



COA (SP) 2023-029  
February 21, 2024

**STAFF REPORT  
SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS  
FOR THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY ADJACENT TO  
216 AND 224 CATALONIA AVENUE, 203 UNIVERSITY DRIVE,  
3000 PONCE DE LEON BOULEVARD, AND 225 MALAGA AVENUE**

Historical Resources &  
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- Proposal:** The proposed development is a receiving site for Transfer of Development Rights, the application requires review and approval of the proposed development to determine if the proposal adversely affects the historic, architectural, or aesthetic character of historic properties located within a 500 feet radius of the development.
- Architect:** N/A
- Owner:** City of Coral Gables
- Legal Description:** Legally described as Lots 8 through 20, Block 29, Coral Gables Crafts Section, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 10, at Page 40, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.
- Site Characteristics:** The subject property consists of the east-half of Block 29 within the Crafts Section and is bounded by Catalonia Avenue (north), Ponce de Leon Boulevard (east) and the intersection of University Drive and Malaga Avenue (south)

**LOCATION MAP**



**APPLICATION REQUEST AND CASE HISTORY**

This Certificate of Appropriateness application, submitted in conjunction with the development project known as “Ponce Park Residences,” requests the following actions of the Historic Preservation Board:

1. A recommendation of approval for an amendment to the City Plan for the vacation of the 20-foot-wide public alley that runs north-south within the boundaries of the proposed project.
2. A recommendation of approval for an amendment to the City Plan for the abandonment and vacation of a portion of that segment of University Drive north of the Malaga Avenue right-of-way and west of the Ponce de Leon Boulevard right-of-way.
3. Review and approve of the proposed development to determine if the proposal adversely affects the historic, architectural, or aesthetic character of historic properties located within a 500 feet radius of the development.

At the January 24, 2024 meeting, the Historic Preservation Board found that the proposal partially destroys and detracts from the integrity of the Historic City Plan. After a lengthy discussion, the Board passed the following motions:

A motion to **DENY** the request for a recommendation of approval to the City Commission for an amendment to the City Plan for the vacation of the alley on the property adjacent to 216 and 224 Catalonia Avenue, 3000 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, 203 University Drive, and 225 Malaga Avenue, legally described as Lots 8 through 20, Block 29, Coral Gables Crafts Section, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 10, at Page 40, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida and **RECOMMEND DENIAL** of the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness.

AND

A motion to **APPROVE** the request for a recommendation of approval to the City Commission for an amendment to the City Plan for the partial abandonment and vacation of that segment of University Drive north of the Malaga Avenue right-of-way and west of the Ponce de Leon Boulevard right-of-way and **RECOMMEND APPROVAL** of the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness.

A motion to determine that the proposal does adversely affect the historic, architectural, or aesthetic character of the historic properties located within 500 feet of the site, namely the “White Way” Street Lights, a Local Historic Landmark, failed to achieve a majority vote, resulting in the automatic continuance of the this request to the next meeting to be held on February 21, 2024.

**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.*
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.*

**VARIANCES**

No variances have been requested with this application.

**BOARD OF ARCHITECTS**

The proposal does not require Board of Architects review.

**PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD**

The proposal was reviewed the Planning and Zoning Board on December 12, 2023. The PZB reviewed six requests related to the proposed development, including the vacation of the alley and abandonment of that portion of University Drive. (See the attached PZB agenda, Staff Report, and minutes for reference.)

The following summary of the meeting was provided by Planning and Zoning Staff:

The Planning & Zoning Board at their December 12, 2023, meeting recommended denial of the 1) Small Scale Comprehensive Map Amendment Commercial Low-Rise Intensity to Commercial High-Rise Intensity land use (vote: 3-3); approval of the 2) Abandonment and Vacation of University Drive with the condition to retain the slip lane as presented (vote: 4-2); 3) Abandonment and Vacation of the alley (vote: 4-2); 4) Receipt of Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) (vote: 4-2); 5) Tentative Plat (vote: 4-2). The Board took no action on 6) Zoning Zode Code Text Amendment (vote: 3-3).

**TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS RECEIVING SITE**

**BACKGROUND/EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The proposed development is asking to be considered as a receiving site for Transfer of Development Rights.

Article 14, Section 14-204.6 (A) (3) of the Coral Gables Zoning Code reads as follows:

- A. An application to transfer development rights to a receiver site shall be reviewed subject to all of the following:

3. If the receiving site is within five (500) hundred feet of a local historic landmark, Historic Preservation Board review and approval is required to determine if the proposal shall not adversely affect the historic, architectural, or aesthetic character of the property.

Therefore, the Historic Preservation Board's review and approval of the proposed development is required to determine if the proposal adversely affects the historic, architectural, or aesthetic character of the historic properties.

The following historically designated properties are within five hundred (500) feet of the proposed development:

- Historic "White Way" Street Lights, a Local Historic Landmark, located on Riviera Drive between Anastasia Avenue and University Drive and on University Drive between Bird Road and Ponce de Leon Boulevard.
- 2901 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, legally described as Tract E, Plaza Coral Gables, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 173, Page 078 of the Public Record of Miami-Dade County, Florida.
- 247 Malaga Avenue, legally described as Lots 26 & 27, Block 29, Coral Gables Crafts Section, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 10, Page 40 of the Public Record of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

The "White Way" Street Lights were designated as a Local Historic Landmark in 1981. The Arts Center building located at 2901 Ponce de Leon Boulevard was designated as a Local Historic Landmark in 1987. The building at 247 Malaga Avenue was designated as a Local Historic Landmark in 2004.

#### **STAFF OBSERVATIONS**

The proposed development does not adversely affect the historic Arts Center building located at 2901 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, which has been absorbed into the Plaza Coral Gables project surrounding it, or the historic property at 247 Malaga Avenue. The proposed project will not further harm the integrity of either site. As originally submitted, a historic "White Way" Street light located on the right-of-way adjacent to 203 University Drive, was being proposed to be relocated. Staff considered this an adverse affect to a local historic landmark and had recommended to deny the proposal.

At the January 24, 2024 meeting, the Historic Preservation Board made a motion to determine that the proposal does adversely affect the historic, architectural, or aesthetic character of the historic properties located within 500 feet of the site, namely the "White Way" Street Lights, a Local Historic Landmark, failed to achieve a majority vote, resulting in the automatic continuance of the this request to the next meeting to be held on February 21, 2024.

The applicant reviewed the submittal and came to the realization that they had mistakenly represented the location of the historic "White Way" Street Light. The existing location of the light is not in conflict with the proposal, and will remain in its original location (see Figure 1 below). As revised, the proposed development does not adversely affect the historic "White Way" Street light located on the right-of-way adjacent to 203 University Drive.

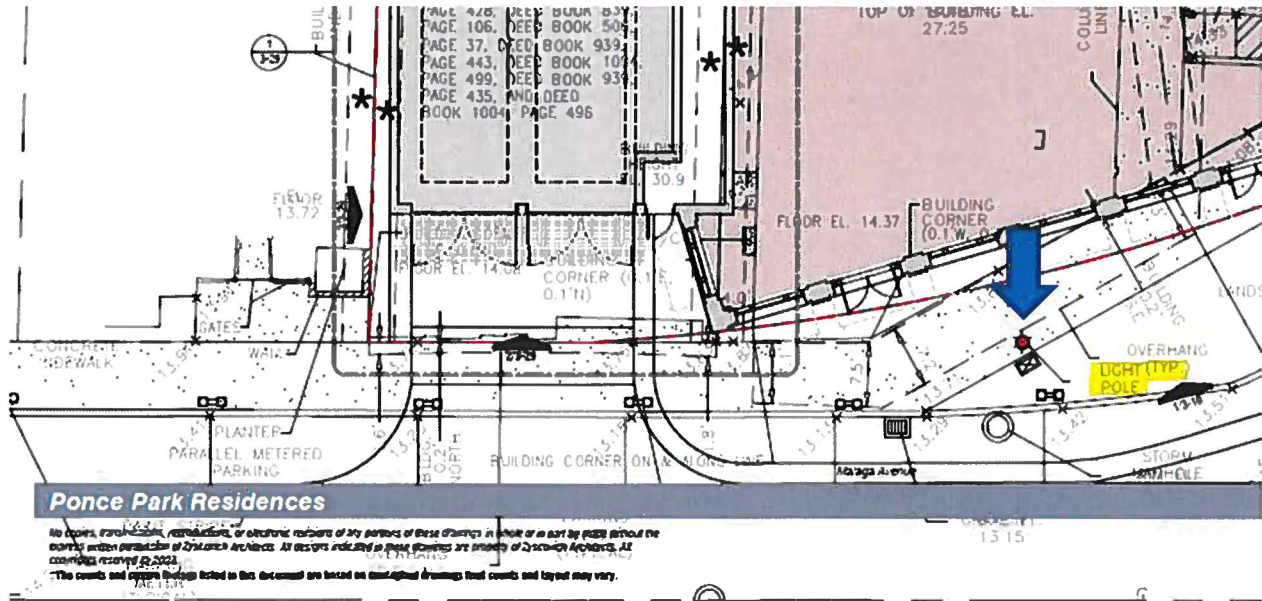


Figure 1: Ponce Park Residences Survey Overlay, provided by Applicant


### STAFF CONCLUSION

The proposed development does not adversely affect the historic Arts Center building located at 2901 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, which has been absorbed into the Plaza Coral Gables project surrounding it, or the historic property at 247 Malaga Avenue or the “White Way” Street Light located on the right-of-way adjacent to 203 University Drive.

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

Staff recommends a motion to determine that the proposal **DOES NOT** adversely affect the historic, architectural, or aesthetic character of the historic properties located within 500 feet of the site, namely the “White Way” Street Lights, a Local Historic Landmark, and to **APPROVE** the proposal referred to as “Ponce Park Residences” with the understanding that it requires further review and approval by the City Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Anna C. Pemas  
Historic Preservation Officer