



*Historical Resources &
Cultural Arts*

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**STAFF REPORT
SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
FOR THE PROPERTY AT
517 ARAGON AVENUE
A LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK**

Proposal: The application requests design approval for a two-story addition and alterations to the residence and sitework.

Architect: Ana Alvarez, Martinez Alvarez

Owner: 517 ARAGON, LLC.

Legal Description: Lot 17 & the West 36.4 feet of Lot 16, Block 10, Coral Gables Section "B," according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 5, Page 111 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida

Site Characteristics: The property is located on an interior 86.40' x 110' lot on the north side of Aragon Avenue between Segovia and Hernando Streets.

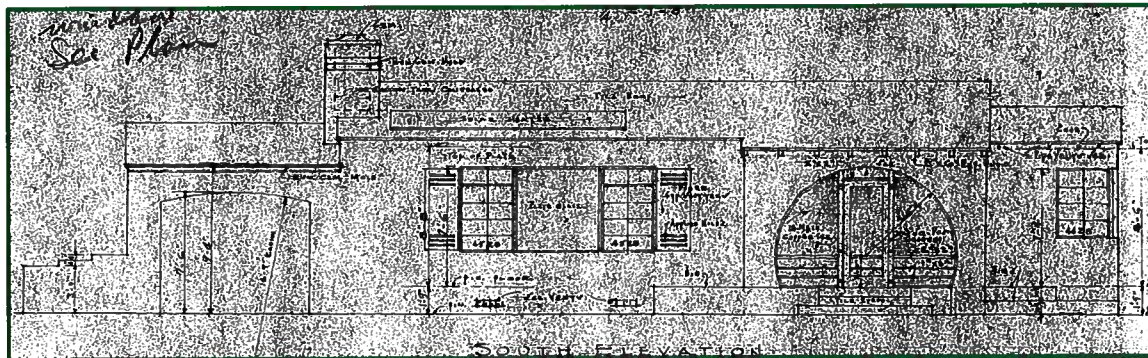
BACKGROUND/EXISTING CONDITIONS

The single-family residence at 517 Aragon Avenue was designed by architect William Merriam in the Minimal Traditional style. Permitted in February 1937 it is amongst the few homes built during the New Deal Era in the City. The Minimal Traditional style emerged in direct response to the Housing Act of 1934.

The home at 517 Aragon Avenue thoughtfully acknowledges the City's Mediterranean Revival foundation while embracing Modernistic aesthetics. It was one of the first homes in the City to usher in this new style. It retains its historic integrity and serves as a visible reminder of the history and the cultural heritage of the City.

PROPOSAL

The applicant is requesting design approval for the construction of an approximately 2,251 SF addition to the north of the residence, alterations to the residence and sitework. The proposal includes a two-story addition at the northwest corner of the property and a one-story addition on the northeast corner.



**Figure 1: 517 Aragon Avenue Over Time,
Front Front Facades: Permit #5357, 1937 [top]
Front (South) Façade: c.1940s [center]; 2022 [bottom] Courtesy of Realtor.com**

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.*

STAFF OBSERVATIONS

Note: For clarity, orthogonal directions have been revised to match the plan layout – i.e., the front facing elevation will be described as south, rear as north, etc.

The work proposed in the application consists of two additions to the rear of the residence. The first is a two-story addition to the northwest that consists of a laundry, kitchen, breakfast room and bedrooms on the second floor. The second addition, at the northeast corner, consists of a one-story addition that includes a bedroom and covered porch. To accommodate the new additions, an existing laundry and family room will be removed, as will the rear wall at the northeast corner. Portions of the interior will be reconfigured as well. The additions are finished in a smooth stucco. The additions are in the appropriate location to the rear of the structure and do not adversely affect the historic character of the existing structure. The design compliments the minimal traditional style of the historic structure and will restore components of the building represented in the original permit drawings.

The proposal also includes: restoring the open carport, window and door locations to be modified, and interior remodeling. The existing garage to the west, a later addition, will be slightly enlarged. The decorative security grilles will be removed and new impact windows to be installed at all openings. The architect has referenced the original plans and historic photos to modify the window types to match the original, as best as possible.

Site work includes: new hardscape including driveway, walkway and pool deck, site fencing and gates, new pool, relocation of mechanical equipment, and landscaping.

Front (South) Elevation – Sheet A-2.0:

The front (south) façade is distinctly horizontal. Main contributors are the low-pitched roofs with shallow eaves and the series of large openings across the facade. The two-story addition, visible from Aragon Avenue, is setback nearly 30'-0" from the front façade of the house. The proposed one-story addition to the northeast will not be visible.

The original carport will be restored, the existing garage doors will be removed and replaced with iron gates. The garage to the west, a later addition to the building, will be slightly expanded into the side yard. A new garage door, appropriate to the style of the building, will be installed. The existing decorative metal grilles will be removed and new aluminum, impact windows to match the original configuration are being proposed. The infill at the front porch will be reconfigured to mimic the design of the screened in porch in the original drawings.

The two-story addition is proposed to have a hipped, 2-piece barrel tile roof and finished in smooth stucco to match the historic structures. The proposed window configuration takes cues from the existing windows on site.

Side (East) Elevation – Sheet A-2.1:

Original window openings are proposed to be modified or enclosed on the side elevation. A recess in the stucco should outline the shape of the original opening. The rear addition extends into the north of the property approximately 12'-0", a seam in the stucco should be introduced to differentiate the new addition from the existing.

The east elevation of the two-story addition consists of a hipped roof with rafter tails and a balcony on the second floor facing an interior courtyard. The elevation would not be visible from the street. The proposed window and doors are complimentary to the existing style of the building.

Rear (North) Elevation – Sheet A-2.2:

The rear façade will be mostly altered due to the location and size of the proposed rear additions. The two-story addition will have single and paired casement windows. The one-story addition will have a set of paired casement windows and a covered terrace facing the courtyard. A new trellis is proposed in the courtyard, the height of the trellis should be studied so that it sits under the roof eave of the one-story portion of the building.

Side (West) Elevation – Sheet A-2.3:

The existing west wall of the garage will be removed, to expand the garage into the side yard. The two-story addition will be attached to the existing structure through the laundry room that is recessed from the edge of the new garage. The mass of the two-story addition gradually steps up away from the historic structure to create a transition between the new and the existing one-story structure. The design intends to create a clear separation, that minimally impacts the original footprint and can easily be reversed.

VARIANCES

No variances are being requested.

BOARD OF ARCHITECTS

The proposal was approved by the Board of Architects on December 14, 2023 with no comments.

STAFF CONCLUSION

The application requests design approval for additions and alterations to the residence and sitework. Elements on the additions have been differentiated from the existing and the additions are located so they do not overwhelm the existing historic structures.

Staff requests that the following conditions be incorporated into any motion for approval:

1. The roof is to be two-piece true barrel tile.
2. Windows and doors are to receive high-profile muntins and glass is to be clear/no tint or reflectivity. Provide note on permit drawings.
3. Provide a note regarding the proposed stucco texture at the additions on the permit drawings.
4. Material to be specified for the new pool deck.

5. Provide information and details of the proposed metal gates at the carport and side yards.
6. Work with Staff to possibly lower the height of the new trellis proposed in the rear courtyard.
7. A separate Standard Certificate of Appropriateness is required for the pool and pool deck. Staff will handle administratively.

Therefore, Historical Resources Department Staff recommends the following:

A motion to **APPROVE WITH THE CONDITIONS NOTED ABOVE** the design proposal for an addition to the residence and sitework on the property located at **517 Aragon Avenue**, a Local Historic Landmark, legally described Lot 17 & the West 36.4 feet of Lot 16, Block 10, Coral Gables Section "B," according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 5, Page 111 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida and **APPROVE** the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness with the condition noted above.

Respectfully submitted,



Anna Pernas
Historic Preservation Officer