

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Elected Officials,

I am a tenant in Coral Gables and I want to make sure the Board hears from people who rent as well as those who own. We live here too. We chose this neighborhood too. And the proposed development at the Garden of our Lord concerns us just as much.

Nine stories is too tall for that block. Four stories is the limit and everything around the site reflects that. The streets are narrow and residential and cannot support a 350 car parking garage. The Coral Gables Historic City Plan and the North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance both require this area to stay low rise.

The community vision process said two to four stories. That was residents saying what they want their neighborhood to be. I am one of those residents and I agree with them.

Please deny this application.

Thank you,

AMEL RODRIGUEZ
42 PHOENIXIA APT 4
33134

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Amel Rodriguez', written in a cursive style.

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Commissioners,

I want to lay out clearly why the Garden of our Lord application should be denied, because I think sometimes when there are many issues with a project they start to blur together.

The first issue is height. The block is zoned Special Use/Religious with a four story maximum. The proposal asks for nine. The buildings immediately surrounding the site are one to four stories. Four single family homes are directly adjacent. This is not a small variance — it is a fundamental incompatibility with the established neighborhood.

The second issue is the ordinances. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance was created specifically to preserve the character of this neighborhood. The Coral Gables Historic City Plan calls for low rise development in scale with surrounding homes. Both were deliberately adopted by the City Commission. Both are violated by this proposal.

The third issue is the community vision process. The North Ponce Community Vision Workshop produced clear recommendations — two to four stories, preserve the garden apartment character, explore park space on this site. This project does the opposite on every point.

The fourth issue is infrastructure. The surrounding streets are narrow residential streets. They were not built to absorb the traffic generated by a 350 car parking garage. The residents who live on those streets would bear that cost daily.

The fifth issue is the PAD request. A school courtyard accessible only outside school hours is not a public benefit under any reasonable reading of what PAD requires. It should not be accepted as one here.

Each of these issues independently supports denial. Together they make an overwhelming case. I am asking the Board to make the decision that all of this evidence points toward.

Sincerely,

- SAMUEL GONZALEZ



126 ANTIQUERA AVE

- NADIA GONZALEZ



Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Commissioners,

I want to submit a thorough opposition to the Garden of our Lord zoning application because I think it deserves a thorough response.

On height: the block is zoned Special Use/Religious with a four story maximum. The proposal is for nine stories. That is not a minor variance. The buildings that actually exist on the surrounding streets are one to four stories. There are four single family homes immediately adjacent to the site. No reasonable compatibility analysis supports nine stories in this context.

On the ordinances: the North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance was created specifically to preserve the character of this neighborhood — its historic buildings and its traditional garden apartment fabric. The Coral Gables Historic City Plan calls for this area to remain low in height and in scale with its single family surroundings. Both were deliberately adopted by the City Commission. Both are directly violated by this proposal.

On the community process: the North Ponce Community Vision Workshop produced specific recommendations — two to four stories, preserve the neighborhood character, explore park space on this site. This application ignores all of them.

On infrastructure: the surrounding streets are narrow residential streets that were not designed to absorb the traffic from a 350 car parking garage. The daily impact on neighboring residents would be real and lasting.

On PAD: a school courtyard accessible to the public only outside school hours does not meet any reasonable standard for a public green space benefit. It should not be accepted as one here.

Every dimension of this application points toward denial. I am asking the Board to deny it.

Respectfully submitted,

35 Phoenicia Ave unit 2

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Vice Mayor,

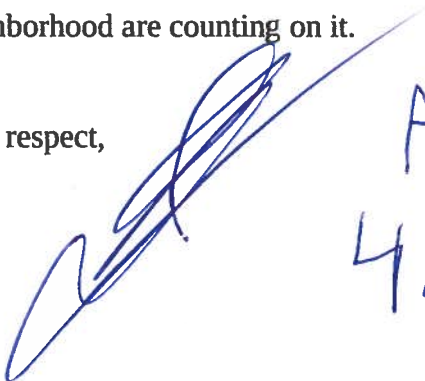
I have walked the streets around the Garden of our Lord many times. I have talked to people who live there — on Phoenetia, on Antilla, on the blocks closest to the site. And I can tell you that the people who actually live in that neighborhood do not want this project. Not one person I spoke with supported it. They were worried about the traffic, the height, the way it would change the character of streets they chose to live on.

What I kept hearing, in different ways, was a version of the same thing: we moved here because it is not like everywhere else. Because the buildings are the right size. Because the neighborhoods are protected. Because Coral Gables is different from Brickell or downtown or the parts of Miami where a developer can put up a nine story building wherever they want.

That reputation is real and it is valuable. It is part of why people choose to live here and why they pay what they pay to do it. But it is not self-sustaining. It requires the City to actually enforce the rules that create it. The four story limit on that block. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance. The Coral Gables Historic City Plan. Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code. These are the rules that make Coral Gables what it says it is.

I am asking the Board to enforce them and vote no on this application. The people who live in that neighborhood are counting on it.

With respect,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

APT #1
42 Phoenetia Ave

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Commissioners,

I have lived in Coral Gables long enough to remember when decisions like this felt like they went the right way more often than not. When the City said no to things that did not belong and yes to things that fit. When the rules felt like they applied to everyone.

The North Ponce neighborhood is one of the parts of this city I love most. It has a quality to it that is hard to describe but easy to feel. The buildings are the right size. The streets are the right scale. It feels like a place where people actually live rather than a place people pass through. That is rarer than it sounds and harder to maintain than most people realize.

A nine story building would change that neighborhood visibly and permanently. It would tower over everything around it. The four families in single family homes right next door would live in its shadow. The streets, which are already tight in the mornings, would absorb the traffic from 350 parking spaces whether they were designed for it or not.

The Coral Gables Historic City Plan, the North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance, and Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code all say this should not happen. The community said so through the North Ponce Vision Workshop. The neighborhood itself, in the way it is built and the way it feels, says so.

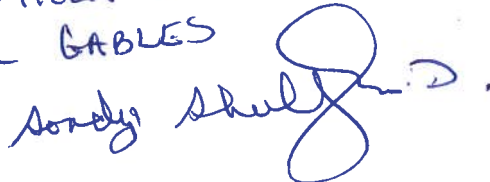
I am asking the Board to say so too and vote no on this application.

With respect,

SANDY SHULTZ, M.D.

415 ANTILLA AVE

CORAL GABLES

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sandy Shultz, M.D." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Mayor,

I want to ask the Board a simple question before getting into the specifics of this application: what makes Coral Gables different?

The answer most people give is the neighborhoods. The scale. The fact that a residential street actually feels residential. The fact that the City enforces its own rules and does not just wave through whatever a developer wants to build. That reputation is real and it is valuable and it does not maintain itself automatically.

The Garden of our Lord proposal is exactly the kind of project that erodes it. Nine stories in a four story neighborhood. A 350 car garage on streets built for residents not institutions. A PAD request dressed up around a school courtyard that is only open when school is out. Multiple ordinances violated. The community's own vision process ignored.

If this gets approved people will reasonably ask what separates Coral Gables from Brickell or downtown Miami. The answer should not be "not much anymore." I am asking the Board to deny this application and keep that answer from being necessary.

Regards,

Javier Loyola
888 S Povel Rd
Coral Gables

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Mayor,

I want to make a specific case about the infrastructure problem with the Garden of our Lord proposal because I think it sometimes gets treated as a secondary concern when it should be primary.

The streets surrounding this site are narrow residential streets. I know them. They were built for a neighborhood of single family homes and low rise apartments, not for an institutional building with 350 parking spaces. There is no road widening plan that accompanies this application. There is no traffic mitigation strategy that makes those streets capable of handling what a building of this size would generate.

The residents who live on those streets — including four families in single family homes directly adjacent to the site — would absorb that traffic every day. Morning commutes. Afternoon pickups. Evening returns. It becomes part of their daily life without them having agreed to it or been compensated for it.

The Zoning Code, the historic city plan, and the conservation overlay ordinance all provide grounds for denial. But even setting all of that aside, the infrastructure alone should be disqualifying. I am asking the Board to take it seriously.

Sincerely,

Magaly Mencos
45 Antilla 3C
Coral Gables FL 33134

Dear Mayor and Elected Officials,


I live near the Garden of our Lord and I drive through that area every single day. I know what those streets look like at seven thirty in the morning and at five thirty in the afternoon. They are not wide streets. They are not built for high volume traffic. There is not a lot of margin.

A nine story building with 350 parking spaces would change those streets permanently. The cars have to go somewhere. They go onto residential streets that were not designed for them, past homes where families are trying to get their kids to school and get to work. That impact is daily and it does not go away.

The project also exceeds the four story height limit, conflicts with multiple City ordinances, and does not meet any reasonable standard for PAD approval. But I wanted the Board to hear from someone who actually uses those streets every day about what this would mean on the ground.

Please vote no.

Thank you,

 36 SANTILLANE AVE APT 3

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Elected Officials,

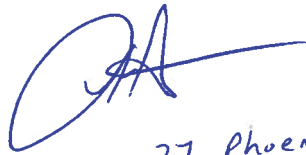
I have walked around the North Ponce area recently and talked to some of the people who live there. I wanted to get a sense of how residents actually feel about this proposal rather than just relying on what shows up in organized opposition.

The answer was pretty uniform. People do not want this. They are worried about the height — nine stories in a neighborhood where four is the limit and everything around it is one to three. They are worried about the traffic that 350 parking spaces would bring to streets that were not designed for it. They feel like a decision is being made over their heads that directly affects their daily lives.

What struck me is that these were not people who follow planning meetings closely or know the details of every relevant ordinance. They were just residents who looked at what was being proposed and thought: that does not belong here.

I think they are right. And I think the Zoning Code, the historic city plan, the conservation overlay ordinance, and the community vision process all agree with them. I am asking the Board to as well.

Thank you,



27 Phoenicia Ave Apt#2

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Commissioners,

I am writing to oppose the proposed zoning changes for the Garden of our Lord and to ask the Board to deny this application.

The case against approval is broad and consistent. The project exceeds the four story height limit on that block by more than double. It is incompatible with the surrounding one to four story neighborhood. It violates Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code, the North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance, and the Coral Gables Historic City Plan. It contradicts the recommendations of the North Ponce Community Vision Workshop. It proposes a 350 car parking garage on narrow residential streets. And it seeks PAD approval through a school courtyard that is only accessible outside school hours — a standard that has never been accepted in Coral Gables and should not be accepted here.

That is not a project with a few issues that can be worked out. That is a project that conflicts with the City's planning framework at every level. The Board has clear and abundant grounds for denial. I am asking them to use them.

Thank you for your consideration,

Katherine Perez
11 Santillane Ave
Coral Gables Fl, 33134

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Vice Mayor,

I want to tell the Board something that I think matters for this decision.


I have lived in this area long enough to remember when neighborhoods in Miami changed faster than anyone expected. When buildings went up that nobody wanted and streets that used to be quiet became something else. When people said it would not happen here and then it did. I watched it happen elsewhere and it is partly why I chose Coral Gables — because the City seemed serious about not letting it happen here.

The Garden of our Lord neighborhood is one of the places that still has what a lot of Miami has lost. The scale is right. The streets feel like they belong to the people who live on them. There are historic buildings that give it character and depth. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance and the Coral Gables Historic City Plan exist precisely because people recognized this and decided to protect it formally.

A nine story building with 350 parking spaces is not compatible with any of that. The zoning says four stories. The ordinances say low rise. The community said two to four stories through the vision process. Four families in single family homes are right next door to this site.

I am asking the Board to protect what makes this neighborhood worth protecting and deny this application. Once it is gone it does not come back.

With respect,

AORIAN ALONSO
 888 S DOUGLAS RD,

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Mayor,

I want to tell the Board what I like about living in the North Ponce neighborhood, because I think it is relevant to this decision.


I like that I can walk to places without feeling like I am navigating a commercial corridor. I like that the buildings on my street are low enough that my apartment gets light and I can see trees from my window. I like that the traffic is manageable most of the time and that the streets feel like they belong to the people who live on them rather than to whoever happens to be driving through.

Those things are not accidents. They are the result of zoning decisions and planning ordinances that someone thought carefully about and the City has enforced over time. The four story height limit. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance. The Coral Gables Historic City Plan. These frameworks produce the neighborhood I just described.

A nine story building with 350 parking spaces would produce something different. More noise. More traffic on streets that are already at their limit during busy times. A building that towers over everything around it and changes the sky over a neighborhood where the sky used to be visible. It would produce something closer to what I moved away from.

I am asking the Board to protect what makes this neighborhood what it is and deny the Garden of our Lord zoning application.

Thank you,



45 Antilla Ave

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Vice Mayor,

I am writing to oppose the proposed zoning changes for the Garden of our Lord and to ask the Board to deny this application.

Nine stories is more than double the four story limit on that block. The neighborhood is low rise. The Coral Gables Historic City Plan and the North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance both say it should stay that way.

The community participated in a vision process that produced recommendations the City should honor. Please do.

Thank you,



888 S. DOUGLAS RD

1117

Coral Gables, FL 33134

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Commissioners,

I want to try to explain something that I think is easy to lose in the back-and-forth of a zoning hearing: what this neighborhood actually feels like to the people who live in it.

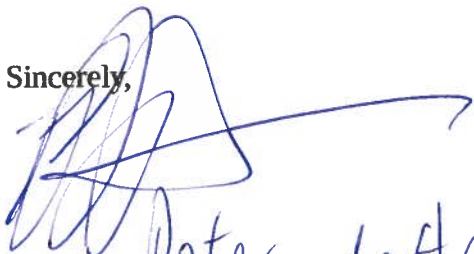
The North Ponce area has a particular quality. The streets are not too wide and not too narrow. The buildings are low enough that you can see the sky. There is a mix of small apartments and single family homes that gives it life without making it feel crowded. Walking through it in the morning or the evening feels different from most of Miami. It feels like a place that was thought about.

A nine story building with 350 parking spaces would introduce something into that environment that it was not built for and cannot absorb gracefully. The four families in single family homes immediately adjacent to the site would feel it most directly — the shadow, the noise, the traffic from a garage on streets where there is very little margin. But everyone who uses those streets would feel it.

I also want to be specific about the streets because I think it matters. These are one lane in each direction in places. School traffic already creates backups at certain times of day. There is no realistic scenario where adding 350 parking spaces worth of daily vehicle trips to that mix does not make things significantly worse for the people who live there.

The Zoning Code says four stories. The ordinances say low rise. The community said two to four stories through the vision workshop. The infrastructure says the same thing in practical terms. All of it points toward denial and I am asking the Board to get there.

Sincerely,



Peter deArmas

911 E Ponce de Leon Blvd

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Elected Officials,

I want to say something that I think a lot of residents feel but do not always say directly in letters like this.

When a project like the Garden of our Lord proposal gets as far as it has — a nine story building in a four story neighborhood, in conflict with multiple ordinances, after ignoring community vision outcomes — people start to wonder whether the process is working for them or for someone else. Whether the rules apply equally or whether money and connections can move things that the rules say should not move.

I do not want to believe that about Coral Gables. I have chosen to live here partly because I believe the City takes its planning commitments seriously. But that belief requires the City to demonstrate it, and this is one of those moments.

The case for denial here is not close. The height, the ordinances, the community vision process, the infrastructure, the PAD request — all of it points the same direction. I am asking the Board to point the same direction and vote no. The residents of this neighborhood are watching to see if the process works for them.

Sincerely,

Michael Perez

*30 Phoenicia Ave
Coral Gables, FL 33134*

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Commissioners,

I want to close my letter by saying what I think is at stake in this decision, because I think it is bigger than one building on one block.

Coral Gables has a reputation that is genuinely rare in South Florida. A city where the neighborhoods are protected. Where the scale is human. Where the zoning code means what it says and the historic city plan is not just a document that collects dust. Where a resident can participate in a community visioning process and trust that the outcome will be respected. That reputation attracts people, retains people, and makes the City worth what it is worth.

The Garden of our Lord proposal asks the Board to set that reputation aside. To approve a nine story building in a four story neighborhood, in conflict with the North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance, the Coral Gables Historic City Plan, and Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code. To disregard the recommendations of the North Ponce Community Vision Workshop. To accept a school courtyard as a qualifying PAD benefit. To put a 350 car parking garage on streets that were built for something entirely different.

Every piece of this application conflicts with the framework that makes Coral Gables what it says it is. The residents who live in that neighborhood — who walk those streets, who are raising families there, who chose it because they believed the rules would protect them — deserve a Board that takes that framework seriously.

I am asking the Board to be that Board and vote no on this application.

Thank you for your service to this city,


Paul Fierstein
1224 GRANADA

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Mayor,


I walk through the North Ponce neighborhood regularly. It is one of the better parts of Coral Gables to walk through — the streets are a manageable size, the buildings feel like they belong where they are, there are trees and it is quiet enough to actually enjoy being outside.

A nine story building on that block would change the feel of the whole area. You would feel it from a distance before you even got there. The scale would be off. And with 350 parking spaces worth of cars coming and going every day the quiet that makes those streets pleasant to walk would take a real hit.

The zoning allows four stories. The surrounding buildings are one to four stories. The Coral Gables Historic City Plan says this area should stay in scale with the single family homes around it. Everything points toward denial.

I hope the Board will follow that and vote no.

Thanks,


1201 E. Ponce de Leon #205
Coral Gables, FL

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Elected Officials,

I have spent some time over the past few weeks talking to people in the North Ponce neighborhood about the Garden of our Lord proposal. Not at organized meetings – just conversations with neighbors, people I ran into walking around, residents who live on the streets closest to the site.

The reaction has been consistent. Nobody I spoke with wants this. People are worried about the traffic and what it means for streets that are already tight. They are concerned about what a nine story building does to the feel of blocks where everything else is one to four stories. Several people mentioned the single family homeowners directly adjacent to the site and said they felt for them specifically. A few people did not know the details of the proposal but when I described it – nine stories, four story limit, 350 car garage, narrow streets – they were surprised it was even being considered.

I am sharing this not because informal conversations constitute a survey but because I think the Board should know that the opposition to this project is not organized noise. It is a real and broadly shared reaction from people who live in that neighborhood and do not want to see it changed in this way.

The legal case for denial is strong – height limit exceeded, multiple ordinances violated, PAD requirements not met, community vision process outcomes ignored. But behind all of that are real people who chose this neighborhood and want it protected. I am asking the Board to protect it.

Regards, 1201 E Ponce De Leon Blvd

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive letter 'R' with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Vice Mayor,

I want to talk about what happens if this project gets approved, because I think that question deserves real consideration.

A nine story building goes up on a block zoned for four, in a neighborhood of one to four story buildings, next to single family homes. The streets absorb the traffic from a 350 car garage whether they can handle it or not. The neighbors live with it. The neighborhood changes in a way that cannot be undone.

And the message sent to every future developer is that the rules in Coral Gables are negotiable. That if you come in with the right project and the right connections you can get approved for something that conflicts with the zoning, the historic city plan, the conservation overlay ordinance, the community vision process, and the basic compatibility requirements of Section 1-103. Why would any developer take those frameworks seriously after that?

The people who live in this neighborhood took them seriously. They participated in planning processes in good faith. They chose this city partly because of what those frameworks mean. I am asking the Board to show them that their faith was not misplaced and deny this application.

Thank you, 723 SIDONIA AVE #4 (R)...

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Commissioners,

Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code exists to protect George Merrick's vision for this city. That is not a vague or abstract purpose — it is written directly into the code. New development must be compatible with surrounding areas, must protect residential neighborhoods from incompatible uses, and must preserve the low intensity character that defines these streets.

A nine story building in a four story neighborhood fails every one of those requirements. It is not compatible with the surrounding one to four story buildings. It intrudes on a residential neighborhood with a scale and traffic load that those streets were not built to absorb. And it does nothing to preserve the character that Merrick intended and that the Zoning Code was written to protect.

The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance and the Coral Gables Historic City Plan add further weight to the case for denial. Both were created specifically for this type of situation. I am asking the Board to apply all of these frameworks and vote no on this application.

Sincerely,

Lizette Caswell
118 Antilla Ave apt 3 (33144)

Dear Mayor and Elected Officials,

George Merrick's vision for Coral Gables was not accidental. He built a city with intention — the scale of the streets, the architecture, the way residential neighborhoods were designed to feel like places where people actually wanted to live. Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code exists specifically to carry that vision forward. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance and the Coral Gables Historic City Plan exist for the same reason.

A nine story building in a four story neighborhood, next to single family homes, on streets built for residents not institutions, with a PAD benefit that consists of a school courtyard with limited public hours — this is not what Merrick built and it is not what those ordinances are supposed to allow.

I am asking the Board to enforce them and deny this application.

Sincerely,


44 Antilla Ave Apt 4
Coral Gables

Dear Planning and Zoning Board,

I live close enough to the Garden of our Lord site that this project would affect my daily life in concrete ways. I want to be specific about what that means.

The noise from a building that size — deliveries, parking garage traffic, general activity from a nine story institutional building — would be part of my daily environment. The traffic from 350 parking spaces would affect my ability to get in and out of my own street at the times of day when I need to. These are not abstract concerns. They are what it actually means to live next to a project like this.

The zoning does not allow nine stories on that block. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance protects the character of this neighborhood specifically. Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code requires compatibility with the surrounding area. None of these standards are met by this application.

I am asking the Board to deny it.

Thank you,

Alfredo D. Jimenez

44 Antilla Ave, Coral Gables, FL, 33134

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Mayor,

I want to spend some time on the PAD component of this application because I think it reveals something important about how this project has been put together.

Planned Area Development was designed to create a genuine exchange: the developer gets additional approvals and in return the community gets real, accessible public green space. That is the deal. It only works if the public benefit is actually public and actually beneficial.

What is being offered here is a courtyard inside a school campus. The public can access it when school is not in session. That means most weekday mornings during the school year — unavailable. Most weekday afternoons — unavailable. Holidays and school breaks — maybe available. Weekends — probably available.

That is not a park. That is not what PAD was designed to incentivize. In the entire history of Coral Gables this kind of conditionally accessible space has never been accepted as a qualifying PAD benefit. The reason is obvious once you look at it: if it were accepted, every future developer would offer a version of the same thing and the program would lose its purpose entirely.

The Board should reject the PAD request outright and make clear that this approach does not meet the standard. The rest of the application — the height violation, the ordinance conflicts, the infrastructure problems — provides further grounds for denial. But I want the PAD piece specifically to be rejected clearly and on the record.

Sincerely,

Tina Miller
878 Douglas Road, Coral Gables 33134

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Elected Officials,

I want to make the case for denying the Garden of our Lord application on historic grounds specifically, because I think that dimension of this decision deserves more attention than it sometimes gets.

Phoenetia Avenue has six historically designated structures. Antilla Avenue has three. The neighborhood as a whole is actively being studied for Historic District designation. That is not background information — it is the central context for this decision.

Historic District designation processes take years. They require sustained effort from residents, preservation advocates, city staff, and elected officials. They represent a genuine commitment to protecting something that cannot be replaced once it is gone. When a significant development proposal comes in during that process — in a block zoned for four stories, surrounded by one to four story buildings with multiple designated structures nearby — the Board's response defines what the designation process means.

A denial says: we take preservation seriously, we protect neighborhoods that are in the process of being recognized, we will not allow a nine story building to go up while a historic study is underway. An approval says the opposite. It says the process does not actually protect you until the ink is dry, and maybe not even then.

The Coral Gables Historic City Plan and the North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance already provide the legal basis for denial. The historic designation study adds moral weight to it. I am asking the Board to honor both.

Sincerely,

Dennis Fatur
44 Ard Apt 5. Coral Gables 33174.
