



CORAL GABLES MUSEUM STONE EXTERIOR AND CUBAN TILE PAVINGS ASSESSMENT

Coral Gables, Florida



Client/Owner

City of Coral Gables, Owner
Jorge Hernandez, AIA, Architect

Location

Coral Gables, FL

Project Dates

2007-2008

Materials

Coral Stone
Cuban Tile

Services Provided

Assessment
Documentation
Testing and Analysis
Treatment Recommendations

Coral Gables, “The City Beautiful” was planned and developed during Miami’s land boom in the 1920’s. The first development to advertise and sell nationally, it became an icon of the good life that Florida promised. The city was built on old orchards along strict design guidelines that retain its unique character. The Coral Gables Fire and Police Station was built to a design by Phineas Paist, one of the original architects of the town, in 1936. The unique solid ashlar coral stone structure includes portrait heads and penguins on its façade and is a National Historic Landmark. It is being restored and updated to serve its new purpose as the Coral Gables Museum.

The conversion represents a challenge to the project designers. The coral stone and Cuban tiles (decorative concrete scagliola castings) used on the walls and floors of the building have suffered from deterioration since first being installed more than 70 years ago. The porous nature of the stone makes the museum’s goal of providing climate controlled exhibition grade spaces particularly challenging.

Conservation Solutions, Inc. (CSI) conservators were contracted to assist in the development of plans to restore the building’s masonry structure. All exterior coral stone blocks were surveyed and assessed. Causes of the observed conditions were analyzed and recommendations for treating the conditions were made. A series of tests is planned prior to full-scale implementation as part of the museum development.