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CITY OF CORAL GABLES  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING

EXCERPT RE: 649 PALMARITO COURT

405 BILTMORE WAY, FIRST FLOOR  
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA

and

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

DECEMBER 16, 2020

## P A R T I C I P A N T S

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Albert Menendez, Chairperson

Cesar Garcia-Pons, Vice Chairperson

John P. Fullerton, Board Member

Bruce Ehrenhaft, Board Member

Alicia Bache-Wiig, Board Member

Xavier Durana, Board Member

Dona Spain, Board Member

Margaret A. "Peggy" Rolando

Kara N. Kautz, Historic Preservation Officer

Elizabeth B. Guin, Historic Preservation Coordinator

Gustavo Ceballos, Esq., Assistant City Attorney

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1 Excerpt of Historical Preservation Board Meeting

2 December 16, 2020

3 \*\*\*\*\*

4 CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ: The next item is Case File  
5 LHD 2020-008: Consideration of the local historic  
6 designation of the property at 649 Palmarito Court,  
7 legally described as Lots 18 and 19, Block 139,  
8 Coral Gables Country Club Section Part Six,  
9 according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat  
10 Book 20, at Page 1 of the Public Records of  
11 Miami-Dade County, Florida.

12 MS. KAUTZ: Thank you. In a similar fashion  
13 as the previous, we have a PowerPoint with a  
14 voiceover for this property.

15 POWERPOINT VOICEOVER: The property at 649  
16 Palmarito Court is before you for consideration for  
17 designation as a local historic landmark. The  
18 board submitted the historical significance request  
19 in August 2020. In October we directed staff to  
20 prepare a designation report.

21 The current owners purchased the property in  
22 2007. As per Article 3, Section 3-1103 of the  
23 Coral Gables zoning code, criteria for designation  
24 of historic landmarks, a local historic landmark  
25 must have significant character, interest, or value

1 as part of a historical, cultural, archeological,  
2 aesthetic, or architectural heritage of the city,  
3 state, or nation. For designation, a property must  
4 meet one of the criteria as outlined in the code.

5 649 Palmarito Court is eligible as a local  
6 historic landmark based on three significant  
7 criteria.

8 Historical cultural significance, Criteria 4,  
9 exemplifies the historical, cultural, political,  
10 economic or social trends of the community.

11 Architectural significance, Criteria 1, it  
12 portrays the environment in an era of history  
13 characterized by the one or more distinctive  
14 architectural styles.

15 Criteria 2, it embodies those distinguishing  
16 characteristics of an architectural style or period  
17 or method of construction.

18 And as per Article 3, Section 3-1104 C3 of the  
19 Coral Gables Zoning Code, designation procedures,  
20 decision of the board:

21 If after a public hearing the board finds that  
22 the proposed local historic landmark or local meets  
23 the criteria set forth in Section 3-1103, it shall  
24 designate the property as a local historic  
25 landmark.

1           The single-family home at 649 Palmarito Court  
2           is located on a corner lot, the northeast  
3           intersection of Palmarito Court and Palmarito  
4           Street one block north of University Drive. The  
5           lot is 100 feet by 105 feet.

6           This Neoclassical-style home was designed in  
7           1940 by William Shanklin for owner/builder George  
8           E. Batcheller. The first residents were George  
9           Simpson and Minnie Wilcox Simpson.

10           Coral Gables' developmental history is divided  
11           into three major historical periods. George  
12           Merrick founded it in the early 1920s based on his  
13           vision for a fully-conceived Mediterranean-inspired  
14           city.

15           The architecture constructed during this  
16           initial period of development provide elements  
17           commonly used in Spanish, Moorish, and Italian  
18           architecture and has come to be known as the  
19           Mediterranean Revival style. During the 1920s  
20           structures and amenities were built almost  
21           exclusively in accordance with this style.

22           The construction of this home occurred during  
23           the city's second developmental period at the end  
24           of the New Deal era, when the city began to embrace  
25           contemporary styles that followed national trends.

1           In Coral Gables, the dire downturn in the  
2           economy coming closely on the heels of the  
3           devastating 1926 hurricane had a drastic impact on  
4           the construction. Not only did the number of new  
5           houses greatly decrease, but the types and the  
6           styles of homes also changed.

7           You can see here the precipitous dollar value  
8           decline of permits issued in the late 1920s and the  
9           slow recovery during the 1930s, until 1942, at  
10          which time all efforts and materials were diverted  
11          to the war efforts.

12          In the late 1930s the building industry began  
13          to regain some footing and with the assistance of  
14          New Deal relief measures. When the construction of  
15          homes began again in the late 1930s, people had  
16          adjusted to a new way of life and their parties and  
17          aesthetics had changed. This was reflected in all  
18          aspects of life, including the types of homes that  
19          were built.

20          In Coral Gables, there was a concerted trend  
21          to follow national home-building trends. In this  
22          six-year transitional period, between 1936 and  
23          1941, there were approximately 700 homes built in  
24          the city.

25          The historic surveys of Coral Gables indicate

1 that, during this period, it shifted away from the  
2 Mediterranean Revival style homes towards minimal  
3 traditional, Neoclassical, and masonry vernacular  
4 styles, along with a few Art Moderne and early  
5 traditional custom ranch houses.

6 The single-family home at 649 Palmarito Court  
7 built in 1940 in the Neoclassical style was amongst  
8 the homes that ushered the new architectural era  
9 into the city and set the trend for the post-war  
10 home-building boom.

11 Coral Gables was originally conceived as a  
12 suburb of Miami and attracted investors from across  
13 the nation during the first phase of building in  
14 the 1920s. The builder of this home, George  
15 Batcheller, with his partner, Joseph Kresse, were  
16 amongst those drawn to Coral Gables.

17 Founder George Merrick drew from the Garden  
18 City the City Beautiful movements of the 19th and  
19 early 20th century to create his vision for a  
20 fully-conceived Mediterranean-inspired city, which  
21 is now considered one of the first modern-planned  
22 communities in the United States.

23 Forest Hills Gardens, which was in the New  
24 York City borough of Queens was one of the  
25 communities that George Merrick studied when

1           developing his plan for Coral Gables. And years  
2           later, he stated that it had the most influence on  
3           his vision.

4           Forest Hills designed in 1909 by Architect  
5           Grosvenor Atterbury and Landscape Architect  
6           Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., was one of the earliest  
7           and still considered one of the greatest garden  
8           city communities of this period, that purposely  
9           demonstrate the latest ideas of town-planning,  
10          housing, open space, and building construction.

11          Both Kresse and Batcheller resided in Forest  
12          Hills, and Batcheller was a well-established  
13          builder and designer there. It is likely that they  
14          fully grasped Merrick's vision for Coral Gables.

15          In the mid 1920s Merrick announced plans for a  
16          premiere hotel and a redesigned golf course in  
17          Section H. At this time Sections G, H, and I were  
18          primarily undeveloped and were re-worked to  
19          accommodate the large \$10 million Biltmore Hotel  
20          complex.

21          These three sections were divided into six  
22          sections and renamed Country Club Sections Part One  
23          through Six, and additional scenic boulevards were  
24          added which included Anastasia Avenue, Ocean Beach  
25          Drive, which was later renamed University Drive,



1 and Segovia Street.

2 You can see some of these changes on the two  
3 maps dated from 1922 and 1925. The home at 649  
4 Palmarito Court was built in this area in Country  
5 Club Section Six, which is outlined in blue.

6 In late 1925 Joseph Kresse and George  
7 Batcheller committed to building 40 homes in Coral  
8 Gables in the undeveloped Riviera section just  
9 south of Bird Road between the golf course and  
10 Riviera Drive.

11 They hired architects Robert Law Weed and R.  
12 A. Klingbeil. As a team they built the first homes  
13 in the Riviera section. These included several of  
14 the homes in the Italian Village Historic District.

15 Newspaper accounts indicate that, after the  
16 first few homes were built, there was a demand for  
17 more of their homes, and they took on additional  
18 individual commissions.

19 In 1928, Batcheller, who now resided in Coral  
20 Gables, decided to re-invest his earnings and  
21 purchased 50 lots in the Country Club sections,  
22 essentially expanding his efforts north of Cross  
23 Bird (phonetic) Road.

24 He began developing it in a manner consistent  
25 with Merrick's upscale plans for these sections

1 adjacent to the Biltmore. Unfortunately, the  
2 downturn of the economy halted these plans.

3 The Country Club Section Part six is located  
4 east of the Biltmore Golf Course. It is bounded by  
5 Anastasia Avenue, LeJeune Road, Bird Road, and  
6 Anderson Road. It is bifurcated by the curving  
7 University Drive, as seen here on the plat map.

8 There were only a handful of homes constructed  
9 in this section during the early 1920s. The  
10 emphasis on developing it as a prominent section  
11 coincided with the construction of the Biltmore  
12 complex.

13 Global undertakings were during this initial  
14 development of the home at 711 University Drive, at  
15 the northwest corner of the intersection of  
16 Palmarito Street and University Drive, where George  
17 Merrick's sister Ethel and her husband Edmond  
18 Bishop.

19 The initial construction of French Normandy  
20 Village and the Anastasia Hotel started  
21 construction in 1925 and was completed in 1926 by  
22 the University of Miami.

23 In 1940 after a few private commissions  
24 Batcheller decided to resume building on the  
25 remainder of his 50 lots in the Country Club

1 section.

2 His choice for the first of these new homes  
3 was on the prominent corner of 649 Palmarito Court.  
4 It was built in the Neoclassical style who's  
5 formality and importance reflected an upwardly  
6 mobile lifestyle. And he engaged Architect William  
7 Shanklin Jr., who was well versed in this style, to  
8 design the home.

9 Shanklin moved to the Miami area in 1926 after  
10 earning his architecture degree from Cornell  
11 University and practiced with John Bullen and  
12 Walter DeGarmo, who was a member of Merrick's  
13 original design team.

14 In 1935 Shanklin opened his own firm in Coral  
15 Gables. Shanklin designed projects through the  
16 greater Miami area, but the core of his practice  
17 was within the city. It appeared that he was  
18 particularly devoted to revitalizing Coral Gables.

19 Between 1935 to his death in 1946, he designed  
20 approximately 100 new single-family residences.  
21 Four of those homes are currently designated as  
22 individual historic landmarks in the city, and  
23 another nine are contributing resources in historic  
24 districts. Shanklin also has projects listed on  
25 the historic registers of Miami Beach and Miami

1 Shores.

2 Neoclassical style is an eclectic classical  
3 style arising from the 1893 World's Columbian  
4 Exposition. The most common application of the  
5 style was for public and commercial buildings and  
6 for larger or more affluent domestic homes. It was  
7 a leading style for domestic architecture  
8 throughout the country during the first half the  
9 20th century.

10 The dominant characteristic and driving force  
11 of Neoclassical design is it's proportion and  
12 asymmetry. Neoclassical architecture includes  
13 simple geometric forms, symmetry, and balance with  
14 austere ornamentation drawn from the classical  
15 orders.

16 At its inception in the late 19th century,  
17 these stately homes presented a dramatic contrast  
18 to the Baroque and Rococo styles' elaborate  
19 ornamentation, asymmetry, curves, moldings, and  
20 serpentine lines. In Coral Gables it offered a  
21 similar contrast to the Mediterranean Revival  
22 style.

23 The style with its uncluttered appearance and  
24 grandeur of scale most often features full-height  
25 or full-facade front porches, elaborate front

1 doors, large columns with classical capitals, with  
2 flat or low roof lines.

3 Noted architectural historian Vincent Scully  
4 described the domestic Neoclassical-style homes as  
5 intending to be austere symbols of affluence, and  
6 their formality and importance seemed to suggest a  
7 upwardly mobile lifestyle.

8 The home was built in 1940 by owner/builder  
9 Batcheller Properties. The permit was issued in  
10 May. Building permits indicate that, by  
11 September of 1940, the property had been sold, and  
12 the new owners, George and Minnie Simpson, were in  
13 residence. It was the Simpsons' home for the next  
14 48 years.

15 George was an attorney and Minnie was  
16 extremely active in the Daughters of the American  
17 Revolution at both the local and state level. She  
18 was a direct descendant of Oliver Wolcott, a  
19 Declaration of Independence signer. Both were  
20 leaders in the community, and newspaper accounts  
21 reflect that the Simpsons frequently hosted events  
22 in their stately home.

23 Neoclassical style first appeared at Coral  
24 Gables in the late 1930s and became popular in the  
25 city after World War II. Shanklin was well versed

1 in Neoclassical style and produced some of the  
2 city's earliest examples.

3 Built in 1940, the home at 649 Palmarito Court  
4 is a significant example of an early  
5 Neoclassical-style home in Coral Gables and  
6 exemplifies the type of prominent home that was  
7 built during the New Deal era.

8 Hallmark and character-defining features are  
9 visual and physical features that give a building  
10 its identity and distinctive character. This home  
11 includes many defining features of a Neoclassical  
12 house. It clearly exhibits the hallmark  
13 character-defining elements including a symmetrical  
14 purity and balance that reiterate the concepts of  
15 simplicity and order; a dominant rounded portico  
16 comprised of an even number of two-story slender  
17 classical columns supporting a flat roof and a  
18 molded entablature; elaborate front doorway with  
19 fanlight with radiating muntins, sidelights, niches  
20 and molded framing; and evenly spaced windows  
21 across the front facade flanked by louvered  
22 shutters.

23 The home also possesses the following  
24 character-defining features: It is rectangular in  
25 the form of a large central mass flanked by lower

1           bays imparting an aesthetic symmetry. It has  
2           low-pitched and flat roofs, with boxed eaves with  
3           moderate overhangs and molded cornices.

4           It has smooth-textured stucco, rectangular  
5           windows with divided panes, paired windows on the  
6           front facade, molded cornices on one-story bays, an  
7           attached garage with a side entry as to not impair  
8           the symmetry of the front facade, and a two-car  
9           garage with one large door.

10          The next set of slides I'll walk you around  
11          the home. It should be stated that staff did not  
12          have access to the site, and the photos are  
13          courtesy of the owner or from Google Earth. In  
14          this image, you can see how the home is cited on  
15          the corner lot.

16          Here are detailed photos of the hallmark  
17          two-story front portico feature. The columns and  
18          the classical doorway, the brick detailing over the  
19          door, and the current steps further emphasize it.  
20          The planter box above the entrance and the two  
21          smaller windows together as one feature to provide  
22          visual balance to the front door ensemble.

23          This side elevation faces Palmarito Street.  
24          Note the modern feature of an attached garage,  
25          which is a marked departure from the detached

1 garages of Mediterranean Revival homes. Also note  
2 the shutters on the street-facing elevation.

3 Moving around to the rear of the home, these  
4 photos provide further perspective on the citing of  
5 the home on the property. The aerial views provide  
6 a bird's-eye view of the two low-pitched hip roofs  
7 and the two flat-roof bays.

8 Here's a photo of the rear and east facades  
9 with their original permit drawings. The rear  
10 facade, as it's typical of a Neoclassical style, is  
11 unadorned.

12 Note the wide eaves, which are slightly  
13 disproportionate for the style, but it was a  
14 conscious choice by Shanklin. He talked about this  
15 choice in a 1939 newspaper article about another  
16 Neoclassical home he designed and how he extended  
17 the eaves to provide much-needed shade for a  
18 Florida environment.

19 Also note the original configuration of the  
20 screen porch bays shown in the permit drawings.

21 The home has retained its massing and most of  
22 its character-defining features. There have been  
23 no additions to the home.

24 The most notable exterior alterations occurred  
25 in 1988 after the passing of Minnie Simpson when



1 the home was purchased by Nostalgic Homes, who  
2 renovated it and sold the property a year later.

3 The most dominant alteration was the  
4 replacement of the original 25 steel-casement  
5 windows for awning windows. The window sizes were  
6 retained, and the muntin patterns of the  
7 replacement windows largely replicated the original  
8 configurations.

9 This was also when the screen porch was  
10 enclosed. These drawings are from one of the 1988  
11 permits. You can see the large screen openings  
12 were reduced slightly at the bottom to accommodate  
13 standard-size windows.

14 Based on original permit plans, historic  
15 photos, and building records of the property  
16 indicates the residence retains a significant  
17 degree of historic integrity.

18 Thus, the property at 649 Palmarito Court  
19 contributes to the historic fabric of the city of  
20 Coral Gables, and is part of a collection of  
21 quality residences that serve as a visible reminder  
22 of the history and the cultural heritage of the  
23 city.

24 In summary, Coral Gables was founded in the  
25 1920s as a Mediterranean-inspired City, and its

1 buildings were initially designed almost  
2 exclusively in the Mediterranean Revival style.

3 In the late 1920s, the economy and the  
4 building industry plummeted. When the construction  
5 of homes began again in the late 1930s, people had  
6 adjusted to a new way of life, and their priorities  
7 and aesthetics had changed. This was reflected in  
8 the types of homes that were built. In Coral  
9 Gables, there was a concerted shift to follow  
10 national home-building trends.

11 Cited on a corner lot, this residence, built  
12 in 1940, is a noteworthy example of an early Coral  
13 Gables Neoclassical home.

14 It was one of the earliest Neoclassical  
15 residences in the city and represents an evolution  
16 from the Mediterranean Revival foundation into a  
17 new chapter in the city's architectural history.

18 The home was designed by the well-established  
19 Coral Gables based team, Architect William  
20 Shanklin, Jr., and owner/builder George E.  
21 Batcheller.

22 Building on his success in developing the  
23 Riviera section, Batcheller significantly invested  
24 in the Country Clubs Section as a prominent area.  
25 With the Neoclassical style, he chose to build a

1 style with formality and importance suggesting an  
2 upwardly mobile lifestyle.

3 The Neoclassical style first appeared in Coral  
4 Gables in the late 1930s and became popular in the  
5 city after World War II. Shanklin was well-versed  
6 in the Neoclassical style and produced some of the  
7 earliest examples in Coral Gables, including this  
8 home.

9 The property at 649 Palmarito Court has  
10 maintained a significant degree of historic  
11 integrity, and thus contributes to the historic  
12 fabric of the city of Coral Gables.

13 Staff recommends approval of the local  
14 historic designation of the property at 649  
15 Palmarito Court based on its historical, cultural,  
16 and architectural significance.

17 MS. KAUTZ: I believe the owner should be  
18 making a presentation. Before we do that, we need  
19 to swear him in.

20 (Edmund Zaharewicz was duly sworn by the court  
21 reporter.)

22 MS. KAUTZ: The floor is yours.

23 MR. ZAHAREWICZ: My name is Edmund Zaharewicz,  
24 Z-a-h-a-r-e-w-i-c-z. Thank you, I'm going to share  
25 my screen. Hopefully everybody sees my slides.

1           There we go, okay. All right, it looks like that  
2           is the case.

3           Well, let me begin by thanking everyone and  
4           all the help that I've gotten from different people  
5           in the city to prepare for this hearing, so that  
6           includes the archivist, Amanda, the city clerk  
7           helper, Cynthia Garcia, the preservation board  
8           officer -- OR the preservation officer for all she  
9           was doing to coordinate to get me the information I  
10          requested, the city's attorneys for listening to my  
11          complaints. Everyone was very professional and  
12          helpful, so I appreciate that very much.

13          I'm also very sensitive to all the different  
14          interests here. I appreciate the board's interest  
15          here, the city attorney's interest in protecting  
16          the city's interest, the interest of the community  
17          at large. As well as the activists,  
18          preservationists, that write notes into the  
19          meetings, I also get their point of view as well.

20          It does bear mentioning, though, that for all  
21          these people who are coming in saying it should be  
22          preserved, that they really have no stake in the  
23          property. They don't pay the taxes. They don't  
24          maintain it. They don't bear the burden that would  
25          come with a designation. So I think that's

1 important to bear in mind as well.

2 In fact, at the end of the day, the only party  
3 here to have something at stake, something to lose,  
4 is myself, my wife, and my family.

5 So what designation would mean and which we  
6 oppose is that we would lose the hope to build the  
7 beautiful home in the city that we desire. We  
8 would, in effect, become an indentured caretaker of  
9 a house we do not believe is historic and whose  
10 functions and form have become a relic of the past.

11 We also stand to lose significant economic  
12 value in that as well.

13 I would also like to point out this is not the  
14 situation where the owner comes in voluntarily  
15 asking for preservation. In that situation, there  
16 are no losers.

17 The city wins because they are able to  
18 designate a property, add a property to their  
19 roster of historic homes, without having to  
20 consider too carefully whether the property is  
21 truly historic. The owner wins because he feels  
22 he's contributing to a community and likely gets a  
23 tax break in return.

24 Here, however, as the owners of this property,  
25 we strongly oppose designation, and we believe the

1 information we have submitted and will present  
2 shortly clearly shows that 649 Palmarito Court is  
3 not eligible for designation.

4 I also hope to convey the sense that we are  
5 not against historic preservation. We very much,  
6 and myself in particular, very much appreciate the  
7 history, the architectural style, and the design of  
8 many of the structures in Coral Gables. They are a  
9 true treasure. But not all structures at the end  
10 of the day are historic, including ours.

11 So, with that, let me start my little  
12 presentation here. If it'll move forward for me,  
13 okay, there we go, okay.

14 All right. The first one is really just for  
15 the record. I just, out of precaution, want to  
16 preserve whatever rights we have in connection with  
17 this hearing. The first one, and I complained  
18 about this in the first meeting and just to raise  
19 it again, was, to be honest, we don't have notice  
20 of what the claims against our property were going  
21 to be until Friday, when we received the report.  
22 So we had no idea that there would be a claim that  
23 our property was a historical Neoclassical form of  
24 house.

25 We also are confused about the rules of the

1 hearing, and so I've talked to the city's attorneys  
2 about that, so I just wish to preserve whatever  
3 rights we may have under that one as well.

4 And then I add on there the harm economically  
5 that will happen if it is designated. Again, it is  
6 the owner who bears these burdens and not the  
7 public.

8 And that's not to say I'm not for  
9 preservation. I truly appreciate it.

10 All right. So onto the staff's claims,  
11 there's three claims. The first is that the  
12 property is a significant example of a Neoclassical  
13 house.

14 The second, as I gather, is that the house  
15 exemplifies New Deal era home-building trends in  
16 the city.

17 And the last is that it portrays the New Deal  
18 era environment characterized by more than one  
19 distinctive style.

20 So before I get into the points and why I  
21 think it's not historic, I think it's also  
22 important to share a little bit of our history and  
23 how we got here. So we came in in -- we bought the  
24 house in 2007. We had looked for about a year for  
25 finding one.

1           One of the lasting impressions I have of our  
2 house search was just how many houses had ad hoc  
3 additions to them, that when you look at it from an  
4 architectural and aesthetic point of view, to me,  
5 it always distracted from the property, whether it  
6 was the building or the site. And I found that,  
7 frankly, to be dismaying.

8           So we ultimately decided on 649. We purchased  
9 it in a state of neglect. The shutters, for  
10 example, were falling apart. There was probably  
11 not any money truly invested in the home since it  
12 was sold to the Nostalgic company in '88, who  
13 flipped the house to new owners shortly after that.  
14 And so we spent a significant amount renovating it  
15 just to make it livable.

16           At the time we had one child, and then shortly  
17 we ended up with twins. We were only expecting  
18 one. We had twins.

19           So the house is a 3-2, and so we started  
20 thinking about additions right away, and we came up  
21 with plans that are approved, and I'll show them to  
22 you a little shortly. But once we went out for a  
23 bid to get it constructed, we abandoned those plans  
24 because of costs and compromises.

25           And, frankly, I was happy that we weren't able



1 to do that because I think it would have been not a  
2 good addition to the city's fabric of quality  
3 homes.

4 So we spent some time looking for new homes,  
5 and we decided that we liked where we were and that  
6 we could do something that was very nice for both  
7 the community and ourselves.

8 So here's one slide. This is just the  
9 elevations of our addition. So if we just look at  
10 the top of the elevation, which is the south  
11 elevation, the front of the house, it obviously  
12 retains the original house. And then so the idea  
13 at the time was to expand the two wings by building  
14 up.

15 But, for the architects in the room as well as  
16 the historic preservationists, you should all  
17 shriek in horror, because I think this design lacks  
18 a couple of things immediately.

19 I think by building out on the two wings, it  
20 distracts from the center mass of the home, and so  
21 I think you lose that, if that is what you are  
22 accentuating.

23 And, secondly, you can see, on the two wings,  
24 the upper level, the two doors are centered, so the  
25 structure overall lacks vertical symmetry, the

1           hallmark of Neoclassical design as well as many  
2           other categories of design.

3           So atop of that -- so I think that was a  
4           Godsend that we didn't actually end up building  
5           this. We could have. It was approved. It only  
6           didn't go through because of the costs. And the  
7           costs, as I understood it, basically goes, when you  
8           do something like this, you have to tie into it a  
9           new roof and the new structure, and you are, in  
10          effect, building a new home.

11          But more than that, and I had this in my  
12          report, and I don't have a slide of it ready, but  
13          when you look at the floor layouts from a design  
14          like that, what you end up invariably with is  
15          hallways that are connecting spaces, only for the  
16          purpose of connecting spaces, they -- you end up  
17          with rooms that you don't need, space that you  
18          don't need, hallways you don't need. You end up  
19          with truncated rooms, loss of windows.

20          So, anyway, I mean, I think, in short,  
21          architecturally, the interior becomes just a mess.  
22          And, frankly, I was very happy to see this design  
23          fail.

24          So when we began thinking about the house, we  
25          were inspired by the existing design, the existing

1 layout, and the position of the home. So we set  
2 about to make a simple, austere, stately property  
3 that seized upon the uniqueness of the lot and  
4 would ultimately contribute to the architectural  
5 heritage of the area. And we'll talk about that a  
6 little bit more.

7 But I think if you just look at the front  
8 facade here -- now, by the way, this design has  
9 been approved by the Board of Architects and  
10 through Zoning, and we got this design done without  
11 a single variance, so we played by all the rules.

12 But you can see we have a stately front, that  
13 looks very much like the current front, in a sense.  
14 It has the symmetry. It has the stateliness. It  
15 has the clean lines. It was the austerity.

16 But what this design has that the current one  
17 doesn't have from is the west view, which is the  
18 bottom -- which the bottom view of that is my slide  
19 here.

20 Now, this is the street view as well. And you  
21 can see, at least in my estimation, that this has a  
22 nice quality to it, very pleasing. And, also, I  
23 don't have the site plan here, but it's recessed a  
24 little further from the street than my current  
25 property, which will allow parking of cars, for

1 example, without the car crossing the sidewalk and  
2 things like that.

3 And, also, I think it gives it a more pleasing  
4 view, from this elevation, for the neighborhood to  
5 look at it.

6 Now, the other unique thing about this design  
7 is, and it's one of the chief motivating factors,  
8 is that we're trying to preserve the back yard,  
9 which is a splendid 100-by-40 unobstructed, and so  
10 it's just beautiful, and I think it's consistent  
11 with the current property. You don't have this  
12 dense, heavy, two-story building on a corner lot,  
13 which you see a lot now, which I think is horrible.  
14 And so I think there's that element that needs to  
15 be appreciated of this design as well.

16 I also think if you took this -- I don't think  
17 it's practical to build up over the wings and have  
18 an aesthetically pleasing house, which means the  
19 only way to really modernize this house, and I  
20 would say it's not really modernizing it, is to  
21 build off of the back.

22 But I think, if you do that, you truly ruin  
23 the charm of this lot, and I think you get away  
24 from some of the historicalness of the plot.  
25 That's not to say it's of historic significance.

1           So this is quickly the back view. The top is  
2           the north elevation, which is the back yard. You  
3           can see we have achieved here a high degree of  
4           symmetry, even in the back elevation.

5           And then the lower elevation is the east view,  
6           and even there, although it's not quite as pure  
7           symmetrically as the other elevations, also has a  
8           high degree of symmetry, something we've sought to  
9           preserve.

10          Okay. So why is 649 not historic or, I should  
11          say, not of his historic significance? The house  
12          is, by all appearances, an ordinary house.

13          So we bought the property as fee simple.  
14          There are no deed restrictions. There are no  
15          restrictions from George Batcheller. There are no  
16          restrictions from Minnie Simpson. There are no  
17          restrictions from the other owners of what we can  
18          do with the property.

19          The property is not Mediterranean Revival,  
20          which is, actually, the hallmark of the Coral  
21          Gables city.

22          We've had this property for 13 years. Even  
23          when we bought it, for those 13 years, we've never  
24          considered it to be historic. We just considered  
25          it to be a fine, old house in some regards.

1           In the 50 years that the city has had the  
2 ordinance, the historic preservation ordinance, as  
3 far as we know, to our knowledge, there have been  
4 no efforts to identify the property with any  
5 historic significance.

6           We're also aware of no articles or books  
7 claiming that the property is significant.  
8 Although, I saw, in the materials I was provided  
9 today, that one of the local papers, apparently,  
10 printed an article.

11           Be that as it may, the first that we became  
12 aware that the property was significant was the --  
13 when we weren't given our letter of significance,  
14 and then the staff report, when the staff issued  
15 their report.

16           Okay, so, one, if you read the report, one of  
17 the things that the report says multiple times, no  
18 less than four, is that the property is an  
19 prominent corner location.

20           I would say that the property is all but  
21 invisible to the community in its location. And  
22 the reason being is it's not on any of the  
23 boulevards or the grand thoroughfares or the  
24 historied streets that Coral Gables is truly known  
25 for.

1           It's really at a corner of, and I can show  
2           this here, you can see it's really at the corner of  
3           two very lightly-travelled streets. I mean, the  
4           people who travel the street are pretty much the  
5           people who live on it.

6           It's not on University. It's not on Segovia.  
7           It's not on Alhambra Circle or Granada or any of  
8           those other -- Coral Way. It's not there.

9           In contrast, similarly designed houses are in  
10          prominent locations. So, for example, 3701  
11          Segovia, also built in 1940, stands prominently on  
12          Segovia Street, looking directly down Palmarito  
13          Court. That's a prominent location. Ours is not.

14          And here, perhaps the grandest of all  
15          Neoclassical designs in the city, that I'm aware  
16          of, is 3600 Granada Boulevard sitting on a 47,000  
17          square-foot lot on the prestigious and prominent  
18          Granada Golf Course as well as Granada Boulevard,  
19          looking down Escobar Avenue, which I think is  
20          another historied street.

21          And for the real history buffs here, the house  
22          across the street from this property is one of  
23          Shanklin's designated properties, a Moderne  
24          property, and that property is truly beautiful and  
25          historic. But mine is not.

1           And then, lastly, here's another good one, and  
2           I have other photos a little bit later, but I  
3           assume that you are familiar with some of these  
4           houses, by the way, and this is 3502 Alhambra  
5           Circle, and this is another Neoclassical house  
6           sitting on the beautiful Alhambra Circle, where it  
7           bends by the canal there just across the street  
8           from the golf course, and it sits there nestled  
9           between two streets with its driveway cutting  
10          across. It truly projects a grandeur that my house  
11          does not.

12          So, in my report, that I wrote and submitted,  
13          I argued that the house exhibits elements of  
14          Colonial Revivalism and Neoclassical design. And  
15          the reason I brought that up is because, in my  
16          research, I came across this property, 3501 Granada  
17          Boulevard. When you read the report, it describes  
18          it as Colonial Revival and not as a Neoclassical  
19          home.

20          These are obviously two distinct architectural  
21          styles. And my sense is, if my property is both of  
22          these, then it is neither and, therefore, not  
23          historical. But I point that out to you, because I  
24          thought that was very interesting that they put  
25          that in the report. That was from 2003.



1           And I should say all my photos are either  
2 borrowed from Google Maps or the FIU Coral Gables  
3 collection.

4           So the other hallmark of the Neoclassical  
5 style that my property does not have is that of  
6 grandeur and scale. In my view, I would say that  
7 the property is actually totally mismatched for its  
8 size; that is, even though it's on a generous lot,  
9 in a sense, relative to other Coral Gables lots  
10 that is 10,500 square feet, it is not of the  
11 dimensions that you would think for such a design.

12           So I give you three examples, I think all  
13 three of these I've just a mentioned. So there was  
14 3701, which is 17,000 square feet. And when you  
15 look at that property, when you look at that  
16 property, it also has driveways on either end of  
17 the property. The house sits isolated in the  
18 middle, very stately and prominent.

19           3600 Granada, I think, is actual the Spanish  
20 Embassy, but it is simply a magnificent,  
21 magnificent property in Neoclassical design. And,  
22 I believe, it's done by Curtis E. Haley, someone we  
23 will talk about a little later in my presentation,  
24 but that is truly a magnificent property. The size  
25 and scale of that property is exactly what is meant

1 for a Neoclassical design.

2 And then I would say the same thing about  
3 3502, that I mentioned a little bit -- a while ago.  
4 That sits on a 23,000 square-foot property, also  
5 has a driveway that cuts across the front of the  
6 property without diminishing the character of that  
7 property.

8 Also, I think if you look at any of these  
9 houses, the interior dimensions are significantly  
10 bigger than my house. My interior space is 18,035  
11 feet, not big at all, tiny closets, tiny bathrooms,  
12 things of that nature.

13 When I first looked at it, I also -- I had a  
14 conversation one time with someone in the Gables, I  
15 don't know how true it is, but it rings true; in  
16 that, these kinds of designs were really for people  
17 from New York. In other words, these houses were  
18 originally marketed to New Yorkers looking for a  
19 summer home, and so you wouldn't need to have  
20 spacious closets and spacious bathrooms, because  
21 they were going to put their suitcase into the  
22 house for a couple of months and then return to  
23 their New York homes for the summer. Anyway, the  
24 design of the house reminds me of that kind of  
25 history.

1           I also think the house lacks some of the  
2 details that are characteristic of the Neoclassical  
3 design, and one of the chief ones I would say, in  
4 addition to the grandness and scale, is the  
5 hallmark doorway. I know the report says that the  
6 door is elaborate. I would say not.

7           I would think an elaborate door of this style  
8 would have a pediment above it, maybe some  
9 pilasters on either side to accentuate the door.  
10 And, in fact, I think the front doorway sidelights  
11 are more characteristic of Colonial Revival than of  
12 the Neoclassical-style architecture.

13           So this, for example, I'll show you two  
14 things, this is a front view of 3600 Granada  
15 Boulevard, and you can see the truly elaborate door  
16 in that fashion with the broken pediment above it.  
17 You can also see the scale of the house in this  
18 picture, although it doesn't show exactly it. You  
19 actually see the stairway from either side coming  
20 up to it. Notice the columns seem a little wider  
21 at the bottom, and they taper up to the front for  
22 an added touch.

23           It's simply a magnificent property. The  
24 driveway, in this case, is circular, with that  
25 waterfront in front of it. This is what a

1 Neoclassical design of historic value looks like.

2 I also take issue at the portico as to whether  
3 or not it is of truly a hallmark status here. So I  
4 think the first thing I would note is that this  
5 curved portico design is a common variant of the  
6 Neoclassical design.

7 That, according to Virginia McAllister, the  
8 noted historian of American homes, the same design  
9 almost verbatim is repeated in no less than four  
10 nearby properties, 620 Palmarito Court, 3701  
11 Segovia, which we mentioned before, 2828 Segovia,  
12 as well as 3801 Toledo.

13 Note that these were all built in different  
14 years, '36, '40, '56, and '59.

15 And very interestingly, the portico at 620  
16 Palmarito was added after the fact. So, in my  
17 estimation, which style of a portico was,  
18 essentially, an off-the-shelf design element used  
19 to spruce up the house to give it an appearance of  
20 grandeur. I use the term "on the cheap," but you  
21 could also think of it as a developer's trick. And  
22 so, I think, for that reason, as well, it is not of  
23 historic value.

24 So we can look at these. This is 620. With  
25 it, this is a photo of it with the columns. That

1 is a photo from 1949 and shows that it has -- it  
2 wasn't originally built with the columns. I  
3 actually called the son of the architect who built  
4 it, to find out what year the columns were added.  
5 He was a super-nice guy and a gentleman. But he  
6 didn't know that information.

7 So this is kind of a front view of Segovia --  
8 actually, it's two addresses. I always get it  
9 confused, 3701 and 3703. But you can see they look  
10 pretty much like mine. Although, I would say this  
11 property is definitely more prominent than mine.

12 Here's 2828, and you can see the columns added  
13 to there. Interestingly, on this one, you can see  
14 the pediment on the doorway there, which is true, I  
15 believe, to this style or simply more true than the  
16 fanlights and the sidelights.

17 Another very interesting aspect of this  
18 property -- and I should add for the benefit of the  
19 board members, I added a few slides from the ones  
20 that were distributed to you, and this is one of  
21 them, and I apologize.

22 But you can see, from this view, and I don't  
23 know if the structure was original to the house or  
24 added afterwards, but what you see in the back of  
25 this house is the garage.

1           And, to me, architecturally, if I wanted a  
2 house -- I mean, this is one of the possibilities  
3 for my house, right? Someone is going to build off  
4 the back to, basically, modernize it and bring it  
5 up to today's standards.

6           I think that would be just devastating for a  
7 property such as this. I mean, it works here for  
8 Segovia, because I think this may be zoned now  
9 multi-unit or whatever it might be, but it would be  
10 a travesty for my residence or even in the  
11 neighborhood there.

12           And then, lastly, here is 3801. Sorry, the  
13 picture is the best one I could pull from Google  
14 Maps, but you can see, essentially, the same  
15 portico. I forget, this might have been '59 or  
16 '56, but it's the same, exact structural or design  
17 element.

18           I also think the property is unremarkable in  
19 most of its details, if not all. I will show you  
20 shortly that the front doorway and window details  
21 are repeated in spec-home-like with another  
22 Shanklin design at 3402 Toledo Street.

23           I think the slender, unadorned columns are  
24 under-whelming and lack gravitas in comparison to a  
25 property like 3502 Alhambra Circle. I think the

1 side wings, another elevation, show no distinction.  
2 And I say that also from a point of view that this  
3 is a corner lot, really two elevations that the  
4 architects should be concerned about.

5 I think the attached garage that was mentioned  
6 by someone in some e-mail as being distinctive, it  
7 is not. That kind of design was around for two  
8 decades before it was incorporated into this  
9 design.

10 I'll note that the original porch and  
11 ornamental balustrades no longer exist on the  
12 house, and, that, to the extent that anyone sees  
13 value in the stained glass windows, they are not  
14 original.

15 So here's the front view of 6949, and here's  
16 the house on Toledo, both 1940, both built by  
17 Shanklin, and I wouldn't be surprised if George  
18 Batcheller was the developer of the other house.  
19 Look, they are the same, right? It's the same  
20 door, same door, same door detail, same window  
21 details, the same window details on my house as  
22 well.

23 I think that is not indicative of a historic  
24 house. That is indicative of a developer making a  
25 spec house of its day.

1           Now, these are the columns on 3502 Alhambra  
2 Circle, and you can see how much more gravitas this  
3 kind of style has. You can see the Corinthian  
4 capitals at the top. You can see the fluting of  
5 the columns. This is just a wonderful property.

6           This is my west elevation. It's absolutely  
7 unremarkable in every respect.

8           This is another perspective on the west  
9 elevation. I would argue that the choice of  
10 slender columns, from this perspective at least,  
11 does absolutely nothing for the property. They get  
12 lost in the background.

13           Again, the back, there's nothing to  
14 distinguish this back. It is what it is. There's  
15 simply nothing of distinction there.

16           Then, lastly, this is the 19 -- I think this  
17 actually 1945, where you can see they painted over  
18 the details at this time and history of the house  
19 there above the door. But what I wanted to point  
20 out is these balustrades here and the balustrade  
21 here, on the right and the left, the top, the lower  
22 wrings. And if you look on the porch side below,  
23 you can see how Shanklin quite nicely tied those  
24 balustrade elements to make that a pleasing tie-up  
25 on the porch side. But that porch no longer



1 exists, and those balustrades no longer exist.

2 And I would also say, if you look at '40s  
3 photos of truly remarkable Neoclassical designs,  
4 you will see these types of balustrades on there,  
5 which no longer exist on the property.

6 So one of the claims is that it exemplifies  
7 New Deal era trends. I can only say to that, that  
8 it does not. I mean, if you think about it, it is  
9 simply impossible for a signal property to  
10 exemplify any kind of trend.

11 That's like saying today's temperature, you  
12 know, exemplifies a cooling or a heating trend.  
13 The only thing that exemplifies that is some set of  
14 information before today's temperature, and so what  
15 is significant of that is the collection of data  
16 that shows the trend. One single data point does  
17 not show a trend. It's simply impossible. And I  
18 would argue that it's arbitrary to try to do so.

19 So if you're trying to show a trend, you have  
20 to have a collection of properties. It's the  
21 collection of properties that is of historic  
22 significance. And, in this regard, I point out  
23 that 649 Palmarito Court is not in a historic  
24 district.

25 Similarly, for the claim that the property

1           portrays the New Deal era environment, this claim  
2           fails for the same reason. There's simply no way  
3           that the single house of 649 Palmarito can  
4           characterize this era.

5           So if you look at the report that the  
6           preservation officer put together, and it is very  
7           interesting, but what's noted there is that, in the  
8           New Deal era, that this part of the Gables was,  
9           actually, if you're looking for an environment,  
10          would be comprised of an assortment of things.

11          There would be empty lots yet to be developed.  
12          There would be a couple of 1920 homes built  
13          after -- in the 1920s before the great -- before  
14          the stock market crash.

15          And then there would be an assortment of homes  
16          of which Neoclassical design would only be one.  
17          There would be a minimal traditional design, and  
18          then there would masonry vernacular design, and  
19          then there would be early custom ranch homes, as  
20          well as maybe some Art Moderne -- I misspelled  
21          that -- design as well.

22          So what's interesting, and if you looked at my  
23          report, I didn't put it in any slides, if you look  
24          at this, this is all in my neighborhood. It's  
25          across my street. But I have much more than that.

1 I have houses, also, in my neighborhood houses  
2 built in the '80s, in the '70s. I have additions  
3 that were put in throughout the course of Coral  
4 Gables.

5 So I would say that the kind of house I want  
6 to build actually fits into the environment that  
7 actually exists at 649 Palmarito Court perfectly.

8 But the house itself simply cannot be said to  
9 portray an environment of the new era -- the New  
10 Deal era. It's simply impossible.

11 I would also like to point out that there are  
12 a number of comparable properties found not to be  
13 significant within a two-block radius of my  
14 property. And these properties were, among other  
15 things, include three corner lot homes, as well as  
16 homes developed by or designed by notable  
17 designers.

18 So 640 Escobar was William Merriam. He,  
19 actually, has at least one property on the national  
20 register. It has a two pedigree as an architect.

21 730 Escobar was built by Curtis E. Haley, who  
22 built that magnificent Neoclassical home at 3600  
23 Granada Boulevard, and we're going to talk about  
24 that property in a little bit.

25 731, I don't know much about. But if I skip

1 over to 3510 Segovia Street, Howard B. Knight  
2 (phonetic), I am certain is another very notable  
3 architect from Coral Gables' early years.

4 So let's take a look at 730 Escobar. Now,  
5 this house was given a letter of significance  
6 without anyone claiming it was historic, without a  
7 hearing or anything. And it was demolished, and  
8 the design of the house that sits there now is  
9 basically a very spread out -- it's nice, but it's  
10 a spread-out house that has nothing of the old  
11 Florida charm that used to reside here.

12 So if you look at this property, what's very  
13 interesting about it and strikes you right away, is  
14 you look at the central mass of this, even though  
15 it's only one story, the central mass, it has the  
16 full-height columns, which is indicative of the  
17 Neoclassical style. If you look at the door, it  
18 has the broken pediment, which is characteristic of  
19 Neoclassical style. If you look on either side, it  
20 has the element of symmetry.

21 And if you look a little bit broader off to  
22 the sides, you can see that the architect tried to  
23 incorporate some of these, I would say, graphical  
24 or geometrical shapes, that you can see on the left  
25 side, which is the porch. And then you look at the

1 garage door, with the geometrical shapes, I think  
2 the attempt was to harmonize those two wings of the  
3 house in a nice way.

4 This house sat on a 21,600-square-foot lot.  
5 It was built in 1951, not 1940. But it was a post  
6 World War II design. It evoked old Coral Gables  
7 charm. You could say it was one of the earliest  
8 examples of a Neoclassical cottage, which is one of  
9 the variants that Virginia McAlester points out in  
10 her book on American homes. And you can say it's  
11 one of the earliest of those, of that design, in  
12 that period. And yet it was not significant.

13 So I submit to you that my property is not  
14 significant for the same reasons. If this is not  
15 significant, my property cannot possibly be  
16 significant.

17 I also think, and a lot for the reasons I  
18 mentioned earlier, when I was describing what we  
19 planned to do with the property and why we were  
20 glad we didn't get to do it with the property, when  
21 we first thought of doing an addition, is because I  
22 don't believe making this historic will promote  
23 either educational, cultural, or economic welfare.

24 I actually think if we're allowed to go  
25 through and build the house we want, that will

1           preserve the architectural heritage of both the  
2           original design in a sense and the presence and the  
3           way that the property is presented in the  
4           neighborhood. It will bring a property of high  
5           value, one designed for modern living and a modern  
6           family.

7                     And I think, with those characteristics, you  
8           can look at property values being enhanced, in no  
9           way diminished, in a way that is really a homage to  
10          the heritage of this area.

11                    And so this may be my almost last slide here,  
12          but these are just the properties I mentioned  
13          before. In the lower essential area is my  
14          property. Off to the left, in yellow, is 730 and  
15          740 Escobar. In front of that is 731 Escobar. The  
16          top center is 637 Aledo, and then the property on  
17          the right is the Segovia property as well, just to  
18          kind of give you a flavor of just how close these  
19          properties are in the this area.

20                    And then, in conclusion, summing everything  
21          up, we don't believe that the property rises to the  
22          level of historical significance.

23                    And while the property may have some appeal as  
24          a pleasing example of Neoclassical-inspired design,  
25          in the end it simply does not possess the integrity

1 of location, design, material, workmanship, or  
2 association required for designation.

3 And, with that, we respectfully request that  
4 the board find that the property is not eligible  
5 for designation.

6 And if I may interject, picking up on  
7 something that the city attorney mentioned earlier,  
8 if you think it is historic, and I hope you do not  
9 find it historic, for all of the reasons I've  
10 mentioned, I think the board should vote separately  
11 on each of the three criteria presented in the  
12 report as to the reason why it is -- I mean, if  
13 that's a determination why it's historic.

14 But I hope, after hearing this presentation  
15 and my report, that you agree with me that this  
16 house is not of historic significance.

17 Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ: Thank you, Mr. Zaharewicz.

19 Do we have anyone in the audience that would  
20 like to speak in favor of this case?

21 MS. KAUTZ: And they have to be sworn in  
22 before we begin.

23 CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ: And I'll just let everyone  
24 know that we're two-and-a-half hours into this  
25 meeting, and we're still on the second item. We

1           have four more items to go. We have people  
2           waiting. So those who speak, we're just to give  
3           them a couple of minutes to speak, to say what they  
4           need to say, but they need to be brief.

5                     First, we have Mr. Jorge Zaldivar?

6                     (Jorge Zaldivar was duly sworn by the court  
7           reporter.)

8                     MR. ZALDIVAR: So for whatever it's worth and  
9           for all the history and the word "history" that we  
10          keep mentioning throughout this talk, just to be  
11          clear, I believe one of those homes that is on  
12          Granada is not on the Granada Golf Course. It's on  
13          the Biltmore Golf Course, so I want to make sure  
14          that that's just being mentioned to the audience,  
15          that I get to make sure that it's either on the  
16          Biltmore Golf Course or the Granada Golf Course,  
17          nothing serious, just wanted to jump in.

18                    I was following along with of those addresses,  
19          and I noticed that the Granada Golf Course was  
20          mentioned.

21                    But that is all. I don't have any other  
22          testimony.

23                    CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ: Thank you. Anyone else?

24                    MR. DURANA: We have one more person with  
25          their hand raised.



1           CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ:  Go ahead.

2           MS. CARBONELL:  Thank you.  Hi, this is  
3           Karelia Martinez Carbonnel.  I am president of the  
4           Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables.  
5           And I will -- there is a letter that's been filed  
6           on behalf of our association, but I do want to just  
7           make three points, and then I will read the letter  
8           real quickly.

9           But, Point No. 1, the designation of a  
10          property is not a taking, and that's been applied  
11          by the Supreme Court of the United States, and it's  
12          Central Transportation v. New York City, so that is  
13          one point I would like to make.

14          Point No. 2, under the historic preservation  
15          ordinance of Coral Gables, any home that's 50 years  
16          or older and will trigger -- and when a demolition  
17          application is applied for, it will trigger a  
18          historic review.

19          And that's why 649 Palmarito Court really  
20          stayed dormant until now, when it was -- there was  
21          the designation -- there was the application for  
22          demolition.

23          And, number three, as per the City Historic  
24          Preservation Ordinance 649, it meets three of the  
25          criteria for designation.

1           And, as you know, the code does say your board  
2 has to -- shall, shall designate that it meets one  
3 criteria. And, also, this home meets three  
4 criteria.

5           And the last point about the property losing  
6 value, according to the National Trust for Historic  
7 Preservation, historic properties appreciate at  
8 rates much greater than the local market overall,  
9 as well as faster than similar non-designated  
10 property. So a historic property actually  
11 increases in value, instead of losing value.

12           And with that, I just want to read the letter  
13 from the Historic Preservation Association, and it  
14 says:

15           Please accept this letter in support of the  
16 historic designation for 649 Palmarito Court, one  
17 of the earliest Neoclassical-style homes to be  
18 designed by Coral Gables dream team, Architect  
19 William Shanklin, Jr., who, for other Coral Gables'  
20 residences, has garnered historic status, and  
21 George E. Batcheller, who, also, one of his  
22 developments was the Italian Village, which is  
23 historically designated as well.

24           The construction in 1940 of the single-family  
25 home occurred during the New Deal era and was among

1 the first several hundred homes built during 1936  
2 through 1941. This style is indicative of the type  
3 of architecture of this time period when the City  
4 began to move away from its Mediterranean Revival  
5 foundation. The 80-year home has maintained its  
6 historical integrity.

7 So, with that, again, my name is Karelia  
8 Martinez Carbonnel. I am president of the  
9 organization. And we ask that the Historic  
10 Preservation Board accept the recommendation of the  
11 city's preservation office and approve the local  
12 historical designation of 649 Palmarito Court.  
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ: Thank you.

15 Anyone else?

16 MR. ZAHAREWICZ: Can I speak? I'm still off  
17 mute. This is the owner. Am I heard?

18 MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

19 MR. ZAHAREWICZ: Okay, thank you. Just two  
20 quick points, to the first speaker, he's correct.  
21 If I said Granada, it's actual the Biltmore, and  
22 thank you for that clarification.

23 And then, to the last speaker, it's true that  
24 takings -- historical designations aren't takings.  
25 But, in this case, Florida has a law that super --

1 not supersedes, but gives Florida owners rights  
2 beyond what's in the U.S. Constitution. And I just  
3 want the board to be aware of that clarification.  
4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ: Okay.

6 MS. KAUTZ: As part of the record, we received  
7 e-mails in support of designation of the property,  
8 and I just want to read their names so they're  
9 included in the record:

10 Jorge Zaldivar, who I believe spoke, Dolly  
11 MacIntyre, former board member engineer of this  
12 board, Vivian and William Rios, Carol Smith, Brett  
13 Gillis, Jeanette Pressman. And I received  
14 additional e-mails from Dade Heritage Trust, from  
15 Bruce Fitzgerald, Michelle Dunaj, Historic  
16 Preservation Association of Coral Gables, Tim and  
17 Connie Crowther, Joyce Nelson.

18 And there was an opinion piece written by  
19 Karelia Carbonell, that is also part of the record.  
20 There's Marie Vacca, president of The Villagers,  
21 Sandra Scidmore, Maria Rivero Abella, Carlos Ariza,  
22 Armando Hernandez-Rey, Daniel Ciraldo, the  
23 executive director of the Miami Design Preservation  
24 League, Debra and Armando Incera, Annette Hogan,  
25 Douglas Wartzok, Rhonda Anderson, Christina

1 Villeneal (phonetic), I'm sorry if I mispronounced  
2 that, and Jill Kramer.

3 CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ: Is there anyone in the  
4 audience who wishes to speak in opposition? No  
5 one?

6 Okay. So we're going to close this part of  
7 the public hearing and have some board discussion.

8 MS. KAUTZ: I would like to address, as part  
9 of our rebuttal, some of the statements that were  
10 made, just to note them.

11 So your role, your purview at this meeting is  
12 to determine whether or not the property meets the  
13 criteria as outlined in the code. We're not  
14 comparing it to other properties. Is it best? Is  
15 it better? Is not a consideration. Does it meet  
16 the criteria? That's it.

17 This property is not grandiose. It is an  
18 early 1940s Neoclassical design. The city was  
19 coming out of the downturn of the economy and  
20 before the World War, and it was in response to the  
21 time it was built.

22 The later examples that were shown, the  
23 bigger, larger as being grandiose were built later  
24 on, in the '50s, when there was optimism and  
25 enthusiasm.

1           Neoclassical is an eclectic style. It takes  
2 elements of Colonial. And there's a slide that  
3 refers to that. So there are some that overlap in  
4 the styles.

5           So the owner of the property is an attorney  
6 and did a bunch of research and has delved very  
7 deep into architecture, but is not an architect,  
8 and is not a historian. And the staff report that  
9 was prepared for you was written by a PhD.

10          The hallmark and the distinguishing features  
11 of a style will show up repeatedly. They are  
12 character-defining features of the style, and,  
13 therefore, will be used over and over again.

14          We see this in Mediterranean Revival. We see  
15 this in Art Deco, in Art Moderne. There are  
16 elements that are repeated, that are indicative of  
17 the style, which is why you see them over and over  
18 again.

19          That's the rebuttal for now. Thank you.

20          CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ: Board member comments?

21          MR. ZAHAREWICZ: May I interject one comment?

22          This is the owner.

23          CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ: We've closed that part of  
24 the hearing. We're having board discussion right  
25 now.

1           MR. ZAHAREWICZ: I would just say, a rebuttal  
2           to the rebuttal, the slender columns design, of the  
3           Neoclassical design, was from the period 1920 to  
4           1940. It is not indicative of new era -- New Deal  
5           era homes. It existed well before the Great  
6           Depression.

7           Thank you.

8           MR. GARCIA-PONS: Anybody on Zoom want to go  
9           first?

10          MR. FULLERTON: No, go ahead.

11          MR. GARCIA-PONS: My question and staff did  
12          mention it in their comments just now, the  
13          relationship between Neoclassical and Colonial  
14          Revival. I know that, in the presentation, it was  
15          meant that there are overlapping styles.

16          I thought both the staff and the owner made  
17          substantial comments on that, and I was going to  
18          ask staff to elaborate on the relationship between  
19          the two styles and how they overlap.

20          I'm satisfied with the comment that was given.  
21          I don't know if anybody else is, or if the staff  
22          wants to elaborate further.

23          MS. KAUTZ: Elizabeth, do you want to give a  
24          brief summary?

25          MS. GUIN: This is Elizabeth. The

1 Neoclassical style and why we attribute it to this  
2 building is Neoclassical is a very eclectic style  
3 and takes in all different types of  
4 classifications.

5 The two-story portico is a hallmark feature of  
6 that style. The Colonial Revival and also  
7 Neoclassical tends to be more Georgian features.  
8 There is overlap. You see some of the same  
9 features in both styles.

10 But I'm not really sure what kind of -- what  
11 you're looking for, but ...

12 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I guess, I'm satisfied with  
13 Kara's, so I appreciate the additional information.

14 CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ: I think the staff report  
15 is an excellent report, and it summarizes the  
16 reasons for designation.

17 Mr. Durana?

18 MR. DURANA: I agree with Kara. I think that  
19 it's pretty clear, for me, that it's Neoclassical  
20 and in the same shape as it was when it was built.  
21 I mean, the owner could be recommending about the  
22 balusters with thicker railings, but, in the  
23 future, any additional work, I hope they would  
24 consider that. That's it for me.

25 CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ: Ms. Rolando?



1 MS. ROLANDO: I too thought that the staff  
2 report was comprehensive and thoughtful.

3 There's a couple of items that the homeowner  
4 raised that, the first, I would like to address to  
5 the city attorney. The homeowner questioned  
6 whether he had sufficient notice and adequate time  
7 to respond to the report. And I would like to have  
8 the city attorney, assistant city attorney's,  
9 response to that.

10 ATTORNEY CEBALLOS: Well, the code only speaks  
11 that once a preliminary decision to move forward  
12 with a designation is made, which was made at the  
13 last board meeting, that's part of the 60-day time  
14 frame, if you will, and this meeting is being held  
15 within that 60-day time frame.

16 In terms of receiving the report, the code is  
17 silent on when they need to receive it by. And, in  
18 this particular case, they received it a few days  
19 before the actual board hearing today. I believe  
20 he received it on Thursday or Friday of last week.  
21 I'm sure staff can clarify.

22 There is no requirement to receive it in a  
23 particular time frame, whether it be a week or two  
24 weeks or one day before the actual hearing takes  
25 place.

1           He did articulate originally that he needed  
2           criteria for that preliminary designation. Once  
3           again, our code is silent on that. The code does  
4           not require for a preliminary designation -- not a  
5           designation, but the preliminary decision to move  
6           forward with a designation does not have any  
7           criteria in our code.

8           The criteria comes into play when you're at  
9           the board, which is why the report states, in this  
10          particular instance, that it meets three of the  
11          criterias.

12          There was also sufficient notice. They were  
13          well aware of the procedure. We've been  
14          communicating back and forth the entire time.

15          So, at least from the legal standpoint, we see  
16          no issue with this item going forward.

17          MS. ROLANDO: Thank you. Obviously, the  
18          homeowner put in an enormous amount of time and  
19          research into rebutting the staff report.

20          I think that those of us on the board  
21          recognize that a property does not have to be  
22          magnificent. A lot does not have to be large. A  
23          home does not have to be the finest example of a  
24          particular period in order to merit designation.

25          So, frankly, I felt sorry for the house,

1           because it was so denigrated by the homeowner. But  
2           when I read the report and I see the home, it's a  
3           stately home. It's a nice example. I think it is  
4           a contributing structure.

5           I was not persuaded by the efforts to  
6           differentiate it from other examples, and I think  
7           the fact that, at that time, the city itself and  
8           the country was coming off of a really, really bad  
9           time. And then there were, also, echoes of the war  
10          that was about to begin in Europe. So I can  
11          understand why this is not an exuberant example of  
12          Neoclassical or even Colonial Revival architecture.

13          So I am comfortable saying that the property  
14          merits designation.

15          But I'm interested in hearing what those of  
16          you on the board have to say who have the aesthetic  
17          training that I don't have.

18          CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ: Ms. Bache-Wiig?

19          MS. BACHE-WIIG: I have a quick question, and  
20          I want to preface it with saying I do believe that  
21          the report is straightforward, clear, and I think  
22          it does a good job of illustrating how it meets the  
23          criteria in three of them.

24          And, with that said, I mean, it is a good  
25          example of this style, you know, the first of, you

1 know, many of these homes that were built.

2 Now, I have a question. Have we designated  
3 this style, you know, recently? Or is this going  
4 to be the beginning, you know, of potentially more  
5 of these-styled homes coming on line, because of  
6 the date?

7 I mean, this is 80 years old. So we're  
8 already beyond. But it's interesting to know,  
9 because, you know, I think people have a  
10 misconception of, you know, it's not Mediterranean  
11 or Mediterranean Revival, and, therefore, it  
12 doesn't merit designation.

13 But the City of Coral Gables has a story that  
14 doesn't just, you know, rely on, you know,  
15 Mediterranean, so it's a story of the style and  
16 many other styles, and how they came on line is the  
17 history of the City.

18 But I think it's important to note, are these  
19 going to be coming on line as necessary?

20 MS. KAUTZ: I can answer that. I mean, I  
21 don't have that crystal ball. Obviously, as the  
22 city continues to grow, you know, we get demolition  
23 or significance requests all the time, and they  
24 have not slowed down, nor will they slow down, just  
25 given the world.

1           So whether or not more of this time period or  
2 more of this style will come to you, I can't answer  
3 that. We have designated homes of this style in  
4 the past.

5           The recent question, I don't know the answer  
6 to that. I know there are some within the recent  
7 historic districts. Coral Way being the most  
8 recent. There's an original designation --

9           MS. ROLANDO: -- Santa Maria, I know there are  
10 some.

11          MS. KAUTZ: Yeah.

12          MS. ROLANDO: And there's this style of home  
13 in the historic districts. I know there's a home  
14 in Alhambra Circle, also North Greenwood, Santa  
15 Maria --

16          MS. KAUTZ: Absolutely. So they exist, and  
17 there are some that are protected, and there are  
18 some that are not, and there are some that are not  
19 yet.

20          MR. FULLERTON: I would like to say that, you  
21 know, everybody has done a tremendous job of  
22 research, including the owner, and I feel his pain.

23          But this house is, by virtue of its timing,  
24 the time it was built, and its style and its --  
25 just how well it was done is exactly what we're

1 looking at in terms of the history of Coral Gables.

2 It represents that history by being the  
3 simpler version, perhaps, of the more elaborate  
4 ones that came later.

5 And within the three- or four- or five-block  
6 area from this house, you even pointed out,  
7 Mr. Zaharewicz, that there were several examples of  
8 Neoclassical work, that were more and more and more  
9 beautiful than yours.

10 That's kind of like a period in time that  
11 there was a photograph that was taken in 1940, and  
12 you became the model for the other ones that  
13 followed. So it is -- it is like a rung in the  
14 ladder of evolution. I think your house may have  
15 been the beginning of it.

16 So I think it's a very valuable part of the  
17 history of Coral Gables.

18 CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ: Any other comments?

19 MS. SPAIN: I have one quick one. I -- I  
20 understand that the owner has a design for a new  
21 home, but this board really is tasked with looking  
22 at the existing home and really cannot look at  
23 whatever is going in there. But it doesn't really  
24 matter, because that's not part of the criteria.

25 The only thing that we look at is whether your

1 existing home fits the criteria, and I think  
2 clearly it does.

3 And that's, again, Elizabeth, a very good  
4 report, very clear. That's all.

5 CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ: Would anybody like to make  
6 a motion?

7 MS. ROLANDO: I'll move that we designate the  
8 property located at 649 Palmarito Court as a local  
9 historic landmark.

10 CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ: Do we have a second?

11 MS. KAUTZ: Gus, do you need any further  
12 articulation in that motion?

13 ATTORNEY CEBALLOS: So the board, if they're  
14 proceeding with the motion that they had priorly  
15 articulated the reasoning behind it, with what  
16 criteria is being met in order to facilitate the  
17 homeowner's original request, so it's all three of  
18 them.

19 The board is not limited by those initial  
20 three. So if there's any particular criteria that  
21 they can articulate that, that would be great. If  
22 they want to discuss it, that's up to the board.

23 As long as they believe there's evidence that  
24 it meets at least one of the criteria, they can  
25 move forward.

1 MR. FULLERTON: Haven't we articulated those  
2 in our discussion, right now, that we've just had?

3 MS. ROLANDO: Yes, and I can amend the motion  
4 to say that I move for approval based upon the  
5 information set forth in the staff report. I also  
6 found information in Dr. Gillis's (phonetic)  
7 correspondence to be informative as well.

8 CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ: Do we have a second?

9 MR. EHRENHAFT: I'll second.

10 CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ: Can we call the roll,  
11 please.

12 MR. DURANA: Ms. Rolando?

13 MS. ROLANDO: Yes.

14 MR. DURANA: Ms. Spain?

15 MS. SPAIN: Yes.

16 MR. DURANA: Mr. Fullerton?

17 MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

18 MR. DURANA: Ms. Bache-Wiig?

19 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes.

20 MR. DURANA: Mr. Durana?

21 Yes.

22 MR. DURANA: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

23 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.

24 MR. DURANA: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

25 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.



1 MR. DURANA: Mr. Menendez?

2 CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ: Yes.

3 MS. KAUTZ: Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN MENENDEZ: We're going to take a  
5 10-minute break, and we'll be back shortly.

6 Thank you, Mr. Zaharewicz.

7 \*\*\*\*\*

8 (End of excerpt)

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STATE OF FLORIDA)  
COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE)

I, Chloe Leroux, Florida Professional Reporter,  
certify that I was authorized to and did  
stenographically report the foregoing proceedings and  
that the transcript is a true and complete record of my  
stenographic notes.

Dated this 13th day of January, 2021.

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Chloe Leroux, FPR