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The city hall that doesn't look like one

Hampton Dunn

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CORAL GABLES --- For more than 40 years, proud residents of this beautiful city have boasted of their unique City Hall. And well they might. It doesn't look like the kind of city hall you fight. You just brag about its fine architecture that blends in so perfectly with the rest of the community.

It's a top example of the renowned Mediterranean style of architecture which prevails throughout this boom-time neighborhood. As a matter of fact, it is a replica of the municipal building in Seville.

Strange as it may seem, George Herrick, the founder of the Gables, never traveled abroad but he admired Spanish, Italian, Venetian, Moorish and Tunisian styles of designing and chose them for Coral Gables, starting with City Hall which embodied elements of all the types.

The municipal structure anchors the street known as the Miracle Mile, home of a fabulous shopping area. A dominating feature of City Hall is the campanile, or bell tower, and bronze belfry copied from Seville's building. The tall columns in front reflect the Venetian influence and the rounded front is Italian in nature.

Native stone is used throughout the building. The tiles on the roof were obtained in Spain and Cuba in exchange for U.S.-made roofing materials!

The unusual City Hall is part of the grand dream Merrick had for his modern city, a dream which came true - and then some.