

**COA (SP) 2006-17  
NOVEMBER 16, 2006**

**STAFF REPORT  
SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS  
FOR ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS 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 a gazebo, brick walkways, perimeter walls and fencing and a storage “shed” with semi-enclosed service yard on the southern side of the property.

**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.

On July 20, 2006, the Historic Preservation Board granted approval for the construction of a two-story addition to the west side of the existing house and for alterations to the existing structure.

### **PROPOSAL**

The applicant is requesting design approval for the construction of a gazebo, brick walkways, perimeter walls and fencing and a storage “shed” with semi-enclosed service yard on the southern side of the property. The swimming pool and pool deck, landscaping, and fountain feature illustrated in the applicant’s plans 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**

The applicant has proposed additions and alterations to the site that include constructing a new free-standing gazebo, installing brick pavers, constructing a storage shed and a site wall to create a semi-enclosed courtyard. All of the proposed alterations occur on the south and east sides of the property.

The applicant has previously received approval to remove a swimming pool (installed ca. 1964) in this area.

The gazebo is located to the southeast of the new addition and approximately 52'-8" from the front (Santa Maria) property line. The gazebo, 18'-0" square in plan, is open on three sides with groupings of wood columns and a brick wall with columnettes on the east side. The low brick wall shields from view a countertop with a grill and sink on the interior of the gazebo. The ceiling is exposed tongue and groove between decorative wood beams. The roof is to be copper with a cupola for ventilation and topped by a decorative weathervane.

The gazebo is joined on the south side by a 4'-0" high site wall that has a brick finish on both sides. As the wall meets the south property line and turns to the west, the "interior" side of the wall retains its brick finish while the "exterior" side of the wall (facing the neighbor's property) will have a smooth stucco finish with a brick cap. This wall continues for approximately 30'-0" along the south property line and then turns back again to the north, creating a semi-enclosed courtyard. At this point the wall is again brick on both sides and has a 3'-0" wooden gate into the service yard.

The service yard and storage "shed" is located to the west of the gazebo and to the south of the new addition to the house. The walls of the semi-enclosed storage shed are 8'-2" high. The sides of the wall that face into the courtyard, the pool area, and the golf course behind the house are faced with brick. The sides of the wall that face the storage shed and service yard are faced with smooth stucco. The north side of the shed that faces the pool area is decorated with three stucco panels topped with brick arches and two open "portholes" that will receive decorative wrought iron. The center stucco panel will hold a fountain spout that will empty into the pool fountain below. In addition, there will be two planters, approximately 1'- 4" deep, that flank the center fountain and run the full length of the wall.

The applicant's drawings also indicate a new 4'-0" high wooden picket fence to be constructed along the east property line at the rear of the property. This fence and gate will match the previously approved fence and gate previously approved at the west property line at the front of the property.

The applicant's drawings also indicate paved walkways that connect the existing house and the new addition to the proposed gazebo, pool area and pool deck and to the proposed service yard.

The swimming pool and pool deck, landscaping, and fountain feature illustrated in the applicant's plans are not part of this application.

#### **BOARD OF ARCHITECTS**

The Board of Architects reviewed this proposal on November 9, 2006 and recommended approval of the design.

#### **VARIANCES**

The applicant has not requested a variance as part of this application.

### **STAFF CONCLUSION**

The application presented requests design approval for the construction of additions and alterations to the historic property. Although the proposed programming and the placement of the additions, which are set back to the rear and southern side of the property, are sympathetic with the architectural style of the main residence, staff has concerns regarding the perimeter wall and the use of exposed brick.

The applicant's plans show an existing 5'-0" high CMU wall along the southern property line. The applicant is proposing to extend the perimeter wall with a new 4'-0" CMU wall that is faced with brick on one side. Then applicant is then proposing to add a new 4'-0" high chain link fence that runs from the new CMU wall to the rear (east) property line. At the southeast corner of the property, the chain link fence would meet the previously approved 4'-0" high wooden picket fence that runs along the rear (east) property line. Staff feels that the introduction of a chain link fence is inappropriate to the property and that either the CMU wall or the picket fence should be installed in place of the chain link fence.

Staff also has concerns about the amount of exposed brick that is represented in the applicant's proposal. While the use of brick as a facing material is not out of context, the amount of brick overwhelms the design. There is no brick facing used on the existing historic structure nor on any of the structures within the historic district. If one looks at the west elevation of the full property, the brick of the wall and the gazebo are not harmonious with the historic structure and its new addition. Staff feels that the quantity of brick proposed diminishes the integrity of the historic building because the brick detracts from the historic nature of the structure. Staff recommends a reduction in the amount of brick facing. This could be accomplished by eliminating the low wall that connects the gazebo to the southern property line or by replacing some of the brick facing with a smooth stucco finish.

Please note that the swimming pool and pool deck, landscaping, and fountain feature illustrated in the applicant's plans are not part of this application and will require a separate Certificate of Appropriateness application.

**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 conditions.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kara N. Kautz  
Historic Preservation Officer

Written by: Kara N. Kautz