

HISTORIC LEMON CITY/ LITTLE HAITI CREOLE DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Lemon City, though never incorporated, was one of the earliest settlements in the Miami area, with its history dating back to c. 1870, when pioneers rushed to claim their share of land offered by the federal government through the Homestead Act. E.H. Harrington named the area for the lemon trees growing on his property, and the first use of the name “Lemon City” is recorded by the County in 1889. Lemon City grew as a result of the naturally occurring deep water port located at the Bay and what is now NE 61st Street. By 1896 with the arrival of the Florida East Coast Railway, Lemon City prospered with its main industries farming, fishing and shipping. By the 1920s Lemon City became a prime location for tourist camps. These camps, or parks, often had cabins for the thrifty “tin can” tourists who vacationed in Florida. One of these cabin courts, called “Magic City” remains today. One other building, the drugstore and medical office of Dr. John Gordon Du Puis, built in 1902 at 6041 NE 2nd Avenue also remains of the once prospering community. The City of Miami annexed Lemon City in 1925.

Decades later the former Lemon City community saw its share of émigrés, particularly from Haiti. The infusion of this culture has brought a new and vibrant “personality” to the area. The intent of these design guidelines is to influence future public and private development to respect and enhance the character of Lemon City and the Haitian culture of Little Haiti as a desirable place to live, work, and recreate. Access to Little Haiti Park shall be important for all pedestrians, including elderly and children. The main goals and strategic actions contained in the Miami Design District and Little Haiti Creole District Planning Study completed in November 1998, is to encourage revitalization focused on arts and design, strong urban character, and the area’s importance as a commercial mixed use core for the surrounding residential neighborhoods. The intent encourages mixed-use structures with activities that generally serve the retailing, service, and housing needs.

The Historic Lemon City/Little Haiti Creole District shall include all properties along NE 2nd Avenue between 52nd and 71st Streets. These guidelines will apply architectural and design standards to this highly visible area strategically located along NE 2nd Avenue, to protect against inappropriate, discordant or incongruent design. The design standards will encourage appropriate development for the community character and conservation of its unique cultural and historic heritage. This District is one of Miami’s cultural gateways into the city and should be conserved and enhanced in a manner consistent with the heritage of the Haitian Caribbean island culture. The guidelines will assist in insuring that future development and redevelopment activity along the NE 2nd Avenue corridor respects this character and compliments the scale and variety of uses within the neighborhood. This unique blend of retail, office and residential uses characterize NE 2nd Avenue as a special urban neighborhood with a high volume of pedestrian activity.

The architecture associated with Haiti is characterized as “French-Creole”, a unique mixture of cultural traditions that reflect French and Spanish building traditions. Haiti, occupied by both the Spanish and the French, is also fiercely independent and with its own vernacular traditions synthesized a unique architectural type. Buildings within the area described in these guidelines shall be built to respect this culture, tradition, and architecture. The following guidelines will help to produce an aesthetic cultural identity:

- (1) Buildings shall be designed with the Caribbean climate in mind and complementing the Caribbean-French Creole designed facades reminiscent of the Haitian culture and community’s desired appearance.
- (2) Chain link fencing shall not be placed in the first layer adjacent to NE 2nd Avenue; unless it is of a temporary nature.