

August 18th, 2015

The City of Coral Gables
Board of Architects
427 Biltmore Way, 2nd Floor
Coral Gables, FL 33134

Re: Architectural Statement towards proposed townhouses at 625 Almeria Avenue, Coral Gables, FL 33131

City of Coral Gables Board of Architects:

Our design strategy is to continue the townhouse design that is established by the adjacent Almeria Row townhouses with the distinction of making a contrasting project of a more individualistic aesthetic nature while working within the zoning guidelines and celebrating the tradition of modern architecture that is represented in Coral Gables in certain instances. We have designed 4 townhouses of great architectural articulated value and rich in material application/definition. We are also working diligently with our landscape architect to ensure we mitigate the trees that have to be removed and with the introduction of highly detailed individual front yard gardens for each townhouse unit which is also complimented by a front porch element which allows for neighborhood engagement and lively street activities as its normal in this neighborhood.

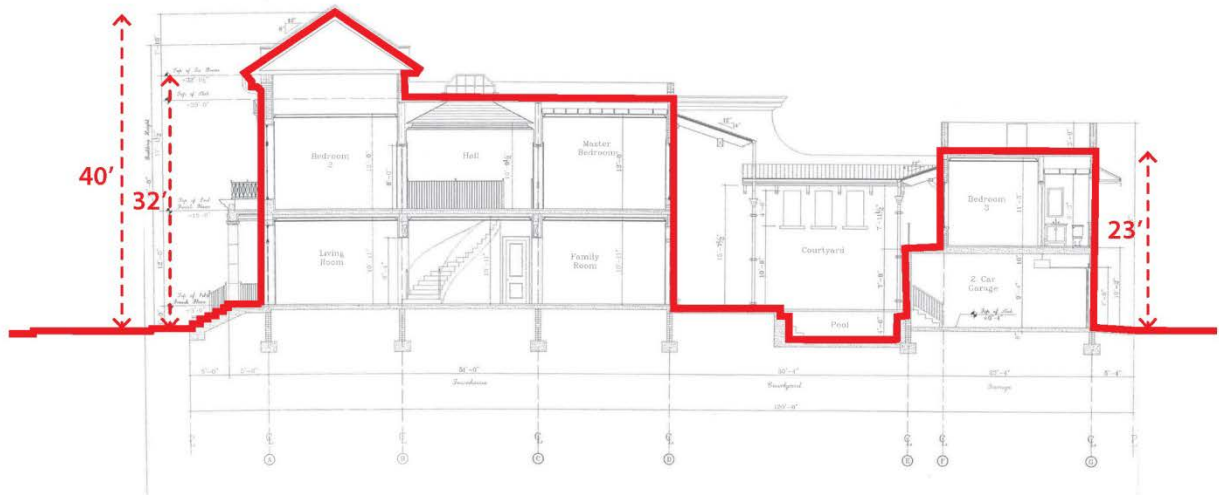


Rather than simply mimicking the architectural style of our neighbors in our façade to blend into the context, our project makes a reference to the context of the area through the scale, height, massing, separation between buildings and style, while developing an optimistic and individualist façade expression that allows each owner to have a sense of uniqueness with their townhome unit. These units have 4 car garage accessed thru alley in a tandem format and 3 levels, including internal courtyard and roof top terrace. The units will offer highly sophisticated interiors and finishes as the luxury market demands in the beautiful City of Coral Gables.

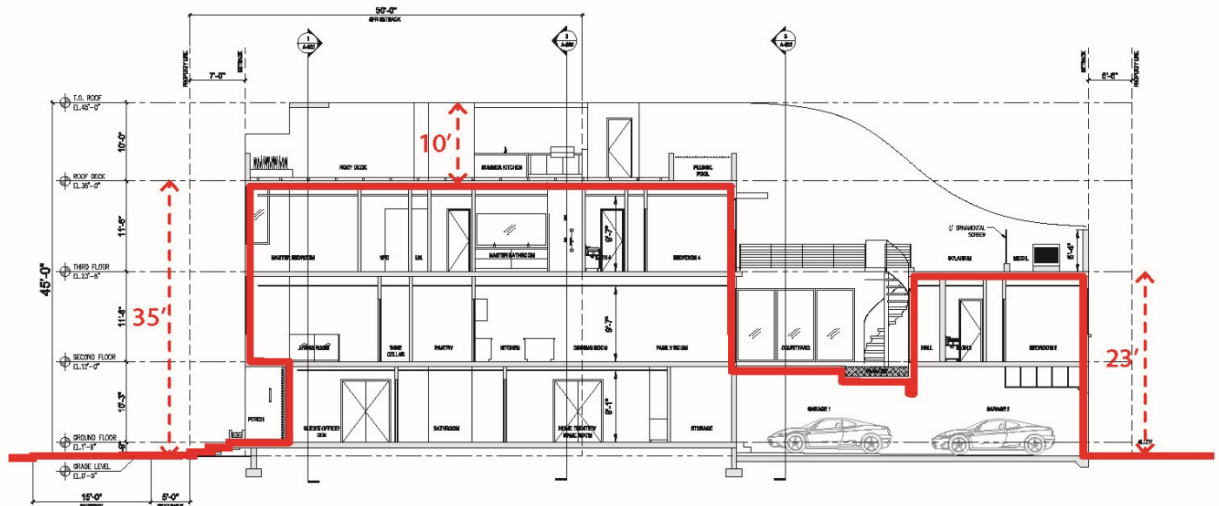
Article 5, Section 5-603, Paragraph C, indicates that “the architectural context of an area includes the height, scale, massing, separation between buildings, and style, in regard to how buildings and structures relate to each other within a specified area. Architectural context allows for differences in height, scale, massing, and separation between building and style, when such differences contribute to the overall harmony and character of the area.” We hope you all agree that our design will bring a fresh aesthetic to Almeria Avenue and that this project will establish itself as a significant contributor to the architectural richness of the City of Coral Gables and its tradition of architectural excellence and quality of life.

Scale & Massing:

The project is designed in the typical row house building typology oriented towards the street, with their primary pedestrian entrance facing the street, and off street parking accessed from the rear of the property through the alley. It also adopts the scale and design rhythm that has been already established in the neighborhood and surrounding areas by other townhouse projects, such as Almeria Row.



Existing neighboring Almeria Row Townhouses (located west of project site).



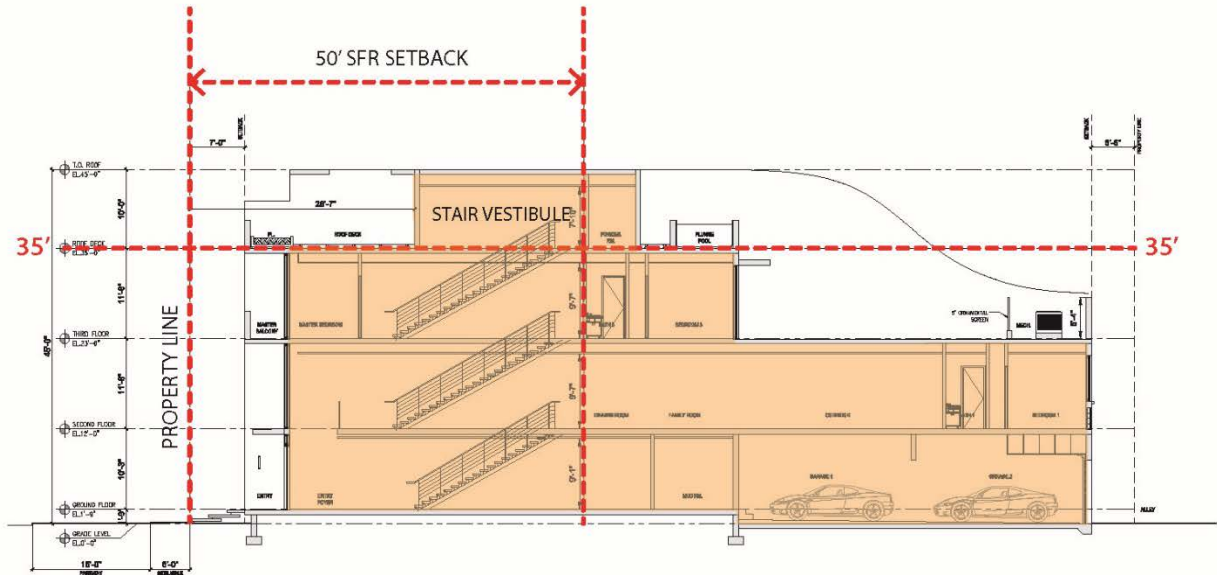
New proposed 625 Almeria Townhouses.

The sections above show how both projects follow typical row house typology in terms of orientation and space distribution, with the addition of an interior courtyard on the main living space.

Height:

The height of our townhouse project complies with the zoning guidelines, which states that there must be a 35' height limitation within 50' of adjacent SFR property as measured from MFSA (front) property lines

As allowed by zoning guidelines, the only element which exceeds the 35' height limitation is the stairs/elevator vestibule. (See section below)



Separation:

Following zoning guidelines and traditional townhouse/row house architecture, our project has no setbacks on the interior or side property lines.

Style:

Our design strategy of making a contrasting project of a more individualistic aesthetic nature is rooted on the notion that Coral Gables is a city of CONTRASTS. While homogeneity or unity of the architecture sometimes is important, in the case of Coral Gables, it has been the combination of historic layers and parts that contributes significance. Even though at its beginning, the architecture of Coral Gables was primarily of Mediterranean revival, in 1926 George Merrick came up with an ambitious plan to build fourteen villages from different international regions, to bring more architectural variety into the city.

The project aimed to showcase the architectural styles of China, France, Italy, Africa, etc... Seven of the themed villages were built, scattered throughout the Gables' Riviera Section.



French Normandy Village



Chinese Village



French Country Village

These themed villages are not the only example of the different architecture in Coral Gables. Examples of various architectural styles can be seen from one neighborhood to the other.



Le Jeune Rd, facing Southwest



Sevilla Ave, facing Southwest



Ponce De Leon Blvd, H. George Fink Offices



Alhambra Plaza, facing West



Valencia Ave, facing East



Aragon Ave, facing West

We are certain that 625 Almeria Townhouses will add a rich new layer to the neighborhood and play a role in creating the heritage of the future.

Cordially,

Borges + Associates Architects:

Reinaldo Borges, AIA, NCARB
Principal