



*Historical Resources &  
Cultural Arts*

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**COA (SP) 2024-021  
AUGUST 21, 2024**

**STAFF REPORT  
SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS  
FOR THE PROPERTY AT  
1148 ALHAMBRA CIRCLE  
A LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK**

**Proposal:** The application requests design approval for an addition and alterations to the residence and sitework.

**Architect:** ARKO Architecture, Edgardo Betancourt Santiago

**Owner:** Mauricio E. Cardenal & Diane Cullinan

**Legal Description:** Lots 1 & 2, Block 15, Coral Gables Section "C," according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8, at Page 26 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

**Site Characteristics:** The property is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Alhambra Circle and Columbus Boulevard. The lot size is 122' x 150.'

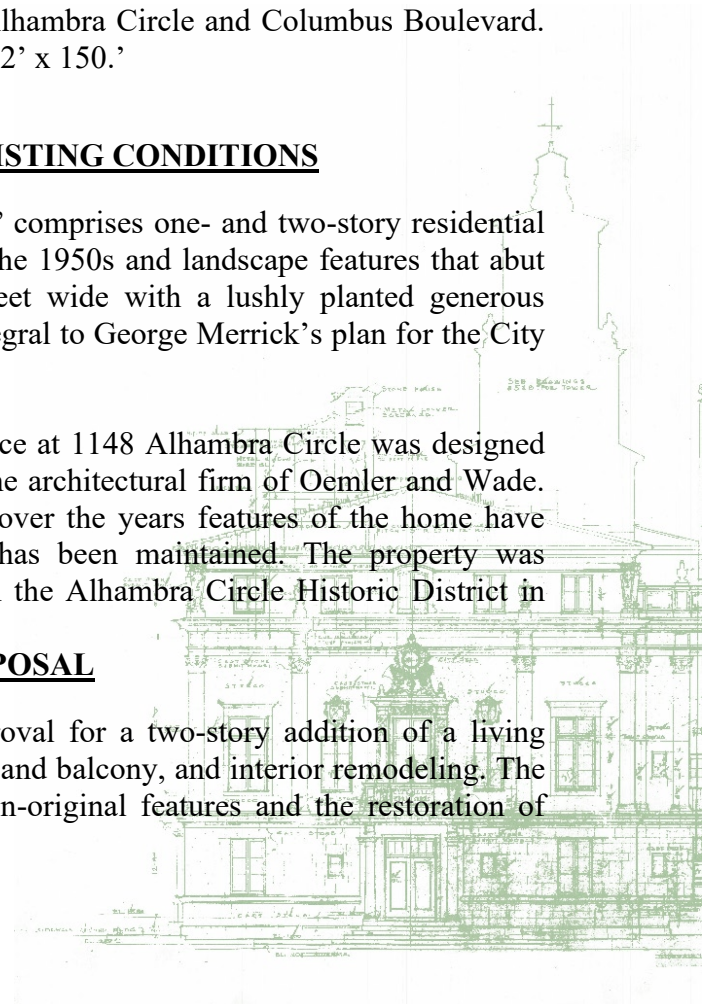
**BACKGROUND/EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The "Alhambra Circle Historic District," comprises one- and two-story residential properties built between the 1920s and the 1950s and landscape features that abut Alhambra Circle. This roadway, 120 feet wide with a lushly planted generous swale, was purposefully planned and integral to George Merrick's plan for the City of Coral Gables.

Permitted on April 27, 1929, the residence at 1148 Alhambra Circle was designed in the Mediterranean Revival Style by the architectural firm of Oemler and Wade. In 1969 the kitchen was expanded and over the years features of the home have been altered but the overall integrity has been maintained. The property was designated as a contributing structure in the Alhambra Circle Historic District in 2007.

**PROPOSAL**

The applicant is requesting design approval for a two-story addition of a living room, primary bedroom, covered terrace and balcony, and interior remodeling. The project also includes the removal of non-original features and the restoration of features.



### **SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION**

The following Standards have application in this matter:

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



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

### **STAFF OBSERVATIONS**

The property currently consists of a two-story residence facing north onto Alhambra Circle. The front entry is under a two-story loggia accessible through walled patio. At the southwest corner along Columbus Boulevard is a three-bay covered carport leading to the one-bay attached garage. To the north of the carport is a trellis-covered area. At the northeast corner of the home is a covered terrace. A CBS perimeter wall runs along the south (rear) property line and wraps around the southeast corner.

The work proposed in the application consists of:

- a two-story addition to the side (east) of the home
- an additional covered terrace and balcony on the side façade
- interior remodeling
- removal of non-original features and the restoration of features
- replacement of windows and doors
- sitework requests are minimal, to include: new a/c court, and storage enclosure

### **Addition**

The proposed two-story addition will be to the side (east) of the home. It will be located behind the extant kitchen infilling an essentially asymmetrical U-shaped portion of the home between the bedroom behind the garage to the south and the bedroom to the north. The two-story addition is approximately 1,510 SF. It extends approximately 2'-7" beyond the extant bedroom behind the garage and 14'-6" beyond the guest bedroom. (Sheet A-1.04) The first floor will include a new mudroom, laundry room, kitchen and living room. The living room will open via three sets of arched French doors onto a new 359 SF covered terrace. Three semi-circular arched openings spring from columns on the east façade of the new loggia and align with the French doors.

The second floor will include a primary bedroom, bathroom and closet. The primary bedroom will open via two sets of French doors onto a new 359 SF balcony. The balcony will have a decorative iron railing to compliment the style of the home. On the west elevation, there will be a roof terrace overlooking Columbus Boulevard.

### **Extant House**

This proposal includes the removal of non-original features, the up-dating of elements in a manner appropriate to the historic integrity of the home, as well as the restoration and/or preservation of original features.

Throughout the extant home the exterior windows and doors are to be replaced with impact-resistant models in the configuration of the original home. With the following noted exceptions the window sizes and original sills are to be retained.

- window configuration and operation need to match the original, details to be worked out with staff prior to permitting
- proposed 12-lite window configuration are not appropriate
- a second story door on the rear (south) elevation is to be enclosed. (Sheet A-2.02)
- a small arched window (not original) on the Columbus Boulevard side (west façade) is to be enclosed and a door installed (Sheet A-2.00)
- a double window will be enlarged to accommodate an arched garage door opening. The opening for the extant garage door will be returned to its original arched opening. (Sheet A-2.00)

The original plans (not easily legible) seem to indicate that there were shutters on some of the windows along the west end of the home. Shutters in this area are being strategically re-introduced.

No substantial changes to the site plan have been presented.

### **VARIANCES**

No variances have been requested with this application.

### **BOARD OF ARCHITECTS**

05/23/2024 BOA meeting: Motion to approve as noted with the following comments: 1) Study proportions of rear terrace arches & 2nd floor rail. Consider making adding a curb on second floor, delete bond and inset rail between piers. connection at the ground floor to house should be a wall vs a column. 2) Shift corridor at second floor entry to master towards the front in order to better articulate the façade with window modulations.

All comments have been addressed with the City Architect.

### **STAFF CONCLUSION**

The application presented requests design approval for the infill construction two-story addition, a covered terrace, balconies and interior remodeling. Staff supports the replacement of the windows and door but the configuration and operation need to match the original, the final details need to be worked out with staff prior to permitting. Overall, the proposed alterations to the property are in keeping with the Secretary of Interior Standards in that the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment are unimpaired.

While the roof of the new two-story addition will be visible from Alhambra Circle it does not adversely impact the historic integrity of the two-story home. However, the distinction between the new addition and the original home are not readily apparent as presented on the plans. Staff recommends a different stucco texture of the new additions to achieve this mandate.

The removal of non-historic features and the re-integration of original features will aid in restoring a higher degree of integrity to late 1920s Mediterranean Revival home. Staff fully supports these endeavors. If the owners are contemplating Ad Valorem Tax Abatement as a result of this project, Staff suggests returning the front terrace enclosure back to its original appearance as seen in the 1940s photograph of the residence and the removal of other non-original features such as the covered entry at the West elevation, and decorative pineapple motif. Staff requests the following conditions to be incorporated into any motion for approval:


1. Windows to be clear glass, no tint, no reflectivity.
2. Window muntins are to be high-profile. Window style and configuration will be worked out with staff to match the original plans, as best as possible.

3. The existing window and door openings are to remain in their existing locations and sizes unless otherwise noted.
4. The extant house is NOT to be restuccoed in its entirety.
5. Extant sills are to remain and not be refinished or resized. Sills may be patched and painted.
6. French doors are to have a kickplate.
7. Roof is to be two-piece true barrel tile.
8. The existing front door (1) and side door in living room (16) are original and are to remain.
9. The texture of the stucco of the new addition should not match existing.
10. Wood columns on front (north) elevation are to be patched and painted.
11. Staff suggests reviewing the original plans for shutter type (they were intended to be more rustic and less colonial-looking) and locations.

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

A motion to **APPROVE WITH THE CONDITIONS NOTED ABOVE** the design proposal for the infill construction of a two-story addition, a covered terrace, balconies and interior remodeling as well as the removal of non-original features and the restoration of features on the property located at **1148 Alhambra Circle**, a contributing resource within the “Alhambra Circle Historic District,” legally described as Lots 1 & 2, Block 15, Coral Gables Section “C,” according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8, at Page 26 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida and **APPROVE** the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness with the conditions noted above.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Anna C. Pernas  
Historic Preservation Officer