



AV 2018-001
April 20, 2021

Historical Resources &
Cultural Arts

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**REPORT OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES
HISTORICAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
ON THE AD VALOREM TAX EXEMPTION REQUEST
FOR THE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PROPERTY AT
711 UNIVERSITY DRIVE
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA
A LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
PART 2**

Owner: Rebecca Byam

Original Date of Permit: October 1, 1925

Original Permit No.: 1547

Architect for Alterations: Robert S. Brown, br3 Architecture, P.A.

Contractor for Alterations: FXD Construction

Estimated Cost of Entire Project: \$1,298,238**

Estimated Cost of Work
on Historic Buildings: \$918,836**

Legal Description: Lot 11 & S ½ of Lot 10, Block 137, Coral Gables Country Club Section Part Six, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 20, at Page 1 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida

Folio Number: 03-4117-004-2070

Date of Listing in Coral Gables
Register of Historic Places: January 19, 2017

(**Dollar amounts supplied by Applicant and are not verified by Historical Resources Staff)

BACKGROUND

Originally permitted as 3904 Ocean Beach Drive (the street name was later changed to University Drive by 1930) in 1925, the striking residence at 711 University Drive is significant as an excellent example of the Mediterranean architectural style which defined the City of Coral Gables' earliest

years. The home was designed by architect Phineas Paist for Edwin Gilbert and Ethel Merrick Bishop, the younger sister of City of Coral Gables founder George Merrick. Originally built on three lots on the corner of a prominent street, this single-family home represents a refined interpretation of the Mediterranean Revival style on a grand scale. The property has maintained its historic integrity and continues to contribute to the historic architectural fabric of the City.

The applicant is requesting Ad Valorem Tax Relief for the renovation of the historic structure and the construction of an addition and alterations to the residence. The information contained within this staff report reflects all the improvements to the property (exterior, interior and site improvements) as reflected in the Certificate of Appropriateness Case File COA (SP) 2017-006. Only portions of the proposed work will actually apply to the tax exemption.

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PROPERTY

Improvements to the property, as reported by the owner, include:

A. General restoration/renovation

- New impact-resistant casement windows and doors to match original configuration
- New two-piece barrel tile roof and repair or replacement of damaged or rotten wood structural members
- New stucco finish and stucco repair
- Paint house
- New mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems
- Replacement of south/front façade balconette railings and iron window grille.
- Reintroduced the east/side second-floor loggia including wood railings to match existing on the house
- Enclosure of an existing west/rear second-floor loggia retaining original wood railings
- Repair of wood rafter ends
- Structural improvements
- Demolition of later inappropriate additions (at rear facades), paving, gates, and pool.
- Replacement of interior and exterior stone/terracotta tile flooring
- Complete interior reconfiguration
- Interior restoration included – replication of missing iron railing in living room, repair of existing wood window grille, retention of stained glass windows, restoration of original ironwork, restoration of pecky cypress elements, restoration of interior doors,

B. Additions

- One-story addition at the southwest corner of the residence at the location of an existing open (screened with an awning) terrace consisting of a media room
- One-story addition at the west side of the wing of the residence that parallels Palmarito Street consisting of a half-bathroom and covered terrace with built-in bar on the first floor, an outdoor staircase and an open terrace surrounded by a low wall above

C. Site improvements

- Installation of new paver driveway and walkways
- Installation of new swimming pool and deck
- Installation of new landscaping
- New walls, fence, and gates

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Please see the attached Certificate of Appropriateness applications and corresponding submitted documents for further information.

Respectfully submitted,



Warren Adams
Historic Preservation Officer

Attachments: Part 1 and Part 2 Applications for Ad Valorem Tax Relief, COA (SP) 2017-006 Application, COA (SP) 2017-006 Report, As-Built drawings, Local Historic Designation Report Case File LHD 2016-021