See Andy Parrish, *Inside Wind and Rain*, at <http://windandrain.com/inside.html>.

¹¹⁶ Andy Parrish, *Learning Right from Wrong: A Ten-Year Retrospective*, July 2004, at <http://www.windandrain.com/index2.html>.

¹¹⁷ Parrish Interview, *supra* note 61.

¹¹⁸ Andy Parrish, *Recommendations for Housing: How to get New Houses Built*, at <http://www.windandrain.com/article5.html>.

¹¹⁹ Parrish Interview, *supra* note 61.

¹²⁰ Parrish, *supra* note 116.

¹²¹ *Id.*

and adding to its original structure.¹²² As part of the same project, Miami students designed a two-story Bahamian style home to get the most use out of a sub-standard lot. They included a front porch on the first and second stories of the home.¹²³ While Parrish attributes his architectural style to practical demands – explaining that porches provide ventilation that lowers electric bills – he has clearly made a conscious effort to be true to the architectural character of the neighborhood.¹²⁴ While not historic preservation in the strictest sense, Parrish’s homes go a long way towards retaining a sense of place.

Most recently, Parrish has partnered with non-profit entities to build more homes for low-income homeowners. The City of Miami deeded lots to the CGC, which then turned to the CUCD and Strang Architects to design the first home, Parrish and Devon Construction to build it, and Coconut Grove and Pointe Banks to finance the construction and homeowner loans, respectively.¹²⁵ The ribbon was cut at 3658 Frow Avenue on March 23. A single mother and her 14-year old son will pay the equivalent of rent on their \$100,000 mortgage, thanks to the city’s soft-second mortgage program.¹²⁶ CUCD students designed the home in a Caribbean “dog-trot” style. In the dog-trot, the rooms revolve around a central covered breezeway, with three bedrooms and two bathrooms on either side of it and a kitchen at the rear. The house is golden-yellow in color with a wide front porch.¹²⁷ While not a shotgun or a Conch home, the dog-trot clearly fits with the Caribbean architecture of the West Grove. “We feel that one of the most important ways

¹²² *Facelift in the West Grove; Designs Make Most of Space*, THE MIAMI HERALD, Nov. 18, 1999, in Neighbors East.

¹²³ *Id.*

¹²⁴ Parrish Interview, *supra* note 61.

¹²⁵ Telephone Interview with Gordon Fales, Vice Pres. for Bus. Dev., Pointe Bank (Apr. 18, 2005); Press Release, The Univ. of Miami, Completion of New UM Student-Designed Home for Village W. (Mar. 15, 2005) (on file with author).

¹²⁶ *Id.*

¹²⁷ Shepard Interview, *supra* note 15; Laura Morales, *Building Ties with Homes*, THE MIAMI HERALD, Mar. 27, 2005, at 3GR.

to preserve a neighborhood is to increase homeownership,” explained Richard Shepard, Director of the CUCD.¹²⁸ The joint venture will construct at least two other homes in the near future for long-standing residents who have been most impacted by gentrification.¹²⁹

Other developers, such as Wally Wilson, have followed Parrish’s example in maintaining their rental properties. Wilson purchased four small wooden homes on one oversized lot on McDonald Street in 2001. Partly due to zoning restrictions on the lot and partly due to his sense of aesthetics, Wilson chose to retain the configuration and the exteriors of the homes. He painted each a pastel color to give them a beachy, Floridian feel. Wilson spent \$30-35,000 remodeling the interior of each home over 7-12 months, and he then rented the homes to a mix of residents (including me). Wilson was told that the houses were built in the 1910’s or 1920’s for local ship captains. “I would love to see it all done the way I had that place,” he said. Wilson sold the lot for a handsome profit in 2004.¹³⁰

Similarly, once Gordon Fales, Vice President of Business Development for Pointe Bank, became acquainted with community preservation efforts, he personally joined the cause. In 2002, he and his son purchased two historic duplex shotgun homes in the West Grove. Fales opted to maintain the original structures and their 65-year old metal roofs. When he sold the properties, the next owner intended to follow suit.¹³¹ While Wilson and Fales are only two small-scale examples, their choices to preserve indicate that private developers can engage in a form of historic preservation.

¹²⁸ Shepard Interview, *supra* note 15.

¹²⁹ Morales, *supra* note 6.

¹³⁰ Telephone Interview with Wally Wilson, real estate developer (Apr. 6, 2005). See Appendix, p. 5 to view his West Grove properties.

¹³¹ Fales Interview, *supra* note 125.

Private developers and the non-profit cooperative have contributed enormously to the architectural and cultural preservation of the Village West. By building and remodeling in the traditional style, they have paid homage to the West Grove's vernacular architecture. By selling and renting to local residents, they have helped keep the neighborhood intact. However, historically conscious private developers could contribute more to the cause of neighborhood preservation if the City designated more properties as historic and provided more financial incentives.

The private developers discussed here are the exception rather than the rule. Out of their own beneficence, they have taken a historically respectful route. Others have not, and will not, make the same choice. Formal historic preservation requires that they do. If more properties were designated as historic at the outset, there would be greater assurance that modifications would be historically accurate.

Even the developers mentioned here have been priced out or lured out of the market by the real estate boom – Parrish can no longer afford to build on his own, and Wilson and Fales recently sold their properties.¹³² That is why Parrish partnered with the non-profit groups, but that route places more of a burden on the financially strapped City government. Parrish has proposed several measures that the City could take to revitalize his initiative and reduce its financial commitment: make land available to him at a lower price, shorten the permit process, reduce or subsidize permit and impact fees, make soft second mortgages larger and easier to obtain, and devote a larger share of money to assisting homeowners than to Section 8 rental housing.¹³³ If private developers are

¹³² Parrish Interview, *supra* note 61.

¹³³ Parrish, *supra* note 118; Parrish, *supra* note 116.

willing to shoulder this burden, the City should step up to the plate with more designation and funding for historic preservation.

III. A Critique of Formal Historic Preservation in the West Grove

While West Coconut Grove has used a variety of tactics to save itself from gentrification, formal historic preservation has rarely been among them. There is a compelling case to be made for it, and its downside suggests room for change.

A. For Formal Historic Preservation

Miamians involved in the West Grove believe that it requires more formal historic preservation, and the Miami historic preservation ordinance provides a means to achieve it. Dr. Paul George, a historian of Miami and a professor at Miami-Dade Community College who leads historic tours of Coconut Grove, said that the area suffers from a lack of historic designation. Andy Parrish, while not a complete proponent, lamented the destruction of three undesignated shotgun homes in 2002: “The shame of it is, they could have been gems... They had the potential to be the crown jewels of the West Grove.”¹³⁴ Becky Matkove, Executive Director of the non-profit Dade Heritage Trust, said that she would like to see the E.W.F. Stirrup House on Charles Avenue turned into a museum of the West Grove.¹³⁵ Beth Dunlop, the architecture critic at *The Miami Herald*, most eloquently expressed the urgent need for historic preservation in a recent commentary. While Dunlop commended the neighborhood conservation district, she explained that

¹³⁴ Anabelle de Gale, *Bulldozer Turns Grove Cottages into Scrap Heap*, THE MIAMI HERALD, Sept. 5, 2002.

¹³⁵ Telephone Interview with Becky Matkove, Exec. Dir., Dade Heritage Trust (Mar. 23, 2005).

“more is needed here by the way of actual historic designation.”¹³⁶ She noted the irony of the destruction of 11 historic shotgun homes behind the marker erected by the city to explain the historical significance of Charles Avenue. She convincingly concluded, “The architecture of the neighborhood expresses its history and its culture, and we can either choose to capture that now while the opportunity is still at hand, or we may find ourselves forging into the future without much sense of who built Miami and how they long lived.”¹³⁷

There are many advantages to formal historic preservation, as opposed to the informal guidelines of the overlay zoning districts or reliance upon the whims of private developers. Miami’s historic preservation ordinance covers the historical, architectural, and cultural aspects of the West Grove, as discussed above, and offers the possibility for more formal designation or the creation of a historic district in the West Grove. It is desirable for properties to be designated, because the Miami preservation ordinance, like most, offers strong protection to designated properties. First, the ordinance establishes procedural safeguards for designated properties. Before a property is even designated as historic, while the HEPB is considering a preliminary evaluation of it, “no building permit for any new construction, alteration, relocation, or demolition that may affect the property proposed for designation shall be issued” until its status is determined.¹³⁸ Once a property has been designated as historic, a property owner must apply to the HEPB for a “certificate of appropriateness” for any new construction, alteration, relocation, or

¹³⁶ Dunlop, *supra* note 43.

¹³⁷ *Id.*

¹³⁸ MIAMI, FLA., CODE §§ 23-4(b)(1)(b)(1-3) (1981).

demolition of the property that exceeds \$500.¹³⁹ The property owner is encouraged to have a “pre-application conference” with a historic preservation officer and then required to submit an application and supporting materials to the HEPB.¹⁴⁰ For minor improvements, the board issues a standard certificate of appropriateness within 10 days of submission.¹⁴¹ For major improvements, the board requires a public hearing and a maximum of 60 days to issue a special certificate of appropriateness.¹⁴²

The procedural requirements imposed by the ordinance may deter a Village West property owner from seeking to change a historic property. In addition, by requiring the property owner to undertake procedures along a specific timeline, the ordinance injects a quasi-waiting period into the process of change. The quasi-waiting period automatically slows the course of change for historic properties and encourages property owners to consider and defend any course of change. In the meantime, a Village West property owner may decide against the change. Furthermore, by holding public hearings on special certificates of appropriateness, the HEPB allows the Village West community to voice its concern over historic structures. Miami’s procedural safeguards for historic properties can slow, and perhaps prevent, the process of gentrification in the Village West, Coconut Grove.

Second, the ordinance creates substantive safeguards for historic properties. To meet the criteria for a certificate of appropriateness for alteration or new construction, the property owner must show that the change “shall not adversely affect the historic, architectural, or aesthetic character of the subject structure or the relationship and

¹³⁹ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 23-5(a) (1981); City of Miami Website, Historic Pres. Section, *Frequently Asked Questions*, at <http://www.historicpreservationmiami.com/faq.html>.

¹⁴⁰ MIAMI, FLA., CODE §§ 23-5(b)(1)(2) (1981).

¹⁴¹ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 23-5(b)(3) (1981).

¹⁴² MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 23-5(b)(4)(c) (1981).

congruity between the subject structure and its neighboring structure and surroundings” or “the special character or special historic, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value of the overall site or historic district.”¹⁴³ To obtain a certificate of appropriateness for demolition, the HEPB considers six criteria pertaining primarily to a structure’s historical and architectural value. If demolition is approved, the HEPB may impose additional conditions on the property owner, such as requiring salvage and preservation of building materials.¹⁴⁴ On the opposite end of the spectrum, the ordinance urges a baseline level of maintenance and repair for historic buildings and those neighboring them.¹⁴⁵ Because changes must clear the hurdle of non-interference with the historic nature of the property and its environs, the substantive requirements for certificates of appropriateness can prevent a West Grove property owner from changing or demolishing property. The requirements at least confine changes to elements that do not infringe on the historic nature of the property. The standard for maintenance and repair works in the other direction to ensure the basic integrity of historic structures and their surroundings. The substantive provisions of the historic preservation ordinance can prevent rapid change to and demolition of centuries-old homes in the West Grove.

Third, unlike most historic preservation ordinances, the Miami ordinance punishes those who violate its procedural and substantive safeguards. The Building Department and the Code Enforcement Division are charged with inspecting designated property and stopping unauthorized work on it.¹⁴⁶ Local residents often bring violations

¹⁴³ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 23-5(c)(1) (1981).

¹⁴⁴ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 23-5(c)(2) (1981).

¹⁴⁵ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 23-6(b) (1981).

¹⁴⁶ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 23-6(e) (1981).

to the attention of the Code Enforcement Division, as well.¹⁴⁷ If inspectors discover that property owners have made changes without obtaining certificates of appropriateness, they then refer their cases to the HEPB.¹⁴⁸ The HEPB may require the property owners to restore the property to its original state or seek a certificate of appropriateness.¹⁴⁹ If property owners violate the new certificate, the Building Department or Code inspectors “shall initiate enforcement proceedings before the code enforcement board . . . in addition to and not in lieu of any civil or criminal prosecution.”¹⁵⁰ The Code Enforcement Board can fine a property owner up to \$250 per day of non-compliance.¹⁵¹ For violations of the standard of maintenance and repair, the HEPB can request that appropriate city officials or agencies rectify the situation under applicable laws and regulations.¹⁵² The City of Miami has attempted to give its historic preservation ordinance some teeth. With repercussions implicated, Village West property owners will be more likely to comply with the ordinance.

Many believe that formal historic preservation can play a crucial role in saving the heritage of the Village West. The Miami historic preservation ordinance, with its procedural and substantive safeguards and unique enforcement mechanisms, offers the city an amazing opportunity to protect designated historic properties. In fact, Preservation Officer Sarah Eaton characterized the city’s preservation ordinance as “probably stronger” than the city’s zoning ordinances with Class II Special Permits, like SD-28 and NCD-2, because it can require an owner to restore property to its original

¹⁴⁷ E-mail from Sarah Eaton, Pres. Officer, Historic Pres. Section, City of Miami Planning Dept., to Molly Cummins (Apr. 27, 2005 16:15:27 EST) (on file with author).

¹⁴⁸ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 23-6(f)(1) (1981).

¹⁴⁹ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 23-6(f) (1981).

¹⁵⁰ MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 23-6(f)(4) (1981).

¹⁵¹ Eaton E-mail, *supra* note 147.

¹⁵² MIAMI, FLA., CODE § 23-6(b) (1981).

appearance.¹⁵³ With a comprehensive ordinance in place, formal historic preservation is a viable option for preserving the West Grove.

B. Against Formal Historic Preservation

Yet, formal historic preservation certainly has its detractors in the Village West. They focus on the inevitability of gentrification, the limitations imposed by preservation, and the resistance of local residents. Many of these voices have extensive experience in the West Grove, so they most definitely have a point. However, there is still room for education and funding to change the situation.

First, many involved in the area see gentrification as a foregone conclusion. They say that the neighborhood can only hope to control the character of new construction, not prevent demolition of old buildings. “You can’t hold back the tide of economics forever,” explained Andy Parrish. “All that we can hope for is new construction that suggests the character of the community,” he added.¹⁵⁴ Yvonne McDonald of the Urban Empowerment Corporation said that gentrification is a sign of growth and progress. “Gentrification is positive, because the alternative is to remain a low, impoverished neighborhood,” she elaborated.¹⁵⁵ With prosperity reaching an area that has long been economically depressed, gentrification certainly has its advantages. However, it is possible for the community to move forward and grow stronger, but not forget its past.

Second, some argue that preserving West Grove homes simply preserves the negative effects of segregation. Attorney and community activist Tucker Gibbs eloquently explored this topic, explaining that “segregation was institutionalized at a

¹⁵³ Eaton E-mail, *supra* note 147.

¹⁵⁴ Parrish Interview, *supra* note 61.

¹⁵⁵ McDonald Interview, *supra* note 65.

planning level” in the West Grove. The West Grove has smaller plat sizes than the white Grove, and its streets intersect those of the white Grove at odd angles. Traditional West Grove houses tend to be smaller than those in the white Grove. “When you talk about preserving the West Grove, what are you preserving?” Gibbs wonders, in light of these lesser living conditions. He does not think that residents should be forced to keep poor housing for the sake of preservation when economic opportunity beckons.¹⁵⁶ Architect Richard Shepard agrees, noting that residents find shotgun homes “small, hot, and cheap.” Shepard said that when he and his students first spoke with residents about the unique architecture of their homes, residents said they would rather burn their houses down than keep them.¹⁵⁷ Parrish agreed that historic preservation is “a luxury these people can’t afford.”¹⁵⁸ Gibbs, Shepard, and Parrish make an interesting and valid point. Many of the homes are small and located on small lots, so it is understandable for residents to want to profit by selling their land or building larger homes. Yet, Parrish has found innovative ways to make homes livable while retaining their architectural character.

Third, many point out that local residents do not like preservation. As Hood-Daniel indicated, the City Planning Department moved away from a more expansive NCD and strict architecture and design guidelines because residents opposed the limitations on their property.¹⁵⁹ “Nobody wants their houses designated,” notes Parrish, who serves on of the city-wide Historic and Environmental Preservation Board.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ Telephone Interview with Tucker Gibbs, attorney and Coconut Grove community activist (Mar. 23, 2005).

¹⁵⁷ Shepard Interview, *supra* note 15.

¹⁵⁸ Parrish Interview, *supra* note 61.

¹⁵⁹ Hood-Daniel Interview, *supra* note 80.

¹⁶⁰ Parrish Interview, *supra* note 61.

“There are certain homes that I would like to see preserved ... whether or not families want to do that is another question,” agreed McDonald.¹⁶¹ When asked to compare Miami to other cities, historian Dr. Paul George noted, “Down here, people don’t think historic preservation through.”¹⁶² Leona Cooper, a Coral Gables resident involved with historic preservation, contrasted Miami with a city like New Orleans where people embrace historic preservation.¹⁶³ While City Preservation Officer Eaton declined to comment on residents’ attitudes towards preservation,¹⁶⁴ the entire region of South Florida is well-known for paving over its natural environment for condos and strip malls. As the population has exploded in the last decade, few cities or counties have had the desire or means to resist lucrative over-development. Opposition to historic preservation fits the region’s penchant for building newer, bigger, and better. The residents of the Village West express a common South Floridian sentiment against preservation. It is questionable that this attitude should receive deference.

There are very real obstacles to historic preservation of the West Grove – the pressures of gentrification, the limits of segregation, and the opposition of local residents. Many believe that more formal historic preservation is simply impractical when the structures are in poor condition and the neighborhood lacks funding for preservation. The voices of opposition are very well-informed, and they may speak the truth. However, there are some opportunities to counter these obstacles and advance formal historic preservation. A public education campaign could go a long way towards teaching West Grove residents about the historic value of their properties. Groups like

¹⁶¹ McDonald Interview, *supra* note 65.

¹⁶² George Interview, *supra* note 7.

¹⁶³ Telephone Interview with Leona Cooper, member of Lola B. Walker Homeowners’ Assoc., Inc. (Apr. 18, 2005).

¹⁶⁴ Eaton Interview, *supra* note 70.

the Urban Empowerment Corporation, the CGC, and the Land Trust already educate local residents about the importance of their neighborhood and the need to protect it by not selling out to the highest bidder. They could incorporate an additional component of education on the historical and architectural value of the neighborhood's properties. The City could get involved through a community education campaign at local schools and neighborhood organizations. Education on local history could give residents a more positive connotation for their shotgun and Conch homes, promoting their desire to preserve them.

Greater funding can also play an essential role in making historic preservation more attractive for West Grove residents. The City of Miami, the state of Florida, and local non-profits can work together to provide funding. "To make a lot of smaller, older structures economically viable through historic preservation, you have to give incentives," explained Parrish. For example, Parrish recommended tax relief for homeowners who retain and refurbish historic structures.¹⁶⁵ Tax breaks do not require additional expenditures by the city or state, but they offer residents a reason to preserve instead of sell. In addition, Parrish's model – revamping historic homes to suit residents' needs and building new structures in the Bahamian style – could prove to be the answer for the preservation of the West Grove, if he and other developers are given the incentives by the City described above. Even allocating more money to the HPS would enable it to make more strides towards preservation. With economic fuel for preservation, residents would be less likely to sell, more able to enjoy their homes, and more willing to engage in historic preservation. While this solution may be unrealistic, it is worth aiming for.

¹⁶⁵ Parrish Interview, *supra* note 61.

Formal historic preservation of the West Grove faces obstacles, but they can be overcome through more education and funding. As the historic district established in the adjoining section of Coral Gables reveals, more formal historic preservation in the Village West is not a farfetched notion.

IV. The MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision Historic District

Coral Gables is a small municipality located within the boundaries of the City of Miami and Dade County. In the section of Coral Gables adjoining the West Grove to the east of U.S. 1, an area has been designated as the MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision Historic District. The District shares a similar historical and architectural heritage with the Village West, and its current residents are of the same socio-economic status. While there are certainly differences between these sections of the Gables and the Grove, their similarities reveal the potential for a historic district in the Village West.

A. Its Contours

The MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision Historic District (“the District”) is listed on the Coral Gables Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places.¹⁶⁶ The District received city landmark status in 1989 and National Register status in 1994.¹⁶⁷ According to the National Register, the District is bounded by Jefferson Street, Frow Avenue, Brooker Street, and Grand Avenue.¹⁶⁸ The District was expanded by amendment in 1998 and 2004 to include 99 properties. Forty-four of those are

¹⁶⁶ Telephone Interview with Dona Lubin, Historical Res. Dir., Historical Res. Dep’t, City of Coral Gables (Apr. 8, 2005).

¹⁶⁷ Lubin, *supra* note 44, at 1.

¹⁶⁸ Nat’l Register of Historic Places, database search on Coral Gables, at <http://www.nr.nps.gov/nrlocl.html>.

contributing structures, 35 are non-contributing, and 20 are vacant. The District is named for Flora MacFarlane, who originally owned a 160 acre tract of land in the area. She sold 19.61 acres to the founders of Coral Gables in 1925, and they named the area the “MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision.”¹⁶⁹

The District shares a similar historical, architectural, and cultural heritage with the West Grove. The district was settled by Bahamian immigrants who had originally migrated from Key West or the Bahamas. Many of them actually moved into the subdivision from the West Grove. Local residents built most of the homes between 1926 and 1941 in the same architectural styles as in the West Grove: shotgun and bungalow. The shotgun homes are one-room wide with a steeply-pitched front gable roof and full-width front porch, and many are adjoined to create “double shotguns.” The bungalow homes have a gable or hipped roof, full-width front porch, and sash windows.¹⁷⁰ The neighborhood is very socially cohesive, because according to long-time resident Leona Cooper, “the people who live in this community were born in this community.”¹⁷¹

The Lola B. Walker Homeowners’ Association (“the Association”) initiated historic designation for the District. When a fire moved through the neighborhood in the late 1980’s, firefighters could not respond appropriately because the water mains dated to the 1920’s. After the fire, telephone lines were out for several weeks. Cooper, an Association leader, “put the mayor’s feet to the fire” to improve the subdivision’s infrastructure. Soon afterwards, Cooper and the Association decided to push for historic status for the neighborhood.¹⁷² “The community of MacFarlane requested the

¹⁶⁹ Lubin, *supra* note 44, at 1.

¹⁷⁰ *Id.* at 2-4.

¹⁷¹ Cooper Interview, *supra* note 164.

¹⁷² *Id.*

designation. They wanted to make sure that they could save the character of their neighborhood,” explained Dona Lubin, Historical Resources Director for the Historical Resources Department (HRD) at the City of Coral Gables.¹⁷³ The City of Coral Gables moved forward with the designation in 1989. Although not all residents support the District, it was distinctively community-driven.

The homes in the District are not in perfect condition, but the HRD works around that fact. The HRD included non-contributing buildings in the District to protect the integrity of the neighborhood’s contributing buildings. The HRD secured a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) of \$85,000 in 1993 to improve designated buildings. Single-family homeowners can apply for CDBG funds to restore their homes,¹⁷⁴ and two homeowners have recently done so. The HRD has identified five other homes in the District most in need of repair, and it will raise money to improve them from the outside in.¹⁷⁵ Cooper said that the grants for improvements have broadened neighborhood support for the District.¹⁷⁶

Though Lubin did not provide information on their application in the MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision Historic District, the City of Coral Gables offers several other financial incentives for historic preservation. Coral Gables is a National Park Service Certified Local Government, a designation which gives it greater access to state and federal funds for historic preservation.¹⁷⁷ The City of Coral Gables offers local tax breaks for historic preservation. After the state passed a Constitutional amendment

¹⁷³ Lubin Interview, *supra* note 167.

¹⁷⁴ Lubin, *supra* note 44, at 3, 4, 6.

¹⁷⁵ Lubin Interview, *supra* note 167.

¹⁷⁶ Cooper Interview, *supra* note 164.

¹⁷⁷ City of Coral Gables Website, Historical Res. Dep’t, *Statistics and Awards*, at http://www.coralgables.com/CGWeb/dep_awardstat.aspx?DeptID=DeptID05; Certified Local Govt. Program, *Program in Brief*, at http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/clg/clg_p.htm.

allowing tax abatement in 1992, Coral Gables became Florida's first city to pass enabling legislation in 1994. If homeowners make improvements worth at least 50% of their property's assessed value, they can exempt the ad valorem portion of taxes for the value of improvements for up to ten years.¹⁷⁸ Only individually listed or contributing properties are eligible for the tax breaks, and the owner must put an easement on the property for the length of the tax break.¹⁷⁹ The City of Coral Gables also offers transfer of development rights to owners of historic and contributing properties.¹⁸⁰ There are a wide range of economic perks available to District residents.

The MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision Historic District preserves early twentieth century shotgun and bungalow homes for their architectural and historical significance. It sets a striking example for a historic district in the Village West.

B. Its Parallels to the West Grove

The existence of the MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision Historic District in a neighborhood directly adjacent to and extremely similar to the West Grove shows that the creation of a West Grove historic district is possible. Based on the similarities between the two, the opportunity exists for more formal historic preservation of the West Grove.

Beyond just their location, the neighborhoods are remarkably similar. Historically, they share the same Bahamian roots and traditions. Architecturally, they employ the same two styles of owner-built homes. Most Village West homes actually pre-date MacFarlane homes, and there are more historic churches throughout the Village

¹⁷⁸ Constance E. Beaumont, *State Tax Incentives*, in SMART STATES, BETTER COMMUNITIES 115 (1996); City of Coral Gables Website, Historical Res. Dep't, *Statistics and Awards*, at http://www.coralgables.com/CGWeb/dep_awardstat.aspx?DeptID=DeptID05.

¹⁷⁹ CORAL GABLES, FLA., CODE §§ 31-6.3, 31-6.5 (1994).

¹⁸⁰ CORAL GABLES, FLA., CODE § 31-5.2.

West than throughout the MacFarlane District. The structures are not in uniformly pristine condition in either area. Culturally, they are both occupied by low- to middle-income black families who have spent most of their lives in the neighborhoods. With these commonalities between it and an historic district recognized on the National Register, it is clear that the Village West has the potential to receive more formal historic designation. The MacFarlane District, with its contributing and non-contributing structures, offers a unique solution to the problem of dilapidated housing stock in a low- to middle-income neighborhood.

Coral Gables and Coconut Grove also approach preservation from a similar foundation in law, as their ordinances are very much alike. As in the Miami ordinance, the Coral Gables ordinance recognizes properties with architectural, aesthetic, and cultural value.¹⁸¹ The Coral Gables ordinance prescribes similar procedures for designation.¹⁸² Coral Gables issues both standard and special certificates of appropriateness for the same purposes of alteration, new construction, and demolition.¹⁸³ The Coral Gables ordinance similarly enforces its maintenance and repair provisions and requires “voluntary” correction of unauthorized work followed by civil and criminal prosecution.¹⁸⁴ Both accomplish preservation through small full-time staffs and community-staffed Historic Preservation Boards. These similarities, which might be common among cities, simply illustrate that Miami has the legal framework in place for more historic preservation in the West Grove. If Coral Gables can accomplish that end with similar procedural and substantive safeguards, the City of Miami can do the same in

¹⁸¹ CORAL GABLES, FLA., CODE § 31-2.4.

¹⁸² CORAL GABLES, FLA., CODE § 31-2.5.

¹⁸³ CORAL GABLES, FLA., CODE § 31-4.

¹⁸⁴ CORAL GABLES, FLA., CODE §§ 31-5.5, 31-5.8.

the Village West. The West Grove is ripe for the creation of a similar historic district, or at least more formal designation.

C. Its Differences from the West Grove

Yet, the MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision differs from the Village West in many significant ways, hinting that the parallel cannot be drawn too closely. The City of Coral Gables' attitude and resources for preservation gave it a greater opportunity to create such a district. The historic integrity of the local homes and the strength of community involvement also differentiate the two neighborhoods. These very real differences can be bridged by the City of Miami.

The City of Coral Gables is a state leader in historic preservation. In 1973, it was the first municipality in Dade County to adopt a historic preservation ordinance. In 1986, it became the sixth Certified Local Government in Florida. As mentioned before, it was the first Florida municipality to enact tax breaks in 1994.¹⁸⁵ As all of these milestones indicate, the City of Coral Gables has a very strong and unique commitment to historic preservation. The same cannot be said of the City of Miami, where the Village West is located. Nevertheless, the City of Miami has a strong preservation ordinance in place, and at any point in time it can begin to make more forceful use of it.

Coral Gables can also back its commitment to preservation with enormous resources. It is a small and affluent city. It is only 14 miles square, with a population of 43,000 people. Meanwhile, the average household income is above \$97,000¹⁸⁶ and the

¹⁸⁵ City of Coral Gables Website, Historical Res. Dep't, *Statistics and Awards*, at http://www.coralgables.com/CGWeb/dep_awardstat.aspx?DeptID=DeptID05.

¹⁸⁶ City of Coral Gables Website, *Demographics*, at <http://www.coralgables.com/CGWeb/demographics.aspx>.

average property value is approximately \$291,300. With property taxes levied at a rate of \$23.50 per \$1000 of property value, Coral Gables has a very high tax base.¹⁸⁷ As a result, its City government has far more money per capita than the City of Miami. In the realm of historic preservation, its HDS has three employees, compared to the City of Miami's two. It may even have a larger absolute budget to serve its population of 43,000, while Miami's HPS caters to a population of approximately four million. Coral Gables certainly offers more financial incentives – in the form of tax breaks and transfer of development rights – to its residents than does the City of Miami. Preservation Officer Eaton highlighted the disparity between the Coral Gables and Miami historic preservation departments, in terms of number of employees per land and population size.¹⁸⁸ While the City of Miami may never have access to as many resources as Coral Gables, it can certainly choose to allocate a larger portion of its existing resources to historic preservation. It can also offer financial incentives, like those suggested by Parrish and those offered in Coral Gables, which cost it nothing out-of-pocket. As mentioned above, the state of Florida and non-profits can step in to make preservation an economically viable option.

The MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision offers a better architectural and cultural environment for historic preservation. Architect Richard Shepard noted that there are more well-preserved double shotguns in Coral Gables than in the West Grove. Double shotguns offer residents better living conditions, enabling them to feel less victimized by segregation.¹⁸⁹ The neighborhood is also in good repair, with well-kept yards and

¹⁸⁷ City of Coral Gables Website, Finance Dep't, *FAQ's*, at http://www.coralgables.com/CGWeb/dep_faq.aspx?deptid=deptid19&faqid=FAQ147.

¹⁸⁸ Eaton Interview, *supra* note 70.

¹⁸⁹ Shepard Interview, *supra* note 15.

streets.¹⁹⁰ Therefore, there is more worth preserving and more desire to preserve in the face of gentrification than in the West Grove. The fact that local residents, through the Lola B. Walker Homeowners' Association, initiated historic designation speaks to that pride of place. The West Grove is very different from the MacFarlane Subdivision, in that its homes and streets are more run-down, and its residents feel more stigmatized. However, as discussed above, a public education campaign can go a long way towards instilling a sense of pride in West Grove residents. Again, increased funding for individual residents and private developers can help make existing homes more livable and preservable. The architectural and cultural environment of the West Grove can be improved.

Because the MacFarlane Subdivision lies in wealthy Coral Gables and has a slightly different history, it has been more amenable to the creation of a historic district than the Village West. However, its differences offer suggestions that the Village West can employ to reach the same point in the process of historic preservation.

Conclusion

From living in and learning about West Coconut Grove, I have realized that it is a unique and vibrant neighborhood. By whatever name it is called – the Black Grove, the West Grove, or the Village West – it stands out from the rest of the City of Miami. It would be a shame for gentrification to pave over its incredible history, architecture, and culture after more than one hundred years of vital exuberance. While many groups have made significant headway against that process, formal historic preservation, as

¹⁹⁰ Lubin Interview, *supra* note 167.

undertaken in the MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision Historic District in Coral Gables, offers a powerful and attractive solution to protecting the character of the neighborhood. With more education and funding behind it, preservation can be the salvation for the Village West. So that one hundred years from now, my children's children can walk the same streets as Mariah Brown once did.

Thanks:

I would like to extend many thanks to all of the people who allowed me to interview them for this paper. They provided me with invaluable insight into the West Grove, and they work each and every day to make it a better place to live.