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Cesar Garcia Pons:

Okay, this meeting is called back into Session at 7:10. The last item of the day is a case file LHD2022-007, consideration of the local historic designation of the property at 1221 Milan Avenue, legally described as Lot 9, Block 39, Coral Gables Granada Section Revised, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8, at page 113, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida, on remand from the City Commission. Since this is on remand of the City Commission, I'm going to ask staff, both Ms. Pernas and the city attorney's office to give us a frame as what exactly we're doing here today.

Stephanie Throckmorton:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the applicant, my name is Stephanie Throckmorton. I'm the Deputy City Attorney, I serve as counsel to the Historic Preservation Board. I just wanted to give a brief overview of the posture we find ourselves in, as it's kind of a unique one for this board, it's been a while, as long as I can remember, since we've had one like this. So, just wanted to give a brief overview to the board and the public. In September of 2022, this property was designated by this board by a seven to one vote, that decision was appealed to the City Commission. And in May, after six months later, in May of 2023, there was a public hearing of the appeal at the City Commission. The City Commission then heard the appeal and found there to be insufficient evidence to affirm or deny the board's decision.

After much deliberation, the City Commission remanded the matter to this board to further review the designation and provide a more detailed explanation as to the reasoning for either designating or not designating the property, a local historic landmark. Clearly, we believe that the record below presented initially to this board in 2022 and at the Commission is part of this hearing today, but we would like you to think of this as a de novo hearing as the City Commission has asked that you review the designation and provide a detailed explanation as to your ruling, one way or the other to designate the property.

So knowing that you all... I think all of you were on the board when this was heard originally-

Speaker 2:

[inaudible 00:02:55].

Stephanie Throckmorton:

Not all of you? Okay, a few not. Since most of you were we know that you have had communications about this, we'd let you know when it was appealed, so hopefully there haven't been any ex-parte communications outside of what was presented to you initially. If so, we ask that you disclose them and let us know if you have any concerns about your ability to rule on this matter, but we should consider this essentially as a new designation, though there may be some evidence presented that has been presented to you previously. Happy to answer any specific questions as they arise, but otherwise I will turn it over to Ms. Pernas.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

If I could just verify with the board, does anybody have any ex-parte communications about this topic since it was last heard?

Bruce Ehrenhaft:

I have none, I've talked to no board members regarding it, nor anybody in the public, so.

Michael Maxwell:

I have none.

Xavier Durana:

Nope.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Okay. None, we have no ex parte communication. Thank you. Before Ms. Pernas starts, one thing that I'm going to encourage the board as I have been all night, is the specificity in which your comments are to be made, particularly when it comes to the board discussion, let's have a thorough board discussion so that the applicant has the benefit of it and the City Commission has the benefit of it. And when it comes time to make a motion, whatever that motion is, that we add specificity to that motion as well. Thank you, Ms. Pernas.

Anna Pernas:

Before we start, can I just ask if the applicant has any questions before we move forward?

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Please, absolutely. Applicant, this is-

Anna Pernas:

This is a new type, as you heard from the attorney and everyone else?

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Any questions for the city attorney? We understand why we're all here today? Okay, thank you.

Anna Pernas:

Thank you. All right. I know that there are a few new members of the board, so I'm going to go over the designation presentation that was made.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

All new.

Anna Pernas:

Right. The property at 1221 Milan Avenue is before you for consideration for designation as a local historic landmark. The single family home was designed in 1923 by architect Lewis Brumm. As previously stated, the city attorney has given you a brief case history, but this application was started by a historic determination letter submitted by the applicant.

As per Article 8, Section 8-103 of the Coral Gables Zoning Code criteria for designation for historic landmarks, a local historic landmark must have significant character or interest or value as part of the

historical, cultural, archeological, aesthetic, or architectural heritage of the city, state, or nation. For designation, a property must meet one of the criteria outlined in the Code.

1221 Milan is eligible as a local historic landmark based on three criteria. Criteria 4, it exemplifies the historical, cultural, political, and economic or social trends of the community. And architectural significance, criteria 1, it portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by one or more distinctive architectural style. Criteria 2, it embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or period or method of construction.

1221 Milan is a residential single family home in this Granada Section. It is a 50 x 100 interior lot on the north side of the street between Columbus Boulevard and Madrid Street.

Coral Gables was originally conceived as a suburb of Miami and attracted investors from across the nation during the South Florida real estate boom of the 1920s. George Merrick drew from the Garden City and City Beautiful movements of the 19th and 20th century to create his vision for a fully conceived Mediterranean inspired city, which is now considered to be one of the first modern planned communities in the United States. The city's development history is divided into three major historical periods. The home at 1221 Milan was commissioned by Coral Gables founder George Merrick, and designed by Lewis Brumm, a member of his design team. It espouses Merrick's Mediterranean ideals and is a very early example of what are known now as Coral Gables cottages.

The 1921 map of the left of the slide shows the initial layout of Coral Gables when lots first went for sale in November 2021. As sales took off, Merrick looked to expand his land holdings. Records indicate that he expended a tremendous amount of time in extending his holdings north to Tamiami Trail in the area highlighted in purple. Note that he initially only held lots on either side of Granada Boulevard denoted as section F.

By fall of 1923, section F, which is highlighted here in purple, was significantly expanded. Merrick renamed it the Granada Section and redirected hundreds of workers to lay street sidewalks and water mains. Milan Avenue was the southern border of the section and is the red line on the plot map. Unlike earlier sections, the Granada Section was platted with large areas allocated for moderately priced and smaller sized homes. To showcase his vision, Merrick commissioned architects, H. George Fink, Martin Hampton, and Lewis Brumm to design 58 Mediterranean inspired homes to demonstrate that though smaller, the moderately priced homes in Coral Gables would have the same quality of construction and aesthetic as the larger homes. In the Granada Section, Merrick stated that these 58 homes would embody new and radical departures from the usual type of small house designing, with compactness, beauty and comfort that will appeal to smaller families. Each home will be a different finely detailed design.

The eight homes on Milan Avenue commissioned by George Merrick are shown here by red blocks. 1221 Milan Avenue was one of these homes and is denoted by the orange arrow. As intended, these homes provided a model for and sparked interest in developing Milan Avenue with moderately priced homes. The blue blocks here are the other homes on the street built in 1920s. Milan Avenue retains this context to date.

I think there might be something missing there, so apologies. Records indicate that as Merrick began developing Granada Section, his brother-in-law, Paul Kuhn contributed financing, which included this home at 1221 Milan Avenue. Kuhn was married to Merrick's sister. In 1927, Dr. John Thom Holdsworth purchased 1221 Milan Avenue and lived in the home for 37 years. Dr. Holdsworth was renowned economist and professor who was recruited heavily by the University of Miami to develop their School of Business Administration. He was dean of school from 1929 to 1941. In 1964, Dr. Holdsworth sold the

home to the University of Miami for \$1. The property has then passed through several owners until the current owner purchased it in 1998.

Merrick chose to develop Coral Gables Mediterranean inspired city because he felt this type of architecture harmonized best with South Florida's climate and lifestyle. The home at 1221 Milan Avenue honors Merrick's vision, built over a crawl space to provide ventilation and separation from the high-water table. The home has thick masonry walls to aid in keeping the home cool, and varied casement windows and porch features arranged to provide much needed cross ventilation and light in the tropical environment. The home was designed by architect Lewis Brumm, who came from Coral Gables from California, where he had substantial experience designing Spanish inspired buildings. The home includes, in its existing condition, many additional prominent and character defining features of the Mediterranean Revival style, which include but are not limited to: textured stucco, combination of roof types and heights, projecting bays, arched openings- particularly the street facing segmental arch with distinctive corner knobs, Spanish inspired chimney with diamond shaped cutouts, detached garage whose parapet were designed to mirror the main home, wing walls, barrel tile roof, decoratively arranged groups of vents in diamond configuration, and recess casement windows with protruding sills and swooped masonry hoods.

In this slide, you can see the home over the last century. Visual assessment of the property as well as examination of the permit documents of the historic photographs indicate that there were a few changes to the character defining features of the home at 1221 Milan Avenue prior to the unpermitted alterations. A discussion of the unpermitted alterations is included in the designation report. Alterations that occurred prior to 1998 included enclosing the two screened porches denoted in blue on the survey. The current S-tile roof was installed in 1997. And in 1981, a roofed porch was added to the rear of the home along the east facade of the garage. The orange arrow on the survey indicates its location and the photo at the center shows it soon after completion. Apologies.

The current owner purchased a property in 1998 and this slide illustrates some of the alterations undertaken since then. The alterations were done without a permit and a code enforcement case is ongoing. Additional details are provided in the designation report. The unpermitted work included open porch area, the front facade was enclosed for living space, a raised concrete pad was laid along the west side of the home as denoted in the green on the survey, this patio now blocks the access to the original garage, the garage door was removed and the garage became connected to the home as a living space, as well as in the rear at the 1981 porch that was enclosed for living space, and then again enlarged in 2021. The photo above this survey shows that the addition painted in white abutting the rear of the original garage is now painted yellow.

Here's a current photo of the home. The taller shed roofed bay was the original screened entry porch. Note the street facing segmental arched opening with a distinctive corner knob features, also evident on this photo is the texture of the stucco. On the west side, note the arched openings of the entry porch and prominent chimney. One of the hallmark features of the home are swooped lintels, two of which can be seen here from the windows flanking the chimney. Above these windows are examples of grouped round vents decoratively arranged in a diamond configuration. In the photo on the left, you can also see another grouping on the original garage.

The photos at the center and the right side of the slides showing the original east facade of the home, there is a pop-out bay whose shed roof was originally tiled. The photo at the top right is the original sleeping porch. Like the pop-out bay, it's historically had barrel tile on its shed roof and is now unclad. The photo on the lower left is-

Cesar Garcia Pons:

We're looking... Yeah, thank you.

Anna Pernas:

Yeah, apologies. The photo on the lower left of the east facade on the recent infill on the front house, the orange arrow on the top slide indicates this location. It's not clear if an opening on this side was recently enclosed or if the area of the addition was not finished as it's obscured by vegetation. The photo on the left shows the rear facade of the home, it is looking at the northeast corner of the original sleeping porch. You can see that two windows infilling the large screened opening whose location and original sizes are easily discernible in the change of stucco texture. The changes on the right are the enclosed 1981 porch at the top and at the bottom are the more recent extension to the rear of the home.

The home was designed with two wing walls. Their locations and configurations are documented in this 1967 historic photo and circled in red. They're currently obscured from the street, but appear on the 2021 property surveys.

In conclusion, the single family home at 1221 Milan Avenue was one of the eight homes on Milan commissioned by city founder George Merrick in 1923. In accordance with Garden City precepts, Merrick envisioned Milan Avenue as a street of moderately priced attractive houses. He commissioned three members of his design team to demonstrate that these smaller homes were built with the same high quality construction and Mediterranean revival style features as other structures that shaped the new city in the early years. The home at 1221 Milan Avenue was designed by architect Lewis Brumm, who in tandem with the team member, George Fink was largely responsible for developing the city's cottage genre. This home was one of the earliest of the cottages, of the cottage types, and it played a significant role in the development of the Coral Gables cottage criteria in the city. Hence, the property at 1221's Avenue significantly contributes to the historic fabric of the city of Coral Gables.

Staff would recommend approval... Sorry, lost my train of thought. Staff would recommend approval of the local historic designation of the property at 1221 Milan based on the criteria four, exemplifies the historic, cultural, political, economic, social trends of the community. When first launching Coral Gables during 1921 and 1922, Merrick's team designed and built homes throughout the community to demonstrate their Mediterranean inspired vision. In 1923, as Merrick substantially increased his land holdings, he began to develop streetscapes following the Garden City precepts. Unlike earlier sections, the Granada Section was platted with large areas allocated for moderately priced and smaller sized homes. Records indicate that as Merrick began developing the Granada Section, his brother-in-law took on the financing of several of Merrick's initial commissions. The home at 1221 Milan was one, was one of these intended homes provided as a model and sparked interest in developing Milan Avenue with moderately priced homes. The houses on the street represent Merrick's vision of these smaller homes and was built in an archetype upon which Coral Gables was founded.

Criterion two, it portrays the environment of architectural significance. It portrays an environment in an era in history characterized by one or more distinctive architectural style. Founder George Merrick drew from the Garden City, from the Garden City and City Beautiful movements of the 19th and 20th century to create his vision for a fully conceived, cohesively designed Mediterranean inspired city, which is now considered one of the first modern plans, communities of the United States. The use of the Mediterranean design was one of the featured selling points in an early promotional materials. The home at 1221 Milan Avenue was built in the Mediterranean Revival style and defined, and that defined the vision of the city.

In Criterion two, it embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or period or method or construction. The existing home possesses numerous character defining features of the

Mediterranean Revival style as listed previously in the designation report. So, staff would recommend approval for the local designation of the property at 1221 Milan Avenue based off the criteria and evidence.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Thank you, Ms. Pernas. Would the applicant wish to make a presentation?

And before we begin, two things. One is, I had an aside with Ms. Spain where I was commenting on Ms. Pernas's pronunciation of Milan versus Milan. So, if anybody saw me sort of talking, that was what it's about. Very, very funny to me.

Ms. Pernas [inaudible 00:18:16] took 15 minutes, how long do you think your presentation will be today?

Peter Saliamonas:

There's three of us speaking, mine maybe five minutes. Mr. Heisenbottle [inaudible 00:18:25].

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Is there a time? Mr. Heisenbottle, how long do you think you'll be?

Richard Heisenbottle:

I think it'll be 20 minutes. I have quite a lot to say.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Mr. Pathman?

Wayne Pathman:

Probably 15 minutes.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Okay, that's almost an hour. That's too long. So, I know that this is important, but-

Richard Heisenbottle:

Then Mr. Heisenbottle will go as fast as possible.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Okay. I don't want you to go fast, I want you to hit the high points and the important parts. I know everything's important.

Richard Heisenbottle:

Everything's important.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Okay, so-

Dona Spain:

I think it's important to allow them to-

Cesar Garcia Pons:

I understand, I'm just trying to set an expectation.

Dona Spain:

...[inaudible 00:18:57] their concerns.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Let's aim for half an hour and see what we can do. That's 25-10, that's about 30 minutes.

Anna Pernas:

Before we start, do we want to see if we'll have availability of quorum after 9:00 PM because that's the other thing to take into consideration.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

It's 7:30. If we have half an hour, we should be fine. So, let's aim for it and see where we are.

Michelle Cuervo Dunaj:

I have a hard stop at 8:00.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Okay, you guys are listening to the issues we may be facing.

Peter Saliamonas:

I'm ready to go.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Okay, thank you.

Peter Saliamonas:

Thank you. Good afternoon, my name is Peter Saliamonas, and along with my wife Anne, seated over there, we own the property at 1221 Milan Avenue. To prepare for today's hearing, I watched every HPB hearing from the last two years. I really wanted to understand what the Board looks for in declaring a home historic. What I learned is that there's no escaping the truth, a home either satisfies the code or it doesn't, and my home does not. Most importantly, it hasn't maintained its integrity as there have been numerous significant changes. This is extremely hard to dispute. Please take a look at the screen. Can we put the... This is the original house plan. You can't see much, so we made it something like-

Cesar Garcia Pons:

You can look at this screen if you'd like.

Peter Saliamonas:

Okay, do a rendering. Thank you.

Here we go. These were renderings from those sketches. This is what it looked like in 1922 before elevations, and these were all the changes that happened to the front elevation over the years. In the interest of time, I won't read them all, but there are some significant ones there. We can always go back, I guess later, if you have any questions regarding them. And this is another elevation, the side elevation, these are also the changes. I think I should note that all the windows have been changed, there's no original casement windows, the openings have changed, there's just tons of changes. Obviously some of them mentioned here are not significant, but many of them are. I just wanted to show all the changes that have been made over the years.

This is the other elevation. It should be noted, I did not attach my garage to the house, that was done in 1982 prior to me buying the house. And yet another elevation, barrel tiles removed, they're all S tiles, and all the homes changes over the years.

I hope that helps clear things up on what's been done to my home. And that in and of itself, according to the code, means that my house cannot be declared historically significant. Nothing else matters. Could have been a George Fink masterpiece, where the Beatles and every US president stayed over the winter, it does not matter. It cannot be declared historic.

Nevertheless, I feel compelled to mention that my home also does not have significant character, interest or value, and it does not satisfy any of the required criteria. I believe that with my home, the historic preservation department whom I very much appreciate and respect made a mistake. I think that because they were presented with a 1922 old Spanish home, they weren't completely objective. Perhaps their passion to protect an old home clouded their objectivity.

As you know, the reason I'm here for the second time is because the City Commission remanded it to you with instructions for the Historic Preservation Department to specify exactly how my home meets the code. They wanted to see the report, identify a cultural trend, then demonstrate specifically how my home exemplifies it. And the same for an historical trend, they wanted to know specifically the architectural features, and if my home possesses enough to be considered a cottage home. The revised report fails to satisfy the Commission's request because it can't. It can't identify a cultural trend or an historical trend because there aren't any associated with my home. And of course, it's impossible to exemplify a trend that doesn't exist.

Regarding my home's architecture, Richard Heisenbottle will demonstrate later how it's exaggerated and mis-characterized. So I really learned a lot watching all those hearings, so I'd like to reference two in particular. In the hearing on the Alfred Browning Parker home at 5005 Hammock Park Drive, Ms. Rolando, who's not here opined that a home doesn't have to be a masterpiece to be considered significant. We saw some examples today, and I also saw in the hearings two very good examples, are the homes at 1207... No, that's my home there, but the home at... That's my home [inaudible 00:24:01] over there, there we go. The home at 1207 Genoa and 831 Capri, which your board designated last June and March respectively. You can tell just by looking at those homes that they possess attributes my home lacks. Not only do they reach an architectural standard, they also haven't been significantly altered. Their integrity is intact.

The other hearing was the one on the Garden of the Lord. Everyone recognized how the Garden of the Lord is a place that has so much meaning to so many people. In fact, Ms. Spain, you felt the need to apologize before your motion. When Mr. Fullerton was asked on what condition he was justifying designation, his response was none. He said it was more ethereal.

And Mr. Maxwell, you talked about how old places matter. I heeded your advice, by the way, and I bought the book, 'Why Old Places Matter' and I read it. Now, I know this might have absolutely nothing to do with the code, but I feel that the ideals outlined in that book are not only extremely important, but they support my need to build a new home. Thompson Mayes, the author of 'Why Old Places Matter' states this in his epilogue, it said, "I came to realize that we save old places, not for the old places themselves, but for what they can do for people. This idea became the central focus of the National Trust's guidebook for the next 50 years, Preserving For People- A Vision For The Future. Though this idea may seem obvious to those who are not practicing professionals in historic preservation, it represents a profound philosophical shift for the field. It encourages us to see through the bricks and mortar of an old place to focus on how these places help people flourish." An old home that doesn't foster meaningful human connections doesn't satisfy the most important criteria for why old places matter. It should be replaced by one that will, and which in time will be an old place that matters. It only takes one generation, which is why sensible preservation doesn't protect the home simply because it's old, neither does the code. I now invite Richard Heisenbottle to the podium. He will explain why my home doesn't reach the standards for integrity, historical significance, and architectural significance. Then my attorney, Wayne Pathman will speak to conclude our presentation. Thank you very, very much for your time.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Thank you.

Peter Saliamonas:

Thank you.

Richard Heisenbottle:

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. For those of you that don't know me, my name is Rich Heisenbottle. I'm president of RJ Heisenbottle Architects, and as most of you know, we have an incredible background in historic preservation projects that date back to 1976. And we run an architectural firm that is 37 years old today, and one of its major primary areas of work is opining on preservation matters. We are expert witnesses in many, many occasions, and I'm joined today by Nina Caruso, who's our Director of Historic Preservation Services, Nina, with her degree in Architecture, and a Master's in Historic Preservation. But today, she has one task whatsoever, and that is to click the button, and change the slides for Rich. So more often than not, you may be asking yourselves, "How did Rich get himself involved in the single-family house?" Because probably many of you certainly know what we do.

We typically support historic designation projects, and have gone around town for many years saving many of our most important landmarks. We spoke out, and managed to save the Chaille Block in downtown Miami. We tried, and we are still trying every day to save the Coconut Grove Playhouse, and most recently, we are the experts trying to save a wonderful little Arnold building up all the way in Lake Park. So why am I here to speak against historic designation of this home at 1221 Milan? I'm here because I believe that staff has completely overstepped and grossly exaggerated the historic and architectural significance of the home, and that their staff report is extremely flawed.

Let me continue. Mr. Saliamonas is the homeowner of 1221 has engaged the firm to conduct a review of the local historic designation report for the property. My review focused on analyzing the information presented in the staff report, assessing whether the criteria for designation was met, and making alternative recommendations as appropriate. You're going to get an alternative recommendation later

tonight. My analysis has concluded that the criteria justifications for historic designation have not been substantiated for the following reasons.

Under the consideration of Historic Cultural Significance Criteria 4 would require that the home exemplifies historical, cultural, political, economic, or social trends of the community, right? We all know that. Staff summary of significance for Criteria A, Historical Cultural Significance does not clearly state how the home exemplifies historical, cultural, and political, economic, or social trends of the community. The reader is left to surmise or guess what the home, why this moderately priced home is somehow part of the historical or cultural trends of the community.

No context for local, state, or national, cultural, economic or social trends is provided. To simply make brief mention that the South Florida real estate boom is not enough to prove the point that because this home was moderately priced, it was part of a historical, cultural or economic trend. There are no citations, no footnotes, no evidence to support the claim. Furthermore, staff states that this home was built as an archetype upon which Coral Gables was founded, page 25.

The home is by no means an archetype upon which Coral Gables was founded. This claim is unfounded. It's an exaggeration of the building's importance. In professionally evaluating the criteria, I find that the Criteria Number 4 is not substantiated at all. Regarding architectural significance, Criteria 1, the home is supposed to portray the environment in an era of history characterized by one or more architectural styles.

Staff's summary of significance claims that this home was built in the Mediterranean Revival style that defined Merrick's vision for the city. Rest assured that this home certainly did not define Merrick's vision for the city, nor is this home an example of the Mediterranean Revival style. The early, this early home 1922, not '23, displays characteristics of the Spanish style, and predates Merrick's vision of the Mediterranean Revival style. This Spanish style home is a result of the fact that Lewis Brumm was a California architect relocated to Florida, bringing with him his knowledge of Spanish style architecture, and there is a difference. And three, with regards to Criteria 2, the home would have to embody those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or period, method of construction.

Staff's summary of significance claims that although the home has been altered, it possesses numerous character-defining features associated with the Mediterranean Revival Style. The summary lists all features associated with the Mediterranean Revival Style, and calls those features "character-defining." In my professional opinion, these features are not character-defining, or distinguishing characteristics of the home. Distinguishing characteristics are those marked by excellence, or more conspicuous by excellence. This poses a question for all of you. Are any of the features of this home in those photographs that Peter showed you earlier in the ones Nina is going to be showing you soon, are any of the features of this home marked by excellence, or made conspicuous by excellence? No.

Section 8-103 of the code establishes the criteria for designation for historic landmarks, or historic districts, and states buildings, that buildings are significant if they possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, or association. In order to qualify for designation as a local historic landmark, or district, individual properties must have significant character, interest, or value as part of the historical, and archeological, and aesthetic, or architectural heritage of the city, state, or nation. There are two important questions to ask yourselves when considering this section, and whether it qualifies. And I ask you, "Does 1221 Milan possess integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, and association?" I think the answer is no.

Does the property have significant character, or interest, or value? I think the answer is again, no. In my opinion, the home of 1221 originally displayed architectural features associated with the Spanish style influence by the 19th century Spanish territory in southwest United States. You all know what I'm talking

about? Lewis Brumm, that California architect was inspired by this architecture. He brought it with him. A study of the home's architectural features reveals that this is more closely associated with the Spanish Style of the southwest United States. In fact, we would call this Spanish Eclectic. You can see some examples of Spanish Eclectic on the right-hand side of this slide. They're almost, they're almost exactly the same. We'll go more into that in a moment.

In the original Spanish style, the home represented characteristics of a distinguished, or a distinctive architectural style, with a distinguishing characteristics of the period. However, with its multiple alterations, the home has lost its architectural integrity. This is supported by the fact that the staff report dedicates more than eight pages, I think it's 11 through 21, maybe nine, to discussing the alterations to the home between 2009 and 2011, calling them, quote, "notable changes." Then the report discusses each change in detail contradicting staff's point that it possesses integrity for designation, sufficient integrity for designation. When we evaluate a home for historic designation, we must evaluate that home for its current architectural appearance. We cannot designate a home based on the original design, and the way it used to look. The home must be evaluated based upon its current architectural appearance. Allow me to demonstrate a bit, and get a bit more in depth, and explain my position here.

I believe that staff's selection of eight homes on Milan is arbitrary. What makes this, these eight homes something more special? Let me continue. In addition to remarking on the designation criteria, I'm going to go point out a few inconsistencies in the staff report to make an important point about the importance of context, holistic thinking, and considering all of the facts when we propose a building for historic designation. First and foremost, 1221 was built in 1922 as indicated by the tax card. This is the only substantiated evidence we have of when this home was built. Staff references 1923 in part of the report, 1924 in another part of the report. Again, the staff report places emphasis on eight initial homes on Milan Avenue that were commissioned by Merrick. These initial eight homes on Milan came from a September 24th 1923 Miami Herald article that reports that there will be forty new moderately priced homes on Granada in the Granada section, and specifically mentions twelve on Ferdinand, eighteen on Genoa, eight on Milan, six on Capri and fourteen on Pizarro.

There are two other newspaper articles, one on October 15th, and another on November 1st reporting on a number of the moderately priced homes being constructed in the Granada Section. In the last paragraph of page 6 of the designation report, a ninth house is thrown into the mix, 1212. It's introduced, leading us to be confused as to whether we're really talking about eight, or we're really talking about nine, another inconsistency in the report. Our research shows according to the tax record, that one home was built in 1922, Peter's home, one home was built in 1923, four homes were built in 1924, three homes were built in 1925. "So what's the point of this, Rich?" That's what you should be asking me right now.

The point of this is, One, 1221 Milan predates the newspaper article of the fall of 1923. Note that these initial eight homes were constructed at different dates. If they were constructed at different dates, then how can they be considered the initial eight? These are not the first eight when there were in fact homes built in 1923, '24, '25, and '26. To raise the question, "Why is staff singling out the eight homes on Milan Avenue when there were also twelve on Ferdinand, eighteen on Genoa, six on Capri, fourteen on Pizarro?" These are all initial homes.

Back to the newspaper articles again for a second. The first reference newspaper article dated September 24, it states thirty new homes moderately priced, and from new and original designs by George Fink, Hampton, Lewis Brumm will be started in the Granada section. The same article goes on to reference later in the article forty new homes. This is an inconsistency even in the article that we're referring to as, as the basis for our decision-making. In October 15th, '23, that newspaper article

announces a new building campaign which involves construction of fifty moderately priced homes. "The homes of all are all of Spanish design, designed by George Fink, DeGarmo, Hampton, Ehmann, and Lewis Brumm," and the emphasis here is on Spanish design.

Here's another article on November 1st, which states that the "Plans for the homes will be drawn by George Fink, Richard Kiehnel, and Mark Hampton," leaving out any reference to Brumm or Eamon. "12 houses will be erected on Ferdinand," and I could go back. You've heard me already eighteen on Genoa, eight on Milan, six on Capri, fourteen on Pizarro. Again, the point of this analysis is to note that there is no significance to singling out the eight initial homes on Milan that are referenced in the designation report. Rather, it is important to acknowledge all the initial homes on Ferdinand, Genoa, Capri, Pizarro, all of the thirty, forty, fifty or fifty-eight or more moderately-priced homes. Staff would have you believe that these initial eight homes on Milan were the initial homes built on Milan. However, the analysis of the homes still standing on Milan today demonstrates that there are thirty-eight homes that were constructed between 1923 and 1926. Of the thirty-eight, eight are actually historically designated, and excuse me, of the thirty-eight, only eight are currently historically designated, and only one of the eight designated is classified as one of the initial eight homes. Let's pause and review the chart on the screen. One home built in 1922, two homes built in '23, eight homes built in '24, eighteen homes built in '25, and nine in '26.

With regards to criteria for historical, cultural, political, or economic trends of the community, and making a case for historic and cultural trends, singling out one moderately priced home, 1221 Milan, and inferring that it is somehow part of the historical cultural trends, is nothing more than conjecture when there were thirty-eight other homes on Milan, and these are just the homes on Milan. At this point, my presentation has been building up to make a recommendation here. If the staff and the board wish to highlight the importance of the moderately priced homes, and to ultimately help save these moderately priced homes, I recommend stepping back from the individual designation, and directing staff to evaluate the eligibility of designating the homes first mentioned in the newspaper articles from September 24th, 1923.

As a historic district, you might consider calling that the Cottage Home Historic District. Proper procedure would have us evaluate the Granada Section as a potential historic district, and not single out individual homes without proper context. Moreover, when you view the Granada Section plat map of 1924, we find that the entire area contains 50-foot lots likely intended for moderately priced homes. Here's a close-up of that Sanborn Map indicating the homes built by 1924, and the quantity of those homes built by 1924. An analysis of the eight homes on Milan show six appear to be consistent with the criteria for historic designation. Only one is already locally designated, one has already been demolished, and in my view, 1221 is not eligible for historic designation, should not be considered even as a contributing home in a historic district, which would have a lower bar. Why? Because it's totally lost its architectural integrity.

Let's switch back, and discuss the Coral Gables Cottage Criteria for a moment. Staff believes that 1221 meets the criteria for as a Coral Gables Cottage Home, and mentions that affordable homes became known as Coral Gables Cottages. Let's review the Section 8-202 that describes the criteria for cottage homes. Coral Gables Cottage Homes must be a, "Detached single-family dwelling, which is distinguished by its movement, and plan, projections and recessions, asymmetrical arrangement of entrances, frequently employed surface ornament for embellishment, and at least twelve of the following features." Now, I'm not going to go through all those features, I promise, but let me say real quickly that right away 1221 Milan does not meet the basic criteria, let alone contain the twelve specific features. The basic criteria, the projections, the recess, to the asymmetrical entrances frequently employed,

anybody see ornament on this house? Because I sure don't see any ornament on this house. Of the nineteen different criteria, our professional analysis shows that this home meets only eight.

When comparing 1221 Milan to other potentially eligible houses on Milan, or, or in a proposed historic district, the homes that are already locally designated, it is important that we, that this house, it's important to point out that this house, what this house lacks, and that is again, any degree of architectural integrity. The value of truly eligible properties would be harmed by including a house such as this. That lack of architectural integrity will hurt the public's perception of the quality and significance of what constitutes a Coral Gables landmark.

To conclude, I do not believe that the criteria for designation of a historic landmark under the criteria of City of Coral Gables code has been met. Milan Avenue does not meet the basic criteria for eligibility. It is not historically significant, because it does not possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, or association. Furthermore, it does not have significant character, interest, or value as part of the historical, cultural, archeological, aesthetic, or architectural heritage.

Staff believes that 1221 Milan is significant to the City of Coral Gables history, and that it meets the following three criteria, the criteria first of cultural significance. Staff fails to make the point, as I said before, about how this moderately priced home demonstrates historical, or cultural trend, nor do they provide any justification or explanation how the home exemplifies its historical cultural trend. Moreover, this home is by no means an archetype upon which Coral Gables was founded. As I said before, staff's claim is unfounded and an exaggeration. My conclusion is that 1221 Milan does not meet Criteria A for cultural significance, Criterion 4. Moving on to Architectural Significance, and Cesar, I promise you, this is the last page.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Fine. You're doing fine.

Richard Heisenbottle:

With regards to the Criteria 1, staff summary recommendations claims that this home was built in the Mediterranean Revival style that defined Merrick's vision for the city. Do any of you think this home defines Merrick's vision for the City of Coral Gables? This home did not, and does not define Merrick's vision for the city, nor is this home an example of the Mediterranean style of architecture. The early home, 1922, displays all the characteristics of the Spanish style, and predates Merrick's vision for the Mediterranean style. Frankly, what the staff is correct that this is the Mediterranean style home, or whether I am correct that this is a Spanish style home, it's really a moot point. The fact of the matter is that this home has been so severely altered that it no longer maintains its architectural integrity as it stands today.

None of these features that are characteristic of the style are distinguishing. My conclusion is that 1221 Milan does not meet the Criteria B, Architectural Significance, Criteria 1 and 2, because 1221 Milan has lost its architectural integrity. Now, I'm here because I'm concerned that there are attempts to designate homes that have lost architectural integrity, and very simply put, that is bad preservation practice, and significantly lowers the bar for what should be deemed as having architectural integrity, and historic and cultural significance. If the board again wishes to save moderately priced homes, also known as cottage homes in the Granada section, we recommend that you direct staff to evaluate the Granada section as a potential historic district and establish a clear period of significance between dates 1921 and 1926. Thank you all for your attention and your patience.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Thank you, Mr. Heisenbottle.

Wayne Pathman:

Good evening, Mr. Chairman, members of the board and staff. My name is Wayne Pathman with Pathman Law. I'll try to be brief. I may be a little bit repetitive of some of the things that Rich said. But I think it's important to start with what did the commission say? You heard the city attorney say that they remanded it back with certain directions to this board as to what you should find.

What they said specifically was specific instructions for the board to specify the competent, substantial evidence for its findings and what it's basing its determination on. Then City Attorney, excuse me, Commissioner Rhonda Anderson added, "Right, if dealing with the addressing the architectural features of the home, specify for us what are those features?" And then Kirk Melendez said, "Show us why HPB thinks their points are valid, one by one." I would submit to you that staff has failed to do that.

If you read the report, and I'm going to go over a number of those things which have already been some mentioned by Rich, but what they're saying is in the report it specifically identifies three very, very important points. When was the house built? Why was it built? Was it by Merrick? Was it for a certain style? And does it have the integrity still to be classified as a historic home?

I would submit to you it doesn't meet any of those requirements. Why? First of all, the house was built in 1921. The tax card, and if you'd like to see a copy, we have copies we can hand out, but you saw it on Rich's presentation, the tax card is very significant. As a lawyer I deal with things like that, whether it's an old home or a current home and everything else, or a building or shopping center, whatever it might be.

Tax cards are typically not created till a home is built because that's how they tax, based upon and if you look at the tax card itself, it has the outline of the house, what was built in 1921. Now why is 1921 so important? It's important because the entire staff report starts, excuse me, in 1922 and that is not when this house was built. This house was built earlier. It wasn't in 1923, it wasn't in 1924. It was earlier as the tax card shows, and I just want to show you real quick, I meant to say, excuse me, 1922, but this picture here shows the outline of the house. How can you say, and it would be complete conjecture, opinion, not substantiated by any record that we've seen so far and now the third hearing from staff that this house was built in 1923. It was either 1921 or 1922. The best evidence we have, and I know that you're not a court of law, but you're a quasi-judicial board, is 1922. So, in 1923 is when staff says George Merrick started buying property in the Grenada section and planning these homes in the cottage style, whether it's cottage or Mediterranean style. Well, clearly it didn't apply to this house. This house was already built in 1922. So, in 1922 you have this house.

Now fast-forward and look at the integrity. The integrity of the house is completely changed, whether it was done with a permit or without a permit, that's really not for your purview. What's for your purview is what is the condition of the house today? What does it look like? Does it have any of those original characteristics?

I'd like to point out that, and again, I'm going to try to brief and I'm changing my presentation a little bit because of time and Rich had covered things quite well, but the most important thing is integrity. And how is integrity defined? I thought it was very interesting that staff on page two of the report doesn't mention the entire section of the code, which is section 103, where it specifically says it must possess integrity. It must have significant character, interest or value. It must meet one or more of the several criteria. In order to meet the above criteria a property cannot be significantly altered.

This house is significantly altered. How do you know that? Well, staff made my claim for me, made my case for me. As Rich said, between pages 11 and 21, they talk about all the alterations. Not one paragraph, not one page, not even two pages, but ten. So, almost one half of the entire report by staff talks about the alterations. That in of itself is enough to say the house has lost its integrity. It no longer has the integrity.

Now what is the definition of integrity in any meaningful treatise? In Law Insider, they define the architectural elements, materials, color and quality of the original building construction. That's what you're supposed to consider as integrity, original building construction. The authenticity of a property's historic identity evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the properties prehistoric or historic period. Again, survival. They didn't survive, they don't exist today. It is not a historic home.

When you look at staff's report, they spent a lot of time talking about George Merrick. But I would ask you to consider what have they proven, what have they shown in their report or anything that they've demonstrated here today or last time when they were before this board, that shows it had anything to do with George Merrick or anything to do with his ideas about the Granada area or the Granada area? It didn't because the house existed beforehand. And as Rich so well pointed out who designed the house, why is it a Spanish-style house? Because it had nothing to do with George Merrick or his idea for Coral Gables.

Now, I'd also like to take some time, and you may not be accustomed to this, but under the rules I have a right to cross-examine. And I would like to cross-examine Anna Pernas and her report. I have a few questions for her.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Madam City Attorney, is this appropriate?

Stephanie Throckmorton:

Certainly, Mr. Chair.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Thank you. Ms. Pernas.

Wayne Pathman:

Anna, hi, good to see you again.

Anna Pernas:

Hello. Nice to see you too.

Wayne Pathman:

Start out in the afternoon. I will be delicate. My intent is not to have a trial here. Okay. So, you indicated in the report that George Merrick acquired the property in this area and you say 1923 and 1924 in the report. Are you familiar with the tax card showing that it's 1922?

Anna Pernas:

I have seen the tax card.

Wayne Pathman:

Okay. Are you familiar what a tax card is?

Anna Pernas:

Yes.

Wayne Pathman:

Okay. So you would agree then that the tax card shows a building, or a home being built as of 1922 as referenced on the tax card.

Anna Pernas:

Yes. And we have seen discrepancies in the built date in those tax cards and permits and other evidence in it.

Wayne Pathman:

Well, but I'm asking you a question, what do you see on this tax card?

Anna Pernas:

Yes, it says 1922.

Wayne Pathman:

So, that would be the best evidence of when this house was built. Would you agree?

Anna Pernas:

Given the report that was written by staff, I would say no.

Wayne Pathman:

Well, again, then what do you have or what did staff have to show it wasn't built in 1922?

Anna Pernas:

Hold on one second because I'm sorry that I did not write this report, so I do have to go back and I did study it.

Wayne Pathman:

I assumed you did it because you signed it.

Anna Pernas:

Right.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Take your time, Ms. Pernas.

Anna Pernas:

Yes, thank you. In the report, it was when the acquisition of the land was acquired by Merrick in 1923. And Merrick substantially increased his land holdings in that area. And that is when the designation of those eight homes, I mean that will originally be... Sorry, thirty-eight homes. Just want to make sure I have the number right.

I'm looking for what I presented in there. I'll go back to the designation report stating that the, stating that the land was acquired in 1923.

Wayne Pathman:

Okay. But again, my question was the tax card shows 1922. So, would you agree then if Merrick acquired it in '23, he didn't build this house?

Anna Pernas:

I'm trying to find the date of the permit that was pulled. Apologies.

Wayne Pathman:

Okay. I would stipulate that if a tax card is already out, the permit had to be pulled prior to that. That's how it typically works in the system.

Anna Pernas:

And again, we've seen discrepancies between those two.

Wayne Pathman:

But can you identify any discrepancies specifically or have any evidence that supports this? The commission was very straightforward in terms of what they wanted to see. They wanted see specifics. And that's what this is-

Anna Pernas:

And the commission wanted the direction to come from the board. And that was very clear too in their resolution that was signed.

Wayne Pathman:

I'm not trying to be argumentative, but I remember the commission saying, "Please give us specifics, one by one, as to how you can show, and this was an issue before the commission, that it was built in 1922 and not 1923." Do you have any specifics?

Anna Pernas:

I do not have any specifics at this time.

Wayne Pathman:

Okay. On page 7 of the report in the middle of the page, you state the home was completed in 1924, but you did not provide any citation within text as a footnote or anything or how you know it was built in 1924. Do you have any evidence to show it was built in 1924?

Anna Pernas:

At this moment I do not.

Wayne Pathman:

Okay. On page 10 of the report, in the first sentence you state, "The home was commissioned by city founder, George Merrick, in 1923." One, how do you know that?

Anna Pernas:

I'm sorry, which page was that on?

Wayne Pathman:

Page 10 of the report, in the first sentence you state, "The home was commissioned by city founder, George Merrick, in 1923."

Anna Pernas:

Sorry, page 10 on the report that I have is photos.

Wayne Pathman:

Well the one I have, which was... Anyhow, the question is 1923. How do you know that George Merrick built the house in 1923?

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Commissioned.

Wayne Pathman:

Commissioned. Do you have any evidence, any documentation, any contracts, any building cards, any permits, anything like that? Anything of that nature?

Anna Pernas:

I think what was referenced was the newspaper articles.

Wayne Pathman:

That's all you have. Nothing actually from the city showing-

Anna Pernas:

I know of at the moment, it was the newspaper articles that was referenced.

Wayne Pathman:

Okay. So, would you agree that the best evidence so far to date is the tax card that show when the house was built?

Anna Pernas:

Again, I would have to review all the materials listed in the designation report, as part of the, as part of the references that were in for the report.

Wayne Pathman:

Let me ask it a different way. In your report, it doesn't say that, correct? It doesn't say-

Anna Pernas:

No, it does not say that the tax card was done. Correct.

Wayne Pathman:

And is there a reason why that was omitted in your report?

Anna Pernas:

I'm not sure. No.

Wayne Pathman:

In the report, the staff or you spend almost ten pages of the report discussing all the modifications that were done to the home. Would you agree that those were significant modifications?

Anna Pernas:

We do describe them as extent exterior description and alterations.

Wayne Pathman:

So would you also agree then that changed the integrity of the house?

Anna Pernas:

It has altered the house.

Wayne Pathman:

The integrity.

Anna Pernas:

It would not have. But these are all items that have been looked at that have can be reversible and have not included, have not changed the integrity of the house. The integrity of the house would've been lost if the house was no longer identifiable as a Spanish Mediterranean style house and/or a cottage type house.

Wayne Pathman:

Go ahead.

Anna Pernas:

Just to include, sorry, I believe the pages that you're speaking of for the report are pages 12 through 21, which we do describe that exterior alterations. And I'd like to just state for the record that five or maybe more of those pages are photos.

Wayne Pathman:

Okay. But again, my question was specific, there's no records. The best record is the tax deed correct?

Anna Pernas:

Is that in reference to the exterior changes that were done?

Wayne Pathman:

I'm just saying to build of the house. With regards to the exterior, my question was you spent ten pages describing all the alterations. That's pretty significant. You make a point of saying how significant it is in the report.

And I would submit to you that your own code says integrity. And the integrity of the house is lost. And the integrity definition, would you not agree from treatises is the original condition. You have to accept the house today when you're designating something as to the condition the house is in now, whether it was done with a permit or not.

Anna Pernas:

Right. And I would go back to what I just stated, that the integrity of the house would've been lost if it was no longer recognizable between style or type.

Wayne Pathman:

So, again, would you agree that the alterations were significant?

Anna Pernas:

Yes, there have been significant alterations.

Wayne Pathman:

Thank you. Do you know who Warren Adams was?

Anna Pernas:

Yes. Previous preservation officer.

Wayne Pathman:

Okay. Do you have, do you know, do you respect him? Do you think he's a knowledgeable person?

Anna Pernas:

Yes.

Wayne Pathman:

Are you familiar with-

Anna Pernas:

I very minimally know him. Just...

Wayne Pathman:

Well, he was, he did share your department at some time I believe. Correct? Or he did share-

Anna Pernas:

No, we never worked together.

Wayne Pathman:

No, but I'm saying but at some before your predecessor.

Anna Pernas:

Oh, yes.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Adams was the previous preservation officer.

Anna Pernas:

He was the previous.

Wayne Pathman:

He is on the record on many occasions saying that if the integrity of the home is lost, you must take the home as it is today. And if it's not original then it's not worth designation. And that's coming from the prior chair of your department and has been said many times on the record here. And we have quotes if we need to see them, but that's what he said. I have no further questions for you. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

I would just like to conclude with after everything that was said by my client, Mr. Saliamonas, by a renowned expert, Richard Heisenbottle, and now myself, there is no way that this house should ever be considered a historic, should be considered to be historic and receive a historic designation.

The best evidence presented today is the tax card. The tax card in of itself refutes everything staff put in its report because staffs report starts in 1923. It talks about George Merrick. It talks about the style of the house, which we know wasn't the case in 1922 when this house was built.

This picture, if I were in a court of law, this is the best evidence. The judge or jury would look at this and say, "That house was built in 1922. It was not part of Merrick's design, his concept for the Granada area, and therefore cannot be considered as a Mediterranean Revival home."

It must be specific. And the commission even zeroed in on that when we were before them on the appeal that they want to see specificity with regards to why this house deserves a designation. We've shown overwhelmingly it does not. There's nothing that was presented today by staff in the report or anything that they said on the record that in any way is competent, substantial evidence to say that this house is a 1923 Mediterranean Revival home that George Merrick planned.

I would ask that you deny the application for historic designation. Let the Saliamonas's get on with their life. They want to build a beautiful home there that will be complementary to the neighborhood. Everybody will be happy and they will not be burdened with the designation of a historic designation for something that is clearly not historic.

I myself live in a, lived in a historic home. I just sold it recently. Even though I'm an attorney who represents lots of developers, I work in balance. I recently, one of the biggest projects I worked on, at the end of last year, was trying to save and work on the National Hotel in Miami Beach.

So, I try to look at balance even though I represent developers in preserving historic things. And like Richard said, and he's on that same side, this doesn't deserve it. This has no merit. Even George Merrick could be saying, "We shouldn't be preserving this house. It's not one of mine. It's not what I intended. It just happens to be an outlier that was built in 1922." Thank you.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Thank you. Mr. Pathman. Does that conclude your presentation?

Wayne Pathman:

It does, but I would reserve in case any other evidence comes up that I have the right to continue my cross examination.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Thank you.

Wayne Pathman:

Okay.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Ms. Pernas or the city, do you have anything you'd wish to say at this time in rebuttal of the presentation by the applicant? Slowly please.

Kara Kautz:

I'll be quick. So, I was-

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Record.

Kara Kautz:

Hm?

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Name for the record.

Kara Kautz:

Kara Kautz, Assistant History Preservation Officer. At the City Commission appeal hearing this issue of the date actually was addressed. And I don't have the correct slide. I don't think it was part of your slide that Anna presented, but the date seems to be an issue. And in all honesty, it's kind of irrelevant because it's a '23 or '22 house. It's old, it's of the time period.

However, the home was constructed in the Granada section of the city. There is a 1922 map that, I don't know if it was part of your slide, but that you all have seen before. It's the normal, it's the map. It was in the two designation presentations earlier.

Merrick didn't own the Granada section in 1922. He hadn't yet acquired that land. It's in purple. It's not part of the map. So, you can't put a house on something that isn't platted. So, when in fall of 1923, section F, highlighted in over here, this was all expanded and Milan became the border.

So, in September of '23, the newspaper article announced the start of construction of the Granada section. The permit for this drawing, the permit drawings for this house, number 402, lists the lot and block in the Granada section, which didn't exist until after 1922 had passed. Therefore, we extrapolated that it was built post-'22 in 1923.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Thank you Ms. Kautz. Miss, does the applicant wish to rebut?

Peter Saliamonas:

I'll take that.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Please.

Peter Saliamonas:

Like I said, I watched all those hearings. And on March 15th, 2023, Ms. Guin did a report on 831 Obispo in which she said, and I'm quoting, "This does not preclude the home from being built prior to the street platting. There are several instances of Mediterranean Revival homes built in the Granada section prior to the land becoming part of Coral Cables."

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Thank you.

Peter Saliamonas:

And the other thing I wanted to mention is when Ms. Pernas was talking about integrity, she defined it as integrity lost if the home was not recognizable. Back to my hearings that I watched, it was the one on 430 Menorca when Warren Adams mentioned, he said, he said there were several significant features that have been altered specifically. And it just so happens that these features that he mentioned are the exact same features that my home was also altered.

And he said, "Specifically enclosure of the garage door opening, the original patio enclosed, reconfiguration of windows, replacement of rough textured stucco with a smoother texture, a smoother stucco, and the installation of inappropriate windows." He said, "These alterations have negative impact on the integrity of the design materials and workmanship." And those were all prevalent changes in my home as well. I just want to mention that.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Thank you, Mr. Saliamonas.

Peter Saliamonas:

Thank you.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Does anybody have any questions for the applicant or staff at this time? This is the time for questions.
Ms. Spain.

Dona Spain:

I have a brief question about the report. One minute. Let me just get to it. I'm sorry. Because I think the report that we have was an updated designation report because it talked about the case history and it talked about all this other stuff.

Anna Pernas:

Correct.

Dona Spain:

So, I think the date on it should be today's date.

Anna Pernas:

Yeah. Oh, on the top right?

Dona Spain:

Yeah, because otherwise it can't be differentiated between-

Anna Pernas:

And that was a typo from it being rescheduled.

Dona Spain:

I understand.

Anna Pernas:

I'll make sure that it's modified.

Dona Spain:

That was my only... Because once it gets back to the commission, it's going to be confusing unless it has the right date.

Anna Pernas:

Yes. Yeah. Yeah. We'll have the right date on there in the header.

Dona Spain:

And just another thing, you have listed in here, the building and permit records for the city of Coral Gables. And you also have the real estate cards that I believe the department received from Kerdyk Realty. And they were very detailed as far as dates go when we acquired those. And so it may be that the date is on one of those cards. I don't know. I don't know. But part of the bibliography references that building permits and those real estate cards.

Anna Pernas:

Yeah. And that's usually one of the first things that we pull when we are doing the determination letters.

Dona Spain:

Because those tax cards were done by the city and it's not... I found when I was you that they weren't necessarily all that accurate. But you probably don't have the building permit record for that, for number whatever it is, 400 and something.

Anna Pernas:

Yeah, we'll take another look. But I know that's something that's all referenced in the...

Dona Spain:

I don't think it matters either. But I agree with Kara that the date really doesn't matter as far as things go, but I mean if it was brought up at the commission, maybe just take another look at those.

Anna Pernas:

Yeah.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Any other questions for staff or the applicant? So, Ms. Pernas, I have two questions and these are on the final two items that are presented by the applicant. One is the dates. Two, what Ms. Spain just said. Does it matter if it's 1921, 1922, or 1923 if it meets the criteria?

Anna Pernas:

No, it doesn't matter. It's still within the substantial development period of the origination of state of Coral Gables. So we would feel it still meets the criteria.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

And the second one is the extensive or significant modifications versus the idea of the integrity of the original home. You've stated on the record, I'd like you to restate what you feel are the modifications that were presented by the staff and the applicant, the very long list of modifications and your professional opinion as to their extensiveness, significance and their effect on the integrity of the home.

Anna Pernas:

I'm not going to comment specifically to the list that was provided by the applicant because that's something that we received the last couple days. But given that the report does have 10 pages of a description of the existing conditions and the modifications made, I think it's important to say that buildings over time develop and change and there are modifications to those buildings.

Losing, a building losing its integrity would be that, it's no, as I stated earlier, it would be no longer recognizable as its, within its architectural style or the type of building that it is. In this condition, in its existing condition, with the some of the original details remaining, we believe that the building still meets the criteria listed. And that although there are some things that cannot be reversed, there are others that can be and brought back, and this is a good example of an opportunity for ad valorem and

for restoring a property back into with the evidence that we have of its original conditions. And taking advantage of something for the future because I don't, it's not something that it's being determined today, but if it were to move forward with a cottage designation, have meet the criteria. But again, the cottage designation is not what's being proposed today.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

One final question, and this would require a slide, if we can pull up the proper presentation, please, the city's criteria number two of architectural significance embodies as distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or period or method of construction, which is on the staff report page 24.

You have that?

Anna Pernas:

Yes.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

So, in this report, it lists the specific elements that staff is using to say that it meets that criteria. Can we pull up an image and/or plans or something and identify them one by one, please?

Anna Pernas:

Yes. CGT TV, could you please ... Thank you. Sorry. Let me find the slide. So, the elements here identified as Mediterranean Revival style elements, and just to state what I had stated for under criterion two is that the existing home possesses numerous character-defining features of the Mediterranean Revival style. These include but are not limited to textured stucco finish-

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Slowly. So, one by one-

Anna Pernas:

Yes.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Does this home have textured stucco finish?

Anna Pernas:

Yes. The items listed are existing.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

I'm just going to go one by one.

Anna Pernas:

Textured stucco finish.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

And the second one?

Anna Pernas:

Combination of roof types and heights.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Does this one have a combination of roof type and heights?

Anna Pernas:

Yes. A series of arched openings.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Does it have a series of arched openings?

Anna Pernas:

Yes.

Dona Spain:

[inaudible 01:19:44]...projecting bays-

Anna Pernas:

Sorry.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

There's two. There's what's written, and those that's up there, so I'm going by the staff report. A series of arched openings?

Anna Pernas:

Yes. A distinctive knob arched opening facing, including, and is a distinctive knob arched opening facing the street, which is, sorry, this guy.

Spanish-inspired chimney with diamond-shaped cutouts. It might be on the other side. Sorry for the angle.

Detached garage whose parapets were designed to mirror the main home. And it's a little bit obscured but there's the original garage at the rear.

Wing walls, which are in the survey but are hidden I think behind some plantings on the side elevations. Barrel tile roof are existing over the overhangs.

Decoratively arranged groups of round vents in a diamond configuration, which I believe remain here at the front, in 2009, and are also present at the side and rear, and the garage. Maybe not the rear. The side and the garage.

Projecting bays, yes, and recess casement windows with protruding sills and swooped masonry hoods, so these were at the side elevation, which you can kind of ... Sorry. That's the wrong button. The hoods and the sills are there now.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

How many is that? Can you tell?

Anna Pernas:

That does not need to meet any number of the items-

Cesar Garcia Pons:

I'm asking a question. How many items is that?

Anna Pernas:

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven. Eleven items that were called out specifically here.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Thank you. Thank you, Miss Pernas.

The applicant would like to ...

Peter Saliamonas:

Can we just go back to that slide-

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Can we bring the slide up, please, again? Let me say that it's not a question that I have, you've stated your case incredibly well, and I understand what your position is. If you wish to restate it, please feel free.

Peter Saliamonas:

I just wanted to address what she said are still on my home. There's a textured stucco finish. It's true, it's not original with the house, because there's multiple different textures throughout the house.

Arched openings, Spanish-inspired ... The chimney is not original. There were never barrel tile on top of it when it was designed. You could even see today, let me find this picture, how it is, and you can see this is 1967, and you can see the picture of it today, it looks nothing like it used to.

The garage is not detached. It is attached. Parapets, I don't know what that means, when you say designed to mirror the main house, but it's just a parapet. There's no decorative feature on the parapet to make it.

There is no wing wall on the right side [inaudible 01:23:18]. Over here, this is the picture from 1967, but if you look at the one from today, there is no wing wall over there, there is no barrel tile roof-

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Do you want to do this and look at the picture from today, and go through the list, as we just did with Miss Pernas versus looking at this image?

Peter Saliamonas:

Sure. I just wanted where that list is there to let you know-

Cesar Garcia Pons:

But to use the one that's in the report.

Peter Saliamonas:

Oh, I'm sorry. I'm a little confused on what you asked me to do.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Mr. Pathman, do you have a copy of this report?

Wayne Pathman:

Yeah. Yeah.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Can you go to page 24, and show him the list? And then go to a picture of the house today.

Wayne Pathman:

Unfortunately, I believe my page 24 is different than yours.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

I'll give you mine.

Wayne Pathman:

This is the report for this hearing.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Miss Pernas, can you provide ... Can somebody provide him with a copy of the staff report?

Peter Saliamonas:

This is my page 24.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

That's it. Criteria number two.

Wayne Pathman:

We're the same? Okay. Here you go. [inaudible 01:24:11].

Peter Saliamonas:

It's not clicking moving forward.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

You'll get it. It's right there. He has it.

Peter Saliamonas:

I have the list here-

Anna Pernas:

Oh, okay. Sorry.

Peter Saliamonas:

That's okay. I just wanted to show a picture of the house as it is today.

Anna Pernas:

Okay.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Can you move the slide? There you go.

Peter Saliamonas:

Okay. There we go.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Let's go in order the same way. Mr. Pathman, if you want to read them out?

Peter Saliamonas:

Okay.

Wayne Pathman:

One by one, as the chairman asked.

Peter Saliamonas:

Okay, so masonry walls, yes, there are those. Textured stucco exterior walls, they're there but they're not original. Construction over a crawlspace, yes. Combination of roof types and heights, I suppose there are. Arched openings, there's the window in front, and the window to the side. She did mention that a series of arched openings, which I don't believe that there is.

Spanish-inspired chimney with diamond-shaped cutouts. Like I said, it's not original, and there are no diamond-shaped cutouts. Detached garage does not exist. The wing walls, like I said, they're one on the ... Well, you can't see from this photo here, but it looks like on this photo from 1967, there's a wing wall, but, currently, there is not one, and on the other side, there is a very slight wing wall attached to what used to be the garage. Barrel tile roof, nothing is original, and they're all S-tiles. Decoratively, I can barely say that, arranged groups of round vents, there are some of those. Projecting bays, the only bay is, you can't see from any of those, is on one of the elevations. It's a very slight bay for the bathroom. Recessed casement windows, there are no casement windows original with the house. They're all jalousie windows. The only casement windows are the ones that I put up in the front, those three but those are all new. And flat roofs with stepped parapets, there are no stepped parapets. The parapets are all at the same level, except I guess for the garage.

So, to address that.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Thank you.

Wayne Pathman:

Mr. Chairman, you asked a very interesting question.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Which one?

Wayne Pathman:

Madam Spain, you said something that was interesting also, but I think you have to look at them together. The first thing you asked was, "Is it significant when the house was built? What year?" If you read the report, it says throughout the report, 1923 to '24, and then it goes on to say why that's important in the report, so they didn't answer the question that you asked.

It is important that 1923 and 1924, because they were tying it into George Merrick, his acquisition of the property, of developing the neighborhood and the style of the homes.

The cards that you talk about, we looked through all of that, and I'm sure the staff did too. It doesn't exist for this house. The only record we found was a tax record for the house, which, very interestingly, they don't do the same thing today, but they draw that design that you saw on the house, that's an indication it was built in 1922.

It doesn't have any of the characteristics as identified in this report, which Richard Heisenbottle testified to. All the stuff that staff has put on it ... I appreciate staff, and I know they do a great job. It's conjecture. It's hearsay. It's speculation. There's nothing that they provided today that shows or complies with the commission's request to be specific. It's just a guess.

But the best guess is 1922. That's when the house was built, and, as our expert said, it doesn't have any of the characteristics, characteristics of Mediterranean Revival, and if you look deeply enough in integrity, as Warren Adam said, that's the most important thing really that this board should be looking at when you go to designate a home.

The city had, since Mr. Saliamonas has owned it, 25 years to designate it. Did he do some things to the house that altered it? Yes, but it wasn't because he thought it was going to be designated historic. He did things, and he should have gotten a permit, but that's not a reason to grant the historic designation.

The real issue is, is the integrity of the home still there in its original condition? And, clearly, that is not, and all the things that I cited, and I have, like I said, documents, I've looked at books-

Cesar Garcia Pons:

You've been very clear.

Wayne Pathman:

Okay. I wanted to just make sure I made it clear enough, because I thought the answer that was given by staff was very unclear.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Thank you, sir.

Wayne Pathman:

Thank you.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

All right. Any additional questions for staff or the applicant? This is the time for questions.

Stephanie Throckmorton:

Mr. Chair?

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Yes, ma'am.

Stephanie Throckmorton:

I just wanted to clarify the commission's direction has been brought up a couple of times, and so before you all begin this deliberation, I just wanted to clarify if it's all right with you what the actual direction was from commission. We've had a few statements.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

I was going to go to public comment, and come back to the board.

Stephanie Throckmorton:

That's fine.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Is there anybody in the audience that wishes to speak in favor of this application or this case? Anyone in opposition? Okay. I am closing the public comment, and I'm bringing it back to the board. Madam City Attorney?

Stephanie Throckmorton:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to clarify, we had it mentioned a few times that it was direction from the commission to city staff. I just want to be clear that the direction from the historic, I mean from the city commission was to the historic preservation board for you all to make clear what substantial competent evidence you were basing your decision on. Not necessarily altering the staff's report but to make sure that you all were clear in what your decision making was, what you were basing that decision on, so to the extent that staff report may or may not have addressed concerns brought up at the city commission, the direction from the commission was for the board, not to staff.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Thank you, Madam City Attorney. So, now it's back to the board. You heard our charge. I'm going to remind everyone that the staff report is substantial competent evidence to give to us for us to determine if it is correct or not. The applicant has provided additional substantial competent evidence

with their opinions, and now it is in our hands to listen to both the staff and the applicant, and make a determination of our own, based on our understanding of the criteria that is before us, so if we're going to have some discussion, which I would encourage, let's have some discussion based on not just the three criteria that were identified by staff, you can have any criteria that you feel is important for designation, or none.

So, this is a de novo hearing, we have a responsibility to the building, the staff and the applicant to make sure that we get this right, so does anybody have any discussion on this item? And this is not a time for questions. This is a time for discussion. Mr. Maxwell?

Michael Maxwell:

If you look at all the buildings, particularly, of this particular category, none of them have original windows. They're 100 years old. They're wood, they're rotted. But yet we look at historic buildings all the time.

The National Register of Historic Places in the guidelines for restoring property that the architect knows and that the attorney knows, also shows that states that if it can be returned to its original condition, that's a criteria.

The architect is an architect of note. Yeah. He came from California, but we all came from someplace else. As a matter of fact, the '20s is when this place boomed. Nobody lived here before.

So, as a developer, and a historic preservationist, I buy property in advance, and a lot of times, I've noted that I've bought something or had something in to be purchased well in advance of my closing on it.

The architectural style, to me, it's there. Yeah, it's been changed but everything that you've seen that's come before this board has been changed. Everything. There's almost nothing that is original, nothing that is pristine, not even this building, which is very good condition.

So, what's the alternative? Why isn't it historic? You say it doesn't meet the criteria. I disagree. I think it meets the criteria. It feels that way. It's an interesting approach that you've taken, but it meets the criteria, in my opinion.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Any further discussion? Mr. Silva?

Alejandro Silva:

I think Mr. Maxwell stated it very, very well. Right? If we were only to designate buildings that were untouched and pristine from 100 years ago, there would be no buildings designated. We all recognize that maintenance has to happen, that components have to be replaced, that roofs have to be replaced.

What's important is that they can be replaced as necessary in a historically appropriate way. Now were all of these windows replaced in a historically appropriate way? Probably not. But this is, and it's defined, as an easily reversible item. Right? Same with the roofs. It has S-tile. We want to see a two piece barrel. The next time that this building comes forward to a board if we designate it, we'll request that it's a two piece barrel tile.

So, these are things that happen just in the course of a building's life span. Right? They get altered, and we regularly approve alterations to historically designated buildings. We did it three times I think today. Right? We approve additions, we approve renovations, we approve alterations.

And funnily enough, the way I understand it, the most disruptive alterations to this property was done without a permit, but it was the front addition, for whatever that's worth.

So, I look at this, and I see ... We went through that checklist, right? Textured stucco, the sills, the altering roof lines, the chimney ... We talked about the chimney. You said there was no diamond on the chimney. I'm looking at a picture that has it from 2023.

Michael Maxwell:

Yeah.

Alejandro Silva:

I don't know if it's been covered since then, but I'm looking at it, so, to me, these are all character-defining things. You quoted Warren Adams before, the previous chief, and you said that sometimes these alterations can have a negative impact on the integrity of a structure. Yes, they can have a negative impact but it doesn't mean that it loses its integrity completely. Something can have a negative impact, we can try to correct it, if something has a negative impact, and it still maintains its general integrity.

So, I'm looking at all these issues and all these, this whole checklist the staff put together and I see that this house still maintains its integrity. The issue with the dates, we're looking at two different sources, the newspaper article, the tax card, I don't know which one is correct, but even putting that aside, even if we were to rule today that this does not merit designation under that historical and cultural and social significance factor, which is really the only one that that time frame plays into, there's still two others that I completely agree with and I have no doubts about, and we only need one to designate.

So, that's my opinion.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Thank you, Mr. Silva.

Dona Spain:

That was exactly my point. You only need one. Absolutely, architectural significance criterion two, it qualifies. And I also believe it qualifies for criterion one in architectural significance, and the date thing, you're right, that only impacts that one criteria, so, for me, I do believe that it still has integrity, in, on the property. I added that to the code, because I thought it was important that properties have integrity, and that the board needs to look at that initially before they even start looking at all the other stuff, because if it doesn't have integrity of site, then there's no point, but this one does. It absolutely retains it. It's been altered but it retains the integrity.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Any further discussion?

Xavier Durana:

I agree with my colleagues. Its, just based on the architect, Lewis Brumm, he was commissioned, I think I read in the report, commissioned for a hundred something houses in Coral Gables by George Merrick, himself. It's, obviously, he was definitely a key figure.

And like I said, any of the alterations, I'm in construction, and most of the alterations can be easily fixed. I mean they're probably less intrusive than knocking down the whole house and building a new house. I mean it's probably easier to just rectify those than to build a new house. So, I don't see why we, you know, wouldn't designate this house. That's just me.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Any additional discussion? Okay. I'm happy to entertain a very specific motion, please, with very specific criterion, and very specific criterion within the criterion, that's if any are selected for designation or otherwise.

Dona Spain:

I'm going to try this, I'm not going to put in any kind of amendment that you all think I should do.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Miss Spain?

Dona Spain:

All right. I'd like to make a motion to approve the local historic designation of the property at 1221 Milan Avenue, legally described as lot nine, block 39, Coral Gables, Granada section, revised based on the following criteria. I'm going to start with architectural significance, criterion number two, I believe that it embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or period or method of construction. Although, it's been altered, it possesses numerous character-defining features of a Spanish style home. These include, but are not limited to: textured stucco finish, combination of roof types and heights, a series of arched openings, distinctive knob arched opening facing the street, the Spanish-inspired chimney with diamond-shaped cutouts, which I also saw in that staff report, detached garage, apparently it was originally detached, but it still functions as a garage whose parapet was designed to mirror the main house, wing walls, barrel tile roof, although they're S-tile, they could easily be made barrel tile, decoratively arranged groups of rounded vents in diamond configuration, projecting bays, and that refers to a portion of the house, not a bay window, and recessed casement windows with protruding sills and swooped masonry hoods.

Absolutely, it fits that criteria. I also believe it fits criterion number one, under architectural significance. I believe it does portray an environment and an era of history characterized by one or more distinctive architectural styles. I also ... All right.

Merrick envisioned a Mediterranean-inspired city, and this is an example of a Mediterranean design. I believe it fits that also.

The other criterion mentioned in the staff report is historical, cultural significance. I think it's important to designate these small homes. This is not a huge home, but it absolutely exemplifies a trend of the community, particularly, in Merrick's vision. He thought it was important to have the same architectural style in the larger homes, and in the smaller homes, and this exemplifies that historical trend, and so I believe it fits all three.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Thank you, Miss Spain. There's a motion. Is there a second?

Michael Maxwell:

Second.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Okay. We have a motion by Miss Spain, a second by Mr. Maxwell. Any discussion on the motion?
Let's call a roll.

Speaker 9:

Mr. Ehrenhaft?

Bruce Ehrenhaft:

Yes.

Speaker 9:

Mr. Durana?

Xavier Durana:

Yes.

Speaker 9:

Mr. Silva?

Alejandro Silva:

Yes.

Speaker 9:

Miss Spain?

Dona Spain:

Yes.

Speaker 9:

Mr. Maxwell?

Michael Maxwell:

Yes.

Speaker 9:

And Mr. Garcia Pons?

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Yes. Motion passes six to zero. Thank you, everybody for your time.

I'm going to adjourn the meeting at this time, so we can handle any business at the next meeting. Miss City Attorney?

Stephanie Throckmorton:

Can I just make one note for the record that Miss Dunaj left at 8:00 and did not participate in this vote? Just for the record, her absence was noted.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Thank you very much.

Michael Maxwell:

Thank you.

Cesar Garcia Pons:

Meeting adjourned.

Michael Maxwell:

Good job.

Speaker 10:

Recording-

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:42:46]