

**COA (SP) 2006-09
JUNE 15, 2006**

**STAFF REPORT
SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
FOR AN ADDITION/RENOVATION TO
THE PROPERTY AT
4320 SANTA MARIA STREET
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA
A CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE WITHIN
THE FLORIDA PIONEER VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Proposal: The applicant is requesting design approval for the construction of an additions and renovation of the existing structure

Architect: Locus Architecture – Nelson de Leon

Owner: Venancio Torre and Wayra Palenque Torre

Legal Description: Lots 21 and 22, less south 15 feet of Lot 22, Block 93, Coral Gables Country Club Section Part Five

Site Characteristics: This property is located the west side of Santa Maria Street. The dimensions of the site are approximately 135 feet wide by 125 feet deep.

Folio Number: 03-4119-001-3750

BACKGROUND/EXISTING CONDITIONS

As one of a number of thematic housing developments planned for the City of Coral Gables by the American Building Corporation of Ohio, the Florida Pioneer Village Historic District is comprised of five free standing homes. In 1925, the architectural firm of John Skinner, Coulton Skinner, and John Pierson designed the residences to reflect an adaptation of Greek Revival and Colonial Revival architectural styles to the South Florida region.

Since its construction in 1926, the structures at 4320 Santa Maria Street have been modified, while maintaining historical integrity. In 1957, a flat roofed overhang projecting from the garage and connecting link to the main residence was constructed. The second floor verandah was replaced with wrought-iron balconets. An addition was constructed at the garage in 1959, and in 1964, an addition to the rear of the main house was constructed. In 1964 a pool and pool deck was installed, but was further modified in the 1991 renovations. Landscape alterations include the replacement of the original wood picket fence with a wrought iron and concrete stuccoed wall, which was again altered in 1991, and the installation of a trellis in 1990.

On March 27, 2006 administrative approval was granted and a Certificate of Appropriateness was issued for the restoration of the second floor balcony (porch), restoration of the door openings, the installation of new French doors, and the installation of new Chicago Brick walkways. Approval was also granted for the removal of the 1964 swimming pool and the concrete wall. A new picket fence, recreating the original pattern as depicted in the historical photographs will replace the concrete wall.

PROPOSAL

The applicant is requesting design approval for the construction of additions and renovation of the existing structure. The addition is comprised of a new kitchen, family room, and master bedroom suite. Additionally, the slate roof on the existing house and garage will be restored. The illustrated gazebo, landscaping, swimming pool and pool deck on the southern portion of the property are not part of this application.

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

The following Standards have application in this matter:

9. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

STAFF OBSERVATIONS

Prior to the local historic designation of the Florida Pioneer Village District, of which this residence at 4320 Santa Maria Street was included as a contributing structure, an extensive remodeling of the rear/side yard of the residence occurred. The kitchen was altered and a family room was added as a one-story addition. The applicant has proposed to remove this previous addition and construct a two story structure that is similar in massing and architectural style to the historic structure.

Transitional spaces, comprised of a foyer and butler's pantry on the ground floor, and bedroom foyer and stair landing on the second floor are designed to recess back from north and south facades of the structure. To further emphasize the transitional spaces and its connective function visually, the roof height is lower than both the existing historic building and the addition. Within this area on its north side, the existing covered walkway will also be remodeled to create a more sympathetic composition.

The interior finished floor elevation of the new ground floor is approximately six inches higher than the finished floor elevation of the existing structure. Located on the ground floor of the addition are the kitchen, breakfast room, family room, laundry room, mud room, a trellised porch that faces the side yard (south), and a porch that is roofed by the porch on the second floor that faces the golf course (west). The master bedroom suite will encompass the majority of the second floor and will access the west porch and the upstairs family room, converted from an existing bedroom located in the original portion of the house.

All the windows and doors are specified to be similar to the ones in the original sections of the home. Subtle detail changes, such as the introduction of new molding profiles, the simplification of the pickets at the balcony railing, and the enlargement of the decorative solid panels below the windows differentiate the new section from the historic structure. Spacing of the openings, the introduction of square columns versus the existing round columns and the elimination of the decorative shutter detail further create a subtle and sympathetic interpretation of the architectural language. Because of its proximity to the historic structure, the addition is proposed to match the existing in its stucco finish and slate roof.

BOARD OF ARCHITECTS

The Board of Architects reviewed this proposal on April 27, 2006 and recommended approval of the design.

VARIANCES

The applicant has not requested approval of variances as part of this application.

STAFF CONCLUSION

The application presented requests design approval for the construction of additions and the renovation of the historic structure. Although the proposed programming and the placement of the addition, which are set back to the rear of the property, are sympathetic with the original orientation of the main residence, the overall height and massing of the addition seemingly overpowers the historic structure and competes for attention, redirecting the focus of attention. The integrity of the historic building is thus diminished because the addition detracts from the historic nature of the structure.

Despite the fact that the addition is designed in the same architectural language, the height of the addition overwhelms and overshadows the existing 1925 structure. Staff recommends that the overall height of the addition be lowered to minimize its impact and allow the attention to be re-directed back to the historic structure. If feasible, the height should be lower than the existing structure. If the height of the addition can not be lower than that of the existing structure, it should not be made any higher than the existing structure.

Staff recommends the following:

A motion to grant design approval, incorporating staff's comments for the addition and renovations to the property at 4320 Santa Maria Street, a contributing structure within the "Florida Pioneer Village Historic District" and APPROVE the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness with the condition that the overall height of the addition be reduced.

Respectfully submitted,

Kara N. Kautz
Historic Preservation Officer

Written by: Simone C. Chin