

CORAL GABLES HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 15, 2007, 4:00 p.m.

City Commission Chambers

405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida

MEMBERS:	A	M	J	J	A#	A	S	O	N	D#	D	J	F	M	APPOINTED BY:
Gay Bondurant	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	Mayor Donald D. Slesnick, II
Ernesto Santos	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	Vice Mayor Maria Anderson
Edmund Parnes	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	E	P	P	P	P	E	P	Comm. Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr.
Catherine Stewart*				P	E	P	E	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	Comm. William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
John Fullerton	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	P	E	Comm. Wayne "Chip" Withers
Michael Beeman	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	Historic Preservation Board
Joyce Meyers	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	E	City Manager David Brown
Lisa Bennett	P	P	P	P	E	E	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	City Commission
Shirley Maroon	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	City Commission

STAFF:

Kara N. Kautz, Historic Preservation Officer

Simone Chin, Historic Preservation Administrator

Rodney Carbonell, Historical Resources Department

Betty Perez, Historical Resources Department

A = Absent

P = Present

E = Excused

*** = New Member**

= Special Meeting

GUESTS: Lourdes Alfonsin-Ruiz, Assistant City Attorney; Zeke Guilford, Ramon Collado, Eduardo Castineira, Peter Kiliddjian, Luis Benitez, T&S Roofing representative, Eloisa Morales, Bruce Calder, Randy Nyl, Norma Vallejo, Mercedes Gomez, Keith Brooking, Julie Hodge, Michael Saenz, Alan Krischer, Jaquelin Robertson, Joseph Goldstein, Jim Tolpin, Robert Fine

RECORDING SECRETARY: Nancy C. Morgan, Coral Gables Services, Inc.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Gay Bondurant at 4:04 p.m. A quorum was present.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT and DISCLOSURE OF CONTEXT:

Ms. Bondurant read for the record the statement regarding lobbyist registration and disclosure. She then stated that if any members of the board had any ex parte communication or contact regarding any cases being heard, it was necessary to disclose such communication or contact. Board members did not indicate that any such communication occurred.

MEETING ATTENDANCE:

Ms. Bennett made a motion to excuse the absence of Ms. Meyers and Mr. Fullerton. Mr. Santos seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

MINUTES: MEETING OF FEBRUARY 15, 2007:

Ms. Bennett made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of February 15, 2007. Mr. Beeman seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

DEFERRALS:

Ms. Kautz reported the following deferrals: Case Files LHD 2006-07 (10005 – 10015 Snapper Creek Road); LHD 2006-14 (42 Navarre Avenue); Historical Significance Determination (1317 Obispo Avenue – withdrawn); Historical Significance Determination (1700 Cortez Avenue).

SWEARING IN OF THE PUBLIC:

Nancy Morgan swore in members of the audience who planned to testify during the meeting.

SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS:

CASE FILE COA (SP) 2007-01: An application for the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the property at 1125 North Greenway Drive, non-contributing structure within the “Country Club of Coral Gables Historic District”, legally described as Lots 18 and 19, Block 15, of Corrected Plat of Coral Gables, Section “C”, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8, Page 26, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The applicant requested design approval for the construction of additions and alterations to the existing structure and the installation of at-grade improvements.

Via Powerpoint presentation, Ms. Kautz displayed photographs and relayed the property’s history, reporting the following:

- the project architect was present and would address proposed additions and alterations;
- Variances were not requested;
- The Board of Architects reviewed plans in December 2006m suggesting the proposed windows for the new bathroom addition be restudied, and that the floor plan reflect fenestration and surface treatments as depicted on the elevations.
- Staff also observed these drawing discrepancies and drafting errors;
- Specific materials have not yet been identified; a separate application for materials/colors will be required.

Ms. Kautz said staff recommended approval of the application with the above-stated conditions, after which she introduced architect Ramon Collado.

Mr. Collado continued the Powerpoint presentation as he described plans for the additions and alterations. At the conclusion of his presentation, Ms. Kautz stated that she neglected to state additional staff comments:

- On the submitted site plans, none of the drawings are dimensioned, notice of which was an oversight. Staff is not aware of any variances required by the plans; however, the back portion of the house on the site plan and the aerial photograph appears to be close to the property line and the dimensions need to be verified to make a variance determination. Mr. Collado responded that there were no variances required and stated the dimensions.
- The addition of the slump brick on the front of the house, which is a character-defining feature of the house. The staff report stated that it should be eliminated from the design of the front of the house as the only unauthentic feature; however, Ms. Kautz deferred to Board consideration and determination. Mr. Collado stated his reason for including the slump brick.

Board members engaged in discussion with Mr. Collado and Ms. Kautz about the horizontal railings, the slump brick, the design element shown on the drawings, the projection on the back patio terrace, the proportionality of the terrace roof to the rest of the house, overall roof proportion and the new garage addition.

Dr. Parnes made a motion to have the applicant restudy the design, to incorporate the Board of Architects’ comments and bring the application back to the Board next month. Mr. Santos seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ms. Bennett, Ms. Maroon, Dr. Parnes, Mr. Santos, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Beeman, Ms. Bondurant. Nays: None.

CASE FILE COA (SP) 2007-03: An application for the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the property at 1408 Obispo Avenue, a local historic landmark, legally described as the East 25 feet of Lot 6 and all of Lot 7, in Block 17, of Coral Gables Section "E", according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8, at Page 13 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County Florida. The applicant requested design approval for the replacement of the existing auxiliary structure and the installation of at-grade improvements.

Ms. Chin presented the property history as she conducted a Powerpoint presentation featuring current and historic photographs. She explained the proposal, and added that staff identified the presence of coordination discrepancies in the drawings, which will have to be fixed, and is recommending approval of the application. Variances are not requested.

Architect Peter Kiliddjian addressed the Board, describing the proposed plans and reviewing the drawings. He introduced owner Luis Benitez. Mr. Benitez advised that the existing structure was deteriorating badly, and stated his aim to replicate the historic structure as much as possible.

Dr. Parnes and Mr. Benitez engaged in a brief exchange related to the garage and storage areas, and Mr. Santos verified the type of doors being proposed.

Mr. Santos made a motion to approve the application. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ms. Maroon, Dr. Parnes, Mr. Santos, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Beeman, Ms. Bennett, Ms. Bondurant. Nays: None.

CASE FILE COA (SP) 2007-04: An application for the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the property at 513 Majorca Avenue, a local historic landmark, legally described as Lots 9 and 10, Block 1 of Coral Gables Section "B", according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 5 at Page 111, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The applicant requested design approval for the placement of mechanical equipment on the site. A variance from the Coral Gables "Zoning Code" has been requested for setbacks.

Ms. Stewart recused herself from this application, stating that she worked in relation with the project architect (Axioma3, Inc., Eduardo Castineira).

With one less voting Board member, Ms. Kautz announced that the applicant had the option of deferring until a larger Board representation was present. The applicant opted to remain.

Ms. Kautz described the background of the property, showing pictures via Powerpoint and reminding the Board that the case came to the Board in 2003 for a Certificate of Appropriateness. She explained that the house was under construction at the present time and described the alterations. A variance is required for this application, she continued, and explained why the variance would be necessary if approval were given. Ms. Kautz pointed out the original location of the air conditioning unit, stating that it would have to be moved to serve the new addition, and explained why it was necessary to relocate the unit.

Regarding a hardship issue, Ms. Kautz said that staff acknowledged a hardship in terms of having to move the air conditioning unit from its current location. Staff explained to the applicant at the outset that a request for variance required a demonstrable hardship. However, she continued, moving the air conditioning to the side setback is a hardship brought on by the design of the house, not anything special or exclusive to this site. Staff felt, she said, that other locations would serve the purpose without a variance, and described alternative locations that would not require a variance. Ms. Kautz concluded by stating that the applicant, architect, contractor and attorney were present to address the Board.

Attorney Robert Fine identified himself as the owners' (James Tolpin and Mercedes Gomez) representative, and introduced the owners and the contractor, Bruce Calder. He stated their purpose was to seek a Special Certificate of Appropriateness to relocate the air conditioner from where it was previously approved and to request a variance for the relocation of the air conditioning unit.

Mr. Fine reviewed the facts about the property, and explained his justification for the requested variance, stating that he disagreed with staff's recommendation that the variance be denied, stating that staff was incorrect when saying that the owner created the situation because he said there were choices the owner could make if the property were not historic and didn't require the variance.

For the record, Mr. Fine read a letter from Lawrence and Suzanne Neves, owners of 505 Majorca Avenue, stating that they did not object to placement of the air conditioning unit along the eastern side of applicants' new addition at the place requested in the variance application.

Mr. Fine reviewed staff's list of criteria for the authorization of variances, addressed each of the seven and disagreed with staff's conclusion that the necessary criteria did not apply. He summarized the applicants' variance hardship request and appealed to the Board to grant the variance.

Ms. Bondurant invited other audience comments. Homeowner Mercedes Gomez explained areas of the design plans, particularly as they related to the location of the pool and air conditioning unit. At the conclusion of her remarks, Ms. Bondurant asked if other members of the audience wished to speak. Hearing no requests to do so, she closed the public hearing for this application and called for Board comments.

Mr. Santos and Ms. Bennett clarified a few design issues with Ms. Gomez.

Ms. Bennett made a motion to approve the application and the requested variance. Mr. Beeman seconded the motion.

**Roll Call: Ayes: Ms. Maroon, Dr. Parnes, Mr. Santos, Mr. Beeman, Ms. Bennett, Ms. Bondurant.
Nays: None. Recused: Ms. Stewart.**

STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS:

CASE FILE COA (SP) 2007-111: An application for the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the property at 737 North Greenway Drive, contributing structure within the "Country Club of Coral Gables Historic District", legally described as Lots 27 and 28, Block 23, Coral Gables Section "B", according to the Plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 5 at Page 111 of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida. The applicant requested design approval for the installation of a new roof using "S" tiles.

Ms. Kautz conducted a Powerpoint presentation as she reviewed the property's history and displayed photographs. She concluded her brief presentation by stating that a sample of the tile was available for review, and the roofing representative was present to address the Board.

The representative of T&S Roofing Systems, Inc. explained that the homeowner wanted an S tile for two reasons: the color was similar to the existing tile and she wanted an interlocking tile for its strength properties.

Homeowner Eloisa Morales addressed the Board, stating that she had no choice but to replace the entire roof. She showed a photograph of a property with an S tile at 1141 North Greenway Drive, as she explained her reason for wanting approval of S tile.

At the conclusion of her presentation, Ms. Bondurant invited other members of the audience to speak. As there were no requests to speak, she closed the public hearing.

Ms. Bennett commented that the roof problems could be due to the age of the roof, rather than the type of tile used. She expressed a preference for restoring the true barrel tile to the home.

Ms. Bondurant mentioned the purpose of the underlayment treatment of the roof, and discussed requirements to preserve original Cuban tiles.

Dr. Parnes also pointed out that the law required the costly preservation of original Cuban tiles, and urged the applicant to reconsider her application.

Ms. Bondurant, Ms. Kautz, Ms. Maroon, the roofing representative and Ms. Morales discussed various aspects of the S tile.

Ms. Stewart made a motion to deny the application, to request replacement with authentic barrel tile and a reminder to salvage all removed tiles. Dr. Parnes seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Dr. Parnes, Mr. Santos, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Beeman, Ms. Bennett, Ms. Maroon, Ms. Bondurant. Nays: None.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE DETERMINATIONS:

111 Salamanca Avenue, legally described as Lots 10 and 11, and the East 30 feet of Lot 12, Block 29, Douglas Section of Coral Gables, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 25, at Page 69, of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida.

Ms. Kautz referenced the memorandum received by the Board, advising that on February 24, 2005, a letter was issued stating that the property met the minimum eligibility criteria for designation as a local historic landmark. Ms. Kautz reviewed the property's history, stated that alternations made to it were minimal and displayed photographs as she mentioned research conducted by Janus. Ms. Kautz concluded her presentation by stating that the building met the following criteria: historical/cultural significance and architectural significance. She stated that the property was an excellent example of an early Coral Gables courtyard apartment building built in the Mediterranean Revival style.

Attorney Zeke Guilford, representing Michael Saenz, property owner, addressed the Board, stating that the property clearly met the minimum standards for designation and he realized that the Board would direct staff to begin the documentation for designation. He said his next step was to prepare documentation demonstrating that the designation would create economic undue hardship on the owner.

Ms. Kautz entered into the record two letters received from neighbors of 111 Salamanca from 123 Salamanca (in opposition to the application to demolish the building).

Ms. Bondurant asked if any member of the public wanted to add any information. Hearing no requests to speak, she closed the public hearing and called for Board comments.

Ms. Bennett made a motion to direct staff to prepare a designation report and issue the historical significance determination letter. Ms. Maroon seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Mr. Santos, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Beeman, Ms. Bennett, Ms. Maroon, Dr. Parnes, Ms. Bondurant. Nays: None.

20 Casuarina Concourse, Lots 30 and 31, Block A of Coral Gables Estates Number 2, according to the Plat thereof, recorded in Plat Book 60 at Page 37 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

As a Powerpoint presentation was conducted, Ms. Kautz discussed the unique property designed by Architect John Volk (owned by George and Ruth Wackenhut), and stated that a person would speak about the building after her presentation. She called attention to documentation included within the Board packets, including a biography of Mr. Wackenhut, photographs of the property as received by staff, a memorandum from Dr. Paul George to the attorney at Holland & Knight regarding the property and his assessment, the resumes of Dr. George and Jaque Robertson.

She pointed out that normally a property would need to achieve the 50-year benchmark and achieved “exceptional importance” status as stated by the National Park Service, arbiters of the National Register of Historic Places. During the presentation, she reviewed the history of the property and its owner, concluding that the property met the minimum criteria for historical, cultural, architectural and aesthetic significance, and that it had achieved exceptional importance within the last 50 years. She stated that staff would like the opportunity to continue its research and prepare a designation report for the Board’s review. Ms. Kautz stated that several people were present to speak, including experts representing the City. Ms. Bennett verified that staff was only asking the Board to prepare a designation report.

Zeke Guilford explained he was present with Alan Krischer and Joseph Goldstein, all of whom represent Casurina 20 LLC, the property owner. He asked the Board to remember that the permit for the property was pulled in 1968 and a Certificate of Occupancy was issued in 1974, stating that the property did not meet the minimum threshold of 50 years. Mr. Guilford pointed out that the Board would hear from Jaque Robertson, Architect; Dr. Paul George, who would speak about Mr. Wackenhut; and from Attorney Alan Krischer.

Mr. Robertson spoke about his qualifications as a practicing architect, town planner, urban designer, educator, Dean of Architecture at the University of Virginia for eight years, and currently a professor at Yale University. He stated that he was very familiar with historic landmark issues. Regarding the Wackenhut property, he reviewed it, understood its history and how it was designed. After discussing various aspects of the building, he concluded that it was not a significant piece of architecture, and found nearly nothing that qualified the property as a historic landmark, nor, he stated, was it an exceptional property. At Mr. Guilford’s urging, Mr. Robertson explained that he became involved with the property when asked by the owner to visit the property and advise him about making the property into a home. Mr. Robertson advised the owner that the structure, which was very confusing, was not worth the effort it would take to make it into a home living space with practical requirements and sensible, organized areas.

Ms. Stewart asked Mr. Robertson why, considering his opinion about the property, he didn’t advise the present owner not to buy the property. Mr. Robertson said he saw the house after it was purchased. Mr. Guilford said the house was purchased in 2003, after it was on the market for eight years.

Dr. Paul George echoed the thoughts of Mr. Robertson, reiterating that the property was too young for historic designation. He said that to compensate, it needed to be an extraordinary piece of architecture, and opined that it was not. He discussed the research he conducted on the property and its original owners, concluding that the Wackenhuts did not have a significant role in the community.

Mr. Krischer, Holland & Knight, echoed the testimony of Mr. Robertson and Dr. George, stating it was an unprecedented property to be brought for historic designation. He summarized the previous testimony, concluding that his primary point was that the property was less than 50 years old and was of no exceptional importance.

Ellen Uguccioni, representing the City, stated that she was not paid as an expert testifier and reviewed her background and qualifications. She termed the 50-year rule for historic designation as a benchmark/guideline, concluding that Mr. Wackenhut amassed several achievements and that the property was extraordinarily significant.

Mr. Krischer stated that the 50-year rule was a strict rule, stated that designation under these circumstances was

limited to exceptional buildings and said this building was not an iconic building.

With no further requests to speak, Ms. Bondurant closed the public hearing.

In response to Ms. Maroon's question, Ms. Kautz stated that the reason the property was brought before the Board was that it was threatened for demolition.

Ms. Bennett reminded the Board that the purpose of the discussion was only to determine whether or not the property met minimum eligibility to warrant further research. She expressed interest in learning more about the architect (John Volk), and opined that the issue was worthy of additional effort.

Ms. Stewart stated that the Wackenhut family was one of Miami's well-known families, and that the Wackenhut Company was a worldwide organization.

Ms. Kautz rebutted Dr. George's comment stating that the Wackenhuts stood for little in Coral Gables history. She said the eligibility criteria made no reference to the importance of individuals within the City of Coral Gables, though their home was located in the City, but to the community.

Ms. Bondurant spoke about Mrs. Winchester (gun family), who built a very unique house over a 30-year period, and relayed the story as an example of a historic and very unique property that is preserved. The story led to discussion focused on the Wackenhut house as an anomaly, during which Ms. Kautz pointed out the City's thematic villages as beyond the norm, particularly the Chinese Village. Ms. Bennett also talked about the Landmark Trust in the United Kingdom that saves buildings known as "follies," never intended to be viewed as standard residential homes. Mr. Beeman recalled that the Wackenhut property was known in days gone past as the "Wackenhut Folly" or "Wackenhut Castle." He questioned what would become of the property.

Dr. Parnes made a motion to direct staff to move forward with the historic designation report. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Mr. Santos, Ms. Stewart, Ms. Bennett, Dr. Parnes, Ms. Maroon, Ms. Bondurant. Nays: Mr. Beeman.

Dr. Parnes left the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

3603 Granada Boulevard/Paint Color:

Ms. Kautz reported that this application was brought to the Board because the paint color was not an approved color. The application was presented to the Board of Architects earlier today and received approval. As the Board reviewed the two color samples, Ms. Kautz described where they would be applied on the residence.

Ms. Maroon made a motion to approve the paint colors as presented. Ms. Stewart seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ms. Stewart, Mr. Beeman, Ms. Bennett, Ms. Maroon, Mr. Santos, Ms. Bondurant. Nays: None.

BOARD ITEMS/CITY COMMISSION UPDATE:

Ms. Kautz reported that the historic preservation plaque item would be presented to the City Commission at its next meeting, including the motion for the City to fund 90% of the cost and the Historic Trust Fund to contribute 10% of the cost.

Metal Roof Issue:

Ms. Kautz reported that the City Commission passed a motion to address metal roofs at its last meeting. At that time, the recommendation of the City Manager was to gather additional information from homeowners about the issue and to form a committee to conduct community meetings, gain input and make a recommendation. The committee will be comprised of members of the Board of Architects, the Planning and Zoning Board and the Historic Preservation Board. Three community meetings will be held: April 18th and 25th and May 2nd. Ms. Kautz said that two members of the Board would be part of that committee. It was agreed that Joyce Meyers would be an ideal participant, if she is able to serve. Mr. Santos volunteered to serve and Ms. Bondurant agreed to be the alternate. Ed Weller will be the committee liaison to facilitate the process.

Update on 737 Alhambra Circle:

Assistant City Attorney Lourdes Alfonsin-Ruiz reported the continuing lack of responsible involvement by the property owner and his representatives in completing the work on this residence. She described ongoing efforts, to date unsuccessful, to achieve compliance and forward movement. At present, the deadline for completion of the exterior work is April 1st. Ms. Alfonsin Ruiz scheduled an emergency meeting with City staff tomorrow at 10:30 a.m. that will include the City Engineer, Code Enforcement and Permitting officials, Kara Kautz and herself to attempt to accommodate the homeowner one last time. She said, however, that the engineering plans are incomplete, were rejected and the homeowner's engineering representative has not made an attempt to speak with anyone about it. Board members commented that none of the benchmarks were met and, via their observations, no work was done to the house.

Ms. Alfonsin-Ruiz stated that upon breach of the settlement agreement, the City Commission requested that the City file suit for foreclosure.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Homes in Partial Demolition:

Ms. Bennett expressed concern about undesignated houses that are partially demolished as an onset of new construction, though it appears they are not being monitored for permit approvals to avoid losing historically significant buildings.

Ms. Alfonsin-Ruiz stated that she would research the issue to determine if owners are reaching "beyond the permitted work" to demolish additional areas of these homes. Ms. Kautz mentioned two such houses on Alhambra Circle.

Ms. Stewart suggested working with the Association of Realtors to develop continuing education on these issues for real estate salespeople and brokers (provide Continuing Education Units (CEUs)). Ms. Kautz said that she and the City of Miami's Historic Preservation Officer would be willing to conduct joint sessions.

OLD BUSINESS:

1044 Coral Way:

Ms. Kautz said that this property was demolished. Regarding salvaged materials, when the City's Structural Engineer visited the site, it was determined that the only salvageable material was the roof tiles.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Beeman made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Stewart seconded the motion, which passed by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kara N. Kautz
Historic Preservation Officer and Secretary to the Board