



LHD 2022-014
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Historical Resources &
Cultural Arts

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**STAFF REPORT
LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION REQUEST
FOR THE PROPERTY AT
110 PHOENETIA AVENUE
"THE GARDEN OF OUR LORD"**

Application: December 29, 2022: a designation application was submitted to the Historic Preservation Office by Bonnie D. Bolton.

Folio Number: 03-4108-009-1840

Legal Description: Lots 1 to 10 inclusive, Block 21, Coral Gables Douglas Section, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 25, at Page 69, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Original Permit No.: 19662M

Date of Construction: 1951

Original Architect: Robert Fitch Smith

Original Owner: St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church

Present Owner: Century Crystal Group LLC

Type: Landscape Feature

Site Characteristics: The property comprises an entire city block situated between Phoenetia Avenue to the north, Antilla Avenue to the south, E. Ponce de Leon Boulevard to the west, and Galiano Street to the east. The property is located across Phoenetia Avenue from the Coral Gables Woman's Club within the North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation District Overlay.

BACKGROUND/EXISTING CONDITIONS

The subject comprises a landscape feature known as the Garden of Our Lord designed as part of the St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church property. The City Code defines a Landscape Feature as "*any site improvement or vegetation including outbuildings, walls, courtyards, fences, shrubbery, trees, sidewalks, planters, plantings, gates, street furniture, signs, exterior lighting, paving, trellis, arbor, fountain, pond, garden sculpture, garden lighting, decking, patio, decorative paving, gazebo and other similar elements.*"

The church building, which has been significantly altered, was built in 1946 and the landscape feature was created in 1951. The architect for the church and garden elements was Robert Fitch Smith. Other structures on the site include church ancillary buildings, a single-family residence currently used as a school, and a playground.

On July 21, 2021, a Historic Significance Request was submitted to the Preservation Office for a determination on whether the site was historically significant or not. On August 9, 2021, Historic Preservation Staff responded that, after careful research and study of City records and the information presented by the applicant, the property did not meet the minimum eligibility criteria for designation as a local historic landmark.

The property was purchased by the current owner on approximately November 24, 2021.

On January 28, 2022, the property owner appeared before the Development Review Committee for review of a proposed new development of the site comprising a Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment, Zoning Code Map Amendment, Planned Area Development (PAD), Mixed-Use Site Plan, and Transfer of Development Rights Receiving Site Plan.

On August 19, 2022, Bonnie D. Bolton submitted a Historic Designation application for the site to the Historic Preservation Office. The applicant and the property owner agreed to allow Staff sufficient time to review the submittal.

On November 29, 2022, it was determined by the Historic Preservation Office that after careful research and study of City records along with information provided with the application, the property did not qualify as presented for listing as a Local Historic Landmark. Ms. Bolton was informed that the application and request should be presented to the Historic Preservation Board at the meeting of December 21, 2022.

Pursuant to Article 8, Section 8-104 A. 1 of the Code, *“if the department’s initial determination is that the property does not meet the minimum eligibility criteria for listing, the applicant may present the proposal for designation to the Historic Preservation Board. The applicant must submit a report within 30 days of the eligibility determination which describes in sufficient detail the criteria the potential historic landmark satisfies for designation. The applicant will then present at the next regularly scheduled Historic Preservation Board meeting where notice can be provided.”*

On December 2, 2022, Ms. Bolton requested 30 days to submit an amended report. The request was granted, and a final designation report was submitted to the Preservation Office on December 29, 2022.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS

Per the historic designation report, the applicant states 110 Phoenetia Avenue, “The Garden of Our Lord” is eligible for historic landmark designation under the following criteria:

A. Historical, cultural significance:

2. Is the site of an historic event with significant effect upon the community, city, state, or nation;
4. Exemplifies the historical, cultural, political, economic, or social trends of the community;
5. Is associated in a significant way with a past or continuing institution, which has contributed, substantially to the life of the City.

B. Architectural significance:

1. Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by one (1) or more distinctive architectural styles;
2. Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or method of construction;
3. Is an outstanding work of a prominent designer or builder;
4. Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship of outstanding quality or which represent a significant innovation or adaptation to the South Florida environment.

C. Aesthetic significance:

1. By being a part or related to a subdivision, park, environmental feature, or other distinctive area, should be developed or preserved according to a plan based on an historical, cultural, or architectural motif;
2. Because of its prominence of spatial location, contrasts of siting, age, or scale, is an easily identifiable visual feature of a neighborhood, village, or the City and contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of such neighborhood, village, or the City. In case of a park or landscape feature, is integral to the plan of such neighborhood or the City.

STAFF CONCLUSION

After careful research and study of available records and the information provided with the application, the Historic Preservation Office has determined **110 Phoenetia Avenue**, legally described as Lots 1 to 10 Inc., Block 21, Coral Gables Douglas Section, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 25, Page 69, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida, does not meet the minimum eligibility criteria for designation as a local historic landmark.

Respectfully submitted,



Warren Adams
Historic Preservation Officer