

**Additional Emails & Letters received in support of  
the designation of 649 Palmarito Court**



December 14, 2020

Ms. Kara Kautz  
City of Coral Gables  
2327 Salzedo Street  
Coral Gables, FL 33134

Re: Designation of 649 Palmarito Court

Dear Ms. Kautz:

Dade Heritage Trust has advocated for the preservation, restoration and use of historic places in Miami-Dade County for 44 years. We continue that mission today as we write to urge the City of Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board to support the recommendation of Historic Preservation staff to honor 649 Palmarito Court with historic designation.

This is one of the most comprehensive designation reports I have ever seen and clearly justifies designation of this stately home.

Coral Gables' grand historic residences remain as symbols of the City's regard for architectural integrity and variety, and they continue to reflect the stories of the City Beautiful's historic past. 649 Palmarito stands as a fine example of an early Coral Gables Neoclassical home worthy of protection and preservation.

Sincerely,

*Dolly MacIntyre*

Dolly MacIntyre  
Advocacy Committee Chair

**Kautz, Kara**

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**From:** mervol@aol.com  
**Sent:** Monday, December 14, 2020 9:09 AM  
**To:** Kautz, Kara  
**Cc:** Urquia, Billy  
**Subject:** historic designation of 649 Palmarito Court

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TO THE MEMBERS OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD:

Following the recommendation of the City's preservation staff to grant historical designation to 649 Palmarito Court, I wish to add my support of such designation.

The 1940 home in question is a fine example of the Colonial Revival style and is as much a part of our architectural heritage as homes built in the Mediterranean Revival or Art Moderne styles, both of which are enshrined in the cultural fabric of our City.

As I am unable to attend the December 16th meeting, I respectfully submit this request in absentia.

Bruce Fitzgerald  
Coral Gables

**Kautz, Kara**

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**From:** Michelle Dunaj <DunajM@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 14, 2020 8:48 AM  
**To:** Kautz, Kara; Urquia, Billy  
**Subject:** SUPPORT for City Preservation Staff's recommendation to designate 649 Palmarito Court a local historic landmark.

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Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Board,

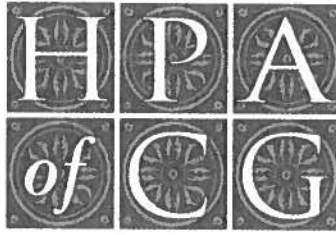
Thank you for your work in preserving our historical heritage.

I cannot attend the December 16th meeting, but want to express my support for the City preservation staff's recommendation that historical designation be granted for the home at **649 Palmarito Court**.

The City's recommendation and detailed report establishes that 3 out of the 5 ordinance criteria have been met. Therefore pursuant to Coral Gables Zoning Code, Article 3, Section 3-1102, local historic designation must be approved.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Best regards,  
Michelle Dunaj  
1224 Castile Avenue



HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
ASSOCIATION OF CORAL GABLES

December 12, 2020

Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board Meeting December 16, 2020

Att: Historic Preservation Board

**Re: 649 Palmarito Court, Coral Gables #2020-008**

On behalf of the Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables, please accept this letter in support of the historic designation for **649 Palmarito Court** – one of the earliest Neoclassical-style homes to be designed by Coral Gables dream team—architect William Shanklin, Jr. [whose 4 other Coral Gables residences have garnered historical status] and owner/builder George E. Batcheller [who developed the Italian Village.] The construction in 1940 of this single-family home occurred during the New Deal era and it was amongst the first 700 homes built during 1936 and 1941. The style is indicative of the type of architecture of this time period as the City began to move away from its Mediterranean Revival foundation. The 80-year old home has retained its historical integrity. Its original owners made an impact in our community with passion and patriotism and their choice of architectural style reflected their lifestyle. The couple dedicated their lives to civic altruism throughout the 30s, 40s, and 50s. They were pillars [just like the firm upright columns in their stately home] of Coral Gables society and their Neoclassical home served as an emblem of their patriotic passion.

The Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables promotes the understanding and the importance of historic resources and their preservation in Coral Gables. We ask the Historic Preservation Board to accept the recommendation of the City's Preservation Office and approve the local landmark designation of **649 Palmarito Court**.

Sincerely,

Karella Martinez Carbonell, President Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables

**Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables**  
**Post Office Box 347944, Coral Gables, Florida 33234**  
**[info@historiccoralgables.org](mailto:info@historiccoralgables.org)**  
**[www.historiccoralgables.org](http://www.historiccoralgables.org)**

**Kautz, Kara**

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**From:** Connie Crowther <connie\_crowther@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 15, 2020 5:22 PM  
**To:** Kautz, Kara  
**Cc:** brett.gillis@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Neighbors' Support for 649 Palmarito Court Historic Designation

**CAUTION:** External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

**Subject:** Neighbors' Support for 649 Palmarito Court Historic Designation

We have read the information/report about our neighbors' home at 649 Palmarito Court being considered for designation as a local historic landmark at the Historic Preservation Board meeting on Wednesday, December 16, at 4 p.m. We enjoyed reading your report, especially since we have lived across the street from this property since 1977 and have known Minnie Simpson and all the subsequent owners of this historic home.

We are pleased to offer our full support for this designation for Ed Zaharawicz's and Cecelia Danger's beautiful stately home, built in 1940. Every historically designated home adds to the history and posterity of the City Beautiful. This home is a prime example of the mid-20th Century style of homes built in Coral Gables, with many of the fine features of such a home and few substantive changes made over the past 80 years.

We had our 1924 home at 3612 Palmarito Street, located directly across Palmarito Street from 649 Palmarito Court, designated as a local historic landmark in 1996, and Michael (Tim) Crowther is a former member of the Historic Preservation Board, so we understand the rigor of this process.

We ask that you Approve the Historic Designation of 649 Palmarito Court, based on its historic, cultural and architectural significance -- which is also your recommendation as the interim historic preservation officer.

Please feel free to call on us if you need more information.

Sincerely,  
**Tim and Connie Crowther**  
**3612 Palmarito Street**

## Kautz, Kara

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**From:** Joyce Nelson <grovites@mac.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 15, 2020 12:46 PM  
**To:** Kautz, Kara; burquia@coralgales.com  
**Subject:** designate 649 Palmarito Court--a 1940 Shanklin-designed Neoclassical Style residence--a local historic landmark

**Importance:** High

**CAUTION:** External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Board,  
I am unable to attend the December 16th meeting.  
However, I wish to express my support in granting historical designation to **649 Palmarito Court** as recommended by the city's preservation staff. Its original owners made an impact in our community with passion and patriotism and their choice of architectural style reflected their lifestyle. Their home stands today as one of the earliest Neoclassical Style homes built in Coral Gables designed by William Shanklin, Jr. an architect whose four other residences have garnered historical status in Coral Gables. Please preserve our heritage.  
Thank you.

Cheers 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

Joyce E. Nelson

305.505.1147



"Be good, be giving, be a good citizen,  
and be a good friend...therein all honor lies."

**Kautz, Kara**

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**From:** Karelia Carbonell <karelia.m.carbonell@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 15, 2020 12:34 PM  
**To:** Kautz, Kara; Urquia, Billy; Albert Menendez; Albert Menendez  
**Subject:** OPINION Letter IN support OF 649 PALMARITO CT  
**Attachments:** OPINION\_Do Not Let History Be Gone With The Wind – Gables Insider.pdf

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KARA & ALBERT,  
Attached is the OPINION PIECE in support for 649 PALMARITO COURT.

**Please forward to the Historic Preservation Board**

BEST,  
KARELIA





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## OPINION: Do Not Let History Be Gone With The Wind

© DECEMBER 14, 2020 1 COMMENT



By: *Dr. Karelia Martinez Carbonell*

On Wednesday, the Historic Preservation Board will be faced with an important decision: preserve or lose the resource to demolition. The Board will consider local historic designation for 649 Palmarito Court per recommendation of the Coral Gables' Historic Resources Department. Staff has produced an in-depth 34-page designation report in support of preserving the property.

Under the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, a property may be considered significant if it can be associated with persons or events which have made an impact on our community, or if the property is deemed to possess architectural distinction. This home is significant on both counts. But for this piece, the focus will be on "persons who have



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Nick Waddell, President  
Pinecrest, FL 33156

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made an impact in our community,” and they are George and Minnie, the original owners of 649 Palmarito Court.

The home on Palmarito is an early example of Neoclassical-architecture [also colloquially known as Georgian or Colonial Revival] in Coral Gables. A most patriotic of styles, a 1988 Miami Herald real estate ad refers to 649 Palmarito Court as a “1939 stately Georgian home with giant oaks.” And it is fitting to refer to the home as a “Georgian” since its original owners selected their new home to reflect their Georgian and Colonial heritage.

So who were the original owners and why are they important to the Coral Gables community? They were somewhat of a celebrity couple. One had the distinction of being the youngest mayor of his town and the other a direct descendant of one of our nation’s founders.

George and Minnie Simpson brought their Southern charm, hospitality, and pride of heritage with them to Coral Gables and settled in the Palmarito neighborhood. Their choice of architectural style reflected a lifestyle full of tradition and patriotism. In late 1939, they selected for their new residence a Neoclassical/Colonial Revival style construction designed by the well-known architect William Shanklin, Jr., a southerner from Mississippi. The builder was northerner George E. Batcheller, who was a significant developer highly admired by George Merrick.

And so began the home life of George and Minnie at 649 Palmarito Court. A life dedicated to civic altruism. Their home, always a place of welcome, was host to numerous events and social affairs for state dignitaries and members of local club chapters. George and Minnie were pillars of their society.

Back in Minnie’s day, women were known by their husband’s name. Therefore, Minnie Wolcott Simpson was officially referred to as Mrs. George C. Simpson in the many society pages. But that was fine with Minnie. She was a traditionalist and proud of her ancestry. She could trace back her heritage directly to “Oliver Wolcott” one of the original signers of the Declaration of Independence. And she lived to honor that heritage. She dedicated her time to local and state leadership in the D.A.R. [Daughters of American Revolution] Everglades Chapter [Coral Gables], rising to Florida Regent in 1940. She chaired local and state affairs in the DAR including St. Distaff Day [an old tradition inherited from Colonial times of sewing for charity], she fundraised for the DAR Museum in DC, and led the Conservation and Thrift committee.

**CORAL GABLES WEATHER**

CORAL GABLES

77°  
partly cloudy

7:00am \* 5:32pm  
EST

feels like: 77°  
wind: 3mph sse  
humidity: 77%  
pressure: 30.02\*hg  
uv index: 5

wed	thu	fri
82/68°F	82/54°F	73/63°F

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Celebrating American heritage was Minnie's life-long commitment. This was reflected in her other volunteer work for the D.F.P.A. [Daughters of Founders and Patriots]. For the 200th anniversary of the birth of George Washington, Minnie Simpson, representing the Everglades Chapter of DAR, dedicated a tree to the first president's memory at Old Fort Dallas on the Miami River. The building was saved from demolition by the DAR and it has served as its headquarters since 1929.

Aside from her commitment to American history, Minnie was also involved with local clubs. She was active in the Coral Gables Garden Club, serving as president from 1938-1940; Coral Gables Women's Club; Ladies of the Civitan Club; elected officer at University Baptist Church; and a supporter of the Opera Guild of Greater Miami. After a full charitable and patriotic life, Minnie passed away in 1987 at age 89.

But Minnie Simpson was not the only civic-minded leader in the family. There was George too.

George C. Simpson was an attorney who practiced law in Miami since 1923. He was with the firm Hudson & Cason for eight years and later formed his own practice. Originally from Talbotton, Georgia, he was elected mayor of that town at the young age of 27.

During his lifetime, he dedicated his personal time to civic activities. George served as past president of the Miami Civitan Club; Vice President of the Riviera Country Club; He was selected as a Governor's Colonel under Governor Fuller Warren; and nominated as Commander of the Harvey Seeds Post, American Legion. George passed away in 1970 at the young age of 76.

The Simpsons lived a full lifetime in their home from 1940 to 1988. Places matter. People matter.

The call to the Historic Preservation Board is to accept the recommendation of the city's preservation staff and grant historical significance to 649 Palmarito Court, a residence designed by William Shanklin, Jr., an architect whose four other residences have garnered historical status in Coral Gables.

As presented in the information above, George and Minnie made an impact in their community. They were patriots and their home stands today as one of the earliest examples of Neoclassical homes built in Coral Gables. Their home's traditional style reflected their traditional lifestyle.

Preserve Palmarito. Do not let history be gone with the wind.

Below is the link to the 34-page staff designation report.

1\_Report\_-\_LHD\_2020-008\_-\_649\_Palmarito\_Court.pdf

To support staff’s recommendation of 649 Palmarito Court, please send your comments to the attention of the Historic Preservation Board in care of Kara Kautz and Billy Urquia [kkautz@coralgables.com; burquia@coralgables.com]

[Recognition goes to Jorge Zaldivar board member of the Miami Pioneers & Natives of Dade for the research used in this article.]

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# 1 thought on “OPINION: Do Not Let History Be Gone With The Wind”

**Harriet Gershman** says:

*December 15, 2020 at 7:40 am*

Preserve the history of Coral Gables

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Gables Insider is an independent online news outlet that seeks to offer residents a regular insight into City Hall and community related matters. Gables Insider seeks to promote the best that Coral Gables has to offer and occasionally sitting down with elected officials and community leaders to educate on things that make Coral Gables a premier city to live, work, learn, play and visit.

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**Kautz, Kara**

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**From:** Patty Harris <pattykak@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 15, 2020 12:15 PM  
**To:** Kautz, Kara; Urquia, Billy  
**Subject:** 649 Palmarito Court

**CAUTION:** External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Re: 649 Palmarito Court

Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Board,

The Villagers is Miami-Dade's oldest historic preservation organization, having started its work in 1966 at the Douglas Entrance. We have assisted in the restoration of at least 75 historic sites, many in Coral Gables.

In keeping with our mission of saving special places, we are writing today to urge you to historically designate 649 Palmarito Court, the subject of one of the most comprehensive designation reports ever written in Coral Gables. Clearly, your professional staff thinks it is worthy of designation and so do The Villagers.

As one of the earliest Neoclassical Style homes built in Coral Gables, the prospect of losing this important residence is, to say the least, very disturbing. Please do not let this happen.

Sincerely,

Marie Vacca

President

The Villagers

**Kautz, Kara**

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**From:** Sandra Scidmore <sscidmore@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 15, 2020 11:27 AM  
**To:** Kautz, Kara; Urquia, Billy  
**Subject:** 12/16/20 Historic Preservation Board Meeting - I SUPPORT HISTORICAL DESIGNATION OF 649 PALMARITO COURT

**CAUTION:** External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Board,

I am unable to attend the December 16th meeting.

However, I wish to express my support in granting historical designation to **649 Palmarito Court** as recommended by the city's preservation staff. Its original owners made an impact in our community with passion and patriotism and their choice of architectural style reflected their lifestyle. Their home stands today as one of the earliest Neoclassical Style homes built in Coral Gables designed by William Shanklin, Jr. an architect whose four other residences have garnered historical status in Coral Gables. Please preserve our heritage.

Thank you.

**Sandra L. Scidmore**  
100 Lincoln Road, Apt. 423  
Miami Beach, Florida 33139  
786-566-0422 C  
[sscidmore@hotmail.com](mailto:sscidmore@hotmail.com)

**Kautz, Kara**

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**From:** Maria River Abella <mariariverabella@outlook.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 15, 2020 9:55 AM  
**To:** Kautz, Kara  
**Subject:** Fw: Palmarito house

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**From:** Maria River Abella <[mariariverabella@outlook.com](mailto:mariariverabella@outlook.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 15, 2020 9:08 AM  
**Subject:** Palmarito house

Good morning,

I am writing to you regarding the house on 649 Palmarito .  
The neoclassical style of

this house is part of what makes the city of Coral Gables unique. I agree the preservation board report of its historical importance, and that it should be tried to be preserve.

I thank you for your time and the opportunity to write to you.

CG Resident  
Maria Rivero  
333 University Dr  
Coral Gables, FL 33134



## Kautz, Kara

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**From:** Carlos Ariza <cariza1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 15, 2020 9:39 AM  
**To:** Kautz, Kara; Urquia, Billy  
**Subject:** Preserve 649 Palmarito Court

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To the Historic Preservation Board,

Please consider this a vote of support for preservation of 649 Palmarito Court from a concerned Gables resident.

Part of what makes Coral Gables unique is its historic heritage, reflected in the architecture of its residences. Tearing down a historic home, which happens to be one of the earliest examples of Neoclassical architecture in our city, is allowing our present short-term views prevail over the history of the city. History is not ours to destroy; we are shepherds of it, protecting it for our descendants.

The current owners of the home must have bought it because they appreciate the charm and history of our community. By tearing it down, they devalue our properties and chip away at the uniqueness of our city.

Thank you,

Carlos Ariza  
Coral Gables, FL

**Kautz, Kara**

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**From:** Armando E Hernandez-Rey <hernandezae@mac.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 15, 2020 5:08 AM  
**To:** Kautz, Kara  
**Subject:** Pal arito

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As at Gables homeowner, I agree and support that the 649 Palmarito home be recognized and designated a Historical home/treasure and not be allowed to be demolished.

**Armando E. Hernandez-Rey, MD, FACOG | Medical Director**  
Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility  
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contact@conceptionsflorida.com  
www.conceptionsflorida.com  
FIU-College of Medicine  
Assistant Professor, Division of Women's Health

www.facebook.com/hernandezreyivf  
www.twitter.com/hernandezreyivf

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**Kautz, Kara**

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**From:** Daniel Ciraldo <daniel@mdpl.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 14, 2020 9:22 PM  
**To:** Kautz, Kara  
**Subject:** 649 Palmarito Court letter

**CAUTION:** External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Board,

Miami Design Preservation League (MDPL) was founded in 1976 to preserve, protect, and promote the architectural, cultural, social, and environmental integrity of Miami Beach and the surrounding areas.

For the past 43 years, MDPL and the City of Miami Beach have welcomed over 150,000 visitors at over 80 events to celebrate Art Deco Weekend. Although Miami Beach may be primarily known for its Art Deco architecture, Miami Beach, like Coral Gables, has a diverse inventory of designated historic landmarks on its register. One noteworthy example is the Betsy Hotel on Ocean Drive that was designed with Colonial Revival and Neoclassical elements. The Betsy has been preserved despite being located in an area that is primarily known for its Art Deco and Streamline Moderne architecture. Different architectural styles and periods add valuable diversity to the historic fabric of cities like Coral Gables and help to tell the story of the community.

The Planning and Zoning Code of Coral Gables states that the purpose of historic designation is to preserve and protect historic structures or sites which serve as visible reminders of the history and cultural heritage of the city, region, state, or nation. 649 Palmarito Court serves this purpose and meets the criteria for designation.

As outlined in the detailed staff report, historic designation is not limited to one architectural style or age of a structure, and, even if a structure or site meets more than one criteria, only *one* of the criteria is necessary for designation. We encourage you to follow the recommendations of your professional staff and designate 649 Palmarito Court as a historic landmark.

Thank you,  
Daniel Ciraldo  
Executive Director  
Miami Design Preservation League

--

**Daniel Ciraldo**  
Executive Director at Miami Design  
Preservation League

**A** 1001 Ocean Drive, Miami Beach, FL,  
33139  
**P** W: 305-672-2014  
**E** [daniel@mdpl.org](mailto:daniel@mdpl.org)  
**W** [mdpl.org](http://mdpl.org)



**Kautz, Kara**

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**From:** Debra a. Incera <mrsdebster@bellsouth.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 14, 2020 8:09 PM  
**To:** Kautz, Kara  
**Subject:** Save the Palmarito Home

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

This beautiful neoclassical home is an example of what makes coral gables interesting and unique. How can we even think of demolishing it? If this one is allowed to be demolished, where will we stop? There are so many other homes in the Biltmore area in this style. I am so disappointed in the City's recent decisions and lack of respect for our preservation code. Please Save this Home!

Debra and Armando Incera  
917 Algaringo Ave.  
Coral Gables, FL 33134

Sent from my iPhone

## Kautz, Kara

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**From:** Annette Hogan <annettepatriciahogan@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 15, 2020 7:47 PM  
**To:** Kautz, Kara  
**Subject:** 649n Palmarito Court

**CAUTION:** External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Please do NOT demolish 649 Palmarito Court. It is a Neoclassical home that was built in 1940 when little construction was occurring in Coral Gables compared to the boom years of the 1920's. If Colonial and Neoclassical homes like this are not preserved, then the area particularly around the Biltmore (where many are located) could be changed forever.

It is my request as a Coral Gables resident that this home NOT be demolished BUT rather PRESERVED.

Thank you.

Annette P. Hogan  
(E) [annettepatriciahogan@gmail.com](mailto:annettepatriciahogan@gmail.com)  
(A) 1421 Columbus Blvd, Coral Gables, FL 33134  
(M) +1 305 496-6787

**Kautz, Kara**

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**From:** Douglas Wartzok <wartzok@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 16, 2020 7:29 AM  
**To:** Kautz, Kara; Urquia, Billy  
**Subject:** 649 Palmarito Court

**CAUTION:** External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

After extensive walking in Coral Gables, I have accumulated sufficient evidence that whatever new construction might replace this property it will be decided less inspiring than the present architecture. Let's preserve what we have.

Thank you.

Douglas Wartzok