



COA (SP) 2026-017  
May 21, 2026

**STAFF REPORT  
SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS  
FOR THE PROPERTY AT  
1008 ALHAMBRA CIRCLE  
A CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE WITHIN  
THE ALHAMBRA CIRCLE HISTORIC LANDMARK**

*Historical Resources &  
Cultural Arts*

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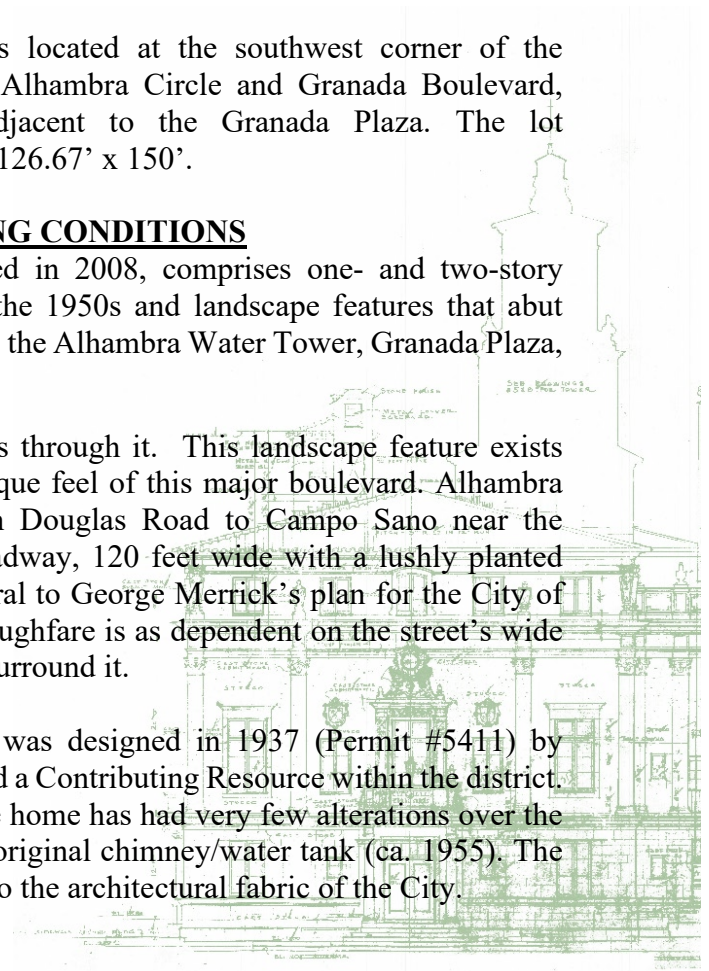
- Proposal:** The application requests design approval for additions and alterations to the residence and sitework.
- Architect:** Locus Architecture, Inc. (Nelson de Leon, AIA)
- Owner:** Alexander and Lindsay Volsky
- Legal Description:** Lot 9 and the North 45 Feet of Lot 10, Block 4, Coral Gables Section "C," according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8, at Page 26, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.
- Site Characteristics:** The property is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Alhambra Circle and Granada Boulevard, immediately adjacent to the Granada Plaza. The lot dimensions are 126.67' x 150'.

**BACKGROUND/EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The "Alhambra Circle Historic District," designated in 2008, comprises one- and two-story residential properties built between the 1920s and the 1950s and landscape features that abut Alhambra Circle. Also included within the district are the Alhambra Water Tower, Granada Plaza, and Alcazar Plaza.

The district is defined by the wide median that runs through it. This landscape feature exists nowhere else in the City and helps to create the unique feel of this major boulevard. Alhambra Circle is the City's longest roadway running from Douglas Road to Campo Sano near the University of Miami campus to the south. This roadway, 120 feet wide with a lushly planted generous swale, was purposefully planned and integral to George Merrick's plan for the City of Coral Gables. The experience of this important thoroughfare is as dependent on the street's wide median as it is on the architecture of the homes that surround it.

The single-family home at 1008 Alhambra Circle was designed in 1937 (Permit #5411) by architect William H. Merriam. The home is considered a Contributing Resource within the district. With the exception of one small addition in 1956, the home has had very few alterations over the years, the most significant being the removal of the original chimney/water tank (ca. 1955). The property retains its historic integrity and contributes to the architectural fabric of the City.



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**Figure 1: 1940s photo**



**Figures 2: Current photos, 2026**

### **PROPOSAL**

The application requests design approval for the construction of one-story and two-story additions (approx. 3,944 SF), alterations to the residence, and sitework.

### **SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION**

The following Standards have application in this matter:

2. *The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*
5. *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.*
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 scope of work contained in this application includes:

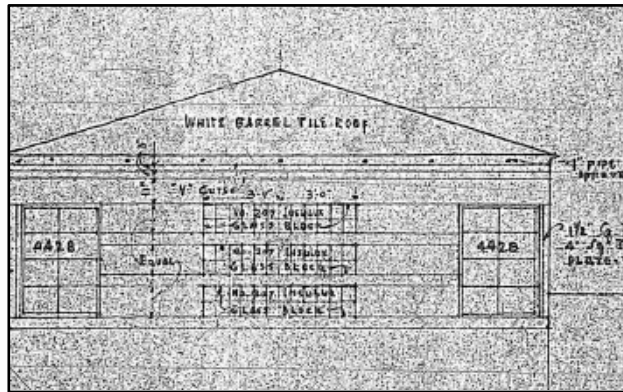
- Construction of a one-story addition to the southeast corner of the home consisting of a new kitchen and adjacent covered terrace. To accommodate the addition the shed roof of an existing original loggia (later enclosed with windows) will be removed and replaced with a flat and hipped (mansard) roof.
- Construction of a two-story addition to the southwest corner of the home. The proposed addition includes a mudroom, playroom, family room, gym, powder room and cabana bath, an elevator, and second staircase on the first floor. The second floor houses a laundry room, two bedrooms with en suite bathrooms, and a new master bathroom suite. The rear portion of the original garage (the original maid's room, bathroom, and laundry) will be demolished along with a one-story maid's room that was added in 1956 (Permit #14043) to the rear (south) of the garage.
- Construction of an approximately 125 SF one-story storage addition to the west of the existing garage.
- New impact-resistant windows and doors.
- Full interior remodeling.
- Sitework includes: the removal of the existing walkway and driveway, a new paver walkway and driveway/motor court, swimming pool and pool deck, generator, a 4'-0" masonry wall at the northeast corner of the property that ties into an existing wall at the east property line and drops down to 2'-0" in front of the historic home (see Sheet A-01.3). Note that the existing wall has a brick course cap that is not shown and is to remain.

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**Front (North) Elevation – Sheet A-05.0:**

At the front (north) elevation, the existing original steel casement windows are to be replaced with aluminum impact-resistant windows that match in type and style. On the second floor, a new window opening is proposed centered on the façade. The window is in the same location as three removed glass block ribbon windows that have been removed and blocked up (see Figures 3). An existing awning and railing at the front door will be removed. It is not indicated that the tiles at front entrance will be replaced, and no description of how the tiles will be patched. The garage door will be replaced with a door that more closely resembles the original permit drawings. The front door assembly (door, screen door, and carved doorway surround) are not noted and the door and screen are absent from the existing and demo elevations. It is believed that the screen and surround are original and are to remain. The original drawings note the front door was a “6 Lite Steel Door” although it is not drawn. The current door is a flush panel door with a single inset square window. Staff is not clear whether it is steel or wood and needs clarification on what is being proposed for the door.

Similarly, the round vents at the second-floor eaves (see Figure 1 and Figures 3) are original details and are to remain. They are shown in the existing elevation, but not the demo or proposed. They remain shown on the other proposed elevations, so this is believed to be a drafting error. Stucco score lines at the banks of windows on the east end of the house are not shown and are original to remain as well.



**Figures 3: Original glass block ribbons**

The two-story addition is visible behind the west side of the existing home. The addition is under a flat tile hip roof “to match existing.” Note that the existing roof is noted to remain. The roof ridge of the addition aligns with the height of the existing second-story roof ridge. The proposed windows around the additions are similar in proportion (slightly larger), but have fewer muntins to differentiate them from those on the original structure. The one-story storage addition, under a side-gable roof is visible to the west of the existing garage.

**Rear (South) Elevation – Sheet A-05.1:**

The rear elevation is largely new construction with the exception of the rounded living room at the east and a small visible portion of the two-story volume. The original shed-roof enclosed loggia will be extended to the south with a new covered terrace under a flat and hip (mansard) roof. A large opening framing the sliding French doors into the new kitchen is flanked by smaller open “windows.” The upper corners of each opening feature scallop details (see Board of Architects comment #3 below). This detail is typical around the additions. To the west, at the two-story portion of the existing home, the corner windows at the first floor are being removed and a pair of

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French doors installed centered on the window opening above. At the west end is the rear façade of the two-story addition. Stucco bands run around the addition under the windows as a continuous sill and under the roof eave at header height. The openings of the covered terrace have the same scalloped openings as the new one-story terrace to the east. The rear of the one-story storage addition is visible at the far west.

**West Elevation – Sheet A-05.2:**

At the west elevation, the one-story storage addition to the existing garage is visible and ties into the existing roof. To the south, the side elevation of the two-story addition is visible with windows spaced regularly across the facades. Proposed picket fences and gates at the front and rear of the home are visible as well.

**East Elevation – Sheet A-05.3:**

The new covered terrace under a flat and hip (mansard) roof is visible in the foreground to the south of the existing home. An existing ocular window remains opening remains. Note that this was originally a screened opening, so matching the existing window look is not necessary. Beyond, the two-story addition is visible. From this view, one can see articulation of the new curved staircase that is under a flat roof with a parapet. To the south a projecting balcony is centered under the hipped roof. Sliding French doors lead into the master bedroom. Centered below is the opening to the covered terrace that frames another bank of French doors. Further to the south, more sliding French doors lead to the family room. Above is a grouping of three windows flanked by a smaller ocular window.

**VARIANCES**

No variances from the Coral Gables Zoning Code have been requested with this application.

**BOARD OF ARCHITECTS**

The proposal was reviewed and approved with the following conditions by the Board of Architects on February 26, 2026: 1. POSSIBLE INTRODUCTION OF CORNER WINDOWS; 2. CONSIDER POSSIBLE PARAPET AT STAIR IN FRONT ELEVATION; 3. ELONGATE CORNER DETAIL AT TERRACE OPENINGS.

**STAFF CONCLUSION**

The application requests design approval for additions and alterations to the residence and sitework. The additions to the home take detailing cues from the historic residence yet provides differentiation from it. With the proposed addition of the second-floor window at the front façade, staff recommends that the glass block ribbon windows be reintroduced rather than a conjectural feature be introduced.

Staff requests that the following conditions be incorporated into any motion for approval:

1. Window and door glass is to be clear, no tint, no reflectivity, no low-e.
2. Muntins are to be high-profile.
3. French doors are to receive higher kickplates.
4. Existing house is not to be restuccoed in its entirety.
5. Stucco corner beads are not to be used on the addition.
6. Incorporate BOA comment #3 to elongate the corner detail (scallop) at the terrace openings.

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7. Work with Staff to ensure that the proposed window configuration (mimicking the original steel casements) is achievable as drawn.
8. The front door screen and surround are original and are to remain.
9. Round vents at the second-floor roof eaves are to remain.
10. Clarify the design intent for the front door.
11. Clarify the proposed stucco texture of the additions.
12. Restudy the window inset into the ocular window to more closely resemble the original screen framing.
13. All roof tile is to be flat white tile to match existing.
14. Specify paint colors to be used on the house in the permit drawings.
15. Indicate color of fencing on the permit.
16. Existing details (stucco scores, brickwork) are original and are to remain. Show in existing elevations and label as existing to remain.
17. Clarify material to be used on the proposed pool deck and the pavers to be used for the new walkway and driveway.
18. A separate Standard Certificate of Appropriateness will be required for swimming pool and any new awnings.

**Therefore, Historical Resources Department Staff recommends the following:**

A motion to **APPROVE** the design proposal for additions and alterations to the residence and sitework on the property located at **1008 Alhambra Circle**, a Contributing Resource within the “Alhambra Circle Historic Landmark, legally described as Lot 9 and the North 45 Feet of Lot 10, Block 4, Coral Gables Section “C,” according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8, at Page 26, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida, and **APPROVE WITH THE CONDITIONS NOTED ABOVE** the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anna Pernas", written over a horizontal line.

Anna Pernas  
Historic Preservation Officer