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May 6, 2014

Chairperson and Members
Historic Preservation Board
City of Coral Gables, Florida
c/o Dona M. Spain
Historic Preservation Officer

Re: Case File COA (SP) 2014-002, Coral Gables Country Club

Dear Chair and Members:

Please excuse me for not being able to make a personal appearance at your meeting of May 8th, but the date was set despite my notification to the City of my absence from the area. My spouse, Jeannett, plans to be in attendance to add her comments and respond to any questions regarding my input.

I write in opposition to the above-referenced application altering the physical configuration of the historic country club building located at 997 North Greenway Drive. This is of great concern to me, my family and our neighbors who live on a day-to-day basis with the challenges of having a commercial operation in the midst of a single-family residential historically-designated neighborhood.

I am intimately familiar with the club and its history. I was a member as a child (it was known then by its historic name: The Country Club of Coral Gables); my children were raised as members; I served as President; I served as Founding Chair of its charitable Foundation; I was Mayor during the restoration and transition from private club to catering facility and I have lived four doors east of the Club for more than 25 years.

As someone who helped in the creation of the current preservation ordinance, I realize that the role of your Board is more limited than that of the Planning & Zoning Board or the Commission. But that fact, however, should not deter you from considering the important negative impact that the proposal before you will have on the historic character of the district. If granted, it will cause increased parking pressures upon the neighborhood, upon the grounds of the historic Granada Golf Course and upon the five historically designated houses that are situated on the same block.

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The application before you provides for the paving of a substantial portion of the front yard and the opening of a new entrance to the bar and pool area with the ultimate purpose of opening an outside dining facility and encouraging more access from the Greenway side of the building.

Let me enumerate a few pertinent facts:

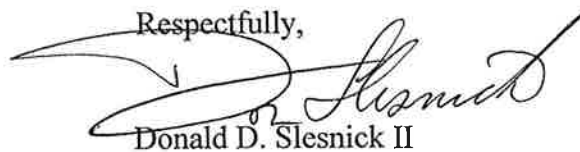
1. Historically, the club has never been allowed to have an outside dining facility on North Greenway Drive (a historic residential street). Even George Merrick's famous outside band shell and dance floor were centered within the property surrounded by walls separating outside activities from the residential neighbors.
2. Historically, there has never been more than one entrance to the club on North Greenway Drive. Prior to the fire, the main entrance and reception foyer faced North Greenway, but persons entering the pool area entered from the eastern boundary driveway or the rear entrance on the Alhambra parking lot.
3. During the past two years, the first block east of the clubhouse has been more and more negatively impacted by overflow parking of vehicles along the golf course and swale areas. The presence of vehicles parked along the street at all times of the day and night is destructive of the historic character of the neighborhood. By granting the application, more parking will be introduced to the clearly overburdened street as the outside restaurant area will attract more diners to the southside of the clubhouse and the new pool deck bar entrance will provide expanded access to the clubhouse from North Greenway. Both of these changes will result in encouraging people to park along North Greenway rather than in the parking lot to the rear of the building.

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4. The North Greenway entrance has historically been fronted by a yard of green grass between the building and the sidewalk, thereby providing a streetscape similar to the rest of the block = **an historic streetscape.**

Thus, for the above reasons, the Slesnick family of 827 N. Greenway Drive urges your rejection of this application. Your help in saving what is left of the ambiance within this district is critical to our future quality of life.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald D. Slesnick II", written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "S".

Donald D. Slesnick II