

DRAFT

CORAL GABLES HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

June 19, 2008, 4:00 p.m.

City Commission Chambers

405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida

MEMBERS:

J A S O N D J F M A M J

Dorothy Thomson*	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Catherine Stewart	P	E	P	P	P	P	E	E	P	E	P	P
Ernesto Santos	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Gonzalo Sanabria									P	E	E	P
Dolly MacIntyre*	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P
Michael Beeman	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Joyce Meyers	E	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Lisa Bennett	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P
Shirley Maroon	E	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P

APPOINTED BY:

Mayor Donald D. Slesnick, II
Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Comm. Maria Anderson
Comm. Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr.
Comm. Wayne "Chip" Withers
Historic Preservation Board
City Manager David Brown
City Commission
City Commission

STAFF:

Kara N. Kautz, Historic Preservation Officer
Betty Perez, Historical Resources Department
Simone Chin, Historical Preservation Administrator
Rodney Carbonell

A = Absent

P = Present

E = Excused

*** = New Member**

^ = Resigned Member

GUESTS: Zeke Guilford; Laura Russo; Raul Sotolongo; Sofia Powell-Cosio; James Hinds; Ruben Ceballos; Bill Bonn; Craig Werley; Alberto Delgado, Public Works Director; Ernesto Pino, Assistant Public Works Director; Art and Stella Del Rio.

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

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lisa Bennett at 4:07 p.m. A quorum was present.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT and DISCLOSURE OF CONTEXT:

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

MINUTES: MEETING OF MAY 22, 2008:

Ms. Meyers made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 22, 2008. Mr. Beeman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

DEFERRALS:

Ms. Kautz reported no deferrals.

SWEARING IN THE PUBLIC:

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

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE DETERMINATION:

3601 Alhambra Court, legally described as all of Lots 26 and 27, and parts of Lots 23, 24, and 25, Block 50, Coral Gables Country Club Section, Part Four, according to the plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 10, at Page 57, of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida.

The application, deferred from the May meeting as the applicant wanted full Board review, was presented by Ms. Kautz. She pointed out that the application was a significance hearing, not a designation hearing. At the conclusion of her presentation, she reported that the property met the minimum eligibility criteria for historic designation. She also pointed out additional information furnished by the applicant to support hardship conditions related to the property, and stated that the applicant's attorneys would review the packet with the Board prior to staff making its recommendation.

Zeke Guilford, representing homeowner Sofia Powell-Cosio with co-counsel Laura Russo, referenced distributed information regarding architectural design and displayed photographs of the existing house with comparisons to colonial revival architecture, stating that the subject property did not have colonial revival characteristics. Features of the house and similar comparisons were detailed, and he concluded the house did not comply with colonial revival criteria.

Mr. Guilford then reviewed the projects and background of architect Upton Ewing, stating that Mr. Ewing's work focused more on multi-family and commercial projects rather than residential. Mr. Guilford concluded that the house was not historically significant, was not a good example of Upton Ewing's architecture, and that the applicant was claiming property hardship.

Ms. Russo's portion of the presentation was related to hardships unique to the property. Through displays and photographs, she pointed out the impact on the property of the canal and floodgates, and specific areas of the house continuously affected by flooding as a result of these conditions. She enumerated property and monetary losses suffered by the family, including the loss of approximately one third of the rear of the property due to canal erosion. She stated that insurance companies would not cover the losses because the water intrusion from the flooding did not fit insurance criteria. Finally, Ms. Russo distributed and described photographs of the property during rainy season, and referenced a structural engineering report on the crawl space and underlying structure.

Ms. Powell-Cosio responded to questions about the affects of these conditions on her home over the years.

Ms. Russo cited a December 2007 Building and Zoning letter sent to the property owner that acknowledged the area had flooded several times, and noted that specific economic hardships, including twice replacing wood floors and three times replacing the air conditioning system.

Ms. Stewart confirmed that the significance hearing was triggered by a demolition permit request, and dialogued with Ms. Powell Cosio regarding damaged areas of the house. Ms. Russo explained the effects of the floodgates constructed in the 1980s and resulting compressed water intrusion. Attention was called to a letter from Dr. Michael Martin, a previous owner of the property, who confirmed water intrusion and flooding problems during the time he, his parents and the Redfern family owned the home. She said the home was not marketable and there were no plans to subdivide the lot, but to rebuild a house for the owner and family.

Board members, the applicant and counsel discussed various details about the background, features, damage, history of problems and related issues, primarily to clarify comprehensive understanding.

Mr. Delgado explained circumstances pertaining to floodgates, the canal and intentions to dredge the canal to improve conditions; however, money to dredge the canal was not available. He pointed out that the Water Management District recognized problems caused when they installed floodgates, including excess silt in the waterway during storms. Funding in the amount of \$2.2 million is available to dredge the waterway, but first silt needs to be removed to restore normal water level and stabilize the canal. The impact of opening floodgate will lessen the problem, but won't eliminate it. As the subject property is close to the floodgate, the situation will continue. Building the house higher will resolve the problem.

Ms. Meyer disagreed with Mr. Guilford's assessment of colonial revival style related to this house, and stated her opinion that the house qualified for designation. However, she felt the information regarding the conditions were compelling and said she would vote not to designate the property (she had to leave the meeting and wanted her opinion known as she would miss the vote).

Ms. Kautz rebutted photographs shown by Mr. Guilford as examples of colonial revival, stating that many of the examples homes were built long before the 1940s, and did not represent an "apples-to-apples" comparison to the subject house. With the passage of time, modifications of the colonial revival style were made to adapt to South Florida. She stated that the house did meet criteria for colonial revival style architecture in a modified way and had significance. In terms of the number of houses remaining from the 1940s time period, she explained why staff's opinion of the remaining houses differed from that which Mr. Guilford cited. Ms. Kautz also reviewed architectural features that were previously discussed.

Mr. Sanabria made a motion to declare this property not historically significant due to its structural deficiencies, its unsuitability for living and the fact that it is situated in a high water zone, all of which overwhelm issues of significance. Mr. Beeman seconded the motion.

Ms. Bennett opined that the City Commission should make the decision about the house, rather than the Board; however, Board consensus was not reached on this issue.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ms. Thomson, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Beeman, Ms. MacIntyre, Ms. Maroon, Mr. Sanabria, Mr. Santos, Ms. Bennett. Nays: None. (Ms. Meyers left prior to the vote.)

SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS:

CASE FILE COA (SP) 2008-04 An application for the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the property at 501 Alhambra Circle, a local historic landmark and a contributing structure within the "Alhambra Circle Historic District," legally described as Lots 13 and 14, Block 12, Coral Gables Section "B," according to the Plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 5, at Page 111, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The applicant is requesting design approval for the construction of an addition and alterations to the existing structure.

Ms. Chin reviewed the background of the house as photographs were displayed, stating that the applicant requested design approval for construction of a pergola addition over an existing second floor terrace. She added that the overall design of the addition did not detract or destroy original features, and said staff recommended approval of the application.

Homeowners Bill Bond and Ruben Ceballos described their efforts to restore the house and plans for the alterations.

Ms. Bennett invited members of the audience to speak for or against the application. Hearing no requests, she closed the public hearing portion of this case.

Ms. Thomson made a motion to approve the design for the addition and alterations related to the construction of the pergola on the second floor terrace of the residence at 501 Alhambra Circle. Ms. Stewart seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ms. MacIntyre, Ms. Maroon, Mr. Sanabria, Mr. Santos, Ms. Stewart, Ms. Thomson, Ms. Bennett. Nays: None. (Mr. Beeman was not present for the vote.)

CASE FILE COA (SP) 2008-09 An application for the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the Country Club Prado Entrance, a local historic landmark, generally described as the most northerly landscaped lot known as Park No. 308, and portions of Blocks 74, 75 and 76 as it appears on the revised plat of Coral Gables Granada Section. The applicant is requesting design approval for the restoration of the existing plaza.

This City entrance gateway, one of eight, was completed in 1927 at the northeast corner of the City. Ms. Kautz displayed numerous photographs and features of the entrance, concluding that it was in desperate need of repair.

Mr. Delgado reviewed the application's process through City procedures, explaining that the entrance would be restored as it was designed, with nothing added or removed, and detailing all repairs necessary. He said repairs were anticipated to be completed by year end 2008, and would be managed by the same contractor who restored the DeSoto Fountain.

Mr. Santos made a motion to approve the application. Mr. Sanabria seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Mr. Beeman, Ms. Thomson, Ms. MacIntyre, Ms. Maroon, Mr. Sanabria, Mr. Santos, Ms. Stewart, Ms. Bennett. Nays: None.

At the request of Ms. Thomson, Mr. Delgado updated the Board on the status of the City's water tower.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE:

Mr. Art Del Rio requested a recommendation of the Historic Preservation Board on the design of a new residence to be constructed at 19XX Country Club Prado, a vacant lot legally described as Lots 1 and 2, Block 26, Coral Gables Section "E", according to the plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8, at Page 86, of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida.

Recalling that this item was a return from the last meeting, Ms. Kautz summarized discussions from the previous meeting. She noted that the owner addressed comments the Board made at that meeting and detailed how they were addressed, prior to inviting the applicant to dialogue with the Board. Issues discussed included the blank wall at the Cadiz Street elevation, windows, parking accommodations, gabled roof, and front façade in the flat roof portion of the design. While discussing design elements, Ms. Kautz stated that staff thought the portion of the building with the parapet gave weight to the entrance of the house. She agreed there were formality issues between the front and rear of the house, but said it had the least impact on the proposed district.

She asked the owner, to which he agreed, to use barrel tile on the roof, and to install casement windows. Finally, Ms. Kautz reported that the property was advertised, staked and a mailing was sent to neighbors about the application. She said that neighbor Craig Werley was present.

Mr. Del Rio introduced his wife, Stella, explained again the history of the property as it related to Ms. Del Rio's family and said the house would be built for her sister. He described the house, emphasizing their attempt to maintain simplicity in design and landscaping.

Mr. Sanabria clarified the purpose of this appearance with Ms. Kautz, who stated that Board approval of the design would be binding in accordance with the City Attorney's advice in order to provide assurance for the owners and the City.

Ms. Bennett invited members of the audience to speak. Mr. Werley's questions about setbacks and trees on the property were satisfied by Mr. Del Rio. Hearing no further requests, Ms. Bennett closed the public hearing, and invited Board comments.

Ms. Kautz stated staff's recommendation to accept the design as presented with the inclusion of the specified roof tile and casement windows. She reviewed City processes the owners would undergo if the Board approved the plans and design drawings, pointing out that the owners would not be able to pull a permit until the district was designated.

Mr. Santos disagreed with certain staff report comments, specifically:

- Regarding the flat roof area, he suggested the elevation of the house be lowered to reduce the height of the entire structure. If the parapet were lowered, it would be possible to develop a roof to work with the hips.
- He stated that the configuration of the rear elevation impacted the district, and noted that the design of the rear of the house did not make sense.

Ms. MacIntyre opined that the layout of the pool area was interesting, added dimension and wouldn't be visible to others. After brief discussion, Ms. Bennett read a draft of a possible motion (drafted by Ms. Kautz) which had the approval of the City Attorney as being appropriate for the circumstances, if the Board chose to adopt it. In consideration of previous discussion, Ms. Kautz said she didn't think it was necessary to have the applicants return for a Certificate of Appropriateness, suggesting Board consideration of eliminating it. Ms. Stewart then clarified placement of the angled pool. Mr. Beeman indicated disagreement with the Board of Architects' approval of the design, and termed it a "McMansion" compared with the neighboring house. He also voiced objection to the rear design, and Ms. Bennett added that she objected to it on the basis that the house would be part of a historic district.

Ms. MacIntyre made a motion to allow the property at 19XX Country Club Prado, currently a vacant lot within a potential local historic district, to continue with the permitting process with support of the design as presented, and grant binding approval of the design as a potential Special Certificate of Appropriateness. Mr. Sanabria seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Mr. Santos, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Beeman, Ms. Thomson, Ms. MacIntyre, Ms. Maroon, Mr. Sanabria, Ms. Bennett. Nays: None.

BOARD ITEMS/CITY COMMISSION UPDATE:

- a. Ms.Kautz reported that the Board's decision on the Salamanca property was appealed to the City Commission based not on the issue of historic designation, but because the hardship issue was bifurcated from the designation. The appeal will not be heard this month, but at a later Commission meeting.
- b. The Obispo Avenue Historic District decision was not appealed.

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY:

Ms. Kautz reported that staff requested a Zoning Code text amendment from the Planning and Zoning Board that would require Historic Preservation Board membership to include two architects (versus one) to provide additional technical expertise.

Regarding the DeSoto Fountain, Ms. Kautz reported that the protective bollards were struck by a car; however, only the bollards were affected. The Public Works Department design is to create a larger green area around the perimeter of the Fountain, with the bollards in front of the green area.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Mr. Sanabria suggested that the City Attorney should either be present in person or available by telephone during all Board meetings.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Hearing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kara N. Kautz
Historic Preservation Officer