The Miami Herald Building

1 Herald Plaza

Miami, Florida

Proposal for Historic Designation Report
REPORT TO THE
HISTORIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION BOARD
ON THE POTENTIAL FOR DESIGNATION FOR
THE MIAMI HERALD BUILDING
1 HERALD PLAZA
MIAMI, FLORIDA

Prepared by:
Morris Hylton III
Director of Historic Preservation Program
University of Florida

Becky Roper Matkov
CEO of Dade Heritage Trust

Blair Mullins
Masters of Historic Preservation Student
University of Florida

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I: General Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic Name:</th>
<th>Miami Herald Building</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific Dates:</td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architects:</td>
<td>Naess and Murphy Architects of Chicago, Illinois</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>1 Herald Plaza</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Miami, FL 33132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Owner:</td>
<td>Resorts World Miami, LLC (Formerly known as Bayfront 2011 Property, LLC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Herald Plaza Miami, FL 33132</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Managing Member, Genting Florida LLC</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1501 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 107</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Miami, FL 33132</td>
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<tr>
<td>Present Use:</td>
<td>Miami Herald/El Nuevo Herald Newspaper</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Production and Offices;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brown Mackie College Educational Facilities</td>
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<td>Present Zoning:</td>
<td>T6-36B-0,</td>
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<td>General Commercial Land Use Designation</td>
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<td>Tax Folio Number:</td>
<td>01-3231-045-0010</td>
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<td>Boundary Description:</td>
<td>Located in the City of Miami, Florida, the building is bounded on the North by NE 15th Street/Venetian Causeway, on the East by the Biscayne Bay, on the South by the MacArthur Causeway, and on the East by Herald Plaza.</td>
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The Miami Herald Building
1 Herald Plaza

Overview of Location

Site Map

Zoning Map
Aerial Map
II: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

Opened in 1963, the Miami Herald Building embodies many of the ideals and characteristics that came to define Miami’s postwar era and its architecture. Its significance is further reinforced by its association with some of twentieth-century America’s leading figures in the newspaper industry and architecture.

Mirroring what was happening in many places across the United States, Miami experienced unprecedented growth and change in the decades that followed the Second World War. The population more than quadrupled between 1940 (+/-250,000) and 1980 (+/-1,600,000),¹ establishing Miami-Dade County as one of the nation’s largest metropolitan areas. The transformation of Miami during this period was characterized by the optimism and belief in progress and the future that permeated American society at that time. Further, the fusion of different cultures from the Caribbean, Latin America, and elsewhere established Miami’s reputation as a cosmopolitan city. These profound changes were documented by the Miami Herald and reflected in its history and headquarters.

John S. Knight (1894-1981), commonly referred to as Jack, purchased the Miami Herald in 1937 for $2.5 million.² Previous owners included Henry Flagler, who changed the name from the Miami Morning Herald in 1910. However, it was Knight, serving as editor and assisted by his brother James L. Knight (1909-1991), often referred to as Jim, who oversaw the Herald’s transformation into an award-winning newspaper. The first of some twenty Pulitzer Prizes was awarded in 1951 for the staff’s coverage of Miami’s organized crime activities. The local and national success of the Miami Herald and its expansion during the 1950s necessitated a larger facility.

The Knights chose the Chicago-based architectural firm of Naess and Murphy to design a new home for the newspaper. One of the postwar periods more commercially successful and prolific firms, Sigurd E. Naess (1886-1970) and Charles F. Murphy (1890-1985) were responsible for many of Chicago’s now iconic landmarks including O’Hare


Airport and the Prudential building. The architects also designed the *Chicago Sun-Times* headquarters, which was admired by the Knights.³

However, unlike the Chicago example, the design of the Miami Herald Building reflects what has come to be known as Miami Modern or MiMo architecture.

As described by authors Eric P. Nash and Randall C. Robinson Jr. in their book *MiMO: Miami Modern Revealed*⁴, “The Herald epitomizes the Subtropical Modern office building, with its eggcrate facades, sun grilles [once painted blue], and external expression of its interior functions.” These and other exterior, character-defining features such as the exposed structural columns, yellow mosaic tiles, porte cochere entry, and wrap-around terrace distinguish the building as MiMo.

³ “Man of Many Monuments,” *Miami Herald* April 1963 special edition

East-facing window with sun grille and yellow mosaic tiles
Photo by Becky Roper Matkov, 2012
The building was also distinguished for other reasons. At the time of its construction, the Miami Herald, housing both office and printing operation, was the largest building in Florida. It was erected on a 10 ½ acre site. According to a *Miami Herald* brochure of

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the time, the building was constructed on 3246 pilings driven to coral rock. It was built 631 feet long, 220 feet wide, and over 117 feet tall, with 770,000 square feet in seven sprawling stories (roughly the size of 14 football fields). Due in part to strengthening provisions for hurricanes, over 250,000 pounds of steel, 140 tons of half-inch glass and 55,000 yards of poured concrete--enough to build 2000 homes--were used in its construction.  

The building also housed one of the most advanced printing presses of the day. Originally, the building had seven presses of 63 units able to print seven 144-page newspapers at one time. It was the largest order of presses ever recorded and the press drive was the largest installed in the world at that time. The Press Room was separated from the rest of the building by an air space to absorb the vibration of the

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6 Miami Herald Advertising Sales Brochure, 1963
giant presses. Describing the new facility, James Knight said “That’s the Miami Herald plant we are going to need in 1980.”

The year the Knights broke ground on the building, Alvah Chapman Jr. (1921-2008) was hired. Chapman helped the Knights expand *The Miami Herald* and oversee the merger of Knight Newspapers, Inc. with Ridder Publications, Inc. in 1974 to form one of the country’s largest newspaper publishers, printing over 32 daily papers. The Knight-Ridder offices were housed in the Miami Herald Building. Alvah Chapman was one of Miami’s key civic and philanthropic figures in the latter half of the twentieth century, championing many issues and projects for the improvement of Miami from his leadership role at the Herald.

### III: Criteria for Designation

1. Federal Standard, Chapter 23, Section 4, (a) (1):
   
   ASSOCIATED IN A SIGNIFICANT WAY WITH THE LIFE OF A PERSON (S) IMPORTANT IN THE PAST.

**The Knight Brothers**

The Miami Herald Building was commissioned by John S. and James L. Knight who built one of the largest newspaper conglomerates in the United States. Knight-Ridder had a Sunday circulation of 4.2 million and reported an income of $500 million dollars in the 1970s. Attesting to the Knights’ success and influence, President John F. Kennedy Jr. sent a letter of congratulations upon the inauguration of The Miami Herald Building (dated April 3, 1963). The influence of the Knights continues today through the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which supports quality journalism, media innovation, and community engagement.

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7 Whited, 204

8 Whited, 307
John Shively Knight, known as Jack, was born in Bluefield, West Virginia in 1894. James Landon Knight, known as Jim, was born in 1910 in Akron, Ohio. Their father, Charles Landon Knight, was a fiery journalist who published the Akron Beacon Journal, where both Jack and Jim first learned the newspaper business.

When their father died of cancer in 1933, the Knight brothers and their mother were left with a newspaper deep in debt during the height of the Depression, having to borrow to pay taxes.
John Knight became president and editor of the *Akron Beacon Journal* and turned around the newspaper financially and editorially. In 1936 he began writing a daily column he called “The Editor’s Notebook.” This column ran for 40 years, winning him a Pulitzer Prize in 1968 “for clearness of style, moral purpose, sound reasoning and power to influence public opinion.”

As longtime Herald columnist Charles Whited described in his biography of John Knight, in 1936 the Knight family took an automobile trip to vacation in Miami and Miami Beach, where they enjoyed fishing, thoroughbred racing at Hialeah, golfing and the clubs. A year later John Knight paid $2.5 million for the debt-ridden *Miami Herald* newspaper owned by Col. Frank Schutts. He took control of the *Miami Herald* on October 15, 1937. His brother James Knight moved to Miami to become the Herald’s secretary-treasurer and reshape the business enterprise.

John Knight set up a code of ethics for the *Herald* and encouraged an editorial policy that would no longer ignore widespread crime and corruption in the name of tourism. John Knight stated, “In our news columns, we believe in facts, aggressiveness and giving both sides a hearing. We think of our editorial page as a public defender and a builder of causes.”

The paper under its new ownership thrived. The successful financial turnaround of the *Miami Herald* enabled the Knights to acquire other newspapers, eventually creating one of the most powerful media companies in America.

The August 29, 1970 issue of *Business Week* magazine stated that Knight Newspapers was “one of the best-managed, most profitable and most aggressive chains in the country,” with John Knight as “company overlord” establishing editorial independence and autonomy among his papers and complete separation of editorial and financial functions.

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9 Whited, 262
James Knight served as board chairman and chief executive officer and presided over the business side of the company. James lived full time in Miami, and John summered in Akron and wintered in Miami at his home on La Gorce Island.

John Knight acquired the *Detroit Free Press* in 1940. In 1944 he was elected president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. That same year he acquired the *Chicago Daily News*. Other acquisitions included the *Charlotte Observer* in 1956, the *Charlotte News* in 1959, the *Tallahassee Democrat* in 1965, and the *Philadelphia News*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Boca Raton News*, the *Macon Telegraph*, and the *Macon News* in 1969.  

The Knight brothers believed in owning newspapers in cities with strong growth potential. To underscore their belief in the bright economic future and growth of Miami, in 1963 they opened as a signature architectural statement the new Miami Herald building on Biscayne Bay.

It took years to plan and design the state-of-the-art newspaper plant James Knight envisaged on a technical scale never before attempted by a newspaper. Construction began in 1960 on what would then be the largest building in Florida. On February 13, 1963, the first of seven new presses went into production. The newspaper moved into its new facility in March, 1963, not missing a single edition. Management had an open house for employees and their relatives and friends on Sunday, March 31, 1963, with over 3100 touring the Herald’s new headquarters. John and James Knight hosted a grand opening for the public in April, 1963, with 10,000 people filing through to admire the Herald’s magnificent new Modernist structure.\(^{12}\)

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\(^{11}\) Photo caption written by Alvah H. Chapman, Jr. from Chapman Archives

\(^{12}\) Miami Herald April 1963 Dedication Issue
500 Civic Leaders Hike
On Herald’s ‘New Frontier’

You are shown here among the more than five hundred civic leaders attending The Miami Herald civic luncheon, Wednesday, held in the pressroom of the new Herald building. After an invocation by Dr. J. Lawrence Yenches, pastor of The Church by the Sea, Herald Editor Don Shoemaker introduced John S. Knight, publisher, and James L. Knight, president of The Herald. The two newspaper pioneers told the story behind the building of the new plant and what it means to the community. The civic leaders were then accompanied on a tour of the new facilities by key Herald personnel. This special Front Page on today’s edition of The Herald was photographed and produced while you were eating. When Mr. Shoemaker signaled press C1 to start, it printed this newspaper.
Over the next decades, 19 Pulitzer Prizes would be awarded to Herald staff working as writers, editors and photographers in the Herald Building on Biscayne Bay.\(^{13}\)

In 1969 Knight Newspapers went public. By 1973, Knight owned 15 newspapers. In 1974 Knight Newspapers merged with Ridder Publications, Inc. to become at that time the biggest newspaper publisher in the United States, with John Knight the biggest shareholder. Knight-Ridder Newspapers, Inc. grew into a major media conglomerate, known for its innovations in technology.

**From its beginning in 1974 to 1998, Knight-Ridder Newspapers was headquartered on the top floor of the Miami Herald Building on Biscayne Bay.**

When John Knight died on June 16, 1981, according to Knight biographer Charles Whited, “Knight-Ridder Newspapers, Inc. was a $1 billion-a-year enterprise and flourishing, its operations including newspapers, publishing, television broadcasting, electronic distribution of commodity and financial news, newsprint production, and computerized information services. “

At John Knight’s funeral, Lee Hills, a Knight executive for 45 years, gave a eulogy saying “John Shively Knight was a Renaissance man, entrepreneur, reporter, sportsman, business executive, writer, publisher, philanthropist, columnist. But first and last, he was an editor. He believed fiercely that newspapers must be independent editorially and economically. He practiced journalism with passion, energy and courage. He left a legacy of excellence.”\(^{14}\)

John Knight also left a major philanthropic legacy, bequesting $428,000,000 to the Knight Foundation, which the brothers had started in 1940 as a memorial to their father. In 1990, the Knight Foundation headquarters moved from Akron to Miami.

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\(^{14}\) Whited, 347
James Knight died in February, 1991. He left a $200 million bequest to the Knight Foundation. In 1993 the Knight Foundation became the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to honor the memory of the brothers who created it.

Thanks to the legacy of the Knight brothers, over a billion dollars has been awarded in grants in Miami and across the country to support “transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts.” Like the Knight brothers, the Knight Foundation believes “that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged.”

The Miami Herald Building on Biscayne Bay stands as a manifestation of the belief the Knight brothers had in the future of the Miami community and in the vital role a free press plays in society.

**Alvah H. Chapman, Jr.**

![James Knight and Alvah Chapman at the Miami Herald](https://www.knightfoundation.org/about/history/)

Alvah H. Chapman, Jr. was hired in 1960 as an assistant to James L. Knight. Born in Columbus, Georgia on March 21, 1921, he graduated first in his class from The Citadel.

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and was a decorated B-17 bomber pilot and squadron commander in World War II. A third generation newspaperman, he worked at the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, the *St. Petersburg Times* and was part owner of the *Savannah Morning News and Press* before coming to Miami.

Alvah Chapman oversaw the move of the Herald to its new headquarters on Biscayne Bay, which opened March 23-24, 1963. A “natural born leader”, he was appointed president of the *Herald* in 1969. In 1973 he became president of Knight Newspapers, the parent company of the Herald. Following the 1974 Knight-Ridder merger, he continued as Knight-Ridder president. In 1976 he became Knight-Ridder president and CEO. From 1982 to 1988 he was Chairman and CEO, and served as Chairman until 1989.

In 1986-87 Alvah Chapman served in the prestigious position of Chairman and President of the American Newspaper Publishers Association. In 2004 he was inducted into the Florida Newspaper Hall of Fame.

In addition to his outstanding business success, Alvah Chapman was one of Miami’s most prominent civic and philanthropic leaders of the latter decades of the twentieth century. He was chairman of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce and headed
the New World Center Action Study Group to revitalize downtown. He was president of Goodwill Industries of Florida, a member of the Orange Bowl Committee, and co-chaired the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra Campaign. He was co-leader of a campaign to raise $7 million for the revitalization of Liberty City. He was a major opponent of the legalization of casino gambling in 1978 and in the years following, and he took a strong stand against slot machines in 2005.

He led the fundraising efforts to bring Pope Paul II to Miami in 1987 to meet with President Ronald Reagan at Villa Vizcaya. For his leadership and collaboration with the Archdiocese of Miami in promoting the common good among the people of South Florida, Alvah Chapman was honored in December 2000 with the Benemerenti Pontifical Medal. At that time, he was one of only five non-Catholics in the Archdiocese of Miami to ever receive this papal recognition.

Following Hurricane Andrew in 1992, Alvah Chapman led We Will Rebuild, a coalition to restore and revitalize devastated portions of Homestead and South Dade, bringing millions of dollars to the rescue of a suffering community.
From 1988-1993, Alvah Chapman served as Chairman of the Florida International University Foundation, and in 2001, FIU named the College of Business Administration Graduate School of Business in his honor.

In 1991 Alvah and Betty Chapman were moved by the sight of large numbers of homeless persons living under expressways. At the same time they were inspired by a Disciples Bible Class at Coral Gables First United Methodist Church to make a personal commitment to take a leadership role in addressing the problem of homelessness. In 1992, Governor Lawton Chiles appointed Alvah as Chairman of the Governor’s Commission on Homeless. Alvah then co-chaired a Task Force which developed the Miami-Dade County Community Homeless Plan, recognized nationally as a model program. In 1993 he founded the private sector Community Partnership for Homeless, now known as Chapman Partnership, to help those in need get off the streets and become self-sufficient. He served as chairman until 2001. Miami-Dade County Commission named the Homeless Assistance Center at 1550 North Miami Avenue after Betty and Alvah Chapman in 2002. Notably, the Center is on 15th Street, the same street that runs west from the Herald Building and that had been named Alvah Chapman Boulevard in 1984.16

Alvah was founding chairman of Miami Citizens Against Crime and served as Chairman of the National Coalition Committee of the President’s Drug Advisory Council. He founded CADCA, Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, which continues as an active national coalition today

16 Alvah H. Chapman, Jr. Archives and interview with Betty Chapman
For 30 years, Alvah served on the Board of Trustees for the Knight Foundation, which awards millions of dollars for the betterment of Miami and communities across the nation.

For decades, every Florida Governor and U.S. President called upon Alvah Chapman to lead on important issues for the public good. From 1963 until the day he died on Christmas Day, 2008 at the age of 87, Alvah Chapman’s office was in the Miami Herald Building on Biscayne Bay.

2. Federal Standard, Chapter 23, Section 4, (a) (3):

EXEMPLIFY THE HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMICAL, OR SOCIAL TRENDS OF THE COMMUNITY.
Reflecting the growth and prosperity of the post-World War II era, *The Miami Herald* became one of the nation’s leading newspapers and Knight-Ridder (the merged Knight Newspapers, Inc. and Ridder Publications, Inc.) one of the largest newspaper publishers. The success of the *Miami Herald* is represented by its headquarters, which was, at the time, the largest building in Florida and housed one of the most advanced newspaper printing operations. Prominently located in downtown Miami along Biscayne Bay, the building symbolizes Miami’s transformation during the postwar era.

Over the decades, the *Miami Herald* has taken on many causes for the betterment of the community, advocating for civil rights, opposing drugs and crime and supporting community revitalization. A bronze plaque in the Herald Building commemorates the Herald’s founding father, Frank B. Stoneman, a Quaker who had worked for justice for blacks and who in 1936 had led a bi-racial effort to create Liberty Square to improve conditions for black families. African Americans were hired in production from the day the 1963 Herald Building opened, and the Herald’s first black reporter was hired in 1967.

Underscoring the Herald’s important role in the historical, cultural, political, economical and social trends of the era are the Herald’s 20 Pulitzer Prizes. Nineteen of these have been won at the Herald Building on Biscayne Bay. The following is a list of the Herald’s Pulitzer Prizes:17

- **2009:** Breaking News Photography, Patrick Farrell, "for his provocative, impeccably composed images of despair after Hurricane Ike and other lethal storms caused a humanitarian disaster in Haiti."
- **2007:** Local Reporting, Debbie Cenziper, "for reports on waste, favoritism and lack of oversight at the Miami housing agency that resulted in dismissals, investigations and prosecutions."
- **2004:** Commentary, Leonard Pitts, Jr., "for his fresh, vibrant columns that spoke, with both passion and compassion, to ordinary people on often divisive issues."
- **2001:** Breaking news reporting, staff, "for its coverage of the seizure by federal agents that took the Cuban boy Elián González from his Miami relatives and reunited him with his Cuban father."

17 [http://www.pulitzer.org/faceted_search/results/miami-herald](http://www.pulitzer.org/faceted_search/results/miami-herald)
- 1999: Investigative reporting, staff, "for its detailed reporting that revealed pervasive voter fraud in a city mayoral election that was subsequently overturned."
- 1996: Editorial cartooning, Jim Morin
- 1993: Meritorious public service, staff, "for coverage that not only helped readers cope with Hurricane Andrew's devastation but also showed how lax zoning, inspection and building codes had contributed to the destruction."
- 1993: Commentary, Liz Balmaseda, "for her commentary from Haiti about deteriorating political and social conditions and her columns about Cuban-Americans in Miami."
- 1991: Spot News Reporting, staff, "for stories profiling a local cult leader, his followers, and their links to several area murders."
- 1988: Commentary, Dave Barry, "for his consistently effective use of humor as a device for presenting fresh insights into serious concerns."
- 1988: Feature photography, Michel duCille, "for photographs portraying the decay and subsequent rehabilitation of a housing project overrun by the drug crack."
- 1987: National reporting, staff, "for its exclusive reporting and persistent coverage of the U.S.-Iran-Contra connection."
- 1986: Spot news photography, Michel duCille and Carol Guzy;
- 1986: General reporting, Edna Buchanan, "for her versatile and consistently excellent police beat reporting."
- 1983: Editorial writing, Herald editorial board, "for its campaign against the detention of illegal Haitian immigrants by federal officials."
- 1981: International reporting, Shirley Christian, "for her dispatches from Central America."
- 1980: Feature writing, Madeleine Blais, "for 'Zepp's Last Stand'."
- 1976: General reporting, Gene Miller, "for his persistent and courageous reporting over eight and one-half years that led to the exoneration and release of two men who had twice been tried for murder and wrongfully convicted and sentenced to death in Florida."
- 1967: Specialized Reporting, Gene Miller, "whose initiative and investigative reporting helped to free two persons wrongfully convicted of murder."
- 1951: Meritorious public service, staff, "for their crime reporting during the year."

In a reflection of the changing national economic trends of the newspaper industry that made it increasingly difficult for evening papers to survive, The Cox-owned Miami News, Miami’s oldest newspaper, signed an agreement with the Miami Herald Publishing Company in 1966 to print, distribute, sell advertising and promote the
Miami News, while retaining editorial independence. This cooperation was made possible as a result of John Knight’s strong belief that cities needed two newspapers offering two voices. The Miami News offices and staff moved from their own building on the Miami River into the Miami Herald Building on July 29, 1966. The Miami News remained in the Herald Building until the demise of the Miami News in 1988. While in the Herald Building, the Miami News’ distinguished staff included publisher David Kraslow, editor Bill Baggs, who crusaded for Civil Rights and led the fight to acquire Cape Florida as a State Park on Key Biscayne, editor and author Howard Kleinberg and political cartoonist Don Wright, who won his second Pulitzer Prize there in 1980.

The history that took place in the Miami Herald Building also reflects the rise of Hispanic influence in the community. Beginning in the 1960s, hundreds of thousands of Cubans fled the dictatorship of Fidel Castro, followed over the years by waves of immigrants from the Caribbean and Latin America. In response to changing demographics, in 1973, the Spanish-language El Miami Herald was published by The

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*Miami Herald.* It was relaunched in 1987 as *El Nuevo Herald,* and became a stand-alone newspaper in 1998. Still located in the Herald Building, *El Nuevo Herald* is the largest Spanish-language Sunday paper in the U.S. and the second-largest daily and is a major influence in Latin America. In 2002 *El Nuevo Herald* received the Ortega y Gasset Journalism Award as the best Spanish-language newspaper in the world.¹⁹

5. Federal Standard, Chapter 23, Section 4, (a) (5):

**EMBODY THOSE DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ARCHITECTURAL STYLE, OR PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION.**

¹⁹ http://www.miamiherald.com/about-el-nuevo/
The Miami Herald Building was constructed to be “heroic in size,” reflecting the economic optimism of the late 1950s and early 1960s. It was the largest building in Florida for its era, and its spacious design was planned to accommodate future growth.

The Herald was constructed as “two buildings in one.” The state-of-the-art printing presses were housed in the northern portion of the Herald complex, actually separated by air space from the newspaper offices to absorb vibrations and noise. The Herald was built on the water so that the enormous rolls of paper needed for printing could be transported by boat to the Herald’s presses.
1. In the huge City Room, the generous use of space buffers the ever-present buzz of activity.

2. All page elements are assembled and locked up in the vast Composing Room.

3. Finished plates receive a durable coating of nickel, when required, to assure highest reproduction fidelity.

4. The push-button Supermatic Plate Caster makes the plate and molds it into form for the printing press.

5. Sixty-three massive press units deliver newspapers at the rate of 70,000 copies per hour through each of 7 folders. Yet the Press Room is less than half filled—eventual capacity: 135 units.

6. The twist-and-turn layout of the Mailroom is the terminal of the modern high-speed system where the finished “product” starts its journey to the reader.

7. A section of the spacious Business Office as seen from the Central Telephone Control Center.
The Miami Herald’s waterfront location, highly visible from both MacArthur Causeway and Venetian Causeway, made an emphatic statement about the importance of the Herald as a community force.

The complex was described in the Herald’s April 1963 Dedication Issue as being “From afar, a massive jewel in the crown of the city skyline; up close, a composite of the beautiful and the functional.”

With its horizontal lines and flat roof, the Herald Building is a prime example of the Miami Modern or MiMo style, adapting Modernist principles to the subtropical climate and culture of South Florida.
Prominent in its MiMo design are the Herald’s brise-soleil, horizontal grilles, projecting from the many windows on the east and west facades to provide shading from the sun while allowing in low-angle light. These finely-crafted metal sun grilles were originally painted blue to contrast with spandrel panels covered in sunshine-yellow one-inch mosaic tiles on the east and west facades. The brightly colored spandrels contrast with the white marble piers. The southern façade of the building is also clad in white marble.
A soaring porte cochere entry with a thin-spanned concrete roof combines Classical proportions with Modernist detailing. A colonnade of rectilinear piers supports a three-story canopy that tapers aerodynamically at its edges. The canopy is punctured by large round skylights allowing circles of sunshine to stream down to enter the grand lobby space through a 30-foot-high window wall. The ground floor parking pedestal is clad in contrasting brown aggregate over a folded-plate surface pattern. Beige aggregate panels cover the printing press wing.

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The double-height lobby features a dramatic escalator to transport arrivals to the spacious second floor business and ad department. This enormous area is also double-height, highlighted with rows of marble-clad columns and Modernist ceiling light fixtures. An expansive terrace provides sweeping views of Miami and Miami Beach.
Very attuned to its waterfront location on Biscayne Bay, the Herald was built at the time to be “as storm proof as any building in existence.” The building was constructed on 3246 pilings, driven to coral rock at depths ranging from 45 to 106 feet.  

Both the printing press plant and the newspaper complex were built on stilts, or pillars, elevating the structures eight feet or more above the ground to protect against flooding. In the Modernist tradition of Le Corbusier, the use of pilotis, ground-level supporting columns, raises the building and frees space for circulation under the structure. The ground floor of the Herald Building is open, allowing for parking space.

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21 Miami Herald Advertising Brochure 1963
Pilotis, or pillars, raise the Herald eight feet and allow for parking space on the first floor, which is accented with a waffle patterned ceiling.

Photo by Becky Roper Matkov, 2012
Detail of the Herald’s brise-soleil and the brown aggregate folded-plate façade.

Photo Credit: The Miami Herald.
For extra protection from storm surge and erosion, the builders put up a 638-foot seawall, 4-feet thick and 7 1/2 feet deep, bedded on steel and anchored with cables to another underground wall 40 feet inland.

A quarter of a million pounds of stainless steel was used to frame the windows and the main entrance on the west side of the building. The 17,487 windows were made with storm-proof glass, half an inch thick, \(^{22}\) which have withstood the winds of many hurricanes over the decades.

\(^{22}\) Miami Herald Dedication Issue, April 1963
Federal Standard Chapter 23-4 (a) criteria for designation (6.):

OUTSTANDING WORK OF A PROMINENT DESIGNER OR BUILDER.

Sigurd E. Naess and Charles F. Murphy (the architectural firm of Naess and Murphy) were the designers of the current *Miami Herald* building.

Sigurd Naess was born in Norway, immigrated to the U.S. and studied architecture at Armour Institute. After working for the firm founded by the renowned Chicago School architect Daniel Burnham, Naess and Murphy went on to create some of Chicago’s most iconic Mid-Century Modern structures. These included O’Hare Airport and the $50 million Prudential Building in Chicago. Other projects included the *Chicago Sun-Times* plant, the Merchandise Mart, the Civic Opera House and New York’s Chase National Bank.
Many well-known, modern architects received their early training at Naess and Murphy, including Gertrude Lempp Kerbis, who the National Trust for Historic Preservation has referred to as the “First Lady of Modernism.”

The 75-year-old Naess had postponed his retirement to be lead designer of the mammoth Herald project. At one time, he oversaw 80 men doing structural, electrical, mechanical and architectural design for the Herald building. From the time ground was broken in August, 1960 to the building’s completion in 1963, Naess was at the site practically every day.


24 Miami Herald Dedication Issue April 1963
IV: Physical Description of Property

Located along Biscayne Bay, The Miami Herald Building is comprised of two distinct, rectangular wings.

The southern or largest wing is oriented north-south with its east elevation facing Biscayne Bay. Covered by a porte cochere, the building’s main entry is at the west elevation (southern end) of this wing. The first floor of this wing contains a parking garage and lower entry lobby connected via escalators to a double-height, second-floor lobby. This wing houses the main lobby, newspaper offices, and support spaces such as a cafeteria, over five floors (six floors total including the first floor parking). The upper five floors project over (are cantilevered from) the first floor. (Educational facilities for Brown Mackie College now occupy some of this wing).

The exterior of the southern wing is characterized by an “eggcrate” façade with windows separated by exposed concrete columns. The wall areas above and below the windows (corresponding to the spandrels) are covered with yellow mosaic tiles. Metal sun grilles (once painted blue) project over and out from the windows. The narrow southern façade of the southern wing is covered in marble.

Originally connected and separated by a sound attenuating cavity, the northern or smaller wing is also oriented east-west. This six story wing (originally five) is wider than (and projects east and west beyond) the southern wing. It originally housed the printing operations. The first floor was for loading and unloading materials and newspapers and the printing presses were located on the upper floors.

Reflecting its interior function, the original exterior of the northern wing did not contain windows. Horizontal openings in the east and west elevations were introduced as part of a later, sixth-floor addition built 1984-1988. Beige precast aggregate panels cover the façade of the printing press wing. “The Miami Herald” appears in over-sized letters on the east and west elevations.

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The Miami Herald Building, east facing (Biscayne Bay) elevation. 1 Herald Plaza

Photo courtesy of "Steven Swigart's Blog," May 10, 2011
The Miami Herald Building, west facing (Herald Plaza) elevation. 1 Herald Plaza

V: Incentives to Adaptive Re-Use

The rehabilitation and adaptive use of the Miami Herald Building could serve as a local and national model for sensitively adapting Mid-Century Modern structures to meet new needs and energy (sustainability) requirements.

The building’s 30-foot structural bays and open floor plans make adaptive re-use possible without destroying the character defining features of the exterior.

If listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the adaptive re-use of the building may qualify for Federal tax incentives as long as the work adheres to the Secretary of Interior Treatment for Historic Properties.

VI: Bibliography


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Pulitzer Prize “Past Winners and Finalists”


September 10, 2012

Mr. Alex Adams, Historic Preservation Officer
& Members of the Historic and Environmental Preservation Board
City of Miami
444 SW 2nd Avenue, 3rd Floor
Miami, FL 33130

RE: Request for Historic Designation of The Miami Herald Building

Dear Mr. Adams and Members of the Historic and Environmental Preservation Board:

Sad as it may be, the printed media, newspapers, are shrinking day by day. This has come about because of the internet which provides a constant and rapid flow of news. It is important for future generations to know what a significant role newspapers have had in our lifetime. We have been almost dependent upon the outpouring of news they gave us – whether good or bad.

For example, in times of disaster, such as Hurricane Andrew, The Miami Herald was a lifeline of much-needed information at a time when many residents had no electricity in their homes and their supply of batteries was depleted making even radio news reports impossible. In fact, when it was announced on national TV that President George H.W. Bush and Governor Lawton Chiles had named my husband, Alvah Chapman, to lead We Will Rebuild, it was in the Herald building that Alvah and Jim Batten with the help of Ray Goode and others, gathered community leaders to make their very first plans to initiate this organization to restore our devastated community.

Also, it was in driving home from The Miami Herald Building that Alvah first noticed the many homeless individuals encamped under the expressway and was inspired to initiate the process that eventually led to the development of the Miami-Dade County Community Homeless Plan (MDCCHP) and the organization of Community Partnership for Homeless (now Chapman Partnership) which became its private sector partner.
The Miami Herald Building was home to not only The Miami Herald, which is one of the largest and one of the most respected of our country’s newspapers, but to two other important Miami newspapers as well, El Nuevo Herald and The Miami News.

The Miami Herald Building for decades has been both a powerful symbol of a free press and a hub of community leadership and initiatives benefiting Miami.

Few other structures in Miami have played such a key role in Miami’s history over the last half a century.

The Miami Herald Building should be historically designated and saved so that people can remember and appreciate its unique and most significant heritage.

Sincerely,

Betty B. Chapman

cc: Hon. Tomas Regalado, Mayor, City of Miami and City of Miami Commissioners Frank Carollo, Willy Gort, Marc Sarnoff, Michelle Spence Jones and Francis Suarez

✓Becky Roper Matkov, CEO, Dade Heritage Trust