



COA (SP) 2024-001  
March 20, 2024

Historical Resources &  
Cultural Arts

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**STAFF REPORT  
SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS  
FOR THE PROPERTY AT  
932 TENDILLA AVENUE  
A LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK**

- Proposal:** The application requests design approval for demolition of the original auxiliary structure, additions and alterations to the residence, and sitework.
- Architect:** Touzet Studio
- Owner:** Antonio & Tania Moralejo
- Legal Description:** Lots 3, 4 & 5 Block 39, Coral Gables Country Club Section Part Three according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 10, Page 52 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida
- Site Characteristics:** The property is located on an interior approx. 150' x 120' lot on the south side of Tendilla Avenue between Durango and Toledo Streets.

**BACKGROUND/EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Permitted in 1925, the single-family residence at 932 Tendilla Avenue is one of a handful of homes built in the City's initial development phase in Country Club Section Part Three in tandem with the construction of the nearby Biltmore Hotel and Golf Course. It stands as a testament to Coral Gables' founder George Merrick's vision for a Mediterranean-inspired City. Noted architect John L. Skinner designed it in the Mediterranean Revival style. The residence at 932 Tendilla Avenue was one of their first commissions. Ten years later architect Phineas Paist added a library wing to the home. Paist was a member of Merrick's design team and became the City Architect when Coral Gables was incorporated.

The property at 932 Tendilla Avenue retains its historic integrity and significantly contributes to the historic fabric of the City of Coral Gables. It portrays the environment in an era of history in Coral Gables characterized by the Mediterranean Revival style, and it embodies those distinguishing characteristics of its architectural style, period, and method of construction. A hallmark character-defining feature of the home is its distinctive entry chimney bay which is accented with coral rock. Hence, the property at 932 Tendilla Avenue is part of the collection of quality residences that contributes to the story and the City's sense of place over time.

The property was designated as a Local Historic Landmark in August 2023.



**Figure 1: ca. 1940s photo**



**Figure 2: ca. 1940s photo**



**Figure 3: June 2023**





**Figure 4: Courtesy Miami-Dade Property Appraiser**

**PROPOSAL**

The application requests design approval for demolition of the original auxiliary structure, additions and alterations to the residence, and sitework.

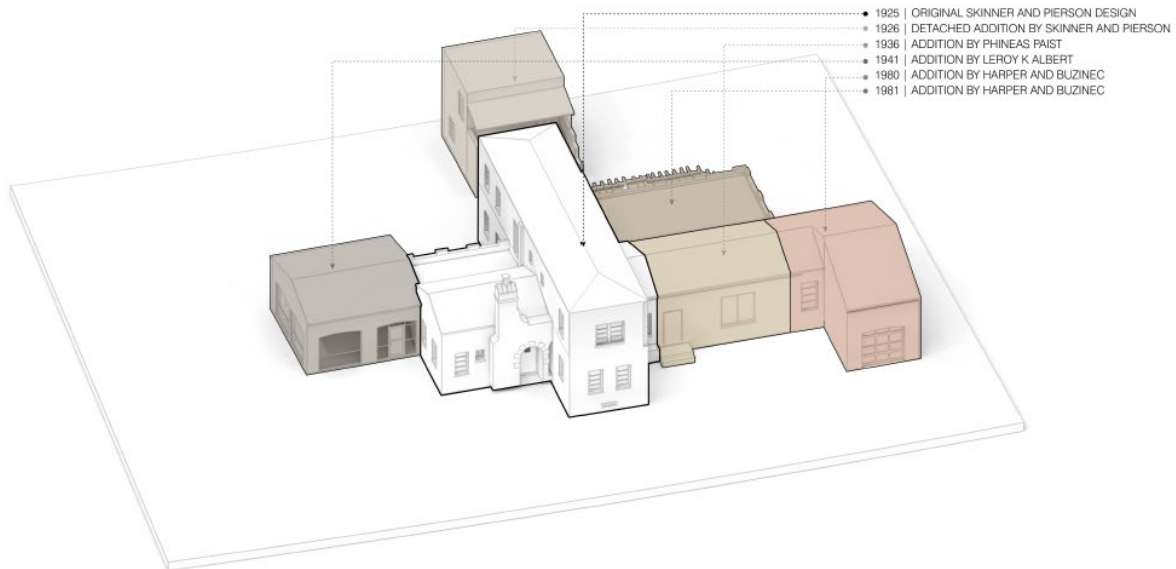
**SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR’S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION**

The following Standards have application in this matter:

2. *The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*
5. *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.*
9. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

### **STAFF OBSERVATIONS**

The scope of work requests design approval for demolition of the original auxiliary structure, additions and alterations to the residence, and sitework. As a designated landmark, retaining as much of the original fabric of the site is a priority. When proposing a new addition, the design should be compatible with the historic character of the building/site and must preserve the historic buildings form and envelope. The scope of work includes the demolition of the original 1926 garage, 1940s garage converted to a screened in porch, 1980 garage addition and a 1981 rear addition. The redevelopment of the site includes a one- and two-story addition to the West that includes a new two car garage, kitchen/family room, laundry room, and guest bedroom and a one-story addition to the East to include a gym, master bedroom, bathroom and closet, attached to the original structure by a glass corridor. The proposed sitework includes a new pool, outdoor kitchen and patio.



**Figure 5: Historical Diagram, Provided by: Touzet Studio**

The single-family residence at 932 Tendilla Avenue sits on an interior lot, approximately 150' x 120', on the south side of the street. The existing property has a residence comprised of one- and two-story bays with an attached garage at its western end, a two-story auxiliary building at the rear of the property and a circular pool. The home was originally designed as a two-story, three-bedroom home with a detached two-story two-car garage behind it. The 1925 structure has undergone multiple additions and modifications over time, see Figure 5 above. As part of the redevelopment of the site, the proposal includes the demolition of the later additions and the original detached garage to accommodate 4,450 SF of new additions. The applicant is also proposing to restore details previously removed from the original home and install new windows to match the original configuration.

The additions proposed include a master suite and gym to the East and a new two-car garage/kitchen and family room to the West. The proposed addition to the West requires the demolition of two 1980s additions that are not contributing to the historic fabric of the site. The new one- and two-story addition will replace an existing one-car garage attached to the 1936 Phineas Paist addition. The garage addition will be finished in a smooth stucco with wood-clad garage doors. The proposed second floor is setback from the front wall of the garage about +/- 28'-0" and will be minimally visible from the public right of way. The addition includes no windows at the West side of the garage and new casement windows, of similar scale to the original structure, on the two-story portion. An addition to a historic building should be subordinate to the historic building and read clearly as an addition. Staff is concerned the width and prominence of the proposed garage is overwhelming the existing one-story portion of the historic structure and recommends that the addition be setback from the front wall of the Phineas Paist addition.

The one-story kitchen addition is located behind the historic structure in place of an existing 1980's addition, and will not be visible from the public right of way. The addition has a pitched, barrel-tile roof similar to the other structures on the site. The walls of the addition are proposed to be an aluminum storefront system on all three sides, inconsistent with any of the existing materials of the historic fabric. When considering an addition to a historic structure, the design should respond to its surrounding. As proposed, the addition is not taking into consideration the historic context, materials or fenestration and needs to be further studied to create a cohesive ambiance between the historic and new addition through compatible, sympathetic design.

The one-story addition to the East will house a master suite and gym and will be connected to the original house by a glass corridor. The glass corridor will replace the 1941 garage addition. The 1941 garage has been modified. Historic photos indicate the street-facing openings are original, but it is not clear if the side and rear openings are original. This building was enclosed with screens when a new garage to the East was built in 1980. The intent of the glass corridor is to create a separation between the new addition and the historic structure. The glass corridor mimics the look of a wood trellis that will have vines growing on either side to help disguise the proposed storefront system. The one-story addition is finished in a smooth stucco, includes a stepped parapet at the front and gabled roof to the rear similar in pitch and material to the existing structures. The proposed window and doors are more in-keeping with the historic structure in size and proportion but the pattern differentiates it from the original window design. The addition does a successful job of taking cues from the historic context to create a compatible design.



**Figure 6: Proposed Street View, Provided by Touzet Studio**



The sitework proposed includes the demolition of the original detached garage, construction of a new pool, patio and outdoor kitchen. The demolition of original historic fabric is considered drastic action, as it alters the character of the historic site. Staff rarely considers the demolition of a contributing building on a landmark site to be an appropriate option. The two-story detached garage was constructed in 1925, the first floor was a two-car garage space and the second floor was servants' quarters. The page of the original permit for the garage structure has not been located to date but the permit book indicates that Permit #1759 was issued for a residence and garage. Additionally, a sketch accompanying a 1926 septic plan shows that the garage and its exterior staircase were original to the property.



**Figure 7: Original Auxiliary Structure, June 2023 (Left), 1962 Historic Photo (Right)**

Per Section 8-107(D) of the Coral Gables Zoning Code, the Board shall consider the following criteria in evaluating applications for a Special Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of designated properties:

1. The degree to which the building, structure, improvement or site contributes to the historic and/or architectural significance of the historic site or district;

*The structure is original to the construction of the house and has been minimally altered. This contributing structure is considered to be a character defining feature of the site.*

2. Whether the building, structure, improvement or site is one of the last remaining examples of its kind in the neighborhood, the county or the region;

*Detached auxiliary structures were common in the original development of the City of Coral Gables, but many have been altered or demolished.*

3. Whether the loss of the building, structure, improvement or site would adversely affect the historic and/or architectural integrity of the historic site or district;

*The removal of original historic fabric is considered drastic action.*

4. Whether the retention of the building, structure, improvement or site would promote the general welfare of the City by providing an opportunity for study of local history,

architecture, and design or by developing an understanding of the importance and value of a particular culture and heritage;

*Detached auxiliary structures were common in the original development of the City and there are other opportunities for this type of study.*

5. Whether architectural plans have been presented to the Board for the reuse of the property if the proposed demolition were to be carried out, and the appropriateness of said plans to the character of the historic site or district, if applicable; and demonstration as well as the posting of a bond requirement that there are sufficient funds in place to carry out such plans;

*The proposed redevelopment plans are not compatible with the original structure and need to be further studied. No bond has been presented to staff at this time.*

6. Whether the building, structure, improvement or site poses an imminent threat to the public health or safety;

*The structure is in stable condition. Any deterioration is due to a lack of maintenance.*

7. Whether the applicant has demonstrated that retention of the building, structure, improvement or site would create an unreasonable or undue economic hardship as described in Section 8-115; and

*None have been presented to staff.*

8. Whether there is compelling public interest requiring the demolition.

*None have been presented to staff.*

## **VARIANCES**

No variances have been requested in conjunction with this application.

## **BOARD OF ARCHITECTS**

The proposal was reviewed and approved as noted, to recommend the approval of the demolition of the accessory structure by the Board of Architects on December 7, 2023.

## **STAFF CONCLUSION**

The built environment reflects the beliefs, values, creative expressions, and technical capacity at a place in time in history. The purpose of the designation of historic landmarks and districts is to promote the educational, cultural, and economic welfare of the public by preserving and protecting historic structures, which serve as visible reminders of the history and cultural heritage of the City, region, state or nation. The buildings that comprise the Coral Gables Register of Historic Places portray the City's story of progress, change and preservation. They are valuable, non-renewable resources that embody our collective heritage. The retention of these historic resources provide continuity and context; they are the foundation of the City's identity.

The application requests design approval for demolition of the original auxiliary structure, additions and alterations to the residence, and sitework. As proposed, the additions are not compatible with the existing development of the site and architecture of the historic structures. The proposal is overwhelming the original 1920s structure and requests demolition of the original two-story garage. As per the designation report, the "two-story garage with distinctive exterior staircase

and detailing” is considered to be a character defining feature of the site and its demolition should be considered a major alteration. Staff met with the applicants on multiple occasions to express concern over the proposed demolition of the original auxiliary structure and redevelopment plans. Staff recommends reconsidering the organization of the new additions to take advantage of the existing vacant areas of the site and exhaust all attempts to reuse the original garage prior to considering demolition.

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

A motion to **DENY** the design proposal for demolition of the original auxiliary structure, additions and alterations to the residence, and sitework on the property located at **932 Tendilla Avenue**, a Local Historic Landmark, legally described as Lots 3, 4 & 5 Block 39, Coral Gables Country Club Section Part Three according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 10, Page 52 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida, and **DENY** the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness with the condition noted above.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Anna C. Pernas  
Historic Preservation Officer