

Dacosta, Susan

From: Nicholas Frankovich <nf2@caa.columbia.edu>
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2026 6:07 PM
To: Urquia, Billy; Davis, Yolande; Liguori, Desiree; City Clerk
Subject: 110 Phoenetia, Special Master hearing

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Dear City Clerks:

Please share this email with the special masters and other city officials who will be involved in the hearing, scheduled for tomorrow, January 13, on plans for the proposed demolition and construction at 110 Phoenetia Avenue in Coral Gables.

January 12, 2026

Dear Special Masters and all concerned:

The architectural plan on the table at the hearing scheduled for January 13 is materially identical to the one that was on the table at last month's hearing. And hence my objections are the same as those I raised last month. Please see below for my email of December 4.

The proposed structure is too massive for the Garden Apartment District of Coral Gables and would entail the elimination of too much greenspace.

On January 8, the editorial board of the *Coral Gables Gazette* published a judicious opinion on the proposed development. Their editorial reads in part:

The central question now extends beyond technical compliance to compatibility, restraint, and stewardship of place. The Phoenetia Avenue site sits within a part of the city shaped by a specific planning intent. George Merrick's original vision for the Douglas Section emphasized garden-scaled development, coherence, and an interplay between architecture and landscape. That vision did not freeze the neighborhood in time, but it did establish a hierarchy of values—scale before spectacle, continuity before disruption, and greenery as structure rather than decoration. That planning intent still shapes expectations in North Ponce today.

Those values did not disappear with Merrick. They were codified and reaffirmed decades later through the North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation District Overlay, adopted to preserve and enhance the area's garden apartment character and to ensure that new development contributes to, rather than overwhelms, its surroundings.

Overlay districts exist precisely because baseline zoning cannot capture every contextual nuance. They signal that compatibility is a governing principle. When a project complies on paper yet strains the spirit of the district it inhabits, the question becomes whether compliance alone satisfies the city's responsibility.

< . . . >

Coral Gables has grown thoughtfully for a century because it has accommodated change within a disciplined framework. Density, when properly placed, strengthens the city. New housing, when well integrated, sustains it.

The issue is whether this site, at this scale, under these conditions, honors the compatibility standards the city itself has established.

Nor is the issue whether a developer acted improperly. Property owners are entitled to pursue the full value of what zoning allows. The city's responsibility is to evaluate outcome.

< . . . >

The Special Master's review will help clarify whether the Board of Architects applied the code correctly. That determination deserves careful consideration. Yet regardless of its outcome, the Commission retains the authority—and the obligation—to ask a broader question: Does this project, as approved, reflect the standards Coral Gables expects for its most sensitive neighborhoods?

Answering that question requires clarity, independence, and an understanding that compatibility is achieved when development feels inevitable in hindsight, not contested at the moment of approval.

Coral Gables has long distinguished itself by insisting that growth carry a civic signature—that new buildings feel placed, not imposed; that landscapes are assets, not afterthoughts; that neighborhoods evolve without losing their center of gravity.

The decision before the City Commission offers an opportunity to reaffirm that tradition. Process brought Coral Gables here. Judgment will define what comes next.

You can read the full editorial [here](#). You do not need to be reminded to respect the process. I do urge you to exercise honest and sound judgment while respecting both the city's "hierarchy of values," as the editors aptly describe it, and the unique character of the Garden Apartment District in particular.

Sincerely,

Nick Frankovich

**888 S. Douglas Road, Apt. 1213
Coral Gables, FL 33134
(216) 773-2873**

On Thu, Dec 4, 2025 at 6:01 PM Nicholas Frankovich <nf2@caa.columbia.edu> wrote:

Office of the City Clerk

Dacosta, Susan

From: bonnie bolton <bonniebolton3@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2026 6:38 PM
To: City Clerk; Maricris Longo; Karelia Carbonell
Subject: Fwd: Comments

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: bonnie bolton <bonniebolton3@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Jan 12, 2026 at 3:25 PM
Subject: Fwd: Comments
To: bonnie bolton <bonniebolton3@gmail.com>

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From: bonnie bolton <bonniebolton3@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Jan 12, 2026 at 3:25 PM
Subject: Fwd: Comments
To: <usa1533@fedex.com>

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From: bonnie bolton <bonniebolton3@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Jan 12, 2026 at 3:09 PM
Subject: Fwd: Comments
To: bonnie bolton <bonniebolton3@gmail.com>

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From: bonnie bolton <bonniebolton3@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Jan 12, 2026 at 2:26 PM
Subject: Fwd: Comments
To: bonnie bolton <bonniebolton3@gmail.com>

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From: Rafael Portuondo <rafael@portuondo-perotti.com>

Date: Mon, Jan 12, 2026 at 12:17 AM

Subject: Comments

To:

Cc: bonniebolton3@gmail.com <bonniebolton3@gmail.com>

My name is Rafael Portuondo

And I writing in regards to the st James site and area . There are many sites in coral gables that that have locations that can hold larger buildings like down town coral gables and the US1 corridor . Civically downtowns tend to be denser and taller to support retail and housing. US1 to me as a large highway supports taller and denser buildings as well. In the case of US1 more density can help mass transit and the scale of US1 as a highway can hold taller structures.

Now in the case the St James site ,it's really more in a neighborhood with single family homes , townhouses , churches and near the Woman's club. So scale should come into play and details the represent the look and feel of coral gables . This building should be judged by there proportions ,details and scale.

Since the adjacent neighborhood is predominantly 1 to 4 stories scale is vital to its success. So as you review the project ask your self is it detailed properly ? Is the scale compatible to the adjacent structures ?If the answer is no then what is the right scale for this section of Coral Gables.

And demand the architecture is in line with Gorge Mericks City Beautiful goals of beauty , harmony ,scale and proportion.

Bless you all. Rafael

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**405 Biltmore Way
Coral Gables, FL 33134**

Re: 110 Phoenetia Avenue

Dear City Clerks:

Please share this letter with the special masters, the city commissioners, and any other city officials involved in the hearing, scheduled for December 8, on the architectural plans that Fifield Companies of Chicago has submitted for the proposed demolition and construction at 110 Phoenetia Avenue in Coral Gables.

Dear Special Masters and all concerned:

The relative merits and drawbacks of any building are inseparable from its location.

While it might have a place in Brickell or downtown Miami, the construction that Fifield Companies of Chicago proposes for 110 Phoenetia Avenue is too massive for the Garden Apartment District of Coral Gables, a jewel of the City Beautiful movement of the early twentieth century. What might add value to other neighborhoods would be a blight on this narrow sliver of a leafy enclave between Douglas Road and Ponce de Leon Boulevard.

I and other residents would welcome a judiciously planned addition of garden apartments, a development that would be consistent with the character of the property and the neighborhood. Its greenspace and quiet benefit the city as a whole and the larger community beyond and would better serve by being reinforced, not demolished.

Fifty years ago, developers and New York City officials with dollar signs in their eyes were ready with the wrecking balls to take down Grand Central Terminal and put up what to many at the time seemed an improvement, another tall building. The demolition was practically a fait accompli when the former first lady of the United States stepped up to add her name to the campaign to preserve the irreplaceable. History has vindicated her judgment. Those who will decide whether to demolish or to preserve the irreplaceable in Coral Gables should be guided by it.

Sincerely,

Nick Frankovich

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