

*From the desk of Brett Gillis,
Historian and Preservationist*

I have reviewed the Local Historic Designation Report for 1005 South Alhambra Circle and agree with its findings.

Constructed during the Colonial Revival period, this residence is a fine example of the Neoclassical style and possesses elements that represent adaptation to the South Florida environment.

Several other Colonial Revival and Neoclassical residences have already been designated, and several other properties designed by this architect have also been designated.

Alterations are minor and inconsequential compared to other properties that the Historic Preservation Board has recently designated, such as 1207 Genoa and 753 Minorca, just to name two examples.

While, yes, each property is considered on its own merits, it is important to the public trust that the Historic Preservation Board carry out its duties based on the established standards and criteria in a fair and consistent manner. In other words, a reasonable person should not find the Board's decisions arbitrary or capricious.

Simply put, I do not see how this Board could, in good faith, turn this one down.

This property meets several of the criteria for designation, even though only one is required. A detailed review of the criteria follows.

This property clearly meets the criteria for designation as per the Zoning Code of Coral Gables:

“Districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects of national, state and local importance are of historic significance if they possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, or association. In order to qualify for designation as a local historic landmark or local historic landmark district, individual properties must have significant character, interest or value as part of the historical, cultural, archaeological, aesthetic, or architectural heritage of the City, state or nation... The eligibility of any potential local historic landmark or local historic landmark district shall be based on meeting one (1) or more of the following criteria:” *[annotations in italics]*

A. Historical, cultural significance:

1. Is associated in a significant way with the life or activities of a major historic person important in the past *[no]*;
2. Is the site of an historic event with significant effect upon the community, city, state, or nation *[no]*;
3. Is associated in a significant way with a major historic event whether cultural, economic, military, social, or political *[no]*;
4. Exemplifies the historical, cultural, political, economic, or social trends of the community *[YES]*; or
5. Is associated in a significant way with a past or continuing institution, which has contributed, substantially to the life of the City *[no]*.

B. Architectural significance:

1. Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by one (1) or more distinctive architectural styles *[YES]*;
2. Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or method of construction *[YES]*;
3. Is an outstanding work of a prominent designer or builder *[no]*; or
4. Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship of outstanding quality or which represent a significant innovation or adaptation to the South Florida environment *[YES]*.

C. Aesthetic significance:

1. By being a part or related to a subdivision, park, environmental feature, or other distinctive area, should be developed or preserved according to a plan based on an historical, cultural, or architectural motif *[no]*; or
2. Because of its prominence of spatial location, contrasts of siting, age, or scale, is an easily identifiable visual feature of a neighborhood, village, or the City and contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of such neighborhood, village, or the City. In case of a park or landscape feature, is integral to the plan of such neighborhood or the City *[no]*.

D. Archaeological significance: Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistoric history or history *[no]*.