

1 CITY OF CORAL GABLES  
2 HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD  
3 JANUARY 18, 2023, 4:08 P.M.  
4 CORAL GABLES CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS  
5 405 BILTMORE WAY, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA  
6 VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT  
7  
8

9 Board Members Present:

10 Albert Menendez, Chairperson  
11 Cesar Garcia-Pons, Vice-Chairperson  
12 Alicia Bache-Wigg  
13 Xavier F. Durana  
14 Bruce Ehrenhaft  
15 John P. Fullerton  
16 Michael J. Maxwell  
17 Margaret "Peggy" Rolando  
18 Dona Spain

19 City Staff:

20 Warren Adams, Director of Historical Resources  
21 Kara Kautz, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer  
22 Gustavo Ceballos, Assistant City Attorney  
23 Deena Bell-Llewellyn, Assistant Director of Public  
24 Works for Greenspace Management  
25 Nancy Lyons, Administrative Assistant and Board  
Secretary

1       THEREUPON:

2               The following proceedings were had:

3               MR. MENENDEZ:   Good afternoon.   Welcome  
4       to the regularly scheduled meeting of the  
5       City of Coral Gables Historic Preservation  
6       Board.

7               It's on.

8               MR. GARCIA-PONS:   It's on.

9               MR. MENENDEZ:   We are residents of  
10      Coral Gables and are charged with the  
11      preservation and protection of historic or  
12      architecturally worthy buildings,  
13      structures, sites, neighborhoods and  
14      artifacts which impart a distinct  
15      historical heritage of the City.

16              You want me to start from the top?

17              MR. GARCIA-PONS:   Technical issues.

18              MR. MENENDEZ:   Well, let's have them  
19      fix it, so we can get started.

20              Good afternoon.   Welcome to the  
21      regularly scheduled meeting of the City of  
22      Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board.  
23      We are residents of Coral Gables and are  
24      charged with the preservation and  
25      protection --

1 THE CLERK: There is feedback. They  
2 can't hear you on Zoom.

3 If you'd give me five minutes.

4 MR. MENENDEZ: Five minutes?

5 MR. CEBALLOS: Nancy, are you muted?

6 THE SECRETARY: Yes. Let's try again.

7 MR. MENENDEZ: Good afternoon. Welcome  
8 to the regularly scheduled meeting of the  
9 City of Coral Gables Historic Preservation  
10 Board. We are residents of Coral Gables  
11 and are charged with the preservation and  
12 protection of historic or architectural  
13 worthy buildings, structures, sites,  
14 neighborhoods and artifacts which impart a  
15 distinct historical heritage of the City.

16 The Board is comprised of nine members,  
17 seven of whom are appointed by the  
18 Commission, one by the City Manager, and  
19 the ninth is selected by the Board and  
20 confirmed by the Commission. Five Members  
21 of the Board constitute a quorum and five  
22 affirmative votes are necessary for the  
23 adoption of any motion.

24 Lobbyist Registration or Disclosure,  
25 any person who acts as a lobbyist pursuant

1 to the City of Coral Gables Ordinance  
2 Number 2006-11 must register with the City  
3 Clerk prior to engaging in lobbying  
4 activities or presentations before City  
5 Staff, Boards, Committees and/or the City  
6 Commission. A copy of the Ordinance is  
7 available in the Office of the City Clerk.  
8 Failure to register and provide proof of  
9 registration shall prohibit your ability to  
10 present to the Historic Preservation Board  
11 on applications under consideration this  
12 afternoon.

13 A lobbyist is defined as an individual,  
14 corporation, partnership or other legal  
15 entity, employed or retained, whether paid  
16 or not, by a principal who seeks to  
17 encourage the approval or disapproval,  
18 adoption, repeal, passage, defeat or  
19 modifications of any Ordinance, Resolution,  
20 action or decision of any City  
21 Commissioner, any action, decision,  
22 recommendation of the City Manager, any  
23 City Board or Committee, including but not  
24 limited to a quasi-judicial advisory board,  
25 trust, authority or council or any action,

1 decision or recommendation of City  
2 personnel during the time period of the  
3 entire decision-making process on the  
4 action, decision or recommendation which  
5 foreseeably will be heard or reviewed by  
6 the City Commission or a City Board or  
7 Committee, including but not limited to a  
8 quasi-judicial advisory board, trust,  
9 authority or council. Presentations made  
10 to this Board are subject to the City's  
11 False Claims Ordinance, Chapter 39 of the  
12 City of Coral Gables City Code.

13 I now officially call the City of Coral  
14 Gables Historic Preservation Board Meeting  
15 of January 19th, 2023, at 4:08 p.m.

16 Present today are Ms. Donna Spain,  
17 Ms. Peggy Rolando, Mr. Michael Maxwell, Mr.  
18 Cesar Garcia-Pons, Mr. John Fullerton, Ms.  
19 Alicia Bache-Wiig, Mr. Bruce Ehrenhaft and  
20 myself, Albert Menendez.

21 The next item on the agenda is Approval  
22 of the Minutes for the meeting held on  
23 December 21st, 2022.

24 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Mr. Chair, I have --  
25 we have the November minutes, that we

1 didn't approve in the December meeting.

2 Can we do that first?

3 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. The November --  
4 what's the date on the November meeting?

5 MR. GARCIA-PONS: November 16th.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: November 16 Minutes.

7 MR. GARCIA-PONS: And I have two  
8 comments, scrivener's errors, on Page 22  
9 and 23, which I'll provide to the Staff,  
10 and I will move them with those two  
11 scrivener's errors.

12 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Do I have a  
13 second?

14 MR. MAXWELL: Second.

15 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Maxwell seconds.

16 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Rolando?

17 MS. ROLANDO: Yes.

18 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

19 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.

20 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

21 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

22 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Maxwell?

23 MR. MAXWELL: Yes.

24 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain?

25 MS. SPAIN: Yes.

1 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Fullerton?

2 MR. FULLERTON: Aye.

3 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Durana? Oh, he's  
4 not here. I'm sorry.

5 Ms. Bache-Wiig?

6 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes.

7 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

8 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

9 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes.

10 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. We would like to  
11 defer the --

12 MR. MAXWELL: We still have the  
13 December minutes.

14 MR. MENENDEZ: Yeah. We just get them,  
15 though, correct?

16 MR. MAXWELL: Yeah, we just did  
17 November's.

18 MR. MENENDEZ: Did we just get  
19 December's?

20 MR. MAXWELL: Oh, yeah.

21 MR. MENENDEZ: We just received  
22 December, correct?

23 MS. ROLANDO: Yeah.

24 MR. MENENDEZ: So I'm going to defer  
25 December's meeting minutes, because we

1 haven't been able to review them yet, okay?

2 All right. Next item, Notice Regarding  
3 Ex Parte Communications, please be advised  
4 that this Board is a quasi-judicial Board  
5 and the items on the agenda are  
6 quasi-judicial in nature, which requires  
7 Board Members to disclose all ex parte  
8 communications. An ex parte communication  
9 is defined as any contact, communication,  
10 conversation, correspondence, memorandum or  
11 other written or verbal communication, that  
12 takes place outside a public hearing  
13 between a member of the public and a member  
14 of a quasi-judicial Board, regarding  
15 matters to be heard by the quasi-judicial  
16 Board.

17 If anyone has made any contact with a  
18 Board Member, when the issue comes before  
19 the Board, the member must state, on the  
20 record, the existence of the ex parte  
21 communication, the party who originated the  
22 communication, and whether the  
23 communication will affect the Board  
24 Member's ability to impartially consider  
25 the evidence to be presented regarding the



1 matter.

2 Deferrals, Mr. Adams, do we have any  
3 deferrals today?

4 MR. ADAMS: Good afternoon. The only  
5 deferral is the one that was marked on the  
6 agenda, which is Item 6.2, for 1710  
7 Hernando Street.

8 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay.

9 MR. ADAMS: Okay?

10 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Perfect. Thank  
11 you.

12 Swearing-in, any person in the audience  
13 who will be testifying today, please rise  
14 to be sworn in.

15 (Thereupon, the participants were sworn.)

16 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. The first Case  
17 File Local Historic Designation, Case File  
18 LHD 2022-014: Consideration of the local  
19 historic designation of the property at 110  
20 Phoenetia Avenue, legally described as Lots  
21 1 to 10 inclusive, Block 21, Coral Gables  
22 Douglas Section, according to the Plat  
23 thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 25, at  
24 Page 69, of the Public Records of  
25 Miami-Dade County, Florida.

1           MR. ADAMS: Chair, before we start, the  
2 owner's representative has a request from  
3 the Board, if you would be willing to hear  
4 it.

5           MR. MENENDEZ: Sure.

6           MR. NAVARRO: Mr. Chair, it's a unique  
7 situation, but we have some parents in the  
8 audience that have children with autism,  
9 and they may get a little rowdy. So I just  
10 wanted to give you a heads-up before. But,  
11 also, we would like to see if maybe we can  
12 take the public comment section a little  
13 earlier than normal, so that we can  
14 accommodate those parents who do have  
15 children with learning disabilities.

16           MR. MENENDEZ: The public comment  
17 section will come after the applicant has  
18 her presentation --

19           MR. NAVARRO: Perfect.

20           MR. MENENDEZ: -- and after the City  
21 states their presentation.

22           MR. NAVARRO: So, then, could I save my  
23 presentation? I represent the property  
24 owner here, whose property is sought to be  
25 designated. Obviously, we have a very

1 important stake in this. We have a  
2 presentation to give. Would it be possible  
3 to take public comment prior to that? I  
4 don't mind holding my presentation until  
5 the end.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: If you don't mind, I  
7 don't mind, either.

8 MR. NAVARRO: Okay. I wouldn't mind.  
9 I think it's the right thing to do. So,  
10 all right, thank you.

11 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Please state your  
12 name?

13 MS. BOLTON: Good afternoon. My name  
14 is Bonnie D. Bolton, and I filed an -- or  
15 we filed an application to have the Garden  
16 of Our Lord designated historic.

17 And do I start my presentation?

18 MR. ADAMS: Can you start the  
19 PowerPoint, please? Thank you.

20 MS. BOLTON: I'm honored to introduce  
21 you to the panel of experts who wrote the  
22 aesthetic and architectural criteria for  
23 this report, Rocco Ceo, Joanna Lombard,  
24 Carlos Marin and Nanette Martinez. Rocco  
25 Ceo, Joanna Lombard and Carlos Marin are

1 all Harvard educated architects, with the  
2 American Institute of Architects, and Rocco  
3 is a Fellow. Rocco and Joanna are  
4 professors of architecture at the  
5 University of Miami and they are the  
6 authors of the Historic Landscapes of  
7 Florida, a book which I'm sure many of you  
8 are familiar with.

9 Carlos Marin is a practicing architect  
10 and former Member of the Board of  
11 Architects, and Nanette Martinez is an  
12 architect and professor of architecture at  
13 FIU. Unfortunately, with UM starting their  
14 classes this week, Rocco and Joanna are  
15 unable to be here today, and Carlos Marin  
16 has COVID, so --

17 But the Garden of Our Lord exceeds the  
18 City's criteria for historic designation  
19 under the categories of aesthetics,  
20 architecture, culture and history. We have  
21 applied for designation under nine  
22 different criteria, when only one is  
23 necessary for designation. The foremost  
24 authorities on historic designation in  
25 South Florida and the State of Florida

1 support the historic designation of the  
2 Garden. They are the much beloved founder  
3 of the preservation movement in Florida;  
4 Sallye Jude, who you received a letter from  
5 her, and Dolly MacIntyre, Dr. Paul George  
6 is a very enthusiastic supporter of the  
7 Garden's designation. Dr. Seth Bramson,  
8 Dr. Karella Carbonel, the Florida Trust for  
9 Historic Preservation, the Miami Design and  
10 Preservation League, the Historic  
11 Preservation Association of Coral Gables,  
12 Vizcaya, all 900 members of the American  
13 Institute of Architects and the City of  
14 Coral Gables Landmarks Advisory Committee,  
15 and their support is demonstrated by the  
16 letters which they wrote and which all of  
17 you have.

18 The Garden's historic designation is  
19 also supported by many highly esteemed  
20 individuals and organizations, and that's  
21 evidenced by the letters of support which  
22 have accompanied this application, and  
23 those are Tropical Audubon Society, the  
24 Woman's Club, the Rotary Club, Montgomery  
25 Botanical Center, Coral Gables Neighbors

1 Association, the Ponce de Leon Homeowners  
2 Group, the Tropical Flowering Tree Society,  
3 UM Arboretum, Robert Ruano, Robin and  
4 Robert Berg, Carol and Vincent Damian,  
5 Joanne Meagher, Bruce Fitzgerald, Judy  
6 Packard, Cheryl Akerman, Maria Cristina  
7 Longo, Peter Jude and Marlon Everett.

8 And the Garden has also been featured  
9 in newspapers and magazines and a  
10 television news broadcast. The media,  
11 which have covered the Garden on eleven  
12 different occasions in the last few months,  
13 are The Gables Insider, The Miami Herald,  
14 The Coral Gables Magazine, Coral Gables  
15 Living and WTVJ Channel 10 News.

16 And now I have the pleasure of  
17 introducing professor Nanette Martinez, who  
18 will provide a summary of the architectural  
19 and the aesthetic criteria. So this is  
20 Nanette.

21 MS. MARTINEZ: Hello. Good afternoon,  
22 Members of the Historic Preservation Board  
23 of Coral Gables and members of the  
24 community. My name is Nanette Martinez.  
25 As Bonnie mentioned, I have a Master's of

1           Architecture from Florida International  
2           University College of Communication,  
3           Architecture and the Arts. I've also  
4           served as an adjunct professor of design  
5           and architecture at FIU. And I am an  
6           associate designer at SB Architects,  
7           located in Coral Gables. I am also a  
8           resident of the City of Coral Gables and a  
9           neighbor of the Garden of Our Lord.

10           I am here today representing the  
11           research done on behalf of the Garden by  
12           Joanna Lombard, AIA professor at the  
13           University of Miami School of Architecture,  
14           Rocco Ceo, a Fellow of AIA, and Carlos  
15           Marin, AIA, also a past member of the Coral  
16           Gables Board of Architects, and myself, on  
17           behalf of the application for historical,  
18           architectural and aesthetic significance  
19           for 110 Phoenetia Avenue, the Garden of Our  
20           Lord.

21           The Garden of Our Lord is a landscaped  
22           feature adjacent to the St. James  
23           Evangelical Lutheran Church, located at the  
24           intersection of East Ponce de Leon  
25           Boulevard and Phoenetia Avenue, across from

1 the Coral Gables Woman's Club, within the  
2 North Ponce neighborhood. The Garden of  
3 Our Lord was designed in 1951 by Robert  
4 Fitch Smith, one of the most notable South  
5 Florida -- one of the most notable South  
6 Florida early architects. You might be  
7 familiar with him already.

8 So, as per Article 8, Section 8-103 of  
9 the Coral Gables Zoning Code, the criteria  
10 for designation of historic landmarks on  
11 historic districts states that a local  
12 historic landmark must have significant  
13 character, interest or value as part of the  
14 historical, cultural, archeological  
15 aesthetic or architectural heritage of the  
16 city, state or nation. The eligibility of  
17 any potential local historic landmark shall  
18 be based on meeting one or more criteria.

19 Today, 110 Phoenetia Avenue, the Garden  
20 of Our Lord, is eligible for designation as  
21 a local historic landmark based on seven  
22 significant criteria, which you can see on  
23 the -- right here.

24 All right. So, first, Criteria A,  
25 historical, cultural significance, we're



1 applying for Item Number 5, it's associated  
2 in a significant way with a past or  
3 continuing institution which has  
4 contributed substantially to the life of  
5 the City. Criteria B, architectural  
6 significance, Item Number 1, portrays the  
7 environment in an era of history  
8 characterized by one or more distinctive  
9 architectural styles; item Number 2,  
10 embodies those distinguishing  
11 characteristics of an architectural style  
12 or period or method of construction; item  
13 Number 3, it's an outstanding work of a  
14 prominent designer or builder; and Item  
15 Number 4, contains elements of design,  
16 detail, materials and craftsmanship of  
17 outstanding quality or which represent a  
18 significant innovation and adaptation to  
19 the South Florida environment; and Criteria  
20 C, Aesthetic Significance, Item Number 1,  
21 by being a part or related to a  
22 subdivision, park, environmental feature or  
23 other distinctive area should be developed  
24 or preserved according to a plan based on a  
25 historical, cultural or architectural

1 motif; and Item Number 2, because of its  
2 prominence of spatial location, contrasts  
3 of siting age or scale, is an easily  
4 identifiable visual feature of a  
5 neighborhood, village or the city and  
6 contributes to the distinctive quality or  
7 identity of such neighborhood, village or  
8 the city. In case of a park or a landscape  
9 feature, is integral to the plan of such  
10 neighborhood or the city.

11 So, for today, I'll be only speaking  
12 about B and C, which is the Architectural  
13 and Aesthetics Significance. So,  
14 Architectural Item 1, when the St. James  
15 Lutheran Church in Coral Gables established  
16 the adjacent Garden of Our Lord, they  
17 developed a garden consistent with  
18 Florida's historic landscape traditions, as  
19 well as a larger movement in religious  
20 memorial gardens. This transformation can  
21 be traced to the mid 19th Century, when Dr.  
22 Jacob Bigelow and the Massachusetts  
23 Horticultural Society addressed health  
24 concerns believed to result from the  
25 crowded conditions of church and burial

1 sites. In response, they developed Mount  
2 Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts  
3 as a picturesque landscape that opened to  
4 the public in 1831. Often cited as the  
5 birth of the garden cemetery movement in  
6 the U.S., the design of Mount Auburn  
7 ushered in a new era.

8 In South Florida, Cluett Memorial  
9 Garden in Palm Beach set a precedent in  
10 1931 for an enclosed memorial garden as a  
11 companion to The Episcopal Church of  
12 Bethesda-by-the-Sea, and an amenity for its  
13 immediate neighbors, as well as the larger  
14 community. Closer to home, Plymouth  
15 Congregational Church, a congregation led  
16 in 1901 by George Merrick's father, Solomon  
17 G. Merrick, host an enclosed garden along a  
18 Miami Highway in Coconut Grove. The  
19 landscape styles vary, but the use of local  
20 stone and memorial plaques and the  
21 protective enclosure of the wall provide  
22 thematic continuity.

23 The Garden -- so for Item --  
24 Architectural Item Number 2, the Garden of  
25 Our Lord provides architectural elements

1 distinctive of its location and era through  
2 its enclosure and application of Architect  
3 Robert Fitch Smith's label in his 1951  
4 drawings of the wall as the Florida  
5 keystone, and we can look at his original  
6 drawings right here.

7 Outwardly, the pedestal drawings of the  
8 wall respond to the architecture of Robert  
9 Fitch's landmark structure for the Coral  
10 Gables Woman's Club in 1936 across the  
11 street -- and we can see an example of that  
12 right here -- and internally the use of  
13 what we know as coral rock, also as oolite  
14 limestone, in both rusticated bench and  
15 grotto and planned surfaces in the  
16 walkways, further situate the Garden in its  
17 era. Robert Fitch Smith's drawings clearly  
18 depict -- and I would like to point to that  
19 really quick -- Robert Fitch Smith's  
20 drawings clearly depict the original design  
21 of the doubly pedimented wall and the  
22 walkway inside of the garden and we can see  
23 this is the wall. And, you know, it's  
24 evident by the dimensions, the angles and,  
25 basically, the type of information in the

1 drawing, that it's obviously been designed  
2 in this drawing.

3 Same thing with the walkway, we can  
4 look at the central axis and we can look at  
5 the angles, and the dimensions also shows  
6 that he was designing this walkway in this  
7 drawing.

8 He designed the commemorative frames  
9 and coral rock -- that will be in the next  
10 slide -- he designed the commemorative  
11 frames and coral rock pilasters on the  
12 exterior of the enclosure to clarify its  
13 purpose as both, a monument and a  
14 contemplative space available to the  
15 congregation and the public for prayer and  
16 meditation, as well as contributing to a  
17 green oasis in the midst of an urbanized  
18 neighborhood. Smith's original design  
19 remains unaltered, except for the public  
20 access gate added in about 1975.

21 So, for Item Number 3, in the  
22 Architectural category, this is to prove  
23 that it was designed by a prominent  
24 architect, so will I will speak of Robert  
25 Fitch Smith's life and work. Robert Fitch

1           Smith is also a Fellow of the AIA. He's  
2           one of the most notable of South Florida's  
3           early architects. His drawings of the wall  
4           of the Garden of Our Lord reflect his  
5           interest in craft through careful  
6           coordination of locally sourced politic  
7           rock, plane stucco surfaces with detailed  
8           classical mouldings, as seen in the  
9           capitals supporting cast stone urns, and we  
10          can see some of that in these drawings. We  
11          can see the urns and the pilasters that are  
12          adjacent to this feature, and, then, in the  
13          rest of the wall, we can see the pilasters  
14          don't have the urns. So he intentionally  
15          created these, as to highlight these  
16          moments in the wall.

17                 The Garden wall today clearly stands  
18                 out as a significant design, and even a  
19                 casual observer would likely be unsurprised  
20                 to learn that this distinctive wall is the  
21                 work of a prominent architect credited with  
22                 decades of accomplishment.

23                 With coursework at Columbia University,  
24                 Carnegie Institute of Technology,  
25                 University of Miami and Western Michigan

1 University, he received his architecture --  
2 he received his architecture degree from  
3 the University of Miami in 1931. While a  
4 student at the University of Miami, Robert  
5 Fitch Smith also taught in the newly formed  
6 Department of Architecture from 1929 to  
7 1931 as one of its earliest instructors.  
8 During that same time, he designed the  
9 landmark residence of Colonel Robert and  
10 Nell Jennings Montgomery, with the  
11 landscape by William Lyman Phillips, now  
12 the home of the Montgomery Botanical  
13 Collection.

14 Among Smith's many significant local  
15 commissions are other residences in Coral  
16 Gables, such as the historic Java Head, the  
17 long-time home of leading preservationist  
18 Sallye Jude, who wrote a support letter --

19 MS. BOLTON: And whose son is here  
20 tonight -- sorry, this afternoon.

21 THE SECRETARY: Please speak into the  
22 mike.

23 MS. BOLTON: Oh, I'm sorry. Sallye  
24 Jude's son, Peter Jude, is here in the  
25 audience in support of the designation of

1 the Garden.

2 MS. MARTINEZ: -- as well as projects  
3 in Miami Beach and Miami Shores. The  
4 residence he designed for Thomas Hayes in  
5 1931 and '32, the present day Doc Thomas  
6 House, headquarters for the Tropical  
7 Audubon Society, was, in 1982, the first  
8 designated historic sites in Dade County.  
9 It was listed in the National Register of  
10 Historic Places in 2014 and designated a  
11 Florida Heritage Site in 2016. The Doc  
12 Thomas House is one of several of Smith's  
13 projects archived in the  
14 Gottscho-Schleisner Collection in the  
15 Library of Congress, along with the  
16 recently designated JF Bauder Residence on  
17 Tigertail Avenue in Coconut Grove.

18 Extending beyond his architectural  
19 practice to contribute to the community, he  
20 was a charter member of the Miami City  
21 Planning Board; Chairman of the Regional  
22 Planning Board of Dade County; Chair of the  
23 Miami Fine Arts Commission; Chair of the  
24 Design Board for the Inter-American Culture  
25 and Trade Center of Miami; Vice-Chairman of



1 the Urban Planning Committee of the  
2 American Institute of Architects for the  
3 Southern area; and a member of the  
4 Architectural League of New York.

5 The Florida Architect quoted the Miami  
6 Herald's obituary which highlighted Smith's  
7 dedication to both, profession and  
8 community, recalling a 1948 interview in  
9 which Smith's message to Miami was that,  
10 "It's too bad that neighborhood planning  
11 could not have guided Miami from the start,  
12 but it's not too late to do a good job with  
13 it," and I hope so, too.

14 So these are some images of the wall,  
15 and the intention of Robert Fitch Smith's  
16 drawings and the reality of it, which is  
17 what we see every day in our neighborhood.

18 Now we're moving to the last item in  
19 the Architectural Category, Item Number 4.  
20 Smith's design for the Garden wall, and, in  
21 particular, it's pilasters, urns and  
22 settings around each plaque represents a  
23 continuity of quality and design that  
24 recall the walls of Vizcaya's Farm Village.  
25 The urns atop the Garden wall's politic

1 limestone pilasters merit further research  
2 given their close association with the work  
3 of John B. Orr and Ettore Pellegatta at  
4 Vizcaya. Smith's use of coral rock is  
5 evident in his other work, such as the  
6 fireplace at the Doc Thomas House, which  
7 represents a superb and well-documented  
8 example, which I'm sure you're familiar  
9 with.

10 Now, moving on to the Aesthetic  
11 Category, there is less than a handful of  
12 public gardens in the City and the Garden  
13 of Our Lord is one of them, and I would  
14 like to show you this slide, which is from  
15 a Master Plan done in September of 2005  
16 from the City of Coral Gables, where we can  
17 clearly see the intention of creating that  
18 green corridor in this part of the City,  
19 because the East Ponce de Leon Boulevard  
20 street cuts right through a residential  
21 area, and it's trying to connect Ponce de  
22 Leon, which is, you know, a very active  
23 commercial access, with the Douglas  
24 Entrance, which is also a very important  
25 point in this City.

1           This corridor, it's an intrusion. So  
2           the best way to maintain that intrusion  
3           soft and buffer it from the residential  
4           area that it clearly interrupts is to  
5           create a green corridor, with parks at the  
6           beginning and at the end, and this has not  
7           been done, but I see it proposed. This is  
8           the site that you see in red. So it's very  
9           clear how the garden contributes to the  
10          concept of the green corridor, to connect  
11          both important areas of the City.

12           East Ponce de Leon Boulevard follows a  
13          curvilinear path leading to the Douglas  
14          Entrance to the City. The Garden is  
15          located about halfway along this path,  
16          which is what we were looking at just now,  
17          a prominent right-of-way in the early years  
18          of the City, seen in Merrick's original  
19          Master Plan dating back to the 1920s. So  
20          this street was drawn in the original plans  
21          connecting the Douglas Entrance.

22           East Ponce de Leon Boulevard currently  
23          defines the west edge of the neighborhood  
24          largely populated by garden apartments.  
25          This street creates a connection between

1 Ponce de Leon and the Douglas Entrance,  
2 providing a green corridor for both,  
3 pedestrians and vehicular circulation, to  
4 connect the two commercial zones. East  
5 Ponce de Leon cuts diagonally through the  
6 garden apartment district area, where this  
7 green corridor becomes necessary, to soften  
8 the instruction of this connection.  
9 Located right in the middle of this buffer  
10 between commercial and residential, the  
11 Garden of Our Lord is an integral part of  
12 its urban context. Together with St.  
13 James, the Coral Gables Woman's Club and  
14 two abutting city parks, they are  
15 compatible institutional, religious and  
16 open space land uses on the boulevard,  
17 safeguarding the neighborhood from  
18 potential commercial encroachment.

19 And for the last item on the Aesthetic  
20 Criteria, Item Number 2, the Garden of Our  
21 Lord is a visually distinctive element of  
22 its neighborhood and is surrounded by  
23 double pedimented masonry wall with engaged  
24 pilasters of Miami limestone.

25 Could we play the video now please?

1           So the video that we'll play is just me  
2           walking on the sidewalk filming what I see,  
3           and -- you know, just so you get a feel of  
4           how the garden feels when you're walking in  
5           the neighborhood. And I do have -- you  
6           know, I've spoken with many people, and,  
7           you know, they absolutely love walking  
8           through that sidewalk and everyone knows  
9           where the Garden is and how nice it is to  
10          walk on it, so --

11           MS. BOLTON: And it's such an easily  
12          identifiable feature of the neighborhood,  
13          which qualifies it for designation.

14           THE SECRETARY: The video is playing.

15           MS. MARTINEZ: So I'll continue reading  
16          the last part. The Garden of Our Lord is a  
17          visually distinctive element of this  
18          neighborhood and it is surrounded by a  
19          double pedimentary masonry wall with  
20          engaged pilaster of Miami oolite limestone.  
21          This material of choice was also informed  
22          by the proximity of the Garden to the Coral  
23          Gables Woman's Club, designed by H. George  
24          Fink in 1936. The architectural materials  
25          and column rhythm of the Woman's Club is

1 reflected on the Garden's well design. The  
2 height of the wall and its pillars  
3 intentionally respond to the scale of the  
4 neighborhood. The appropriate height of  
5 the wall creates continuity and balance  
6 with the Woman's Club, as well as with the  
7 surrounding buildings and the landscape.

8 So, in conclusion for this part, we  
9 strongly believe that the Garden of Our  
10 Lord merits designation as a historic  
11 landmark, because of everything I've  
12 explained, but, you know, I just want to  
13 add, as a neighbor of the area, I  
14 absolutely love the Garden and the wall and  
15 it just -- it brings that scale to the  
16 neighborhood and that feeling that you are  
17 in a place that is meaningful. Thank you.

18 MS. BOLTON: And the walkway in the  
19 Garden that Robert Fitch Smith designed.  
20 So we hope -- and we've worked very hard  
21 for you to designate the Garden today, so  
22 we hope for that. Thank you. Thank you  
23 for your time.

24 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you for your  
25 presentation.

1 MS. MARTINEZ: Thank you.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Adams.

3 MR. ADAMS: Can you play the  
4 PowerPoint, please, the Staff PowerPoint?  
5 Thank you.

6 Okay. This is my response to the  
7 designation request. I'm going to walk  
8 through my thoughts, my opinions, my  
9 observations and point them out to you in a  
10 step-by-step process.

11 I think, first of all, just a quick  
12 comment, yes, there are a lot of letters of  
13 support; however, you have to question how  
14 much validity letters of support have if  
15 they're based on assumptions and incorrect  
16 information. All people have to go on is  
17 the submitted designation report, and it's  
18 not fully correct, and there are  
19 assumptions in there, and I'll point them  
20 out.

21 Second, we also have to ask just how  
22 many of the experts have actual historic  
23 preservation qualifications. I didn't  
24 actually hear any mentioned. And, also,  
25 you have to bear in mind that the initial

1 designation report, which was passed out,  
2 contains certain information that wasn't  
3 true, and we received letters of support  
4 based on that.

5 So the designation report has been  
6 amended. So how many people have actually  
7 seen the final version? In fact, the  
8 Landmarks Advisory Board, in their  
9 recommendation, that recommendation was  
10 made on the prior report, not the amended  
11 report that you have in front of you. So  
12 I'll walk through everything step-by-step  
13 and then I'll do a summary at the end, just  
14 so you can appreciate my thoughts.

15 So, firstly, this is the location of  
16 the site. As you see, this is one site,  
17 comprised of ten lots, but it is one site.  
18 When you zoom in to the site, on the  
19 northwest corner, you have the Garden of  
20 Our Lord, on the northeast corner you have  
21 the church building and the auxillary  
22 structures. On the southeast corner, you  
23 have a single-family residence, which is  
24 currently being used as a special needs  
25 school, and on the southwest corner, you



1 have some open land and a park associated  
2 with the school.

3 So these are the views from the various  
4 directions. So, on the top left, you have  
5 the entrance to the Garden of Our Lord, and  
6 the center of the north's boundary of the  
7 site, you have the church, which has been  
8 significantly altered since it was first  
9 built. At the top right, you have the  
10 auxillary buildings. On the northeast  
11 corner, at the bottom left, on the  
12 southwest corner, you have the open area,  
13 bottom middle, you have the play park, and  
14 bottom right, you have the existing house,  
15 which was determined not eligible for  
16 designation. So there you have the  
17 boundary wall of the site, a couple of  
18 general views of the site and the coral  
19 rock pond and the wall with the plaques on  
20 it. I think you saw sufficient photos in  
21 the previous presentation.

22 So some background for you, a Historic  
23 Significance Request was submitted to the  
24 Historic Preservation on August the 9th,  
25 2021. Staff responded that the site was

1 not eligible for designation, the site.  
2 The property, I believe, was purchased  
3 right about November 24th, 2021. The owner  
4 can clarify that.

5 On January the 28th, 2022, the  
6 Development Review Committee reviewed the  
7 proposal for a Comprehensive Plan Map  
8 Amendment, Zoning Code Map Amendment,  
9 Planned Area Development, Mixed-Use Site  
10 Plan and Transfer of Development Rights  
11 Receiving Site Plan.

12 On August the 19th, 2022, the applicant  
13 submitted a historic designation  
14 application, a full year after the initial  
15 determination was made. The Historic  
16 Preservation Office determined, again, the  
17 property did not meet the criteria for  
18 designation. The applicant informed -- the  
19 applicant was informed, and they were  
20 directed that it should be presented to the  
21 Historic Preservation Board in December of  
22 last year. The applicant, by right,  
23 requested 30 days to submit an amended  
24 report. This request was granted, and this  
25 is why we're here before you today.

1           And just for clarification, the  
2           following are not under consideration, not  
3           for discussion, so any comments related to  
4           it are not under the Board's purview, the  
5           proposed mixed-use development, any  
6           required rezoning which the property would  
7           need to move ahead with the new  
8           development, the creation of a park or tree  
9           preservation. So, with your purview, it's  
10          irrelevant. We have to stick to the Code  
11          for Historic Preservation.

12          So, just some clarification, reports  
13          based on the initial designation report  
14          suggested the Garden served as a cemetery.  
15          Now, each of you have -- I have given you a  
16          handout there, in case you can't clearly  
17          see some of the images of the wall there on  
18          the screen. The handout is for the Board's  
19          benefit of information as shown in the  
20          PowerPoint. This is just exact copies of  
21          what's in the PowerPoint, in case you can't  
22          read anything.

23          So the first thing you have in there is  
24          a letter from a funeral director with forty  
25          years' experience. So, just for

1 clarification, there are no church records  
2 identifying burials have been located.  
3 Now, this garden was designed in 1951. You  
4 would believe there would be records of  
5 burials, if it was as recent as 1951.  
6 There are no historic newspapers  
7 identifying any burials have been located  
8 there. The previous owner of the site, the  
9 St. James Lutheran Church, did not indicate  
10 to the current owner there are any burials  
11 there. The current owner exercised their  
12 due diligence prior to purchase. There are  
13 some bronze memorials set into the grain.  
14 These were evaluated by Mr. Ari Oberstein,  
15 a funeral director in Miami-Dade County for  
16 30 years, who determined they are memorial  
17 garden dedications, or tree dedications  
18 with no urn placements, and you have that  
19 there.

20 And just as an added level of  
21 protection, for any site, regardless of  
22 whether it's historic or not, if any  
23 remains are found during excavation, work  
24 must stop, the County archeologist must be  
25 called. So it does the property owner no

1 good to have everyone there on site ready  
2 to start the work and potentially they've  
3 got human remains.

4 The second thing for clarification, and  
5 it's the second letter that you have, per  
6 the owner's representatives, two urns  
7 containing cremated remains were interment  
8 in the garden wall. The urns have been  
9 removed and given to the family members of  
10 the deceased, in accordance with all legal  
11 requirements, as confirmed in a letter from  
12 Wendy Russell Wiener, Legal and Consulting  
13 Services. Ms. Weiner is an attorney  
14 licensed to practice law in Florida since  
15 1933, who has practiced exclusively in this  
16 area for most of her career. So you have  
17 the letter there confirming this was done.

18 Now, some people may have an issue with  
19 removing cremated remains. Me, personally,  
20 I believe that's something that the family  
21 should determine, and that's their choice,  
22 and they agreed to it.

23 So Code considerations, a historic  
24 landmark means any site, building,  
25 structure, landscape feature, improvement

1 or archeological site which property has  
2 been designated as a historic landmark.

3 So my initial review was to review the  
4 property, which is this, and if you  
5 designate the site, you're designating the  
6 block. The way it stands at the moment,  
7 you're designating the entire block, so  
8 just keep that in mind.

9 Secondly, should the site be  
10 designated? Obviously, it's a protected  
11 site, because it's designated; however,  
12 this section of the Code, 8-1108 states,  
13 "No COA shall be granted for the removal,  
14 relocation, consume or effective  
15 destruction or damage of any landscape  
16 features, especially designated as  
17 significant within the boundaries of a  
18 historic landmark, unless one of the  
19 following conditions exists. The  
20 designated landscape feature or  
21 archeological site is located in the  
22 buildable area or yard where a structure  
23 may be placed and unreasonably restricts  
24 the permitted use of the property." So,  
25 remember what I said, you're designating

1 the entire site here.

2 The second thing is, and of more  
3 importance, the designation of vegetation  
4 is inappropriate in a historical context.  
5 So please keep that in mind, the vegetation  
6 and its historical context.

7 And, integrity, you know that to be  
8 available for designation, a site must  
9 retain its integrity. It's highly  
10 important. It must retain sufficient  
11 integrity.

12 So let's firstly talk about Robert  
13 Fitch Smith. He was an accomplished  
14 architect, with some notable sites that  
15 meet the criteria for designation. He was  
16 not a landscape architect. He designed  
17 buildings. As noted in the designation  
18 report, by the 1930s, Robert Fitch Smith  
19 developed a keen understanding and talent  
20 of subtropical design integration in his  
21 designs for the Doc Thomas House and the  
22 Colonel and Mrs. Montgomery, which has been  
23 dubbed The Stairways to the Sun. He went  
24 on to design several buildings related to  
25 their environment.

1           When you look at the Tropical Audubon  
2           Society's website, the owners of the Doc  
3           Thomas house, Thomas commissioned Robert  
4           Fitch Smith, newly graduated from the  
5           University of Miami Architecture Program,  
6           to design a home that would fit organically  
7           in the property with its setting. He  
8           didn't design the landscape.

9           Then, if you look at the Montgomery  
10          Botanical Center website, historically  
11          Colonel Montgomery utilized the expertise  
12          and professional advise of the landscape  
13          architects William A. Trent Smith and  
14          William Lyman Phillips. So no landscape  
15          design experience at all from Robert Fitch  
16          Smith.

17          Now, let's look at the application  
18          submitted for the Garden, and this is in  
19          your packet, as well, if you can't see it.  
20          The permit application clearly states, wall  
21          and walkway, no mention of coral rock  
22          benches, no mention of a coral rock pond,  
23          no mention of many of the features that are  
24          included on the site; a walkway and a wall.

25          You have this in your packet, in it's



1 case it's difficult to make clear, this is  
2 the application that was submitted. This  
3 was the drawing that was submitted with the  
4 permit application, the wall, and then you  
5 have a walkway, which comes in, goes up,  
6 goes around an angle, and goes down and  
7 goes up. That's what was submitted.

8 That's what was applied for.

9 This is a recent survey. So, you walk  
10 in. This part of the path was added when  
11 the gate was added in 1970s. You come up  
12 here and ring, and not there. All of this  
13 path here, no proof that it was designed by  
14 Robert Fitch Smith. There are stacks here.  
15 There are coral rock walls here. There are  
16 these small spaces, which I think were for  
17 benches. There's no proof that Robert  
18 Fitch Smith designed all of this. Maybe he  
19 did, maybe he didn't, but to state that  
20 Robert Fitch Smith designed this garden is  
21 a massive assumption. There's no proof.

22 So, when you compare the two plans, the  
23 pathway is different from the original  
24 design. A coral rock pond has been added,  
25 coral rock walls have been added, steps

1           have been added. The original plan notes a  
2           four-foot wide imitation stone wall, scored  
3           in two feet squares. That's not what  
4           exists.

5           What exists is there. That is not an  
6           imitation stone sidewalk scored in two  
7           squares. These weren't on the original  
8           plan. These weren't on the original plan,  
9           the addition of a walkway, as well, was not  
10          on the original plan. So, all of a sudden,  
11          we're questioning integrity or the actual  
12          initial design of the property.

13          So now we're going to go on to the  
14          trees and shrubs. As noted in historic  
15          newspaper articles and the designation  
16          report, the Garden of Our Lord was  
17          originally designed as a Biblical garden.  
18          A Biblical garden is made up of plants  
19          mentioned in the Bible. Early reports  
20          indicate many of the plants were donated by  
21          people, suggesting there was no planting or  
22          landscape plan. The church was accepting  
23          plants from whoever decided to donate them.

24          Per a Miami News report from 1971,  
25          titled, Gables Frankincense Really Home

1 Grown Plant, and according to Henry C.  
2 Wallace, Director of the U.S. Department of  
3 Agriculture Plant Introduction Station,  
4 many of the plants were not the Biblical  
5 plants. The Frankincense, Myrtle and Stone  
6 Pine were common Florida plants by the name  
7 of Elegant, Orange Jessamine and Vitext  
8 (phonetic).

9 So here we have a garden that was maybe  
10 intended to be a Biblical garden and was  
11 promoted as a Biblical garden. We have no  
12 landscape plan, we have people donating  
13 plants and we have a recognized expert  
14 stating, "Hang on, a lot of this is  
15 incorrect."

16 Theodore Bartis (phonetic), the pastor  
17 at the time, was not sure which plants came  
18 and how and the church files gave no clues  
19 of a landscape plan, nor planting plan, no  
20 record.

21 The original trees and shrubs, as noted  
22 in newspaper reports, no longer exist, per  
23 the owner's expert. Now, you actually have  
24 a letter in there from the owner's expert  
25 confirming that none of the plants

1 mentioned in the submitted newspaper  
2 reports with the application exist anymore,  
3 and we have also -- and Deena -- Deena,  
4 would you like speak? This is the City  
5 Arborist, and she went out to the site with  
6 me, and she can also confirm what is  
7 actually on the site.

8 MS. BELL-LLEWELLYN: Good evening. I'm  
9 Deena Bell-Llewllyn. I'm the Division  
10 Director of Green Space Management in  
11 Public Works. I've been a licensed  
12 landscape architect, practicing in the  
13 area, for 31 years now. I'm also a  
14 Certified Arborist.

15 So, with those credentials, I have been  
16 to the site three times, a couple of  
17 inspections, and yesterday, again, with  
18 Mr. Adams, just to confirm that I didn't  
19 see any Biblical plants in the garden.  
20 What I see there today is mostly just our  
21 tropical variety of Alexander Palm  
22 seedlings, there are few Dade Palms, the  
23 Canary Island Dade Palm, and one Dade Palm  
24 growing outside, but those are locally  
25 available in Homestead. So there's no real

1 proof of any of this being Biblical  
2 planting.

3 Also, I would note that the Garden has  
4 fallen in disrepair from the years of lack  
5 of maintenance. A lot of what I saw there  
6 were seeded in Alexander Palms, Brazilian  
7 Pepper, even, you know, creating a garden  
8 that's beginning to be overtaken with  
9 weeds, but, again, there's no proof or  
10 evidence of Biblical plants that I saw  
11 there.

12 MR. ADAMS: Thank you.

13 Can you play the PowerPoint, please?

14 Thanks, Deena.

15 Now, we know the Garden was designed,  
16 built, in 1951, and reports do show that it  
17 was a popular attraction at that time, in  
18 the '50s and the '60s. Per a Miami Herald  
19 Article from 1974, the Garden had started  
20 to decline. The report, titled, "Garden of  
21 Our Lord in Coral Gables," notes the loss  
22 of trees, vandalism, the theft of statutes,  
23 damage to the statue of Christ and  
24 discovering hyperdermic needles and  
25 Marijuana plants on the site. A Herald

1 article from 1974 notes alterations to the  
2 church, including a renovation of the  
3 garden.

4 So I think what we had was a site that  
5 was, in all good intentions, designed  
6 initially as a Biblical garden. It did  
7 receive a lot of visitors. For some  
8 reason, by the 1970s, this had started to  
9 decline. The Garden was falling into  
10 disrepair, and then the church decided to  
11 do alterations. So, again, there's a  
12 question over the integrity of the site.

13 And, then, from 1974 onwards, there are  
14 very few reports on this Garden and they  
15 mainly consist of notifications of events  
16 and services. So, I think, really, since  
17 the 1970s, the Garden fell into decline,  
18 maybe wasn't used as much, but it certainly  
19 wasn't the noted Biblical Garden that it  
20 was originally made out to be.

21 So I've got some additional  
22 comments in the submitted report. The  
23 expert opinions contained in the report  
24 appear to use a copy of the applicant's  
25 photographs or show only the exterior of

1 the Garden wall or contain no photos. This  
2 raises the question, how many of those  
3 contributing visited the interior of the  
4 Garden. And if they haven't, can you truly  
5 give an expert and full professional  
6 opinion on something that you really  
7 haven't seen?

8 The contribution by Nanette Martinez  
9 begins with, "The Garden of Our Lord was  
10 designed by Robert Fitch Smith."  
11 Apparently, there's no proof that it was.  
12 The remainder of the report focuses on the  
13 wall and the streetscape and does not  
14 really address the Garden itself. The  
15 contribution by Carlos Marin states, "Fitch  
16 Smith designed not only the wall, but also  
17 the geometrical structure the Garden grew  
18 upon; coral rock paths leading to a grotto,  
19 a pond and steps to a marble statute  
20 representing Jesus Christ." If they had  
21 submitted the proof of this, we could have  
22 taken that onboard and we would have  
23 considered it, but there's just no proof,  
24 and the contributions by Rocco Ceo and  
25 Joanna Lombard focuses mostly on the wall

1 and the architect.

2 According to the designation report,  
3 he, who is Merrick, wholeheartedly  
4 incorporated the Garden city precepts of  
5 comprehensive planning with defined areas  
6 for different uses, residential, commercial  
7 trades, offering housing for different  
8 income levels, without sacrificing quality,  
9 as well as providing an abundance of public  
10 facilities. With the acquisition of  
11 additional land, the Douglas Section was  
12 dedicated to multi-family residences and  
13 was designed to be the same high quality  
14 design spirit as the rest of Coral Gables.

15 The Douglas Section was clearly meant  
16 to be a hub of activity within -- with  
17 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, a wide parkway,  
18 and one of the main commercial  
19 thoroughfares of Coral Gables, running  
20 through it. By the way, that last sentence  
21 is taken straight from our designation  
22 reports. So, obviously, someone's looked  
23 at them and taken them word for word. So  
24 that was actually taken from properties  
25 that were eligible for designation, and I



1 completely agree with this. Merrick knew  
2 that there was a place for everything.  
3 There was a commercial section, a  
4 residential section, there was an apartment  
5 section and there was a place for parks and  
6 spaces.

7 So let's look at Merrick's original  
8 plan. That's the property there on the  
9 left-hand side, clearly split into various  
10 lots, intended for development. If you  
11 look at El Prado on the right, you have a  
12 big vacant space that was intended for  
13 gardens and parks. So if you really expose  
14 what Merrick designed and what the intent  
15 of the Coral Gables Plan was, a park and a  
16 garden there was not what Merrick intended.  
17 And in case you want to question it,  
18 there's some other additional plats. Every  
19 one of them shows that this site was  
20 intended for development.

21 Now, I'm not here to promote a new  
22 development. That is out of our hands and  
23 that has to go to Planning and Zoning. It  
24 needs a rezoning. That has to go through  
25 another process. All I'm saying is, if

1           you're espousing Merrick's plan and his  
2           ideals, this is what he had planned.

3           So now I'm going to go through the  
4           criteria, just to finish up, in summary.  
5           So I went through the report and the  
6           application form was a slightly different  
7           criteria from in the report; however, I  
8           will go through all of them.

9           Number 1, historical cultural  
10          significance, one is associated in a  
11          significant way with the lives or  
12          activities of a major historic person  
13          important in the past. While Robert Fitch  
14          Smith was an accomplished architect, he  
15          does not rise to the level of major  
16          historic person important in the past. A  
17          2016 historic designation for a Fitch Smith  
18          property at 229 Ridgewood was approved by  
19          the Board and successfully appealed to the  
20          Commission.

21          This application did not list Robert  
22          Fitch Smith under this criteria, and as you  
23          see by our other designation reports, it  
24          would be incredibly rare to list an  
25          architect under this criteria.

1           Number 2, the site of a historic event  
2           with significant effect upon the community,  
3           city, state or nation. This is listed on  
4           the application form, but it's not  
5           addressed in the designation report. So no  
6           historic event of a significant effect upon  
7           the community, state or nation is known to  
8           have taken place at the site.

9           Number 4, exemplifies the historical,  
10          cultural, political, economic or social  
11          trends of the community. A Biblical garden  
12          does not exemplify the historical,  
13          cultural, political, economic or social  
14          trends of the community. Per the  
15          designation report, the Douglas Section was  
16          clearly meant to be a hub of activity, with  
17          Ponce de Leon Boulevard, a wide parkway and  
18          one of the main commercial thoroughfares in  
19          Coral Gables running through it, and in the  
20          1940s, the City of Coral Gables recognized  
21          the apartment district and encouraged its  
22          form of development. The historical,  
23          cultural, political, economic and social  
24          trend in this community was the  
25          construction of garden apartments at that

1 time.

2 Number 5 is, associated in a  
3 significant way with a past or continuing  
4 institution which has contributed  
5 substantially to the life of the city. The  
6 designation report does not provide  
7 sufficient information on this criterion,  
8 but does focus on the contribution of  
9 Crystal Academy, a private entity, which  
10 leases property from the church. The  
11 church did have a school; however, many  
12 churches throughout the city may have had a  
13 school. They all contributed to the city  
14 in some way, but it doesn't mean they're  
15 eligible for designation.

16 So now we're going to architectural  
17 significance. For trees, the environment  
18 and history characterized by one or more  
19 distinctive architectural styles, the 1950s  
20 was characterized as Mid Century  
21 architecture, which was simpler and  
22 contained minimal ornamentation. And it's  
23 interesting, nowhere in the report, from  
24 any of the experts, did I see anyone  
25 specifying a specific architectural style

1 for the wall. It wasn't done.

2 MS. SPAIN: That was my question.

3 MR. ADAMS: Number 2, embodies the  
4 distinguishing characteristics of an  
5 architectural style or period or method of  
6 construction. The wall is constructed from  
7 concrete block, topped with a concrete beam  
8 supporting two thin keystone sections to  
9 form a triangular cap. The cap is not  
10 solid keystone, has not been carved. It is  
11 two thin pieces put together over concrete.

12 The wall is faced with stucco, very  
13 common material. The columns are concrete  
14 block, with vertical supporting rods, faced  
15 with keystone and not a carved ornament,  
16 but a cast stone ornament on top.  
17 Keystone, stucco, concrete, common  
18 materials.

19 The architectural style is not a pure  
20 form of a style, but, rather, a mixture of  
21 styles from different periods, and as I  
22 said, the designation report does not  
23 specify a specific style in that report.

24 Number 3 is an outstanding work of a  
25 prominent designer or builder. Neither the

1 wall, nor the coral rock features, rise to  
2 the level of an outstanding work by Robert  
3 Fitch Smith, as designated sites do; but a  
4 wall, and a pathway, no.

5 4, contains elements of design detail,  
6 materials or craftsmanship of outstanding  
7 quality or which represent a significant  
8 innovation or adaptation to the South  
9 Florida environment. As detailed under  
10 Number 2, neither the design detail,  
11 materials or craftsmanship are of an  
12 outstanding quality.

13 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Warren, do you want  
14 to change the slide?

15 MR. ADAMS: Okay. I'll finish up.  
16 Aesthetic significance by being part or  
17 related to a subdivision, park,  
18 environmental feature or other distinctive  
19 area, should be developed or preserved  
20 according to a plan based on a historical,  
21 cultural or architectural motif. The site  
22 is related to the Douglas Section, which  
23 has been developed according to the  
24 original intent of the Douglas Section,  
25 i.e., the construction of apartment

1 buildings. Historic plats for this section  
2 indicate this block was intended to be  
3 developed and not utilized as a garden.

4 A motif is identified by Merriam  
5 Webster as usually having a cutting salient  
6 thematic element, especially a dominant  
7 idea or central theme. The dominant idea  
8 and central theme in that section is for  
9 garden apartments.

10 And Number 2, this actually has two  
11 parts to it, because of its prominence of  
12 spatial location, contrast of site and age  
13 or scale is an easily identifiable visual  
14 feature of a neighborhood, village or the  
15 city and contributes to the distinctive  
16 quality or identity of such neighborhood,  
17 village or the city. Then you have a new  
18 sentence, "In case of a park or landscape  
19 feature, is integral to the plan of such  
20 neighborhood or city," and that's an  
21 important sentence that has been omitted in  
22 places in the designation report. Some  
23 places, it's included, some places it's  
24 not. As this is a garden with landscape  
25 features, the site must be integral to the

1 plan of the neighborhood, and as shown  
2 previously, a park was not integral to the  
3 original design intent of Merrick for this  
4 block and this location.

5 So, really, therefore, in summary,  
6 there are questions over who designed the  
7 property, there are questions over who  
8 built the property. The original intent of  
9 a Biblical garden is no longer there. So  
10 all of these questions stack up to  
11 basically say that, if you're going to  
12 designate this, the original intent is not  
13 there, the integrity is not there, and,  
14 basically, in my opinion, it does not meet  
15 the criteria.

16 So I can answer any questions, and  
17 please note that a number of support  
18 letters were received after your packets  
19 were delivered. You have copies of all of  
20 them. And I have a letter here from Jorge  
21 Hernandez, who had to leave. I don't know  
22 when it's appropriate for anyone  
23 supporting --

24 MS. SPAIN: I was going to ask for his  
25 letter to be read into the record when it



1 was my turn to speak, so --

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Hernandez is here.

3 MR. ADAMS: It depends if you want to  
4 hear from him. He's not representing the  
5 City.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: I understand that, and  
7 it will be heard when -- with the rest of  
8 the residents.

9 MR. ADAMS: Okay. If he has to leave,  
10 then you have his letter, and I will read  
11 that into the record.

12 MR. MENENDEZ: Uh-huh.

13 MR. ADAMS: Thank you.

14 MR. MENENDEZ: At this time, I'm going  
15 to open it up for comments, either in favor  
16 or opposition of this case, to the  
17 audience. I'm going to ask that people be  
18 brief. I'm going to give people -- because  
19 there are so many residents here today, I'm  
20 going to give every resident their turn,  
21 but at least -- maximum three minutes per  
22 resident, and I'm going to start with the  
23 residents who are standing.

24 And if there's anyone who would like to  
25 speak in favor or in opposition of this,

1           then one by one you can come up, starting  
2           with those who are standing.

3           MR. NAVARRO: Mr. Chair, I'd just like  
4           to remind you that, at the end of the  
5           public comment, on behalf of the ownership,  
6           I would like an opportunity to present, as  
7           well.

8           MR. MENENDEZ: Yes sir.

9           MR. NAVARRO: Thank you very much.

10          MS. SPAIN: I'd like to hear from Jorge  
11          Fernandez, if he has to leave early.

12          MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Excuse me.  
13          I'll just read my comments. It won't take  
14          three minutes. And thank you for allowing  
15          me to speak now, but I was standing and I'm  
16          against it, so --

17          MR. CEBALLOS: Can we confirm that you  
18          were sworn in?

19          MR. HERNANDEZ: No. Please do.

20          THE SECRETARY: Gus, can you swear him in?

21          MR. CEBALLOS: The court reporter can.

22          (Thereupon, the participant was sworn.)

23          MR. HERNANDEZ: Yes.

24          So, this is a letter that I sent  
25          earlier. Dear Mr. Adams and Members of the

1 Historic Preservation Board, I am writing  
2 on the matter -- I'm sorry, I have a cold  
3 -- of the application for the Garden of Our  
4 Lord at 110 Phoenetia Avenue, Coral Gables,  
5 Florida to be considered for designation as  
6 a Local Historic Landmark.

7 As you know, I have often advocated on  
8 behalf of local designations for properties  
9 that meet the criteria and against  
10 designation if the site in question fails  
11 to rise to the level of significance which  
12 that distinction merits. I have reviewed  
13 the application and have recently driven by  
14 the site. Long ago, I visited the garden  
15 itself.

16 In this case, I do not support  
17 nomination. The church proper is not being  
18 proposed for designation, and rightfully  
19 so. The wall of the Garden of Our Lord is  
20 a ladder extension, subordinate and  
21 dependent on the sanctuary for its spatial  
22 and compositional meaning. Without the  
23 building, the wall is a fragment, a  
24 dangling participle ripped away from its  
25 context.

1           I have reviewed the permit plans of the  
2           garden wall designed by Robert Fitch Smith,  
3           a noted architect, whose works have  
4           received the distinction of landmark  
5           designation. The wall, on its own, is  
6           neither significant, nor exemplary. There  
7           is no known planting plan establishing the  
8           layout, composition or location of specimen  
9           in the garden. No landscape architect or  
10          master gardener is known to have been  
11          involved with what was contained between  
12          the wall and the sanctuary, in the garden  
13          itself.

14          The garden has also not been well  
15          maintained, and it would be speculative to  
16          reconstruct the design of the Biblical  
17          garden now lost. There are a series of  
18          commemorative plaques that were  
19          incrementally added to memorialize persons  
20          of distinction, often by community  
21          organizations, friends or family members,  
22          but commemorative monuments are not  
23          necessarily historical landmarks. One of  
24          the plaques identifies an individual who's  
25          accomplishments did not occur here and who

1 passed away before the incorporation of the  
2 City of Coral Gables.

3 I am intrigued by projects involving  
4 memory, but the criteria for historical  
5 designation link historically significant  
6 persons and events to specific places.  
7 These plaques are generally commemorative.  
8 They are not historical.

9 There is mention in the nomination for  
10 it's pallisters and a niche with keystones  
11 and other classical elements. As a  
12 material, otolites ubiquitous. It is what  
13 is crafted from the stone that can convey  
14 meaning. The oolite planters -- I mean,  
15 pallisters, on walls that have no  
16 architectural relationship to the pilasters  
17 of the Woman's Club, as stated in the  
18 nomination, other than their categorical  
19 distinction. They are simply one of many  
20 categories of architectural embellishments  
21 of classicism, columns, pediments, volute,  
22 entablature, et cetera.

23 The arch niche also mentioned in the  
24 nomination is curiously attenuated and the  
25 keystone disproportionally small. It is

1 not clear what Fitch Smith had intended  
2 here. This ensemble does not rise to the  
3 level of exquisite mannerist distortion,  
4 and on the other hand, it lacks the  
5 thematic characteristics and interest of  
6 Mid Century ornament, which would be the  
7 prevailing spirit of the day. Together,  
8 pilaster, niche, keystone, urns all seem  
9 excentric, an oddity.

10 The cuprous nature of these ornamental  
11 features does not elevate this wall  
12 fragment to the level of a landmark status.  
13 This wall and the walks and small pool  
14 behind it are neither sufficiently  
15 exceptional nor significant. Approving  
16 this nomination would confer historic site  
17 status to an entire City block, which would  
18 be a misappropriation of the privilege of a  
19 historic landmark status.

20 I know there is a project proposed for  
21 this site. I do not wish to comment on it.  
22 I merely wish to focus on whether the one  
23 singular wall is sufficiently significant  
24 to designate this large urban block as a  
25 historic site.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

3 MR. CEBALLOS: Mr. Chair, if I may,  
4 just procedurally make a comment? So the  
5 property owner has not been given an  
6 opportunity to speak yet, because they had  
7 originally requested to allow certain  
8 individuals from the public to speak,  
9 before they have a chance to -- speak,  
10 mostly because they were on a time  
11 constraint. My recommendation would be to  
12 allow the property owner to speak, after  
13 anybody who's on a time constraint, who  
14 chooses to go before the property owner  
15 speaks, to go first. Does that make sense?

16 So if there is ten people or twenty  
17 people in the audience that would like to  
18 speak and they don't need to wait for the  
19 property owner to speak, that they can go  
20 head and speak now, and the rest of the  
21 public can reserve their comments until  
22 they've heard all three parties.

23 Typically, in your normal hearings, you  
24 have the City and the property owner. In  
25 this case, it's the first time, I've ever

1           been aware, in the five years that I've  
2           been here, the application is being brought  
3           forth by a third party. So, in this case,  
4           there are three parties. So that's the  
5           reason why it's a little nuance.

6           MR. MENENDEZ: The owner asked to speak  
7           after the public portion.

8           MR. CEBALLOS: Agreed, but I don't want  
9           anybody in the public to feel prejudiced  
10          for having to speak before they've heard  
11          the property owner speak. So my  
12          recommendation would be, allow anyone in  
13          the public, who's on a time constraint, or  
14          for whatever reason, the opportunity to  
15          speak now, which is not unheard of. In the  
16          City Commission, you can have your entire  
17          public comment before every item is even  
18          discussed, so it would not atypical to  
19          allow either way, but just, in an abundance  
20          of caution, I would recommend, anybody who  
21          doesn't mind waiting, to wait until after  
22          the property owner has spoken. Anybody on  
23          a time constraint can be heard now. Does  
24          that make sense?

25          MR. MENENDEZ: That makes sense.



1           MR. NAVARRO: I have no issues with  
2           that, Mr. Chair.

3           MR. MENENDEZ: Okay.

4           MR. NAVARRO; Thank you.

5           MR. HEISENBOTTLE: If I may,  
6           Mr. Chairman, allow me to present now,  
7           because I do have a time constraint.

8           Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.  
9           For those of you who may not know me, my  
10          name is Richard Heisenbottle and I'm  
11          president of RJ Heisenbottle Architects,  
12          located right here in Downtown Coral  
13          Gables. We like to think of ourselves as  
14          one of the premier architectural firms in  
15          Florida with a true specialty in historic  
16          preservation, the most complex historic  
17          preservation assignments and decisions,  
18          from the Freedom Tower to Vizcaya, usually  
19          come over our desks.

20          As it relates to the debate over the  
21          historic designation of the Garden of Our  
22          Lord, I've been asked by both sides to be  
23          their expert witness, and I have turned  
24          them both down, hoping that this matter  
25          would resolve itself without a public

1 preservation battle. The fact that we  
2 stand here in front of all of you today  
3 tells me that this may not be the case.

4 So, as a passionate preservationist  
5 myself, I've elected to come forward and  
6 speak both, as a resident of the City of  
7 Coral Gables, as an expert in historic  
8 preservation, and to give you my thoughts,  
9 and remind myself that I sat in Albert's  
10 chair for any number of years charing this  
11 Board in the past.

12 Now, I applaud the passion of the  
13 historic preservation community sitting  
14 behind me, Ms. Bolton and the others who  
15 have joined her in this effort to designate  
16 the Garden of Our Lord, but preservation is  
17 a matter of law. I must say that, in my  
18 professional opinion, the site simply does  
19 not meet the City's criteria for historic  
20 designation. I would tell you, that while  
21 I know Robert -- the work of Robert Fitch  
22 Smith well -- I've had the opportunity to  
23 restore one of his buildings, the Doc  
24 Thomas house restoration just finished last  
25 year -- this property does not portray the

1 environment in the era of history  
2 characterized by one of the distinctive  
3 architectural styles. It does not embody  
4 the distinguishing characteristics of an  
5 architectural style. It is not an  
6 outstanding work of a prominent designer.  
7 It does not contain the elements of design  
8 and craftsmanship that are, quote,  
9 outstanding quality and I could go on, but  
10 there's no reason to go on, because, quite  
11 frankly, Warren Adams has done an  
12 exceptional job -- and his staff have done  
13 an exceptional job in the research of this  
14 criteria for designation and for this  
15 project.

16 While this is a well-intentioned effort  
17 by preservation minded individuals in our  
18 community, it can also be seen as an  
19 attempt to use historic preservation as a  
20 zoning tool to prohibit new neighborhood  
21 re-development. Doing this is a tremendous  
22 disservice to historic preservation and  
23 diminishes the importance of historic  
24 preservation. Somehow, these efforts or  
25 attempts only occur when a developer

1 announces his intention to re-develop a  
2 property. To avoid this sort of thing in  
3 the future, the City should regularly and  
4 you should encourage them to do this --  
5 Dona, how are you?

6 MS. SPAIN: Hi. How are you?

7 MR. HEISENBOTTLE: -- every five to  
8 seven years, to professionally update their  
9 historic districts and individual listings,  
10 reassessing potential structures, so that  
11 there is clarity to all interests in the  
12 community. Preservation is an ongoing  
13 community efforts. Buildings that we may  
14 think of today as completely unworthy for  
15 designation may be tomorrow's historic  
16 landmarks.

17 Thank you very much.

18 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you. Okay.

19 MR. DAMIAN: If I may, I'm Vincent  
20 Damian. I live at 1010 Palermo Avenue.  
21 I've been a resident of Coral Gables for 60  
22 years, 55 of those in a historic house.  
23 I'm one of the original founders of what  
24 then was the Historic Homeowners  
25 Association.

1           I cannot comment on what these very  
2           significant architects, professors,  
3           historians have said. They have looked at  
4           it. They have said that it does meet the  
5           criteria and they have pointed out, in each  
6           case, how it meets the criteria. Now,  
7           there can be people with different  
8           opinions, subjective opinions, but, I mean,  
9           the experts who have come in on this have  
10          come down 100 percent that this is  
11          historic, in accordance with the criteria  
12          of the City. I won't argue anymore about  
13          that, because it's in your report.

14                 What I will say is, we have heard  
15          references to shrubs, to plants. This is  
16          not part of the criteria. That was said  
17          right from the beginning. Nor is part of  
18          the criteria the fact that there is a  
19          developer who purchased the property and  
20          wants to develop it.

21                 I will only point out to you, this is  
22          open space, and if the developer has  
23          purchased the property, wants to develop  
24          it, great architects as our City has here,  
25          can incorporate this garden into the

1 development of the property, to its  
2 benefit, not to its detriment.

3 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

4 MS. PALACIO: Hello, everyone, and  
5 thank you for doing what you do. I also  
6 serve in one of our advisory boards in the  
7 City and I know this is your personal time.

8 I think, for my parents that are here,  
9 and I'm sorry this took so long, my name is  
10 Maria Palacio. I'm one of the founding  
11 members of Crystal Academy. It's a center  
12 and the first school in Coral Gables for  
13 children with autism. For us, this is a  
14 very personal journey, because of my own  
15 son. And in 13 years that we have been in  
16 the St. James Lutheran Church, we have  
17 served over 650 families.

18 We are here because we just -- actually  
19 we just found out about the impending issue  
20 with maybe the development of the area.

21 Years ago, I personally, not because I was  
22 thinking that the area was historical, just  
23 because of the fear that we had as tenant  
24 that a developer would come and would buy  
25 this and actually would kick us out of the

1 Gables -- I'm a resident of the Gables, and  
2 our children live in the Gables, and one of  
3 the reasons why we always wanted to be here  
4 is because our children live here. We want  
5 them to be raised here. We want them to  
6 learn. We wanted them to work here, and in  
7 the future, we want housing for children  
8 with disability here and students with  
9 disabilities.

10 So I reached out to some of you, and  
11 back then, this is maybe seven years ago,  
12 there was no historical value in St. James  
13 or in the Garden. I can tell you that many  
14 developers have come. The last developer  
15 came during the COVID times, and I'm sorry,  
16 this is very emotional for me, and he met  
17 with us, and he said, "I'm sorry, Mary, but  
18 there's not a return on investment."

19 And when he said that, I looked at my  
20 kids and I said, "The return on investment  
21 is the kids that we have, that we serve,  
22 and it's going to be the adults in the  
23 future and is going to be part of this  
24 community. That's the return on  
25 investment." So --

1           MR. MENENDEZ: Please -- please, no  
2           clapping. Please.

3           MS. PALACIO: Sorry. So the deal fell  
4           through. And then comes this parent, who  
5           has an autistic child, that knew about our  
6           issue and said, "I knew someone," and he  
7           never even mentioned the name of that  
8           someone and I said, "Can that person come  
9           and actually visit us," because I could  
10          talk the talk, but if he doesn't come to  
11          Crystal Academy, it's not the same.

12          So he came, and he met with the kids,  
13          and he said, "While you do what you do --  
14          it doesn't have to be you, Mary, it has to  
15          be Crystal Academy, and the mission is  
16          intact, I'm interested in building you a  
17          new school. And while you do what you do,  
18          that school is not going to have any rent  
19          and you're not going to pay anything." We  
20          looked at each other, and I looked at my  
21          kids, and I could not believe that was  
22          coming out of anybody's mounth, because,  
23          again, we are in a serving community. What  
24          we do is, we serve. We are a non-profit  
25          organization. And when this developer,



1 Century Builders, Sergio Pino, even said,  
2 "You can use the Garden of the Lord," and I  
3 said, "No. No. Thank you, but, no, thank  
4 you."

5 The Garden of the Lord is extremely  
6 dangerous for the kids. There's a pond  
7 full of mosquitos and frogs that we  
8 actually have to maintain with Clorox.  
9 There is sharp edges. There are shrubs  
10 that have -- is like blow and cut. There's  
11 nothing else happening in there. So we  
12 don't use the Garden of the Lord. And,  
13 again, yes, there are things that we can do  
14 in comment -- I mean, I never even met you,  
15 and I'm happy to have met you and talked to  
16 you, but instead of building and keeping  
17 walls, what we need to do is actually build  
18 a new future for the kids, and if we need  
19 to develop and we need to maintain some of  
20 those walls in some other type of way in  
21 the architecture, so be it, but I'm here to  
22 represent more than families that will  
23 benefit from having a new development that  
24 actually is going to help us continue doing  
25 what we do.

1           We're not going to add any more traffic  
2           to you guys. We only have 50 children. We  
3           have 53 employees, but we're almost one to  
4           one, but this new development also gives us  
5           the opportunity to perhaps have -- and this  
6           is something that I'm talking to them, is  
7           maybe rent some of the commercial space so  
8           our kids can transfer and transition from  
9           being young adults to adults and they have  
10          a little business in that development.  
11          There's going to be apartments there.  
12          Maybe we can also have apartments for  
13          people with disabilities. So this opens a  
14          new scope of opportunities for Gables  
15          residents with disabilities.

16                 Again, thank you for your time. I'm  
17                 bringing you something new to the table,  
18                 but we were -- we're here today to say,  
19                 this is who we are. We want to be here and  
20                 we can work together and make it happen.  
21                 Thank you.

22                         MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you very much.

23                         Yes, ma'am.

24                         MS. LONGO: Good afternoon. My name is  
25                         Maria Cristina Longo, and I own a historic

1 home at 16 Phoenetia Avenue, where I have  
2 resided for almost seven years. 16  
3 Phoenetia Avenue is about a three-minute  
4 walk east from the Garden of Our Lord.  
5 There are four historic homes on Phoenetia  
6 Avenue, including the John Douglas Home and  
7 the rest of the properties on my block are  
8 multi-family apartment buildings.

9 I know this section of my neighborhood  
10 intimately, because I walk my dog, Oliver,  
11 every day on the same route. First, we  
12 stroll to the west of my home on Phoenetia  
13 Avenue to Galiano Street. Then we turn  
14 south on Galiano until we reach Sidonia  
15 Street. From Sidonia Street, we walk east  
16 to East Ponce de Leon Boulevard, and next  
17 we walk north on East Ponce straight to the  
18 Woman's Club, and back home on Phoenetia  
19 Avenue.

20 I urge you to please designate the  
21 Garden of Our Lord historic, based on its  
22 significant aesthetic value to the  
23 neighborhood's character. By the way, I  
24 failed to mention that I'm a small boutique  
25 developer, so I have nothing against

1 development.

2 The aesthetic significance is easily  
3 identifiable, because this garden strongly,  
4 strongly, complements the Woman's Club and  
5 the green corridor on East Ponce de Leon.  
6 The green corridor starts at the small park  
7 on the intersection with Sidonia Street and  
8 East Ponce de Leon. The garden and its  
9 wall were designed by the notable architect  
10 Robert Fitch Smith, which Mr. -- Architect  
11 Jorge Hernandez mentioned him -- so we are  
12 assuming he did it, because his wall is in  
13 the plans -- who is the same architect who  
14 designed the beautiful now Montgomery  
15 Garden at Fairchild Tropical Garden in  
16 1949.

17 The Guardian of Our Lord was designed  
18 intentionally by Fitch Smith to complement  
19 the green corridor on East Ponce de Leon  
20 Boulevard and the historic Woman's Club.  
21 For example, the design and the pattern of  
22 the coral rock on the garden wall and on  
23 the Woman's Club walls are the same. It's  
24 smaller, but it's the same exact pattern.  
25 The pattern of the design of the rock walls

1 on the Montgomery Garden at Fairchild  
2 Tropical Garden is different. Obviously,  
3 this architect had the sensitivity and  
4 cared about context. The garden is not  
5 just a gathering place, but it is also a  
6 key contributor to the historic streetscape  
7 and the pedestrian experience on the green  
8 corridor.

9 I urge you to please evaluate this  
10 garden in the context of its aesthetic  
11 contribution to the green corridor and the  
12 neighborhood, my neighborhood.

13 Additionally, the Ponce neighborhood faces  
14 a challenge, because property owners of the  
15 multi-family properties on Phoenetia Avenue  
16 do not reside on the properties and a large  
17 majority don't even reside in Florida;  
18 therefore, they do not know of the  
19 potential negative effect of the  
20 neighborhood's character and its aesthetic  
21 value if this garden is demolished and  
22 destroyed.

23 I greatly, greatly appreciate your time  
24 and your participation in this very  
25 important Board, and I urge you, again, to

1 please have the moral fortitude to  
2 designate the Garden of Our Lord historic.  
3 Thank you for your time.

4 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

5 MR. JUDE: Good afternoon. My name is  
6 Peter Jude, and I thank you for allowing me  
7 to speak today and thank you for serving on  
8 this Board.

9 I'm here today to speak for my mother,  
10 Sallye Jude, who on December 21st left us  
11 here on earth. My mother would absolutely  
12 have been here today, if she was still  
13 alive. Even at the age of 96, she  
14 continued, until her last days, to work to  
15 preserve our community's historic  
16 properties.

17 I just want to read one part of the  
18 letter that is in your packet that she  
19 wrote, along with Dolly MacIntyre. "The  
20 Garden of Our Lord is the highest and best  
21 use of land on which it sits. What higher  
22 use could there be than a garden dedicated  
23 to God? Surely, the developer can be  
24 creative in his design for luxury condos  
25 and make use of the Garden as an amenity

1 for the project." Thank you.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

3 MR. CRUZ: Hello, Elvis Cruz. I have  
4 participated in the formulation of four  
5 separate historic districts. I've been a  
6 historic preservation activist for over 40  
7 years. And I've read the designation  
8 report and I found it remarkably  
9 well-written and replete with reasons to  
10 historically designate this property.

11 I was surprised by some of the things I  
12 heard as reasons to not designate it. Let  
13 me point out that a property does not have  
14 to have bodies buried in it to be consider  
15 historic. Nor does a property have to have  
16 Biblical plants planted on it to be  
17 historic. Also, there are many existing  
18 parks across our country that were once  
19 platted as residential land. Also, it's  
20 understood that this property, this Garden,  
21 goes back to 1951. So using the 1920s plat  
22 maps to argue against it is somewhat  
23 disingenuous.

24 In closing, you have a golden  
25 opportunity to do something wonderful for

1 the City of Coral Gables to preserve the  
2 scale, the cultural character and the  
3 ambience of this area, so please do the  
4 right thing and approve this designation.  
5 Thank you.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

7 MS. HOPPE: Hello, I'm Jessica Hoppe,  
8 and this is my son, Valentino Garcia  
9 Rodriguez. We are -- I'm a parent of one  
10 of the students that attends Crystal  
11 Academy, and I appreciate Coral Gables and  
12 all it does to preserve the beauty, but I  
13 appreciate it more for looking forward into  
14 the future, and I've seen everything you  
15 guys have done for autism, all of the  
16 events, the people you've hired here, the  
17 -- yeah, just even everything in the City,  
18 the cars that you've done.

19 And as a parent, finding a place like  
20 Crystal Academy is amazing, but finding  
21 people at a community that's working  
22 towards what my son's future is going to  
23 look like is even more important. Yes, I  
24 have -- we've worked very hard, since the  
25 age of two, but knowing that he would have



1 a place potentially to live and to work and  
2 people that support that means even more to  
3 me than -- I mean, you guys have done a  
4 great job. Everything is beautiful here.  
5 But now I would like my son to be able to  
6 speak.

7 MR. GARCIA RODRIGUEZ: So I am the  
8 older brother of who she was just talking  
9 about, and I really -- like if this  
10 garden -- like are you talking about  
11 designating a wall historical?

12 MS. HOPPE: You've got to just speak --

13 MR. GARCIA-RODRIGUEZ: Oh.

14 MS. HOPPE: Yeah.

15 MR. GARCIA-RODRIGUEZ: Okay. So I  
16 really do think that it shouldn't, because  
17 this school could be built here and it  
18 could help a bunch of kids in their future,  
19 and, then, if you guys don't build this, it  
20 will just make so many lives just suffer.  
21 So if you could really designate any like  
22 place on this earth historical, because it  
23 was all made at the same time, but this  
24 place could be used as a very useful thing  
25 for a lot of other kids, that really do

1           need it, like my little brother.

2           So, yeah, I just wanted to say that,  
3           and so, yes, I do think that the school  
4           should be built there.

5           MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

6           MS. CRUZ: My name is Maria Cruz. I've  
7           been a resident of the City of Coral Gables  
8           since 1976. I am a little concerned. We  
9           were told by Mr. Warren that, really, we  
10          did not have to look into what the purpose  
11          of the property was going to be. He put it  
12          up. It has no bearing on this matter what  
13          the development was going to be, what it  
14          was going to be used for, and, then, at the  
15          end, he brought it up. So, you know, it is  
16          very confusing to someone like me. I'm a  
17          retired educator. I'm not an expert. I'm  
18          not an expert. I'm just a resident that  
19          cares about this City a lot and has taken a  
20          lot of heat for it.

21          You have in your possession letters  
22          from well-known nationally recognized  
23          experts. The City has done very well  
24          bringing local experts, that somehow have  
25          something to gain from this. You will see

1           that most of the people that are here  
2           asking you to consider granting this  
3           designation, we have nothing to gain.  
4           We're not going to get anything from it.  
5           We're not working for the developer. We're  
6           not going to benefit by having the school.

7           I'm sorry, there's plenty of property  
8           in Coral Gables, that if they really want  
9           to help them, they can build the school  
10          someplace else in the City of Coral Gables.  
11          You know, it really -- as a teacher, it  
12          bothers me when you use children as excuses  
13          for what you want. I'm sorry. I do  
14          believe that they deserve to have a school,  
15          but the school doesn't have to be there.  
16          It could be in any other property. This  
17          developer could go out, find another  
18          property in the City of Coral Gables, and  
19          build the school. It doesn't have to be  
20          there, okay.

21          Your job is to decide whether this  
22          Garden of the Lord should be designated as  
23          historic. Your job certainly should not be  
24          whether the children are going to benefit,  
25          whether the project is going to be

1           fantastic, that has nothing to do with  
2           this, as far as we were directed by Warren  
3           Adams. I know that, at the end, he threw  
4           that in, because that helped the issue on  
5           his side.

6           I submit to you that there are two  
7           women, that we all loved, that we all  
8           consider very important to the history of  
9           the City of Coral Gables. One was Roxcy  
10          Bolton. And you have her daughter here  
11          representing her. And the other one was  
12          Sallye Jude. And I can tell you that those  
13          two women are looking down at you to see  
14          how this is going to go. If they were  
15          here, I can tell you that -- Sallye just  
16          passed away at 96, she would have been  
17          here. If she had lasted a few more days,  
18          you would have listened to her.

19          And I can tell you, somebody that  
20          worked very closely to Roxcy, who learned  
21          what I do now as advocate for the residents  
22          of the City from Roxcy, that she would have  
23          been here, no doubt in my mind, to tell you  
24          that this Garden of the Lord should be  
25          preserved historic, and I'm so happy that

1           you have a good show of residents here that  
2           have nothing to gain, nothing to benefit  
3           from, and are here to defend this garden.

4           Thank you very much.

5           MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

6           MS. BIONDO: Hello. My name is Rebekah  
7           Biondo, and my son, Harrison, is a student  
8           at Crystal Academy, and I thank you for  
9           your time today and your consideration.

10          I would agree that we should keep the  
11          comments today focused on the use of the  
12          land, and I think that means something  
13          different to of all us, because when my son  
14          was diagnosed with autism at one year old,  
15          he began his time at the current property  
16          on the Crystal Academy, And for those of  
17          you who think that location may not mean  
18          something, it does mean something to these  
19          children. He learned there to talk. He  
20          learned there to write. And every single  
21          day, when he gets out of his bed, he now  
22          says, "School. School. School."

23          And when we pull in that driveway -- if  
24          we go the wrong direction, if we -- you  
25          know, there's a detour, he starts crying,

1           because that property means something to  
2           him. It is so great to hear what the  
3           residents feel when they're walking down  
4           the street approaching the property,  
5           because I have the same feeling, but it  
6           means something different to me.

7           My son has been there since he's been  
8           one years old, as I had mentioned, and do  
9           believe that the residents have something  
10          to benefit from having us there. I'm happy  
11          that we're focused on the aesthetics of the  
12          building, but I implore you to go look in  
13          the backyard and look at the garden and  
14          look at the children playing there every  
15          day, and I would suggest that the residents  
16          can go spend time there, and they'll get a  
17          lot out of it, if that's the point, in  
18          using the neighborhood.

19          I just would implore you to go look how  
20          the property is being used and think about  
21          what it means. Hearing about Mary's plans  
22          to continue to broaden the use of the  
23          community to support these children is just  
24          incredible, and I would ask you to consider  
25          that location means something to us.

1           Location is the school, location is the  
2           people, location is the community, and it  
3           is a part of every day for our children  
4           learning to adjust and thrive in this  
5           community, and they can thrive and  
6           contribute to your community. That's what  
7           we're all here for.

8           And so the personal aspect for us as  
9           parents, it is the property, it is so much  
10          more than that, but please consider what we  
11          have there and what we're looking to build  
12          and continue to add to the community.

13          My son had to leave. He could not stay  
14          for the community -- or for this meeting,  
15          but, again, every milestone that he has had  
16          has been at that site. So, please, don't  
17          just call it another site. That's not what  
18          it is to us.

19          So thank you for your time.

20          MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

21          MS. HAUB: My name is Noelle Haub. My  
22          parents owned 1119 Coral Way for 64 years.  
23          It's a Fink home. I've lived next to this  
24          property for 25 years. I think the Garden  
25          should be designated historic to keep the

1 integrity of the neighborhood, the Woman's  
2 Club and everything.

3 Everyone's talking about, like they're  
4 going to build this, and it's just a  
5 school. It's not a school. It has to work  
6 within the neighborhood. If we keep our  
7 green spaces, it's for the benefit of  
8 everyone, including the children. We need  
9 the green spaces. To just bulldoze it, to  
10 put who knows what, or we do know, is just  
11 criminal. It doesn't work with the  
12 integrity of the neighborhood.

13 I've been here my whole life. My  
14 mother has come before you guys, fought you  
15 guys, won, so you designated the  
16 neighborhood. I'm not asking you to  
17 designate the neighborhood. I know it's  
18 going to be developed. But it's  
19 multi-family. Our buildings are two and  
20 three stories. Keep it like a community  
21 instead of -- if I wanted to live in a high  
22 rise on Ponce and be part of that kind of  
23 community, I would go there, but I don't.

24 I like the community. I like being  
25 able to walk. I like being able to go into



1 St. James. Is it in disrepair? Sure.  
2 That's what people do when they want  
3 something to go away. They let it fall  
4 into disrepair. They did it to George  
5 Merrick's sister's home, at the corner of  
6 Castile and Coral Way. A gentleman bought  
7 it, wanted to tear it down, you guys said,  
8 no. What did he do? He left it open  
9 through the hurricane season. It rotted.  
10 It collapsed within itself. He waited out  
11 a Commission Board. The Commission  
12 changed. They approved something that  
13 doesn't look anything like what was there.

14 It's important to keep this City --  
15 this is why we live in this City. This is  
16 why we have insane rules that other people  
17 go, "My God, you put up with that?" And  
18 it's like, "Yeah, I like it. It means that  
19 I can walk down the street at night and not  
20 have horrible things."

21 I mean, my father was a prominent  
22 doctor here in this City. Everybody knew  
23 him. We were there -- before the  
24 Courthouse was the Courthouse one Ponce de  
25 Leon. I've watched this City and what's

1 going on is just really sad. Thank you.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

3 MS. MARR: Hello, Joanne Marr, a Member  
4 of the Villagers, Chair of the Governing  
5 Board and Docent at the Merrick House. I  
6 live at 1225 Valencia Avenue.

7 The Douglas Entrance was once called  
8 the finest of all of Coral Gables' noble  
9 gateways, but for Sallye Jude, Dolly  
10 MacIntyre and other like-minded individuals  
11 who founded the Villagers, it would now be  
12 a supermarket and parking lot.

13 The Biltmore Hotel, which opened to  
14 grand fanfare in 1926 and is a City jewel  
15 today, was considered an abandoned eyesore  
16 in the '80s. Many wanted it gone. Dorothy  
17 Thomson cast the final deciding vote.

18 William Philbrick worked for ten years  
19 to convince the City that George Merrick's  
20 family home, which had fallen into a sad  
21 state of neglect was worth saving. Without  
22 people like Sallye, Dolly, and here I'll  
23 add Arva Moore Parks, who recognized that  
24 disrepair, neglect, unpopularity or being  
25 out of fashion does not render a historic

1 property valueless, we would have no  
2 Douglas Entrance, no Biltmore, no Merrick  
3 House, to tell the story of the man who  
4 brought our City Beautiful into being.

5 Now, I know many of you are thinking,  
6 what, you are lumping a wall in with these  
7 significant structures? That's  
8 preposterous? Well, consider that we  
9 appreciate those significant structures  
10 today, but that wasn't always the case.  
11 They were very nearly lost. And to me, the  
12 garden is so much more than a wall.

13 As I considered the use of native  
14 limestone, which addresses Criterion 4,  
15 under Architectural Significance, and  
16 Criterion 2, under Aesthetics Significance,  
17 it strikes me that the benches and walkways  
18 and grotto within the garden are not only  
19 in concert and scale with the things, the  
20 Woman's Club across the street, but are  
21 also very similar to the grotto at the  
22 Merrick House and the wall that has been  
23 rebuilt on that property. That wall,  
24 recently celebrated with a ribbon cutting  
25 ceremony attended by Mayors and

1           Commissioners, was the product of fifteen  
2           years of concerted effort by the House's  
3           Board of Governors.

4           We hail and celebrate the use of local  
5           materials that contribute to the  
6           distinctive quality or identity of one part  
7           of the City, and yet, if the garden is not  
8           designated historic, those same local  
9           materials will be destined to the rubble  
10          pile. I believe it's wasteful and  
11          shortsighted and the garden is so much more  
12          than a wall.

13          Each morning, during my recent visit to  
14          the Yucatan Peninsula, I stood beneath a  
15          giant tree and witnessed the symphony and  
16          spectacle of a breakfast feast that took  
17          place within its branches, yellow breasted  
18          social fly catchers, orange trogon speckled  
19          woodpeckers and white-winged doves gathered  
20          by the hundreds. The tree at the center of  
21          the Garden of Our Lord hosts a similar meal  
22          for cardinals, doves, blue jays,  
23          woodpeckers and more.

24          In designing the garden, Robert Fitch  
25          created a green space. He may not have

1           planted those trees, he may not have  
2           designed it, but he created a green space  
3           for which he would be celebrated, and as I  
4           quote, he worked tirelessly for  
5           neighborhood development to preserve the  
6           breathing space that brought people to  
7           Miami. And this quote has already been  
8           read. In his own words, "It's too bad that  
9           neighborhood planning could not have guided  
10          Miami from the start, but it's not too late  
11          to do a good job with it."

12                 You have heard that the City does not  
13          designate historic just any property by a  
14          prominent architect, only the best  
15          examples. In designing a contemplative  
16          garden in concert with our subtropical  
17          climate, one that provides a visual and  
18          physical respite, honors those who have  
19          made the ultimate sacrifice for our  
20          country, provides virtual and literal food  
21          for humans and animals -- you can tell  
22          where my emotions lie, every time I mention  
23          animals. But anyway -- virtual food for  
24          humans and animals and embodies the garden  
25          city precepts that have made Coral Gables

1 the City Beautiful.

2 Robert Fitch Smith created not just a  
3 home for one family, like a wonderful home  
4 like Java had, not just a home for one  
5 family, but a truly sacred special place  
6 for many, whether they visit on foot, by  
7 vehicle or in the case of our feathered  
8 friends, who depend on Coral Gables being a  
9 bird sanctuary by air. Shouldn't that be  
10 considered a best example?

11 The Garden of Our Lord retains its  
12 historic integrity and significantly  
13 contributes to the historic fabric of the  
14 North Ponce Conservation District and the  
15 City of Coral Gables. It's so much more  
16 than a wall.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

19 MR. SOKOLOFF: Hi. Good afternoon, I'm  
20 Gordon Sokoloff, 225 Alesio Avenue, Coral  
21 Gables, Florida. I'm born and raised in  
22 the Gables. I'm almost as old as the  
23 Garden that we're talking about. And I  
24 used to serve on the Transportation Board  
25 for eight years, as its chairman for two,

1 and as a Vice Chair of the Parking Advisory  
2 Board. I was also president and founder of  
3 the Ponce Neighbors Association.

4 And my involvement on these boards and  
5 on these Committees have been to try to  
6 preserve what is always a fight in the City  
7 of Coral Gables, and it's not a fight  
8 against developers, but it's a fight  
9 against overdevelopment and just trying to  
10 maintain the quality of Coral Gables.  
11 Coral Gables is a special place. We all  
12 agree with that. And what keeps it special  
13 is the character.

14 And there were two previous speakers,  
15 one spoke about the environment around this  
16 property and I think the compatibility is  
17 something you shouldn't ignore. It's right  
18 across the street from the Coral Gables  
19 Woman's Club, which has the same kind of  
20 coral rock configurations.

21 And I think that -- I'm in favor of you  
22 trying to -- if it's possible, and I don't  
23 know if it is, if there's a way to dissect  
24 out the garden. If I heard it correctly,  
25 Mr. Adams, I don't know if he's still here,

1 but it was on ten different lots that  
2 comprised the site. If there's a way for  
3 the developer to somehow compromise and  
4 dissect out the garden and build around it  
5 and preserve it, it would be something  
6 wonderful to do.

7 The garden is just very, very old and  
8 it should remain. Thank you.

9 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

10 MR. CEBALLOS: Just as a friendly  
11 reminder to the public that is speaking,  
12 please let us know if you have not been  
13 sworn in. If you are going to be providing  
14 sworn testimony, you need to be sworn in.

15 And, additionally, the property owner  
16 has yet to speak. An opportunity for  
17 public comment will be allowed after that,  
18 as well.

19 MR. RAMET: Hi. Good afternoon. My  
20 name is Jean-Baptiste Ramet. I live in the  
21 Gables. And I come here as the dad of a  
22 six-year-old non-verbal kid, who's  
23 attending Crystal Academy. I'm also a  
24 member of the University of Miami Center of  
25 Autism and Disability. I'm a board member



1           there.

2                   And we definitely take this issue  
3           seriously. I've dropped my son several  
4           times at that schools -- several times;  
5           hundreds of times -- and I've walked into  
6           that church several times for their shows.  
7           I've never seen that garden -- I've never  
8           noticed it. And I'm not an architect. I'm  
9           not a historian. I love living in Coral  
10          Gables. I love everything, you know, about  
11          the Coral Gables design and history, but I  
12          never noticed that Garden and I've been  
13          there countless times.

14                   I'm not here to talk explicitly about  
15          the needs or autism, but the infrastructure  
16          is definitely one of them, and finding a  
17          project in which a very qualitative school,  
18          delivering a really qualitative service, to  
19          a very underserved community, is given an  
20          opportunity to improve its infrastructures  
21          and deliver better service to even more  
22          kids, I see this as an opportunity. And  
23          I'll finish on just God's work -- you know,  
24          this is God's garden. I pray to God every  
25          day, and I thank God every day for having

1           these people in my life, for having people  
2           that are able to build a school, for the  
3           therapists that are able to provide this  
4           service and I'm truly grateful for God's  
5           work and these people.

6           To me, this is worth more than the  
7           Garden, and this also is God's work. So I  
8           didn't come as prepared and as organized,  
9           but I just wanted to give a heartfelt, you  
10          know, opinion from a resident and a parent  
11          of a non-verbal kid.

12          Thank you very much.

13          MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

14          MS. RIAN: Hello. Excuse me, I've had  
15          a little bit of an issue for about a month,  
16          so I don't think it's a cold. I think it's  
17          allergies.

18          I just moved to 29 Santillane Number --  
19          Santillane, according to the Coral Gables  
20          folks, Number 4. I just bought it in  
21          December.

22          As a new resident, one of the things  
23          I'm doing a lot is walking my dogs -- my  
24          dog, and one of the first things I actually  
25          noticed was the character of the

1 neighborhood, which is very low key, that  
2 people are very friendly, that there are  
3 these old growth trees, including in that  
4 Garden, and one of the first things I  
5 noticed was the plaques on the side of the  
6 Garden wall and the Garden wall itself.

7 So, to me, the character of that Garden  
8 really does contribute to the character of  
9 the neighborhood, and not just the wall,  
10 but the trees and the plants contained  
11 within it. I don't really care that they  
12 are not plants from Israel, although that  
13 would be kind of cool, too, if you wanted  
14 to restore it. I do support development  
15 happening to the right tracts in the City.  
16 Along my street, there are seven older  
17 multi-family buildings. I'm expecting at  
18 least two of those probably to get knocked  
19 down in the next year, and I don't regret  
20 that that's going to happen. I don't think  
21 those buildings are historic. But I do  
22 think this garden is a historic property,  
23 and I urge you to consider designating it  
24 as such.

25 Thank you, Bye.

1 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

2 Anyone in the audience to speak in  
3 favor or opposition of this case?

4 MS. MUNIZ: Hi. Good afternoon. My  
5 name is Laura Muniz, and I'm a resident of  
6 Coral Gables.

7 THE SECRETARY: Tell us your name.

8 MS. MUNIZ: Laura Muniz. I'm a  
9 resident of Coral Gables, and I also work  
10 at Crystal Academy. I am the department  
11 head for Behavior Services and I've been  
12 serving children with autism over the last  
13 ten years of my life.

14 I did not come prepared, but I was  
15 highly motivated by the speakers that I've  
16 been listening to, and I am a firm  
17 supporter of the cause of the development,  
18 not only -- I think history is important.  
19 The Garden, it's a beautiful place, but,  
20 honestly, over the last eight years that  
21 I've been at Crystal Academy, no one has  
22 ever really visited the Garden.

23 The fact is that even the area is a  
24 little bit dangerous, not only for the  
25 kids, but even for people who walk around.

1           If you go and observe, there are syringes  
2           on the sides, there's food, there's debris,  
3           there's a lot of trash, and us, there, who  
4           work at Crystal Academy, we try to maintain  
5           it clean. We do have our kids actually  
6           working on learning how to do maintenance  
7           work, because, at the end of the day, this  
8           is their community, and we want to keep it  
9           clean, we want to keep it safe, for them  
10          and for everyone that resides in this area.

11                 We do love the work that we do and the  
12          population that we serve. So today I'm  
13          here, not only for myself, as a resident,  
14          but for the kids that I represent and I  
15          advocate for them and their futures. So  
16          it's not about using children, because I do  
17          see myself as an educator, but, really,  
18          like talking about their future and what  
19          it's going to be like. A lot of us won't  
20          be here for many, many years, but they  
21          will. They are our future. And if we  
22          don't look out for them, then who will?

23                 So this a very emotional cause for me,  
24          because this is my life's work and seeing  
25          them fulfill their destiny is really

1           important, and I think it's important for  
2           us to take care of them and our city, as  
3           well.

4           So thank you so much for listening  
5           today.

6           MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

7           (Inaudible.)

8           MS. RIVAS: Yes, I'm sworn in.

9           Hello. My name is Gabriela Rivas, and  
10          I live on Calabria Ave, like two or three  
11          blocks away from the Garden. And aside  
12          from that, I also work at Crystal Academy.

13          In the two, three years that I've been  
14          in the area, I've really never seen anyone  
15          go to the Garden or use the Garden, and  
16          it's always been a source of danger, in my  
17          perspective. I walk my dog in the area a  
18          lot and I've always had to avoid that  
19          certain corner, because it's just very  
20          dark. If you've ever looked inside, it's  
21          completely overgrown. Nobody has ever  
22          worked to maintain it. And this, now, with  
23          the new development, it's the first time  
24          that I've heard of anyone actually wanting  
25          to take care and maintain the Garden. So I

1 don't think that it should be assigned as  
2 historical.

3 Thank you for your time.

4 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

5 MS. HAUB: When everybody talks  
6 about --

7 THE SECRETARY: Can you step up to the  
8 mike?

9 MR. MENENDEZ: The microphone, please.  
10 State your name and speak into the  
11 microphone.

12 MS. HAUB: Noelle Haub. Noelle Haub.  
13 They've mentioned that it's dark and it's  
14 overgrown on the swale. That's not the  
15 Garden's responsibility. That's Coral  
16 Gables.

17 So if the lights don't work -- and that  
18 happens on East Ponce all of the time.  
19 That's not Garden's fault. That's the City  
20 of Coral Gables. If the trash cans aren't  
21 emptied, that's the City of Coral Gables,  
22 not the Garden. And I've walked that  
23 neighborhood for 25 years. Never have I  
24 seen a syringe on the ground.

25 Thank you. Never. Never.

1           MR. NAVARRO: I just want to clarify, I  
2 think the speaker was referring to inside  
3 the Garden, which is a private area, which  
4 is unlit, poorly maintained and the  
5 landscaping is kind of --

6           MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

7           THE SECRETARY: State your name, please.

8           MR. NAVARRO: For the record, Jorge  
9 Navarro, with offices at 333 Southeast 2nd  
10 Avenue. Thank you.

11          MR. MENENDEZ: Anybody else in the  
12 audience who would like to speak in favor  
13 or opposition? Please come up.

14          MR. HERRERA: Hi. Good evening. My  
15 name is Carlos Herrera. My daughter  
16 attends Crystal Academy, and I've been  
17 dropping her off for the past ten years.  
18 And the way I see it, this is the first  
19 time that I really noticed, when all of  
20 this came about, about this -- trying to  
21 historically preservate this site.

22                 It's a dilapidated garden. It's a  
23 wall. It's like any other wall that I walk  
24 by in Coral Gables. There's a bigger  
25 purpose than just a garden and just a wall,



1 and we have our kids and -- that need a  
2 place, that are very -- they need  
3 consistency, and by providing this  
4 development, which doesn't have a big  
5 impact, it's a low impact development, and  
6 the ability that our kids could go there,  
7 play, work, live, it's -- I think it's part  
8 of their development. It's very difficult  
9 to find a developer that has -- that is  
10 just giving us this opportunity to provide  
11 this to our kids.

12 So I don't see anything special with  
13 this site. It's just another block. It  
14 looks like another backyard of any of the  
15 houses in Coral Gables. It doesn't look  
16 nothing special. It's a dilapidated  
17 church, a couple of houses, and there's the  
18 school in the back. So it's really -- this  
19 is not the Biltmore. You can't compare  
20 this with the Biltmore or the Venetian Pool  
21 or Merrick's House or anything like that.

22 This is just a wall, with a couple of  
23 crumbling houses and a church that nobody  
24 attended to. So thank you very much.

25 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

1           MR. LOPEZ: Hi. My name is Erik Lopez.  
2           I reside in Coral Gables. I was born and  
3           raised here. And while my current  
4           profession is that I own a jewelry store a  
5           few blocks from the proposed location,  
6           prior to that I was an urban planner. So I  
7           have a little bit of experience with it.  
8           One of my bigger projects that I worked on  
9           was the Rouse project, also known as  
10          Merrick Park. I'm very familiar with what  
11          is required to make something historically  
12          significantly, and I do not feel that this  
13          dilapidated wall meets the criteria.

14                 Aside from that, like many other people  
15          here, I have a child that attends Crystal  
16          Academy, and the school provides us, the  
17          future of Coral Gables, our children,  
18          shelter, and that wall keeps people out.  
19          Nobody goes to that park. Nobody goes to  
20          that garden. I think anyone suggesting  
21          otherwise is not being truthful. And I  
22          walk from my home to my store every day,  
23          that same neighborhood, and I walk my son  
24          after school, that same neighborhood. I  
25          don't see people hanging out there. It's

1 not a place that people use. It's not a  
2 place that people enjoy.

3 It's a dilapidated wall, and it's not  
4 maintained. It's not historically  
5 significant. It's not attractive. It  
6 doesn't draw people into our community.  
7 Walls keep people out. I'm not in favor.  
8 Thank you.

9 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

10 MR. YASSEEN: Hello. My name is Omar  
11 Yasseen. I live on Ponce de Leon  
12 Boulevard. Good afternoon, and thank you  
13 for the opportunity to come up here and  
14 speak to you today. I stand before you to  
15 advocate for the historic designation of  
16 the Garden of Our Lord.

17 As many of you already know, the Garden  
18 of Our Lord is a recognizable landmark  
19 within our community, that is currently  
20 under risk for demolition to make way for a  
21 condo.

22 I grew up in Coral Gables and I've  
23 lived here all 37 years of my life. All of  
24 this time, I have lived close to the Garden  
25 and I've watched it play an important role

1 in our community. The Garden of Our Lord  
2 is a place of peace and tranquility, a  
3 reprieve from the hustle and bustle of  
4 every day life. It is not just another  
5 piece of property. The Garden is over  
6 seventy years old and was built by Robert  
7 Fitch Smith, a man who has played a pivotal  
8 role in building many historic sites in our  
9 City.

10 Losing this Garden would be like losing  
11 a part of our history as a community. If  
12 it is demolished, it can never be replaced.  
13 Coral Gables is known for its green spaces  
14 and historic sites, and destroying the  
15 Garden will only further take away from the  
16 City's origins and original vision. I urge  
17 you to do everything in your power to save  
18 the Garden of Our Lord. This is a property  
19 that needs to be preserved and protected,  
20 and I hope you will give it the  
21 consideration it deserves. Thank you.

22 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

23 MS. BURR: Good evening. My name is  
24 Robin Burr. I'm a member of the Coral  
25 Gables Woman's Club for 22 years and I'm

1 currently the historian and we're about to  
2 celebrate our Centennial, so we're very  
3 proud of that and the history in our block.

4 I would like to see the Garden be  
5 preserved, because it has great historical,  
6 cultural and architectural significance.  
7 But not only that, think about the tree  
8 canopy, the large trees that have been  
9 there for 72 years. I know that people  
10 have to get permits to cut down trees in  
11 their yards, so what about preserving these  
12 trees that are quite old?

13 I think, with everything in the world,  
14 there's compromise, so maybe there's a way  
15 to compromise and keep the Garden and  
16 develop around it. So, thank you.

17 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

18 MS. MARTINEZ: Good evening. My name  
19 is Ruth Martinez. I'm a resident of Coral  
20 Gables. I live at 35 Sevilla Avenue. I  
21 would urge the Board to consider  
22 designating the Garden historic. It is a  
23 very significant area within that -- you  
24 know, that community and it complements the  
25 aesthetic value of the green corridor.

1           And, also, the native limestone that is  
2           used in the wall complements the limestone  
3           that is used at the Coral Gables Woman's  
4           Club, which is right across the street.

5           So I don't -- you know, Robin has  
6           spoken and I would just ask you to  
7           consider, you know, the historic  
8           designation. And I also think that  
9           incorporating the Garden in some way -- I'm  
10          not an architect, nor do I know a whole lot  
11          about landscape, although I love beautiful  
12          landscapes, that it wouldn't be -- I don't  
13          think it would be out of the question to  
14          work with the developer about  
15          incorporating, you know, this Garden into  
16          what is going to be built, without, let me  
17          say, affecting the building -- you know,  
18          the inclusion of a new school.

19          We work with Crystal Academy. We have  
20          a dental clinic that we run. We have had  
21          it since 1939. We provide services -- free  
22          services for low income children, but we  
23          have been working with the children of  
24          Crystal Academy for about five years,  
25          because it's more difficult for them to go

1 to a dentist. So, because of the close  
2 proximity, it's easy for them to come, to  
3 take a look, you know, to feel what that's  
4 like. So, I mean, we recognize -- and we  
5 have done projects, as well, with Crystal  
6 Academy. We're not against -- you know, we  
7 understand that they maybe need a new place  
8 and that that development of the school is  
9 important, but -- so, anyway, I ask you to  
10 consider in favor. Thank you.

11 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

12 Anyone else in the audience who would  
13 like to speak?

14 MS. MARTINEZ-CARBONEL: My name is  
15 Karelia Martinez-Carbonel. I am president  
16 of the Historic Preservation Association,  
17 and as you have heard, our organization is  
18 a hundred percent supportive of this  
19 request, but today I am speaking  
20 personally.

21 And I live at 532 Altara Avenue. I've  
22 been a resident of Coral Gables for over 30  
23 years. And I do have a statement that I'd  
24 like to read, but, first, I'd like to just  
25 make three points.

1           And the request, in the beginning, to  
2           abide by the fact that the development  
3           should not be mentioned, was not abided by,  
4           and for that reason, with all due respect  
5           with Crystal Academy, all of that should,  
6           obviously, not be considered, because  
7           that -- we're here for a historic  
8           designation. If we were to consider every  
9           project, when we consider a landmark, then  
10          we would not have Historic Ordinances,  
11          because you're going to have people  
12          obviously disagree.

13                 So, in the matter that our Ordinance,  
14                 and obviously our National Preservation Act  
15                 was written, is that we have to  
16                 independently look at what's being  
17                 requested, in terms of designation, and  
18                 only one criteria is needed.

19                 And the third point, before I get into  
20                 my comment, is that the whole issue, again,  
21                 with all due respect with Crystal Academy,  
22                 there's a zoning issue. The developer  
23                 bought this parcel -- and, again, I am  
24                 talking about this, because it was brought  
25                 up. This parcel is not zoned for what the



1 developer is trying or proposing to build.  
2 It is zoned as an Institutional Religious.  
3 So the school being promised may not  
4 happen. It's a promise. But he has no  
5 control over that zoning issue, only the  
6 Commissioners. So all these requests,  
7 again, should not affect what you have to,  
8 as a Board, decide today.

9 So here's my comment. Today you have  
10 heard testimony qualifying the historical  
11 significance of the Garden of Our Lord at  
12 110 Phoenetia Avenue under Section 8 of the  
13 Coral Gables Zoning Code. Under the Code,  
14 a property must meet at least one criteria.  
15 The Garden has been identified with, I  
16 believe it was seven, today, each one  
17 meeting the threshold under the City's  
18 Ordinance, and as per the Code, only one is  
19 needed to qualify the resource for local  
20 landmark status.

21 In conjunction with the above, I will  
22 highlight one area of the Code and place  
23 the Garden of Our Lord in a much higher  
24 standing, no pun intended. The Code  
25 states, to qualify for designation as a

1 Local Historic Landmark, individual  
2 properties must have significant character,  
3 interest or value as part of the  
4 historical, cultural, archeological  
5 aesthetic or architectural heritage of the  
6 city, state or nation. My focus will add a  
7 national component to the Garden's  
8 significant character and national value.

9 According to research, at the time the  
10 Garden was completed in the early 1950s, it  
11 was one of only three Biblical Gardens in  
12 the nation. This, in itself, raises the  
13 Garden's pedigree to national prominence.  
14 Fast-forward four decades later, and the  
15 Garden continued to retain its importance,  
16 ranked among the most significant gardens  
17 nationally and internationally in Allan  
18 Swenson's 1994 book, *Plants of the Bible*.

19 Swenson, an author of more than thirty  
20 gardening books, includes three Biblical  
21 Gardens in *Plants of the Bible*, and he  
22 places the Garden of Our Lord, founded in  
23 1951, on the same level of significance as  
24 New York's St. John the Divine, founded in  
25 1973, and Israel's Neot Kedumim, founded in

1           1965, known as the largest, most extensive  
2           Biblical Garden of our world. In fact, the  
3           Garden of Our Lord was the earliest of the  
4           three gardens named. Swenson refers to the  
5           Garden of Our Lord as another excellent  
6           Biblical Garden, a sanctuary of peace and  
7           inspiration open to the public in Coral  
8           Gables.

9           Additionally, the Garden's creation was  
10          of national significance from the start.  
11          The Garden Committee hired, not just any  
12          architect to design the Garden, but the  
13          best qualified award winning architect,  
14          Robert Fitch Smith, who was nationally  
15          renowned for his subtropical design  
16          integrations and ecclesiastical work.

17          And along with hiring Fitch Smith to  
18          design the Garden, the Committee  
19          commissioned nationally recognized  
20          pre-eminent sculptor of the time, Bernhard  
21          Zuckerman, of New York City and Avenza,  
22          Italy, to create a statute of Christ carved  
23          from a solid block of white marble from the  
24          Rubicone District of Carrara Italy,  
25          weighing almost eight tons in the rough.

1 The finished, hand-carved, one of a kind  
2 statute, weighs two tons and measures  
3 seven-and-a-half feet and it's placed at  
4 the head of the coral rock grotto.

5 The statute was a gift of Mrs. Caroline  
6 Hackett of Coral Gables in memory of her  
7 parents. The statute was unveiled and  
8 dedicated in June 1953 with much fanfare  
9 and given exclusive heights to the  
10 original. The master statute continues to  
11 stand today inside in the Garden.

12 Zuckerman, who died in 1980, and I'm going  
13 to put his work in perspective, had an  
14 extensive portfolio. His work comprises  
15 many bronze and marble statutes throughout  
16 the Country, including one, the largest  
17 reproduction in marble in the world, of  
18 Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting of the  
19 Last Supper, placed in the center of  
20 Woodlands Garden of the Last Supper in  
21 Orlando.

22 Zuckerman's Miami's Pieta placed in  
23 Woodlawn Cemetery is a reproduction in  
24 marble taken from the same quarry in  
25 Carrara, Italy used by the Sixteenth

1 Century master artist Michaelangelo.  
2 Zuckerman had exclusive rights from the  
3 Vatican to reproduce the iconic sculpture.  
4 And in 1966, the marble memorial to  
5 President John F. Kennedy was placed in  
6 Tampa's Plant Park. Zuckerman's many other  
7 significant works are found throughout the  
8 nation and continue to be heralded today as  
9 masterpieces in marble.

10 So, Members, as you debate the several  
11 qualifying criteria, and only one is needed  
12 to designate, supported by the body of  
13 research and testimony presented today  
14 identifying the Garden of Our Lord as a  
15 significant historic resource, also  
16 consider the Garden's national value of its  
17 historical, cultural and aesthetic  
18 heritage. Robert Fitch Smith and Bernard  
19 Zuckerman's works qualify for national  
20 importance under Section 8 of the Coral  
21 Gables Zoning Code.

22 Seventy plus years ago, two national  
23 luminaries came together in Coral Gables to  
24 create masterpieces of Biblical  
25 proportions, blessing our City beautifully

1 with national significance, and for that  
2 reason, this Garden is worthy of a  
3 miraculous intervention.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

6 Anyone else in the audience who would  
7 like to speak?

8 Please.

9 MS. PACKARD: Good evening, everyone,  
10 and thank you for the opportunity to  
11 express my views tonight. My name is  
12 Judith Packard. I've lived in the Gables  
13 for 39 years, and I am a retired school  
14 teacher.

15 So I was very sadden to hear that the  
16 Garden of Our Lord could be taken down and  
17 replaced with offices and condos. This  
18 historic site is not only a charming and  
19 beautiful oasis in the City, as many have  
20 said, but it serves an important  
21 educational purposes, teaching the public  
22 about botany, Biblical history, and  
23 honoring heroic individuals. I would like  
24 to request that those responsible please  
25 approve a historic designation for this

1 unique garden, since it meets the criteria.  
2 Its destruction would make the area less  
3 desirable to live in and would be a  
4 terrible loss for the City of Coral Gables.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

7 MR. MOONEY: Good evening, everybody.  
8 For the record, my name is Tom Mooney and I  
9 reside at 601 Navarre Avenue. For  
10 transparency purposes, I am a member of the  
11 Crystal Academy Board, and my son has  
12 attended Crystal Academy since 2010;  
13 however, I am here before you this evening  
14 speaking as a 22-year resident of Coral  
15 Gables.

16 I live in North Gables, and I very much  
17 appreciate the context of North Gables.  
18 When my wife and I bought our home in 2002,  
19 we knew we wanted to live in the north area  
20 of the City, and I'm very familiar with  
21 this particular area where the proposed  
22 designation would occur. It's a very  
23 walkable context sensitive area, and I  
24 think that one of the important things to  
25 keep in mind with regard to designation, as

1           you well know, is that there's a big  
2           difference between the designation of a  
3           Local Historic District, which typically  
4           will include blocks and numbers of  
5           properties, and each one of those blocks  
6           and each one of those properties may or may  
7           not have different attributes and its own  
8           contributing status.

9           However, when you are looking at a  
10          designated historic site, whether it's an  
11          individual building or a landscape feature  
12          or monument, that's a much higher bar, and  
13          it's the type of designation that really  
14          has to go above and beyond, and I think  
15          that, while I certainly commend the  
16          applicant on a well put together research  
17          application, as evidenced by the City's  
18          Historic Preservation Director, Mr. Adams,  
19          in this particular instance, the proposal  
20          clearly does not meet the criteria for  
21          designation, and that's the one narrow  
22          thing that I do want to encourage you to  
23          take a look at.

24          It is very important that decisions  
25          made with regard to the designation of



1 historic sites be based upon that criteria  
2 and the satisfaction of that criteria, and  
3 in this particular instance, I don't  
4 believe that the criteria has been  
5 satisfied. I won't go into the details. I  
6 think the City's done an excellent job of  
7 doing that, and it's very well-documented  
8 in the record here.

9 So, with that, I just want to encourage  
10 you not to move forward with the  
11 designation. Thank you very much.

12 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

13 MR. GILLIS: Okay. Good evening,  
14 everybody. Brett Gillis, for the record.  
15 I wanted to let you know, Bonnie, thank you  
16 for everything that you've done. I got  
17 this calendar. Insurance companies and  
18 banks are giving it out this year, Famous  
19 Floridians of 2023, among the company of  
20 Ernest Hemingway, Andrew Jackson, Roxcy  
21 Bolton. So thank you for everything that  
22 you and your family have done over the  
23 years and keep up the good work.

24 So I'm here to support the Garden of  
25 Our Lord, which clearly meets the criteria

1           for designation. I wish that this would  
2           have had maybe a different outcome and I  
3           think that we can still accomplish that  
4           through the TDR process or other means that  
5           this Board could recommend and the  
6           Commission could approve. I know we've  
7           seen that done before at 42 Navarre, where  
8           there was a live-work building that was  
9           incorporated into another development.  
10          There are a lot of strategies that have  
11          been used, that could accomplish everything  
12          that is needed here, and, actually, the  
13          developer could benefit from it, because of  
14          the TDR program. So I hope that they'll  
15          look at that and consider their opinion  
16          here.

17                 I did want to point out a few things in  
18          the report, though, that I think are  
19          important. So the -- stated in every  
20          designation report that the City puts out,  
21          the Coral Gables Register of Historic  
22          Places, the built environment reflects the  
23          beliefs, values, creative expressions and  
24          technical capacity at a place in time in  
25          history, Historic Preservation conserves

1           those structures and spaces that tell the  
2           story of the community's historic past.  
3           The site that comprises the Coral Gables  
4           Register of Historic Places portray the  
5           City's story of progress change and  
6           preservation. So this clearly meets all of  
7           that, and it's a great example of it.

8                     And we heard from Mr. Adams and the  
9           other City employees, but they haven't  
10          really identified any other properties that  
11          are as unique as this or any other wall,  
12          contemplative garden in Coral Gables. So  
13          it really is a one of a kind space, unique  
14          space. And the criteria are very clear for  
15          historical, cultural.

16                    Criterion 4, exemplifies the  
17          historical, cultural, political, economical  
18          or social trends of the community.

19                    Criterion 5, you know, the people that  
20          are here from Crystal Academy, Criterion 5  
21          states, it's associated in a significant  
22          way with the past or continuing institution  
23          which has contributed substantially to the  
24          life of the City. So I think that we see  
25          that, because of St. James' association

1 with the school's, not only Crystal  
2 Academy, but the Christian school and the  
3 Guardian Shepherd before that, that St.  
4 James is a past or continuing institution  
5 that has contributed substantially to the  
6 life of the City. Numerous people have  
7 commented to that, and, I think, proven  
8 that point very well.

9 The architectural significance,  
10 Criterion 2, embodies those distinguishing  
11 characteristics of an architectural style  
12 or period or method of construction. You  
13 know, we had a property on Davis Road a few  
14 years back that -- it was a house in the  
15 front, and, then, in the back, there was a  
16 back cottage and a coral rock wall, that  
17 that entire property was designated. You  
18 can't even really see it from the street.

19 Here, you have an example where the  
20 wall that was designed by a famous,  
21 nationally acclaimed architect is visible  
22 from the street.

23 And Criterion 3 is an outstanding work  
24 of a prominent designer or builder.  
25 Outstanding has multiple definitions. It

1 doesn't have to be, the supreme example,  
2 compared to Vizcaya. The definitions -- I  
3 mean, I looked it up. We can look that up  
4 again if we need to, but can be  
5 exceptionally good, clearly noticeable or  
6 something yet to be done or paid.

7 So, in terms of Robert Fitch Smith's  
8 body of work, it is an outstanding work,  
9 because it's the only one -- not only the  
10 only one in Coral Gables, but the only wall  
11 contemplative garden that's known that he  
12 designing, although he was known for  
13 designed multiple churches throughout  
14 Greater Miami.

15 Criterion 4, contains elements of  
16 design, detail, materials or craftsmanship  
17 of outstanding quality or which represent a  
18 significant innovation or adaptation to the  
19 South Florida environment. Again, where is  
20 another wall contemplative garden featuring  
21 Robert Fitch Smith's tradition and design  
22 aesthetic in the wall and features that we  
23 see? There isn't another one. This is the  
24 only one. And aesthetics, I think the  
25 neighbors have clearly proven that it's an

1 easily identifiable feature of their  
2 neighborhood. There's really nothing else  
3 like it. I love walking in that area, from  
4 the Douglas Entrance, walking down East  
5 Ponce. It really is a unique area of the  
6 City and a space like no other.

7 The Commission has created a North  
8 Ponce Neighborhood Conservation District  
9 Overlay, also known as the NPNCD, as  
10 defined in Section 2/4 point -- excuse me  
11 2-404, which the purpose is to preserve and  
12 enhance the Garden Apartment character. So  
13 Garden Apartment. Clearly, an aspect of  
14 that garden character of the neighborhood  
15 is this.

16 One of the notes that was made by  
17 Carlos Marin, "Inside the Garden, Architect  
18 Robert Fitch Smith created a geometrical  
19 site on which the garden would grow and the  
20 coral rock paths would lead to a grotto and  
21 pond." So the coral rock is generally  
22 recognized as a historic feature throughout  
23 Coral Gables. In fact, at the Merrick  
24 House, I believe they just rebuilt the  
25 wall -- the coral rock wall. So this is

1 something past, present and future. If  
2 we're not going to save coral rock in Coral  
3 Gables, I don't know really what we're  
4 going to save.

5 So, over time, a visual access running  
6 diagonally across the garden has developed  
7 and it adds a unique dimension for the  
8 visitors' experience. So photographic  
9 evidence and a visual tour of the area do  
10 show that because of its prominence of  
11 spatial location, contrast of siting, age  
12 or scale, it is an identifiable feature of  
13 the neighborhood.

14 Getting to the social criteria, we have  
15 numerous articles that prove that this was  
16 a well-known tourist destination for many  
17 years, and only recently has the gate been  
18 locked, so that members of the community  
19 could not get in to continue to use it.

20 And aside from that, I mean, we do have  
21 in the report a picture of Robert Fitch  
22 Smith with George Merrick. So I thought  
23 that was great. They were part of the  
24 Zoning Commission that was created to help  
25 solve some of the issues in Greater Miami.

1           Aside from that, I think that it's just  
2           an important note here to go over some  
3           of -- fortunately, the aspects of working  
4           with Historic Preservation, that, you know,  
5           this Board, I'd like you to be known as the  
6           Historic Preservation Board and not the  
7           Historic Demolition Board. We've seen  
8           cases -- you know, sometimes I've lost  
9           faith, but this time, I have full faith  
10          that you're going to do the right thing and  
11          save this garden.

12                 So thank you very much.

13                 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

14                 Anyone else who would like to speak,  
15          either in favor or opposition?

16                 MR. ADAMS: Mr. Chair, I would like two  
17          minutes to rebut public comments, please?

18                 MR. MENENDEZ: Go ahead, Mr. Adams.

19                 MR. ADAMS: Okay. Just to address some  
20          of the comments that were made, yes, the  
21          Board must follow the criteria. Anything  
22          that is not related to what's within your  
23          purview, you really can't take into  
24          account.

25                 And I think someone here said that, you



1 know, shrubs and trees aren't significant,  
2 one of the first people to speak. But  
3 historic integrity is the authenticity of a  
4 property's historic identity evidenced by  
5 the survival of physical characteristics  
6 that existed during the property's  
7 pre-historic or historic period. So it's  
8 very much a part of the site.

9 And Mr. Cruz said that properties don't  
10 need bodies to be designated. No, they  
11 don't. They must meet the criteria and  
12 they must have integrity, something which  
13 very few people here have mentioned.  
14 They've tried to say the benefits of the  
15 site, how they meet the criteria. No one  
16 has really discussed the integrity of the  
17 site.

18 And '20s plat maps were used, because  
19 Merrick's vision for the City was  
20 incorporated into the designation report,  
21 not only Merrick, but also the Rostin  
22 (phonetic) and William Morris, which I  
23 didn't comment on, because I don't feel it  
24 appropriate in this situation, but  
25 Merrick's plan for the City was most

1           certainly included in the designation  
2           report. So I addressed it.

3           Next thing, you must stick to the Code,  
4           and someone mentioned something about  
5           disrepair. I don't think I mentioned  
6           disrepair at all in my report. Yes, the  
7           Merrick House wall was rebuilt, based on  
8           photographic evidence, as you have there.  
9           On the landscape plans, there are very few  
10          photographs, there are no plant lists. How  
11          can you possibly accurately restore a  
12          garden when you have absolutely no records?  
13          So the Merrick House wall, yes. This  
14          Garden, almost impossible, unless new  
15          information comes up.

16          And it was mentioned that, at the time  
17          it was completed, it was only one of three  
18          Biblical gardens. Was. I think that's  
19          accurate. And, then, Plants of the Bible  
20          book was mentioned. Obviously, the plants  
21          on a Historical Biblical Garden are  
22          important, which is why you have some  
23          historic Biblical Gardens, but if the  
24          plants don't exist, you don't have a  
25          Biblical Garden.

1           Just another couple of things. It was  
2 mentioned, the best qualified architect  
3 designed the garden. There is no proof of  
4 that. I said that in my report. He was  
5 not a landscape architect, and it was  
6 confirmed yet again that Fitch Smith  
7 integrated his design into existing  
8 landscapes.

9           And it was mentioned a lot that this is  
10 one of a kind, the wall was one of a kind,  
11 the Garden's one of a kind. Well, some  
12 cities do have one of a kind properties in  
13 their designation criteria, but Coral  
14 Gables doesn't.

15           And just in response to Mr. Gillis, Mr.  
16 Gillis regularly approaches our Department  
17 for copies of Determination of Significance  
18 letters that we issue. We issued the  
19 initial Determination of Significance  
20 letter in August, 2021. Mr. Gillis was  
21 sent a copy of it at the start of September  
22 2021. Mr. Gillis is the Vice-President of  
23 the Historic Preservation Association of  
24 Coral Gables. No one, at that time, made  
25 any comment or any complaint or any appeal

1 or any question about the determination at  
2 that time.

3 Thank you.

4 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

5 The representative for the owner, would  
6 you like to speak now?

7 MS. BOLTON: May I have a minute of two  
8 to rebutt what Warren said?

9 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes. Go ahead.

10 MS. BOLTON: Okay. I just wanted to  
11 mention about the trees and bushes in the  
12 Garden, that -- I know for a fact that one  
13 of the trees is a Carob tree, which is  
14 native to the Middle East, and I think it  
15 dates back to when Dr. Hazel Westbe  
16 (phonetic), who was a University of Miami  
17 professor, who brought the seeds back from  
18 Gethsemane, brought that tree back --  
19 brought that seed back, that became a tree,  
20 that is standing to this day in the Garden,  
21 and it's visible from the street.

22 And, then, also, I wanted to mention  
23 that Robert Fitch Smith designed the  
24 University Baptist Church garden and patio  
25 and won awards for that, so I just thought

1 I would mention that.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

3 MS. BOLTON: So thank you.

4 MR. MENENDEZ: Go ahead.

5 MR. NAVARRO: Good evening, Mr. Chair.

6 Thank you for your patience this evening.

7 I appreciate you accommodating some of the  
8 parents that had to head home with their  
9 children.

10 I have a PowerPoint. If we could pull  
11 it up.

12 But, for the record, my office is --  
13 Jorge Navarro, with offices at 333  
14 Southeast 2nd Avenue. I'm joined by my  
15 colleague, David Blattner. I'm also joined  
16 by ownership. The principal is here with  
17 us this evening, Mr. Sergio Pino.

18 We're here today because the applicant  
19 has submitted an application to designate  
20 my client's property as a historical  
21 resource, even though the owner does not  
22 agree. It's one of the first times, I  
23 think, an application like this may be  
24 before you.

25 While the Garden at one time was a

1           nicely landscaped and tranquil open space  
2           that served the St. James Church, the  
3           church has since closed, has sold the  
4           property, and due to the financial issues  
5           that they were having with dwindling  
6           memberships, this Garden really fell into  
7           disrepair and it's lost its overall  
8           aesthetic appearance and the integrity of  
9           it suffered.

10                 This was a Garden that was improved by  
11           the church, similar to what any other  
12           church in Coral Gables would do. They had  
13           memorial plaques to important figures.  
14           They also had memorial plaques to families  
15           and their loved ones. They also planted  
16           trees in order to beautify this area.  
17           However, there are two important points  
18           that I would like to note, before I go into  
19           some of the criteria, which I think is  
20           critical for your analysis.

21                 It's been established by your  
22           professional staff that there's no evidence  
23           presented that Mr. Fitch designed the  
24           landscape for the Garden. The original  
25           permit drawings that are with the City only

1 show a wall and a path. There is no plat  
2 plan or design of the landscaped features  
3 nor the pond that's in this property.  
4 Rather, the evidence on record shows that  
5 the landscape was installed at random, in  
6 an arbitrary manner, by members of the  
7 church and the community, who were not  
8 licensed landscape architects, and that is  
9 a key point.

10 Secondly, the plaques at the property  
11 commemorating the individuals, there is no  
12 relationship whatsoever to the  
13 accomplishments of these individuals and  
14 this property. They're simply  
15 commemorative in nature, and that is key,  
16 because Article 8 of your Code expressly  
17 provides that property commemorative in  
18 nature, such as this, are not eligible for  
19 designation, unless they meet a higher  
20 standard of scrutiny, which your Historic  
21 Preservation Officer has found that this  
22 application does not meet.

23 I know the Historic Preservation  
24 Officer went through the time line, but I  
25 think it's really important. I want to

1 just quickly go through it, so you could  
2 understand how we got here today. This  
3 site was first issued a letter of  
4 determination, finding that there was no  
5 historical resources, in August of 2021.  
6 My client, shortly after, purchased the  
7 property, in November 2021. In January of  
8 the following year, January 2022, my client  
9 submitted an application to the Development  
10 Review Committee in order to redevelop the  
11 property.

12 If we could go to Slide 2 -- or the  
13 first -- yeah, the second slide please.

14 MS. SPAIN: I think you have the  
15 ability to control it somehow.

16 MR. NAVARRO: Okay. Sorry.

17 In July of 2002, Ms. Bolton reached out  
18 to the State agencies in order to advise  
19 the State agencies that this was a cemetery  
20 that required preservation. So, after  
21 extensive investigation, it was actually  
22 determined that the site is not a cemetery.  
23 This is supported by two separate reports  
24 that were commissioned per Mr. Patrick  
25 Range and Ms. Wendy Rusell-Wiener, two



1 attorneys with extensive personal expertise  
2 in this area, and it's been concluded that  
3 this is not a cemetery.

4 When this argument failed, Ms. Bolton,  
5 in September of 2022, alleged that this was  
6 a Biblical Garden that required  
7 preservation, because there were trees here  
8 that came from the Garden of Gethsemane.  
9 Once again, as established by your  
10 Historical Preservation Officer, this is  
11 not the case. You have Ms. Deena Bell, who  
12 has gone out personally to the property --  
13 she's your City expert -- to investigate  
14 each tree that is out there, and these  
15 trees are all native species. There is  
16 nothing exotic of special about any of the  
17 landscaping in this Garden.

18 Additionally, there's an independent  
19 report from Mr. Jeremy Lee, a licensed  
20 arborist, with over fifteen years'  
21 experience, who has conducted his own  
22 independent site investigation, and has  
23 also concluded that none of the plants  
24 referenced in the article that's the basis  
25 of the applicant's designation report are

1 located there today, and they would not  
2 actually exist, due to the climate in South  
3 Florida. The plants that are there are the  
4 plants you could find in any nursery here  
5 locally.

6 Now, she has filed an application to  
7 designate this property. It's very  
8 revealing that this request for designation  
9 did not come at the time that we originally  
10 requested the 2021 letter, but has come up  
11 after we have submitted our proposed  
12 development plans.

13 Regarding the current request before  
14 you by the applicant, pursuant to Article 8  
15 of your Code, this Board is to conduct an  
16 evaluation of the data that was provided by  
17 the applicant for conformance with the  
18 historic designation criteria in your Code.  
19 Your Code explicitly provides that  
20 properties are not eligible for historic  
21 designation unless they are of a  
22 significant character. That's the key  
23 word, significant. If the applicant cannot  
24 show that the wall or the Garden is  
25 exemplary or of a significant character,

1           then this Board must vote against the  
2           proposal for designation.

3           I would like to take a moment, for the  
4           record, to highlight the findings that were  
5           made by your very competent staff in their  
6           presentation today, which constitutes the  
7           substantial competent evidence that this  
8           Board should base its decision on.

9           As to the criteria for historical  
10          cultural significance, your staff has found  
11          that while Mr. Fitch was an important  
12          architect, which we all are aware, he's  
13          done very, very many prominent buildings  
14          that have reached historic significance  
15          that have been designed, there's no  
16          evidence he designed the Garden and the  
17          wall cannot be regarded as one of his  
18          outstanding works. Not every building that  
19          Mr. Fitch Smith did is designated,  
20          actually, and just because he designed it  
21          does not mean that it should be designated.  
22          It needs to be significant.

23          Staff has also found that the wall does  
24          not embody an innovative method of  
25          construction, nor does it embody any

1 distinguishing characteristics of the  
2 architecture that was prevalent during the  
3 period in which it was constructed. By the  
4 time this wall was constructed,  
5 Mediterranean Revival had already passed.

6 As to the criteria for aesthetic  
7 significance, your Staff has found that the  
8 Garden and wall is not part of a  
9 subdivision, park, environmental feature or  
10 other distinctive area that should be  
11 preserved according to the plan. There's  
12 two things I'd like to highlight.

13 This property is not part of the  
14 original park system that was designed by  
15 the founder, George Merrick. It's also not  
16 part of the plan from the Charrette that  
17 was done for this area. In 2018, after  
18 five years of studying and working with  
19 neighbors in this area, the City created a  
20 Charrette for this area, and this property  
21 is not shown as one of the proposed park  
22 areas. It's not in the original park  
23 system. It's platted for development.  
24 Actually, it's platted as developable lots,  
25 and it's not in the plan that the City

1 created for this area just a few years ago,  
2 and that was actually admitted by the  
3 applicant's expert in their testimony. I  
4 believe I have a photo in here and I'll get  
5 to it, but --

6 As the Preservation Officer has  
7 established, the applicant's request is  
8 inconsistent with every single criteria for  
9 designation in your Code, because it's not  
10 of significant character. So what is  
11 significant? That's the question. One way  
12 to compare what significant is, is to  
13 compare other landscapes that have been  
14 designated by the City of Coral Gables as a  
15 significant work, that meets the legal  
16 criteria for approval.

17 I have three examples that I'd like to  
18 show you. Just to understand how high the  
19 bar is to designate a landscape, out of the  
20 1,200 properties in the list of Historic  
21 Landmarks in the City of Coral Gables, only  
22 four of them are parks. That is how high  
23 of a bar you have to meet to show that this  
24 is a significant landscape work, by a  
25 significant landscape architect, which is

1 not the case here, as Mr. Fitch is not a  
2 landscape professional.

3 So, in these limited and unique cases  
4 is where we get to the criteria of these  
5 reaching the standard -- oh, this is the  
6 North Ponce area. Sorry, it came up here.

7 This is the map. As you can see, the  
8 area that is highlighted in red, which was  
9 completely red in the applicant's initial  
10 presentation, is actually not a proposed  
11 park area. So I wanted to just clarify.  
12 That's the North Park Community Visioning  
13 Workshop report.

14 So this is Matheson Hammock. I'm sure  
15 you're all aware of this. Matheson  
16 Hammocks was designed by legendary  
17 landscape architect, William Lyman Philips.  
18 It was the first public park established in  
19 Miami-Dade County, a real big deal. The  
20 structures within this park were built by  
21 the Civilian Conservation Corps, which was  
22 a voluntary relief program established by  
23 President Roosevelt and considered one of  
24 Roosevelt's most successful new deal  
25 programs. This is a significant property,

1 from a historical and social perspective,  
2 that merits designation, not the Garden of  
3 Our Lord.

4 Fewell Park, designed by legendary golf  
5 course and landscape designer, Donald Ross.  
6 This is a landscape architect who dedicated  
7 his life to designing world class  
8 landscapes. Arguably, he's one of the most  
9 notable and famous golf course landscape  
10 designers in U.S. history. This is a  
11 significant work, from a legendary  
12 landscape designer, and is worthy of  
13 designation.

14 Young Park, the Friendship Tree was  
15 planted in this property in 1940 by the  
16 Coral Gables Chapter of the Daughters of  
17 the American Revolution. What's impressive  
18 about this park, for those of you who may  
19 not know, is that the soil from the tree  
20 was sent from each state of the Union,  
21 Cuba, Alaska, France, England, among  
22 others. This site is a unique park, with  
23 strong ties to our Nation's history, to our  
24 local history, not the Garden of Our Lord.

25 This is the Garden of Our Lord. We

1           have some photos. And I think the question  
2           to ask ourselves is, does this Garden rise  
3           to the standard of being significant? Does  
4           the wall that surround this Garden, which  
5           was really part of the church, not the  
6           Garden, does it rise to a level of  
7           significance that warrants designation, in  
8           accordance with the other true works of art  
9           that this City has designated? Because  
10          this City takes historic preservation  
11          seriously and it's an important legal  
12          matter. It does have implications.

13                 You have an awesome responsibility in  
14          front of you, one that cannot be taken  
15          lightly. You have the responsibility of  
16          relying on the criteria in your Code, and  
17          only these criteria, to determine whether a  
18          property owner's site should be designated  
19          by a third party application. Your Staff  
20          has spoken clearly, and unequivocally, that  
21          even with further analysis, since its time  
22          that it issued its initial determination in  
23          2021, Staff still cannot support this  
24          application, and that the request does not  
25          meet the legal criteria in your Code.



1           You also have heard testimony from two  
2           of the most respected architects in the  
3           Historic Preservation community, that  
4           neither the wall, nor the garden, can be  
5           considered significant. This was from  
6           Mr. Jorge Hernandez and Mr. Richard  
7           Heisenbottle, who I believe their resumes  
8           speak for themselves, and if there's no  
9           objections, I would like to clarify them as  
10          experts. I would also like to qualify that  
11          these individuals came in, in their own  
12          capacity. They were not retained by the  
13          owner, and they were not compensated for  
14          their time here by the owner. I know one  
15          of the speakers mentioned that, and I  
16          wanted to clarify that, for the record.  
17          They're both Coral Gables residents.

18                 It's hard to say, with everything  
19                 you've heard today, that this application  
20                 meets the criteria of being a significant  
21                 work. We believe there is no reason to  
22                 proceed further and to put additional staff  
23                 resources on this request. We ask that the  
24                 Board deny the applicant's request,  
25                 consistent with the requirements of law.

1           Approving Historic Designation for  
2           properties that do not warrant Historic  
3           Designation diminishes the entire process,  
4           and we ask that you maintain the integrity  
5           of Historic Designation and deny this  
6           request.

7           I thank you very much for your time and  
8           your patience here this evening. Thank  
9           you.

10          MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

11          Let the record show that Mr. Durana has  
12          joined us, and that Ms. Rolando needed to  
13          leave.

14          I'm going to close the public portion  
15          of the hearing, open it up for discussion  
16          here.

17          MR. HOLMES: I've been waiting on the  
18          phone, and then I decided to come over. I  
19          wonder if I could get a --

20          MR. MENENDEZ: Have you been sworn in?

21          MR. HOLMES: No.

22          MR. MENENDEZ: Well, you need to raise  
23          your hand and get sworn in.

24          (Thereupon, the participant was sworn.)

25          MR. HOLMES: Yes, I do.

1 MR. MENENDEZ: Go ahead.

2 MR. HOLMES; I really appreciate the  
3 opportunity for that. Thank you.

4 So my name is Jackson Rip Holmes. I  
5 live near this site, and I just can't turn  
6 my back on these children. We know that  
7 Mr. Pino is one of our best developers, but  
8 I'm surprised that he would choose this  
9 site, because we had the wall project,  
10 which was finally -- they gave up, because  
11 they realized they were hurting children,  
12 and the people I've heard from the  
13 school -- I walk by. I see these children.  
14 I just cannot fail to speak up for  
15 children. I think it would be a disgrace  
16 to our City if we don't designate this  
17 Historic. Thanks.

18 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

19 Okay. I am now closing the public  
20 portion of this hearing, opening it up to  
21 discussion among the Board Members.

22 MR. MAXWELL: Mr. Chair.

23 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes, sir, Mr. Maxwell.

24 MR. MAXWELL: Thank you.

25 We've heard a lot of information today.

1 We've heard a lot of counter statements  
2 and -- from pros and cons. We've heard a  
3 lot of information that's information.  
4 There's a lot more of Mr. Fitch. As a  
5 matter of fact, I believe Ms. Jude's home  
6 was designed by Mr. Fitch, and there's a  
7 wonderful wall that was designed by  
8 Mr. Fitch at the intersection of Edgewater  
9 and Main. It's a moon gate. It's  
10 beautiful. Lots on Country Club Prado have  
11 been turned into a park. They were part of  
12 the original plan, but, you know, they were  
13 fronting Coral Way. All you have to do is  
14 look at the old plans and there's the lots.

15 But I think what's really important  
16 here is two things; One, this is a War  
17 Memorial. A War Memorial. This is not --  
18 it's just called the Garden of the Lord.  
19 Go look at what's on the plaques, to the  
20 men who died in battle. My father, and  
21 most of your parents, served in the Second  
22 World War. This Garden honored them, at  
23 that time, to the dead and to the living.

24 Old places matter, and I would  
25 encourage all of you to read a wonderful

1 book by Thompson Mayes, from the National  
2 Trust, called Why All Places Matter, and  
3 it's important that this 71-year-old space,  
4 whose time is obviously historic, because I  
5 remember being here many, many years ago  
6 fighting over 50, 60-year-old buildings  
7 that many people said, "Oh, this is not  
8 historic, because it's only 50 or 60 years  
9 old," well, I'm 71 and my kids call me  
10 historic.

11 There's a lot of options that we can do  
12 here. First of all, spaces like this are  
13 why everybody in Coral Gables lives here.  
14 They are what makes Coral Gables Coral  
15 Gables. I understand competing economic  
16 interests. I too, am a developer, but I've  
17 re-developed and historically renovated  
18 many, many historic buildings, Opa-locka  
19 City Hall, a number of buildings Downtown.  
20 I was president of the Dade Heritage Trust.  
21 I understand what we have lost, and we've  
22 lost a lot.

23 Old places matter, because they are the  
24 places we love. We live here because of  
25 them. What's important is that you seek

1           compromise. Yes, the application is  
2           flawed. There's no doubt about that. It's  
3           people who are seriously trying to preserve  
4           our community. But there's also lots of  
5           opportunity that the developer can take and  
6           utilize for his own benefit, as well as the  
7           benefit of the community.

8           This Garden is less than twenty percent  
9           of the entire site. By the way, when you  
10          go under construction, the school is going  
11          to be out of business for a couple of  
12          years, because it's going to take two to  
13          three years to build that, and all of the  
14          people in the neighborhood are going to be  
15          moaning all of the traffic that's going to  
16          be there, because, you know, you've got to  
17          have 2.5 spaces, you know, for a two  
18          bedroom unit, plus service. So traffic is  
19          going to go up. But that's not at issue.  
20          We all know that.

21          What's really important is that we all  
22          look to see why all places matter. This is  
23          a memorial, and we need to preserve and  
24          work with the developer to preserve the  
25          memorial.

1           Architecturally, I've heard a lot of  
2 things. I disagree with Richard  
3 Heisenbottle quite a bit. I also disagree  
4 with Jorge Hernandez. I've worked on  
5 Thomas Jefferson buildings, as well, and,  
6 you know, I can tell you that those of us  
7 in preservation all have different  
8 opinions. And we talk about, something is  
9 not architecturally important; that wall is  
10 very architecturally important, and the  
11 space even more so. Is it run down? You  
12 bet. I can remember when Merrick Manor was  
13 run down, so let's not look at that.

14           And Fewell Park, well, you know, some  
15 of the things that the attorney showed  
16 don't really go with the park. They're not  
17 there. Fewell Park has no development in  
18 it. It's just an open spot, okay. The  
19 little wonderful garden, hey, that was  
20 designed by George Fink, and H. George --  
21 well, he was a pretty good architect.

22           So when we consider these things, let's  
23 just think about that. It's a historic  
24 green space, made by our community, to  
25 remember our community.

1 MR. MENENDEZ: Ms. Spain.

2 MS. SPAIN: So I just disagree with  
3 him. I'm sorry. I really apologize. But  
4 if you're saying that we should designate  
5 this as historic because it's a memorial to  
6 War Veterans, it's very specific in the  
7 Code that says a property primarily  
8 commemorative and the intent of design is  
9 condition of symbolic value has -- that  
10 doesn't qualify. That's not part of the  
11 criteria that we're bound to review.

12 I mean, I think it's interesting.  
13 Maybe they can save the plaques somehow and  
14 make a memorial somewhere else, but if  
15 that's your rationale for designating this  
16 as historic, I think it's flawed.

17 I will tell you, I very much appreciate  
18 Warren's step by step thought process --

19 MR. FULLERTON: Me too.

20 MS. SPAIN: -- because I went through  
21 the same thing, when I was reading the  
22 designation report. I had the criteria  
23 there. I was going through -- no one  
24 mentioned in that designation report, the  
25 very first -- and I'm just speaking about



1 the garden now. The very first sentence,  
2 where it says, "Criteria for designation of  
3 historic landmarks," that talks about  
4 district sites, buildings, structures and  
5 objects, and if we're only talking about  
6 the garden, that doesn't qualify as any of  
7 these.

8 I ran into this when Roxcy Bolton,  
9 Bonnie Bolton's mother, who I battled for  
10 thirty years and loved, but she wanted to  
11 designate Merrick Park across the streets  
12 from City Hall, but it didn't fit any of  
13 the criteria, and that's why the end result  
14 of that is that we added the sentence that  
15 you referred to, "In the case of a park or  
16 a landscape feature, it's integral to the  
17 plan of such neighborhood or city," and  
18 that was when that was added, because  
19 otherwise that would not have fit any of  
20 this. I don't believe that this project  
21 fits the criteria.

22 I do so appreciate all of the people  
23 showing up, though, and being for  
24 preservation, because it's rare that we see  
25 this many people. I honestly wish I could

1 say it fit the criteria, but, in my mind,  
2 it doesn't.

3 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Ehrenhaft.

4 MR. EHRENHAFT: I agree with the  
5 comments that Dona has made.

6 You cannot hear me? Okay.

7 I don't feel that the property, as it  
8 is, fits into the criterion that are  
9 mentioned for parks or green spaces. It  
10 was part of a religious compound, a  
11 religious institution, which is not exempt,  
12 and I don't believe that the Garden stands  
13 on its own. It is part and parcel of an  
14 entire plat of land, and even if one were  
15 thinking about doing a designation or  
16 trying to do something to preserve whatever  
17 aesthetics the wall has, and the space  
18 inside of it, as Mr. Adams has said, the  
19 condition of the rest of the property is  
20 also not amenable to -- in his current  
21 state or based on its history, to  
22 designate.

23 If we do a designation, we're having to  
24 designate, if I'm not incorrect, everything  
25 that's within the periphery of that

1 property, and the rest of -- the built  
2 environment of those buildings fails in  
3 that respect.

4 I think that it is important to  
5 remember and honor people who served in the  
6 war, but I'm not sure that, in this case,  
7 that that had anything to do with what the  
8 Garden was originally. My understanding is  
9 that it was part of a wall, it was part of  
10 a compound for the church, and, then, after  
11 it was built in 1951, then, in individual,  
12 independent steps, those memorial plaques  
13 were added to the wall. I think that --  
14 not to dishonor any of these individuals,  
15 but their possibly could be a way for the  
16 developer to work with the people whose  
17 families were involved in hanging those  
18 plaques, and finding an appropriate way to  
19 leave them, perhaps not on-site, and -- so  
20 I don't feel that the wall, standing alone,  
21 in its current state, is appropriate for  
22 designation.

23 That doesn't mean that the people  
24 involved or people that have interests in  
25 having that wall not torn down or having

1 the Garden not torn down can't advocate  
2 with the developer and try to find  
3 accommodations in that way, but I do not  
4 believe that this fits -- I'm sorry, I  
5 don't think it fits in the criteria that we  
6 have to follow.

7 MR. MENENDEZ: Ms. Bache-Wiig.

8 MS. BACHE-WIIG: I would like to echo  
9 Ms. Spain's comments, Bruce's comments. I  
10 think that the City Historic Preservation  
11 Officer and Staff did an excellent job of  
12 taking us through their report and their  
13 findings. I think the most important  
14 components of what they outlined was, you  
15 know, the buildings, they're not just old,  
16 but they have to be significantly  
17 contributing and I think that's the  
18 distinguishing factor.

19 I think, you know, just mention of the  
20 construction type, the style of the  
21 components that we're talking about being  
22 significant here, you know, were not in the  
23 spirit of the prevailing time, you know, at  
24 that time, right, and there's nothing that  
25 seems to be unique or significant with

1           those components; however, I think it's  
2           important that we recognize, what is unique  
3           is the connection, the devotion, the  
4           experience and the honor that everyone has  
5           had here, at this Garden, you know, the  
6           local community has had, and I think it's  
7           very palpable tonight. I think people have  
8           come forward, and you can see that.  
9           There's evidence of that. And I can  
10          certainly appreciate that.

11                 I mean, my church is the Church of the  
12          Little Flower here in Coral Gables, and I  
13          would just -- I can just appreciate the  
14          experience one has with your, you know,  
15          religious institution locally; however, I  
16          think that that component, unfortunately,  
17          doesn't fit into the criteria that's before  
18          us today. We're not bound by that.

19                 We're bound by very specific criteria  
20          that talks about, you know, events and  
21          aesthetics, that, in my professional  
22          opinion, I don't think it's meeting it, you  
23          know, in a significant way, that we can  
24          call this property historic and designate  
25          it accordingly.

1 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Durana.

2 MR. DURANA: I mean, you know, I'll  
3 kind of piggyback on Dona's statements and  
4 Bruce and everyone. I mean, I kind of want  
5 to go -- off the bat, I mean, I want to  
6 make it clear, I mean, you know, this  
7 decision is more based on what we are --  
8 you know, what we are responsible for  
9 voting on. And, you know, I know what the  
10 future of the site is. I don't necessarily  
11 agree with it, what's going to get built  
12 there, but, you know, our Historic  
13 Preservation Board, we have very strict  
14 guidelines, very thorough guidelines, of  
15 what should be a designated historic  
16 property, and I think Warren has done a  
17 good job of explaining, you know, that we  
18 don't meet those criteria for this specific  
19 property.

20 While I wish we could preserve it, and  
21 I like the idea of the park and I like the  
22 idea -- you know, I don't necessarily think  
23 the development fits in with the  
24 neighborhood, but that's not what we're  
25 here, you know, to decide. And so I have

1 to agree with what Warren presented to us,  
2 which was a very detailed report, you know,  
3 kind of outlining those points.

4 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Fullerton.

5 MR. FULLERTON: Well, I align myself  
6 right now with Mr. Maxwell and his  
7 comments. I don't think there's an  
8 architect or designer or park or landscape  
9 designer that does any of their work with  
10 the idea that it's going to be historic  
11 some day.

12 MR. MAXWELL: Right.

13 MR. FULLERTON: That project was done a  
14 long time ago and they did what they did to  
15 meet the requirements of the day, to which  
16 things were added to make it even more  
17 beautiful, the pond, the statute, the work  
18 on walls, et cetera.

19 We're not just -- in my mind, we're not  
20 just talking about a wall. We're talking  
21 about an entire element of our City, which  
22 has become important to a lot of people. I  
23 mean, we've heard from a lot of people,  
24 more than any other subject I've ever  
25 witnessed on this Board, and I've served on

1           this Board probably a total of fifteen  
2           years, not all in one shot, but a long  
3           time.

4           I know I've designed a lot of buildings  
5           in Coral Gables, and Miami, and around  
6           South Florida, and none of them -- I'm not  
7           assuming that any of them will become  
8           historic some day, but if they are, good  
9           for me and good for maybe somebody, but I  
10          really feel that what was being -- what  
11          we're looking at now is a part of our  
12          community, which has evolved into something  
13          that's valuable to the people who see it,  
14          move around it, and hopefully be able to  
15          participate in it.

16          I can't imagine that we have to be  
17          bound by who designed it or -- I think  
18          that's part of it, of course. Robert Fitch  
19          Smith is a very important architect and  
20          designer in our community, but I think it's  
21          important to know that anybody can put  
22          something together, that eventually could  
23          become historic, and I don't think we  
24          should have to say that that wall is  
25          specifically something that we're



1           designating. We're designating an idea, a  
2           place, which is made for people in our  
3           community, and so I feel very, very solid  
4           in the idea that it should be designated  
5           and protected from development.

6           It doesn't mean that the owners  
7           couldn't profit from their ownership. They  
8           can sell off their air rights and so  
9           forth -- I mean, the FAR and so forth to  
10          other developments. I'm usually on the  
11          side of development, because I have been an  
12          architect in Miami, in Coral Gables, for  
13          57 -- 56 years, I think it is now. So I've  
14          done a lot of the things that I like  
15          developments for -- developers for, but in  
16          this case, I think that the needs of the  
17          community exceed the value to a developer  
18          at this point.

19          MS. SPAIN: So, John, can I ask you  
20          what criteria you think it meets, which is  
21          what I've struggled with --

22          MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

23          MS. SPAIN: -- because so I appreciate  
24          the thoughts of everybody on it, but I  
25          honestly just couldn't find a criteria

1           that it would meet.

2           MR. FULLERTON: Well, I think it's more  
3           ethereal than that. It's a place.

4           MS. SPAIN: Well, you know --

5           MR. FULLERTON: I know, but it's a  
6           place. It's a place --

7           MS. SPAIN: Okay. I understand.

8           MR. FULLERTON: -- that if people knew  
9           more about it, maybe it would be something  
10          that -- you know, it's a place of  
11          reflection and a place of getting in touch  
12          with the Lord, if you're of that mind. I  
13          think that's important, as much as who  
14          designed it and whether there are plants  
15          there from Israel or not.

16          MR. MAXWELL: Right.

17          MR. FULLERTON: And that's not to say  
18          that there couldn't be plants from Israel  
19          in the future. So maybe with a little  
20          notoriety, this place, this space, will  
21          become something that is more special than  
22          it ever has been.

23          MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Garcia-Pons.

24          MR. GARCIA-PONS: Thank you,  
25          Mr. Chairman. I do have a couple of

1 questions for Staff, Warren, and if you  
2 could pull up your PowerPoint presentation.  
3 It's really on a couple of slides. I have  
4 three questions and a few comments.

5 MR. ADAMS: Could we have the Staff  
6 PowerPoint up, please?

7 MR. GARCIA-PONS: And it's right at the  
8 beginning.

9 MR. ADAMS: What slide?

10 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Right at the  
11 beginning, the What Are We Not Doing Today  
12 slide.

13 MR. ADAMS: It's the first one?

14 MR. GARCIA-PONS: The one with the  
15 text. The text. Go back. It's the What  
16 Are We Not Doing Today.

17 MR. ADAMS: Oh, sorry.

18 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Right. So I think  
19 this is important, because some of the  
20 members of the public and all of us on the  
21 Board -- you know, I appreciated you  
22 showing this, and I know that the  
23 developer's attorney showed this, and some  
24 of us mentioned it. As an architecturally  
25 trained urban designer and planner, I have

1 thoughts and opinions on all of these  
2 things, all of them. I just -- as a member  
3 of the Historic Preservation Board, I  
4 cannot take these into consideration today,  
5 as far as the preservation of this  
6 property. So I just want that to be clear.  
7 And I know that's what Mr. Durana has said  
8 as well, is -- and I believe all of us --  
9 and I've heard all of us talk about what we  
10 think about these things, outside of our  
11 roles as Historic Preservation Board  
12 Members, and it's maybe not the same  
13 feelings on either side, but we have a duty  
14 to do what we're required to do as part of  
15 this Board.

16 The second slide is the site diagram  
17 with the outline of the one lot, and it's a  
18 question. You had mentioned that it is one  
19 site.

20 MR. ADAMS: Yes.

21 MR. GARCIA-PONS: And that the  
22 designation today is of a site and not of  
23 an element of that site.

24 MR. ADAMS: Yes.

25 MR. GARCIA-PONS: There was a question

1 by one of the speakers, the last one,  
2 talking about, can you dissect out the  
3 Garden? And that's a great question, and I  
4 hate asking you like this, but can you  
5 dissect out the Garden from this site?

6 MR. ADAMS: I mean, my opinion, the  
7 Code says you designee the site. That's  
8 what you do. You don't designate the  
9 building. You designate the site.

10 MR. GARCIA-PONS: So you designate the  
11 site and then you can specify specific  
12 elements within that site?

13 MR. ADAMS: Everything would require  
14 review, because it's within the site. Some  
15 elements may be more important than others,  
16 but everything would require review within  
17 the site.

18 MR. GARCIA-PONS: So any future  
19 development on this site would have to go  
20 through a Certificate of Appropriateness,  
21 if it is designated, and, then, if there  
22 are specific elements that were called out,  
23 a future Historic Preservation Board would  
24 have to take note of that?

25 MR. ADAMS: If the site were designated

1 and there was an application to demolish  
2 the church, it would have to come to the  
3 Board. If there was an application to  
4 build something new, it would have to come  
5 to the Board.

6 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Thank you.

7 And then the third question -- sorry --  
8 has to do with the -- and I appreciate the  
9 early site plans showing Merrick's drawings  
10 of what was intended for this site, and I  
11 think you had showed that the original ones  
12 were from the 1920s, the original plan, and  
13 this is leading to the question that I also  
14 struggled with, which is what Ms. Spain  
15 struggled with, which is, under what  
16 Criterion can we designate? And the  
17 closest one to me is C-2, which is the last  
18 one that you mentioned.

19 MS. SPAIN: Right. That's the only  
20 one.

21 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I'm just saying, the  
22 closest one for me. You guys have your  
23 thoughts.

24 Go to the historic drawing of the site  
25 from Merrick that show the lots, the

1 residential lots, which is the last thing  
2 you did. And I see it here, and there was  
3 a comment, and I agree with this comment,  
4 that preservation is an ongoing thing,  
5 right. We're not going to freeze it here.

6 But the two questions are, on the plan  
7 that was designated by the City, does it  
8 have these lots or does it have something  
9 else, the designated plan, not the original  
10 plan?

11 MR. ADAMS: The designated street plan?

12 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Looking at the City  
13 of Coral Gables Master Plan that is part of  
14 our --

15 MS. SPAIN: That was designated.

16 MR. GARCIA-PONS: But what's the word?  
17 It's the City of Coral Gables' Master Plan  
18 or Street Plan or what is the plan that is  
19 the historic --

20 MR. ADAMS: The Historic Street Plan.

21 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Right. So, in the  
22 Historic Street Plan, does it identify lots  
23 or uses on these lots? And just like you  
24 have an image of this one, I was hoping  
25 that we could have an image of the adopted

1 plan of that block.

2 MR. ADAMS: Okay. I can maybe pull one  
3 up on the computer, but, remember, the  
4 Designated Street Plan is for review of  
5 alterations to the street only. So they  
6 could potentially have used really any plan  
7 to actually --

8 MR. GARCIA-PONS: No, actually, I  
9 appreciate that. You're right. You're  
10 right. I was going to see if there was --  
11 if it's just of the streets, it's  
12 irrelevant as to what the lots are. Thank  
13 you very much for that.

14 (Simultaneous speaking.)

15 MR. GARCIA-PONS: No. He answered my  
16 question. It's irrelevant to my question.

17 Thank you, Mr. Adams.

18 So the comments that I have is, first,  
19 I'd like to thank Ms. Bolton and Professors  
20 Martinez and Ceo and Lombard. I enjoyed  
21 reading every word on every page of this  
22 application and the letters of  
23 recommendation, and there are a lot of  
24 them. And as we can all see, the emotion  
25 and the positive intentions of it are clear



1 as a bell.

2 I would also like to commend the City  
3 Staff, because Mr. Adams' presentation of  
4 what he believes is the requirement of the  
5 City Staff and this Board to do, was as  
6 equally as clear, and I believe,  
7 well-intentioned, as the previous one. And  
8 I'll also commend the owner's presentation,  
9 as to what they believe is happening on  
10 this site and how they think we should be  
11 focused on what the requirements of the  
12 conditions are.

13 As many of us, and I said it a little  
14 bit earlier -- of all of the things that  
15 could happen on this site, I think the  
16 interest on that site is there. I think,  
17 you know, the aesthetic significance to,  
18 you know, is it prominent, in a special  
19 location, its scale, it's an easily  
20 identifiable and visible feature of the  
21 neighborhood, contributes to the  
22 distinctive quality and identity of the  
23 neighborhood; where it falls down, in my  
24 opinion, is, in case of a park or landscape  
25 feature is integral to the plan of such a

1 neighborhood or the City.

2 MS. SPAIN: That's right.

3 MR. GARCIA-PONS: If it were in the  
4 original plan to be a civic building, if it  
5 were in the original plan to be a public  
6 space, I think I would have a very  
7 different opinion, but the fact that it  
8 isn't, I don't, and I feel that, although I  
9 want this site to be something, I don't  
10 think it meets the criteria to be  
11 historically designated, and that's my  
12 comments.

13 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

14 Well, I think it's a great day for  
15 preservation in the City of Coral Gables.  
16 I can't believe the turnout of the  
17 citizens, the residents, how passionate you  
18 are and how much you care about our City.  
19 I listened to Mr. Maxwell's comments, and,  
20 you know, I can see his comments. I can  
21 believe -- see what he's thinking.

22 But, also, we had a great report from  
23 the City and the City was very thorough and  
24 the City made their points very obvious.  
25 They were very clear.

1           Ms. Bolton, you put together a great  
2           presentation, a great report, and a great  
3           team, and, obviously, there's a lot of love  
4           for you and for that property. My hope is  
5           that whatever happens to that property,  
6           whether it gets developed, whether it gets  
7           sold, whether it stays the way it is today,  
8           that people can rally around it and there  
9           could be some cohesion between all of the  
10          different entities. That's my wish.

11           But right now, I'm leaning towards not  
12          recommending it for designation.

13           MR. NAVARRO: Mr. Chairman, I had a  
14          thought to talk to my client about some of  
15          the concerns regarding the plaques. I  
16          would like to state, for the record, that  
17          my client is committed to safely removing  
18          the plaques and any sculptures that are  
19          within the Garden, at his own expense. He  
20          will store them in a safe location and work  
21          to re-incorporated them into our project,  
22          or, as was recommended, perhaps some of the  
23          war plaques, we could work with the City to  
24          relocate to the War Memorial at the Youth  
25          Center, and we could also work -- if we

1           could try to find some of the relatives of  
2           the people that are referenced in these  
3           plaques, we would be committed to doing so,  
4           to make sure these memories are preserved  
5           in one of those three ways, either  
6           reincorporating them into the project,  
7           returning them to the families or finding  
8           another location for it.

9           MR. MAXWELL: I would encourage your  
10          client to look at his open space  
11          requirements and meet the community at a  
12          minimum of halfway. Your client will  
13          propose and exceedingly large building to  
14          be on this property, which we'll be --

15          MR. NAVARRO: And we'd be happy to  
16          discuss it with them during the --

17          MR. MAXWELL: If you'll excuse me,  
18          please.

19          MR. NAVARRO: Yes, of course.

20          MR. MAXWELL: -- which will forever  
21          change the nature of that community, okay,  
22          and the scale of it, you know, will have an  
23          impact, the traffic will have an impact.  
24          It's going to impact everybody there, okay.  
25          So rather than be negative, reach out to

1 the community and be positive. Look to  
2 seek -- just as Mr. Menendez said, look to  
3 seek a compromise. Don't talk about  
4 removing plaques, don't talk about removing  
5 walls, look and see what you can do to  
6 create harmony within the community,  
7 because that is what the community is  
8 looking for. You don't have to save all of  
9 the Garden, that's not what's at question.  
10 The question is, you can't create more  
11 green space, okay, and you can't recreate  
12 the history and the love that is there.

13 So, that, I would ask you to get back  
14 to Mr. Pino and to work with the community  
15 to do something more than what you are  
16 suggesting, and actually talk to people and  
17 try to come up with what makes the  
18 community great, rather than what is solely  
19 financially most profitable. Thank you.

20 MR. NAVARRO: And we're committed to  
21 doing that. We're committed to meeting  
22 with the neighbors and discussing that  
23 project, but I believe that discussion is  
24 in a different setting. It's in our Zoning  
25 hearing, and not in this legal proceeding,

1           which is a very serious legal matter, where  
2           you have certain criteria, and we're only  
3           looking at what the property is today, and  
4           whether what's in that property is  
5           significant and meets your criteria, but we  
6           are committed to that, and obviously -- I  
7           don't have your information. It's an honor  
8           to be up here with you actually, but I  
9           would love to, you know, obviously continue  
10          those discussions.

11                 MR. MENENDEZ: I'm sure, at your Zoning  
12           hearing, you're going to have quite an  
13           army.

14                 MR. NAVARRO: Yes.

15                 MR. MENENDEZ: So I would also  
16           encourage you to work with the community,  
17           and, yes, a compromise would be great for  
18           all.

19                 MS. BOLTON: And I had a question --  
20           I'm a little confused, and maybe you can  
21           explain to me --

22                 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Ms. Bolton, can you  
23           speak into the microphone?

24                 MS. BOLTON: Oh. I'm a little confused  
25           and I'm hoping you could explain to me

1           why -- because, to me, the Garden is a very  
2           easily identifiable feature of the  
3           neighbor, like distinct, very clear. Why  
4           does it have to be attached to the other  
5           elements in that paragraph on the criteria?

6           MS. SPAIN: By Code, that's a  
7           requirement. That last sentence of C-2  
8           specifically talks about a garden, a  
9           landscape, and right now I don't have it in  
10          front of me, but it says --

11          MR. CEBALLOS: Would you like me to  
12          read it?

13          MS. SPAIN: Yeah.

14          MR. CEBALLOS: The last line of C-2  
15          states, "In case of a park or landscape  
16          feature is integral to the plan of such  
17          neighborhood or the City."

18          MS. SPAIN: Which I don't believe it  
19          fits that criteria. That was the issue for  
20          me.

21          And I just want to tell you, your  
22          mother would be so proud of you. I knew  
23          her well and she would be so proud of you.

24          MS. BOLTON: But I think it is an  
25          integral part of the neighborhood, because

1           it's in like the green corridor.

2           MS. SPAIN: It says to the plan,  
3           integral to the plan.

4           MS. BOLTON: Of the City, but it was --

5           MS. SPAIN: The City.

6           MS. BOLTON: On one of the graphs that  
7           Professor Martinez presented, the green  
8           areas, the trees, the parks. You know, at  
9           the beginning of East Ponce and Ponce,  
10          there's the park, and all of the way when  
11          you go to -- even once you reach the  
12          Douglas Entrance, there's a continuous span  
13          of green space, an open green space, park  
14          like --

15          MR. NAVARRO: That was the North Ponce  
16          Charrette, and what had happened was, our  
17          property was highlighted in red in that  
18          exhibit, and that's why I wanted to show  
19          the North Ponce Charrette, which I was  
20          actually honored to be a part of, when it  
21          got approved. They designated certain  
22          areas in the plan where perspective parks  
23          could go, but this site was not one of  
24          them, in that plan. And that's why I  
25          think, in my exhibit, I just wanted to



1 clarify for the Board that this site, even  
2 though it was identified on the plan --  
3 even though it is identified on that plan,  
4 I think it was more for showing the  
5 relationship to it.

6 We are going to have to comply with all  
7 of the beautification of East Ponce as  
8 every other project does, but that site is  
9 not a designated park in that plan.

10 MS. BACHE-WIIG: And I think that's  
11 something that when they go to Zoning, for  
12 example, that's something that is valid,  
13 and they have to consider, where is that  
14 green space, how does it affect the  
15 corridor, I mean, what's the opportunity  
16 there. And I just want to say to  
17 Mr. Navarro, I think it's important -- you  
18 know, our Board, we're obliged to look at  
19 the criteria, but I think, like what John  
20 was saying about -- this is more than --  
21 it's beyond, it's ethereal --

22 MR. FULLERTON: Ethereal.

23 MS. BACHE-WIIG: -- ethereal -- and I  
24 think -- you know, and even to Ms.  
25 Carbonel's, you know, comment about, we

1           need something miraculous, like a  
2           miraculous intervention, I think that all  
3           of these words mean something, because this  
4           is a sacred space, that is important, and  
5           when you come in and develop, you have to  
6           recognize that, and maybe just this is not  
7           the forum for that, because it's the  
8           Historic Board, but, definitely, I think  
9           the Zoning, there's validity there.  
10          There's a conversation that needs to be had  
11          there.

12                 MS. BOLTON: Okay. And I also have  
13                 another couple of other questions. I don't  
14                 understand why it doesn't exemplifies --

15                 THE SECRETARY: Speak into the mike.

16                 MS. BOLTON: I'm sorry. I don't  
17                 understand why it doesn't exemplify the  
18                 historical, cultural or social trends of  
19                 the community. Like why doesn't it?

20                 MR. MAXWELL: It does. I believe that  
21                 it does.

22                 MS. BOLTON: It does. Yes, I think it  
23                 does very clearly.

24                 MR. FULLERTON: It does.

25                 MS. BOLTON: Why are you saying it doesn't?

1 Dona?

2 MS. SPAIN: Oh, that's that general  
3 comment -- we're bound to the individual  
4 criteria that falls below what you're  
5 reading.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. At this time --

7 MS. BOLTON: And can I make one more --

8 MR. GILLIS: Mr. Gillis, you can sit down.

9 MR. MENENDEZ: Go ahead.

10 MS. BOLTON: Another criteria is, is it  
11 associated in a significant way with a past  
12 or continuing institution, which has  
13 contributed substantially to the life of  
14 the City? You know, definitely the  
15 school -- even, you know, the Crystal  
16 Academy families that spoke, you know --  
17 and there has been a school on that site  
18 continuously since the '50s.

19 So why is it that it's not meeting that  
20 criteria?

21 MR. FULLERTON: Good point.

22 MS. BOLTON: Dona?

23 MR. FULLERTON: Good point.

24 MS. BACHE-WIIG: I think, for me, at  
25 least, is the level of accomplishing that.

1           So, for example, maybe the example that was  
2           given by the client or the property owner  
3           is -- by your client, the park that had the  
4           tree, the friendship tree, where you had --

5           MR. NAVARRO: The soils came from all  
6           of the states of the Union, yes. These are  
7           really like significant major events.

8           MS. BACHE-WIIG: I think it's  
9           significant on a broader level, and maybe  
10          this is more local, and I think that that's  
11          where -- at least, my -- for me --

12          MR. NAVARRO: Usually it's tied to the  
13          significant --

14          MS. BOLTON: But this is one of the  
15          first three Biblical gardens in America.

16          MS. SPAIN: But it's no longer a  
17          Biblical Garden.

18          MR. MAXWELL: But it is.

19          MR. FULLERTON: It could become one.

20          MS. BOLTON: Well, I think it is,  
21          because, actually, before Pino purchased  
22          the property, there were little name plates  
23          by every plant and tree and bush in the  
24          garden, like a Carod bush, and there's  
25          still like a little fragment of a couple of

1           those left on the property.  Apparently,  
2           right before or about the time that Pino  
3           purchased the property, those name plates  
4           disappeared, but there was Frankincense,  
5           there were different little plates that  
6           identified each plant and where they were  
7           mentioned in the Bible.  So that's --

8           MS. BACHE-WIIG:  But I think what  
9           Warren was saying is that there's no  
10          planting plan, there's no landscape plan  
11          that documents that.  So the evidence is --

12          MS. BOLTON:  That's another issue  
13          that -- I spoke with Sallye Jude about a  
14          week before she died about the Garden, and  
15          I was talking to her about the water  
16          features and why the plans didn't have a  
17          lot of details, and she specifically stated  
18          to me, and Professor Martinez substantiated  
19          it to me, after I spoke to her, that during  
20          the 1950s, and at that time, plans did not  
21          have a lot of detail.

22          MR. MAXWELL:  Right.

23          MS. BOLTON:  It wasn't until recent  
24          years, you know, developments and  
25          technology -- so I think that that's the

1 reason why they're missing -- and the City  
2 has had some problems with keeping their  
3 records, as well. There are a lot of  
4 records that are missing, that the City  
5 had, but --

6 MR. NAVARRO: We're going to continue  
7 to go in a back and forth here.

8 MR. MENENDEZ: No.

9 MR. NAVARRO: Because I'm going to have  
10 to rebut everything you said.

11 MR. MENENDEZ: I know that now you have  
12 to rebut, but we finished the public  
13 evidence --

14 MR. NAVARRO: I'll just let the evidence --

15 MS. BOLTON: Okay. Yeah. Yeah.

16 MR. MENENDEZ: This is our  
17 conversation, so that we can make a  
18 determination.

19 MS. BOLTON: Okay.

20 MR. NAVARRO: If I can just say one  
21 ten-second thing? I'd like to just say  
22 that I rely on the substantial competent  
23 evidence as part of this record that has  
24 been established previously and your Staff  
25 representations and the experts that have

1 spoken today. That's all.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Duly noted.

3 Would someone like to make a motion?

4 MR. FULLERTON: I move to designate the  
5 property historic.

6 MR. MAXWELL: Second.

7 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay.

8 MR. GARCIA-PONS: On what condition?

9 MR. FULLERTON: None.

10 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Okay.

11 MR. MENENDEZ: So we have

12 Mr. Fullerton --

13 MR. ADAMS: Excuse me, if you're going  
14 to recommend designation, please specify  
15 the criteria. You have to specify which  
16 criteria the property is eligible under.

17 MS. SPAIN: We always do that.

18 MR. FULLERTON: Help me out here.

19 MR. MAXWELL: Let me think for a  
20 second. The property is associated with an  
21 architect of local and national  
22 significance and a historic space. I would  
23 leave it at that. An architect of local  
24 and national significance would be the  
25 criteria, and that it fits everything about

1           what we built Coral Gables, which is  
2           concrete, coral rock, and stucco and cast  
3           stone, the essence of Coral Gables since  
4           its beginning.

5           MR. ADAMS:   Okay.  With all due  
6           respect, the essence of Coral Gables is not  
7           a designation criteria.  If this is to be  
8           appealed --

9           MR. MAXWELL:  I understand that, Mr.  
10          Adams.

11          MR. ADAMS:  A piece of advice, if this  
12          is --

13          MR. FULLERTON:  And it is an  
14          outstanding work of a prominent designer or  
15          builder.

16          MR. MAXWELL:  That's what we said.  
17          There you go.

18          MR. MENENDEZ:  Okay.  It's  
19          Mr. Fullerton, with Mr. Maxwell as the  
20          second.

21          THE SECRETARY:  Mr. Ehrenhaft?

22          MR. EHRENHAFT:  No.

23          THE SECRETARY:  Mr. Fullerton?

24          MR. FULLERTON:  Yes.

25          THE SECRETARY:  Ms. Bache-Wiig?



1 MS. BACHE-WIIG: No.

2 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

3 MR. GARCIA-PONS: No.

4 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Durana?

5 MR. DURANA: No.

6 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Maxwell?

7 MR. MAXWELL: Yes.

8 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain?

9 MS. SPAIN: No.

10 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

11 MR. MENENDEZ: No.

12 THE SECRETARY: The motion fails.

13 MS. SPAIN: All right. I'll make

14 another motion.

15 MR. GARCIA-PONS: No, it doesn't --

16 MS. SPAIN: I think we need another

17 motion, don't we?

18 MR. MAXWELL: No, we don't.

19 MR. CEBALLOS: There needs to be an

20 affirmative vote.

21 MS. SPAIN: Right.

22 MR. CEBALLOS: The Board took no action

23 when the Board failed -- when the motioned

24 failed.

25 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Even if it's --

1 MR. MENENDEZ: Yeah.

2 MS. SPAIN: I've been through that  
3 before.

4 MR. GARCIA-PONS: State it in the  
5 positive.

6 MR. CEBALLOS: Basically the yeses have  
7 to be dominant in order to pass anything.  
8 It needs to be an affirmative vote.

9 MS. SPAIN: So I would like to make a  
10 motion stating that the designation does  
11 not meet the minimum eligibility criteria  
12 for designation as a Local Historic  
13 Landmark. What other motion is there? And  
14 deny the designation.

15 MR. MENENDEZ: Do I have a second?

16 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I'll second it.

17 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. It's Ms. Spain  
18 and Mr. Garcia-Pons.

19 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain?

20 MS. SPAIN: That would be a yes.

21 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Maxwell?

22 MR. MAXWELL: No.

23 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Durana?

24 MR. DURANA: Yes.

25 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

1 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.

2 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Bache-Wiig?

3 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes.

4 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

5 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

6 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Fullerton?

7 MR. FULLERTON: No.

8 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

9 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

10 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes.

11 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

12 MR. MAXWELL: All right. Then we need  
13 a break.

14 MS. SPAIN: Thank you all very much.

15 MR. MENENDEZ: I'm going to recess for  
16 ten minutes.

17 (Recess taken.)

18 MR. MENENDEZ: All right. Let's go.  
19 Nancy, let's go.

20 Okay. The next Case File, Case File  
21 LHD 2022-016; Consideration of the local  
22 historic designation of the property at  
23 1042 Catalonia Avenue, legally described as  
24 the East 8.33 feet of Lot 1 and all of Lot  
25 2, Block 21, Coral Gables Country Club

1 Section Part One, according to the Plat  
2 thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8, at  
3 Page 108 of the Public Records of  
4 Miami-Dade County, Florida.

5 MS. KAUTZ: Thank you.

6 So you don't get a voice over today.  
7 You actually have to pay attention.

8 The property at 1042 Catalonia Avenue  
9 is before you for designation as a Local  
10 Historic Landmark. It is the result of a  
11 Historic Significance Determination filed  
12 at the request of the Board of Architects.

13 The single-family residence was  
14 designed in 1925 by prominent architects  
15 Skinner and Pierson. As per Article 8,  
16 Section 8-103 of the Coral Gables Zoning  
17 Code, Criteria for Designation of Historic  
18 Landmarks, a local historic landmark must  
19 have significant character, interest or  
20 value as part of the historical, cultural,  
21 archeological, aesthetic or architectural  
22 heritage of the City, state or nation.

23 For designation, a property must meet  
24 one of the criteria outlined in the Code.  
25 This property is eligible as a Local

1 Historical Landmark based on 4 criteria.  
2 There are Historical, Cultural  
3 Significance, Criteria 4, as it exemplifies  
4 the historical, cultural, political,  
5 economic or social trends of the community.

6 Architectural significance, Criteria 1  
7 and 2, it portrays the environment in an  
8 era of history characterized by one or more  
9 distinctive architectural styles, and it  
10 embodies those distinguishing  
11 characteristics of an architectural style,  
12 or period or method of construction.

13 This property is in the Coral Gables  
14 Country Club Section Part 1, which is a  
15 residential single-family home neighborhood  
16 near the Biltmore Hotel. You can see the  
17 location map on the screen. The Biltmore  
18 is at the very bottom center. You'll  
19 recognize some landmarks nearby, the De  
20 Soto Fountain, the Coral Gables  
21 Congregational Church, Salvadore Park, et  
22 cetera.

23 It sits on -- the home sits on  
24 approximately a 58 by 130 interior lot, on  
25 the south side of Catalonia Avenue, between

1 Granada and Cordova Streets.

2 Coral Gables was originally conceived  
3 as a suburb of Miami and attracted  
4 investors from across the nation during the  
5 South Florida real estate boom of the  
6 1920s. Merrick drew from the Garden City  
7 and City Beautiful movements of the 19th  
8 and early 20th Century to create his vision  
9 for a fully conceived Mediterranean  
10 inspired city, which is now considered one  
11 of the first modern planned communities in  
12 the United States.

13 This City's developmental history is  
14 divided into three major historical  
15 periods. During the initial developmental  
16 period architectural design specifically  
17 combined elements commonly used in Spanish,  
18 Moorish and Italian architecture and became  
19 known as the Mediterranean Revival Style.  
20 This home was constructed during that  
21 initial phase.

22 The official launch of the George  
23 Merrick's Coral Gables occurred on April  
24 16th, 1921, with a front page article in  
25 the Miami News. It announced that Merrick

1 was developing 1,200 acres of his land.  
2 The boundaries were generally from Tamiami  
3 Trail to Bird Road and east to west, from  
4 Le Jeune Road to Red Road.

5 Initial sales were the direct vicinity  
6 of the Merrick homestead in Section A,  
7 which is outlined here on the maps in  
8 purple. Sales were very successful and the  
9 remainder of the land was divided into  
10 Sections B through I, and offered for sale  
11 throughout 1922.

12 In late 1922, with infrastructure of  
13 roads, plazas and entrances progressing at  
14 a substantial pace and the sale of lots and  
15 construction of new homes and businesses  
16 well underway, Merrick began to also  
17 concentrate on other aspects of the  
18 community, such as schools, churches and  
19 additional recreational amenities. In  
20 particular, he began to vigorously pursue  
21 an endeavor near and dear to his heart, a  
22 new congregational church.

23 In 1923, Merrick revamped Section G,  
24 the area just south of his homestead, and  
25 renamed it Country Club Section Part 1, and

1           you can see it on the right side map, and  
2           that's from the 1923 outlined in blue.

3           The Coral Gables Congregational Church  
4           was to be a tribute to George Merrick's  
5           father, Reverend Solomon Greasley Merrick.  
6           Solomon was a congregational minister in  
7           Massachusetts in George's youth and after  
8           the family moved to Florida in 1899, he  
9           helped to establish the Plymouth  
10          Congregational Church in Coconut Grove and  
11          served as its first pastor.

12          In 1923, with the revamp of Country  
13          Club Section 1, Merrick kicked off the  
14          building campaign by funding 10 percent of  
15          the church's projected building costs and  
16          by donating prime real estate to the  
17          church. The land that he donated is  
18          circled yellow on the map and it's called  
19          the Columbus Esplanade. He also donated  
20          land for the parsonage of the church at  
21          1014 Catalonia Avenue, which was recently  
22          designated as a Local Historic Landmark  
23          also, which he stated -- which Merrick  
24          stated was sited at the midpoint between  
25          the noble De Soto Fountain Plaza and the



1 church, in a residential neighborhoods, so  
2 that the pastor would live amidst the  
3 congregation. The parsonage location is  
4 noted on the map by the yellow rectangle.  
5 And just to the west is the home at 1042  
6 Catalonia, which is denoted in green.

7 In 1925, the same year in which the  
8 Congressional Church were completed, plans  
9 for a premier hotel and golf course at the  
10 end of the church's Columbus Esplanade were  
11 announced. As seen here in photographs  
12 taken from the tower of the resulting  
13 Biltmore Hotel, the area surrounding the  
14 church, the hotel complex, was primarily  
15 undeveloped.

16 The golf course opened January 2nd,  
17 1926, and while rapid development of the  
18 area around the church and hotel complex  
19 was anticipated, it was, however, decades  
20 before the Country Club Section 1 was  
21 developed. The home at 1042 Catalonia can  
22 be seen in the photo on the right.

23 The combination of the devastating  
24 Hurricane of 1926 and the Great Depression  
25 had a dramatic impact on new construction.

1           In Coral Gables, few single-family homes  
2           were built during the Depression Era. With  
3           the implementation of the New Deal and  
4           other incentives. The building industry  
5           experienced a small resurgence in the late  
6           1930s and early '40s. However, it abruptly  
7           ground to a halt during the War years. As  
8           illustrated in this 1948 aerial photo, the  
9           area around the church and hotel complex,  
10          unlike its northern counterparts, were not  
11          developed at this time.

12                 The Post-War prosperity that followed  
13                 these lean years created an optimism which  
14                 reigned through the 1950s and '60s and  
15                 resulted in an unprecedented building boom.  
16                 During this era, single-family homes in  
17                 Coral Gables followed national trends, both  
18                 in numbers and style and were a distinctive  
19                 departure from the ornamented and  
20                 picturesque Mediterranean Revival style  
21                 that had dominated this City's landscape  
22                 since its inception.

23                 By the late 1950s, Coral Gables Country  
24                 Club Part 1 was built out with new  
25                 residences, and the area retains this

1 context of single-family homes to this day,  
2 hence the home at 1042 Catalonia remains as  
3 one of the few residences built in this  
4 area during the early years of the City and  
5 is representative of that era.

6 During this time, architecture was  
7 primarily in the Mediterranean Revival  
8 style. The home exhibits  
9 character-defining features of the style,  
10 including projecting and recessed planes,  
11 including a projecting entry bay;  
12 rectilinear massing and floor plan;  
13 combination of roof types; clad barrel  
14 tile; textured stucco; prominent and  
15 distinctive chimney; decorative grooved  
16 vents; arched openings; slightly raised  
17 front entry masonry quoin surround the  
18 front door; carved rafter tails; decorative  
19 cascading protruding -- sorry, wrong one --  
20 recessed casement windows of various shapes  
21 and sizes with projecting sills.

22 The detached two-story auxillary  
23 structure also exhibits many of the same  
24 character-defining features of the style,  
25 as seen on the residence. Additional

1 features include the exterior staircase to  
2 the right, large scroll pieces that bookend  
3 the terrace and barrel tile coping at the  
4 terrace parapet.

5 The home was originally designed as  
6 two-story, three bedroom home with a  
7 detached two-story two-car garage at the  
8 southeast corner of the property. In 1943,  
9 a permit was granted for the extension of  
10 the pergola screened porch at the southeast  
11 corner of the home. This permit has not  
12 been located to date. Historic photos seem  
13 to indicate that this configuration has  
14 been maintained since then.

15 In 1944, a permit was issued for the  
16 construction of the screened porch on the  
17 west facade. It is labeled as laundry  
18 porch in the left image. The permit has  
19 also not been located to date.

20 The original drawings of the home  
21 indicate an interior porch that existed at  
22 this location, that was subsequently  
23 enclosed with this 1944 porch addition. No  
24 other additions have been made to the home.

25 These photos show the north -- the

1 front, north facing facade of the home.  
2 Many of the character defining features are  
3 found on this facade, such as the prominent  
4 chimney, the quoin surround, projecting  
5 bays and varied roofs. Note that the  
6 arched front door and the arched pairs of  
7 French doors appear to be original to the  
8 home. In the photo on the right, you can  
9 see the 1944 porch addition to the west  
10 facade, kind of in the background.

11 These are two views of the west side  
12 facade. At the center of the right photo  
13 is the shed-roofed 1944 porch addition.

14 These are views of the rear of the  
15 home, which is compromised of the two-story  
16 L-shaped living space, which opens onto a  
17 second floor open air terrace that's  
18 enclosed with a parapet wall along the  
19 interior east facade.

20 The southern portion of the second  
21 story was originally a sleeping porch, and  
22 the windows that wrap around this area on  
23 the west, south and east sides are  
24 distinctly different in proportion than the  
25 other windows on the home.

1           In the right photo, you can see the  
2 porch at the southeast corner of the home,  
3 that was originally a screened porch space.  
4 As noted, this porch or Florida room was  
5 roofed and expanded in 1943. Carved rafter  
6 tails support a large eave on the east side  
7 and keep the memory of the original pergola  
8 feature. The current screened frame  
9 configuration is also reminiscent of the  
10 original feature.

11           The views of the east facade are  
12 looking to the south on the left and  
13 looking to the north on the right. This  
14 facade retains its original fenestration  
15 and the east facade of the porch is visible  
16 on the photo on the left.

17           At the southeast corner of the property  
18 is a north facing two-story auxillary  
19 building. The first story is a two-car  
20 garage, enclosed with carriage doors. The  
21 second story is living space with an open  
22 air terrace. Two scroll features bookend  
23 the terrace wall along the east and west  
24 sides, and an exterior staircase along the  
25 west facade provides access to the living

1           quarters above. And these are photos that  
2           range from 1926, 1968 and then current  
3           photos.

4           So the property at 1042 Catalonia  
5           Avenue retains its historic integrity and  
6           significantly contributes to the historic  
7           fabric of the City of Coral Gables. It is  
8           part of a collection of quality buildings  
9           that serves as a visible reminder of the  
10          history and the cultural heritage of the  
11          City, and we recommend approval of the  
12          Local Historic Designation based on its  
13          historical, cultural and architectural  
14          significance.

15          MR. FULLERTON: Motion to designate.

16          MS. KAUTZ: I think the owner is in the  
17          audience.

18          MS. SPAIN: Is the owner here?

19          MS. KAUTZ: You can take the PowerPoint  
20          down, please.

21          MR. MENENDEZ: Would the owner like to  
22          speak or --

23          MR. MAYER: We're just excited to, you  
24          know, have the honor of owning this home  
25          and we're looking forward to building --

1 THE SECRETARY: Please come up to the mike.

2 MR. MAYER: I'm sorry.

3 MR. MENENDEZ: I must apologize. I  
4 know it's late and most of you sat through  
5 the three and a half hour marathon. We  
6 have those from time to time, but thanks  
7 again. Go ahead.

8 MR. MAYER: You know, we're really --

9 THE SECRETARY; State your name, please.

10 MR. MAYER: Theodore Mayer. As I  
11 mentioned, we are excited to be new  
12 homeowners in Coral Gables of this  
13 potentially historic home, we hope. It's  
14 always been a dream of ours to own a  
15 historic home, and we look forward to  
16 building our family in this neighborhood  
17 and look forward to collaborating to really  
18 bring this preservation project to the  
19 starting gate, really. So that's all.

20 MR. MAXWELL: Great.

21 MS. SPAIN: Great house.

22 MR. MENENDEZ: Is a beautiful home.

23 MS. SPAIN: Beautiful home.

24 MR. MAXWELL: Beautiful home.

25 MR. MENENDEZ: And as Mr. Fullerton has



1 already, you know, recommended --

2 MR. FULLERTON: This house used to be a  
3 neighbor of mine. I was at 1026.

4 MS. KAUTZ: Don't you love the picture  
5 with the flag? The flag is giant.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: It is giant.

7 MS. KAUTZ: I've never seen one like  
8 that, though.

9 MS. SPAIN: It's probably against Code  
10 now, but I'd love to see the flag --

11 MS. KAUTZ: A hundred percent against  
12 the Code.

13 MR. FULLERTON: So I move to designate.

14 MS. KAUTZ: Based on?

15 MR. FULLERTON: Do I have to say  
16 something else?

17 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Per the criteria  
18 identified in the Staff report?

19 MR. FULLERTON: Okay.

20 MR. MENENDEZ: Do I have a second?

21 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I'll second.

22 MR. MAXWELL: Second.

23 Oh, Mr. Garcia-Pons --

24 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Garcia-Pons seconds  
25 it.

1 MS. SPAIN: Do we have anybody from the  
2 audience that wants to say anything?

3 MR. MAXWELL: Any public comments?

4 MR. MENENDEZ: If there's anyone in the  
5 public who would like to speak regarding  
6 this property? I think --

7 MR. MAXWELL: Do so now or forever hold  
8 your peace.

9 MR. MENENDEZ: You've said that way too  
10 often.

11 MR. FULLERTON: Call the question.

12 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

13 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.

14 THE SECRETARY; Ms. Bache-Wiig?

15 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes.

16 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Durana?

17 MR. DURANA: Yes.

18 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Fullerton?

19 MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

20 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

21 MR. EHRENHAFT: It's a beautiful home.  
22 Congratulations. Yes.

23 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Maxwell?

24 MR. MAXWELL: Yes.

25 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain?

1 MS. SPAIN: Absolutely. Yes.

2 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

3 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

4 THE SECRETARY: Motion passes.

5 MR. MENENDEZ: There you go.

6 Congratulations.

7 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Congrats.

8 MS. KAUTZ: I just want to point out to  
9 you that Elizabeth did prepare the report.  
10 I'm just presenting it to all of you on her  
11 behalf.

12 MR. MENENDEZ: Great task.

13 Okay. The next items, Special  
14 Certificates of Appropriateness.

15 Case File COA (SP) 2022-036; An  
16 application for the issuance of a Special  
17 Certificate of Appropriateness for the  
18 property at 126 Frow Avenue, a vacant  
19 parcel within the "MacFarlane Homestead  
20 Subdivision Historic District," legally  
21 described as Lot 18, Block 2-A, MacFarlane  
22 Homestead, according to the Plat thereof,  
23 as recorded in Plat Book 5, at Page 81 of  
24 the Public Records of Miami-Dade County,  
25 Florida. The application requests design

1 approval for the construction of a new  
2 residence and sitework.

3 MR. ADAMS: Okay. So the property is  
4 at 126 Frow Avenue. It's currently a  
5 vacant lot within the MadFarlane Historic  
6 District, on both the Local and National  
7 Register. The architectural types within  
8 the MadFarlane Homestead Subdivision were,  
9 in most cases, built by their owners,  
10 without the assistance of an architect, and  
11 are considered vernacular. And the two  
12 most prevalent types of residential  
13 architecture in the district are frame or  
14 concrete block bungalows and the shotgun  
15 house.

16 A new two-story residence is proposed  
17 and -- so the parcel originally was  
18 included as a contributing resource within  
19 the MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision when  
20 it was established in 1989. At the time of  
21 designation, a one story wood frame  
22 bungalow, constructed in 1935, was on the  
23 property.

24 In 1993, the Preservation Board denied  
25 the request to demolish the structure, but

1 the structure was demolished some time  
2 after 1993. There is currently only one  
3 historic two-story wood frame vernacular  
4 residence remaining in the district is  
5 located at 1198 Grand Avenue.

6 And a new two-story residence at 106  
7 Florida Avenue was approved in 2011 and a  
8 second new two-story residence at 112  
9 Florida Avenue was approved by the Board in  
10 2019.

11 The proposed residence is rectangular  
12 in plan, consists of 1,200 square feet of  
13 floor area on the first floor and 1,200  
14 square feet on the second floor, and the  
15 first floor consists of an  
16 eight-foot-five-inch covered entry porch,  
17 vestibule, bedroom with bathroom, living  
18 room, dining room and kitchen.

19 To the west of the residence is a one  
20 story hipped-roof carport, and the second  
21 floor consists of three bedrooms with  
22 bathrooms.

23 The structure has been designed with  
24 many of the characteristics present in the  
25 existing historic vernacular homes in the

1 district, including a front porch with the  
2 roof supported by columns, hipped metal  
3 roof, double-hung windows, Hardie Plank  
4 siding to the second story elevations to  
5 mimic wood siding, operable wood shutters,  
6 brackets and rafter tails. There's also  
7 some sitework.

8 No variances have been requested.

9 This proposal was reviewed and approved  
10 by the Board of Architects on September  
11 15th, 2022, with the following comments,  
12 which were incorporated into the submission  
13 you have; change the carport to be more  
14 open, remove terrace on carport, remove  
15 cupola and restudy materials of the front  
16 porch.

17 The Preservation Office comment prior  
18 to Board of Architects review stated, scale  
19 massing architectural features not  
20 consistent with Historic District.

21 The application presented requests for  
22 a new construction. Per the applicant's  
23 Letter of Intent, it states, at this time,  
24 the Lola B. Walker Homeowners Association  
25 cannot approve the submitted plans for

1 inclusion in our Historic neighborhood.  
2 The design and scale are not compatible  
3 with the character of the surrounding  
4 structures. This design would set a  
5 precedent leading to the demise of a  
6 historic jewel within the City Beautiful.

7 I've included images in the report of  
8 the two most recently approved two-story  
9 homes at 106 and 112 Florida. And the  
10 analysis shows the proposed new house at  
11 126 is fairly consistent with the Zoning  
12 requirements of the two recently approved  
13 new homes; however, it is situated on a  
14 slightly larger lot, which accounts for the  
15 additional square footage.

16 With regard to setbacks, the subject  
17 home has a 15-foot front setback, which is  
18 allowed per Section A-66E of the Code for  
19 the MacFarlane District. The large west  
20 side setback for 106 Florida Avenue is due  
21 to the property having a garage at the rear  
22 incorporated into the residential structure  
23 rather than a carport.

24 Although the subject is somewhat  
25 consistent with prior approvals, the

1 proposed designs appears to be larger and  
2 have greater massing. There are several  
3 reasons for this. Firstly, the subject has  
4 a shallow roof pitch and an eaves height of  
5 21 feet nine, while 106 and 112 Florida  
6 have a steeper pitched roof and eaves  
7 heights of 20 feet and 19 feet six inches  
8 respectively. This results in a greater  
9 massing of the front facade, as there is  
10 more wall area. This additional height has  
11 been incorporated into the subject to  
12 accomodate the first floor ceiling height  
13 of approximately eleven feet six inches and  
14 a second floor ceiling height of  
15 approximately nine feet four. 106 Florida  
16 has a first and second floor ceiling height  
17 of nine feet. 112 Florida has a first  
18 floor of ten feet and a second floor of  
19 nine.

20 With regard to the carport, 112 Florida  
21 has a simple design with slender columns  
22 and shed-roofed, while the subject design  
23 appears bulkier due to the thicker of  
24 columns and beams and the hip roof.

25 With regard to the architectural



1 features, the porch columns and beams on  
2 the subject are thicker than those normally  
3 found in Frame Vernacular structures.  
4 Additionally, the higher ceiling heights  
5 have resulted in doors and windows which  
6 are much longer than those found in  
7 existing structures in the District. The  
8 front door with transom height is eight  
9 feet six. The first floor windows are five  
10 feet ten and the second floor windows are  
11 six feet. The height of the windows has  
12 also resulted in the elongated appearance  
13 of the shutters.

14 Based on the above, it is Staff's  
15 opinion that the residence as proposed is  
16 incompatible with the existing structures  
17 in the Historic Distract and will detract  
18 from the overall integrity of the Historic  
19 District. So we're recommending a deferral  
20 to work more with the property owners and  
21 the architect to see if we can bring the  
22 house more in line with the historic  
23 architecture.

24 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Is the owner  
25 here, present?

1 MR. FETT: Yes.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Would you like to speak?

3 MR. FETT: We have a presentation. I  
4 don't know how that works, but --

5 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Speak into the mike.

6 MS. SPAIN: Did you submit it prior?

7 MR. FETT: Yes.

8 MS. SPAIN: So all you have to do is to  
9 ask the people upstairs that are --

10 MR. MENENDEZ: There you go.

11 Please state your name.

12 MR. FETT: Thank you.

13 My name is Steven Fett. I'm the  
14 architect. My office address is 25  
15 Southeast 2nd Avenue, in Miami. These are  
16 the owners.

17 Would you like to --

18 MR. SALCEDO: My name is Victor Salcedo  
19 and my wife is Noemi Salcedo.

20 MRS. SALCEDO: Noemi Salcedo.

21 MR. FETT: Thank you very much. Thanks  
22 for this opportunity to present and the  
23 forum to do so, and your dedication to it.

24 Okay. So this has been a relatively  
25 lengthy process. We have met, on a number

1 of occasions, with Staff Members from  
2 Historic Preservation. First, we did so in  
3 mid to late 2020.

4 You're seeing here four variations, in  
5 fact, of this same property, the same  
6 house, where we've worked -- the first two  
7 have been presented to the Historic  
8 Preservation Staff, to Ms. Kautz.

9 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Can you tell us which  
10 was one, two, three, four?

11 MR. FETT: I'm sorry. Yes.

12 MS. BACHE-WIIG: No, it's okay.

13 MR. FETT: Let's say, the upper left is  
14 one, upper right is two, lower left is  
15 three, lower right is four.

16 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Okay.

17 MR. FETT: We presented to the Lola B.  
18 Walker Homeowners Association on three  
19 occasions, as well, meeting at their  
20 facility in Coral Gables, within the  
21 MacFarlane District. I don't know that  
22 they've seen the latest version, but  
23 nevertheless these are sort of four  
24 iterations. We're constantly sort of  
25 striving to reach a kind of compromise of

1           sorts.

2           Indeed, it is true, as Mr. Adams  
3           suggests, the character of the neighborhood  
4           is, generally speaking, of smaller  
5           structures, particularly wood frame  
6           structures, that were built in the 1920s.  
7           We see a lot of these lots have been  
8           vacated over the years. There are some  
9           examples of variations, let's say,  
10          within --

11           MS. SPAIN: What a nice drawing.

12           MR. FETT: -- within this site. Yes.

13           119 Frow is actually a duplex. The  
14           shotgun houses, of course, represented by  
15           Tom Spain, depict houses that are on  
16           smaller lots, as well, 25-foot lots.

17           It would be interesting to know,  
18           historically, this site, on the house that  
19           we're proposing, whether or not it was  
20           originally a 50 by 100 plat as it is today.  
21           The current Code and Zoning does not allow  
22           multi-family. It does not allow 25-foot  
23           lots and such. It is, you know, set to  
24           market at the price, with the expectation,  
25           let's say, of being able to build a

1 single-family house on a 50 by 100 foot  
2 lot.

3 Indeed, there are examples of two-story  
4 buildings within the context of the  
5 neighborhood, 106 Florida Avenue, a  
6 historic example at 113 Grand.

7 I would say, also, in all of our  
8 conversations with the homeowners  
9 association, the conversation has never  
10 been about architecture. It has always  
11 been about size. The -- just maybe to  
12 follow this sort of train of thought, in  
13 the immediate adjacency, these are in the  
14 City of Miami, but nevertheless within the  
15 sort of Coconut Grove District, there are  
16 other examples of two-story buildings.

17 And as has been mentioned, we did  
18 present and were approved by the Board of  
19 Architects, in fact, unanimously. The sort  
20 of changes that they suggested helped to  
21 reduce the scale of the house somewhat from  
22 its initial sort of conception. We reduced  
23 the floor height and we reduced a little  
24 bit of the massing. We adjusted some of  
25 the things, to make the house appear

1 smaller.

2 It does have some distinct sort of  
3 historic features. Of course, it's not  
4 wood framed, as is not allowed by Code. It  
5 also has the presence of a carport, which  
6 is also required by Code, indeed not, you  
7 know, historic to the District.

8 Our initial proposal, if you remember,  
9 from the upper left, actually proposed a  
10 kind of independent carport, and one of the  
11 recommendations by the Board was that, in  
12 fact, we had to add an attached carport to  
13 it.

14 So upon receiving this approval, this  
15 is our happy homeowners here -- they, I  
16 should say, also represent a family of six,  
17 who will be living in the home. The house  
18 requirement, let's say, of buildable space  
19 within the lot, the 50 by a hundred foot  
20 lot, is 35 percent, and so having, let's  
21 say, a minimum four-bedroom house, on a lot  
22 where 35 percent of it is allowed to be  
23 built, makes it essentially impossible to  
24 put all of the necessary program on one  
25 floor. So, the option, really, is then

1 sort of directed towards having a two-story  
2 home.

3 And, you know, indeed the owners  
4 have -- I should say a bit about them, as  
5 well. They've spent the majority of their  
6 lives in Los Angeles. They're moving here.  
7 Noemi's family, indeed, is from Miami, as  
8 well, and so they hope to spend, you know,  
9 God willing, a long healthy life in this  
10 home, in this neighborhood. They're  
11 excited to be a part of the neighborhood  
12 and very much engaged in community affairs  
13 in all of the places that they've lived.

14 They also had the reasonable  
15 expectation, I should add, that when they  
16 bought the property, that they would be  
17 allowed to build per right, as is denoted  
18 in the City's Zoning Code. We are asking  
19 for no variances, no exceptions. By  
20 extension, perhaps, one could assume that  
21 by the Bert Harris Act of private property  
22 protection from 1995, that there would be  
23 no unnecessary obstacles, you know, in the  
24 way. And so they pursued the purchase of  
25 the lot, and we've been, you know, working

1 with them for some time now to try and  
2 satisfy their needs and find a balance  
3 between what they're after and what the  
4 community is hoping to, you know, get out  
5 of this, as well. And it should be noted  
6 that it's a tricky situation.

7 The neighborhood is at a smaller scale.  
8 It is in direct opposition to the allowable  
9 Zoning Code. You know, this house, in some  
10 ways, will set a precedent, because not a  
11 lot of development has happened in that  
12 neighborhood. You know, we've done our  
13 very best to try and accommodate, to try  
14 and compromise, but a family of six,  
15 nevertheless, is a family of six, and if we  
16 can, you know, sort of review some of the  
17 floor plans, I mean, reducing a few inches  
18 here and there are things that we've done,  
19 and quite frankly, you know, the plan, we  
20 believe, is compatible.

21 Here you see the plan view, as well as  
22 a sort of street elevation. It's probably  
23 sort of uniquely sited, in so much as the  
24 fact that there is sort of a larger church  
25 to the north -- I'm sorry, to the west,



1           which has a kind of, you know, even larger  
2           scale to it. There is an empty lot, which  
3           is owned by that same entity, which may or  
4           may become a parking lot in the future. So  
5           this sort of bookends one side of the  
6           neighborhood.

7                     And, you know, in plan view, certainly  
8           the house is not larger, really, than  
9           adjacent structures.

10                    In elevation view, the ceiling  
11           heights -- actually, I would dispute one  
12           comment made about ceiling height. In  
13           fact, our first floor ceiling height is  
14           nine foot eight. The eleven foot eight  
15           that was mentioned includes the height of a  
16           presumed two foot wooden truss and the  
17           second floor is nine foot four. So they're  
18           not excessive heights, nor is the width  
19           excessive. It's less than 25 feet wide.  
20           Some of the adjacent other mentioned  
21           properties are also above 20 feet.

22                    So, you know, we're happy to certainly  
23           answer questions about this, and I  
24           understand that it's not an easy decision.  
25           We would love to have gained the approval

1 of the Lola B. Walker Board, you know, and  
2 it's -- well, I'll leave it at that. I  
3 think -- you know, I think it's a  
4 reasonable -- certainly we've done our best  
5 to design something that resembles the  
6 character of the historic structures within  
7 the neighborhood, while also accommodating,  
8 you know, the needs and desires of the  
9 clients, you know, who are very invested in  
10 the community.

11 So thank you.

12 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

13 MR. MAXWELL: Thank you.

14 MR. CEBALLOS: Just for the purposes of  
15 clarification, because I feel the need to  
16 make a comment, there was a reference to a  
17 Bert J. Harris claim or act. I'm not sure  
18 how that's relevant to this property. The  
19 Board of Architects and the Historic  
20 Preservation Board predate 1995  
21 substantially. This District, I believe,  
22 was designated in the '80s. I'm not sure  
23 how that would factor into any of these  
24 considerations.

25 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Is there anyone

1 in the audience who would like to speak in  
2 favor or opposition of this case?

3 MS. SPAIN: Steven, did you say that  
4 the Lola B. Walker Homeowners Association  
5 has not seen this final version?

6 I'm sorry. I apologize. But I think  
7 it's important.

8 MR. FETT: I can't -- it's my  
9 understanding -- we've never presented it  
10 to them.

11 MS. SPAIN: Okay.

12 MR. FETT: If they've seen it, it's not  
13 because we've shown it to them.

14 MS. SPAIN: I see. Because it's  
15 substantially different than the ones  
16 before, so --

17 MR. PRIME: Good evening.

18 MR. MENENDEZ: Good evening.

19 MR. PRIME: Carl Leon Prime, 209  
20 Florida Avenue.

21 Mr. Chairman, Members of the Board, I  
22 stand before you today as a life-long  
23 resident and citizen of Coral Gables,  
24 life-long resident of the same  
25 neighborhood. And I currently serve as

1           President of the Lola B. Walker Homeowners  
2           Association.

3           Our namesake sought to the need to  
4           preserve our unique community. In carrying  
5           on in that vein, the late Mr. Cooper,  
6           William Cooper, Carl Prime, my father --

7           MS. SPAIN: Nice man.

8           MR. PRIME: -- along with the City of  
9           Coral Gables worked diligently to have our  
10          neighborhood designated on the National  
11          Register of Historic Places. And to that,  
12          I must speak out against granting the  
13          Special Certificate of Appropriateness for  
14          126 Frow Avenue.

15          It's come back in many iterations.  
16          It's large. It doesn't actually fit into  
17          the same type of character, design as the  
18          rest of the neighborhood.

19          I watched my playgrounds in Coconut  
20          Grove become these huge sugar cubes that  
21          are really just glorified duplexes, and I  
22          don't want to see the precedent set where  
23          that begins here in Coral Gables, and  
24          especially in our historic neighborhood.  
25          If we start, little by slowly, eroding the

1           little guidelines that say, no, you can't  
2           build this huge thing here, it must also  
3           adhere to some guideline to look something  
4           like the others in the neighborhood, then  
5           why are we here as a Historic Preservation  
6           Board, and why are we trying to hold on to  
7           a historic neighborhood, if it's just going  
8           to be eroded away?

9           You know, our neighborhood is full of  
10          bungalows, shotgun Miami style homes, as I  
11          call them, and, yes, the property is Zoned  
12          for two stories, but it doesn't have to be  
13          that large. And this current version of  
14          this is sort of large, it's a little bit  
15          more boxy. It fits a little bit more in,  
16          but it doesn't have any character, from  
17          what I'm looking at.

18          Members of the Homeowners Association  
19          said, no, come back, build something a  
20          little smaller, try some split level,  
21          something else. They didn't listen to us.  
22          Progress is what it is. There comes a  
23          point where you have to draw the line and  
24          just say, "Look, you bought into a historic  
25          neighborhood. There are certain

1 guidelines. We have design standards and  
2 you need to fit in."

3 And I believe that basically -- let's  
4 see, I think that covered most of what I  
5 wanted to say.

6 As they always say, it's the remarks  
7 you want to make, the ones you write down,  
8 and then the ones that you think about at  
9 2:30 in the morning as, this is what I  
10 should have said.

11 With that -- okay, just one last thing  
12 here. It's been said that a journey of a  
13 thousand miles begins with a first step.  
14 Do not let this be the first step of the  
15 journey in degrading our neighborhood.  
16 Thank you.

17 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

18 MS. SPAIN: Mr. Prime, I have a  
19 question while you're up.

20 MR. PRIME: Sure.

21 MS. SPAIN: First of all, how are you?

22 MR. PRIME: I'm doing well. Thank you.

23 MS. SPAIN: I see you here all of the  
24 time now.

25 MR. PRIME: Yes.

1 MS. SPAIN: And I loved your dad. He  
2 was such a nice man.

3 But you don't have a problem with it  
4 being two stories?

5 MR. PRIME: No, I don't.

6 MS. SPAIN: Okay. All right. You're  
7 not saying that they should not build a  
8 two-story home because there have been --

9 MR. PRIME: We have no problem with the  
10 a two-story home.

11 MS. SPAIN: Okay. All right.

12 MR. PRIME: I believe it's zoned for  
13 that and it would be appropriate. We're  
14 not saying you can't build a home. It's  
15 just -- let's keep it in the same style and  
16 design of the rest of the neighborhood.

17 MR. DURANA: I have a question. Have  
18 you guys seen the latest --

19 MS. SPAIN: Yeah, have you seen the  
20 latest one?

21 MR. PRIME: No, I haven't seen that.

22 MS. SPAIN: Because, I will tell you,  
23 it's substantially different than anything  
24 before, and in my view, is in keeping with  
25 the neighborhood.

1 MR. DURANA: Yeah.

2 MR. MAXWELL: Yeah, it does. Would you  
3 like to see it?

4 MR. PRIME: Yeah.

5 MR. MAXWELL: Please.

6 MR. PRIME: Well, when I was before the  
7 Board of Architects, this is even different  
8 from the last plan that I saw there.

9 MS. SPAIN: Yeah, I think so.

10 MR. DURANA: Yeah, this one seems a lot --

11 MR. PRIME: Our main concern is that,  
12 yes, it's getting closer and closer, but  
13 still the size, and it's -- and in  
14 comparison to the church, a church is a  
15 church, you know. Churches are usually  
16 large.

17 MR. MAXWELL: Yeah.

18 MS. SPAIN: Yeah, but I think that Mr.  
19 Fett's comment about there being churches  
20 next to it is relevant, because it's nice  
21 that the church is there, in order for a  
22 two-story residence not to stand out, being  
23 surrounded by one stories. So I don't  
24 know.

25 MR. PRIME: Yeah. Our thing is that,



1 if it could just be a little bit narrower,  
2 no problem.

3 MR. DURANA: I have a question, though,  
4 and this is for Staff, didn't we approve a  
5 house at 4600 Booker Street a little while  
6 ago?

7 MR. MAXWELL: Would you like the --

8 MR. DURANA: I mean, in my opinion, I  
9 think this is a nicer --

10 MS. SPAIN: So much nicer.

11 MR. DURANA: A lot nicer. Like it's  
12 way nicer. No offense to the other, you  
13 know, architect, but this is really nice,  
14 compared to 4600 Booker Street that was  
15 approved. I mean, I understand the  
16 neighborhood's concern, but to me, I mean,  
17 this is a beautiful house, honestly.

18 But I get it, you know, they have  
19 their opinion.

20 MR. MENENDEZ: You know, the size of  
21 the house is not dictated by us.

22 MR. PRIME: Right.

23 MR. MENENDEZ: What about 112 Florida  
24 Avenue?

25 MR. PRIME: 112 Florida Avenue?

1 Growing up -- let's see, those were already  
2 Zoned as two-story. When I was growing up  
3 there, there was one that was a two-story  
4 wood frame house, and from what I was told,  
5 there was another one there, but during my  
6 lifetime, I don't remember it, but I was  
7 told that it was there before. So with the  
8 two properties there, between 112 and the  
9 one next to it, those were always two  
10 stories, as far as I know.

11 MR. MENENDEZ: And how do you like  
12 those?

13 MR. PRIME: We love those.

14 MR. MENENDEZ: You love those?

15 MR. PRIME: Yeah. I have no problem  
16 with those.

17 MR. MENENDEZ: Yeah, I don't think  
18 you've seen the latest. I think you need  
19 to take a look at that.

20 MR. PRIME: Yeah, I've looked at some  
21 of them. As I was saying, our primary  
22 concern is that, if it were a little bit  
23 narrower, and other than that, it is  
24 probably much better than some of the  
25 others that have come through.

1 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Thank you.

2 Yes, sir, you would like to speak?

3 MR. PRICE: Good evening. I am a  
4 resident of --

5 THE SECRETARY: Your name, sir?

6 MR. PRICE: My name is Llewellyn Price.  
7 I'm a resident of 125 Florida Avenue, right  
8 across from where the structure is supposed  
9 to be constructed. And I've heard all of  
10 the arguments, but my views are very, very,  
11 very much different.

12 They said they are coming from  
13 California. I happen to be born in Los  
14 Angeles. Now, I've seen A-frame structures  
15 that are also two-story high. They don't  
16 like two-story buildings.

17 My mom, she's arguing the point about  
18 her air quality, of a structure that is so  
19 tall in front of her front door, that she  
20 might not even get the sun, which is  
21 questionable, but I really think that the  
22 architects, they should get some more  
23 designs on the board, because there's more  
24 to a two-story structure than all of these  
25 windows in front of the house.

1           MR. GARCIA-PONS: Mr. Price, can you  
2 speak into the microphone? She can't hear  
3 you. Thank you very much.

4           MR. PRICE: I'm sorry.

5           You know, I'm just thinking that, you  
6 know, there is kind of like a narrow view  
7 of what they want to put. I'm thinking  
8 they just want to destroy the contour of  
9 the neighborhood with this two-story  
10 structure. Those houses that were done on  
11 Booker, those are on the edge of the  
12 neighborhood. The actual neighborhood  
13 consists of a colonial style, Caribbean  
14 historical wood frame, A-frame, homes.

15           I'm not against a two-story house, but  
16 there are better constructions. They need  
17 to get a real architect out in California.  
18 He could show you something different.  
19 Thank you.

20           MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

21           MR. MAXWELL: Thank you.

22           THE SECRETARY: We have someone on Zoom  
23 that wants to speak.

24           MR. MENENDEZ: Go ahead.

25           THE SECRETARY: Yes, we can hear you.

1 MS. SPAIN: No, we can't.

2 THE SECRETARY: You can't hear her?

3 MR. FULLERTON: No.

4 MS. SPAIN: No.

5 THE SECRETARY: Hold on one second.

6 Hold on one second, ma'am. Hold on one  
7 second. The Board cannot hear you. Hold  
8 on.

9 MR. DURANA: In the meantime, can I ask  
10 Warren a question? Would it be possible to  
11 get a variance to eliminate the carport, so  
12 that the structure doesn't look as big? I  
13 mean, is that allowable?

14 MS. SPAIN: To eliminate what -- oh,  
15 the carport.

16 MR. DURANA: Yeah. I mean, maybe that  
17 will help give it more that shotgun feel,  
18 if we can get rid of the carport. I know  
19 the Code requires a carport, but maybe we  
20 can give a variance --

21 MR. ADAMS: Because it's a new  
22 structure, it's sort of difficult to argue.

23 MR. DURANA: Because I like the design.  
24 I think it fits in. I mean, it's a really  
25 pretty -- what happened -- maybe the

1           carport -- you know, I think that's what's  
2           kind of making it seem a lot bigger than  
3           what it is.

4           MR. ADAMS:   And this is one of the  
5           reasons I included the chart in the report,  
6           just so you can compare what had been  
7           approved before with what's here.

8           MR. FULLERTON:   That carport is set  
9           back quite a bit.

10          MR. MAXWELL:   Mr. Adams, in your  
11          comments, you're requesting a deferral --  
12          or recommending a deferral, excuse me. Can  
13          you specifically say, you know, what it is  
14          that you would like to work with --

15          THE SECRETARY:   Mr. Maxwell, can you  
16          hold, please?

17          MR. MAXWELL:   Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

18          THE SECRETARY:   Go ahead. I'll  
19          transfer her --

20          MR. MENENDEZ:   Okay. Go ahead, Mr.  
21          Maxwell.

22          MR. MAXWELL:   Okay.

23          MR. ADAMS:   Well, as you heard them,  
24          the architect, Mr. Fett, and Mr. Prime, and  
25          when you see the examples that were given

1           before, I don't think anyone can deny it's  
2           all moving in the right direction. So the  
3           intent would be to try and get something  
4           that everyone can live with and support. I  
5           didn't want to recommend outright denial,  
6           because that creates a big problem for the  
7           property homeowner. But, also, creating  
8           approval, when technically they don't have  
9           the homeowners association on board -- I  
10          suppose I'm hoping that now that we're past  
11          the Board of Architects, if maybe there  
12          aren't significant alterations that they  
13          would have to go back, maybe there's a  
14          middle ground that everyone can live with.  
15          I don't know if that's possible.

16                 But recommending either approval or  
17          denial seemed to be -- it would be nice to  
18          get the design finalized into something  
19          that everyone can live with. But, again,  
20          you know, the difficulty is, I did present  
21          the chart showing what was approved before,  
22          and all of the dimensions of the existing  
23          home are sort of similar to what was  
24          approved before.

25                 I was just wondering if there was a way

1 to bring the scale down. As I said, I  
2 believe the pitch of the roof in this one  
3 is much shallower, so you've got much -- to  
4 keep it within the height, if the pitch is  
5 shallower, so there's more wall space,  
6 maybe if that was reduced and the pitch was  
7 increased, you know, that angle to bring --  
8 you know, if you reduce the size of the  
9 windows, it brings down the shutters, it  
10 stops this vertical --

11 MR. MAXWELL: Yeah, the floors to  
12 ceilings are higher than typical, you know,  
13 in that neighborhood, too, right, because  
14 they're contemporary.

15 MS. SPAIN: Well, yeah, but I wouldn't  
16 want them to lower the ceiling height,  
17 because then the proportion of the  
18 residence would be off. It would be squat.

19 MR. MAXWELL: Sure. But for energy  
20 efficiency standards, now you kill that.  
21 So, you know, a compromise, but --

22 MS. SPAIN: I think it's a pity that it  
23 didn't go to the Lola B. Walker Homeowners  
24 Association, because it's so much more in  
25 keeping with the neighborhood than the past



1 designs --

2 MR. ADAMS: Yeah.

3 MS. SPAIN: -- that I would imagine  
4 that it would be -- if the others ones were  
5 approved that we've seen, I would imagine  
6 that this one would be, also.

7 MR. DURANA: I mean, I think this is  
8 the nicest one that I've seen.

9 MS. SPAIN: Yeah. Beautiful plans, by  
10 the way. The plans themselves are  
11 beautiful.

12 MR. DURANA: I mean, is there a way to  
13 show the original intent and then this new  
14 design, because I think that's maybe where  
15 the disconnect is?

16 THE SECRETARY: Can we let the person  
17 on Zoom speak, because we're having --

18 Go ahead. Go ahead. Can you speak?

19 MS. SPAIN: We still can't hear this  
20 person.

21 MR. MAXWELL: It's sign language.

22 MS. SPAIN: No.

23 THE SECRETARY: You can hear her?

24 MS. SPAIN: No.

25 MR. MENENDEZ: No.

1 MS. BACHE-WIIG: No. We can see --

2 MR. FULLERTON: That's her? Anybody  
3 that can lip read?

4 MS. SPAIN: No.

5 MR. MAXWELL: We're not getting any  
6 voice.

7 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Nancy, if you unplug  
8 your headset --

9 THE SECRETARY: I hear her.

10 MS. BACHE-WIIG: No, but if you unplug  
11 your headset, would that allow --

12 THE SECRETARY: No.

13 MS. BACHE-WIIG: No?

14 (Simultaneous speaking.)

15 (Inaudible.)

16 MR. FULLERTON: Can we proceed until we  
17 find the problem?

18 MR. MENENDEZ: Yeah. Let's --

19 THE SECRETARY: Yeah, go ahead.

20 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Adams, what can we  
21 do to move this project along for the  
22 applicants and the community, as well?

23 MR. FULLERTON: Looking at the lot size  
24 comparison with other properties, 106 and  
25 112, this stacks up fairly equally to those

1 buildings, and maybe if a different  
2 structural system were employed, it can  
3 bring the house down a foot or so from the  
4 second to roof, and increase the pitch of  
5 the roof a foot, maybe that would help make  
6 the house a little more compatible, and may  
7 be a simple change.

8 MR. MENENDEZ: Could the carport be  
9 detached and pushed back?

10 MS. SPAIN: Apparently that's what they  
11 had, and the Board of Architects asked that  
12 it be connected.

13 MR. FULLERTON: But it's already pushed  
14 back. I don't see that the carport has an  
15 impact on the --

16 MR. MENENDEZ: It just makes the  
17 structure look wider. That's the thing.

18 MR. FULLERTON: Only from that one  
19 vantage point, straight on. And as you're  
20 passing the house, you're going to see the  
21 front.

22 MR. DURANA: Yeah, but that's what  
23 they're saying. I mean, the resident from  
24 across the street is the one saying that he  
25 feels it's too wide for the lot.

1 MR. MAXWELL: Yeah.

2 MR. ADAMS: I think, as well, the roof  
3 in the carport isn't really consistent with  
4 other carports in the District that either  
5 have shed roofs or flat roofs and there is  
6 more of a half of a hip roof, and the  
7 thickness of the columns and -- you know,  
8 when you compare it to a historic house, it  
9 just looked heavier.

10 MR. MAXWELL: Yeah.

11 MR. ADAMS: Heavier. It doesn't seem  
12 the have the lightness of --

13 MS. SPAIN: Well, yeah, but integral  
14 buildings in historic districts don't have  
15 to mimic exactly the historic properties.

16 MR. ADAMS: No.

17 MS. SPAIN: In fact, you don't want  
18 them to look like the historic properties,  
19 because then you can't differentiate them  
20 from the historic ones and the non-historic  
21 ones. So there is a --

22 MR. MENENDEZ: You know, to me, those  
23 shutters make it look heavy on the front of  
24 the building.

25 MR. FULLERTON: Yeah, those have an

1 impact, for sure.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Maybe if those shutters  
3 came off, it wouldn't look so heavy.

4 MS. BACHE-WIIG: I think it's also the  
5 color. I mean, they're green against  
6 white. They pop too much.

7 MR. FULLERTON: Yeah.

8 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Maybe the color can  
9 be -- do we have issues with the hip roof?  
10 Was that --

11 MR. ADAMS: No.

12 MS. BACHE-WIIG: No?

13 MR. MAXWELL: No.

14 MR. FULLERTON: No.

15 MS. BACHE-WIIG: I agree, though, with  
16 Warren, that the half hip kind of, you  
17 know, dying at the house is a bit odd and  
18 it's a bit high. Can we just adjust that  
19 slope a little bit to minimize --

20 MR. FULLERTON: Which hip?

21 MS. BACHE-WIIG: You see this -- this  
22 is pretty --

23 MR. FULLERTON: The carport?

24 MS. BACHE-WIIG: The carport. Can we  
25 just -- what is it, like a twelve and four

1 right now, 4.5?

2 MR. FULLERTON: Like a three.

3 MS. BACHE-WIIG: I don't know. Can it  
4 mimic the hip above, you know, the angle?  
5 I think -- it's pretty big. I mean, I  
6 don't want to play architect, but --

7 MR. GARCIA-PONS: You are.

8 MR. EHRENHAFT: I think the height of  
9 the peak is going to be higher.

10 MS. BACHE-WIIG: No, just the carport  
11 here.

12 MR. FULLERTON: I would say, pull the  
13 eave down a foot, along with the floor plan  
14 of the second floor, one foot, in structure  
15 alone, and leave the pitch -- leave the top  
16 of the roof exactly where it is. So it's a  
17 higher pitch, but it looks a little thinner  
18 from an overall standpoint.

19 MS. SPAIN: But that would still keep  
20 the first floor at the same height --  
21 ceiling height. You're just talking about  
22 the structure itself.

23 MR. FULLERTON: Yes. Yes. Yes.

24 MR. MAXWELL: Yeah, and then they end  
25 up with windows that are two different

1 styles and heights.

2 MR. FULLERTON: I don't think that  
3 matters that much.

4 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Mr. Chair, can I ask  
5 the architect a question?

6 MR. MENENDEZ: Go ahead.

7 MR. GARCIA-PONS: So, again, I also, as  
8 you, would have loved to have Lola B.  
9 Walker's approval on this before coming to  
10 us today, and I would imagine that the  
11 request is reasonable. I also think it's a  
12 beautiful home. So it's a matter -- I can  
13 see where Staff was torn between a  
14 beautiful home and not meeting the  
15 expressed wishes of the neighborhood.

16 I think, listening to my colleagues on  
17 the dais, would the architect be able to  
18 accomplish two things that I've heard,  
19 which is rethink the roof of the carport,  
20 so is not as tall? Again, I think the one  
21 story in depth is fine. I think it won't  
22 have the impact that some people think it  
23 will have. But the roof is up to you,  
24 right? You can do the roof many different  
25 ways. It doesn't have to be that way.

1           And second, per Mr. Fullerton, is there  
2           a way to lower the second floor eave,  
3           maintaining the top of the roof, so that  
4           you do get a little bit more pitch --

5           MR. FEET: Like bring the rafter over  
6           the tie beam to lower it, kind of bring the  
7           hat down a little bit.

8           MR. GARCIA-PONS: Not the hat, the  
9           pitch. So keeping the top point, and  
10          getting more --

11          (Simultaneous speaking.)

12          MR. GARCIA-PONS: -- so it appears  
13          thinner, right? What I heard several times  
14          was thinner. You're going to reduce from  
15          three bays -- so I don't think you're going  
16          to reduce from three bays, but can you do  
17          things architecturally to make it look a  
18          little bit thinner? And one of the things  
19          that I think several of us are thinking is,  
20          if it has a higher pitch, even -- not  
21          exceeding height, dropping the beam -- I  
22          don't know if you can, because I don't have  
23          the interiors of this, but I think that is  
24          what I'm hearing.

25          Beautiful home. Good comments from the



1 neighborhood. It's a tough decision.

2 MR. FETT: Maybe if I could address  
3 that, before I say yes. With respect to  
4 the carport, we have had it as a flat roof  
5 in the past. We were told that we should  
6 put a roof back on it.

7 MR. MAXWELL: Right.

8 MR. FETT: So we mimicked the hip roof,  
9 as opposed to, let's say, a shed, because  
10 we felt that the slope of the roof that  
11 would come back would reduce the scale  
12 somewhat.

13 MR. GARCIA-PONS: And I'm interrupting,  
14 I would agree with you.

15 MR. FETT: What's that?

16 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I would agree with  
17 that assessment.

18 MR. MAXWELL: Could you bring it down,  
19 though, I mean, and then also look at the  
20 column --

21 MR. FETT: Right now, it is a two and  
22 seven and 12 pitch, 2.75 and twelve. It  
23 gets a little bit tricky with the  
24 manufacturer's requirements, you know.

25 MR. MAXWELL: Yeah.

1           MR. FETT: With respect to bringing the  
2           roof down or the floor heights down, the  
3           ground floor is now nine foot eight floor  
4           to ceiling. The second floor is nine foot  
5           four.

6           MS. SPAIN: I think they were't talking  
7           about changing that. They were talking  
8           about changing the structure, but still  
9           maintaining the ceiling heights. I have  
10          not a clue if that can be done.

11          MR. FETT: Right. The only thing is,  
12          at the location at the tie beam, we want  
13          that truss to be able to rest on the tie  
14          beam. So if you're talking about adjusting  
15          the roof pitch -- I mean, look, yes, of  
16          course, yes, we can do it; however -- and I  
17          would say one other thing about the Lola B.  
18          Walker Foundation, they may not have seen  
19          this very latest one, but they were at the  
20          initial Board of Architects meeting, so  
21          they saw that.

22          MS. SPAIN: Uh-huh.

23          MR. FETT: So I am skeptical that if we  
24          went there again and presented it that --

25          MS. SPAIN: So they saw it with the

1 cupola and that? I see.

2 MR. FETT: With the cupola, yeah. Yeah.

3 The shutters, in terms -- to answer  
4 your question about the colors, the reason  
5 that we -- and we've gone, as you see, you  
6 know, back and forth with colors and so on  
7 and so forth. Certainly we're open to  
8 that, as well. Those colors are distinctly  
9 kind of Bahamian, you see. The most  
10 typical example of a Key West house and the  
11 most typical example of most Bahamian  
12 neighborhoods would be a white painted  
13 house with green operable shutters, which  
14 is what we have.

15 Ana Alvarez did make an interesting  
16 comment at the Board of Architects, meaning  
17 that the windows maybe were slightly too  
18 large and perhaps would -- or too  
19 attenuated, actually. So I thought of  
20 that, too, maybe reducing the size of it.

21 And maybe my last point would be, if  
22 you consider two meetings with the Staff of  
23 Historic Preservation, one meeting with  
24 Mr. Adams and Mr. Riesgo at their office.

25 MS. SPAIN: That's the City Architect.

1           MR. FETT: That's three -- the City  
2           Architect, correct -- plus three meetings  
3           to the Lola B. Walker group, that is seven,  
4           plus -- no, six, plus two meetings to the  
5           Board of Architects, and now here. We can  
6           keep changing, but at some point, you  
7           know -- I mean, I can offer you a good  
8           faith that we will do it, and, you know, I  
9           don't know if that's good enough or we have  
10          to present again, but at some point, when  
11          is it enough, you know?

12          MR. GARCIA-PONS: We do have a history  
13          on this Board to let you work out the  
14          details with Staff. So if there is an  
15          approval there could be a method to work it  
16          out with Staff.

17          But I want to be clear as to, you  
18          mentioned directly to reducing the height  
19          of the floors. That's not what the request  
20          is. I think there was a request to maybe  
21          change the structural system. Maybe the  
22          floor joists can be remodified. I'm not  
23          going to get into the details of how to do  
24          it. I think the intention is to create the  
25          appearance of a slimmer building by --

1           MR. FETT: Oh, by raising the ridge?

2           MR. GARCIA-PONS: -- hold the ridge,  
3           dropping the eave. Now, that could be in  
4           the floor plates. That could be in the  
5           edges. That could be in the window. I  
6           think there's many ways to do that, and  
7           we're not going to tell you how to do it,  
8           which is why, if it's approved, we'll let  
9           you work it out with Staff, but that's the  
10          intent that I heard, I think, from Mr.  
11          Fullerton.

12          MR. FETT: Okay. Okay.

13          MR. FULLERTON: Yeah. That floor has  
14          quite a long span, if I'm reading your plan  
15          correctly, at the living room and dining  
16          room area.

17          MR. FETT: 24 feet at the widest point,  
18          and then it telescopes back, which we  
19          thought was also a good idea, for the side  
20          of -- you know, from the side view, even  
21          though you don't see it as much, down to  
22          21.

23          MR. FULLERTON: There might be a way to  
24          put a column between the kitchen and --  
25          that island kitchen and the living room, so

1           you could reverse and use two by twelve or  
2           do something like that, to go the other  
3           direction, to take it from a two foot truss  
4           to twelve inches of timber.

5           MR. FETT: Right. I think the issue  
6           there might be the second floor just having  
7           a reasonable bedroom width, and, you know,  
8           access to the hall or to a bath that's on  
9           the opposite side, but -- I mean, a foot,  
10          is that what we're talking about here?  
11          Because I think we're talking about  
12          gentrification or we're talking about a  
13          change in the neighborhood. It's something  
14          much bigger than this house, frankly.

15          MR. FULLERTON: Well, in order to get  
16          this house to fit into it, so you can make  
17          that change, I think we just need to make  
18          some tweaks.

19          MR. FETT: Understood.

20          MR. FULLERTON: And you have multiple  
21          options for structural for the second  
22          floor, for the roof structure. It's just  
23          that first floor long span of the living  
24          room which is a trouble spot.

25          MR. CEBALLOS: Mr. Chair, pardon the

1 interruption. Just FYI, it is 8:56 p.m.  
2 As you recall, we cannot go past 9:00 p.m.  
3 without a motion to extend the meeting past  
4 9:00.

5 MS. SPAIN: I'll make that motion.

6 MR. MAXWELL: Second.

7 MR. MENENDEZ: Ms. Spain and  
8 Mr. Maxwell.

9 MS. SPAIN: Thank you so much, Gus.

10 MR. FULLERTON: Sir, have you heard  
11 anything that you disagree with?

12 MR. SALCEDO: Yes, Mr. Fullerton.

13 MR. MAXWELL: Excuse me just one  
14 moment. We have to take --

15 MR. FULLERTON: Oh, sorry. Sorry.

16 (The Board voted aye.)

17 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Fullerton.

18 MR. SALCEDO: Yes. Okay. This design  
19 that we have here, okay, as you know, has  
20 gone through many modifications over many  
21 years. Okay. The reason why this design  
22 is so beautiful -- I get excited -- because  
23 it has met the perfection of the Board of  
24 Architects, but to get there, it took this  
25 many years. And I understand you're an

1 architect. I'm a civil engineer. And when  
2 you ask for these structural changes, it  
3 costs money and it takes away from the  
4 aesthetics, the way it is right now.  
5 That's why I ask for the design to be  
6 approved, please, because once we go  
7 through another modification, we have to do  
8 structural changes and that costs money and  
9 aesthetically it will take away from the  
10 beauty of this house.

11 MR. FULLERTON: You haven't started the  
12 structural drawings as of yet, have you,  
13 the working drawings, Mr. Fett?

14 MR. FEET: You mean, has the structural  
15 engineer been engaged?

16 MR. FULLERTON: Yeah.

17 MR. FETT: No, not yet.

18 MR. FULLERTON: Okay. So we're not  
19 causing you additional time. We're just  
20 suggesting that you change the structural  
21 system, maybe to a simpler one, actually,  
22 lower the second floor height by a foot,  
23 leaving the peak of the roof at where it is  
24 today, not bringing it down like this, but  
25 bringing it down like this, so you're



1 increasing the pitch of the roof by one  
2 foot, which --

3 MR. FETT: Just to clarify, if I do --  
4 if I'm here and I do this, I'm moving the  
5 wall in.

6 MR. FULLERTON: No. No. No.

7 MR. FETT: Or I'm not resting it --  
8 you'll do a sketch for me, right?

9 MS. BACHE-WIIG: The overhang --

10 MR. FULLERTON: You're just bringing  
11 the structural connection down. You know,  
12 it used to be up here, now it's down here,  
13 and your ceiling heights are the same.

14 MR. FETT: I mean -- okay.

15 MR. FULLERTON: The only thing that  
16 changes is the height of the roof -- sorry,  
17 of the ceiling, the second floor, from the  
18 first floor, by one foot. It takes away  
19 stair treads. So you have two fewer treads  
20 on your staircase, cheaper, by a long shot.

21 MR. SALCEDO: We're not looking for  
22 cheaper. We're looking for a beautiful  
23 home that we could live in and enjoy.

24 MR. FULLERTON: I don't think you can  
25 tell the difference.

1           MR. SALCEDO: Yes, you can. I build  
2 and you build.

3           MS. SPAIN: But that would not change  
4 the ceiling height of the second floor.

5           MR. FULLERTON: No.

6           MR. MAXWELL: Nor the first floor.

7           MR. FULLERTON: Nor the first floor.

8           MR. SALCEDO: Any time you take away  
9 using the stairs -- you're going to take  
10 two stairs off --

11           MR. FULLERTON: Because I'm going to  
12 take a foot out of your structural system.

13           MR. SALCEDO: We understand that. When  
14 you do that, you have to lower the height  
15 of the building. The walls have to come  
16 down, because you're reducing the two  
17 stairs.

18           MS. SPAIN: The walls come down, but  
19 the height of the ceiling doesn't change.

20           MR. FULLERTON: And your tie beams  
21 here --

22           MS. SPAIN: I'm talking to a civil  
23 engineer. You must know that.

24           MR. FULLERTON: Yeah, but the roof  
25 stays exactly where it is, and the ceiling

1 goes down one foot.

2 MR. SALCEDO: Okay. We could do that,  
3 but let me tell you, aesthetically it won't  
4 look as nice. That I agree.

5 MR. FULLERTON: I think it will look  
6 nicer.

7 MR. DURANA: I mean, I kind of  
8 disagree. I think it's a really nice  
9 design. I don't know why we're giving him  
10 such a hard time on this. I think it fits  
11 in well with the neighborhood. I'm okay to  
12 make a motion, if you guys are okay,  
13 because I just don't see why this -- I  
14 mean, I really feel bad for them. Like  
15 this is a really nice design. It's a good  
16 compromise for the neighborhood.

17 THE SECRETARY: We have the person --

18 MS. SPAIN: Does this person on Zoom --  
19 isn't there some kind of rule that if  
20 they're not in the meeting, we can't rely  
21 on them? I mean, I don't know.

22 MR. CEBALLOS: They want to call into  
23 the Zoom, but I think that's going to have  
24 the same issue. I mean, if you want to  
25 call on the phone, at the end of the day --

1           THE SECRETARY: I'm going have them  
2 call --

3           MR. CEBALLOS: I'm not sure if that's  
4 going to work, but you're more than welcome  
5 to try it. She needs to be on Zoom video  
6 to be sworn in. So she can provide public  
7 comment, but she can't provide sworn  
8 testimony.

9           MS. SPAIN: I knew there was some sort  
10 of rule.

11          MR. CEBALLOS: If she can't be on video  
12 and she can't be sworn in, then it's not  
13 sworn testimony, it's only public comment.

14          MR. MAXWELL: I have one question to  
15 address the comments of the community. One  
16 of the things that was discussed was sort  
17 of the -- the width, it was the bulk, and  
18 just in looking at the carport, would it be  
19 possible to reduce the width of the column,  
20 so it appears lighter, at least in here, to  
21 perhaps match the column from the front  
22 porch? Would that be possible?

23          MR. FETT: I mean, how wide is the  
24 column there?

25          MR. FULLERTON: Probably six by six.

1 MR. FETT: No, the width of it.

2 I think what we decided to do there,  
3 first of all, because it's concrete block,  
4 it's going to be, let's say, eight inches  
5 for the block --

6 MR. MAXWELL: Oh, your columns are  
7 concrete block?

8 MR. FETT: Because the construction is  
9 concrete, yeah.

10 MR. MAXWELL: Because the ones on the  
11 front are steel tubes and, you know,  
12 they're sheathed in wood.

13 MR. FETT: Could be. I don't know, you  
14 know, if I felt like it was a little  
15 flimsy, like a spider leg or something. I  
16 don't know. You know, like I'm doing my  
17 best trying to make it --

18 MR. MAXWELL: Yeah, but we're also  
19 trying to listen to --

20 MR. FETT: I know. I completely  
21 understand.

22 MR. MAXWELL: If you could take a look  
23 at that, that would really be good.

24 MR. FETT: Okay. I mean, I will  
25 promise this, if we are approved, we will,

1           regardless -- if Mr. Adams will accept,  
2           we'll sit with him and we can work out some  
3           of these things, absolutely. You know, it  
4           would be great to be approved and we would  
5           do it anyway. I can swear on the Bible for  
6           it. But, you know, like these poor  
7           individuals here -- I shouldn't say it like  
8           that, but, I mean, they've flown from Los  
9           Angeles on multiple occasions to attend  
10          meetings like this, to show their good  
11          faith, like, you know, thank you.

12                 MS. BACHE-WIIG: I just want to say  
13                 something.

14                 THE SECRETARY: Okay.

15                 MS. BACHE-WIIG: I'm sorry, go ahead.  
16                 I'm sorry, Nancy.

17                 THE SECRETARY: Go ahead.

18                 MS. HEMSING: Hello. Can you all hear  
19                 me? Oh, there we go.

20                 Okay. Hi, everyone. Please let me  
21                 know if you can't hear me.

22                 My name is Kathryn Hemsing. I am the  
23                 co-owner of 107 Frow Avenue, so I'm a  
24                 couple of houses down the block. And I  
25                 don't have an opinion on all of the

1 architectural modifications that you all  
2 are discussing now, but -- and I don't have  
3 a horse in this race, and I've never met  
4 the homeowner, but, neighbor, I guess it's  
5 nice to meet you.

6 Listen, I appreciate the work of this  
7 Board, and I think its mandate is extremely  
8 important in preserving the fabric of our  
9 neighborhood, which I think is the best  
10 neighborhood in all of Miami. I love my  
11 neighbors and I love that we are a  
12 historically Black community. I have a lot  
13 of pride in where I live.

14 But I worry here that this Board is  
15 being overly narrow in its view of  
16 acceptable design, so much so that it is  
17 potentially creating such an arduous and  
18 bureaucratic process for what I believe is  
19 a homeowner who's making a good faith  
20 effort to, you know, meet us halfway, and I  
21 think this design and how different it  
22 looks from its first iteration is a  
23 positive reflection of that.

24 You know, when I was reading the  
25 report, a couple of things stood out for

1 me. Mainly, the key concerns were, you  
2 know, scale, mass and architectural  
3 features. I think this design adequately  
4 addresses the architectural features that I  
5 think are reflective of Bahamian, you know,  
6 and Caribbean design, and I think you see  
7 that with the metal roof, the front porch,  
8 the hip roof, the siding, the double-hung  
9 windows, the wood shutters and even down to  
10 the color of the house. I'm even going to  
11 paint my house white, with, you know, kind  
12 of a light greenish-blue, because I want my  
13 house to also reflect more the character of  
14 the neighborhood. So I think that's an  
15 important facet of the MacFarlane  
16 Homestead.

17 I think the main concerns, and probably  
18 the only criteria that is worth  
19 entertaining, is around this idea of like  
20 mass and the heaviness potential of the  
21 design, but, frankly, I think it's  
22 beautiful. I think it's a modern take on,  
23 you know, what looks like the historical  
24 character of the neighborhood. And you all  
25 can continue to debate the architectural



1 components, but I do agree that at some  
2 point you're now creating precedent for an  
3 overly bureaucratic process, when the  
4 homeowners have tried to engage with  
5 stakeholders in the community, for which I  
6 am one.

7 And so this is just to show support,  
8 and I hope that if there's a motion to deny  
9 this design request, that you all can move  
10 to kind of a mutually amicable resolution,  
11 that is efficient and takes everyone's  
12 views and addresses everyone's concerns  
13 adequately.

14 Thank you so much for your time and for  
15 staying very late. We appreciate your  
16 service.

17 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

18 Mr. Durana, you have a motion?

19 MR. DURANA: I make a motion to approve  
20 the current design.

21 MS. SPAIN: I'll second.

22 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Mr. Durana, and  
23 Ms. Spain seconds.

24 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Are there any  
25 conditions with the approval?

1 MR. DURANA: No.

2 MS. BACHE-WIIG: No.

3 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Bache-Wigg --

4 MR. MAXWELL: Wait.

5 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Can we add like that  
6 they would work with Staff on some of the  
7 details, because I think the devil is in  
8 the details? I know that the tweaking may  
9 be overdone, but I think, because it's a  
10 neighborhood that deserves just some  
11 tweaking to make sure that we're being, you  
12 know, as sensitive as possible to the  
13 neighborhood, can we put that as a  
14 condition, that they will address some of  
15 the -- with Staff and let them move ahead?

16 MR. DURANA: I mean, I think the one  
17 you have now, versus what they started  
18 with, shows all of that, that they've done  
19 that, but, I mean, if you guys -- I don't  
20 know, I just think it's more -- it leaves  
21 room for interpretation. You know, I think  
22 we need to be clear about what we want in  
23 the design, because, if not, they're going  
24 to go change it more, and then present to  
25 the Board of Architects, and the Board of

1 Architects is going to say, "No, we don't  
2 like it like that. We want you to go back  
3 to this." And then we're back to this  
4 again.

5 I mean, I'd rather not add any  
6 amendments. Let's try to pass it like  
7 that, and let's see. If not, we'll change  
8 it.

9 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. We have a motion  
10 and a second.

11 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Bache-Wigg?

12 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Can we go back and put  
13 a condition just to have them tweak it?

14 MR. GARCIA-PONS: He said no.

15 MS. BACHE-WIIG: So I have to say yes  
16 or no?

17 THE SECRETARY: Yes.

18 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes. I hope, though,  
19 they tweak it with Staff.

20 THE SECRETARY; Is that a yes?

21 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes. It is a yes.

22 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

23 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes. And I would  
24 encourage the architect to reach out to the  
25 Lola B. Walker Community.

1 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

2 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

3 THE SECRETARY; Mr. Maxwell?

4 MR. MAXWELL: Yes.

5 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain?

6 MS. SPAIN: Yes.

7 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Fullerton?

8 MR. FULLERTON: Yes, with the same  
9 encouragement.

10 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Durana?

11 MR. DURANA: Yes. And I would say to  
12 the architect, if you can, out of good  
13 faith, you know, please try to coordinate  
14 with Warren and even maybe one of the  
15 members of the Association, just because I  
16 think -- I have a feeling that they haven't  
17 seen this, because this is a really  
18 beautiful design and I think it's  
19 respectful to the neighborhood and to the  
20 design and the architecture and the history  
21 of it.

22 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

23 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

24 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes.

25 MR. MENENDEZ: All right.

1 MR. MAXWELL: Thank you all.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

3 Next, Case File COA (SP) 2022-037; An  
4 application for the issuance of a Special  
5 Certificate of Appropriateness for the  
6 property at 1800 Le Jeune Road, a Local  
7 Historic Landmark, legally described as Lot  
8 3, Block 1, Pilafian Properties, according  
9 to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat  
10 Book 169, at Page 5 of the Public Records  
11 of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The  
12 application requests after the fact design  
13 approval for the removal of barrel tile  
14 coping from the auxillary structure.

15 MR. SALCEDO: Thank you very much, all  
16 of you, for approving our plan. I'm just  
17 so excited, and come over and see it.  
18 We'll have an open house. Thank you.

19 MS. BACHE-WIIG: It's beautiful.  
20 Congratulation.

21 MR. FULLERTON: Thanks for stick around  
22 for five hours.

23 MS. SALCEDO: Thank you. I'm excited at  
24 the beautiful home and living in Florida.

25 MR. FULLERTON: Thank you.

1 MR. MAXWELL: Thank you.

2 MS. BACHE-WIIG: That's great.

3 MR. FULLERTON: Good luck.

4 MR. SALCEDO: Thank you.

5 MS. KAUTZ: So this is the location map  
6 of the property. This was the home of  
7 James Girtman, a Miami pioneer. He raised  
8 the initial funds to build Le Jeune Road,  
9 that you can see his house directly fronts.  
10 This property was designated as a Local  
11 Historic Landmark in February of 2007.

12 So this is a circa 1940s photo of the  
13 house. When it was built, it was outside  
14 of Coral Gables. It was on Girtman's farm  
15 property, which is now known as Coral  
16 Groves, when it was platted and brought  
17 into the City.

18 So the gist of this is that the --  
19 there's a roof permit for the property, for  
20 the auxillary structure. You can see a  
21 2007 photo in the top left, and prior to  
22 the installation of the tile in 2022.

23 The drawings that were submitted with  
24 the roof application didn't show any  
25 engagement with the parapet in any way, and

1           what's now there is this, with an aluminum  
2           cap and the barrel tile coping has been  
3           removed, even though the permit was  
4           approved with the condition that it was to  
5           remain.

6           We asked them to put it back. The  
7           homeowner chose to ask you all to let them  
8           leave it off.

9           MR. DURANA: If you can leave the photo up.

10          MS. KAUTZ: Yes.

11          MR. MOLINA: Good evening, everybody.  
12          This is my first time here. This has been  
13          a very entertaining evening. I've learned  
14          a lot.

15          My name is Xavier Molina. I'm the  
16          roofing contractor, which we pulled the  
17          permit. I'm a licensed roofing contractor,  
18          a licensed building contractor. We did  
19          pull the permit for this project and  
20          performed the work, as stated.

21          We are seeking a request for an after  
22          the fact approval to remove the coping  
23          tile. The homeowner has requested to  
24          remove the coping tile from the structure.  
25          On the document in your case file, it

1 states our application was erroneous,  
2 because we did not mention the coping tile  
3 to be removed, and that is correct, to an  
4 extent.

5 The application is correct, because in  
6 this particular photo, if you look at it,  
7 we detailed the back end of it and it just  
8 didn't mention the coping. So this is an  
9 open end. So this roof actually is -- has  
10 the parapet on three sides, and one side,  
11 it's open end. On that open end is like a  
12 Mansard styled overhang, where the flat  
13 tile just butts up flat against to, because  
14 of the structure of this property.

15 The structure itself is sloped, so it  
16 does have a low slope to it. It does have  
17 positive drainage. That's nothing we  
18 created. The structure itself has it. As  
19 a result of that, if you can see in this  
20 photo at the very top middle, where the  
21 parapet actually begins, on that open end,  
22 it's only about three inches, and, then,  
23 obviously, as it slopes, it gets larger.

24 With that being said, I'm going to get  
25 to a few points here. The side that faces



1           Madeira Avenue, that's the side that's  
2           open, because this house is a corner house,  
3           between Le Jeune and Madeira, and the only  
4           accessible entrance is Madeira. There is  
5           no access on Le Jeune. It's closed off.  
6           It's got shrubs and the enclosure of the  
7           property, so the access is actually off of  
8           Madeira. Actually, if you search the  
9           property, it's 405 Madeira. I guess the  
10          plat says 1800 Le Jeune.

11                 The structure in question, like it was  
12          mentioned, is not the main structure of the  
13          house. It's the back southwest auxillary  
14          structure of the property. Upon removal of  
15          the existing roofing system, the existing  
16          membrane was tucked underneath the coping  
17          cap. So in order for us to remove the  
18          membrane correctly and to properly finish  
19          that, we had to remove the coping tile. As  
20          a result, that's where the coping tile  
21          started to be removed.

22                 Now, Florida RES 1-11, and I have it  
23          here, it's RES 1117.2.2, the roofing base  
24          flashing at a roof to wall juncture needs  
25          to be a minimum of eight inches. So I

1 don't have that on the top left corner. I  
2 have to wrap my membrane up above. I have  
3 to remove the roofing tile in order to do  
4 that, to seal it and flash it properly,  
5 which resulted in us having to remove the  
6 coping tile.

7 So, like I said, it has the three  
8 tiles. We did proceed to call our building  
9 inspections. We passed all of our  
10 inspections. We got historical to come do  
11 that, and that's when it got flagged, and  
12 we failed our final historical because of  
13 the coping cap removal.

14 One of the interesting things to note,  
15 I did see -- I have a copy of our actual  
16 permit that we got issued here, the  
17 perforated copy. On our copy, that we  
18 picked up from the City, our perforated  
19 copy does not have the stamp of the  
20 Historical Board mentioning of the coping  
21 tile. So that was an oversight, on our  
22 side, too, because it's not there. It was  
23 e-mailed to us and then we see where it  
24 specifically said, "Coping tile to remain,"  
25 but it's not on our field copy that we

1 picked, our perforated copy from the City.

2           Regardless, with that said, even if I  
3 wanted to put the coping cap tile back on,  
4 by Code, I can't -- there's no -- it would  
5 fail. From a pitch standpoint, the minimum  
6 requirement for a roof pitch to put tile is  
7 two and twelve. This is a straight flat,  
8 zero and twelve, and it wouldn't meet the  
9 wind uplift pressure requirement on that,  
10 for the method of tile attachment, the way  
11 the tile has to be attached to that. So I  
12 can't put it back. I mean, I can try to,  
13 but it just wouldn't meet any Code  
14 requirement. Two, that there is no Code  
15 requirement or Code approval for the coping  
16 cap application -- excuse me, tile on top  
17 of the coping.

18           MS. KAUTZ: So I spoke with the  
19 Building Official and the parapet coping is  
20 purely decorative. So there is no pitch  
21 requirement. There is no uplift  
22 requirement. It's decorative. There is no  
23 issue with the application in that way.  
24 Whether or not you can use it with this  
25 system that you have installed is another

1 question.

2 MS. SPAIN: Did you get a Zoning  
3 inspection? Did this pass Zoning, the  
4 inspection?

5 MR. MOLINA: We have passed our roofing  
6 final and zoning final. We're just waiting  
7 for historical final.

8 MS. SPAIN: That type of coping is  
9 allowed by zoning? Wow.

10 MR. MOLINA: So we've pulled multiple  
11 -- we've done plenty of roof permits here  
12 in the City and we've done many parapets  
13 where the tile is -- you know, we specify  
14 specifically that the coping cap tile is  
15 off and -- or we're doing a coping cap or  
16 we do a two Brad nailer, we do a strip or  
17 we do a trip edge or something to make sure  
18 that we create a water tight seal.

19 One of the things that I have  
20 encountered myself is, the cause for a lot  
21 of these structures to deteriorate,  
22 especially at the parapet, are these coping  
23 cap tiles. They sit at the top and then  
24 there's no positive drainage. It  
25 deteriorates the membrane, goes to the

1 structural concrete and now we've got  
2 spalling on the concrete or you've got  
3 issues leaking into the structure, because  
4 these tiles are placed on top of these  
5 coping caps.

6 I know aesthetically they look  
7 fantastic. I agree. You know, they add to  
8 the aesthetics of the home, but  
9 functionality, from my perspective, as a  
10 roofing contractor, trying to provide a  
11 water tight system, it's just very  
12 difficult to be able to provide a water  
13 tight system that we can warranty and the  
14 manufacturer can warranty with the  
15 membranes -- sitting tile on top of that  
16 coping cap.

17 MR. MENENDEZ: Any questions?

18 Anybody in the audience who would like  
19 to speak on this? A lot of nos.

20 MR. MAXWELL: They all went home.

21 MR. MOLINA: I'll just close with this  
22 one statement, sorry.

23 I just ask that the Board consider an  
24 after the fact modification to allow the  
25 roofing system to remain intact, without

1 insulation of the coping tiles, allowing  
2 the roof to be Florida Building Code  
3 compliant and also allowing the  
4 installation of the roofing membrane to not  
5 contribute to the deterioration of the  
6 roofing membrane that was just nearly  
7 installed, further deteriorating the  
8 structure in the future.

9 MS. SPAIN: Can I make a motion?

10 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes, you can.

11 MS. SPAIN: I'd like to make a motion  
12 to deny the after the fact design approval  
13 for the removal of the barrel tile coping  
14 from the auxillary structure on the  
15 property located at 1800 Le Jeune Road and  
16 deny the issuance of a Special Certificate  
17 of Appropriateness.

18 MR. FULLERTON: Second.

19 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Ms. Spain, and  
20 Mr. Fullerton seconds.

21 MR. DURANA: I have one question for  
22 the applicant.

23 MR. MENENDEZ: Sure.

24 MR. DURANA: If you were to originally  
25 do this with the barrel tile edge, you

1           would have done a different system or what  
2           exactly would you have done in the parapet?

3           MR. MOLINA: You can't. You have to  
4           remove the tile, because of the way the  
5           membrane is underneath --

6           (Simultaneous speaking.)

7           MR. DURANA: What do you do on -- like  
8           on the other houses, because there's other  
9           houses that have the carports with the  
10          barrel tile on the parapet --

11          MR. MOLINA: Either (A) Those are  
12          original and they haven't been re-roofed  
13          yet, because at the time of re-roof, it has  
14          to be addressed. Or sometimes they're just  
15          a concrete pillar. Because what I have  
16          seen also is, it's a concrete and then you  
17          have tiles that are mortar -- yes, stucco  
18          mortar bed on that. That's not this  
19          situation. That is actually a roofing  
20          membrane underneath the coping and I have  
21          to remove that membrane in order to  
22          properly go over that tile.

23          MR. DURANA: This is hard, because  
24          Historic is --

25          MR. MOLINA: I'm here because the

1 homeowner requested to remove the tile and  
2 the homeowner is requesting to not put  
3 those tiles back on.

4 MR. DURANA: I mean, this comes to us a  
5 lot, and like the barrel tiles are a very  
6 important feature.

7 MR. MOLINA: This particular structure,  
8 we did roof barrel tile in the lower  
9 section. That's barrel tile. The  
10 overhang, we didn't touch, either. That  
11 stayed barrel tile. Everything stayed like  
12 on the top left -- sorry, the top of this,  
13 that Mansard overhang, that remained. We  
14 didn't touch it.

15 On the bottom left, there is also a --

16 MR. MENENDEZ: So, Mr. Durana, how do  
17 you vote?

18 MR. DURANA: I guess we have to call  
19 the roll, right?

20 MR. MENENDEZ: She did.

21 THE SECRETARY: I haven't yet.

22 MR. MENENDEZ: You did not? I thought  
23 you did.

24 THE SECRETARY: No, I had not started.

25 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay.



1 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

2 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I'm sorry, what was  
3 the motion, again?

4 THE SECRETARY: To deny.

5 MR. MAXWELL: Motion to deny.

6 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.

7 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

8 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

9 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

10 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

11 THE SECRETARY: Okay. I'm sorry.

12 Mr. Maxwell?

13 MR. MAXWELL: Yes.

14 THE SECRETARY; Ms. Spain?

15 MS. SPAIN: Yes.

16 THE SECRETARY; Mr. Fullerton?

17 MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

18 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Durana?

19 MR. DURANA: Yes.

20 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Bache-Wigg?

21 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Mrs. Bache-Wigg says  
22 yes.

23 THE SECRETARY: I'm listening to  
24 myself. I'm sorry.

25 MS. BACHE-WIIG: I'm just kidding.

1 THE SECRETARY; Ms. Bache-Wigg?

2 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes.

3 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

4 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

5 THE SECRETARY: Okay. The motion passes.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: Next, Case File COA (SP)  
7 2022-038; An application for the issuance  
8 of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness  
9 for the property at Balboa Plaza, a Local  
10 Historic Landmark located at the  
11 intersections of Coral Way (a Local and  
12 State Designated Highway and a contributing  
13 resource within the "Coral Way Historic  
14 District"), De Soto Boulevard, South  
15 Greenway Drive, and Anderson Road. The  
16 application requests design approval for  
17 the alteration of the historic street grid  
18 and the introduction of a vehicular  
19 roundabout.

20 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Mr. Chair, before we  
21 get started, is somebody from Miami-Dade  
22 County here?

23 MR. ADAMS: That's what I was just  
24 going to say. I don't see anyone here.

25 MS. SPAIN: I don't think we should

1 hear it.

2 MR. GARCIA-PONS: So if I could make a  
3 motion to defer the item, as requested by  
4 Staff, without presentation? If the City  
5 Attorney, can we just --

6 MR. MAXWELL: I'll second your motion.

7 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I want to hear from  
8 the City Attorney. Do we need to hear the  
9 presentation?

10 MR. CEBALLOS: Is the question whether  
11 you can hear the presentation without them  
12 being here or if you can defer it?

13 MR. GARCIA-PONS: If we can defer it  
14 right now.

15 MR. CEBALLOS: You can make a motion to  
16 defer it. That's fine.

17 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Mr. Chair, would you  
18 entertain a motion for deferral?

19 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

20 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I'd like to make a  
21 motion for deferral per Staff comments.

22 MR. MAXWELL: Second.

23 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Mr. Adams, do you  
24 want a date certain for this?

25 MR. ADAMS: Yes, please.

1           MR. GARCIA-PONS:  What date certain  
2           would you prefer?

3           MR. ADAMS:  Next meeting.

4           MR. GARCIA-PONS:  I would like to defer  
5           it to the next meeting, per Staff

6           MR. MENENDEZ:  Mr. Maxwell seconds.

7           MS. SPAIN:  Did you advertise this?  
8           Did you send notices out on that at all?

9           MR. ADAMS:  I believe so, yes, and I  
10          was in touch with them last week.

11          MS. SPAIN:  Do you want us to not defer  
12          it, but to continue it, so that he doesn't  
13          have to send the notices out again?

14          MR. GARCIA-PONS:  If I defer it to a  
15          date certain, I understand that you don't  
16          have to notice.

17          MS. SPAIN:  Oh, is that true?

18          MR. GARCIA-PONS:  I can use the word  
19          continue if you'd like.

20          MR. CEBALLOS:  That is correct.  If he  
21          defers to a time certain, you do not need  
22          to renotice.

23          MS. SPAIN:  Perfect.

24          MR. GARCIA-PONS:  I would like to  
25          continue it to the next meeting, which is

1 the same.

2 MS. SPAIN: Okay. So there's no notice  
3 -- no mailed notices, then it doesn't  
4 matter.

5 THE SECRETARY: Okay. Mr. Durana?

6 MR. DURANA: Yes.

7 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

8 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

9 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Maxwell?

10 MR. MAXWELL: Yes.

11 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain?

12 MS. SPAIN: Yes.

13 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Fullerton?

14 MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

15 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Bache-Wigg?

16 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes.

17 THE SECRETARY; Mr. Garcia-Pons?

18 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.

19 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

20 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

21 THE SECRETARY; Motion passes.

22 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Next Case File  
23 COA (SP) 2023-001; An application for the  
24 issuance of a Special Certificate of  
25 Appropriateness for the property at 311

1 Romano Avenue, a Local Historic Landmark,  
2 legally described as Lots 17 to 19  
3 inclusive, Block 1, Coral Gables Coconut  
4 Grove Section Part One, according to the  
5 Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 14,  
6 at Page 25 of the Public Records of  
7 Miami-Dade County, Florida. The  
8 application requests design approval for  
9 the demolition of the existing garage,  
10 addition and alterations to the residence  
11 and sitework. Variances have also been  
12 requested from Article 2, Section 2-101 D  
13 (4) c and Article 10, Section D-102 (sic)  
14 4a of the Coral Gables Zoning Code for the  
15 minimum rear setback and minimum carport  
16 dimensions.

17 MR. ADAMS: Okay. The application is  
18 for design approval for demolition of the  
19 existing garage, addition and alterations  
20 to the residence and sitework.

21 The single-family home at 311 Romano  
22 was designed by Samuel Ross Wyvill, built  
23 in 1925, Mediterranean Revival style and it  
24 was designated at the December 21st, 2022  
25 meeting.

1           And two variances are requested, as  
2           noted.

3           Demolition of the 906 square foot  
4           existing garage; an addition of  
5           construction of a two-story 1,793 square  
6           foot addition to the northeast corner of  
7           the residence, construction of a new  
8           carport to the west elevation, installation  
9           of new windows and pavers. To accommodate  
10          the new addition at the northeast corner,  
11          the applicant is requesting approval for  
12          demolition of most of the existing garage.  
13          The front and rear elevations of the garage  
14          will remain and be incorporated into the  
15          addition. The garage is original to the  
16          historic house, but has been altered.

17          Construction of the addition will be of  
18          concrete block and stucco, with a hip roof,  
19          Spanish tile exposed outriggers. The  
20          proposed windows appear to be single  
21          casement with clear glass, raised muntins  
22          and sills. And the first floor, there will  
23          be -- contains stairs to the second floor,  
24          a kitchen, dining room, bedroom, laundry,  
25          cabana bathroom and covered loggia. The

1 second floor will have two bedrooms, master  
2 bathroom, a bathroom and a reading area.

3 The primary facade faces south onto  
4 Romano. The two-story addition is attached  
5 to the northeast corner of the historic  
6 structure and it will be visible from the  
7 street. It will be setback approximately  
8 27 feet 7 inches from the front facade and  
9 will be partially obscured by the new  
10 carport. And the first floor will  
11 contained a wall, with a decorative water  
12 fountain, which will be visible through the  
13 proposed new carport. Again, casement  
14 windows on the second floor, and the front  
15 elevation of the carport will be flushed  
16 with the existing front facade of the  
17 historic house.

18 Construction will be of concrete block  
19 and stucco, with a flat roof, with Spanish  
20 tile shed element to the front. The  
21 proposed alterations to the existing  
22 historic structure here comprise the  
23 installation of new impact windows, similar  
24 to those on the addition and the  
25 installation of decorative window grills.



1           The east elevation, again, casement  
2           windows, French doors. On the east  
3           elevation of the existing house it will  
4           have a decorative metal grill over the  
5           porch arched opening. The rear elevation,  
6           again, similar windows. The windows in the  
7           existing house, again, will be replaced.  
8           On the west elevation, similar windows,  
9           and, again, the windows on the existing  
10          house will be replaced. Siteworks are  
11          limited to the installation of brick pavers  
12          to extend the pool deck and crushed shell  
13          along the west, on the edge of the new  
14          addition.

15                 Two variances have been requested.  
16                 Article 2, Section 2-101 D (4), and this is  
17                 a variance to allow the proposed addition  
18                 to have a rear setback of approximately  
19                 four feet two inches versus ten feet. The  
20                 allowable rear setback for single-family  
21                 residences is ten feet. The rear setback  
22                 of the existing first floor rear addition  
23                 is four feet two inches. This was  
24                 permitted in 1929. The proposal retains  
25                 that rear wall, which will be incorporated

1           into the first floor of the addition. The  
2           second floor of the addition will meet the  
3           required ten-foot setback.

4           The second variance from Article 10,  
5           Section 10-102, has to do with the required  
6           interior length of a one-car carport and  
7           the required interior length is 22 feet.  
8           The applicant is requesting 20 feet 6  
9           inches. The carport has been designed to  
10          respect the location of the existing  
11          windows in the historic structure.

12          And it was approved by the Board of  
13          Architects on September 29, 2022, with two  
14          comments, six-inch overhang with exposed  
15          rafter tails to emulate the existing front  
16          porch and use casement window profile.

17          The conclusion is, the proposed  
18          addition is visible from the right of way,  
19          but setback 27 feet 7 inches from the front  
20          facade on the location of the existing  
21          garage. The front and rear walls of the  
22          garage and existing addition will be  
23          retained; however, the east and west walls  
24          will be demolished. The garage has been  
25          altered in the front, as the garage door

1 has been replaced with a window and  
2 pedestrian access door and on the rear, as  
3 an addition has been added. Ideally, the  
4 proposed addition would be placed to the  
5 rear of the existing structure; however,  
6 this is not possible due to the pool.  
7 There is space for an addition to the east  
8 elevation of the structure; however, the  
9 septic tank is located here, and this would  
10 likely lead to a negative impact on the  
11 historic structure.

12 Based on this, the demolition of the  
13 east and west walls of the original garage,  
14 much of which is a later addition, can be  
15 supported. The Board may wish to consider  
16 the addition of a full garage door in place  
17 of the proposed wall-mounted fountain to  
18 retain a garage appearance. The carport is  
19 set flush with the existing front facade.  
20 The carport can be supported; however, it's  
21 recommended that it be setback slightly  
22 from the front facade, but if not, if the  
23 Board supports this condition, the  
24 requested variance for the interior length  
25 may have to be adjusted.

1           The proposed design of the new addition  
2           is in keeping with the style of the  
3           structure. The proposed windows for the  
4           addition can be supported; however, the  
5           windows in the historic structure shall  
6           match the original double-casement windows.  
7           Staff does not support the addition of the  
8           decorative metal window grills on the front  
9           porch; therefore, the proposed addition is  
10          in keeping with the standards. Although  
11          visible from the right-of-way, the addition  
12          is setback. The existing historic  
13          structure is being retained, apart from a  
14          small portion of the northeast corner. The  
15          addition is compatible in design, massing  
16          and scale with the existing structure. It  
17          can be removed in the future.

18                 Staff does have a number of conditions  
19                 there. The variances meet all of the  
20                 requirements; therefore, Staff supports  
21                 granting the requested variances. And that  
22                 is it.

23                 MS. BLOCK: Hello. I'm Alisa Block,  
24                 the architect of record.

25                 Do you have any questions for me?

1           Let me go through the PowerPoint.

2           So here I shows pictures of the  
3           existing condition. This is to show you  
4           the full width of the lot, where we have  
5           the existing one story garage structure on  
6           the west side, that is setback 57 feet --  
7           I'm sorry, it is setback 59 feet 7 inches  
8           from the front --

9           THE SECRETARY; Could you talk into the  
10          mike, please?

11          MS. BLOCK: -- 59 feet 7 inches from  
12          the front property line. That's the  
13          existing garage structure. And that is  
14          where the two-story structure will also be  
15          set. So there is going to be the one story  
16          carport, either at the front facade or set  
17          in, perhaps, a couple of inches for, you  
18          know, a definition of the new carport, but  
19          the two-story structure is set  
20          substantially back from the front property  
21          line.

22          The other thing that you see is, there  
23          is an empty space on the east side;  
24          however, that is taken up by the septic  
25          tank and drain field area, which we will

1           need to expand for the additional bedroom.  
2           You know, so the existing one story  
3           structure in the front, the main house,  
4           will remain pretty much intact.

5           Here's another view, a little off to  
6           the side, so you can see that that -- you  
7           will perceive that two-story structure kind  
8           of, you know -- you know, very far from the  
9           street elevation. Here's another view  
10          closer to the west, showing the three  
11          windows on the west side that would be  
12          impacted by the carport. Therefore, we  
13          can't have the carport at 22 feet deep or  
14          it wouldn't keep the third window.

15          Also, you can see -- there you go, the  
16          existing south facade of the garage does  
17          not have a garage door. It currently has  
18          an -- A-300 -- currently has a French door,  
19          steps, and a window, in place of the  
20          original garage door.

21          Just another one showing the setback of  
22          the original garage.

23          This is a photo of the house across the  
24          street, where some substantial additions  
25          were made, that don't seem to be very

1 sensitive to the historic structure. The  
2 two-story structure is close to the front  
3 property line, doesn't seem to harmonize  
4 with the existing historic structure very  
5 well and just seems very large and  
6 imposing, in contrast to what we are  
7 proposing.

8 This is our survey.

9 The original drawings, the garage  
10 building was -- the garage structure was  
11 altered in 1929, with the addition of the  
12 additional area shown on my Sheet A-200.1,  
13 which I will show you. These are more  
14 pictures of the other areas of the house  
15 and condition that are, you know, intact,  
16 such as the barrel tile and parapet, shed  
17 roof, barrel tile.

18 MS. SPAIN: Good call.

19 MS. BLOCK; The front porch is still  
20 screened in and will remain screened in. I  
21 mean, we're proposing the metal work,  
22 because it looks a little blank. You know,  
23 we love having the screened porch and we  
24 want to keep it, but it just looks like  
25 maybe it's missing something, but that's

1 just a design --

2 THE SECRETARY: You are not speaking  
3 into the mike.

4 MS. BLOCK: It's a design sort of  
5 preference.

6 Here's just another highlighted version  
7 of the -- the yellow is the original  
8 structure and the pink was added on, per  
9 the permit, in 1929. The loggia that is  
10 adjacent to the pool was added on at some  
11 other time, and is not -- you know, it's  
12 much more recent.

13 Here is our new site plan showing the  
14 existing house, the addition, keeping the  
15 front -- the south facade of the two-story  
16 addition and the north facade of the  
17 two-story addition at the same location.  
18 We would like to keep the north facade at  
19 the 4 foot 2 setback, just as what's  
20 existing, and then the second floor will  
21 step back to the 10-foot required setback.

22 There are Zoning diagrams showing the  
23 various lot coverage details that the  
24 Zoning Department requires for variances,  
25 four pages of these.



1           Let's see. I made a note on mine  
2 earlier -- I made some notes in my free  
3 time during this meeting. Let's see.

4           Okay. Our ground area coverage on this  
5 sheet is -- this is, maximum allowed, 35  
6 percent. We have 26 percent. And on the  
7 next sheet, maximum square foot floor area,  
8 we are providing 77 percent of the maximum  
9 allowable. So, in the lower right corner,  
10 2,709 is 77 percent of the maximum  
11 allowable -- maximum square foot area.

12           Let's see. Here's our A-200 showing  
13 the first floor plan with the carport and  
14 the conditions of the new structure and the  
15 existing. The second floor plan, where we  
16 step back, per the Board of Architects'  
17 recommendation, instead of -- I had a  
18 different condition at the north side, and  
19 we provided like a shed-roofed over that  
20 extended first floor area, so that it  
21 breaks down the massing of the house, and  
22 then we have a terrace on the east side,  
23 above the loggia below, and the existing  
24 house remains thoroughly intact.

25           This eave detail is per the Board of

1 Architects' recommendations to provide sort  
2 of a thinner, more elegant historical type  
3 eave detail for the addition. And here are  
4 the various elevations. The -- you know,  
5 the railing -- you know, the railing final  
6 detail is to be determined, but we will  
7 have a metal railing above the beam and  
8 columns of the loggia below.

9 The rear elevation, we see the  
10 shed-roofed breaking down the massing in  
11 the back, and then we have the west  
12 elevation, which is 5 feet from -- you  
13 know, it's at the setback.

14 That's it.

15 MS. SPAIN: Alisa, have you read the  
16 Staff conditions and do you have any  
17 problems with what they're asking for?

18 MS. BLOCK: I don't. I don't have any  
19 issues with that. I would prefer to  
20 have -- I mean, I would prefer to have the  
21 wall fountain at the south facade of the,  
22 let's say, garage wall, because there has  
23 not been a garage there. I think it's an  
24 elegant detail from when you look through  
25 the carport. However, if necessary, we

1           could provide that sort of garage door type  
2           facade.

3           I think, for the most part, you know,  
4           everything is acceptable, depending on what  
5           you all propose that we do.

6           MS. SPAIN: And if you set back the  
7           proposed carport like they're asking, does  
8           that change the variance?

9           MS. BLOCK: It does, because if we set  
10          it back two inches --

11          MS. SPAIN: So it would be like 20,  
12          4 --

13          MS. BLOCK: Sorry?

14          MS. SPAIN: It would be 20 foot 4  
15          inches instead of the 20 foot 6 inches or  
16          something?

17          MS. BLOCK: Yeah. If it could be 20  
18          foot 4, that would be the variance.

19          MS. SPAIN: Is that okay with you?

20          MR. ADAMS: Yeah.

21          MS. BLOCK; Setting back two inches --

22          MR. ADAMS: If that's okay with the  
23          Board, we can amend the variance, and  
24          you're okay with working with us on the  
25          windows?

1 MS. BLOCK: Yes. I mean, I think we  
2 have an issue with egress in many areas, so  
3 I don't know -- I mean, you know, we could  
4 do that, but then in some areas we would  
5 have double casements and in some areas you  
6 have single. Does that --

7 MR. ADAMS: Yeah, because we  
8 understand you need the egress windows, but  
9 we can work with you.

10 MS. SPAIN: You can do the muntins, so  
11 that it looks like double. So you can do  
12 the thick one in the center, so you don't  
13 realize it unless you really look.

14 MR. ADAMS: And, again, you're trying  
15 to keep it to the back as possible, so  
16 they're off the front facade.

17 MS. BLOCK: Right. I mean, the other  
18 thing is that, if we -- I mean, I haven't  
19 mapped it out on the plans yet, but if  
20 there is a way to keep it to one facade,  
21 can we do it without having a thicker  
22 muntins in the middle or do we need to do  
23 that? Is that required?

24 MR. MENENDEZ: Work with Staff on that,  
25 right?

1 MR. ADAMS: You can work with us on it.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Yeah.

3 MS. BLOCK: I think we can show you  
4 elevations with variance options.

5 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Mr. Garcia-Pons,  
6 do you have a question?

7 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I have two questions  
8 for Staff. One is the side setback. It  
9 says it's five feet. Is that for a  
10 two-story building at whatever length?

11 MR. ADAMS: Yeah. They've worked at  
12 length with Zoning on this, I believe.  
13 This was one of the issues in getting it  
14 here. It was going back and forward  
15 between Zoning for, I don't know how many  
16 times, but you cleared -- because we  
17 specifically said, make sure that you check  
18 with Zoning exactly what variances you  
19 require and that was done.

20 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I just want to triple  
21 verify from Staff, because the architect  
22 has drawn it, five-foot setbacks, the  
23 two-story within the side setback. I just  
24 want to make sure that is correct, because  
25 I'm not a Zoning person.

1 MS. SPAIN: Unless they changed it, it  
2 has been in the past.

3 MR. FULLERTON: That's right.

4 MR. GARCIA-PONS: One question with  
5 regards to the last comment, which is the  
6 fountain versus the door.

7 MR. ADAMS: I'll leave that up to the  
8 Board as a suggestion.

9 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Then I don't have a  
10 preference either way. I just want to  
11 state that, for whoever the mover is going  
12 to be.

13 THE HOMEOWNER: We do. We don't want a  
14 garage door. We want a water feature.

15 MR. FULLERTON: Is it a requirement or  
16 is there somewhere written that they'll  
17 need to change the stucco texture to bring  
18 the new and the old --

19 MR. MENENDEZ: Yeah, that's there.

20 MS. SPAIN: That's part of the  
21 conditions.

22 MR. FULLERTON: That little two-inch  
23 setback will th help you in that regard.

24 MS. BLOCK: Since this has be  
25 texture -- I mean, do we have to have

1 smooth versus texture or could it be two  
2 different textures of --

3 MR. ADAMS: Different people do it  
4 different ways. Some people seem to like  
5 one rough and the new completely smooth.  
6 Other people go for a more subtle  
7 difference.

8 MS. BLOCK: I think, if they reset it  
9 back a little, I don't mind it being smooth  
10 versus that texture.

11 MR. FULLERTON: So there's a textured  
12 stucco there now on the building.

13 THE HOMEOWNER: Depends on the definition.

14 MR. FULLERTON: That's where it gets  
15 kind of tricky, when you have new abutting  
16 old at the same line.

17 MR. MENENDEZ: Well, I'm entertaining  
18 any motions, if there are no other  
19 questions.

20 MR. DURANA: I guess my only question,  
21 the roof tile, is it barrel or Spanish S?

22 MR. FULLERTON: Barrel.

23 MR. DURANA: Barrel, right? Because it  
24 says Spanish tile.

25 MR. FULLERTON: Yeah, Spanish barrel.

1           MR. DURANA: I would make sure -- put a  
2 note, because your subcontractors, when  
3 they bid on it, make sure that they're  
4 bidding barrel tile, because there's a  
5 difference and people have come to the  
6 Board and been rejected after the fact.

7           MR. FULLERTON: There's no such thing  
8 as S tile in Coral Gables.

9           MR. GARCIA-PONS: So I make a motion --  
10 I'm going to make three motions. The first  
11 motion is to approve with Conditions 1  
12 through 6, not Condition Number 7, as  
13 proposed by Staff, and adding the  
14 clarification, Number 7, that it's a  
15 two-piece barrel tile, would be the  
16 condition that I would add to the Staff  
17 requests.

18           The design proposal for the demolition  
19 of the existing garage, addition and  
20 alterations to the residence sitework on  
21 the property of 311 Romano Avenue and  
22 approve the issuance of a Special  
23 Certificate of Appropriateness with the  
24 conditions as stated.

25           MR. ADAMS: And for clarification, a



1 two-inch setback for the carport?

2 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes, correct. And  
3 the two-inch setback for the carport.

4 MR. MENENDEZ: Do we have a second?

5 MR. MAXWELL: Second.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Mr. Maxwell  
7 seconds.

8 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Durana?

9 MR. DURANA: Yes.

10 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain --

11 MR. DURANA: I just want to let them  
12 know, if I can, just please, windows, roof  
13 tile, stucco consult with Staff before the  
14 contractor gets ahead of himself and does  
15 something wrong. So just I wanted to make  
16 that very clear, because it's been --  
17 lately it's come to us a lot after the  
18 fact, and you'll save yourself a big  
19 headache.

20 MR. FULLERTON: Good point.

21 MR. DURANA: If in doubt, just ask  
22 Warren.

23 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Durana?

24 MR. DURANA: Yes.

25 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain?

1 MS. SPAIN: Yes.

2 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Fullerton?

3 MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

4 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

5 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

6 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Bache-Wigg?

7 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes.

8 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

9 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.

10 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Maxwell?

11 MR. MAXWELL: Yes.

12 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

13 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

14 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I'd like to make a  
15 second motion, to approve a variance to  
16 allow the proposed addition to have a rear  
17 setback of approximately 4 feet 2 inches.

18 MR. MAXWELL: Second.

19 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Mr. Maxwell seconds.

20 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain?

21 MS. SPAIN: Yes.

22 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Fullerton?

23 MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

24 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Bache-Wigg?

25 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes.

1 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Durana?

2 MR. DURANA: Yes.

3 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

4 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.

5 THE SECRETARY; Mr. Ehrenhaft?

6 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

7 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Maxwell?

8 MR. MAXWELL: Yes.

9 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

10 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

11 THE SECRETARY: Motion passes.

12 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I'd like to make a  
13 third motion to approve a variance to allow  
14 the interior length of the proposed one car  
15 carport to be 20 feet 4 inches.

16 MR. MENENDEZ: Second?

17 MR. MAXWELL: Second.

18 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Maxwell seconds.

19 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain?

20 MS. SPAIN: Yes.

21 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Durana?

22 MR. DURANA: Yes.

23 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Bache-Wigg?

24 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes.

25 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

1 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.

2 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

3 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

4 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Maxwell?

5 MR. MAXWELL: Yes.

6 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Fullerton?

7 MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

8 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

9 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

10 THE SECRETARY: Motion passes.

11 MR. MENENDEZ: Great.

12 MR. MAXWELL: Thank you.

13 MR. MENENDEZ: Congratulations.

14 MS. SPAIN: Thank you so much for  
15 waiting all of that time.

16 MS. BLOCK: Thank you all for your  
17 time. We appreciate it.

18 MR. MAXWELL: Thank you for waiting.

19 MR. MENENDEZ: Do we have any Old  
20 Business, New Business?

21 MR. ADAMS: Any what, sorry?

22 MR. MENENDEZ: Old Business, New  
23 Business.

24 MR. ADAMS: We have a list. No, I  
25 think we're good.

1           MR. MAXWELL: A question, when we  
2 review the Balboa Plaza next time, will we  
3 be able to have input into that design?

4           MR. ADAMS: Here's the thing, the  
5 Board have to -- we have several things,  
6 which include preservation and safety and  
7 everything else. This is a fairly major  
8 alteration to the Historic Street Plan. My  
9 recommendation for deferral was to allow  
10 time for us to hopefully look at possible  
11 other solutions without something so  
12 drastic.

13          MS. SPAIN: You know, that was one of  
14 the reasons we designated the plan, was  
15 because of traffic engineers.

16          MR. ADAMS: Yeah. And so, you know,  
17 again, you only make a recommendation to  
18 the Commission. They approve final COA.  
19 So, ultimately, whatever you recommendation  
20 is, it would still go ahead to Commission.  
21 I just felt that maybe -- we could maybe  
22 see if there's any other solution, but,  
23 again, I don't know if these are things  
24 that are pushed through.

25          MS. SPAIN: I understand.

1           MR. ADAMS: So, it is a difficult one,  
2           because you do have -- we have safety and  
3           everything else. But if you have any  
4           ideas -- Gus, the alteration to the street  
5           plan, the item that was deferred, if the  
6           Board have any suggestions, that I can sit  
7           down with the applicants to suggest to  
8           them, can we do that? If a Board Member  
9           calls and says, "We know this application  
10          is coming back next month, we know you want  
11          to work with the applicants, here are some  
12          suggestions," can we do that or can they  
13          not --

14          MR. CEBALLOS: Can one of our Board  
15          Members reach out to the County, is that  
16          what you're saying?

17          MR. ADAMS; Reach out to me and say,  
18          "Warren, I know you want to look at other  
19          alternatives for this traffic circle.  
20          Maybe you can suggest this to them, maybe  
21          you can suggest this to them;" so can they  
22          give me any ideas they may have prior to  
23          going to the next --

24          MR. CEBALLOS: I mean, any Board Member  
25          can reach out to you directly to discuss

1 things, but anything that's going to come  
2 before this Board for a decision, I would  
3 probably encourage you not to do it.

4 MR. ADAMS: Can they give me  
5 recommendations of what they would like to  
6 see individually, just by calling me?

7 MR. CEBALLOS: Once again, it's not a  
8 Sunshine Law violation for them to call you  
9 and talk to you about anything, but  
10 anything that's coming before this Board, I  
11 would recommend against it.

12 MR. ADAMS: Okay.

13 MR. MAXWELL: Hold on. Would you  
14 clarify that again, Gus?

15 MS. SPAIN: He said it's probably not a  
16 good idea.

17 I have a very quick question. The  
18 first agenda item, the Garden, that went to  
19 the Landmark Committee. Is that their  
20 purview? Why was that taken to them?

21 MR. ADAMS: It was -- Bonnie Bolton  
22 took it to them. She turned up at the  
23 meeting and requested -- she turned up at  
24 one meeting --

25 MS. SPAIN: That's not normal, with

1 designations, right?

2 MR. ADAMS: No. No, it's not a  
3 requirement and it's not -- but the problem  
4 was, Ms. Bolton turned up at one of the  
5 meetings and asked for their support.

6 MS. SPAIN: I see.

7 MR. ADAMS: They then said, well, it's  
8 difficult to do, if we haven't seen the  
9 application --

10 MS. SPAIN: But designations are not  
11 under their purview.

12 MR. ADAMS: No. No. It was purely a  
13 support and it was --

14 MS. SPAIN: And what was the vote? Do  
15 you remember?

16 MR. ADAMS: There were only five  
17 members there and the vote was three to two  
18 to support it. But, no, it's not  
19 typical --

20 MR. MENENDEZ: Won't happen again,  
21 right?

22 MR. ADAMS: Sorry?

23 MR. MENENDEZ: It won't happen again,  
24 right?

25 MR. ADAMS: If someone turns up at a



1 Board and asks for support for something,  
2 and you don't know they're going, can the  
3 Board -- I mean, the Board entertained it.

4 MS. SPAIN: It's fine. I thought that  
5 you had taken it to them.

6 MR. ADAMS: No. No. No.

7 MR. MENENDEZ: You know, it puts us in  
8 a situation where another Board has already  
9 approved it.

10 MR. ADAMS: And the two people who  
11 were not in support of it, their concern  
12 was that this is a Preservation Board item  
13 and it hadn't been to you. So two of the  
14 Board Members --

15 MS. SPAIN: I think it would have been  
16 probably a good idea, whoever staffs that  
17 Board, to say, "This is not appropriately  
18 before you," but, you know -- anyhow --

19 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Any other items?

20 MR. EHRENHAFT: This --

21 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Ehrenhaft, he's got  
22 something to say.

23 (Inaudible)

24 MR. MENENDEZ: Go ahead.

25 MR. EHRENHAFT: If we can return to the

1 roundabout, the street --

2 MR. CEBALLOS: I would just encourage  
3 us not to continue discussing items that  
4 are going to come back before this Board.  
5 If the item wasn't heard, I would not  
6 continue discussing it, especially if the  
7 approval is going to continue to come back  
8 to you.

9 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. I just had --

10 MR. CEBALLOS: If it's a high level  
11 question, that's not specific to the  
12 application, feel free, but it's my job to  
13 kind of remind you.

14 MR. EHRENHAFT: Fine. I'll save it for  
15 then, but there were a couple of  
16 observations about the intersection.  
17 That's all. Thank you.

18 MR. MENENDEZ: Do I have a motion to  
19 adjourn?

20 MR. MAXWELL: Motion to adjourn.

21 MR. MENENDEZ: Do I have a second?

22 MS. SPAIN: Second.

23 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay.

24 THE SECRETARY: All in favor?

25 (The Board Members voted aye.)

1                   (Thereupon, the meeting was adjourned at  
2 10:00 p.m.)  
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C E R T I F I C A T E


STATE OF FLORIDA:

SS.

COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE:

I, NIEVES SANCHEZ, Court Reporter, and a Notary Public for the State of Florida at Large, do hereby certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the foregoing proceedings and that the transcript is a true and complete record of my stenographic notes.

DATED this 6th day of February, 2023.



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NIEVES SANCHEZ