Black Miami's Resiliency: A Photographic Essay

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Germane Barnes creates a narrative of Black Miami architecture through the medium of photography.

Keywords: Architecture; Allapattah; Brownsville; Liberty City; Coconut Grove; Overtown; Little Haiti

Black Miami architecture is not unique, in that one can find many examples of scattered-site housing, shotgun-style homes, and low-rise multi-family housing developments across America. However, what is unique to Miami is the littoral urbanism found in the Deep South that requires a significant commitment to the sustainability of local ecologies. The initial housing stock of black migrant labor was composed of single-family shotgun homes and cracker vernacular-type bungalows. Densely organized in the Central Negro District of Miami and Coconut Grove respectively, these historically black architectural typologies revealed many inherent innovations seen in site-specific design. Raised floors and porches, central corridors, and passive cooling are all components of historic black Miami architecture that contemporary Miami has rebranded as climate resiliency and environmentally-friendly design. Unfortunately, today many of the historic architecture remnants are no longer present, and what is left is government-sanctioned housing developments, which reduces the impact and influence of blacks on the build environment.¹

¹ Unless otherwise cited, all photographs are courtesy of the author.
Allapattah Neighborhood, 2019.

Photos Clockwise L to R.
Hampton House, Brownsville. Photo credit Brownsvillemiami.com/history.
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Interior Residence, Brownsville. Photo credit Brownsvillemiami.com/history.
Ann's Cleaners & Laundry, Brownsville. Photo credit Brownsvillemiami.com/history.
Liberty Square, 1937. Image courtesy of HistoryMiami.

Liberty Square, 2019.
West Coconut Grove, 2019.

Competing Interests
The author has no competing interests to declare.