

Cuban Club

Circulo Cubano De Tampa



National Register of Historic Places Listing

Updated 2020

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Cuban Club

other names/site number Circulo Cubano de Tampa, 8HI00116

2. Location

street & number 2010 N. Avenida Republica de Cuba ☐ not for publication

city or town Tampa ☐ vicinity

state Florida code FL county Hillsborough code 057 zip code 33605

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet

- ☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.

- ☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.

- ☐ removed from the National
Register.

- ☐ other, (explain) _____

Cuban Club
Name of Property

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ buildings
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1 buildings
sites
structures
objects
1 total

Name of related multiple property listings

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

"N/A"

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/clubhouse
EDUCATION/classes/library
RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater/auditorium, sports
HEALTH CARE/clinic

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/Neo-Classic

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
walls yellowbrick, concrete
roof built-up, composition shingles
other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested
- ☒ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

ETHNIC HERITAGE/Hispanic

HEALTH/MEDICINE

PERFORMING ARTS

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1917-present

Significant Dates

1917--construction

Significant Person

Cultural Affiliation

Hispanic

Architect/Builder

ARCHITECT/Leo Elliot of Bonfoey and Elliot, Architects

BUILDER/McGuoken and Hyers

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of Repository

Cuban Club Foundation, Inc.

Cuban Club
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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.36 acres

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	3	5	7	8	9	4	3	0	9	3	8	6	8
Zone			Easting			Northing									
2	1	7	3	5	7	8	9	4	3	0	9	3	8	4	3

3	1	7	3	5	7	9	3	0	3	0	9	3	8	6	8
Zone			Easting			Northing									
4	1	7	3	5	7	9	3	0	3	0	9	3	8	4	3

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lucy B. Wayne, Ph.D., RPA and Lauren Krebs

organization Commonwealth Heritage Group, Inc. date 11/16/20

street & number 3700 NW 91st Street, Suite D300 telephone 352-372-2633

city or town Gainesville state FL zip code 32606

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Clear and descriptive photographs under separate cover. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Each photograph must be numbered in the order they are referenced in the manuscript, and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Cuban Club Foundation, Inc.

street & number 2010 N. Avenida Republica de Cuba telephone 813-248-2954

city or town Tampa state FL zip code 33605

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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SUMMARY

The *Circulo Cubano de Tampa*, or Cuban Club, is located on the southwestern corner of the intersection of E. Palm Avenue and N. Avenida de Republica de Cuba (N. 14th Street) in the Ybor City section of Tampa, Florida (Figures 1 and 2). The Cuban Club property occupies the northern half of its block and abuts the former *El Pasaje* or Cherokee Club on the south (Figure 3). The building is a Neo-Classical Revival design constructed of yellow brick with formed concrete trim (Figure 4). The top (third) floor is set back to provide an open terrace with decorative concrete balustrades on the east and north sides of that floor. Access to the ground (basement) floor is through a door under the entry stairs on the east side and a door on the west facade. Paired grand staircases with elaborate metal railing provide access to the main (first) floor on the east and north sides of the building. Paired columns at the top of the east staircases flank the main entry and a stained glass three-pane Diocletian window which is located on second floor landing. The north staircases end at an open terrace along that side of the building. The top story has a projecting center gable-roofed section which encloses the interior marble staircase. The top (third) floor has a low hip roof, while the balance of the building has a flat roof. Rows of sash windows are present on all sides, separated by concrete pilasters on the east and north. The third-floor fanlight windows are arched. The west and south sides of the building are more utilitarian with no trim, as they face the patio on the west and an alley on the south. Modern fire escapes are located on the west and south sides of the building. The large patio on the west has been used since the club's early years as a recreational and outdoor entertainment venue, with an open-air covered bar installed during the late 1930s or early 1940s at the base of the building.

SETTING

The *Circulo Cubano de Tampa* sits in the heart of Ybor City in Tampa, Florida. Tampa is Florida's third largest city, and sits on Tampa Bay on the west coast of the Florida peninsula. In 2018, the city had a population of 392,890 people. The economy is based on tourism, agriculture, construction, finance, healthcare, government, and the Port of Tampa, Florida's largest port. It is the site of MacDill Air Force Base and Tampa International Airport. Ybor City is located northeast of downtown Tampa. It is a National Historic Landmark City (one of two in the State of Florida) which increasingly supports corporate offices, small businesses, retail stores, restaurants and residential occupation.¹ It is known for its lively night life and fine foods with a Latin emphasis.

¹ City of Tampa web page, *Local Information*, www.tampagov.net (Accessed August 2020).

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NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The 1917 Cuban Club property encompasses the north half of the block, with the club building itself filling the northeast corner at the junction of East Palm Avenue (formerly 10th Avenue) and N. Avenida de Republica de Cuba (N. 14th Street). The northwest quarter of the block contains a terrazzo and concrete courtyard walled on the north and west sides. This courtyard once hosted a boxing ring and wooden bleachers. It has also been used for outdoors events and more recently for concerts. Additional continuation sheets provided the architect's original elevations and roof plan for the Cuban Club.

Exterior

Because the initial 1907 club building had burned, the new Cuban Club building was designed to be as fireproof as possible. The foundation, core vertical supports and floors of the structure are all reinforced concrete, while the exterior is yellow brick with formed concrete and stucco trim. The building is basically Neo-Classical Revival in style. This style was particularly popular from 1900 to 1920, and is described as "symmetrically arranged buildings of monumental proportions."² Front porticos with columns are prevalent and buildings often have an attic story, parapets and pilasters.³ The Cuban Club is a variation on this style with somewhat more ornate details, multi-pane sash windows and arches.

The main (east) façade has a pair of grand staircases leading up to the main floor and slightly projecting main central bay (Figure 5). The stairs have wrought iron railings, terracotta tile surfaces and a pair of pedestals supporting urns at the top landing. The central door is surmounted by an arched Diocletian window which is located at the staircase landing on the second floor. Another arch marks the basement entrance under the center of the entry stair landing. Modified Roman Corinthian columns and matching pilasters flank the entry door and extend to the top of the second-floor cornice. The central main double door (now glass) is flanked by single glass doors on the main floor, while one-over-twelve pane sash windows flank the Diocletian window at the second floor. Three sets of similar windows flank the entrance bay on the first and second floors; these windows are separated by brick pilasters with decorative capitals. The basement level has smaller windows paired on each side of the staircases. A horizontal concrete water table band marks the break between the basement and the first floor levels. The basement level brickwork is also laid in decorative bands above a concrete baseboard. A marble plaque is mounted on the north side of the east basement wall with the building name, construction date and name of the contractor (Figure 4). The architectural firm's name is molded into the nearby water table band separating the basement from the main level (Figure 6). The triple windows on the east and

² John J. G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms 1600-1945*. (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 1995), 69.

³ Ibid., 69.

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north façades have sgraffito spandrel panels beneath each window; these panels once had molded stucco decorative finishes, but all but two panels flanking the columns have been obscured by weathering and paint. The third-floor terrace is surrounded by a concrete parapet that once had urn-shaped balustrades between brick piers; these supports were replaced by decorative concrete block, probably during a major building renovation in 1963. The third floor of this façade contains a projecting pedimented bay which encloses the staircase and provides access to the roof terrace and ballroom. Another parapet surrounds the hip roof of the third floor.

The north façade has projecting bays at the east and west ends and a central double grand staircase leading to a terrace on the first level (Figure 7). The staircase and the terrace both have decorative wrought iron railings and decorative tile floors. Like the east staircase, pedestals with urns mark the stair landing. There are three windows on the basement, first and second floors of the end bays which match those on the east façade. Entry doors provide access to the basement on either side of the central staircase. The first floor terrace is accessed by multipane French doors with transoms, while single doors lead into the end bays. A suspended flat wood, metal and composition roof shades the terrace. Windows on the second floor match those on the east façade and bays. The third (ballroom) floor originally had multipane French doors topped by fanlight multipane transoms and fronted by metal "Juliet" balconies. The lower portion of these windows has been enclosed on the north side and the remaining windows are similar to those on the second floor, although they still retain the fanlight transoms. Pilasters extend from the terrace to the roof cornice on this side. The base of the pilasters are marked by concrete bands to look like pedestals, while concrete panels substitute for capitals at the top of the pedestals. A small terrace is located on the west bay of the third floor, accessed by a French door. The east terrace railings extend across the north façade between the stairwell bay and the west end of the building, partially hiding the hip roof of the ballroom level. French doors in the ballroom on the third floor provide access to the east and west terraces. Windows on the first, second and third floors of the main building have concrete bands framing the sashes.

The west façade is basically utilitarian (Figure 8). French doors with arched transoms on the third floor once provided access to a metal fire escape. Smaller six-over-one sash windows mark the floor levels below the French doors, and a row of windows and a door mark the basement level. The thirty-foot wide by seven-foot deep projecting bay that serves as an alcove for the two-story theater stage area is original to the building's 1916 design. A modern metal fire escape on the north side of the façade was installed in 1998 to replace the original west façade fire escape. The existing covered open-air bar at ground level was added by the late 1930s or early 1940s. The patio contains a terrazzo star in the approximate center of the paved area.

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Like the west façade, the south façade is utilitarian in appearance (Figure 9). Although it had twelve over one sash windows on each floor, with arched windows at the ballroom (third floor) level, many of these windows have been enclosed today. A metal fire escape remains on the west half of this façade. The roof of the building consists of a hip roof with composition shingles over the ballroom on the top floor, flat built-up pedestrian deck roofing on the terraces which top portions of the second floor, and a composition shingle gable roof over the staircase pavilion on the top floor.

Interior

It should be noted that ceiling light fixtures and ceiling fans throughout the public areas are either original to the building or correct for the period.

The basement level of the Cuban Club (Figure 10) is one of the best areas to see the massive concrete columns which support the building, as well as the use of concrete throughout, since only part of the floors on this level are tiled (Figures 8 and 9).

The basement, known as the Cantina since either the late 1930s or early 1940s, is accessed from a main door under the east exterior staircase within an arched opening (Figure 11). Two double doors at either side of the west end lead to the paved rear courtyard. The main door opens on to terracotta tile semi-circular stairs which lead down to a tiled floor. The entry is set off from the rest of the basement level by a divider of concrete columns between the staircases leading to the first floor. The tile work continues around the east end of the room at the base of the two staircases. As originally designed the center of the basement contained a concrete-paved oval area about three feet below the surrounding floors designed as a basketball court in use until the 1950s (Figure 11). Although the original plans show a raised walking track around the court, it is not clear whether this feature was actually completed⁴. Today only the east end of this track is visible on either side of the stairs leading down to the court (Figure 11). An open area at the west end of the court features a concrete stage constructed in 1998 for events held in the court. The area to the north of the ball court once contained a two-lane bowling alley (Figure 11). This was replaced during the late 1930s or early 1940s with the cantina and bar. The bar was originally five-bays wide (50 feet long), but has been reduced to three bays. The south side of the basement originally contained a gymnasium, dressing locker room, bathrooms and a white Cuban marble plunge pool which measured approximately 15 feet long and 8 feet wide with a depth of three to five feet (Figure 10). Today this area is primarily storage, bathrooms in the southeast corner and a recently installed elevator adjacent to the bathrooms.

⁴ Rolando Perez-Pedrero, interview by Lucy Wayne, June 1, 2020.

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When the cantina and bar were installed in the late 1930s or early 1940s, the primary purpose of the basement ceased to be a gymnasium and became a social area. Former club president Rolando Perez-Pedrero remembers this area as having sawdust on the floor and men sitting at tables playing cards and dominos.⁵

Rooms in the northeast corner now used for storage were once the medical clinic for club members; the entry door to this area still has “Circulo Cubano Dispensary Doctors Office” painted on it (Figure 12). A door at the east end of these rooms retains an opening used to dispense prescriptions to members (Figure 12). Today the basement is used for social events and small musical presentations.

The main (first) floor contains both the club offices and social spaces (Figure 13). The offices are in the northeast corner accessed underneath the north staircase (Figure 14). The offices contain one interesting feature—an iron safe room with an ornate iron door surround (Figure 14). All of the floors, except for the office and theater on this level are covered in the three-dimensional cube patterned Cuba cement tile also present in the east end of the basement level (Figure 14). Decorative tile borders are found along the edges of the floors at the walls and stairs. The east half of the first floor contains the offices, lobby for the theater, a seating area on the north side, a bar on the south side and a large library in the southeastern half of the room (Figure 14). French doors on the north wall provide access to the north terrace, which is tiled in the same pattern as the interior floors (Figure 14). The seating area was originally a billiards room, and the library was also used as a space for art, music, English and other lessons for members and their families. It contains a large wood and glass bookcase built for the room (Figure 14). The bar has a mirrored backbar with arches and gilded trim (Figure 15).

One of the building’s distinctive interior features are two parallel marble staircases with elaborate wrought iron balustrades. The staircases begin on the first floor and rise to the third floor ballroom level where there is an ornate wrought iron arch at the ballroom entry. The staircases are not enclosed on each floor, so they are open to view from floor to floor. The staircases leading to the basement level have the same wrought iron balustrades, but the treads are terrazzo.

The ornate theater box office is centered on the west wall of this portion of the first floor (Figure 15). The white and gilt box office is accessed through a very narrow door on the south side. Double doors provide entry to the theater on either side of the box office. The main level of the theater has seating sloping down towards the floor in front of the stage (Figure 16). The theater is distinguished by decorative plaster mounted on the front of the balcony, over the doors and around the Mediterranean style stage; this includes caryatids above the stage itself (Figures 16 and 17). Semi-circular stairs lead up to the stage on either side. Dressing rooms are located to the left and right of the stage at a lower

⁵ Perez-Pedrero. *Ibid.*

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level (Figure 17); they are accessed from the stage. Additional double doors provide exits on the north and south side of the theater—two on the south (now closed—Figure 17) and four on the north. The theater has a fixed seating capacity of 309 upholstered seats installed in 1986. When additional open areas on either side of the orchestra and balcony levels have temporary seating added, the theater's total capacity increases to about 400 people, close to the capacity of its original 1917 wooden seating.

The stair landing on the second floor (Figure 18) contains an elaborate Diocletian stained glass window honoring the 1850s era Cuban Coat-of-Arms for Battle. This symbol memorializes the Club's direct descent from over 40 Cuban patriotic clubs in the Ybor City, West Tampa and Palmetto Beach areas of 1880s to 1890s Tampa. These clubs played a crucial role in providing funds and many volunteer soldiers to fight against the oppressive colonial rule of Spain during Cuba's Second War of Independence (1895-1898). Those clubs united in 1899 to form the *Club Nacional Cubano 10 de Octubre*, which changed its name on May 20, 1902 to the *Circulo Cubano de Tampa* to commemorate the founding of the Republic of Cuba on that date (Figure 19). This window is located immediately above the main (east) entrance to the club.

This floor contains the lobby for the theater balcony, with a ticket office matching the one on the main floor (Figure 19). The Board of Directors office (*Salon de Sesiones*) has always been and still is located in the northeast corner of this floor. The *Salon de Damas*, originally the only ladies' meeting room and restroom in the building, is located on the west side of the office (Figure 18). Originally the south side of this area contained classrooms for club members and their children. Today it contains the elevator and restrooms. Like the lower floors, this floor has the same elaborate three-dimensional cube patterned Cuba cement tile and decorative borders found on the first floor (Figure 21). On the south side of the room, the borders indicate where the classroom walls were originally located. Double doors flanking the box office provide access to the theater balcony (Figure 20) and projection room. The south fire escape exit is located on the south wall of the balcony.

The top floor contains the ballroom (Figure 22). Unlike the other floors, this room has wood floors which originally covered the entire space. The outer areas are now carpeted, leaving a central wooden dance area (Figure 23). Plaster floral decorations are mounted on the walls between the arched windows and chandeliers hang above the dance floor (Figure 23). Originally the coved ceiling showcased an ornate mural the length of the ballroom floor completed in 1927 by Juan Aciego, a Spanish artist who had also painted artwork in the palace of the Sultan of Morocco. The mural presented a cloud-filled blue sky adorned with the Coats-of-Arms of Cuba's six provinces, cherubs and musical instruments flanked at either end of the ballroom by large eight-foot long images of *La Patria*, an allegorical symbol of the quest for Cuban Liberty in the form of a sword-wielding Greek goddess draped in a Cuban flag, along with the Greek Muse for dance and chorus, Terpsichore. The mural was removed in 1998 due to water damage but the image of *La Patria* was cut out for eventual preservation and display as a wall

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panel. The ballroom's original multi-paneled cypress wood stage located on the west end was removed in 1998 to comply with ADA access requirements. It was replaced by a proscenium framed alcove with no permanent stage (Figure 22). Rooms on either side of the stage provided service areas. A bar was built from a converted storeroom located on the south side of the room extending south out from the ballroom walls. French doors on either side of the staircase at the east end of the room provide access to the east roof terraces. Originally, seven French doors surmounted by multipane fanlight transoms along the north wall opened onto wrought iron "Juliet" balconies to provide ventilation. The doors were later altered to enclose the lower halves, converting them to windows, but retaining the fanlight transoms and balconies (Figures 23 and 24). An elaborate decorative wrought iron arch with wrought iron gates provides access to the east stair landing (Figure 23).

ALTERATIONS

Overall, there have been relatively few visible alterations to the Cuban Club, perhaps due to funding issues through the years. Necessary upgrades to the electrical, plumbing and heating/air conditioning have been relatively discreet in most parts of the building. Original lighting fixtures in the public areas have been retained or replaced with period-appropriate fixtures. An elevator was added to the southeast side of the building, but efforts were made to make minimal changes for this addition.

There have been relatively few exterior alterations to the Cuban Club. The original urn-shaped balustrades on the east and north roof terraces have been replaced with decorative concrete block fill (Figure 24). Five-globe light posts once located on the third-floor terrace balustrades and at the top of the entry staircases have been removed. Those at the entries have been replaced by concrete urns. Windows on the north façade have been altered, primarily with the lower portion of the third-floor French doors enclosed. The three-dimensional cube patterned Cuba cement floor tile on the north terrace was replaced, but duplicate tile was used. The wrought iron railings originally had wood hand rails; these have been replaced with wrought iron. The west elevation has been changed by removal of the original fire escape and replacement with a modern structure on the north side of that wall. An open-air bar has been placed at ground level against the west exterior wall in the patio (Figure 8). Some windows on the south side have been closed, primarily for placement of an elevator on that side of the building and to comply with safety codes. A concrete block wall has been added at ground level on that side to enclose service areas (Figure 9). The enclosed rear courtyard has suffered weather and time damage to the point the terrazzo surface in the center is now rather obscured (Figure 8).

Interior changes in the basement level have included raising the floor of the original basketball court five to six inches to the level of the running track, and installing a drop ceiling over that area (Figure 11). The original supporting columns have been enlarged to strengthen the building and eliminate damage to the original columns. The former dressing room is now partly an open area and partly mechanical and

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storage rooms. The plunge pool was demolished in 1993, and that space is now an air handler service room. The two-lane bowling alley on the north side of the ball court was removed during the late 1930s or early 1940s to install a bar for the cantina. The clinic is now used as a maintenance and storage area.

On the first floor, glass partitions have been installed under the staircases flanking the east (main) entry (Figure 14). The original theater stage floor has termite damage and has been covered by a temporary wooden floor, and the south theater doors have been sealed (Figure 17). Otherwise this floor and the theater have few visible changes.

On the second floor, the area which once contained classrooms on the south side of the lobby has been altered with the classrooms replaced by bathrooms and the new elevator installed in 1998 (Figure 21). Otherwise, this floor has few visible alterations.

The ballroom level may have the most noticeable changes. The lower part of the French doors on the north wall have been enclosed (Figure 23). The outer edges of the dance floor have been carpeted. The mural once located in the ceiling was damaged and removed. The original cypress wood stage was removed in 1998 and replaced by a proscenium framed alcove with no permanent stage. Some of the south façade windows have been sealed to comply with safety codes and one small window space was sealed to install the elevator shaft.

INTEGRITY

Overall, the Cuban Club retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Alterations have been minimal and generally consistent with the overall design and construction of the building. The building retains many of its original functions as a social and cultural center for Ybor City.

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SUMMARY

The Cuban Club and its history is significant to multiple categories of the National Register of Historic Places. It is especially important in the category of *Social History* for Ybor City as one of the larger ethnic social clubs in the neighborhood, hosting picnics, festivals, dances, performing arts and sports events. It is noteworthy in *Ethnic Heritage* for its role in providing a meeting and social center for the Cuban residents of Ybor City. In the area of *Education*, the Cuban Club provided classes not only in English, but in music, art and other subjects for the members and their families. The Club played a significant role in *Performing Arts*, offering theater, music and dance classes for children and adults, and in-house and outdoor performances in both Spanish and English. The theater was also the site for live radio programs transmitted city-wide in both Spanish and English. The Club served as a cultural center, significant in maintaining Cuban identity in the diaspora. Significance in the area of *Entertainment and Recreation* is based not only on the social events and performances held at the Club, but also provision of a gymnasium, basketball court and boxing facilities. The Club supported competitive teams in baseball, basketball, soccer and swimming, which served to strengthen bonds within the Cuban community as well as ties with the other immigrant groups in the area. One of the most vital areas of significance for the Cuban Club, however, was *Health and Medicine*. The Club created a subscription program which for a small weekly fee provided medical care, including dental and eye care for its members and their families. The Club had its own clinic with state-licensed doctors, nurses and pharmacists. The subscription program extended to disability and convalescence funds as well as burial assistance as needed. During the Spanish influenza, the Club also served as a hospital for citizens of Tampa. Significance in the category of *Architecture* is based on the building's expression of the popular Neo-Classical Revival style of the early 20th century and its association with a noted Tampa architect, Leo Elliot.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The Cuban Club is located in the Ybor City portion of Tampa, Florida. Tampa sits at the junction of the Hillsborough River and Tampa Bay. The area was occupied by prehistoric Native Americans for thousands of years prior to Euro-American settlement. Spanish explorers located Tampa Bay in the early 16th century. In 1528, Pánfilo de Narváez landed in nearby Pinellas County at Boca Ciega Bay prior to marching north into Florida.⁶ Eleven years later, in 1539, Hernando de Soto landed in Tampa Bay before beginning his march through the southeastern United States.⁷ Although the Spaniards

⁶ Michael Gannon, "First European Contacts," in *The New History of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1996), 16-39.

⁷ Jerald T. Milanich, "Original Inhabitants," in *The History of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 2013), 3-17.

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attempted to Christianize the Tocobaga Native Americans in the Tampa Bay area, they were unsuccessful and generally abandoned the southwest coast of Florida. By the mid-18th century, Cuban fishermen had established camps around Tampa Bay, but permanent settlement did not really begin until the early 19th century. In 1823, English settlers established a plantation near the mouth of the Hillsborough River, but soon after the U.S. Army confiscated the property, and in 1824 established Fort Brooke in that location. Hillsborough County was chartered in 1834, but settlement remained limited until after the Second Seminole War of 1835 to 1842.⁸ During the Civil War, Tampa Bay became important as a shipping center for Florida cattle for the Confederate Army, which occupied Fort Brooke. The Bay was blockaded by Union Naval vessels and Tampa was eventually occupied by Northern troops until 1864.⁹

The late 19th century brought growth to Tampa through several occurrences. First, phosphate mining began in the Bone Valley southeast of the area. The phosphate was shipped from the Port of Tampa. Second, that same year Henry Plant obtained controlling interest in the South Florida Railroad, extending its lines from Kissimmee to Tampa. He also built a deep water port to increase trade with Cuba and the Caribbean—as well as ship phosphate. In 1891, Plant built the extravagant Tampa Bay Hotel in hopes of attracting northerners to the area in the winter. Third, when Key West cigar maker Vicente Martínez Ybor opened a factory in 1886, it led to the movement of several other cigar makers to the area and the development of the thriving Ybor City community of Cuban, Italian and Spanish immigrants.¹⁰

The 1895 Cuban war for independence from Spain, which evolved into the Spanish-American War of 1898, impacted Tampa tremendously. Prior to that, hundreds of Cubans had already been driven to Key West, thanks to the failed Ten Years War for Cuban independence between 1868 and 1878. This immigration set the stage for the influx of many of those Cubans to Tampa in 1885 after a labor strike and devastating fire in Key West.¹¹ Even before American involvement in Cuba, the foremost Cuban independence leader, José Martí, had already visited Tampa 20 times in four years, beginning in 1891,¹²

⁸ William G. Saalman and John F. Creighton, "History and Development" in *Soil Survey of Hillsborough County, Florida*, Soil Conservation Service (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1989), 2.

⁹ Canter Brown Jr. "The Civil War, 1861-1865," in *The New History of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1996) 231-248; Florida Back Roads Travel, *Tampa, Florida. Vibrant City on the Bay*, <https://www.florida-backroads-travel.com/tampa-florida.html> (accessed October 2020).

¹⁰ Thomas Graham, "The First Developers," in *The History of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 2013) 276-295; Florida Back Roads Travel, *Tampa, Florida. Vibrant City on the Bay*, <https://www.florida-backroads-travel.com/tampa-florida.html> (accessed October 2020).

¹¹ Gerald E. Poyo, *With All, and for the Good of All: The Emergence of Popular Nationalism in the Cuban Communities of the United States, 1848-1898* (Raleigh: Duke University Press 1989), 35-125.

¹² E. J. Salcines, "José Martí in Tampa: 20 Documented Visits (1891-1894)," in *La Gaceta* (Tampa: June 27, 1997), 22.

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in his efforts to garner financial and moral support from Cubans, other Latins and Americans for this final war.¹³

The U.S. got involved in the War for Cuban Independence after the U.S.S. Maine was sunk in Havana harbor. The subsequent Spanish-American War of 1898 also impacted the growth of the city because it became a primary point of assembly for troops, and the port from which they departed for the war. In fact, the harbor channel was dredged to be deeper and the Tampa Bay Hotel became lodging for military officers, while the troops bivouacked on its grounds.¹⁴ These troops included the 1st U.S. Volunteer Calvary under the command of the future U.S. President, Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt.

While all of the war efforts were going on in Tampa, there were already over 40 active Cuban patriotic organizations which had existed since the 1880s, precursors to the creation of *Circulo Cubano de Tampa*.

By the early 20th century, the Florida Land Boom had begun to attract new settlers—particularly retirees—to the state due to lower land costs and favorable taxes.¹⁵ Tampa was a primary shipping port for both phosphate and agricultural products.¹⁶

The Great Depression of 1929 and the crash of the Land Boom led to financial straits in Florida as in the rest of the United States. It also led to the crash of the cigar industry in Tampa and Cuba.¹⁷ Recovery remained slow in the years between the World Wars, except in one area—crime. During the 1920s and 1930s, criminal activities in the form of the *bolita* lotteries, bootlegging, election rigging, bribery of officials and brothels increased in the city, initially under the leadership of Charlie Wall. By the 1950s, the Trafficante Mafia crime family had taken over the criminal business in Tampa. This was largely brought to an end during the Estes Kefauver organized crime hearings of the mid-1950s.¹⁸

World War II brought another boom to Tampa with the construction of MacDill and Drew Airfields, along with the Tampa Shipbuilding Company. The arrival of the military in the area often resulted in

¹³ Graham, *Ibid*.

¹⁴ Graham, *Ibid*, 277; Reynolds *Ibid*.

¹⁵ Samuel Proctor, "Prelude to the New Florida, 1877-1919," in *The New History of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 2013), 266-286.

¹⁶ Saalman and Creighton *Ibid*, 2

¹⁷ Gary R. Mormino, "World War II" in *The History of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 2013), 332-352.

¹⁸ *Florida Back Roads Travel. Ibid*.

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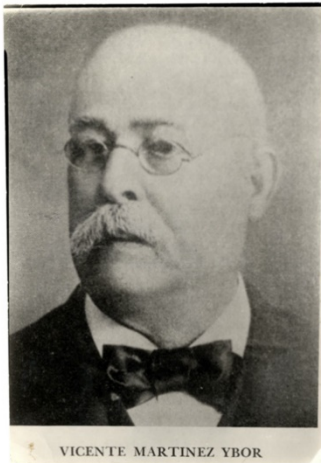
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their families also moving to Tampa.¹⁹ Since World War II, Tampa has continued to grow and thrive as a port, industrial city, military location (MacDill Air Field), large airport location and favorite of retirees due to the weather, abundance of water-related activities and continued favorable taxes.



Ybor City and the *Círculo Cubano de Tampa*

Located northeast of downtown Tampa and north of Port Tampa Bay, Ybor City was founded in 1885 by Don Vicente Martínez-Ybor. Martínez-Ybor was a Spanish-born cigar manufacturer who moved to Cuba at the age of 14. He had a successful business in Cuba (Prince of Wales), but was forced to flee the island amidst the first war for Cuban independence, after Spanish colonial authorities were made aware of his support for Cuban independence from Spain.²⁰ Ybor transplanted his business to Key West, but due to labor unrest and the great fire of 1886 which destroyed his factory, he was forced to move his business elsewhere. In 1885, the Tampa Board of Trade was established to attract businesses to the city.²¹ Their efforts plus Tampa Bay's proximity to Cuba's tobacco fields in the West and the port of Havana, as well as railroad tycoon Henry B. Plant's decision to build a giant hotel in the area, solidified Ybor's decision to move his business to Tampa.²²

The development of Ybor City as a community began when Don Vicente Ybor, Eduardo Manrara and Gavino Gutierrez created the Ybor City Land and Development Company.²³ The company purchased approximately 111 acres of land northeast of downtown Tampa.²⁴ where they company created fifty "casitas" to house cigar workers, two large buildings, wooden sidewalks, and a small railroad that connected Ybor's factory to downtown Tampa. From there, development of the area grew at an unprecedented rate, which drew other businesses to locate in the area. Within the span of one year, Ybor City grew to 176 buildings, and several cigar factories.²⁵ In 1886, Don Vicente Martínez-Ybor donated

¹⁹ Mormino *Ibid*, 335.

²⁰ Frank Trebín Lastra and Richard Mathews, *Ybor City: The Making of a Landmark Town* (Tampa: University of Tampa Press, 2013), 4.

²¹ Alixandra Waitman, "El Círculo Cubano," *Tampa Historical*, <http://tampahistorical.org/items/show/42> (accessed August 6, 2020).

²² Trebín Lastra and Mathews, *Ibid*, 10.

²³ *Ibid*, 15.

²⁴ Waitman *Ibid*, "El Círculo Cubano."

²⁵ Henry A. Cawston, managing editor. *History of Hillsborough County*, 1986 Centennial Guide: A Committee Festive Publication, Harris Mullen, Chairman. Tampa, FL.

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a wooden tobacco warehouse to serve as a space for patriotic, educational and cultural activities for Cuban cigar workers, many of whom were dedicated to the cause of Cuban Independence. The *Guerra Chiquita* or Little War (1879-1880), the second of the three wars by Cuban rebels against Spanish colonial rule, had ended only six years before. The tobacco warehouse became known as the “*Liceo Cubano*” or Cuban Lyceum. It also served as a school for Cuban children and the site of two famous José Martí speeches. What began as a social organization became the most prominent of over forty Cuban patriotic clubs located throughout the Ybor City, West Tampa and Palmetto Beach areas, all of which had numerous cigar factories. The clubs played a crucial organizational and logistical role in providing funds and volunteer soldiers for Cuba’s second war of independence in 1895. It was because of these clubs that Tampa earned a place in Cuban history as the “Cradle of Cuban Independence.” After the war’s end in 1898, under the direction of Cuba’s provisional government, Tampa’s Cuban patriotic clubs united to form one club—the *Nacional Cubano 10 de Octubre*. Created as a mutual-aid society for the Cuban immigrants of Tampa, the Club changed its name on May 20, 1902 to the *Circulo Cubano de Tampa* to commemorate the establishment of the new Republic of Cuba at the end of the American military occupation that began in 1898 with the Spanish-American War.

Although both black and white Cubans belonged to the *Nacional Cubano 10 de Octubre* and many other clubs before 1899, due to “Jim Crow” laws, pressure from state and local governments, the U.S. Supreme Court decision on Plessy vs. Ferguson, and echoing of post-war racial discriminatory behavior in Cuba, the black members of the *Club Nacional Cubano* left the club in 1900 to form *La Sociedad de Libres Pensadores de Martí y Maceo*, or the “Society of the Free Thinkers of Martí and Maceo.” In 1907 after merging with “*La Union*,” a Cuban black mutual-aid organization formed in 1904, the new club was renamed “*La Union Martí-Maceo*.” It is an active part of the Ybor City community to the present day.²⁶

The *Circulo Cubano de Tampa* is one of several ethnic clubs of Ybor City that helped build the city and sociocultural fabric of the surrounding area. The Club’s first meetinghouse was erected in 1907 at 14th Street and 10th Avenue (Palm Avenue). The brick building consisted of two stories facing 10th Avenue and a two-story theater facing 14th Street. The upper story of the club portion contained offices, a drawing room with a small library and the Board of Directors’ meeting room. The ground floor contained a canteen and billiards room for members. Funding for the building was paid from proceeds from the theater as well as from dances and picnics organized by younger members of the club, and the equivalent of women’s auxiliaries.²⁷ Unfortunately, the club and theater were destroyed by fire in 1916. After additional fund-raising efforts, the new (current) Cuban Club structure was inaugurated in 1918, and included a theater, cantina, pharmacy, library and ballroom.

²⁶ Perez-Pedrero. *Ibid.*

²⁷ Federal Writers Project n.d. Study of the Circulo Cubano. Ms. on file, Special Collections, University of South Florida, Tampa.

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The purpose and function of the *Circulo Cubano de Tampa* was, in short, to bind all Cuban residents of Tampa into a fraternal group to offer assistance and help the sick. According to its Charter of Incorporation and *Reglamento General* or By-Laws, the organization was to offer assistance, supply moral and physical instruction, provide recreational activities for its members and their families, to maintain relations with other clubs, and to facilitate and participate in any functions celebrated by Cubans. Expressly prohibited by its charter was the discussion of labor issues, politics or religion.²⁸ Members of the Cuban Club—most of whom were working-class cigar maker immigrants---received health care, access to recreational activities, library services, death benefits, and instruction in the English language.²⁹



Cuban Club in 1926—Burgett Brothers photograph

The *Circulo Cubano de Tampa* experienced a notable decline in its predominantly cigar worker membership and corresponding revenue during the early 1960s as a result of the 1962 Cuban Trade Embargo, which ended importation of Cuban tobacco leaf to Tampa. The decline continued and accelerated in the 1970s and 1980s due to divides in the Cuban community, changes in the healthcare

²⁸ *Circulo Cubano de Tampa, Actas de Circulo Cubano*. 24 August 1920, Special Collections, University of South Florida.

²⁹ Waitman *Ibid*, "El Circulo Cubano."

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industry, and an aging membership as second and third-generation descendants of Cuban immigrants became increasingly Americanized and no longer identified with the Club.³⁰

Declining revenues from membership, fundraising and rentals meant that necessary maintenance to the aging and deteriorating building was deferred. In the early 1990s, the *Circulo Cubano* leadership reached out to prominent leaders in Tampa's Latin community to help stave off a pending foreclosure of the building. A group was formed, and money was raised to pay off the note. That group was formally incorporated on May 8, 1992 as the Cuban Club Foundation, Inc. The *Circulo Cubano de Tampa* transferred ownership of the building to the Foundation on October 27, 1992 for the sum of \$10, with the understanding that the Foundation would raise money and secure grants for the building's repair and maintenance, while the *Circulo de Cubano* organization would still be housed in the building and would manage it. The Foundation achieved non-profit status in 1997, and in the 14 years after the ownership change, close to \$2 million was received in grants, fundraising and loans to make the much needed repairs and upgrades to the building. During this period, the Foundation also took on the day-to-day management of the building.³¹

Since 2016, the Foundation has intensified its efforts to restore the building and create a sustainable business plan. It has paid off a million-dollar mortgage, and received grants and fund-raised over \$4 million dollars to renovate and restore the structure. The *Circulo de Cubano* remains active and in residence, as is its auxiliary, the Krewe of Mambi, which is a parade unit that dresses in the uniforms of Cuban freedom fighters from the 19th century.³²

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Criterion A—Property is Associated with Events That Have Made a Significant Contribution to the Broad Patters of Our History.

The Cuban Club is significant under Criterion A for its role in the social history of the Cuban community of Ybor City, and to a lesser extent, the overall community of Tampa. Specifically, the Club played an important role in healthcare, education, entertainment/recreation and performing arts. It served as a primary gathering place for the Cubans of Ybor City and Tampa, reinforcing their Cuban heritage, integrating them into American culture, providing entertainment and sports activities, and perhaps most importantly, as a mutual-aid society for health and medical care.

Healthcare

³⁰ Patrick Manteiga, The Cuban Club Foundation, November 2020.

³¹ Manteiga, *Ibid.*

³² Manteiga, *Ibid.*

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The period of significance for the building took place during the Jim Crow era of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In a segregated Tampa, whose scant healthcare infrastructure provided subpar healthcare to its non-Anglo and non-white citizens, the Cuban Club provided the vital function of providing healthcare to its members. The Cuban Club was part of the mutual aid society healthcare network which included the *Centro Español* and *Centro Asturiano* hospitals. These hospitals were created in 1905 primarily to serve their members. While the *Circulo Cubano* did not have a hospital of its own, it did have contracts with those hospitals to provide certain types of care. Much of the later hospital primary care for the *Circulo Cubano* was provided by the *El Bien Publico* Clinic (founded in 1925)--which became the Gonzalez Clinic in 1939, and also by the Trelles Clinic (founded in 1926). Both were within walking distance of the Cuban Club.³³ During the tuberculosis outbreak of the early 20th century, the healthcare benefits extended to sending members to convalesce in Colorado, while providing a stipend for their families in Florida.³⁴ The club's pharmacy ensured that Cuban Club members and their families were able to obtain affordable access to necessary medications. At its height, the Club gave members access to eye, ear and nose specialists, surgery, tests such as laboratory tests and x-rays, hospitalization, prescription drugs, limited dental care (per the 1933 *Reglamento* or By-Laws) and access to the clinic at the Club. At one point the Club had seven doctors--including surgeons, several nurses, two pharmacists and a health inspector who visited sick members in their homes to see if they were getting the care they needed. During the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918-1919, the Club provided hospital space for ailing Tampa citizens, including non-members.³⁵

Education

The Cuban Club provided English-language classes to its members to aid in the assimilation of its members into American society.³⁶ Other classes were provided depending on member needs and interests, including music, math, art and theater.³⁷ Noted Tampa-born novelist and journalist, Jose Yglesias, wrote about attending art classes at the club in his youth. The club also housed a sizeable library where its members could read books, American newspapers, magazines, and other literary works. In addition to important works of literature in English and Spanish, the library allowed its members to remain connected to Cuba and their heritage through its subscriptions to the most popular newspapers and magazines from the island such as *Bohemia*, *Carteles* and *Diario de la Marina*.³⁸ The Club itself

³³ Perez-Pedrero. *Ibid.*

³⁴ Judge E. J. Salcines, interview by Lauren Krebs, June 2020.

³⁵ Federal Writers Project *Ibid.*

³⁶ Salcines. *Ibid.*

³⁷ Federal Writers Project, *Ibid.*; Patrick Manteiga, interview by Lauren Krebs, June 2020.

³⁸ Salcines. *Ibid.*

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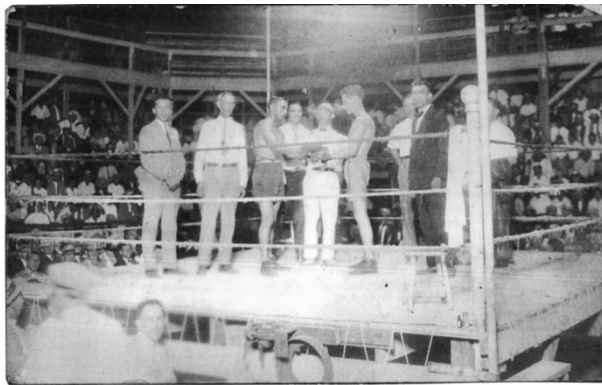
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provided a weekly periodical explaining membership benefits and news relevant to the club such as upcoming performances and events.³⁹

Entertainment/Recreation

The Cuban Club hosted a myriad of social functions, sports clubs, and theater productions which became a community staple. Especially in the first half of the 20th century, the functions at the Cuban Club were announced and covered not only by the community newspaper *La Gaceta*, but also the *Tampa Tribune*. Cubans brought the sport of baseball to Ybor City in 1887 by cigar workers.⁴⁰ That was an interesting case of an American sport having first gone to Cuba, and then being reintroduced to a U.S. location where it was not previously played. Initially, each cigar factory had company teams which played each other frequently. By the 1920s, baseball was embraced by the various ethnic groups of the city who would play games against each other in the Inter-Social League. As historian Gary Mormino noted, "baseball became a community focal point, as factory workers, club members and the general citizenry watched and participated together."⁴¹ The Cuban Club was home to a gymnasium complete with a plunge pool and basketball court, as well as a boxing arena with multi-level wooden bleacher seating. The Cuban Club's boxing arena and training complex, which expanded to 2,000-seats in 1925, was the centerpiece of Ybor City's boxing community. Circulo Cubano's boxing arena hosted bouts every Monday from the 1920s to the 1940s.⁴² The boxing matches and developments of the boxing club at the Circulo Cubano were so popular that they were frequently covered in the Sports section of *The Tampa Times* and *The Tampa Tribune*.⁴³



³⁹ Federal Writers Program, *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Gary R Mormino and George E Pozzetta, *The Immigrant World of Ybor City: Italians and Their Latin Neighbors in Tampa, 1885-1985* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2017), 281.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 282.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 251.

⁴³ "Reyes and Conway Meet in Cuban Club Exhibit," *The Tampa Tribune*, June 23, 1924; "Bill Introduced to Permit Spanish War Vets to Hold Bouts," *The Tampa Tribune*, July 15, 1931.

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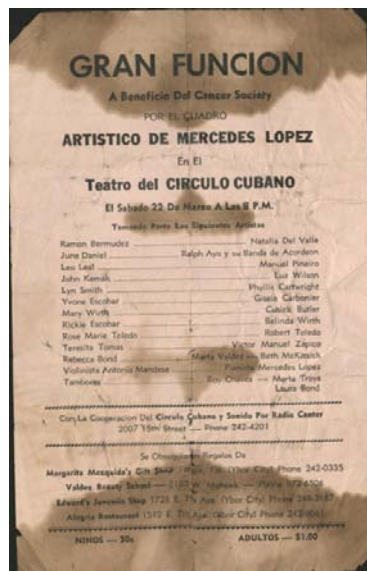
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Boxing Match

Cuban Club Baseball Team

The Cuban Club frequently held celebrations of Cuban heritage, American holidays, and philanthropic benefit functions in their illustrious grand ballroom. These functions were attended by Cuban Club members as well as local notables.



Event Program



Event, Grand Ballroom

Performing Arts

The Cuban Club's two-storied traditional proscenium neo-Mediterranean Revival style theater was home to concerts, recitals, plays, film screenings and dance performances. However, Cuban and Tampa Cuban theater started in 1886, years before construction of the club. The first full-scale theatrical performance of any kind in Tampa was organized by some of the people who would go on to be the Cuban Club's founding members.⁴⁴

The theater and outdoor patio hosted Spanish and English performances, both musical and recreational. These performances were essential to the Cuban Club's mission in their ability to raise money as a revenue stream or to benefit causes. Well-known local American and Latin bands provided regular entertainment both inside the building and on the patio. The same patio was rented to Black Cubans for their functions. The Cuban Club theater served as a place for Cuban and Tampa-born playwrights, actors and musicians, as well as performers from the Spanish clubs, to not only showcase their

⁴⁴ Kenya Dworkin y Mendez, "Latin Placemaking; La Patria Que Nace De Lejos: Cuba y Lo Cubano En La Vanguardia de Martí," *Cuban Studies* 36, no. 1 (2005)1-22.

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creativity, talents and professional-level training, but also to create and affirm their Cuban and evolving American identities.⁴⁵ Productions such as *Yo quiero ser Senador* (1927), *Trabajadores a Cojer el Cheke* (n.d.), *Un Black-Out in Ybor City* (1943), *La familia Tinguillo va a Clearwater* (1952), and *El arma secreta* (1979), were produced at the Cuban Club, and spoke not only to the experience of being Cuban in Tampa, but also to engage their audiences in questions concerning issues such as inter-ethnic marriage, incipient Americanization, fascism, World War II and the Allies, labor strife, the mechanization of the cigar industry, the Korean War, racism and discrimination, ties between the U.S. and Cuba, and many others. Moreover, a number of Cuban Club theatrical members participated in the Federal Theatre Project's only Spanish-language unit in the county between 1936 to 1937. Cuban Club members also participated in the Federal Music Project.⁴⁶

In addition to theatrical and musical productions, the theater also was home to the WALT Sunday radio show, the first Spanish-language radio show in Tampa.⁴⁷ Many of the adults and teenagers who participated in these performances and programs were from the Cuban community in Tampa and were able to travel as ambassadors for Tampa and the Club.



Performances in the Theater

Ethnic Heritage

⁴⁵ Dworkin y Mendez, *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Kenya Dworkin y Mendez, "When a 'New Deal' Became a Raw Deal: Depression-Era, 'Latin' Theatre," *TRANSMODERNITY: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1(2011), <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3rd2z64t>.

⁴⁷ Salcines, *Ibid.*

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The *Circulo Cubano de Tampa* is the direct descendant of over forty separate Cuban patriotic clubs which came into being between 1886 to 1898 to promote the continuing struggle for Cuban independence that culminated in the the last of Cuba's liberty and united in 1899 as the *Octubre*, later *de Tampa* in 1902, political and social life of the did the Club provide meet and relax, but in the form of facilities, support to Cuban sports teams, education and medical care for the Cuban community.



had begun in 1868, and Second War for Independence, three 19th century wars for sovereignty. After those clubs *Club Nacional Cubano 10 de* renamed the *Circulo Cubano* the Club transitioned from its military roots to a focus on the Cuban community.⁴⁸ Not only a place where Cubans could it began offering entertainment picnics and dances, recreational

Throughout its history, the Club has striven to maintain the Cuban heritage, language and culture, serving as a meeting place for over four to five generations of Cubans and Americans, as well as the general Tampa Latin community. The Cuban Club stands uniquely positioned to continue to support historical, cultural, educational and civic efforts in Tampa, as it has, in one form or another, for over 130 years.

1936 Seccion de Recreo, Subseccion de Juventud

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

⁴⁸ Perez-Pedrero. *Ibid.*

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Neo-Classical Revival

The Neo-Classical Revival style of architecture was popular between 1900 and 1920 for both public buildings and private homes. It draws inspiration from the Classical Revival style popular in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Both Classical Revival and Neo-Classical Revival reference the Greek and Roman architectural styles, particularly Greek with its symmetry and use of massive columns. Neo-Classical Revival buildings are characterized by symmetry, monumental proportions, masonry construction, large porticos and both columns and pediments. Windows, columns and pilasters are in rhythmic rows, with generally large sash windows. Attic stories and parapets are also popular.⁴⁹ All of these features appear in the Cuban Club.

Architect—M. Leo Elliot

Malachi Leo Elliot was born in upstate New York in 1886. He studied at Cooper's Institute in New York City and also received training from the Welch, Smith & Provost architectural firm. One of his early projects was assisting with design of the buildings for the 1907 Jamestown Exposition in Norfolk, Virginia. He moved to Tampa when he was 21, and formed an architectural partnership with Bayar C. Bonfoey. Between 1913 and 1917 the company designed three of the social clubs in Ybor City: *Centro Asturiano* in 1913, the *L'Unione Italiana* or Italian Club in 1917 and the Cuban Club in 1916. The company also designed the Tampa YMCA and the Tampa City Hall. Elliot left the partnership in 1920, founding M. Leo Elliot, Inc. with offices in Tampa, Sarasota and St. Petersburg, but working throughout the state by 1925. Elliot is particularly noted for his designs in the Temple Terrace area of Tampa, including the Temple Terrace Golf and Country Club clubhouse and Temple Terrace Estates, a Mediterranean Revival golf course community established in 1921. Temple Terrace Community Church was also an Elliot design, originally as the Temple Terrace Real Estate Office built in 1922. Elliot designed schools in Sarasota and the second skyscraper in Sarasota: the former American First National Bank building on Main Street. Elliot retired in 1954 and died in 1967.⁵⁰

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Cuban Club is an excellent example of interpretation of the Neo-Classical Revival style in its size, monumental entry, symmetry, use of rows of windows and French doors, use of pilasters and columns

⁴⁹ Rachel Carley, *The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994); Blumenson *Ibid*.

⁵⁰ Jules Lewis Gibson, *Florida Homes* blog, April 18, 2012. (Accessed August 10, 2020). Mohl

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and use of an attic story and parapet. It has undergone minimal changes in its 100+ years and retains most of its original design elements on both the exterior and interior.

The building is also associated with a prominent regional architect responsible for design of numerous public buildings in the Tampa Bay area, including two of the other Ybor City clubs, both of which are interpretations of the Neo-Classical Revival style.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is based on the Hillsborough County Property Appraiser's record, Folio 197064-0000, which lists the property as Ybor City Map Lots 1, 2 and 3, Block 31. Aerial photographs from *GoogleEarth* web page were also used. Patrick Manteiga, President of the Cuban Club Foundation outlined the property boundaries during an on-site meeting June 2, 2020.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the entire property historically and currently utilized by the Cuban Club.

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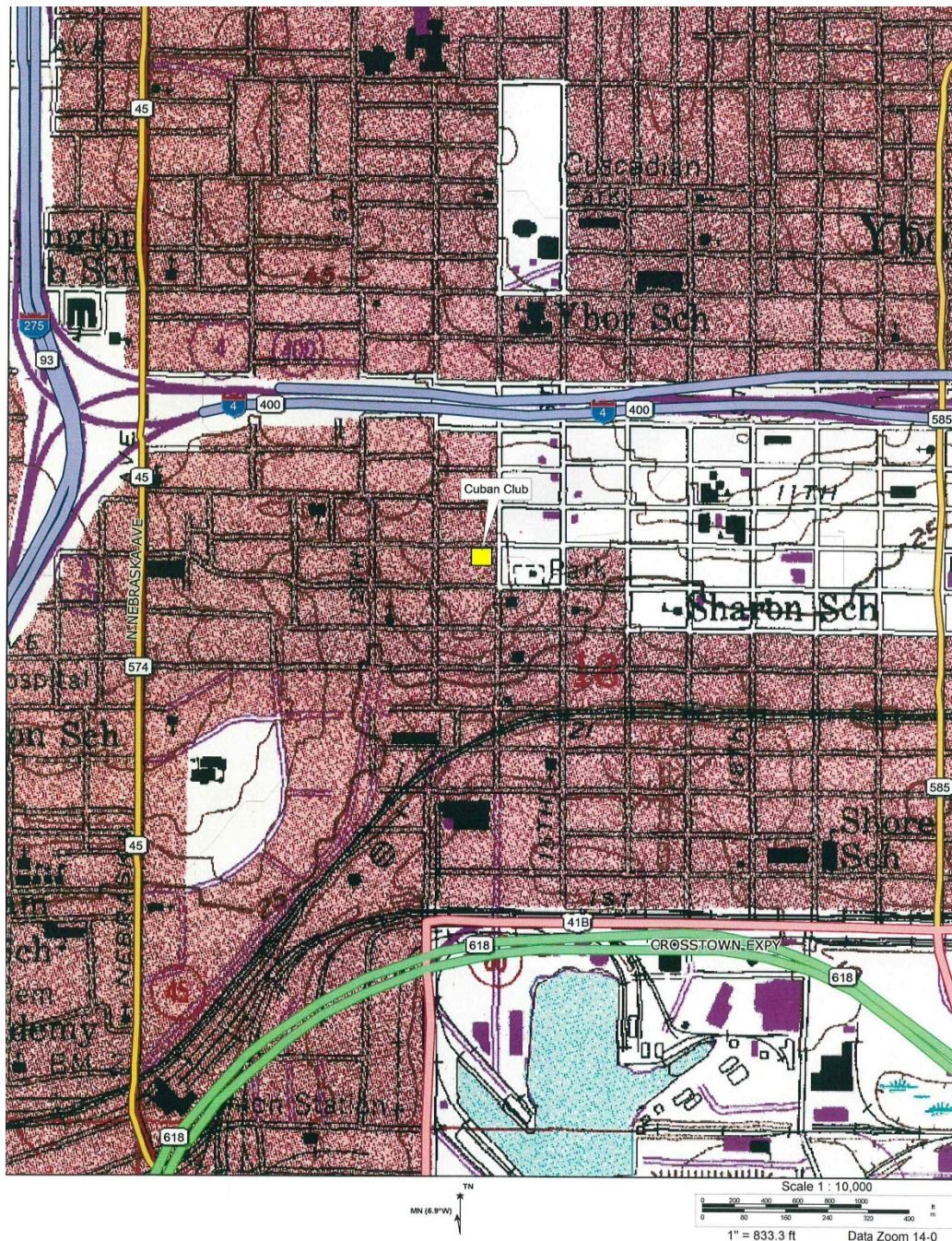
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Additional Documentation (Figures, photos, plans)

Figure 1. Cuban Club Location. USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map, Tampa, FL 1983



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Figure 2. Cuban Club Location. Tampa, FL street map. DeLorme Mapping Co., Freeport, ME, 2013

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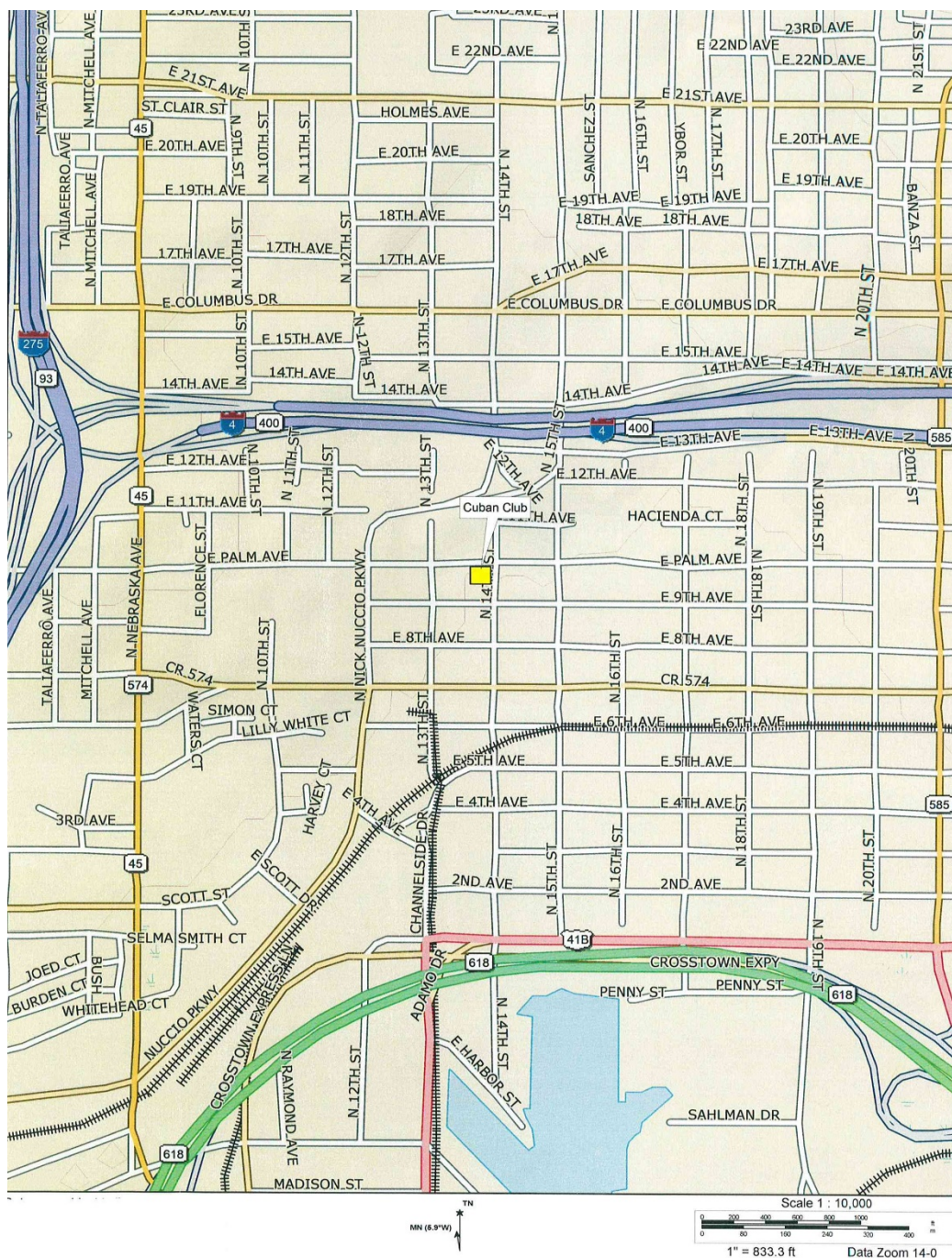
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Figure 3. Cuban Club aerial photograph. *GoogleEarth* web page, 2020.

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Figure 4. The Cuban Club looking southwest from the intersection of Avenida de Republica de Cuba (N. 14th Street) and Palm Avenue.



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Figure 5. East (main entry) façade, looking west, Cuban Club. Photograph taken June 2, 2020 by Lucy Wayne.



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Figure 6. Builder's plaque and architect's name, east façade, Cuban Club. Pictures taken June 2, 2020 by Lucy Wayne

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Figure 7. North façade, looking southwest, Cuban Club. Picture taken Oct. 14, 2020 by Patrick Manteiga.



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Figure 8. West f

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Figure 9. South fa

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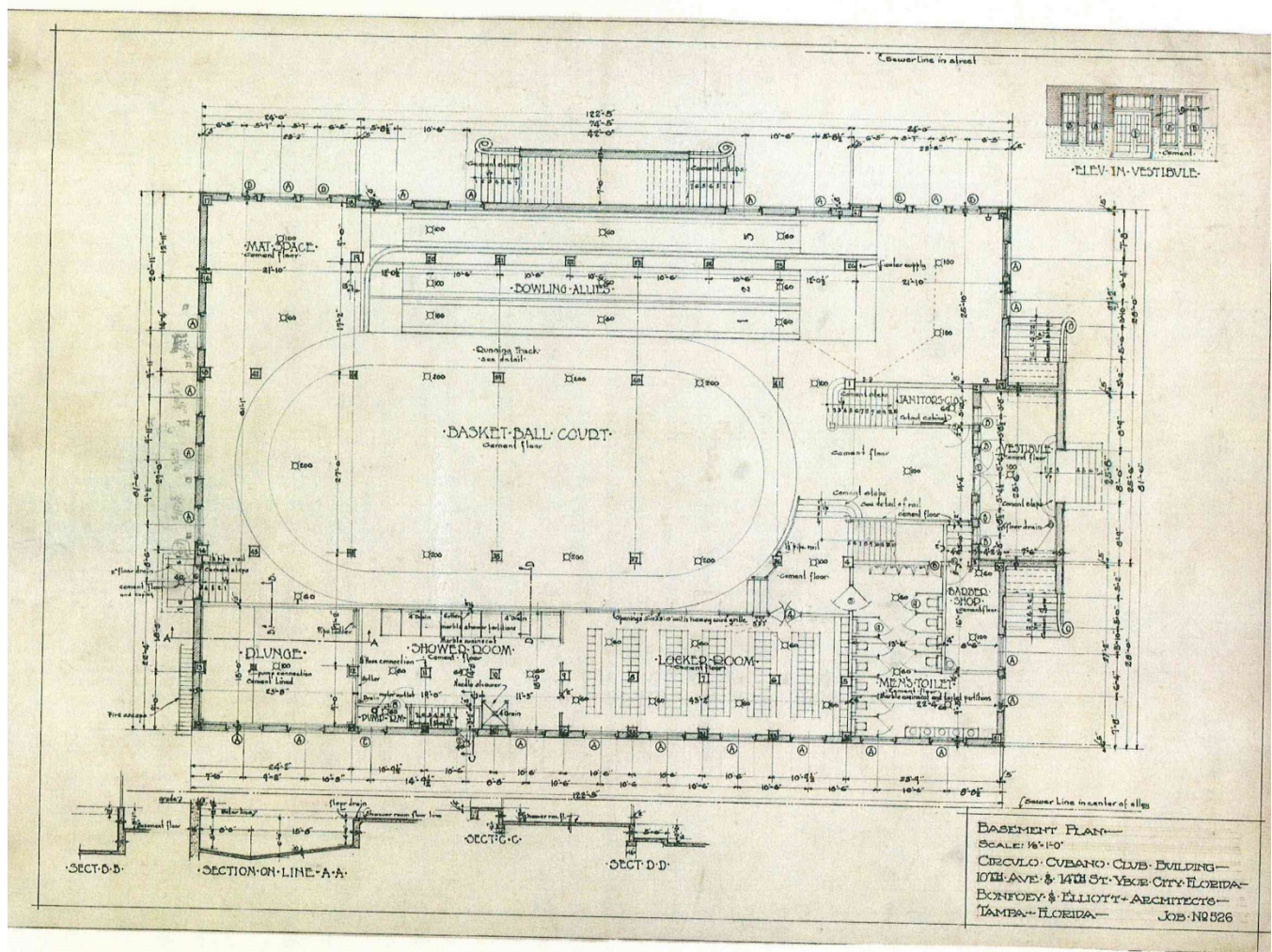
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Figure 10. Original basement floor plan by Leo Elliot, Cuban Club. Courtesy Tampa Bay History Center.



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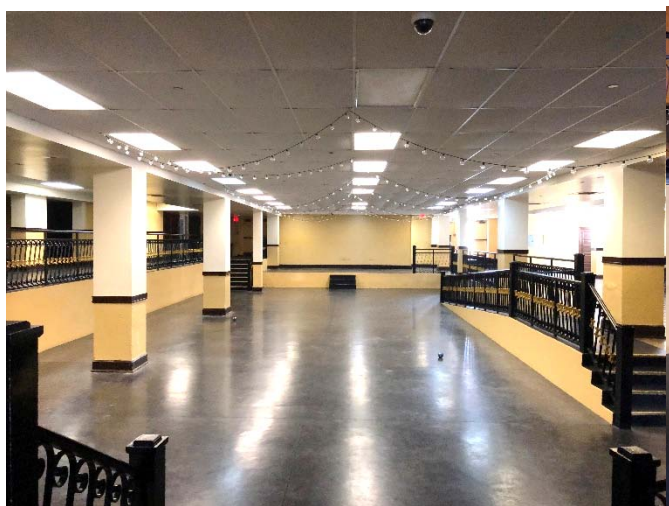
Figure 11. Views of basement level, Cuban Club. Photographs taken June 2, 2020 by Lucy Wayne.



Looking east at east entrance to basement



Looking east at staircases and east basement entry



Looking west across former basketball court



Northeast corner of basketball court with remains of track

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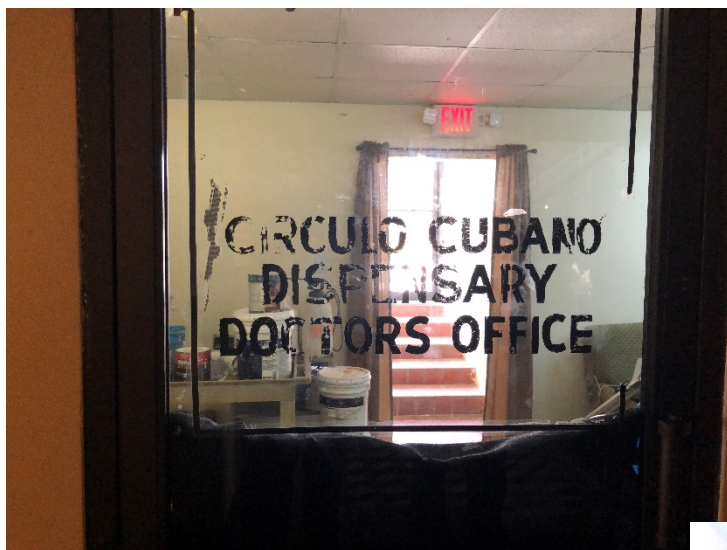
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Figure 12. Health Clinic photographs, basement level, Cuban Club. Photographs taken June 2, 2020 by Lucy Wayne.



Clinic Door, Basement, Cuban Club



ast Side

Figure 13. Original first floor plan by Leo Elliot, Cuba

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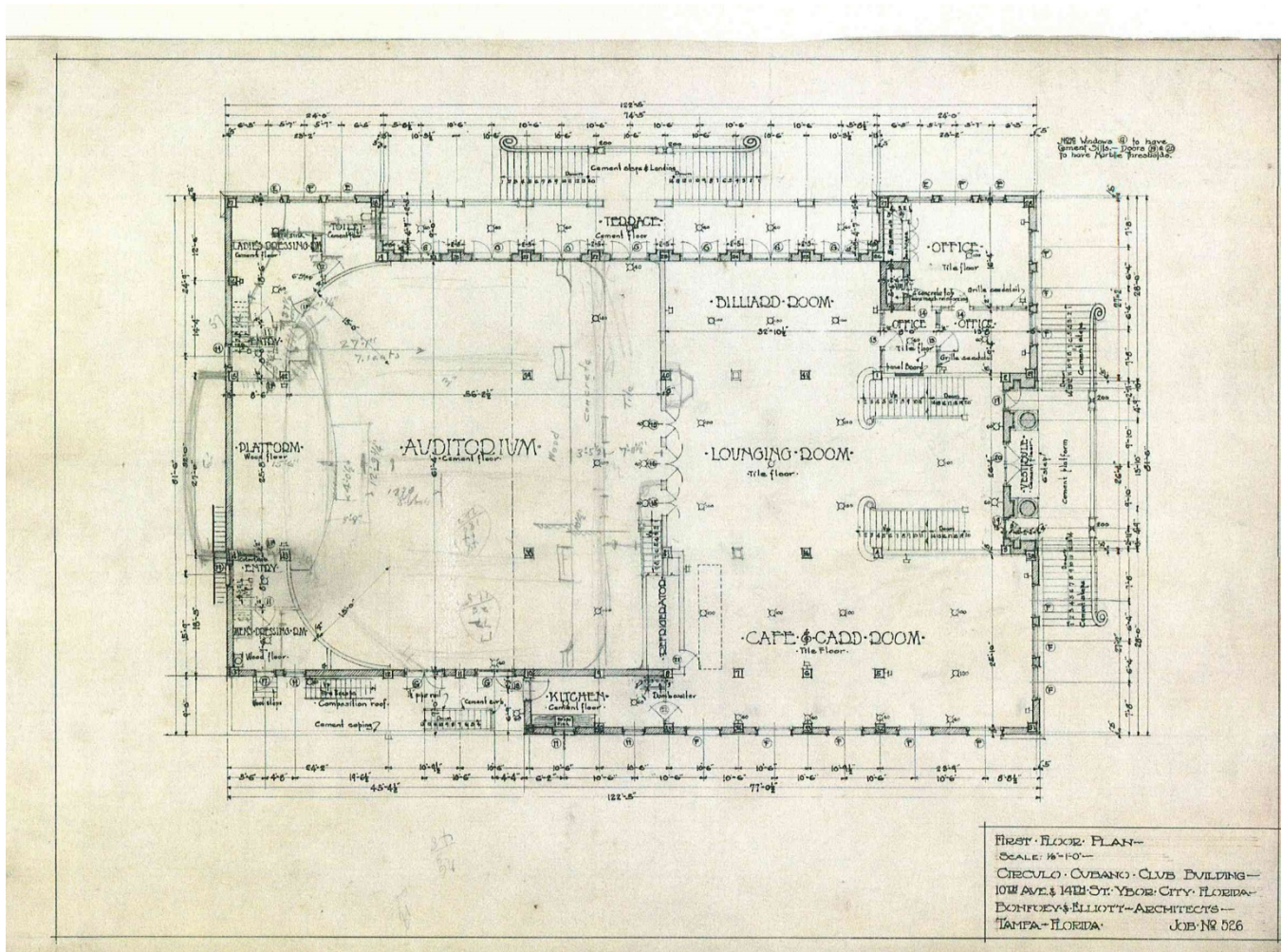
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Photographs taken June 2, 2020 by Lucy Wayne.



Looking into safe, office, first floor, looking west

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Looking north to first floor lounge area



Looking north in library, first floor

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Figure 15. Lobby and Theater, Cuban Club. Photographs taken June 2, 2020 by Lucy Wayne. Upper—lobby bar looking southwest, first floor. Lower, theater box office, looking west, first floor.

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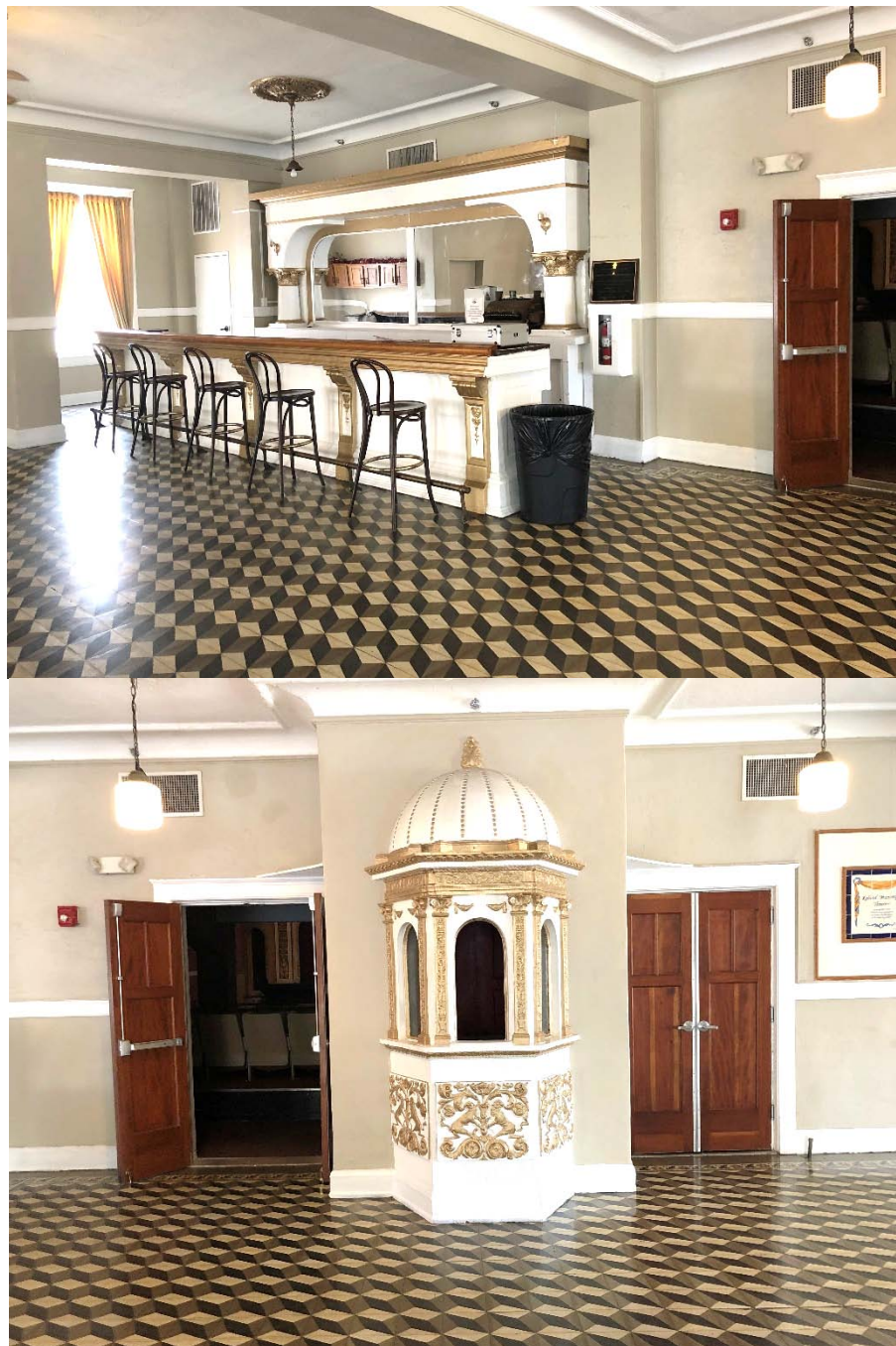


Figure 16. Theater main level, first floor, Cuban Club. Photographs taken June 2, 2020 by Lucy Wayne.

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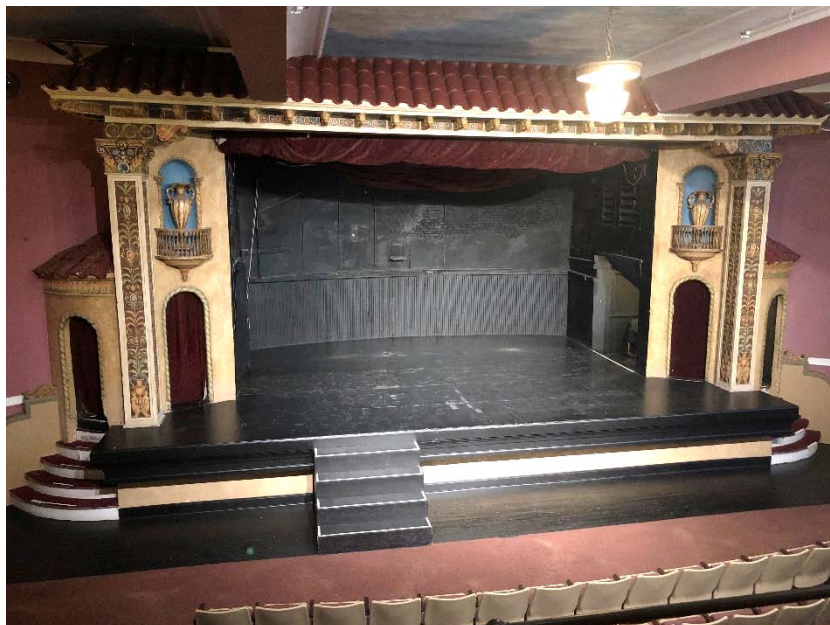
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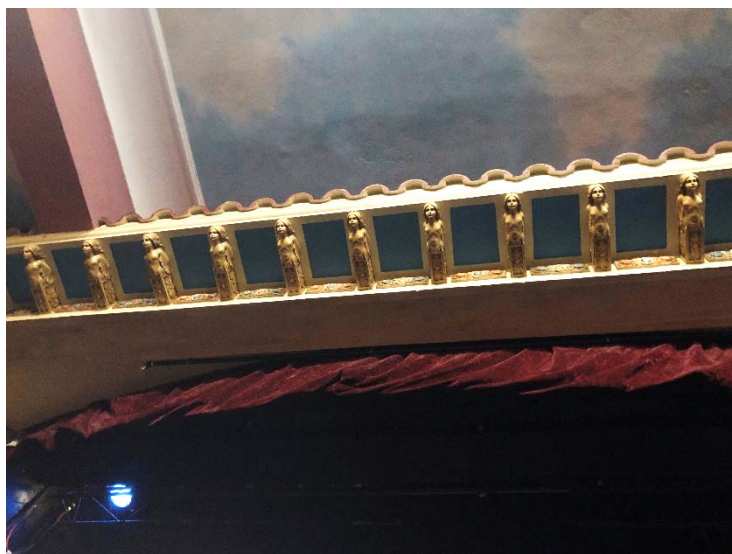
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Looking west at stage, Cuban Club theater



Detail of caryatids above stage, Cuban Club theater

Figure 17. Cuban Club theater, first floor. Photographs taken June 2, 2020 by Lucy Wayne.

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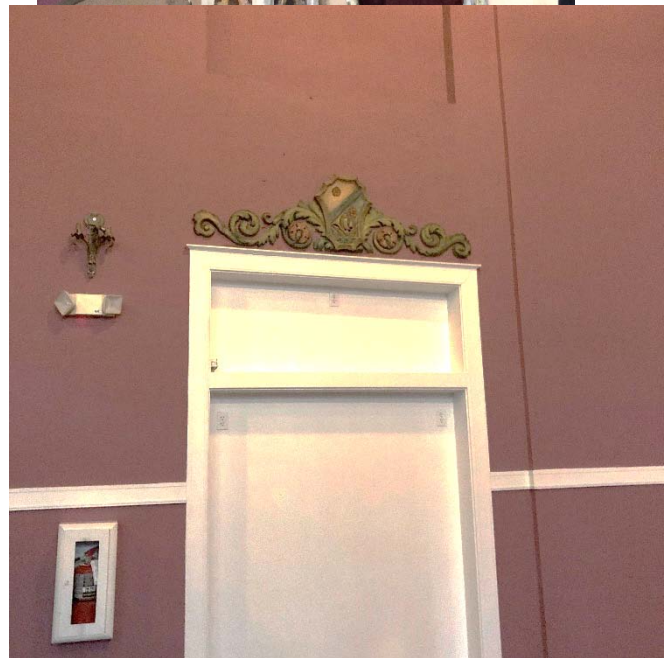
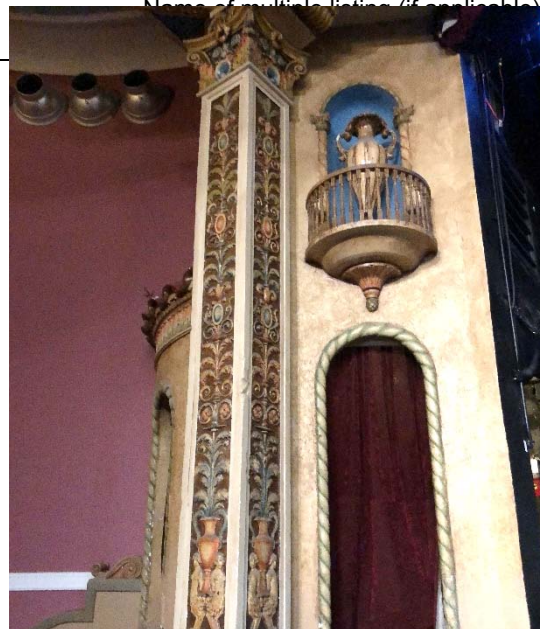
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Left stage detail, looking southwest

Decorative plaster above closed door, south wall

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Dressing room, right side of stage

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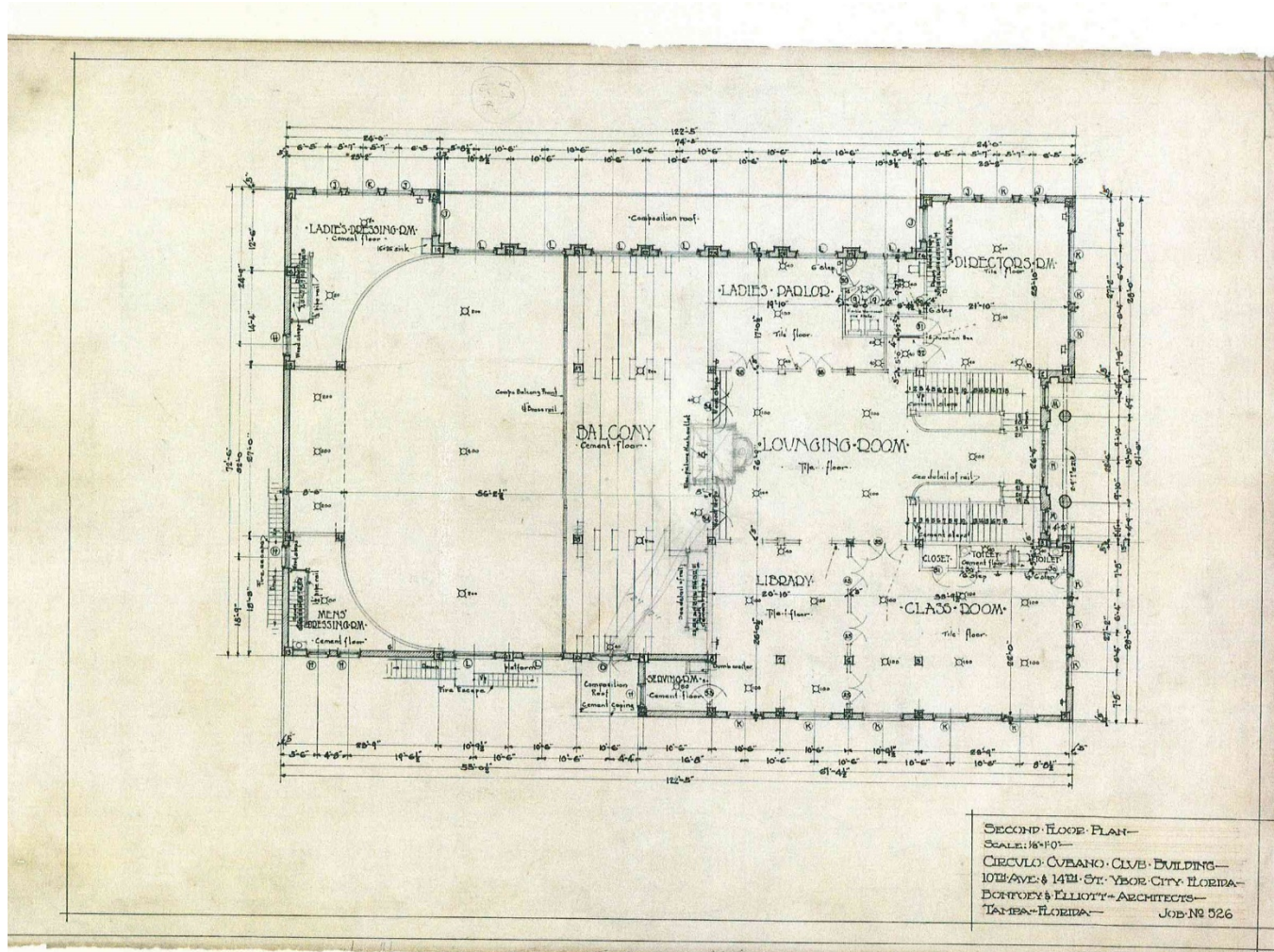
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Figure 18. Second floor plans by Leo Elliot, Cuban Club. Courtesy Tampa Bay History Center.



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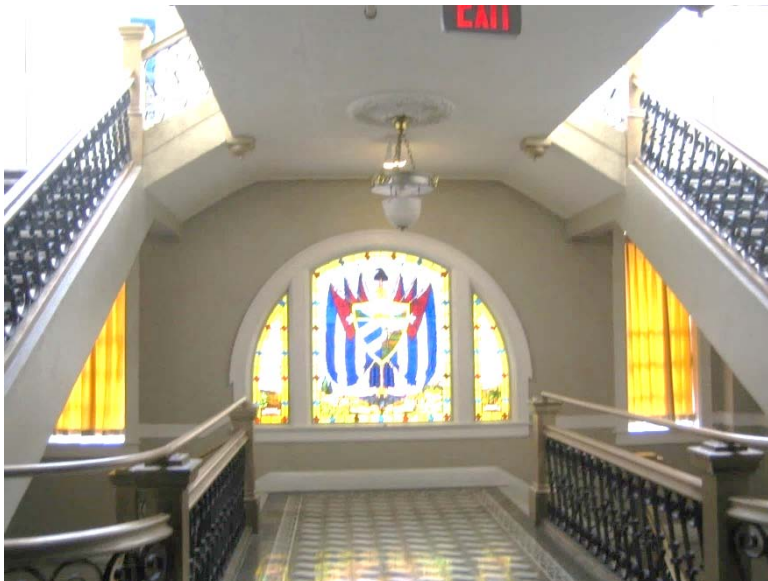
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Figure 19. Second floor photographs, Cuban Club. Photographs taken June 2, 2020 by Lucy Wayne.



Stained glass window looking east



Balcony (looking east)

Figure 20. Theater balcony details, Cuban Club. Photographs taken June 2, 2020 by Lucy Wayne.

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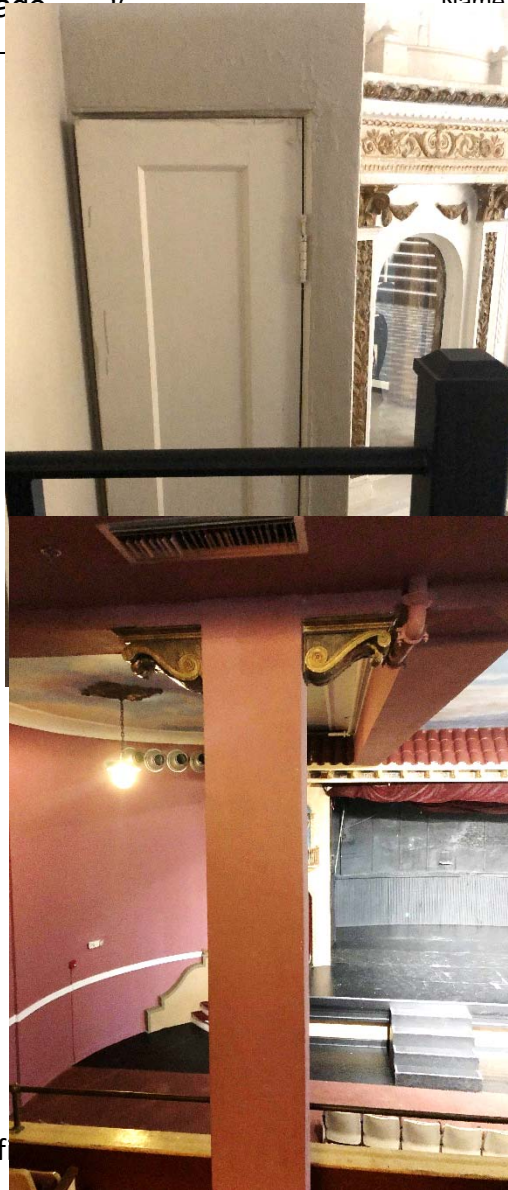
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Balcony ticket off

ts, balcony columns

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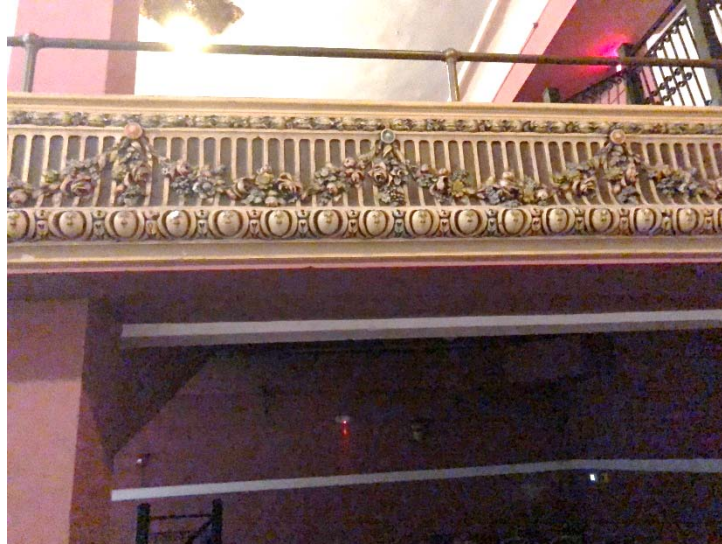
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Balcony railing with plaster ornamentation

Figure 21. Second floor details, Cuban Club. Photographs taken June 2, 2020 by Lucy Wayne.

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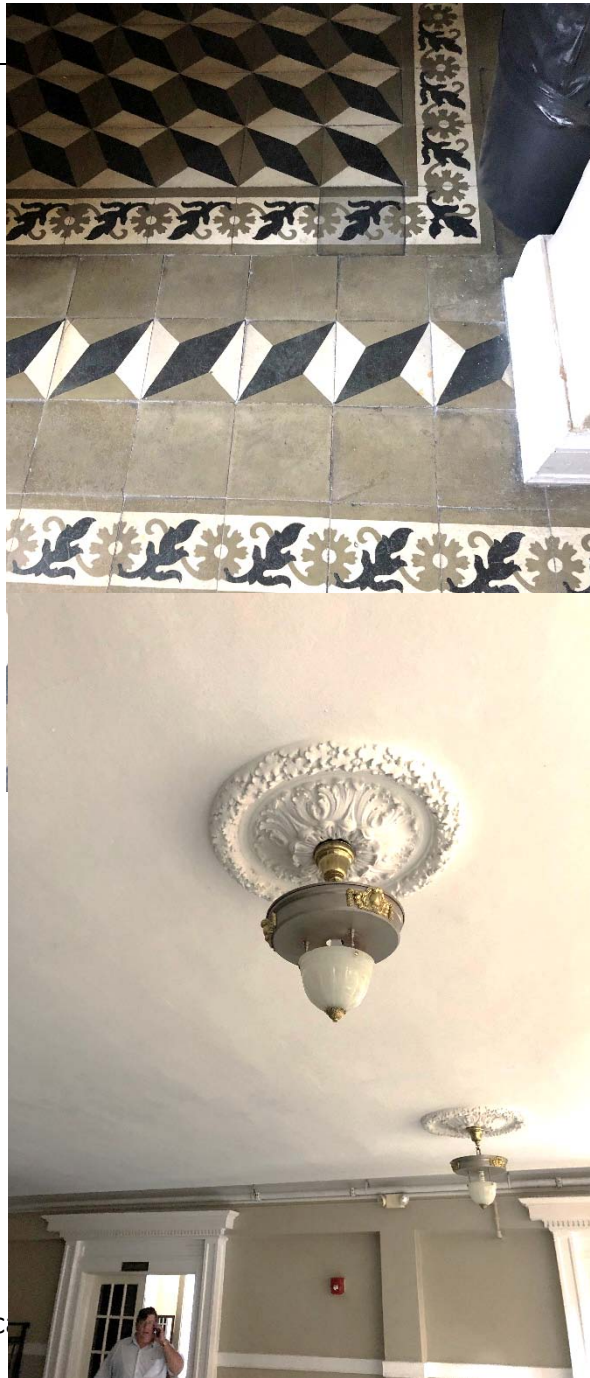
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Floor tile indic

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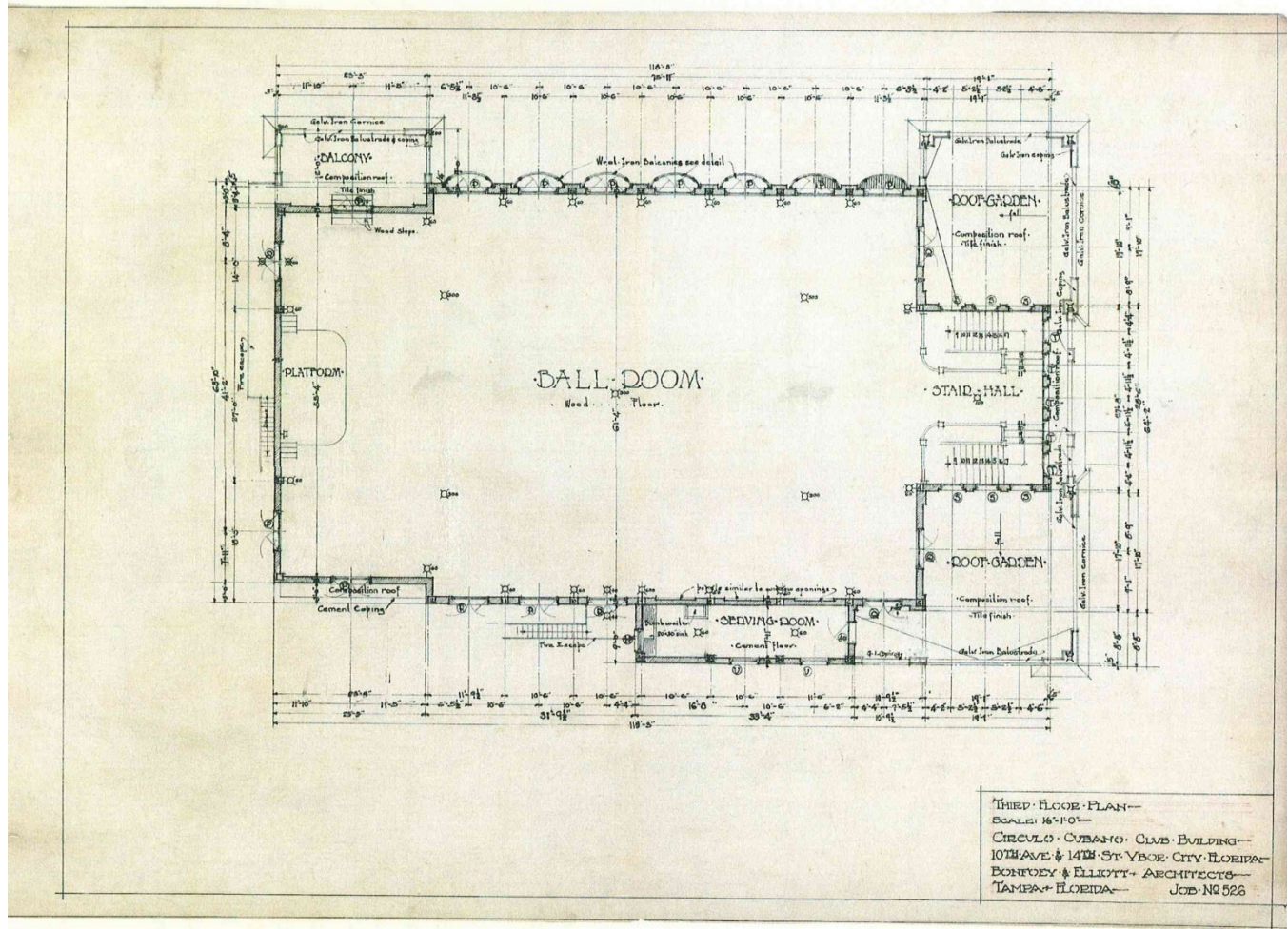
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Figure 22. Third floor plans by Leo Elliot, Cuban Club. Courtesy Tampa Bay History Center.



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Figure 23. Third floor ballroom details, Cuban Club. Photographs taken June 2, 2020 by Lucy Wayne.



Arched gate to east stairs, ballroom



Looking north in ballroom—note plaster decorations between windows

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Plaster decoration south wall

Figure 24. Third floor exterior details, Cuban Club. Photographs taken June 2, 2020 by Lucy Wayne

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"Juliet" balconies, ballroom
Looking west

balcony, northeast terrace

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Terrace balustrade, east end third floor, looking east

Original Plans for Cuban Club, Ybor City, Tampa, Florida

1. East Elevation by Leo Elliot. Plan courtesy Tampa Bay History Center.
2. North Elevation by Leo Elliot. Plan courtesy Tampa Bay History Center.
3. West Elevation by Leo Elliot. Plan courtesy Tampa Bay History Center.
4. South Elevation by Leo Elliot. Plan courtesy Tampa Bay History Center.
5. Roof Plan by Leo Elliot. Plan courtesy Tampa Bay History Center.

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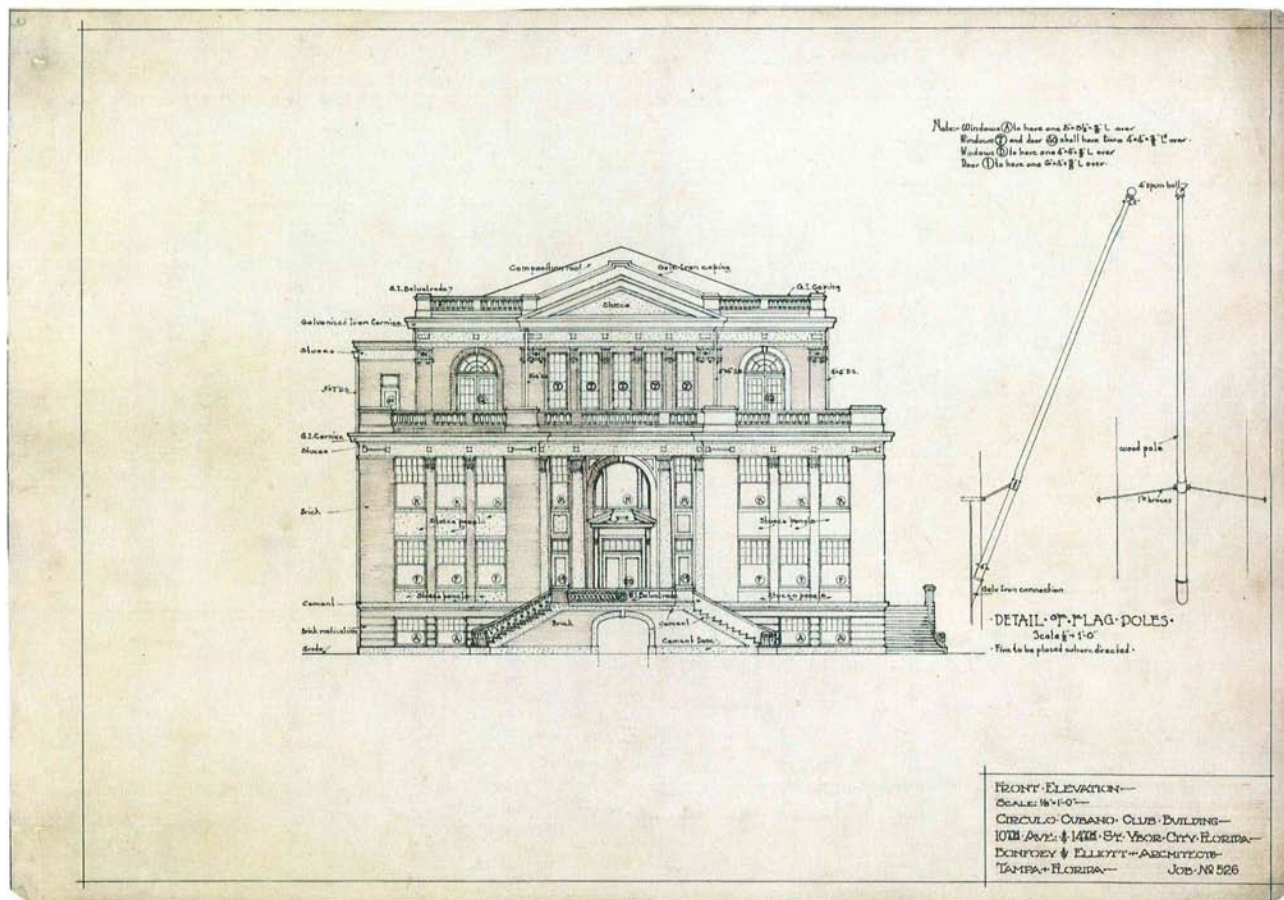
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EAST ELEVATION



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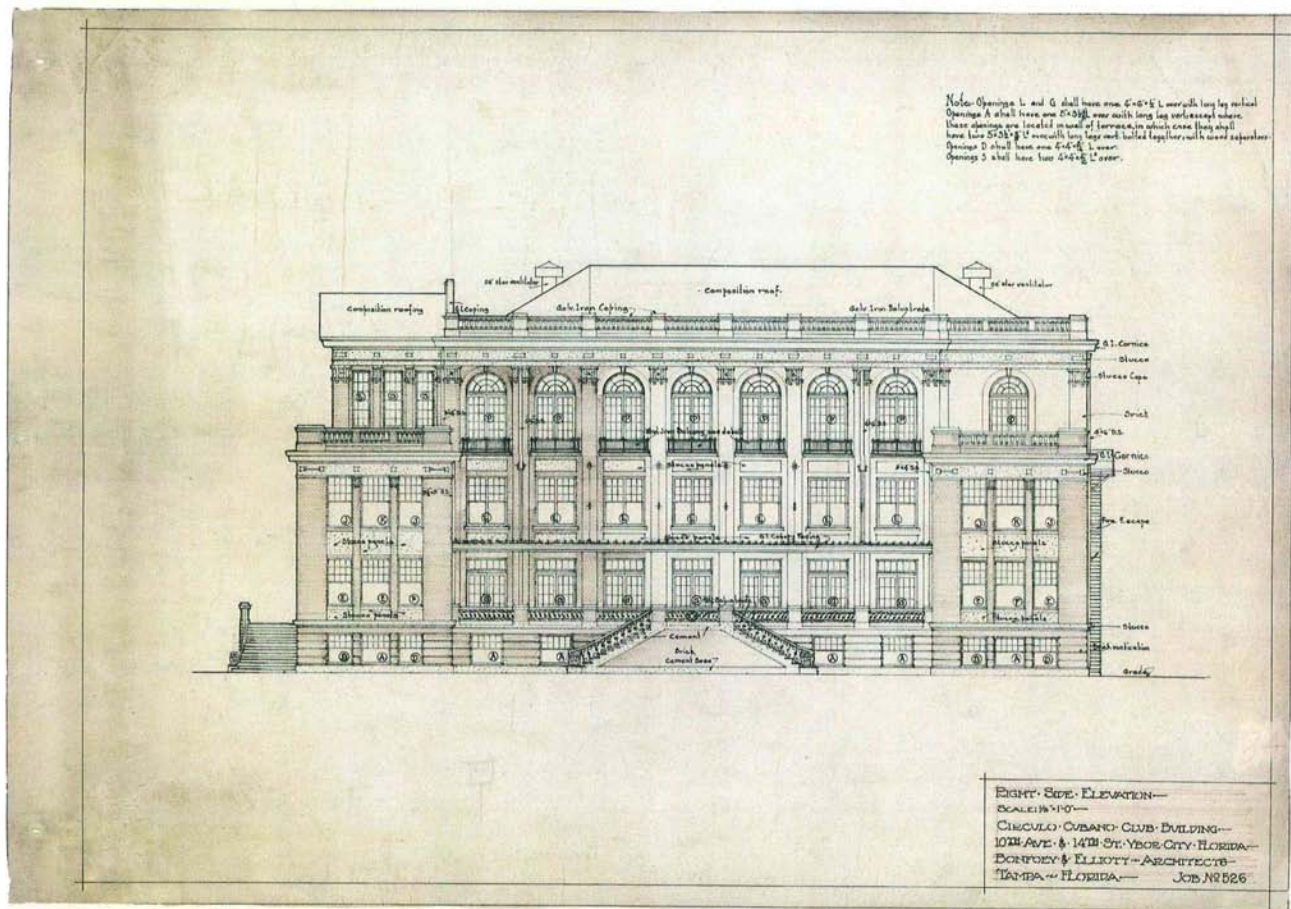
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NORTH ELEVATION



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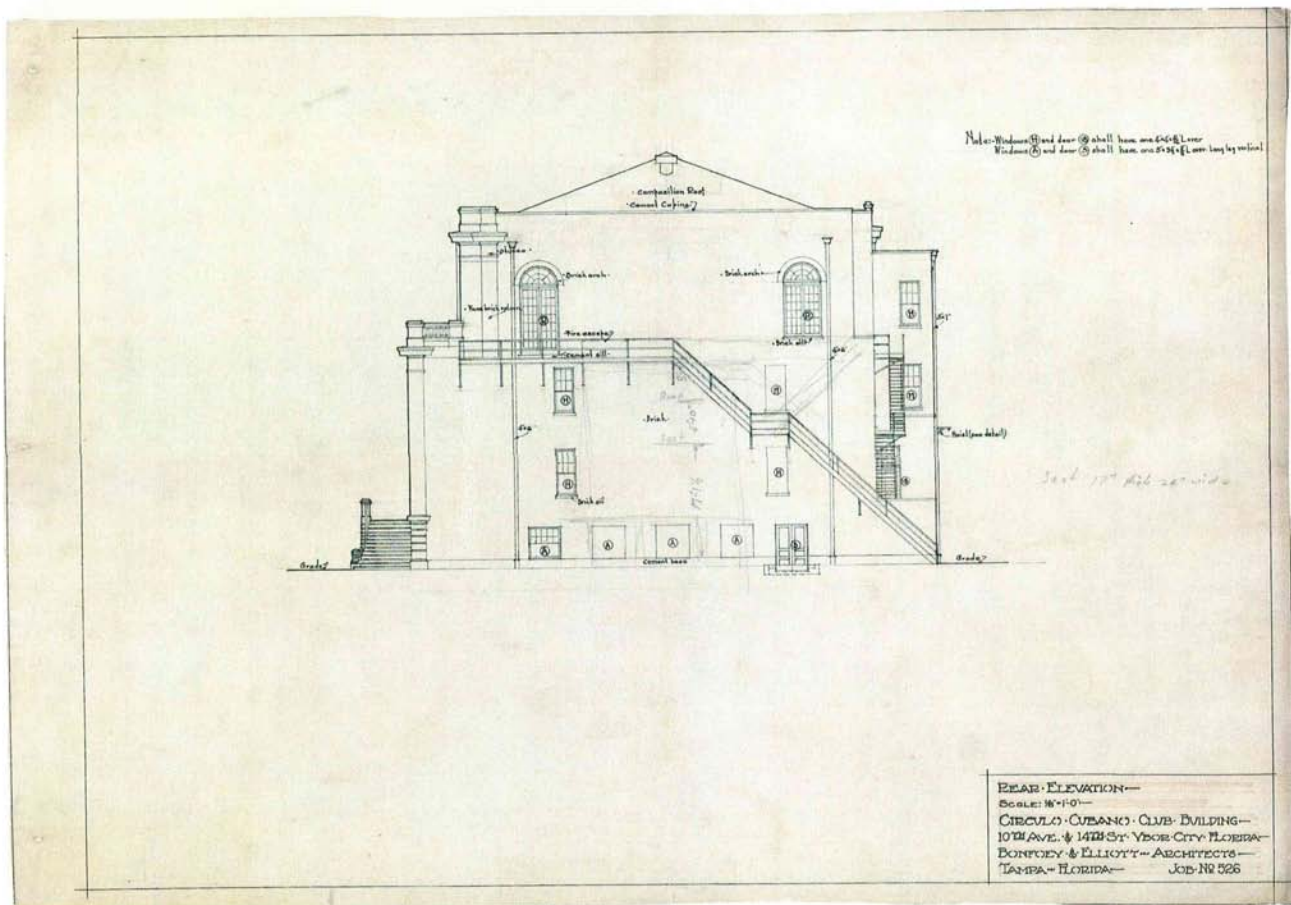
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WEST ELEVATION



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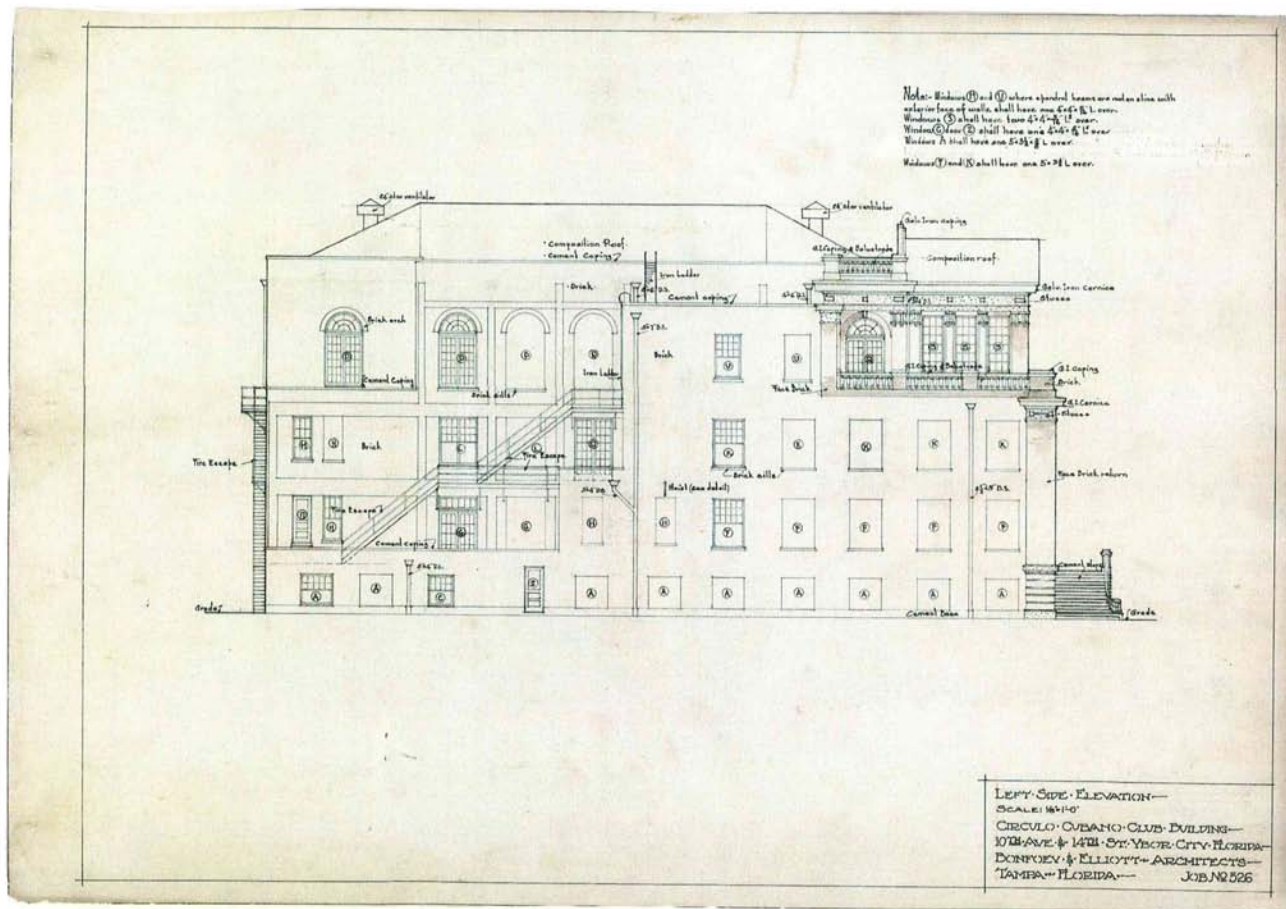
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SOUTH ELEVATION



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ROOF PLAN

