



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of STATE

RON DESANTIS
Governor

CORD BYRD
Secretary of State

July 28, 2025

Marialaura Leslie, Director
Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs
111 N.W. First Street, Suite 625
Miami, FL 33128

Re: DHR Project File No.: 2019-968B
Project: *Coconut Grove Playhouse. Miami, Florida*

Ms. Leslie,

The Florida Department of State's Division of Historical Resources (DHR) reviewed the above referenced project pursuant to a July 10, 2025, request for consultation from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Division of State Lands. The review is in accordance with Section 267.061(2), *Florida Statutes*, and implementing state regulations, for possible effects on historic properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the *National Register of Historic Places*, or otherwise of historical, architectural or archaeological value.

The Coconut Grove Playhouse was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 19, 2018, and as stated in the National Register nomination, the entire 1927 theatre structure is considered historically significant. The property is owned by the State Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund. The property lease is administered by DEP, making the agency subject to Section 261.061(2), *Florida Statutes*. As you know, the property is leased to Miami-Dade County and Florida International University for future use as a theatre.

In a letter dated March 1, 2019, to then City of Miami Historic Preservation Officer Warren Adams, DHR recommended that the Playhouse be restored in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and for DEP to determine that "no feasible and prudent alternative to the proposed demolition or alteration exists, and, where no such alternative is determined to exist, to assure that timely steps are taken either to avoid or mitigate the adverse effect" (267.061(2)(b), *Florida Statutes*). DHR recommended that Miami-Dade County and DEP consult to evaluate alternatives to the Playhouse's demolition and that if the demolition cannot be avoided, that Miami-Dade County and DEP consult with our office and the City of Miami to develop an appropriate mitigation strategy. We are aware that the City of Miami in their Resolution R-19-0169 has issued a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the current Playhouse project including conditions, and that the project has been permitted by the City of Miami.

Division of Historical Resources
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The site visit by DHR staff on June 2, 2025, and the project plans confirm that the majority of the historic structure will be demolished. The original historic windows in the front portion of the structure have already been removed; and new, code-compliant, hurricane impact windows and doors will be installed to visually match the originals. Plans also include a recreated parapet which will be added to the front façade to mimic the original 1927 design; the parapet has not been present for more than 50 years.

Per DHR's review authority under Chapter 267.061(2), DHR considers the current project an adverse effect to this historic property, however, appropriate mitigation strategies are underway. Accordingly, DHR and DEP recommend that Miami-Dade County complete the following items to mitigate impacts to the property:

- Retain the building's masonry front façade;
- Restore and reinstall the iron balconies on the front façade;
- Provide DEP and DHR with detailed architectural plans for the front façade including shop drawings for windows and doors. DHR will provide a review of the façade plans within 10 business days of receipt. DHR approval of all window and door replacements on the front façade is required prior to their purchase and installation;
- Salvage historic decorative elements to result in reinstallation of the proscenium arch and decorative elements around the stage and reuse or static display of the interior fountains, decorative grills, and Solomonic columns; and
- Meet all conditions of the City of Miami COA.

Recreation of the parapet is not recommended by DHR, but addition of this architectural feature is not restricted. Please note that DHR will conduct a final assessment of the adverse effects to the property and its National Register of Historic Places designation once the project has been completed.

As the Coconut Grove Playhouse parcel is a state-owned property, in addition to the City of Miami's Certificate to Dig referenced in the COA conditions for High Probability Archaeological Conservation Area, this project requires an archaeological research permit under 1A-32, *Florida Administrative Code*. This permit has already been issued to the project archaeologist. Ground disturbance at the site will be monitored by a professional archaeologist, and a final report will be forwarded to the Bureau of Archeological Research upon completion.

While preservation is not the outcome here, mitigation of impacts is not unusual in reviews conducted under Chapter 267, *Florida Statutes*, and we recognize that there are positive results for this project. After many years of vacancy and condition issues, the property will be reactivated for its original use as a theatre. The State Historical Marker in front of the building will remain, highlighting the long history of the Coconut Grove Playhouse and its importance to the area. Connectivity to the historic neighborhood at the back of the property will be improved, along with construction of a new park adjacent to the property. Most importantly, the property will again become an asset to the local community.

We look forward to continuing to work with you on this project so that the community can once again enjoy a useful and functional theatre space. Please contact the Division of State Lands at Public.Services@FloridaDEP.gov or the Division of Historical Resources at FLheritage@dos.fl.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of State Lands &
Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources