

1 CITY OF CORAL GABLES
2 HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
3 JANUARY 18, 2023, 4:08 P.M.
4 CORAL GABLES CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS
5 405 BILTMORE WAY, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA
6 VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT
7
8

9 Board Members Present:

10 Albert Menendez, Chairperson
11 Cesar Garcia-Pons, Vice-Chairperson
12 Alicia Bache-Wigg
13 Xavier F. Durana
14 Bruce Ehrenhaft
15 John P. Fullerton
16 Michael J. Maxwell
17 Margaret "Peggy" Rolando
18 Dona Spain

19 City Staff:

20 Warren Adams, Director of Historical Resources
21 Kara Kautz, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
22 Gustavo Ceballos, Assistant City Attorney
23 Deena Bell-Llewellyn, Assistant Director of Public
24 Works for Greenspace Management
25 Nancy Lyons, Administrative Assistant and Board
Secretary

1 THEREUPON:

2 The following proceedings were had:

3 MR. MENENDEZ: Good afternoon. Welcome
4 to the regularly scheduled meeting of the
5 City of Coral Gables Historic Preservation
6 Board.

7 It's on.

8 MR. GARCIA-PONS: It's on.

9 MR. MENENDEZ: We are residents of
10 Coral Gables and are charged with the
11 preservation and protection of historic or
12 architecturally worthy buildings,
13 structures, sites, neighborhoods and
14 artifacts which impart a distinct
15 historical heritage of the City.

16 You want me to start from the top?

17 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Technical issues.

18 MR. MENENDEZ: Well, let's have them
19 fix it, so we can get started.

20 Good afternoon. Welcome to the
21 regularly scheduled meeting of the City of
22 Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board.
23 We are residents of Coral Gables and are
24 charged with the preservation and
25 protection --

1 THE CLERK: There is feedback. They
2 can't hear you on Zoom.

3 If you'd give me five minutes.

4 MR. MENENDEZ: Five minutes?

5 MR. CEBALLOS: Nancy, are you muted?

6 THE SECRETARY: Yes. Let's try again.

7 MR. MENENDEZ: Good afternoon. Welcome
8 to the regularly scheduled meeting of the
9 City of Coral Gables Historic Preservation
10 Board. We are residents of Coral Gables
11 and are charged with the preservation and
12 protection of historic or architectural
13 worthy buildings, structures, sites,
14 neighborhoods and artifacts which impart a
15 distinct historical heritage of the City.

16 The Board is comprised of nine members,
17 seven of whom are appointed by the
18 Commission, one by the City Manager, and
19 the ninth is selected by the Board and
20 confirmed by the Commission. Five Members
21 of the Board constitute a quorum and five
22 affirmative votes are necessary for the
23 adoption of any motion.

24 Lobbyist Registration or Disclosure,
25 any person who acts as a lobbyist pursuant

1 to the City of Coral Gables Ordinance
2 Number 2006-11 must register with the City
3 Clerk prior to engaging in lobbying
4 activities or presentations before City
5 Staff, Boards, Committees and/or the City
6 Commission. A copy of the Ordinance is
7 available in the Office of the City Clerk.
8 Failure to register and provide proof of
9 registration shall prohibit your ability to
10 present to the Historic Preservation Board
11 on applications under consideration this
12 afternoon.

13 A lobbyist is defined as an individual,
14 corporation, partnership or other legal
15 entity, employed or retained, whether paid
16 or not, by a principal who seeks to
17 encourage the approval or disapproval,
18 adoption, repeal, passage, defeat or
19 modifications of any Ordinance, Resolution,
20 action or decision of any City
21 Commissioner, any action, decision,
22 recommendation of the City Manager, any
23 City Board or Committee, including but not
24 limited to a quasi-judicial advisory board,
25 trust, authority or council or any action,

1 decision or recommendation of City
2 personnel during the time period of the
3 entire decision-making process on the
4 action, decision or recommendation which
5 foreseeably will be heard or reviewed by
6 the City Commission or a City Board or
7 Committee, including but not limited to a
8 quasi-judicial advisory board, trust,
9 authority or council. Presentations made
10 to this Board are subject to the City's
11 False Claims Ordinance, Chapter 39 of the
12 City of Coral Gables City Code.

13 I now officially call the City of Coral
14 Gables Historic Preservation Board Meeting
15 of January 19th, 2023, at 4:08 p.m.

16 Present today are Ms. Donna Spain,
17 Ms. Peggy Rolando, Mr. Michael Maxwell, Mr.
18 Cesar Garcia-Pons, Mr. John Fullerton, Ms.
19 Alicia Bache-Wiig, Mr. Bruce Ehrenhaft and
20 myself, Albert Menendez.

21 The next item on the agenda is Approval
22 of the Minutes for the meeting held on
23 December 21st, 2022.

24 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Mr. Chair, I have --
25 we have the November minutes, that we

1 didn't approve in the December meeting.

2 Can we do that first?

3 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. The November --
4 what's the date on the November meeting?

5 MR. GARCIA-PONS: November 16th.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: November 16 Minutes.

7 MR. GARCIA-PONS: And I have two
8 comments, scrivener's errors, on Page 22
9 and 23, which I'll provide to the Staff,
10 and I will move them with those two
11 scrivener's errors.

12 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Do I have a
13 second?

14 MR. MAXWELL: Second.

15 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Maxwell seconds.

16 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Rolando?

17 MS. ROLANDO: Yes.

18 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

19 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.

20 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

21 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

22 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Maxwell?

23 MR. MAXWELL: Yes.

24 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain?

25 MS. SPAIN: Yes.

1 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Fullerton?

2 MR. FULLERTON: Aye.

3 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Durana? Oh, he's
4 not here. I'm sorry.

5 Ms. Bache-Wiig?

6 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes.

7 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

8 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

9 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes.

10 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. We would like to
11 defer the --

12 MR. MAXWELL: We still have the
13 December minutes.

14 MR. MENENDEZ: Yeah. We just get them,
15 though, correct?

16 MR. MAXWELL: Yeah, we just did
17 November's.

18 MR. MENENDEZ: Did we just get
19 December's?

20 MR. MAXWELL: Oh, yeah.

21 MR. MENENDEZ: We just received
22 December, correct?

23 MS. ROLANDO: Yeah.

24 MR. MENENDEZ: So I'm going to defer
25 December's meeting minutes, because we

1 haven't been able to review them yet, okay?

2 All right. Next item, Notice Regarding
3 Ex Parte Communications, please be advised
4 that this Board is a quasi-judicial Board
5 and the items on the agenda are
6 quasi-judicial in nature, which requires
7 Board Members to disclose all ex parte
8 communications. An ex parte communication
9 is defined as any contact, communication,
10 conversation, correspondence, memorandum or
11 other written or verbal communication, that
12 takes place outside a public hearing
13 between a member of the public and a member
14 of a quasi-judicial Board, regarding
15 matters to be heard by the quasi-judicial
16 Board.

17 If anyone has made any contact with a
18 Board Member, when the issue comes before
19 the Board, the member must state, on the
20 record, the existence of the ex parte
21 communication, the party who originated the
22 communication, and whether the
23 communication will affect the Board
24 Member's ability to impartially consider
25 the evidence to be presented regarding the

1 matter.

2 Deferrals, Mr. Adams, do we have any
3 deferrals today?

4 MR. ADAMS: Good afternoon. The only
5 deferral is the one that was marked on the
6 agenda, which is Item 6.2, for 1710
7 Hernando Street.

8 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay.

9 MR. ADAMS: Okay?

10 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Perfect. Thank
11 you.

12 Swearing-in, any person in the audience
13 who will be testifying today, please rise
14 to be sworn in.

15 (Thereupon, the participants were sworn.)

16 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. The first Case
17 File Local Historic Designation, Case File
18 LHD 2022-014: Consideration of the local
19 historic designation of the property at 110
20 Phoenetia Avenue, legally described as Lots
21 1 to 10 inclusive, Block 21, Coral Gables
22 Douglas Section, according to the Plat
23 thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 25, at
24 Page 69, of the Public Records of
25 Miami-Dade County, Florida.

1 MR. ADAMS: Chair, before we start, the
2 owner's representative has a request from
3 the Board, if you would be willing to hear
4 it.

5 MR. MENENDEZ: Sure.

6 MR. NAVARRO: Mr. Chair, it's a unique
7 situation, but we have some parents in the
8 audience that have children with autism,
9 and they may get a little rowdy. So I just
10 wanted to give you a heads-up before. But,
11 also, we would like to see if maybe we can
12 take the public comment section a little
13 earlier than normal, so that we can
14 accommodate those parents who do have
15 children with learning disabilities.

16 MR. MENENDEZ: The public comment
17 section will come after the applicant has
18 her presentation --

19 MR. NAVARRO: Perfect.

20 MR. MENENDEZ: -- and after the City
21 states their presentation.

22 MR. NAVARRO: So, then, could I save my
23 presentation? I represent the property
24 owner here, whose property is sought to be
25 designated. Obviously, we have a very

1 important stake in this. We have a
2 presentation to give. Would it be possible
3 to take public comment prior to that? I
4 don't mind holding my presentation until
5 the end.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: If you don't mind, I
7 don't mind, either.

8 MR. NAVARRO: Okay. I wouldn't mind.
9 I think it's the right thing to do. So,
10 all right, thank you.

11 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Please state your
12 name?

13 MS. BOLTON: Good afternoon. My name
14 is Bonnie D. Bolton, and I filed an -- or
15 we filed an application to have the Garden
16 of Our Lord designated historic.

17 And do I start my presentation?

18 MR. ADAMS: Can you start the
19 PowerPoint, please? Thank you.

20 MS. BOLTON: I'm honored to introduce
21 you to the panel of experts who wrote the
22 aesthetic and architectural criteria for
23 this report, Rocco Ceo, Joanna Lombard,
24 Carlos Marin and Nanette Martinez. Rocco
25 Ceo, Joanna Lombard and Carlos Marin are

1 all Harvard educated architects, with the
2 American Institute of Architects, and Rocco
3 is a Fellow. Rocco and Joanna are
4 professors of architecture at the
5 University of Miami and they are the
6 authors of the Historic Landscapes of
7 Florida, a book which I'm sure many of you
8 are familiar with.

9 Carlos Marin is a practicing architect
10 and former Member of the Board of
11 Architects, and Nanette Martinez is an
12 architect and professor of architecture at
13 FIU. Unfortunately, with UM starting their
14 classes this week, Rocco and Joanna are
15 unable to be here today, and Carlos Marin
16 has COVID, so --

17 But the Garden of Our Lord exceeds the
18 City's criteria for historic designation
19 under the categories of aesthetics,
20 architecture, culture and history. We have
21 applied for designation under nine
22 different criteria, when only one is
23 necessary for designation. The foremost
24 authorities on historic designation in
25 South Florida and the State of Florida

1 support the historic designation of the
2 Garden. They are the much beloved founder
3 of the preservation movement in Florida;
4 Sallye Jude, who you received a letter from
5 her, and Dolly MacIntyre, Dr. Paul George
6 is a very enthusiastic supporter of the
7 Garden's designation. Dr. Seth Bramson,
8 Dr. Karella Carbonel, the Florida Trust for
9 Historic Preservation, the Miami Design and
10 Preservation League, the Historic
11 Preservation Association of Coral Gables,
12 Vizcaya, all 900 members of the American
13 Institute of Architects and the City of
14 Coral Gables Landmarks Advisory Committee,
15 and their support is demonstrated by the
16 letters which they wrote and which all of
17 you have.

18 The Garden's historic designation is
19 also supported by many highly esteemed
20 individuals and organizations, and that's
21 evidenced by the letters of support which
22 have accompanied this application, and
23 those are Tropical Audubon Society, the
24 Woman's Club, the Rotary Club, Montgomery
25 Botanical Center, Coral Gables Neighbors

1 Association, the Ponce de Leon Homeowners
2 Group, the Tropical Flowering Tree Society,
3 UM Arboretum, Robert Ruano, Robin and
4 Robert Berg, Carol and Vincent Damian,
5 Joanne Meagher, Bruce Fitzgerald, Judy
6 Packard, Cheryl Akerman, Maria Cristina
7 Longo, Peter Jude and Marlon Everett.

8 And the Garden has also been featured
9 in newspapers and magazines and a
10 television news broadcast. The media,
11 which have covered the Garden on eleven
12 different occasions in the last few months,
13 are The Gables Insider, The Miami Herald,
14 The Coral Gables Magazine, Coral Gables
15 Living and WTVJ Channel 10 News.

16 And now I have the pleasure of
17 introducing professor Nanette Martinez, who
18 will provide a summary of the architectural
19 and the aesthetic criteria. So this is
20 Nanette.

21 MS. MARTINEZ: Hello. Good afternoon,
22 Members of the Historic Preservation Board
23 of Coral Gables and members of the
24 community. My name is Nanette Martinez.
25 As Bonnie mentioned, I have a Master's of

1 Architecture from Florida International
2 University College of Communication,
3 Architecture and the Arts. I've also
4 served as an adjunct professor of design
5 and architecture at FIU. And I am an
6 associate designer at SB Architects,
7 located in Coral Gables. I am also a
8 resident of the City of Coral Gables and a
9 neighbor of the Garden of Our Lord.

10 I am here today representing the
11 research done on behalf of the Garden by
12 Joanna Lombard, AIA professor at the
13 University of Miami School of Architecture,
14 Rocco Ceo, a Fellow of AIA, and Carlos
15 Marin, AIA, also a past member of the Coral
16 Gables Board of Architects, and myself, on
17 behalf of the application for historical,
18 architectural and aesthetic significance
19 for 110 Phoenetia Avenue, the Garden of Our
20 Lord.

21 The Garden of Our Lord is a landscaped
22 feature adjacent to the St. James
23 Evangelical Lutheran Church, located at the
24 intersection of East Ponce de Leon
25 Boulevard and Phoenetia Avenue, across from

1 the Coral Gables Woman's Club, within the
2 North Ponce neighborhood. The Garden of
3 Our Lord was designed in 1951 by Robert
4 Fitch Smith, one of the most notable South
5 Florida -- one of the most notable South
6 Florida early architects. You might be
7 familiar with him already.

8 So, as per Article 8, Section 8-103 of
9 the Coral Gables Zoning Code, the criteria
10 for designation of historic landmarks on
11 historic districts states that a local
12 historic landmark must have significant
13 character, interest or value as part of the
14 historical, cultural, archeological
15 aesthetic or architectural heritage of the
16 city, state or nation. The eligibility of
17 any potential local historic landmark shall
18 be based on meeting one or more criteria.

19 Today, 110 Phoenetia Avenue, the Garden
20 of Our Lord, is eligible for designation as
21 a local historic landmark based on seven
22 significant criteria, which you can see on
23 the -- right here.

24 All right. So, first, Criteria A,
25 historical, cultural significance, we're

1 applying for Item Number 5, it's associated
2 in a significant way with a past or
3 continuing institution which has
4 contributed substantially to the life of
5 the City. Criteria B, architectural
6 significance, Item Number 1, portrays the
7 environment in an era of history
8 characterized by one or more distinctive
9 architectural styles; item Number 2,
10 embodies those distinguishing
11 characteristics of an architectural style
12 or period or method of construction; item
13 Number 3, it's an outstanding work of a
14 prominent designer or builder; and Item
15 Number 4, contains elements of design,
16 detail, materials and craftsmanship of
17 outstanding quality or which represent a
18 significant innovation and adaptation to
19 the South Florida environment; and Criteria
20 C, Aesthetic Significance, Item Number 1,
21 by being a part or related to a
22 subdivision, park, environmental feature or
23 other distinctive area should be developed
24 or preserved according to a plan based on a
25 historical, cultural or architectural

1 motif; and Item Number 2, because of its
2 prominence of spatial location, contrasts
3 of siting age or scale, is an easily
4 identifiable visual feature of a
5 neighborhood, village or the city and
6 contributes to the distinctive quality or
7 identity of such neighborhood, village or
8 the city. In case of a park or a landscape
9 feature, is integral to the plan of such
10 neighborhood or the city.

11 So, for today, I'll be only speaking
12 about B and C, which is the Architectural
13 and Aesthetics Significance. So,
14 Architectural Item 1, when the St. James
15 Lutheran Church in Coral Gables established
16 the adjacent Garden of Our Lord, they
17 developed a garden consistent with
18 Florida's historic landscape traditions, as
19 well as a larger movement in religious
20 memorial gardens. This transformation can
21 be traced to the mid 19th Century, when Dr.
22 Jacob Bigelow and the Massachusetts
23 Horticultural Society addressed health
24 concerns believed to result from the
25 crowded conditions of church and burial

1 sites. In response, they developed Mount
2 Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts
3 as a picturesque landscape that opened to
4 the public in 1831. Often cited as the
5 birth of the garden cemetery movement in
6 the U.S., the design of Mount Auburn
7 ushered in a new era.

8 In South Florida, Cluett Memorial
9 Garden in Palm Beach set a precedent in
10 1931 for an enclosed memorial garden as a
11 companion to The Episcopal Church of
12 Bethesda-by-the-Sea, and an amenity for its
13 immediate neighbors, as well as the larger
14 community. Closer to home, Plymouth
15 Congregational Church, a congregation led
16 in 1901 by George Merrick's father, Solomon
17 G. Merrick, host an enclosed garden along a
18 Miami Highway in Coconut Grove. The
19 landscape styles vary, but the use of local
20 stone and memorial plaques and the
21 protective enclosure of the wall provide
22 thematic continuity.

23 The Garden -- so for Item --
24 Architectural Item Number 2, the Garden of
25 Our Lord provides architectural elements

1 distinctive of its location and era through
2 its enclosure and application of Architect
3 Robert Fitch Smith's label in his 1951
4 drawings of the wall as the Florida
5 keystone, and we can look at his original
6 drawings right here.

7 Outwardly, the pedestal drawings of the
8 wall respond to the architecture of Robert
9 Fitch's landmark structure for the Coral
10 Gables Woman's Club in 1936 across the
11 street -- and we can see an example of that
12 right here -- and internally the use of
13 what we know as coral rock, also as oolite
14 limestone, in both rusticated bench and
15 grotto and planned surfaces in the
16 walkways, further situate the Garden in its
17 era. Robert Fitch Smith's drawings clearly
18 depict -- and I would like to point to that
19 really quick -- Robert Fitch Smith's
20 drawings clearly depict the original design
21 of the doubly pedimented wall and the
22 walkway inside of the garden and we can see
23 this is the wall. And, you know, it's
24 evident by the dimensions, the angles and,
25 basically, the type of information in the

1 drawing, that it's obviously been designed
2 in this drawing.

3 Same thing with the walkway, we can
4 look at the central axis and we can look at
5 the angles, and the dimensions also shows
6 that he was designing this walkway in this
7 drawing.

8 He designed the commemorative frames
9 and coral rock -- that will be in the next
10 slide -- he designed the commemorative
11 frames and coral rock pilasters on the
12 exterior of the enclosure to clarify its
13 purpose as both, a monument and a
14 contemplative space available to the
15 congregation and the public for prayer and
16 meditation, as well as contributing to a
17 green oasis in the midst of an urbanized
18 neighborhood. Smith's original design
19 remains unaltered, except for the public
20 access gate added in about 1975.

21 So, for Item Number 3, in the
22 Architectural category, this is to prove
23 that it was designed by a prominent
24 architect, so will I will speak of Robert
25 Fitch Smith's life and work. Robert Fitch

1 Smith is also a Fellow of the AIA. He's
2 one of the most notable of South Florida's
3 early architects. His drawings of the wall
4 of the Garden of Our Lord reflect his
5 interest in craft through careful
6 coordination of locally sourced politic
7 rock, plane stucco surfaces with detailed
8 classical mouldings, as seen in the
9 capitals supporting cast stone urns, and we
10 can see some of that in these drawings. We
11 can see the urns and the pilasters that are
12 adjacent to this feature, and, then, in the
13 rest of the wall, we can see the pilasters
14 don't have the urns. So he intentionally
15 created these, as to highlight these
16 moments in the wall.

17 The Garden wall today clearly stands
18 out as a significant design, and even a
19 casual observer would likely be unsurprised
20 to learn that this distinctive wall is the
21 work of a prominent architect credited with
22 decades of accomplishment.

23 With coursework at Columbia University,
24 Carnegie Institute of Technology,
25 University of Miami and Western Michigan

1 University, he received his architecture --
2 he received his architecture degree from
3 the University of Miami in 1931. While a
4 student at the University of Miami, Robert
5 Fitch Smith also taught in the newly formed
6 Department of Architecture from 1929 to
7 1931 as one of its earliest instructors.
8 During that same time, he designed the
9 landmark residence of Colonel Robert and
10 Nell Jennings Montgomery, with the
11 landscape by William Lyman Phillips, now
12 the home of the Montgomery Botanical
13 Collection.

14 Among Smith's many significant local
15 commissions are other residences in Coral
16 Gables, such as the historic Java Head, the
17 long-time home of leading preservationist
18 Sallye Jude, who wrote a support letter --

19 MS. BOLTON: And whose son is here
20 tonight -- sorry, this afternoon.

21 THE SECRETARY: Please speak into the
22 mike.

23 MS. BOLTON: Oh, I'm sorry. Sallye
24 Jude's son, Peter Jude, is here in the
25 audience in support of the designation of

1 the Garden.

2 MS. MARTINEZ: -- as well as projects
3 in Miami Beach and Miami Shores. The
4 residence he designed for Thomas Hayes in
5 1931 and '32, the present day Doc Thomas
6 House, headquarters for the Tropical
7 Audubon Society, was, in 1982, the first
8 designated historic sites in Dade County.
9 It was listed in the National Register of
10 Historic Places in 2014 and designated a
11 Florida Heritage Site in 2016. The Doc
12 Thomas House is one of several of Smith's
13 projects archived in the
14 Gottscho-Schleisner Collection in the
15 Library of Congress, along with the
16 recently designated JF Bauder Residence on
17 Tigertail Avenue in Coconut Grove.

18 Extending beyond his architectural
19 practice to contribute to the community, he
20 was a charter member of the Miami City
21 Planning Board; Chairman of the Regional
22 Planning Board of Dade County; Chair of the
23 Miami Fine Arts Commission; Chair of the
24 Design Board for the Inter-American Culture
25 and Trade Center of Miami; Vice-Chairman of

1 the Urban Planning Committee of the
2 American Institute of Architects for the
3 Southern area; and a member of the
4 Architectural League of New York.

5 The Florida Architect quoted the Miami
6 Herald's obituary which highlighted Smith's
7 dedication to both, profession and
8 community, recalling a 1948 interview in
9 which Smith's message to Miami was that,
10 "It's too bad that neighborhood planning
11 could not have guided Miami from the start,
12 but it's not too late to do a good job with
13 it," and I hope so, too.

14 So these are some images of the wall,
15 and the intention of Robert Fitch Smith's
16 drawings and the reality of it, which is
17 what we see every day in our neighborhood.

18 Now we're moving to the last item in
19 the Architectural Category, Item Number 4.
20 Smith's design for the Garden wall, and, in
21 particular, it's pilasters, urns and
22 settings around each plaque represents a
23 continuity of quality and design that
24 recall the walls of Vizcaya's Farm Village.
25 The urns atop the Garden wall's politic

1 limestone pilasters merit further research
2 given their close association with the work
3 of John B. Orr and Ettore Pellegatta at
4 Vizcaya. Smith's use of coral rock is
5 evident in his other work, such as the
6 fireplace at the Doc Thomas House, which
7 represents a superb and well-documented
8 example, which I'm sure you're familiar
9 with.

10 Now, moving on to the Aesthetic
11 Category, there is less than a handful of
12 public gardens in the City and the Garden
13 of Our Lord is one of them, and I would
14 like to show you this slide, which is from
15 a Master Plan done in September of 2005
16 from the City of Coral Gables, where we can
17 clearly see the intention of creating that
18 green corridor in this part of the City,
19 because the East Ponce de Leon Boulevard
20 street cuts right through a residential
21 area, and it's trying to connect Ponce de
22 Leon, which is, you know, a very active
23 commercial access, with the Douglas
24 Entrance, which is also a very important
25 point in this City.

1 This corridor, it's an intrusion. So
2 the best way to maintain that intrusion
3 soft and buffer it from the residential
4 area that it clearly interrupts is to
5 create a green corridor, with parks at the
6 beginning and at the end, and this has not
7 been done, but I see it proposed. This is
8 the site that you see in red. So it's very
9 clear how the garden contributes to the
10 concept of the green corridor, to connect
11 both important areas of the City.

12 East Ponce de Leon Boulevard follows a
13 curvilinear path leading to the Douglas
14 Entrance to the City. The Garden is
15 located about halfway along this path,
16 which is what we were looking at just now,
17 a prominent right-of-way in the early years
18 of the City, seen in Merrick's original
19 Master Plan dating back to the 1920s. So
20 this street was drawn in the original plans
21 connecting the Douglas Entrance.

22 East Ponce de Leon Boulevard currently
23 defines the west edge of the neighborhood
24 largely populated by garden apartments.
25 This street creates a connection between

1 Ponce de Leon and the Douglas Entrance,
2 providing a green corridor for both,
3 pedestrians and vehicular circulation, to
4 connect the two commercial zones. East
5 Ponce de Leon cuts diagonally through the
6 garden apartment district area, where this
7 green corridor becomes necessary, to soften
8 the instruction of this connection.
9 Located right in the middle of this buffer
10 between commercial and residential, the
11 Garden of Our Lord is an integral part of
12 its urban context. Together with St.
13 James, the Coral Gables Woman's Club and
14 two abutting city parks, they are
15 compatible institutional, religious and
16 open space land uses on the boulevard,
17 safeguarding the neighborhood from
18 potential commercial encroachment.

19 And for the last item on the Aesthetic
20 Criteria, Item Number 2, the Garden of Our
21 Lord is a visually distinctive element of
22 its neighborhood and is surrounded by
23 double pedimented masonry wall with engaged
24 pilasters of Miami limestone.

25 Could we play the video now please?

1 So the video that we'll play is just me
2 walking on the sidewalk filming what I see,
3 and -- you know, just so you get a feel of
4 how the garden feels when you're walking in
5 the neighborhood. And I do have -- you
6 know, I've spoken with many people, and,
7 you know, they absolutely love walking
8 through that sidewalk and everyone knows
9 where the Garden is and how nice it is to
10 walk on it, so --

11 MS. BOLTON: And it's such an easily
12 identifiable feature of the neighborhood,
13 which qualifies it for designation.

14 THE SECRETARY: The video is playing.

15 MS. MARTINEZ: So I'll continue reading
16 the last part. The Garden of Our Lord is a
17 visually distinctive element of this
18 neighborhood and it is surrounded by a
19 double pedimentary masonry wall with
20 engaged pilaster of Miami oolite limestone.
21 This material of choice was also informed
22 by the proximity of the Garden to the Coral
23 Gables Woman's Club, designed by H. George
24 Fink in 1936. The architectural materials
25 and column rhythm of the Woman's Club is

1 reflected on the Garden's well design. The
2 height of the wall and its pillars
3 intentionally respond to the scale of the
4 neighborhood. The appropriate height of
5 the wall creates continuity and balance
6 with the Woman's Club, as well as with the
7 surrounding buildings and the landscape.

8 So, in conclusion for this part, we
9 strongly believe that the Garden of Our
10 Lord merits designation as a historic
11 landmark, because of everything I've
12 explained, but, you know, I just want to
13 add, as a neighbor of the area, I
14 absolutely love the Garden and the wall and
15 it just -- it brings that scale to the
16 neighborhood and that feeling that you are
17 in a place that is meaningful. Thank you.

18 MS. BOLTON: And the walkway in the
19 Garden that Robert Fitch Smith designed.
20 So we hope -- and we've worked very hard
21 for you to designate the Garden today, so
22 we hope for that. Thank you. Thank you
23 for your time.

24 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you for your
25 presentation.

1 MS. MARTINEZ: Thank you.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Adams.

3 MR. ADAMS: Can you play the
4 PowerPoint, please, the Staff PowerPoint?
5 Thank you.

6 Okay. This is my response to the
7 designation request. I'm going to walk
8 through my thoughts, my opinions, my
9 observations and point them out to you in a
10 step-by-step process.

11 I think, first of all, just a quick
12 comment, yes, there are a lot of letters of
13 support; however, you have to question how
14 much validity letters of support have if
15 they're based on assumptions and incorrect
16 information. All people have to go on is
17 the submitted designation report, and it's
18 not fully correct, and there are
19 assumptions in there, and I'll point them
20 out.

21 Second, we also have to ask just how
22 many of the experts have actual historic
23 preservation qualifications. I didn't
24 actually hear any mentioned. And, also,
25 you have to bear in mind that the initial

1 designation report, which was passed out,
2 contains certain information that wasn't
3 true, and we received letters of support
4 based on that.

5 So the designation report has been
6 amended. So how many people have actually
7 seen the final version? In fact, the
8 Landmarks Advisory Board, in their
9 recommendation, that recommendation was
10 made on the prior report, not the amended
11 report that you have in front of you. So
12 I'll walk through everything step-by-step
13 and then I'll do a summary at the end, just
14 so you can appreciate my thoughts.

15 So, firstly, this is the location of
16 the site. As you see, this is one site,
17 comprised of ten lots, but it is one site.
18 When you zoom in to the site, on the
19 northwest corner, you have the Garden of
20 Our Lord, on the northeast corner you have
21 the church building and the auxillary
22 structures. On the southeast corner, you
23 have a single-family residence, which is
24 currently being used as a special needs
25 school, and on the southwest corner, you

1 have some open land and a park associated
2 with the school.

3 So these are the views from the various
4 directions. So, on the top left, you have
5 the entrance to the Garden of Our Lord, and
6 the center of the north's boundary of the
7 site, you have the church, which has been
8 significantly altered since it was first
9 built. At the top right, you have the
10 auxillary buildings. On the northeast
11 corner, at the bottom left, on the
12 southwest corner, you have the open area,
13 bottom middle, you have the play park, and
14 bottom right, you have the existing house,
15 which was determined not eligible for
16 designation. So there you have the
17 boundary wall of the site, a couple of
18 general views of the site and the coral
19 rock pond and the wall with the plaques on
20 it. I think you saw sufficient photos in
21 the previous presentation.

22 So some background for you, a Historic
23 Significance Request was submitted to the
24 Historic Preservation on August the 9th,
25 2021. Staff responded that the site was

1 not eligible for designation, the site.
2 The property, I believe, was purchased
3 right about November 24th, 2021. The owner
4 can clarify that.

5 On January the 28th, 2022, the
6 Development Review Committee reviewed the
7 proposal for a Comprehensive Plan Map
8 Amendment, Zoning Code Map Amendment,
9 Planned Area Development, Mixed-Use Site
10 Plan and Transfer of Development Rights
11 Receiving Site Plan.

12 On August the 19th, 2022, the applicant
13 submitted a historic designation
14 application, a full year after the initial
15 determination was made. The Historic
16 Preservation Office determined, again, the
17 property did not meet the criteria for
18 designation. The applicant informed -- the
19 applicant was informed, and they were
20 directed that it should be presented to the
21 Historic Preservation Board in December of
22 last year. The applicant, by right,
23 requested 30 days to submit an amended
24 report. This request was granted, and this
25 is why we're here before you today.

1 And just for clarification, the
2 following are not under consideration, not
3 for discussion, so any comments related to
4 it are not under the Board's purview, the
5 proposed mixed-use development, any
6 required rezoning which the property would
7 need to move ahead with the new
8 development, the creation of a park or tree
9 preservation. So, with your purview, it's
10 irrelevant. We have to stick to the Code
11 for Historic Preservation.

12 So, just some clarification, reports
13 based on the initial designation report
14 suggested the Garden served as a cemetery.
15 Now, each of you have -- I have given you a
16 handout there, in case you can't clearly
17 see some of the images of the wall there on
18 the screen. The handout is for the Board's
19 benefit of information as shown in the
20 PowerPoint. This is just exact copies of
21 what's in the PowerPoint, in case you can't
22 read anything.

23 So the first thing you have in there is
24 a letter from a funeral director with forty
25 years' experience. So, just for

1 clarification, there are no church records
2 identifying burials have been located.
3 Now, this garden was designed in 1951. You
4 would believe there would be records of
5 burials, if it was as recent as 1951.
6 There are no historic newspapers
7 identifying any burials have been located
8 there. The previous owner of the site, the
9 St. James Lutheran Church, did not indicate
10 to the current owner there are any burials
11 there. The current owner exercised their
12 due diligence prior to purchase. There are
13 some bronze memorials set into the grain.
14 These were evaluated by Mr. Ari Oberstein,
15 a funeral director in Miami-Dade County for
16 30 years, who determined they are memorial
17 garden dedications, or tree dedications
18 with no urn placements, and you have that
19 there.

20 And just as an added level of
21 protection, for any site, regardless of
22 whether it's historic or not, if any
23 remains are found during excavation, work
24 must stop, the County archeologist must be
25 called. So it does the property owner no

1 good to have everyone there on site ready
2 to start the work and potentially they've
3 got human remains.

4 The second thing for clarification, and
5 it's the second letter that you have, per
6 the owner's representatives, two urns
7 containing cremated remains were interment
8 in the garden wall. The urns have been
9 removed and given to the family members of
10 the deceased, in accordance with all legal
11 requirements, as confirmed in a letter from
12 Wendy Russell Wiener, Legal and Consulting
13 Services. Ms. Weiner is an attorney
14 licensed to practice law in Florida since
15 1933, who has practiced exclusively in this
16 area for most of her career. So you have
17 the letter there confirming this was done.

18 Now, some people may have an issue with
19 removing cremated remains. Me, personally,
20 I believe that's something that the family
21 should determine, and that's their choice,
22 and they agreed to it.

23 So Code considerations, a historic
24 landmark means any site, building,
25 structure, landscape feature, improvement

1 or archeological site which property has
2 been designated as a historic landmark.

3 So my initial review was to review the
4 property, which is this, and if you
5 designate the site, you're designating the
6 block. The way it stands at the moment,
7 you're designating the entire block, so
8 just keep that in mind.

9 Secondly, should the site be
10 designated? Obviously, it's a protected
11 site, because it's designated; however,
12 this section of the Code, 8-1108 states,
13 "No COA shall be granted for the removal,
14 relocation, consume or effective
15 destruction or damage of any landscape
16 features, especially designated as
17 significant within the boundaries of a
18 historic landmark, unless one of the
19 following conditions exists. The
20 designated landscape feature or
21 archeological site is located in the
22 buildable area or yard where a structure
23 may be placed and unreasonably restricts
24 the permitted use of the property." So,
25 remember what I said, you're designating

1 the entire site here.

2 The second thing is, and of more
3 importance, the designation of vegetation
4 is inappropriate in a historical context.
5 So please keep that in mind, the vegetation
6 and its historical context.

7 And, integrity, you know that to be
8 available for designation, a site must
9 retain its integrity. It's highly
10 important. It must retain sufficient
11 integrity.

12 So let's firstly talk about Robert
13 Fitch Smith. He was an accomplished
14 architect, with some notable sites that
15 meet the criteria for designation. He was
16 not a landscape architect. He designed
17 buildings. As noted in the designation
18 report, by the 1930s, Robert Fitch Smith
19 developed a keen understanding and talent
20 of subtropical design integration in his
21 designs for the Doc Thomas House and the
22 Colonel and Mrs. Montgomery, which has been
23 dubbed The Stairways to the Sun. He went
24 on to design several buildings related to
25 their environment.

1 When you look at the Tropical Audubon
2 Society's website, the owners of the Doc
3 Thomas house, Thomas commissioned Robert
4 Fitch Smith, newly graduated from the
5 University of Miami Architecture Program,
6 to design a home that would fit organically
7 in the property with its setting. He
8 didn't design the landscape.

9 Then, if you look at the Montgomery
10 Botanical Center website, historically
11 Colonel Montgomery utilized the expertise
12 and professional advise of the landscape
13 architects William A. Trent Smith and
14 William Lyman Phillips. So no landscape
15 design experience at all from Robert Fitch
16 Smith.

17 Now, let's look at the application
18 submitted for the Garden, and this is in
19 your packet, as well, if you can't see it.
20 The permit application clearly states, wall
21 and walkway, no mention of coral rock
22 benches, no mention of a coral rock pond,
23 no mention of many of the features that are
24 included on the site; a walkway and a wall.

25 You have this in your packet, in it's

1 case it's difficult to make clear, this is
2 the application that was submitted. This
3 was the drawing that was submitted with the
4 permit application, the wall, and then you
5 have a walkway, which comes in, goes up,
6 goes around an angle, and goes down and
7 goes up. That's what was submitted.

8 That's what was applied for.

9 This is a recent survey. So, you walk
10 in. This part of the path was added when
11 the gate was added in 1970s. You come up
12 here and ring, and not there. All of this
13 path here, no proof that it was designed by
14 Robert Fitch Smith. There are stacks here.
15 There are coral rock walls here. There are
16 these small spaces, which I think were for
17 benches. There's no proof that Robert
18 Fitch Smith designed all of this. Maybe he
19 did, maybe he didn't, but to state that
20 Robert Fitch Smith designed this garden is
21 a massive assumption. There's no proof.

22 So, when you compare the two plans, the
23 pathway is different from the original
24 design. A coral rock pond has been added,
25 coral rock walls have been added, steps

1 have been added. The original plan notes a
2 four-foot wide imitation stone wall, scored
3 in two feet squares. That's not what
4 exists.

5 What exists is there. That is not an
6 imitation stone sidewalk scored in two
7 squares. These weren't on the original
8 plan. These weren't on the original plan,
9 the addition of a walkway, as well, was not
10 on the original plan. So, all of a sudden,
11 we're questioning integrity or the actual
12 initial design of the property.

13 So now we're going to go on to the
14 trees and shrubs. As noted in historic
15 newspaper articles and the designation
16 report, the Garden of Our Lord was
17 originally designed as a Biblical garden.
18 A Biblical garden is made up of plants
19 mentioned in the Bible. Early reports
20 indicate many of the plants were donated by
21 people, suggesting there was no planting or
22 landscape plan. The church was accepting
23 plants from whoever decided to donate them.

24 Per a Miami News report from 1971,
25 titled, Gables Frankincense Really Home

1 Grown Plant, and according to Henry C.
2 Wallace, Director of the U.S. Department of
3 Agriculture Plant Introduction Station,
4 many of the plants were not the Biblical
5 plants. The Frankincense, Myrtle and Stone
6 Pine were common Florida plants by the name
7 of Elegant, Orange Jessamine and Vitext
8 (phonetic).

9 So here we have a garden that was maybe
10 intended to be a Biblical garden and was
11 promoted as a Biblical garden. We have no
12 landscape plan, we have people donating
13 plants and we have a recognized expert
14 stating, "Hang on, a lot of this is
15 incorrect."

16 Theodore Bartis (phonetic), the pastor
17 at the time, was not sure which plants came
18 and how and the church files gave no clues
19 of a landscape plan, nor planting plan, no
20 record.

21 The original trees and shrubs, as noted
22 in newspaper reports, no longer exist, per
23 the owner's expert. Now, you actually have
24 a letter in there from the owner's expert
25 confirming that none of the plants

1 mentioned in the submitted newspaper
2 reports with the application exist anymore,
3 and we have also -- and Deena -- Deena,
4 would you like speak? This is the City
5 Arborist, and she went out to the site with
6 me, and she can also confirm what is
7 actually on the site.

8 MS. BELL-LLEWELLYN: Good evening. I'm
9 Deena Bell-Llewllyn. I'm the Division
10 Director of Green Space Management in
11 Public Works. I've been a licensed
12 landscape architect, practicing in the
13 area, for 31 years now. I'm also a
14 Certified Arborist.

15 So, with those credentials, I have been
16 to the site three times, a couple of
17 inspections, and yesterday, again, with
18 Mr. Adams, just to confirm that I didn't
19 see any Biblical plants in the garden.
20 What I see there today is mostly just our
21 tropical variety of Alexander Palm
22 seedlings, there are few Dade Palms, the
23 Canary Island Dade Palm, and one Dade Palm
24 growing outside, but those are locally
25 available in Homestead. So there's no real

1 proof of any of this being Biblical
2 planting.

3 Also, I would note that the Garden has
4 fallen in disrepair from the years of lack
5 of maintenance. A lot of what I saw there
6 were seeded in Alexander Palms, Brazilian
7 Pepper, even, you know, creating a garden
8 that's beginning to be overtaken with
9 weeds, but, again, there's no proof or
10 evidence of Biblical plants that I saw
11 there.

12 MR. ADAMS: Thank you.

13 Can you play the PowerPoint, please?

14 Thanks, Deena.

15 Now, we know the Garden was designed,
16 built, in 1951, and reports do show that it
17 was a popular attraction at that time, in
18 the '50s and the '60s. Per a Miami Herald
19 Article from 1974, the Garden had started
20 to decline. The report, titled, "Garden of
21 Our Lord in Coral Gables," notes the loss
22 of trees, vandalism, the theft of statutes,
23 damage to the statue of Christ and
24 discovering hyperdermic needles and
25 Marijuana plants on the site. A Herald

1 article from 1974 notes alterations to the
2 church, including a renovation of the
3 garden.

4 So I think what we had was a site that
5 was, in all good intentions, designed
6 initially as a Biblical garden. It did
7 receive a lot of visitors. For some
8 reason, by the 1970s, this had started to
9 decline. The Garden was falling into
10 disrepair, and then the church decided to
11 do alterations. So, again, there's a
12 question over the integrity of the site.

13 And, then, from 1974 onwards, there are
14 very few reports on this Garden and they
15 mainly consist of notifications of events
16 and services. So, I think, really, since
17 the 1970s, the Garden fell into decline,
18 maybe wasn't used as much, but it certainly
19 wasn't the noted Biblical Garden that it
20 was originally made out to be.

21 So I've got some additional
22 comments in the submitted report. The
23 expert opinions contained in the report
24 appear to use a copy of the applicant's
25 photographs or show only the exterior of

1 the Garden wall or contain no photos. This
2 raises the question, how many of those
3 contributing visited the interior of the
4 Garden. And if they haven't, can you truly
5 give an expert and full professional
6 opinion on something that you really
7 haven't seen?

8 The contribution by Nanette Martinez
9 begins with, "The Garden of Our Lord was
10 designed by Robert Fitch Smith."
11 Apparently, there's no proof that it was.
12 The remainder of the report focuses on the
13 wall and the streetscape and does not
14 really address the Garden itself. The
15 contribution by Carlos Marin states, "Fitch
16 Smith designed not only the wall, but also
17 the geometrical structure the Garden grew
18 upon; coral rock paths leading to a grotto,
19 a pond and steps to a marble statute
20 representing Jesus Christ." If they had
21 submitted the proof of this, we could have
22 taken that onboard and we would have
23 considered it, but there's just no proof,
24 and the contributions by Rocco Ceo and
25 Joanna Lombard focuses mostly on the wall

1 and the architect.

2 According to the designation report,
3 he, who is Merrick, wholeheartedly
4 incorporated the Garden city precepts of
5 comprehensive planning with defined areas
6 for different uses, residential, commercial
7 trades, offering housing for different
8 income levels, without sacrificing quality,
9 as well as providing an abundance of public
10 facilities. With the acquisition of
11 additional land, the Douglas Section was
12 dedicated to multi-family residences and
13 was designed to be the same high quality
14 design spirit as the rest of Coral Gables.

15 The Douglas Section was clearly meant
16 to be a hub of activity within -- with
17 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, a wide parkway,
18 and one of the main commercial
19 thoroughfares of Coral Gables, running
20 through it. By the way, that last sentence
21 is taken straight from our designation
22 reports. So, obviously, someone's looked
23 at them and taken them word for word. So
24 that was actually taken from properties
25 that were eligible for designation, and I

1 completely agree with this. Merrick knew
2 that there was a place for everything.
3 There was a commercial section, a
4 residential section, there was an apartment
5 section and there was a place for parks and
6 spaces.

7 So let's look at Merrick's original
8 plan. That's the property there on the
9 left-hand side, clearly split into various
10 lots, intended for development. If you
11 look at El Prado on the right, you have a
12 big vacant space that was intended for
13 gardens and parks. So if you really expose
14 what Merrick designed and what the intent
15 of the Coral Gables Plan was, a park and a
16 garden there was not what Merrick intended.
17 And in case you want to question it,
18 there's some other additional plats. Every
19 one of them shows that this site was
20 intended for development.

21 Now, I'm not here to promote a new
22 development. That is out of our hands and
23 that has to go to Planning and Zoning. It
24 needs a rezoning. That has to go through
25 another process. All I'm saying is, if

1 you're espousing Merrick's plan and his
2 ideals, this is what he had planned.

3 So now I'm going to go through the
4 criteria, just to finish up, in summary.
5 So I went through the report and the
6 application form was a slightly different
7 criteria from in the report; however, I
8 will go through all of them.

9 Number 1, historical cultural
10 significance, one is associated in a
11 significant way with the lives or
12 activities of a major historic person
13 important in the past. While Robert Fitch
14 Smith was an accomplished architect, he
15 does not rise to the level of major
16 historic person important in the past. A
17 2016 historic designation for a Fitch Smith
18 property at 229 Ridgewood was approved by
19 the Board and successfully appealed to the
20 Commission.

21 This application did not list Robert
22 Fitch Smith under this criteria, and as you
23 see by our other designation reports, it
24 would be incredibly rare to list an
25 architect under this criteria.

1 Number 2, the site of a historic event
2 with significant effect upon the community,
3 city, state or nation. This is listed on
4 the application form, but it's not
5 addressed in the designation report. So no
6 historic event of a significant effect upon
7 the community, state or nation is known to
8 have taken place at the site.

9 Number 4, exemplifies the historical,
10 cultural, political, economic or social
11 trends of the community. A Biblical garden
12 does not exemplify the historical,
13 cultural, political, economic or social
14 trends of the community. Per the
15 designation report, the Douglas Section was
16 clearly meant to be a hub of activity, with
17 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, a wide parkway and
18 one of the main commercial thoroughfares in
19 Coral Gables running through it, and in the
20 1940s, the City of Coral Gables recognized
21 the apartment district and encouraged its
22 form of development. The historical,
23 cultural, political, economic and social
24 trend in this community was the
25 construction of garden apartments at that

1 time.

2 Number 5 is, associated in a
3 significant way with a past or continuing
4 institution which has contributed
5 substantially to the life of the city. The
6 designation report does not provide
7 sufficient information on this criterion,
8 but does focus on the contribution of
9 Crystal Academy, a private entity, which
10 leases property from the church. The
11 church did have a school; however, many
12 churches throughout the city may have had a
13 school. They all contributed to the city
14 in some way, but it doesn't mean they're
15 eligible for designation.

16 So now we're going to architectural
17 significance. For trees, the environment
18 and history characterized by one or more
19 distinctive architectural styles, the 1950s
20 was characterized as Mid Century
21 architecture, which was simpler and
22 contained minimal ornamentation. And it's
23 interesting, nowhere in the report, from
24 any of the experts, did I see anyone
25 specifying a specific architectural style

1 for the wall. It wasn't done.

2 MS. SPAIN: That was my question.

3 MR. ADAMS: Number 2, embodies the
4 distinguishing characteristics of an
5 architectural style or period or method of
6 construction. The wall is constructed from
7 concrete block, topped with a concrete beam
8 supporting two thin keystone sections to
9 form a triangular cap. The cap is not
10 solid keystone, has not been carved. It is
11 two thin pieces put together over concrete.

12 The wall is faced with stucco, very
13 common material. The columns are concrete
14 block, with vertical supporting rods, faced
15 with keystone and not a carved ornament,
16 but a cast stone ornament on top.
17 Keystone, stucco, concrete, common
18 materials.

19 The architectural style is not a pure
20 form of a style, but, rather, a mixture of
21 styles from different periods, and as I
22 said, the designation report does not
23 specify a specific style in that report.

24 Number 3 is an outstanding work of a
25 prominent designer or builder. Neither the

1 wall, nor the coral rock features, rise to
2 the level of an outstanding work by Robert
3 Fitch Smith, as designated sites do; but a
4 wall, and a pathway, no.

5 4, contains elements of design detail,
6 materials or craftsmanship of outstanding
7 quality or which represent a significant
8 innovation or adaptation to the South
9 Florida environment. As detailed under
10 Number 2, neither the design detail,
11 materials or craftsmanship are of an
12 outstanding quality.

13 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Warren, do you want
14 to change the slide?

15 MR. ADAMS: Okay. I'll finish up.
16 Aesthetic significance by being part or
17 related to a subdivision, park,
18 environmental feature or other distinctive
19 area, should be developed or preserved
20 according to a plan based on a historical,
21 cultural or architectural motif. The site
22 is related to the Douglas Section, which
23 has been developed according to the
24 original intent of the Douglas Section,
25 i.e., the construction of apartment

1 buildings. Historic plats for this section
2 indicate this block was intended to be
3 developed and not utilized as a garden.

4 A motif is identified by Merriam
5 Webster as usually having a cutting salient
6 thematic element, especially a dominant
7 idea or central theme. The dominant idea
8 and central theme in that section is for
9 garden apartments.

10 And Number 2, this actually has two
11 parts to it, because of its prominence of
12 spatial location, contrast of site and age
13 or scale is an easily identifiable visual
14 feature of a neighborhood, village or the
15 city and contributes to the distinctive
16 quality or identity of such neighborhood,
17 village or the city. Then you have a new
18 sentence, "In case of a park or landscape
19 feature, is integral to the plan of such
20 neighborhood or city," and that's an
21 important sentence that has been omitted in
22 places in the designation report. Some
23 places, it's included, some places it's
24 not. As this is a garden with landscape
25 features, the site must be integral to the

1 plan of the neighborhood, and as shown
2 previously, a park was not integral to the
3 original design intent of Merrick for this
4 block and this location.

5 So, really, therefore, in summary,
6 there are questions over who designed the
7 property, there are questions over who
8 built the property. The original intent of
9 a Biblical garden is no longer there. So
10 all of these questions stack up to
11 basically say that, if you're going to
12 designate this, the original intent is not
13 there, the integrity is not there, and,
14 basically, in my opinion, it does not meet
15 the criteria.

16 So I can answer any questions, and
17 please note that a number of support
18 letters were received after your packets
19 were delivered. You have copies of all of
20 them. And I have a letter here from Jorge
21 Hernandez, who had to leave. I don't know
22 when it's appropriate for anyone
23 supporting --

24 MS. SPAIN: I was going to ask for his
25 letter to be read into the record when it

1 was my turn to speak, so --

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Hernandez is here.

3 MR. ADAMS: It depends if you want to
4 hear from him. He's not representing the
5 City.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: I understand that, and
7 it will be heard when -- with the rest of
8 the residents.

9 MR. ADAMS: Okay. If he has to leave,
10 then you have his letter, and I will read
11 that into the record.

12 MR. MENENDEZ: Uh-huh.

13 MR. ADAMS: Thank you.

14 MR. MENENDEZ: At this time, I'm going
15 to open it up for comments, either in favor
16 or opposition of this case, to the
17 audience. I'm going to ask that people be
18 brief. I'm going to give people -- because
19 there are so many residents here today, I'm
20 going to give every resident their turn,
21 but at least -- maximum three minutes per
22 resident, and I'm going to start with the
23 residents who are standing.

24 And if there's anyone who would like to
25 speak in favor or in opposition of this,

1 then one by one you can come up, starting
2 with those who are standing.

3 MR. NAVARRO: Mr. Chair, I'd just like
4 to remind you that, at the end of the
5 public comment, on behalf of the ownership,
6 I would like an opportunity to present, as
7 well.

8 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes sir.

9 MR. NAVARRO: Thank you very much.

10 MS. SPAIN: I'd like to hear from Jorge
11 Fernandez, if he has to leave early.

12 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Excuse me.
13 I'll just read my comments. It won't take
14 three minutes. And thank you for allowing
15 me to speak now, but I was standing and I'm
16 against it, so --

17 MR. CEBALLOS: Can we confirm that you
18 were sworn in?

19 MR. HERNANDEZ: No. Please do.

20 THE SECRETARY: Gus, can you swear him in?

21 MR. CEBALLOS: The court reporter can.

22 (Thereupon, the participant was sworn.)

23 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yes.

24 So, this is a letter that I sent
25 earlier. Dear Mr. Adams and Members of the

1 Historic Preservation Board, I am writing
2 on the matter -- I'm sorry, I have a cold
3 -- of the application for the Garden of Our
4 Lord at 110 Phoenetia Avenue, Coral Gables,
5 Florida to be considered for designation as
6 a Local Historic Landmark.

7 As you know, I have often advocated on
8 behalf of local designations for properties
9 that meet the criteria and against
10 designation if the site in question fails
11 to rise to the level of significance which
12 that distinction merits. I have reviewed
13 the application and have recently driven by
14 the site. Long ago, I visited the garden
15 itself.

16 In this case, I do not support
17 nomination. The church proper is not being
18 proposed for designation, and rightfully
19 so. The wall of the Garden of Our Lord is
20 a ladder extension, subordinate and
21 dependent on the sanctuary for its spatial
22 and compositional meaning. Without the
23 building, the wall is a fragment, a
24 dangling participle ripped away from its
25 context.

1 I have reviewed the permit plans of the
2 garden wall designed by Robert Fitch Smith,
3 a noted architect, whose works have
4 received the distinction of landmark
5 designation. The wall, on its own, is
6 neither significant, nor exemplary. There
7 is no known planting plan establishing the
8 layout, composition or location of specimen
9 in the garden. No landscape architect or
10 master gardener is known to have been
11 involved with what was contained between
12 the wall and the sanctuary, in the garden
13 itself.

14 The garden has also not been well
15 maintained, and it would be speculative to
16 reconstruct the design of the Biblical
17 garden now lost. There are a series of
18 commemorative plaques that were
19 incrementally added to memorialize persons
20 of distinction, often by community
21 organizations, friends or family members,
22 but commemorative monuments are not
23 necessarily historical landmarks. One of
24 the plaques identifies an individual who's
25 accomplishments did not occur here and who

1 passed away before the incorporation of the
2 City of Coral Gables.

3 I am intrigued by projects involving
4 memory, but the criteria for historical
5 designation link historically significant
6 persons and events to specific places.
7 These plaques are generally commemorative.
8 They are not historical.

9 There is mention in the nomination for
10 it's pallisters and a niche with keystones
11 and other classical elements. As a
12 material, otolites ubiquitous. It is what
13 is crafted from the stone that can convey
14 meaning. The oolite planters -- I mean,
15 pallisters, on walls that have no
16 architectural relationship to the pilasters
17 of the Woman's Club, as stated in the
18 nomination, other than their categorical
19 distinction. They are simply one of many
20 categories of architectural embellishments
21 of classicism, columns, pediments, volute,
22 entablature, et cetera.

23 The arch niche also mentioned in the
24 nomination is curiously attenuated and the
25 keystone disproportionally small. It is

1 not clear what Fitch Smith had intended
2 here. This ensemble does not rise to the
3 level of exquisite mannerist distortion,
4 and on the other hand, it lacks the
5 thematic characteristics and interest of
6 Mid Century ornament, which would be the
7 prevailing spirit of the day. Together,
8 pilaster, niche, keystone, urns all seem
9 excentric, an oddity.

10 The cuprous nature of these ornamental
11 features does not elevate this wall
12 fragment to the level of a landmark status.
13 This wall and the walks and small pool
14 behind it are neither sufficiently
15 exceptional nor significant. Approving
16 this nomination would confer historic site
17 status to an entire City block, which would
18 be a misappropriation of the privilege of a
19 historic landmark status.

20 I know there is a project proposed for
21 this site. I do not wish to comment on it.
22 I merely wish to focus on whether the one
23 singular wall is sufficiently significant
24 to designate this large urban block as a
25 historic site.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

3 MR. CEBALLOS: Mr. Chair, if I may,
4 just procedurally make a comment? So the
5 property owner has not been given an
6 opportunity to speak yet, because they had
7 originally requested to allow certain
8 individuals from the public to speak,
9 before they have a chance to -- speak,
10 mostly because they were on a time
11 constraint. My recommendation would be to
12 allow the property owner to speak, after
13 anybody who's on a time constraint, who
14 chooses to go before the property owner
15 speaks, to go first. Does that make sense?

16 So if there is ten people or twenty
17 people in the audience that would like to
18 speak and they don't need to wait for the
19 property owner to speak, that they can go
20 head and speak now, and the rest of the
21 public can reserve their comments until
22 they've heard all three parties.

23 Typically, in your normal hearings, you
24 have the City and the property owner. In
25 this case, it's the first time, I've ever

1 been aware, in the five years that I've
2 been here, the application is being brought
3 forth by a third party. So, in this case,
4 there are three parties. So that's the
5 reason why it's a little nuance.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: The owner asked to speak
7 after the public portion.

8 MR. CEBALLOS: Agreed, but I don't want
9 anybody in the public to feel prejudiced
10 for having to speak before they've heard
11 the property owner speak. So my
12 recommendation would be, allow anyone in
13 the public, who's on a time constraint, or
14 for whatever reason, the opportunity to
15 speak now, which is not unheard of. In the
16 City Commission, you can have your entire
17 public comment before every item is even
18 discussed, so it would not atypical to
19 allow either way, but just, in an abundance
20 of caution, I would recommend, anybody who
21 doesn't mind waiting, to wait until after
22 the property owner has spoken. Anybody on
23 a time constraint can be heard now. Does
24 that make sense?

25 MR. MENENDEZ: That makes sense.

1 MR. NAVARRO: I have no issues with
2 that, Mr. Chair.

3 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay.

4 MR. NAVARRO; Thank you.

5 MR. HEISENBOTTLE: If I may,
6 Mr. Chairman, allow me to present now,
7 because I do have a time constraint.

8 Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.
9 For those of you who may not know me, my
10 name is Richard Heisenbottle and I'm
11 president of RJ Heisenbottle Architects,
12 located right here in Downtown Coral
13 Gables. We like to think of ourselves as
14 one of the premier architectural firms in
15 Florida with a true specialty in historic
16 preservation, the most complex historic
17 preservation assignments and decisions,
18 from the Freedom Tower to Vizcaya, usually
19 come over our desks.

20 As it relates to the debate over the
21 historic designation of the Garden of Our
22 Lord, I've been asked by both sides to be
23 their expert witness, and I have turned
24 them both down, hoping that this matter
25 would resolve itself without a public

1 preservation battle. The fact that we
2 stand here in front of all of you today
3 tells me that this may not be the case.

4 So, as a passionate preservationist
5 myself, I've elected to come forward and
6 speak both, as a resident of the City of
7 Coral Gables, as an expert in historic
8 preservation, and to give you my thoughts,
9 and remind myself that I sat in Albert's
10 chair for any number of years charing this
11 Board in the past.

12 Now, I applaud the passion of the
13 historic preservation community sitting
14 behind me, Ms. Bolton and the others who
15 have joined her in this effort to designate
16 the Garden of Our Lord, but preservation is
17 a matter of law. I must say that, in my
18 professional opinion, the site simply does
19 not meet the City's criteria for historic
20 designation. I would tell you, that while
21 I know Robert -- the work of Robert Fitch
22 Smith well -- I've had the opportunity to
23 restore one of his buildings, the Doc
24 Thomas house restoration just finished last
25 year -- this property does not portray the

1 environment in the era of history
2 characterized by one of the distinctive
3 architectural styles. It does not embody
4 the distinguishing characteristics of an
5 architectural style. It is not an
6 outstanding work of a prominent designer.
7 It does not contain the elements of design
8 and craftsmanship that are, quote,
9 outstanding quality and I could go on, but
10 there's no reason to go on, because, quite
11 frankly, Warren Adams has done an
12 exceptional job -- and his staff have done
13 an exceptional job in the research of this
14 criteria for designation and for this
15 project.

16 While this is a well-intentioned effort
17 by preservation minded individuals in our
18 community, it can also be seen as an
19 attempt to use historic preservation as a
20 zoning tool to prohibit new neighborhood
21 re-development. Doing this is a tremendous
22 disservice to historic preservation and
23 diminishes the importance of historic
24 preservation. Somehow, these efforts or
25 attempts only occur when a developer

1 announces his intention to re-develop a
2 property. To avoid this sort of thing in
3 the future, the City should regularly and
4 you should encourage them to do this --
5 Dona, how are you?

6 MS. SPAIN: Hi. How are you?

7 MR. HEISENBOTTLE: -- every five to
8 seven years, to professionally update their
9 historic districts and individual listings,
10 reassessing potential structures, so that
11 there is clarity to all interests in the
12 community. Preservation is an ongoing
13 community efforts. Buildings that we may
14 think of today as completely unworthy for
15 designation may be tomorrow's historic
16 landmarks.

17 Thank you very much.

18 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you. Okay.

19 MR. DAMIAN: If I may, I'm Vincent
20 Damian. I live at 1010 Palermo Avenue.
21 I've been a resident of Coral Gables for 60
22 years, 55 of those in a historic house.
23 I'm one of the original founders of what
24 then was the Historic Homeowners
25 Association.

1 I cannot comment on what these very
2 significant architects, professors,
3 historians have said. They have looked at
4 it. They have said that it does meet the
5 criteria and they have pointed out, in each
6 case, how it meets the criteria. Now,
7 there can be people with different
8 opinions, subjective opinions, but, I mean,
9 the experts who have come in on this have
10 come down 100 percent that this is
11 historic, in accordance with the criteria
12 of the City. I won't argue anymore about
13 that, because it's in your report.

14 What I will say is, we have heard
15 references to shrubs, to plants. This is
16 not part of the criteria. That was said
17 right from the beginning. Nor is part of
18 the criteria the fact that there is a
19 developer who purchased the property and
20 wants to develop it.

21 I will only point out to you, this is
22 open space, and if the developer has
23 purchased the property, wants to develop
24 it, great architects as our City has here,
25 can incorporate this garden into the

1 development of the property, to its
2 benefit, not to its detriment.

3 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

4 MS. PALACIO: Hello, everyone, and
5 thank you for doing what you do. I also
6 serve in one of our advisory boards in the
7 City and I know this is your personal time.

8 I think, for my parents that are here,
9 and I'm sorry this took so long, my name is
10 Maria Palacio. I'm one of the founding
11 members of Crystal Academy. It's a center
12 and the first school in Coral Gables for
13 children with autism. For us, this is a
14 very personal journey, because of my own
15 son. And in 13 years that we have been in
16 the St. James Lutheran Church, we have
17 served over 650 families.

18 We are here because we just -- actually
19 we just found out about the impending issue
20 with maybe the development of the area.

21 Years ago, I personally, not because I was
22 thinking that the area was historical, just
23 because of the fear that we had as tenant
24 that a developer would come and would buy
25 this and actually would kick us out of the

1 Gables -- I'm a resident of the Gables, and
2 our children live in the Gables, and one of
3 the reasons why we always wanted to be here
4 is because our children live here. We want
5 them to be raised here. We want them to
6 learn. We wanted them to work here, and in
7 the future, we want housing for children
8 with disability here and students with
9 disabilities.

10 So I reached out to some of you, and
11 back then, this is maybe seven years ago,
12 there was no historical value in St. James
13 or in the Garden. I can tell you that many
14 developers have come. The last developer
15 came during the COVID times, and I'm sorry,
16 this is very emotional for me, and he met
17 with us, and he said, "I'm sorry, Mary, but
18 there's not a return on investment."

19 And when he said that, I looked at my
20 kids and I said, "The return on investment
21 is the kids that we have, that we serve,
22 and it's going to be the adults in the
23 future and is going to be part of this
24 community. That's the return on
25 investment." So --

1 MR. MENENDEZ: Please -- please, no
2 clapping. Please.

3 MS. PALACIO: Sorry. So the deal fell
4 through. And then comes this parent, who
5 has an autistic child, that knew about our
6 issue and said, "I knew someone," and he
7 never even mentioned the name of that
8 someone and I said, "Can that person come
9 and actually visit us," because I could
10 talk the talk, but if he doesn't come to
11 Crystal Academy, it's not the same.

12 So he came, and he met with the kids,
13 and he said, "While you do what you do --
14 it doesn't have to be you, Mary, it has to
15 be Crystal Academy, and the mission is
16 intact, I'm interested in building you a
17 new school. And while you do what you do,
18 that school is not going to have any rent
19 and you're not going to pay anything." We
20 looked at each other, and I looked at my
21 kids, and I could not believe that was
22 coming out of anybody's mounth, because,
23 again, we are in a serving community. What
24 we do is, we serve. We are a non-profit
25 organization. And when this developer,

1 Century Builders, Sergio Pino, even said,
2 "You can use the Garden of the Lord," and I
3 said, "No. No. Thank you, but, no, thank
4 you."

5 The Garden of the Lord is extremely
6 dangerous for the kids. There's a pond
7 full of mosquitos and frogs that we
8 actually have to maintain with Clorox.
9 There is sharp edges. There are shrubs
10 that have -- is like blow and cut. There's
11 nothing else happening in there. So we
12 don't use the Garden of the Lord. And,
13 again, yes, there are things that we can do
14 in comment -- I mean, I never even met you,
15 and I'm happy to have met you and talked to
16 you, but instead of building and keeping
17 walls, what we need to do is actually build
18 a new future for the kids, and if we need
19 to develop and we need to maintain some of
20 those walls in some other type of way in
21 the architecture, so be it, but I'm here to
22 represent more than families that will
23 benefit from having a new development that
24 actually is going to help us continue doing
25 what we do.

1 We're not going to add any more traffic
2 to you guys. We only have 50 children. We
3 have 53 employees, but we're almost one to
4 one, but this new development also gives us
5 the opportunity to perhaps have -- and this
6 is something that I'm talking to them, is
7 maybe rent some of the commercial space so
8 our kids can transfer and transition from
9 being young adults to adults and they have
10 a little business in that development.
11 There's going to be apartments there.
12 Maybe we can also have apartments for
13 people with disabilities. So this opens a
14 new scope of opportunities for Gables
15 residents with disabilities.

16 Again, thank you for your time. I'm
17 bringing you something new to the table,
18 but we were -- we're here today to say,
19 this is who we are. We want to be here and
20 we can work together and make it happen.
21 Thank you.

22 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you very much.

23 Yes, ma'am.

24 MS. LONGO: Good afternoon. My name is
25 Maria Cristina Longo, and I own a historic

1 home at 16 Phoenetia Avenue, where I have
2 resided for almost seven years. 16
3 Phoenetia Avenue is about a three-minute
4 walk east from the Garden of Our Lord.
5 There are four historic homes on Phoenetia
6 Avenue, including the John Douglas Home and
7 the rest of the properties on my block are
8 multi-family apartment buildings.

9 I know this section of my neighborhood
10 intimately, because I walk my dog, Oliver,
11 every day on the same route. First, we
12 stroll to the west of my home on Phoenetia
13 Avenue to Galiano Street. Then we turn
14 south on Galiano until we reach Sidonia
15 Street. From Sidonia Street, we walk east
16 to East Ponce de Leon Boulevard, and next
17 we walk north on East Ponce straight to the
18 Woman's Club, and back home on Phoenetia
19 Avenue.

20 I urge you to please designate the
21 Garden of Our Lord historic, based on its
22 significant aesthetic value to the
23 neighborhood's character. By the way, I
24 failed to mention that I'm a small boutique
25 developer, so I have nothing against

1 development.

2 The aesthetic significance is easily
3 identifiable, because this garden strongly,
4 strongly, complements the Woman's Club and
5 the green corridor on East Ponce de Leon.
6 The green corridor starts at the small park
7 on the intersection with Sidonia Street and
8 East Ponce de Leon. The garden and its
9 wall were designed by the notable architect
10 Robert Fitch Smith, which Mr. -- Architect
11 Jorge Hernandez mentioned him -- so we are
12 assuming he did it, because his wall is in
13 the plans -- who is the same architect who
14 designed the beautiful now Montgomery
15 Garden at Fairchild Tropical Garden in
16 1949.

17 The Guardian of Our Lord was designed
18 intentionally by Fitch Smith to complement
19 the green corridor on East Ponce de Leon
20 Boulevard and the historic Woman's Club.
21 For example, the design and the pattern of
22 the coral rock on the garden wall and on
23 the Woman's Club walls are the same. It's
24 smaller, but it's the same exact pattern.
25 The pattern of the design of the rock walls

1 on the Montgomery Garden at Fairchild
2 Tropical Garden is different. Obviously,
3 this architect had the sensitivity and
4 cared about context. The garden is not
5 just a gathering place, but it is also a
6 key contributor to the historic streetscape
7 and the pedestrian experience on the green
8 corridor.

9 I urge you to please evaluate this
10 garden in the context of its aesthetic
11 contribution to the green corridor and the
12 neighborhood, my neighborhood.

13 Additionally, the Ponce neighborhood faces
14 a challenge, because property owners of the
15 multi-family properties on Phoenetia Avenue
16 do not reside on the properties and a large
17 majority don't even reside in Florida;
18 therefore, they do not know of the
19 potential negative effect of the
20 neighborhood's character and its aesthetic
21 value if this garden is demolished and
22 destroyed.

23 I greatly, greatly appreciate your time
24 and your participation in this very
25 important Board, and I urge you, again, to

1 please have the moral fortitude to
2 designate the Garden of Our Lord historic.
3 Thank you for your time.

4 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

5 MR. JUDE: Good afternoon. My name is
6 Peter Jude, and I thank you for allowing me
7 to speak today and thank you for serving on
8 this Board.

9 I'm here today to speak for my mother,
10 Sallye Jude, who on December 21st left us
11 here on earth. My mother would absolutely
12 have been here today, if she was still
13 alive. Even at the age of 96, she
14 continued, until her last days, to work to
15 preserve our community's historic
16 properties.

17 I just want to read one part of the
18 letter that is in your packet that she
19 wrote, along with Dolly MacIntyre. "The
20 Garden of Our Lord is the highest and best
21 use of land on which it sits. What higher
22 use could there be than a garden dedicated
23 to God? Surely, the developer can be
24 creative in his design for luxury condos
25 and make use of the Garden as an amenity

1 for the project." Thank you.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

3 MR. CRUZ: Hello, Elvis Cruz. I have
4 participated in the formulation of four
5 separate historic districts. I've been a
6 historic preservation activist for over 40
7 years. And I've read the designation
8 report and I found it remarkably
9 well-written and replete with reasons to
10 historically designate this property.

11 I was surprised by some of the things I
12 heard as reasons to not designate it. Let
13 me point out that a property does not have
14 to have bodies buried in it to be consider
15 historic. Nor does a property have to have
16 Biblical plants planted on it to be
17 historic. Also, there are many existing
18 parks across our country that were once
19 platted as residential land. Also, it's
20 understood that this property, this Garden,
21 goes back to 1951. So using the 1920s plat
22 maps to argue against it is somewhat
23 disingenuous.

24 In closing, you have a golden
25 opportunity to do something wonderful for

1 the City of Coral Gables to preserve the
2 scale, the cultural character and the
3 ambience of this area, so please do the
4 right thing and approve this designation.
5 Thank you.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

7 MS. HOPPE: Hello, I'm Jessica Hoppe,
8 and this is my son, Valentino Garcia
9 Rodriguez. We are -- I'm a parent of one
10 of the students that attends Crystal
11 Academy, and I appreciate Coral Gables and
12 all it does to preserve the beauty, but I
13 appreciate it more for looking forward into
14 the future, and I've seen everything you
15 guys have done for autism, all of the
16 events, the people you've hired here, the
17 -- yeah, just even everything in the City,
18 the cars that you've done.

19 And as a parent, finding a place like
20 Crystal Academy is amazing, but finding
21 people at a community that's working
22 towards what my son's future is going to
23 look like is even more important. Yes, I
24 have -- we've worked very hard, since the
25 age of two, but knowing that he would have

1 a place potentially to live and to work and
2 people that support that means even more to
3 me than -- I mean, you guys have done a
4 great job. Everything is beautiful here.
5 But now I would like my son to be able to
6 speak.

7 MR. GARCIA RODRIGUEZ: So I am the
8 older brother of who she was just talking
9 about, and I really -- like if this
10 garden -- like are you talking about
11 designating a wall historical?

12 MS. HOPPE: You've got to just speak --

13 MR. GARCIA-RODRIGUEZ: Oh.

14 MS. HOPPE: Yeah.

15 MR. GARCIA-RODRIGUEZ: Okay. So I
16 really do think that it shouldn't, because
17 this school could be built here and it
18 could help a bunch of kids in their future,
19 and, then, if you guys don't build this, it
20 will just make so many lives just suffer.
21 So if you could really designate any like
22 place on this earth historical, because it
23 was all made at the same time, but this
24 place could be used as a very useful thing
25 for a lot of other kids, that really do

1 need it, like my little brother.

2 So, yeah, I just wanted to say that,
3 and so, yes, I do think that the school
4 should be built there.

5 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

6 MS. CRUZ: My name is Maria Cruz. I've
7 been a resident of the City of Coral Gables
8 since 1976. I am a little concerned. We
9 were told by Mr. Warren that, really, we
10 did not have to look into what the purpose
11 of the property was going to be. He put it
12 up. It has no bearing on this matter what
13 the development was going to be, what it
14 was going to be used for, and, then, at the
15 end, he brought it up. So, you know, it is
16 very confusing to someone like me. I'm a
17 retired educator. I'm not an expert. I'm
18 not an expert. I'm just a resident that
19 cares about this City a lot and has taken a
20 lot of heat for it.

21 You have in your possession letters
22 from well-known nationally recognized
23 experts. The City has done very well
24 bringing local experts, that somehow have
25 something to gain from this. You will see

1 that most of the people that are here
2 asking you to consider granting this
3 designation, we have nothing to gain.
4 We're not going to get anything from it.
5 We're not working for the developer. We're
6 not going to benefit by having the school.

7 I'm sorry, there's plenty of property
8 in Coral Gables, that if they really want
9 to help them, they can build the school
10 someplace else in the City of Coral Gables.
11 You know, it really -- as a teacher, it
12 bothers me when you use children as excuses
13 for what you want. I'm sorry. I do
14 believe that they deserve to have a school,
15 but the school doesn't have to be there.
16 It could be in any other property. This
17 developer could go out, find another
18 property in the City of Coral Gables, and
19 build the school. It doesn't have to be
20 there, okay.

21 Your job is to decide whether this
22 Garden of the Lord should be designated as
23 historic. Your job certainly should not be
24 whether the children are going to benefit,
25 whether the project is going to be

1 fantastic, that has nothing to do with
2 this, as far as we were directed by Warren
3 Adams. I know that, at the end, he threw
4 that in, because that helped the issue on
5 his side.

6 I submit to you that there are two
7 women, that we all loved, that we all
8 consider very important to the history of
9 the City of Coral Gables. One was Roxcy
10 Bolton. And you have her daughter here
11 representing her. And the other one was
12 Sallye Jude. And I can tell you that those
13 two women are looking down at you to see
14 how this is going to go. If they were
15 here, I can tell you that -- Sallye just
16 passed away at 96, she would have been
17 here. If she had lasted a few more days,
18 you would have listened to her.

19 And I can tell you, somebody that
20 worked very closely to Roxcy, who learned
21 what I do now as advocate for the residents
22 of the City from Roxcy, that she would have
23 been here, no doubt in my mind, to tell you
24 that this Garden of the Lord should be
25 preserved historic, and I'm so happy that

1 you have a good show of residents here that
2 have nothing to gain, nothing to benefit
3 from, and are here to defend this garden.

4 Thank you very much.

5 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

6 MS. BIONDO: Hello. My name is Rebekah
7 Biondo, and my son, Harrison, is a student
8 at Crystal Academy, and I thank you for
9 your time today and your consideration.

10 I would agree that we should keep the
11 comments today focused on the use of the
12 land, and I think that means something
13 different to of all us, because when my son
14 was diagnosed with autism at one year old,
15 he began his time at the current property
16 on the Crystal Academy, And for those of
17 you who think that location may not mean
18 something, it does mean something to these
19 children. He learned there to talk. He
20 learned there to write. And every single
21 day, when he gets out of his bed, he now
22 says, "School. School. School."

23 And when we pull in that driveway -- if
24 we go the wrong direction, if we -- you
25 know, there's a detour, he starts crying,

1 because that property means something to
2 him. It is so great to hear what the
3 residents feel when they're walking down
4 the street approaching the property,
5 because I have the same feeling, but it
6 means something different to me.

7 My son has been there since he's been
8 one years old, as I had mentioned, and do
9 believe that the residents have something
10 to benefit from having us there. I'm happy
11 that we're focused on the aesthetics of the
12 building, but I implore you to go look in
13 the backyard and look at the garden and
14 look at the children playing there every
15 day, and I would suggest that the residents
16 can go spend time there, and they'll get a
17 lot out of it, if that's the point, in
18 using the neighborhood.

19 I just would implore you to go look how
20 the property is being used and think about
21 what it means. Hearing about Mary's plans
22 to continue to broaden the use of the
23 community to support these children is just
24 incredible, and I would ask you to consider
25 that location means something to us.

1 Location is the school, location is the
2 people, location is the community, and it
3 is a part of every day for our children
4 learning to adjust and thrive in this
5 community, and they can thrive and
6 contribute to your community. That's what
7 we're all here for.

8 And so the personal aspect for us as
9 parents, it is the property, it is so much
10 more than that, but please consider what we
11 have there and what we're looking to build
12 and continue to add to the community.

13 My son had to leave. He could not stay
14 for the community -- or for this meeting,
15 but, again, every milestone that he has had
16 has been at that site. So, please, don't
17 just call it another site. That's not what
18 it is to us.

19 So thank you for your time.

20 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

21 MS. HAUB: My name is Noelle Haub. My
22 parents owned 1119 Coral Way for 64 years.
23 It's a Fink home. I've lived next to this
24 property for 25 years. I think the Garden
25 should be designated historic to keep the

1 integrity of the neighborhood, the Woman's
2 Club and everything.

3 Everyone's talking about, like they're
4 going to build this, and it's just a
5 school. It's not a school. It has to work
6 within the neighborhood. If we keep our
7 green spaces, it's for the benefit of
8 everyone, including the children. We need
9 the green spaces. To just bulldoze it, to
10 put who knows what, or we do know, is just
11 criminal. It doesn't work with the
12 integrity of the neighborhood.

13 I've been here my whole life. My
14 mother has come before you guys, fought you
15 guys, won, so you designated the
16 neighborhood. I'm not asking you to
17 designate the neighborhood. I know it's
18 going to be developed. But it's
19 multi-family. Our buildings are two and
20 three stories. Keep it like a community
21 instead of -- if I wanted to live in a high
22 rise on Ponce and be part of that kind of
23 community, I would go there, but I don't.

24 I like the community. I like being
25 able to walk. I like being able to go into

1 St. James. Is it in disrepair? Sure.
2 That's what people do when they want
3 something to go away. They let it fall
4 into disrepair. They did it to George
5 Merrick's sister's home, at the corner of
6 Castile and Coral Way. A gentleman bought
7 it, wanted to tear it down, you guys said,
8 no. What did he do? He left it open
9 through the hurricane season. It rotted.
10 It collapsed within itself. He waited out
11 a Commission Board. The Commission
12 changed. They approved something that
13 doesn't look anything like what was there.

14 It's important to keep this City --
15 this is why we live in this City. This is
16 why we have insane rules that other people
17 go, "My God, you put up with that?" And
18 it's like, "Yeah, I like it. It means that
19 I can walk down the street at night and not
20 have horrible things."

21 I mean, my father was a prominent
22 doctor here in this City. Everybody knew
23 him. We were there -- before the
24 Courthouse was the Courthouse one Ponce de
25 Leon. I've watched this City and what's

1 going on is just really sad. Thank you.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

3 MS. MARR: Hello, Joanne Marr, a Member
4 of the Villagers, Chair of the Governing
5 Board and Docent at the Merrick House. I
6 live at 1225 Valencia Avenue.

7 The Douglas Entrance was once called
8 the finest of all of Coral Gables' noble
9 gateways, but for Sallye Jude, Dolly
10 MacIntyre and other like-minded individuals
11 who founded the Villagers, it would now be
12 a supermarket and parking lot.

13 The Biltmore Hotel, which opened to
14 grand fanfare in 1926 and is a City jewel
15 today, was considered an abandoned eyesore
16 in the '80s. Many wanted it gone. Dorothy
17 Thomson cast the final deciding vote.

18 William Philbrick worked for ten years
19 to convince the City that George Merrick's
20 family home, which had fallen into a sad
21 state of neglect was worth saving. Without
22 people like Sallye, Dolly, and here I'll
23 add Arva Moore Parks, who recognized that
24 disrepair, neglect, unpopularity or being
25 out of fashion does not render a historic

1 property valueless, we would have no
2 Douglas Entrance, no Biltmore, no Merrick
3 House, to tell the story of the man who
4 brought our City Beautiful into being.

5 Now, I know many of you are thinking,
6 what, you are lumping a wall in with these
7 significant structures? That's
8 preposterous? Well, consider that we
9 appreciate those significant structures
10 today, but that wasn't always the case.
11 They were very nearly lost. And to me, the
12 garden is so much more than a wall.

13 As I considered the use of native
14 limestone, which addresses Criterion 4,
15 under Architectural Significance, and
16 Criterion 2, under Aesthetics Significance,
17 it strikes me that the benches and walkways
18 and grotto within the garden are not only
19 in concert and scale with the things, the
20 Woman's Club across the street, but are
21 also very similar to the grotto at the
22 Merrick House and the wall that has been
23 rebuilt on that property. That wall,
24 recently celebrated with a ribbon cutting
25 ceremony attended by Mayors and

1 Commissioners, was the product of fifteen
2 years of concerted effort by the House's
3 Board of Governors.

4 We hail and celebrate the use of local
5 materials that contribute to the
6 distinctive quality or identity of one part
7 of the City, and yet, if the garden is not
8 designated historic, those same local
9 materials will be destined to the rubble
10 pile. I believe it's wasteful and
11 shortsighted and the garden is so much more
12 than a wall.

13 Each morning, during my recent visit to
14 the Yucatan Peninsula, I stood beneath a
15 giant tree and witnessed the symphony and
16 spectacle of a breakfast feast that took
17 place within its branches, yellow breasted
18 social fly catchers, orange trogon speckled
19 woodpeckers and white-winged doves gathered
20 by the hundreds. The tree at the center of
21 the Garden of Our Lord hosts a similar meal
22 for cardinals, doves, blue jays,
23 woodpeckers and more.

24 In designing the garden, Robert Fitch
25 created a green space. He may not have

1 planted those trees, he may not have
2 designed it, but he created a green space
3 for which he would be celebrated, and as I
4 quote, he worked tirelessly for
5 neighborhood development to preserve the
6 breathing space that brought people to
7 Miami. And this quote has already been
8 read. In his own words, "It's too bad that
9 neighborhood planning could not have guided
10 Miami from the start, but it's not too late
11 to do a good job with it."

12 You have heard that the City does not
13 designate historic just any property by a
14 prominent architect, only the best
15 examples. In designing a contemplative
16 garden in concert with our subtropical
17 climate, one that provides a visual and
18 physical respite, honors those who have
19 made the ultimate sacrifice for our
20 country, provides virtual and literal food
21 for humans and animals -- you can tell
22 where my emotions lie, every time I mention
23 animals. But anyway -- virtual food for
24 humans and animals and embodies the garden
25 city precepts that have made Coral Gables

1 the City Beautiful.

2 Robert Fitch Smith created not just a
3 home for one family, like a wonderful home
4 like Java had, not just a home for one
5 family, but a truly sacred special place
6 for many, whether they visit on foot, by
7 vehicle or in the case of our feathered
8 friends, who depend on Coral Gables being a
9 bird sanctuary by air. Shouldn't that be
10 considered a best example?

11 The Garden of Our Lord retains its
12 historic integrity and significantly
13 contributes to the historic fabric of the
14 North Ponce Conservation District and the
15 City of Coral Gables. It's so much more
16 than a wall.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

19 MR. SOKOLOFF: Hi. Good afternoon, I'm
20 Gordon Sokoloff, 225 Alesio Avenue, Coral
21 Gables, Florida. I'm born and raised in
22 the Gables. I'm almost as old as the
23 Garden that we're talking about. And I
24 used to serve on the Transportation Board
25 for eight years, as its chairman for two,

1 and as a Vice Chair of the Parking Advisory
2 Board. I was also president and founder of
3 the Ponce Neighbors Association.

4 And my involvement on these boards and
5 on these Committees have been to try to
6 preserve what is always a fight in the City
7 of Coral Gables, and it's not a fight
8 against developers, but it's a fight
9 against overdevelopment and just trying to
10 maintain the quality of Coral Gables.
11 Coral Gables is a special place. We all
12 agree with that. And what keeps it special
13 is the character.

14 And there were two previous speakers,
15 one spoke about the environment around this
16 property and I think the compatibility is
17 something you shouldn't ignore. It's right
18 across the street from the Coral Gables
19 Woman's Club, which has the same kind of
20 coral rock configurations.

21 And I think that -- I'm in favor of you
22 trying to -- if it's possible, and I don't
23 know if it is, if there's a way to dissect
24 out the garden. If I heard it correctly,
25 Mr. Adams, I don't know if he's still here,

1 but it was on ten different lots that
2 comprised the site. If there's a way for
3 the developer to somehow compromise and
4 dissect out the garden and build around it
5 and preserve it, it would be something
6 wonderful to do.

7 The garden is just very, very old and
8 it should remain. Thank you.

9 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

10 MR. CEBALLOS: Just as a friendly
11 reminder to the public that is speaking,
12 please let us know if you have not been
13 sworn in. If you are going to be providing
14 sworn testimony, you need to be sworn in.

15 And, additionally, the property owner
16 has yet to speak. An opportunity for
17 public comment will be allowed after that,
18 as well.

19 MR. RAMET: Hi. Good afternoon. My
20 name is Jean-Baptiste Ramet. I live in the
21 Gables. And I come here as the dad of a
22 six-year-old non-verbal kid, who's
23 attending Crystal Academy. I'm also a
24 member of the University of Miami Center of
25 Autism and Disability. I'm a board member

1 there.

2 And we definitely take this issue
3 seriously. I've dropped my son several
4 times at that schools -- several times;
5 hundreds of times -- and I've walked into
6 that church several times for their shows.
7 I've never seen that garden -- I've never
8 noticed it. And I'm not an architect. I'm
9 not a historian. I love living in Coral
10 Gables. I love everything, you know, about
11 the Coral Gables design and history, but I
12 never noticed that Garden and I've been
13 there countless times.

14 I'm not here to talk explicitly about
15 the needs or autism, but the infrastructure
16 is definitely one of them, and finding a
17 project in which a very qualitative school,
18 delivering a really qualitative service, to
19 a very underserved community, is given an
20 opportunity to improve its infrastructures
21 and deliver better service to even more
22 kids, I see this as an opportunity. And
23 I'll finish on just God's work -- you know,
24 this is God's garden. I pray to God every
25 day, and I thank God every day for having

1 these people in my life, for having people
2 that are able to build a school, for the
3 therapists that are able to provide this
4 service and I'm truly grateful for God's
5 work and these people.

6 To me, this is worth more than the
7 Garden, and this also is God's work. So I
8 didn't come as prepared and as organized,
9 but I just wanted to give a heartfelt, you
10 know, opinion from a resident and a parent
11 of a non-verbal kid.

12 Thank you very much.

13 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

14 MS. RIAN: Hello. Excuse me, I've had
15 a little bit of an issue for about a month,
16 so I don't think it's a cold. I think it's
17 allergies.

18 I just moved to 29 Santillane Number --
19 Santillane, according to the Coral Gables
20 folks, Number 4. I just bought it in
21 December.

22 As a new resident, one of the things
23 I'm doing a lot is walking my dogs -- my
24 dog, and one of the first things I actually
25 noticed was the character of the

1 neighborhood, which is very low key, that
2 people are very friendly, that there are
3 these old growth trees, including in that
4 Garden, and one of the first things I
5 noticed was the plaques on the side of the
6 Garden wall and the Garden wall itself.

7 So, to me, the character of that Garden
8 really does contribute to the character of
9 the neighborhood, and not just the wall,
10 but the trees and the plants contained
11 within it. I don't really care that they
12 are not plants from Israel, although that
13 would be kind of cool, too, if you wanted
14 to restore it. I do support development
15 happening to the right tracts in the City.
16 Along my street, there are seven older
17 multi-family buildings. I'm expecting at
18 least two of those probably to get knocked
19 down in the next year, and I don't regret
20 that that's going to happen. I don't think
21 those buildings are historic. But I do
22 think this garden is a historic property,
23 and I urge you to consider designating it
24 as such.

25 Thank you, Bye.

1 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

2 Anyone in the audience to speak in
3 favor or opposition of this case?

4 MS. MUNIZ: Hi. Good afternoon. My
5 name is Laura Muniz, and I'm a resident of
6 Coral Gables.

7 THE SECRETARY: Tell us your name.

8 MS. MUNIZ: Laura Muniz. I'm a
9 resident of Coral Gables, and I also work
10 at Crystal Academy. I am the department
11 head for Behavior Services and I've been
12 serving children with autism over the last
13 ten years of my life.

14 I did not come prepared, but I was
15 highly motivated by the speakers that I've
16 been listening to, and I am a firm
17 supporter of the cause of the development,
18 not only -- I think history is important.
19 The Garden, it's a beautiful place, but,
20 honestly, over the last eight years that
21 I've been at Crystal Academy, no one has
22 ever really visited the Garden.

23 The fact is that even the area is a
24 little bit dangerous, not only for the
25 kids, but even for people who walk around.

1 If you go and observe, there are syringes
2 on the sides, there's food, there's debris,
3 there's a lot of trash, and us, there, who
4 work at Crystal Academy, we try to maintain
5 it clean. We do have our kids actually
6 working on learning how to do maintenance
7 work, because, at the end of the day, this
8 is their community, and we want to keep it
9 clean, we want to keep it safe, for them
10 and for everyone that resides in this area.

11 We do love the work that we do and the
12 population that we serve. So today I'm
13 here, not only for myself, as a resident,
14 but for the kids that I represent and I
15 advocate for them and their futures. So
16 it's not about using children, because I do
17 see myself as an educator, but, really,
18 like talking about their future and what
19 it's going to be like. A lot of us won't
20 be here for many, many years, but they
21 will. They are our future. And if we
22 don't look out for them, then who will?

23 So this a very emotional cause for me,
24 because this is my life's work and seeing
25 them fulfill their destiny is really

1 important, and I think it's important for
2 us to take care of them and our city, as
3 well.

4 So thank you so much for listening
5 today.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

7 (Inaudible.)

8 MS. RIVAS: Yes, I'm sworn in.

9 Hello. My name is Gabriela Rivas, and
10 I live on Calabria Ave, like two or three
11 blocks away from the Garden. And aside
12 from that, I also work at Crystal Academy.

13 In the two, three years that I've been
14 in the area, I've really never seen anyone
15 go to the Garden or use the Garden, and
16 it's always been a source of danger, in my
17 perspective. I walk my dog in the area a
18 lot and I've always had to avoid that
19 certain corner, because it's just very
20 dark. If you've ever looked inside, it's
21 completely overgrown. Nobody has ever
22 worked to maintain it. And this, now, with
23 the new development, it's the first time
24 that I've heard of anyone actually wanting
25 to take care and maintain the Garden. So I

1 don't think that it should be assigned as
2 historical.

3 Thank you for your time.

4 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

5 MS. HAUB: When everybody talks
6 about --

7 THE SECRETARY: Can you step up to the
8 mike?

9 MR. MENENDEZ: The microphone, please.
10 State your name and speak into the
11 microphone.

12 MS. HAUB: Noelle Haub. Noelle Haub.
13 They've mentioned that it's dark and it's
14 overgrown on the swale. That's not the
15 Garden's responsibility. That's Coral
16 Gables.

17 So if the lights don't work -- and that
18 happens on East Ponce all of the time.
19 That's not Garden's fault. That's the City
20 of Coral Gables. If the trash cans aren't
21 emptied, that's the City of Coral Gables,
22 not the Garden. And I've walked that
23 neighborhood for 25 years. Never have I
24 seen a syringe on the ground.

25 Thank you. Never. Never.

1 MR. NAVARRO: I just want to clarify, I
2 think the speaker was referring to inside
3 the Garden, which is a private area, which
4 is unlit, poorly maintained and the
5 landscaping is kind of --

6 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

7 THE SECRETARY: State your name, please.

8 MR. NAVARRO: For the record, Jorge
9 Navarro, with offices at 333 Southeast 2nd
10 Avenue. Thank you.

11 MR. MENENDEZ: Anybody else in the
12 audience who would like to speak in favor
13 or opposition? Please come up.

14 MR. HERRERA: Hi. Good evening. My
15 name is Carlos Herrera. My daughter
16 attends Crystal Academy, and I've been
17 dropping her off for the past ten years.
18 And the way I see it, this is the first
19 time that I really noticed, when all of
20 this came about, about this -- trying to
21 historically preservate this site.

22 It's a dilapidated garden. It's a
23 wall. It's like any other wall that I walk
24 by in Coral Gables. There's a bigger
25 purpose than just a garden and just a wall,

1 and we have our kids and -- that need a
2 place, that are very -- they need
3 consistency, and by providing this
4 development, which doesn't have a big
5 impact, it's a low impact development, and
6 the ability that our kids could go there,
7 play, work, live, it's -- I think it's part
8 of their development. It's very difficult
9 to find a developer that has -- that is
10 just giving us this opportunity to provide
11 this to our kids.

12 So I don't see anything special with
13 this site. It's just another block. It
14 looks like another backyard of any of the
15 houses in Coral Gables. It doesn't look
16 nothing special. It's a dilapidated
17 church, a couple of houses, and there's the
18 school in the back. So it's really -- this
19 is not the Biltmore. You can't compare
20 this with the Biltmore or the Venetian Pool
21 or Merrick's House or anything like that.

22 This is just a wall, with a couple of
23 crumbling houses and a church that nobody
24 attended to. So thank you very much.

25 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

1 MR. LOPEZ: Hi. My name is Erik Lopez.
2 I reside in Coral Gables. I was born and
3 raised here. And while my current
4 profession is that I own a jewelry store a
5 few blocks from the proposed location,
6 prior to that I was an urban planner. So I
7 have a little bit of experience with it.
8 One of my bigger projects that I worked on
9 was the Rouse project, also known as
10 Merrick Park. I'm very familiar with what
11 is required to make something historically
12 significantly, and I do not feel that this
13 dilapidated wall meets the criteria.

14 Aside from that, like many other people
15 here, I have a child that attends Crystal
16 Academy, and the school provides us, the
17 future of Coral Gables, our children,
18 shelter, and that wall keeps people out.
19 Nobody goes to that park. Nobody goes to
20 that garden. I think anyone suggesting
21 otherwise is not being truthful. And I
22 walk from my home to my store every day,
23 that same neighborhood, and I walk my son
24 after school, that same neighborhood. I
25 don't see people hanging out there. It's

1 not a place that people use. It's not a
2 place that people enjoy.

3 It's a dilapidated wall, and it's not
4 maintained. It's not historically
5 significant. It's not attractive. It
6 doesn't draw people into our community.
7 Walls keep people out. I'm not in favor.
8 Thank you.

9 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

10 MR. YASSEEN: Hello. My name is Omar
11 Yasseen. I live on Ponce de Leon
12 Boulevard. Good afternoon, and thank you
13 for the opportunity to come up here and
14 speak to you today. I stand before you to
15 advocate for the historic designation of
16 the Garden of Our Lord.

17 As many of you already know, the Garden
18 of Our Lord is a recognizable landmark
19 within our community, that is currently
20 under risk for demolition to make way for a
21 condo.

22 I grew up in Coral Gables and I've
23 lived here all 37 years of my life. All of
24 this time, I have lived close to the Garden
25 and I've watched it play an important role

1 in our community. The Garden of Our Lord
2 is a place of peace and tranquility, a
3 reprieve from the hustle and bustle of
4 every day life. It is not just another
5 piece of property. The Garden is over
6 seventy years old and was built by Robert
7 Fitch Smith, a man who has played a pivotal
8 role in building many historic sites in our
9 City.

10 Losing this Garden would be like losing
11 a part of our history as a community. If
12 it is demolished, it can never be replaced.
13 Coral Gables is known for its green spaces
14 and historic sites, and destroying the
15 Garden will only further take away from the
16 City's origins and original vision. I urge
17 you to do everything in your power to save
18 the Garden of Our Lord. This is a property
19 that needs to be preserved and protected,
20 and I hope you will give it the
21 consideration it deserves. Thank you.

22 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

23 MS. BURR: Good evening. My name is
24 Robin Burr. I'm a member of the Coral
25 Gables Woman's Club for 22 years and I'm

1 currently the historian and we're about to
2 celebrate our Centennial, so we're very
3 proud of that and the history in our block.

4 I would like to see the Garden be
5 preserved, because it has great historical,
6 cultural and architectural significance.
7 But not only that, think about the tree
8 canopy, the large trees that have been
9 there for 72 years. I know that people
10 have to get permits to cut down trees in
11 their yards, so what about preserving these
12 trees that are quite old?

13 I think, with everything in the world,
14 there's compromise, so maybe there's a way
15 to compromise and keep the Garden and
16 develop around it. So, thank you.

17 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

18 MS. MARTINEZ: Good evening. My name
19 is Ruth Martinez. I'm a resident of Coral
20 Gables. I live at 35 Sevilla Avenue. I
21 would urge the Board to consider
22 designating the Garden historic. It is a
23 very significant area within that -- you
24 know, that community and it complements the
25 aesthetic value of the green corridor.

1 And, also, the native limestone that is
2 used in the wall complements the limestone
3 that is used at the Coral Gables Woman's
4 Club, which is right across the street.

5 So I don't -- you know, Robin has
6 spoken and I would just ask you to
7 consider, you know, the historic
8 designation. And I also think that
9 incorporating the Garden in some way -- I'm
10 not an architect, nor do I know a whole lot
11 about landscape, although I love beautiful
12 landscapes, that it wouldn't be -- I don't
13 think it would be out of the question to
14 work with the developer about
15 incorporating, you know, this Garden into
16 what is going to be built, without, let me
17 say, affecting the building -- you know,
18 the inclusion of a new school.

19 We work with Crystal Academy. We have
20 a dental clinic that we run. We have had
21 it since 1939. We provide services -- free
22 services for low income children, but we
23 have been working with the children of
24 Crystal Academy for about five years,
25 because it's more difficult for them to go

1 to a dentist. So, because of the close
2 proximity, it's easy for them to come, to
3 take a look, you know, to feel what that's
4 like. So, I mean, we recognize -- and we
5 have done projects, as well, with Crystal
6 Academy. We're not against -- you know, we
7 understand that they maybe need a new place
8 and that that development of the school is
9 important, but -- so, anyway, I ask you to
10 consider in favor. Thank you.

11 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

12 Anyone else in the audience who would
13 like to speak?

14 MS. MARTINEZ-CARBONEL: My name is
15 Karelia Martinez-Carbonel. I am president
16 of the Historic Preservation Association,
17 and as you have heard, our organization is
18 a hundred percent supportive of this
19 request, but today I am speaking
20 personally.

21 And I live at 532 Altara Avenue. I've
22 been a resident of Coral Gables for over 30
23 years. And I do have a statement that I'd
24 like to read, but, first, I'd like to just
25 make three points.

1 And the request, in the beginning, to
2 abide by the fact that the development
3 should not be mentioned, was not abided by,
4 and for that reason, with all due respect
5 with Crystal Academy, all of that should,
6 obviously, not be considered, because
7 that -- we're here for a historic
8 designation. If we were to consider every
9 project, when we consider a landmark, then
10 we would not have Historic Ordinances,
11 because you're going to have people
12 obviously disagree.

13 So, in the matter that our Ordinance,
14 and obviously our National Preservation Act
15 was written, is that we have to
16 independently look at what's being
17 requested, in terms of designation, and
18 only one criteria is needed.

19 And the third point, before I get into
20 my comment, is that the whole issue, again,
21 with all due respect with Crystal Academy,
22 there's a zoning issue. The developer
23 bought this parcel -- and, again, I am
24 talking about this, because it was brought
25 up. This parcel is not zoned for what the

1 developer is trying or proposing to build.
2 It is zoned as an Institutional Religious.
3 So the school being promised may not
4 happen. It's a promise. But he has no
5 control over that zoning issue, only the
6 Commissioners. So all these requests,
7 again, should not affect what you have to,
8 as a Board, decide today.

9 So here's my comment. Today you have
10 heard testimony qualifying the historical
11 significance of the Garden of Our Lord at
12 110 Phoenetia Avenue under Section 8 of the
13 Coral Gables Zoning Code. Under the Code,
14 a property must meet at least one criteria.
15 The Garden has been identified with, I
16 believe it was seven, today, each one
17 meeting the threshold under the City's
18 Ordinance, and as per the Code, only one is
19 needed to qualify the resource for local
20 landmark status.

21 In conjunction with the above, I will
22 highlight one area of the Code and place
23 the Garden of Our Lord in a much higher
24 standing, no pun intended. The Code
25 states, to qualify for designation as a

1 Local Historic Landmark, individual
2 properties must have significant character,
3 interest or value as part of the
4 historical, cultural, archeological
5 aesthetic or architectural heritage of the
6 city, state or nation. My focus will add a
7 national component to the Garden's
8 significant character and national value.

9 According to research, at the time the
10 Garden was completed in the early 1950s, it
11 was one of only three Biblical Gardens in
12 the nation. This, in itself, raises the
13 Garden's pedigree to national prominence.
14 Fast-forward four decades later, and the
15 Garden continued to retain its importance,
16 ranked among the most significant gardens
17 nationally and internationally in Allan
18 Swenson's 1994 book, *Plants of the Bible*.

19 Swenson, an author of more than thirty
20 gardening books, includes three Biblical
21 Gardens in *Plants of the Bible*, and he
22 places the Garden of Our Lord, founded in
23 1951, on the same level of significance as
24 New York's St. John the Divine, founded in
25 1973, and Israel's Neot Kedumim, founded in

1 1965, known as the largest, most extensive
2 Biblical Garden of our world. In fact, the
3 Garden of Our Lord was the earliest of the
4 three gardens named. Swenson refers to the
5 Garden of Our Lord as another excellent
6 Biblical Garden, a sanctuary of peace and
7 inspiration open to the public in Coral
8 Gables.

9 Additionally, the Garden's creation was
10 of national significance from the start.
11 The Garden Committee hired, not just any
12 architect to design the Garden, but the
13 best qualified award winning architect,
14 Robert Fitch Smith, who was nationally
15 renowned for his subtropical design
16 integrations and ecclesiastical work.

17 And along with hiring Fitch Smith to
18 design the Garden, the Committee
19 commissioned nationally recognized
20 pre-eminent sculptor of the time, Bernhard
21 Zuckerman, of New York City and Avenza,
22 Italy, to create a statute of Christ carved
23 from a solid block of white marble from the
24 Rubicone District of Carrara Italy,
25 weighing almost eight tons in the rough.

1 The finished, hand-carved, one of a kind
2 statute, weighs two tons and measures
3 seven-and-a-half feet and it's placed at
4 the head of the coral rock grotto.

5 The statute was a gift of Mrs. Caroline
6 Hackett of Coral Gables in memory of her
7 parents. The statute was unveiled and
8 dedicated in June 1953 with much fanfare
9 and given exclusive heights to the
10 original. The master statute continues to
11 stand today inside in the Garden.

12 Zuckerman, who died in 1980, and I'm going
13 to put his work in perspective, had an
14 extensive portfolio. His work comprises
15 many bronze and marble statutes throughout
16 the Country, including one, the largest
17 reproduction in marble in the world, of
18 Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting of the
19 Last Supper, placed in the center of
20 Woodlands Garden of the Last Supper in
21 Orlando.

22 Zuckerman's Miami's Pieta placed in
23 Woodlawn Cemetery is a reproduction in
24 marble taken from the same quarry in
25 Carrara, Italy used by the Sixteenth

1 Century master artist Michaelangelo.
2 Zuckerman had exclusive rights from the
3 Vatican to reproduce the iconic sculpture.
4 And in 1966, the marble memorial to
5 President John F. Kennedy was placed in
6 Tampa's Plant Park. Zuckerman's many other
7 significant works are found throughout the
8 nation and continue to be heralded today as
9 masterpieces in marble.

10 So, Members, as you debate the several
11 qualifying criteria, and only one is needed
12 to designate, supported by the body of
13 research and testimony presented today
14 identifying the Garden of Our Lord as a
15 significant historic resource, also
16 consider the Garden's national value of its
17 historical, cultural and aesthetic
18 heritage. Robert Fitch Smith and Bernard
19 Zuckerman's works qualify for national
20 importance under Section 8 of the Coral
21 Gables Zoning Code.

22 Seventy plus years ago, two national
23 luminaries came together in Coral Gables to
24 create masterpieces of Biblical
25 proportions, blessing our City beautifully

1 with national significance, and for that
2 reason, this Garden is worthy of a
3 miraculous intervention.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

6 Anyone else in the audience who would
7 like to speak?

8 Please.

9 MS. PACKARD: Good evening, everyone,
10 and thank you for the opportunity to
11 express my views tonight. My name is
12 Judith Packard. I've lived in the Gables
13 for 39 years, and I am a retired school
14 teacher.

15 So I was very sadden to hear that the
16 Garden of Our Lord could be taken down and
17 replaced with offices and condos. This
18 historic site is not only a charming and
19 beautiful oasis in the City, as many have
20 said, but it serves an important
21 educational purposes, teaching the public
22 about botany, Biblical history, and
23 honoring heroic individuals. I would like
24 to request that those responsible please
25 approve a historic designation for this

1 unique garden, since it meets the criteria.
2 Its destruction would make the area less
3 desirable to live in and would be a
4 terrible loss for the City of Coral Gables.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

7 MR. MOONEY: Good evening, everybody.
8 For the record, my name is Tom Mooney and I
9 reside at 601 Navarre Avenue. For
10 transparency purposes, I am a member of the
11 Crystal Academy Board, and my son has
12 attended Crystal Academy since 2010;
13 however, I am here before you this evening
14 speaking as a 22-year resident of Coral
15 Gables.

16 I live in North Gables, and I very much
17 appreciate the context of North Gables.
18 When my wife and I bought our home in 2002,
19 we knew we wanted to live in the north area
20 of the City, and I'm very familiar with
21 this particular area where the proposed
22 designation would occur. It's a very
23 walkable context sensitive area, and I
24 think that one of the important things to
25 keep in mind with regard to designation, as

1 you well know, is that there's a big
2 difference between the designation of a
3 Local Historic District, which typically
4 will include blocks and numbers of
5 properties, and each one of those blocks
6 and each one of those properties may or may
7 not have different attributes and its own
8 contributing status.

9 However, when you are looking at a
10 designated historic site, whether it's an
11 individual building or a landscape feature
12 or monument, that's a much higher bar, and
13 it's the type of designation that really
14 has to go above and beyond, and I think
15 that, while I certainly commend the
16 applicant on a well put together research
17 application, as evidenced by the City's
18 Historic Preservation Director, Mr. Adams,
19 in this particular instance, the proposal
20 clearly does not meet the criteria for
21 designation, and that's the one narrow
22 thing that I do want to encourage you to
23 take a look at.

24 It is very important that decisions
25 made with regard to the designation of

1 historic sites be based upon that criteria
2 and the satisfaction of that criteria, and
3 in this particular instance, I don't
4 believe that the criteria has been
5 satisfied. I won't go into the details. I
6 think the City's done an excellent job of
7 doing that, and it's very well-documented
8 in the record here.

9 So, with that, I just want to encourage
10 you not to move forward with the
11 designation. Thank you very much.

12 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

13 MR. GILLIS: Okay. Good evening,
14 everybody. Brett Gillis, for the record.
15 I wanted to let you know, Bonnie, thank you
16 for everything that you've done. I got
17 this calendar. Insurance companies and
18 banks are giving it out this year, Famous
19 Floridians of 2023, among the company of
20 Ernest Hemingway, Andrew Jackson, Roxcy
21 Bolton. So thank you for everything that
22 you and your family have done over the
23 years and keep up the good work.

24 So I'm here to support the Garden of
25 Our Lord, which clearly meets the criteria

1 for designation. I wish that this would
2 have had maybe a different outcome and I
3 think that we can still accomplish that
4 through the TDR process or other means that
5 this Board could recommend and the
6 Commission could approve. I know we've
7 seen that done before at 42 Navarre, where
8 there was a live-work building that was
9 incorporated into another development.
10 There are a lot of strategies that have
11 been used, that could accomplish everything
12 that is needed here, and, actually, the
13 developer could benefit from it, because of
14 the TDR program. So I hope that they'll
15 look at that and consider their opinion
16 here.

17 I did want to point out a few things in
18 the report, though, that I think are
19 important. So the -- stated in every
20 designation report that the City puts out,
21 the Coral Gables Register of Historic
22 Places, the built environment reflects the
23 beliefs, values, creative expressions and
24 technical capacity at a place in time in
25 history, Historic Preservation conserves

1 those structures and spaces that tell the
2 story of the community's historic past.
3 The site that comprises the Coral Gables
4 Register of Historic Places portray the
5 City's story of progress change and
6 preservation. So this clearly meets all of
7 that, and it's a great example of it.

8 And we heard from Mr. Adams and the
9 other City employees, but they haven't
10 really identified any other properties that
11 are as unique as this or any other wall,
12 contemplative garden in Coral Gables. So
13 it really is a one of a kind space, unique
14 space. And the criteria are very clear for
15 historical, cultural.

16 Criterion 4, exemplifies the
17 historical, cultural, political, economical
18 or social trends of the community.

19 Criterion 5, you know, the people that
20 are here from Crystal Academy, Criterion 5
21 states, it's associated in a significant
22 way with the past or continuing institution
23 which has contributed substantially to the
24 life of the City. So I think that we see
25 that, because of St. James' association

1 with the school's, not only Crystal
2 Academy, but the Christian school and the
3 Guardian Shepherd before that, that St.
4 James is a past or continuing institution
5 that has contributed substantially to the
6 life of the City. Numerous people have
7 commented to that, and, I think, proven
8 that point very well.

9 The architectural significance,
10 Criterion 2, embodies those distinguishing
11 characteristics of an architectural style
12 or period or method of construction. You
13 know, we had a property on Davis Road a few
14 years back that -- it was a house in the
15 front, and, then, in the back, there was a
16 back cottage and a coral rock wall, that
17 that entire property was designated. You
18 can't even really see it from the street.

19 Here, you have an example where the
20 wall that was designed by a famous,
21 nationally acclaimed architect is visible
22 from the street.

23 And Criterion 3 is an outstanding work
24 of a prominent designer or builder.
25 Outstanding has multiple definitions. It

1 doesn't have to be, the supreme example,
2 compared to Vizcaya. The definitions -- I
3 mean, I looked it up. We can look that up
4 again if we need to, but can be
5 exceptionally good, clearly noticeable or
6 something yet to be done or paid.

7 So, in terms of Robert Fitch Smith's
8 body of work, it is an outstanding work,
9 because it's the only one -- not only the
10 only one in Coral Gables, but the only wall
11 contemplative garden that's known that he
12 designing, although he was known for
13 designed multiple churches throughout
14 Greater Miami.

15 Criterion 4, contains elements of
16 design, detail, materials or craftsmanship
17 of outstanding quality or which represent a
18 significant innovation or adaptation to the
19 South Florida environment. Again, where is
20 another wall contemplative garden featuring
21 Robert Fitch Smith's tradition and design
22 aesthetic in the wall and features that we
23 see? There isn't another one. This is the
24 only one. And aesthetics, I think the
25 neighbors have clearly proven that it's an

1 easily identifiable feature of their
2 neighborhood. There's really nothing else
3 like it. I love walking in that area, from
4 the Douglas Entrance, walking down East
5 Ponce. It really is a unique area of the
6 City and a space like no other.

7 The Commission has created a North
8 Ponce Neighborhood Conservation District
9 Overlay, also known as the NPNCD, as
10 defined in Section 2/4 point -- excuse me
11 2-404, which the purpose is to preserve and
12 enhance the Garden Apartment character. So
13 Garden Apartment. Clearly, an aspect of
14 that garden character of the neighborhood
15 is this.

16 One of the notes that was made by
17 Carlos Marin, "Inside the Garden, Architect
18 Robert Fitch Smith created a geometrical
19 site on which the garden would grow and the
20 coral rock paths would lead to a grotto and
21 pond." So the coral rock is generally
22 recognized as a historic feature throughout
23 Coral Gables. In fact, at the Merrick
24 House, I believe they just rebuilt the
25 wall -- the coral rock wall. So this is

1 something past, present and future. If
2 we're not going to save coral rock in Coral
3 Gables, I don't know really what we're
4 going to save.

5 So, over time, a visual access running
6 diagonally across the garden has developed
7 and it adds a unique dimension for the
8 visitors' experience. So photographic
9 evidence and a visual tour of the area do
10 show that because of its prominence of
11 spatial location, contrast of siting, age
12 or scale, it is an identifiable feature of
13 the neighborhood.

14 Getting to the social criteria, we have
15 numerous articles that prove that this was
16 a well-known tourist destination for many
17 years, and only recently has the gate been
18 locked, so that members of the community
19 could not get in to continue to use it.

20 And aside from that, I mean, we do have
21 in the report a picture of Robert Fitch
22 Smith with George Merrick. So I thought
23 that was great. They were part of the
24 Zoning Commission that was created to help
25 solve some of the issues in Greater Miami.

1 Aside from that, I think that it's just
2 an important note here to go over some
3 of -- fortunately, the aspects of working
4 with Historic Preservation, that, you know,
5 this Board, I'd like you to be known as the
6 Historic Preservation Board and not the
7 Historic Demolition Board. We've seen
8 cases -- you know, sometimes I've lost
9 faith, but this time, I have full faith
10 that you're going to do the right thing and
11 save this garden.

12 So thank you very much.

13 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

14 Anyone else who would like to speak,
15 either in favor or opposition?

16 MR. ADAMS: Mr. Chair, I would like two
17 minutes to rebut public comments, please?

18 MR. MENENDEZ: Go ahead, Mr. Adams.

19 MR. ADAMS: Okay. Just to address some
20 of the comments that were made, yes, the
21 Board must follow the criteria. Anything
22 that is not related to what's within your
23 purview, you really can't take into
24 account.

25 And I think someone here said that, you

1 know, shrubs and trees aren't significant,
2 one of the first people to speak. But
3 historic integrity is the authenticity of a
4 property's historic identity evidenced by
5 the survival of physical characteristics
6 that existed during the property's
7 pre-historic or historic period. So it's
8 very much a part of the site.

9 And Mr. Cruz said that properties don't
10 need bodies to be designated. No, they
11 don't. They must meet the criteria and
12 they must have integrity, something which
13 very few people here have mentioned.
14 They've tried to say the benefits of the
15 site, how they meet the criteria. No one
16 has really discussed the integrity of the
17 site.

18 And '20s plat maps were used, because
19 Merrick's vision for the City was
20 incorporated into the designation report,
21 not only Merrick, but also the Rostin
22 (phonetic) and William Morris, which I
23 didn't comment on, because I don't feel it
24 appropriate in this situation, but
25 Merrick's plan for the City was most

1 certainly included in the designation
2 report. So I addressed it.

3 Next thing, you must stick to the Code,
4 and someone mentioned something about
5 disrepair. I don't think I mentioned
6 disrepair at all in my report. Yes, the
7 Merrick House wall was rebuilt, based on
8 photographic evidence, as you have there.
9 On the landscape plans, there are very few
10 photographs, there are no plant lists. How
11 can you possibly accurately restore a
12 garden when you have absolutely no records?
13 So the Merrick House wall, yes. This
14 Garden, almost impossible, unless new
15 information comes up.

16 And it was mentioned that, at the time
17 it was completed, it was only one of three
18 Biblical gardens. Was. I think that's
19 accurate. And, then, Plants of the Bible
20 book was mentioned. Obviously, the plants
21 on a Historical Biblical Garden are
22 important, which is why you have some
23 historic Biblical Gardens, but if the
24 plants don't exist, you don't have a
25 Biblical Garden.

1 Just another couple of things. It was
2 mentioned, the best qualified architect
3 designed the garden. There is no proof of
4 that. I said that in my report. He was
5 not a landscape architect, and it was
6 confirmed yet again that Fitch Smith
7 integrated his design into existing
8 landscapes.

9 And it was mentioned a lot that this is
10 one of a kind, the wall was one of a kind,
11 the Garden's one of a kind. Well, some
12 cities do have one of a kind properties in
13 their designation criteria, but Coral
14 Gables doesn't.

15 And just in response to Mr. Gillis, Mr.
16 Gillis regularly approaches our Department
17 for copies of Determination of Significance
18 letters that we issue. We issued the
19 initial Determination of Significance
20 letter in August, 2021. Mr. Gillis was
21 sent a copy of it at the start of September
22 2021. Mr. Gillis is the Vice-President of
23 the Historic Preservation Association of
24 Coral Gables. No one, at that time, made
25 any comment or any complaint or any appeal

1 or any question about the determination at
2 that time.

3 Thank you.

4 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

5 The representative for the owner, would
6 you like to speak now?

7 MS. BOLTON: May I have a minute of two
8 to rebutt what Warren said?

9 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes. Go ahead.

10 MS. BOLTON: Okay. I just wanted to
11 mention about the trees and bushes in the
12 Garden, that -- I know for a fact that one
13 of the trees is a Carob tree, which is
14 native to the Middle East, and I think it
15 dates back to when Dr. Hazel Westbe
16 (phonetic), who was a University of Miami
17 professor, who brought the seeds back from
18 Gethsemane, brought that tree back --
19 brought that seed back, that became a tree,
20 that is standing to this day in the Garden,
21 and it's visible from the street.

22 And, then, also, I wanted to mention
23 that Robert Fitch Smith designed the
24 University Baptist Church garden and patio
25 and won awards for that, so I just thought

1 I would mention that.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

3 MS. BOLTON: So thank you.

4 MR. MENENDEZ: Go ahead.

5 MR. NAVARRO: Good evening, Mr. Chair.

6 Thank you for your patience this evening.

7 I appreciate you accommodating some of the
8 parents that had to head home with their
9 children.

10 I have a PowerPoint. If we could pull
11 it up.

12 But, for the record, my office is --
13 Jorge Navarro, with offices at 333
14 Southeast 2nd Avenue. I'm joined by my
15 colleague, David Blattner. I'm also joined
16 by ownership. The principal is here with
17 us this evening, Mr. Sergio Pino.

18 We're here today because the applicant
19 has submitted an application to designate
20 my client's property as a historical
21 resource, even though the owner does not
22 agree. It's one of the first times, I
23 think, an application like this may be
24 before you.

25 While the Garden at one time was a

1 nicely landscaped and tranquil open space
2 that served the St. James Church, the
3 church has since closed, has sold the
4 property, and due to the financial issues
5 that they were having with dwindling
6 memberships, this Garden really fell into
7 disrepair and it's lost its overall
8 aesthetic appearance and the integrity of
9 it suffered.

10 This was a Garden that was improved by
11 the church, similar to what any other
12 church in Coral Gables would do. They had
13 memorial plaques to important figures.
14 They also had memorial plaques to families
15 and their loved ones. They also planted
16 trees in order to beautify this area.
17 However, there are two important points
18 that I would like to note, before I go into
19 some of the criteria, which I think is
20 critical for your analysis.

21 It's been established by your
22 professional staff that there's no evidence
23 presented that Mr. Fitch designed the
24 landscape for the Garden. The original
25 permit drawings that are with the City only

1 show a wall and a path. There is no plat
2 plan or design of the landscaped features
3 nor the pond that's in this property.
4 Rather, the evidence on record shows that
5 the landscape was installed at random, in
6 an arbitrary manner, by members of the
7 church and the community, who were not
8 licensed landscape architects, and that is
9 a key point.

10 Secondly, the plaques at the property
11 commemorating the individuals, there is no
12 relationship whatsoever to the
13 accomplishments of these individuals and
14 this property. They're simply
15 commemorative in nature, and that is key,
16 because Article 8 of your Code expressly
17 provides that property commemorative in
18 nature, such as this, are not eligible for
19 designation, unless they meet a higher
20 standard of scrutiny, which your Historic
21 Preservation Officer has found that this
22 application does not meet.

23 I know the Historic Preservation
24 Officer went through the time line, but I
25 think it's really important. I want to

1 just quickly go through it, so you could
2 understand how we got here today. This
3 site was first issued a letter of
4 determination, finding that there was no
5 historical resources, in August of 2021.
6 My client, shortly after, purchased the
7 property, in November 2021. In January of
8 the following year, January 2022, my client
9 submitted an application to the Development
10 Review Committee in order to redevelop the
11 property.

12 If we could go to Slide 2 -- or the
13 first -- yeah, the second slide please.

14 MS. SPAIN: I think you have the
15 ability to control it somehow.

16 MR. NAVARRO: Okay. Sorry.

17 In July of 2002, Ms. Bolton reached out
18 to the State agencies in order to advise
19 the State agencies that this was a cemetery
20 that required preservation. So, after
21 extensive investigation, it was actually
22 determined that the site is not a cemetery.
23 This is supported by two separate reports
24 that were commissioned per Mr. Patrick
25 Range and Ms. Wendy Rusell-Wiener, two

1 attorneys with extensive personal expertise
2 in this area, and it's been concluded that
3 this is not a cemetery.

4 When this argument failed, Ms. Bolton,
5 in September of 2022, alleged that this was
6 a Biblical Garden that required
7 preservation, because there were trees here
8 that came from the Garden of Gethsemane.
9 Once again, as established by your
10 Historical Preservation Officer, this is
11 not the case. You have Ms. Deena Bell, who
12 has gone out personally to the property --
13 she's your City expert -- to investigate
14 each tree that is out there, and these
15 trees are all native species. There is
16 nothing exotic of special about any of the
17 landscaping in this Garden.

18 Additionally, there's an independent
19 report from Mr. Jeremy Lee, a licensed
20 arborist, with over fifteen years'
21 experience, who has conducted his own
22 independent site investigation, and has
23 also concluded that none of the plants
24 referenced in the article that's the basis
25 of the applicant's designation report are

1 located there today, and they would not
2 actually exist, due to the climate in South
3 Florida. The plants that are there are the
4 plants you could find in any nursery here
5 locally.

6 Now, she has filed an application to
7 designate this property. It's very
8 revealing that this request for designation
9 did not come at the time that we originally
10 requested the 2021 letter, but has come up
11 after we have submitted our proposed
12 development plans.

13 Regarding the current request before
14 you by the applicant, pursuant to Article 8
15 of your Code, this Board is to conduct an
16 evaluation of the data that was provided by
17 the applicant for conformance with the
18 historic designation criteria in your Code.
19 Your Code explicitly provides that
20 properties are not eligible for historic
21 designation unless they are of a
22 significant character. That's the key
23 word, significant. If the applicant cannot
24 show that the wall or the Garden is
25 exemplary or of a significant character,

1 then this Board must vote against the
2 proposal for designation.

3 I would like to take a moment, for the
4 record, to highlight the findings that were
5 made by your very competent staff in their
6 presentation today, which constitutes the
7 substantial competent evidence that this
8 Board should base its decision on.

9 As to the criteria for historical
10 cultural significance, your staff has found
11 that while Mr. Fitch was an important
12 architect, which we all are aware, he's
13 done very, very many prominent buildings
14 that have reached historic significance
15 that have been designed, there's no
16 evidence he designed the Garden and the
17 wall cannot be regarded as one of his
18 outstanding works. Not every building that
19 Mr. Fitch Smith did is designated,
20 actually, and just because he designed it
21 does not mean that it should be designated.
22 It needs to be significant.

23 Staff has also found that the wall does
24 not embody an innovative method of
25 construction, nor does it embody any

1 distinguishing characteristics of the
2 architecture that was prevalent during the
3 period in which it was constructed. By the
4 time this wall was constructed,
5 Mediterranean Revival had already passed.

6 As to the criteria for aesthetic
7 significance, your Staff has found that the
8 Garden and wall is not part of a
9 subdivision, park, environmental feature or
10 other distinctive area that should be
11 preserved according to the plan. There's
12 two things I'd like to highlight.

13 This property is not part of the
14 original park system that was designed by
15 the founder, George Merrick. It's also not
16 part of the plan from the Charrette that
17 was done for this area. In 2018, after
18 five years of studying and working with
19 neighbors in this area, the City created a
20 Charrette for this area, and this property
21 is not shown as one of the proposed park
22 areas. It's not in the original park
23 system. It's platted for development.
24 Actually, it's platted as developable lots,
25 and it's not in the plan that the City

1 created for this area just a few years ago,
2 and that was actually admitted by the
3 applicant's expert in their testimony. I
4 believe I have a photo in here and I'll get
5 to it, but --

6 As the Preservation Officer has
7 established, the applicant's request is
8 inconsistent with every single criteria for
9 designation in your Code, because it's not
10 of significant character. So what is
11 significant? That's the question. One way
12 to compare what significant is, is to
13 compare other landscapes that have been
14 designated by the City of Coral Gables as a
15 significant work, that meets the legal
16 criteria for approval.

17 I have three examples that I'd like to
18 show you. Just to understand how high the
19 bar is to designate a landscape, out of the
20 1,200 properties in the list of Historic
21 Landmarks in the City of Coral Gables, only
22 four of them are parks. That is how high
23 of a bar you have to meet to show that this
24 is a significant landscape work, by a
25 significant landscape architect, which is

1 not the case here, as Mr. Fitch is not a
2 landscape professional.

3 So, in these limited and unique cases
4 is where we get to the criteria of these
5 reaching the standard -- oh, this is the
6 North Ponce area. Sorry, it came up here.

7 This is the map. As you can see, the
8 area that is highlighted in red, which was
9 completely red in the applicant's initial
10 presentation, is actually not a proposed
11 park area. So I wanted to just clarify.
12 That's the North Park Community Visioning
13 Workshop report.

14 So this is Matheson Hammock. I'm sure
15 you're all aware of this. Matheson
16 Hammocks was designed by legendary
17 landscape architect, William Lyman Philips.
18 It was the first public park established in
19 Miami-Dade County, a real big deal. The
20 structures within this park were built by
21 the Civilian Conservation Corps, which was
22 a voluntary relief program established by
23 President Roosevelt and considered one of
24 Roosevelt's most successful new deal
25 programs. This is a significant property,

1 from a historical and social perspective,
2 that merits designation, not the Garden of
3 Our Lord.

4 Fewell Park, designed by legendary golf
5 course and landscape designer, Donald Ross.
6 This is a landscape architect who dedicated
7 his life to designing world class
8 landscapes. Arguably, he's one of the most
9 notable and famous golf course landscape
10 designers in U.S. history. This is a
11 significant work, from a legendary
12 landscape designer, and is worthy of
13 designation.

14 Young Park, the Friendship Tree was
15 planted in this property in 1940 by the
16 Coral Gables Chapter of the Daughters of
17 the American Revolution. What's impressive
18 about this park, for those of you who may
19 not know, is that the soil from the tree
20 was sent from each state of the Union,
21 Cuba, Alaska, France, England, among
22 others. This site is a unique park, with
23 strong ties to our Nation's history, to our
24 local history, not the Garden of Our Lord.

25 This is the Garden of Our Lord. We

1 have some photos. And I think the question
2 to ask ourselves is, does this Garden rise
3 to the standard of being significant? Does
4 the wall that surround this Garden, which
5 was really part of the church, not the
6 Garden, does it rise to a level of
7 significance that warrants designation, in
8 accordance with the other true works of art
9 that this City has designated? Because
10 this City takes historic preservation
11 seriously and it's an important legal
12 matter. It does have implications.

13 You have an awesome responsibility in
14 front of you, one that cannot be taken
15 lightly. You have the responsibility of
16 relying on the criteria in your Code, and
17 only these criteria, to determine whether a
18 property owner's site should be designated
19 by a third party application. Your Staff
20 has spoken clearly, and unequivocally, that
21 even with further analysis, since its time
22 that it issued its initial determination in
23 2021, Staff still cannot support this
24 application, and that the request does not
25 meet the legal criteria in your Code.

1 You also have heard testimony from two
2 of the most respected architects in the
3 Historic Preservation community, that
4 neither the wall, nor the garden, can be
5 considered significant. This was from
6 Mr. Jorge Hernandez and Mr. Richard
7 Heisenbottle, who I believe their resumes
8 speak for themselves, and if there's no
9 objections, I would like to clarify them as
10 experts. I would also like to qualify that
11 these individuals came in, in their own
12 capacity. They were not retained by the
13 owner, and they were not compensated for
14 their time here by the owner. I know one
15 of the speakers mentioned that, and I
16 wanted to clarify that, for the record.
17 They're both Coral Gables residents.

18 It's hard to say, with everything
19 you've heard today, that this application
20 meets the criteria of being a significant
21 work. We believe there is no reason to
22 proceed further and to put additional staff
23 resources on this request. We ask that the
24 Board deny the applicant's request,
25 consistent with the requirements of law.

1 Approving Historic Designation for
2 properties that do not warrant Historic
3 Designation diminishes the entire process,
4 and we ask that you maintain the integrity
5 of Historic Designation and deny this
6 request.

7 I thank you very much for your time and
8 your patience here this evening. Thank
9 you.

10 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

11 Let the record show that Mr. Durana has
12 joined us, and that Ms. Rolando needed to
13 leave.

14 I'm going to close the public portion
15 of the hearing, open it up for discussion
16 here.

17 MR. HOLMES: I've been waiting on the
18 phone, and then I decided to come over. I
19 wonder if I could get a --

20 MR. MENENDEZ: Have you been sworn in?

21 MR. HOLMES: No.

22 MR. MENENDEZ: Well, you need to raise
23 your hand and get sworn in.

24 (Thereupon, the participant was sworn.)

25 MR. HOLMES: Yes, I do.

1 MR. MENENDEZ: Go ahead.

2 MR. HOLMES; I really appreciate the
3 opportunity for that. Thank you.

4 So my name is Jackson Rip Holmes. I
5 live near this site, and I just can't turn
6 my back on these children. We know that
7 Mr. Pino is one of our best developers, but
8 I'm surprised that he would choose this
9 site, because we had the wall project,
10 which was finally -- they gave up, because
11 they realized they were hurting children,
12 and the people I've heard from the
13 school -- I walk by. I see these children.
14 I just cannot fail to speak up for
15 children. I think it would be a disgrace
16 to our City if we don't designate this
17 Historic. Thanks.

18 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

19 Okay. I am now closing the public
20 portion of this hearing, opening it up to
21 discussion among the Board Members.

22 MR. MAXWELL: Mr. Chair.

23 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes, sir, Mr. Maxwell.

24 MR. MAXWELL: Thank you.

25 We've heard a lot of information today.

1 We've heard a lot of counter statements
2 and -- from pros and cons. We've heard a
3 lot of information that's information.
4 There's a lot more of Mr. Fitch. As a
5 matter of fact, I believe Ms. Jude's home
6 was designed by Mr. Fitch, and there's a
7 wonderful wall that was designed by
8 Mr. Fitch at the intersection of Edgewater
9 and Main. It's a moon gate. It's
10 beautiful. Lots on Country Club Prado have
11 been turned into a park. They were part of
12 the original plan, but, you know, they were
13 fronting Coral Way. All you have to do is
14 look at the old plans and there's the lots.

15 But I think what's really important
16 here is two things; One, this is a War
17 Memorial. A War Memorial. This is not --
18 it's just called the Garden of the Lord.
19 Go look at what's on the plaques, to the
20 men who died in battle. My father, and
21 most of your parents, served in the Second
22 World War. This Garden honored them, at
23 that time, to the dead and to the living.

24 Old places matter, and I would
25 encourage all of you to read a wonderful

1 book by Thompson Mayes, from the National
2 Trust, called Why All Places Matter, and
3 it's important that this 71-year-old space,
4 whose time is obviously historic, because I
5 remember being here many, many years ago
6 fighting over 50, 60-year-old buildings
7 that many people said, "Oh, this is not
8 historic, because it's only 50 or 60 years
9 old," well, I'm 71 and my kids call me
10 historic.

11 There's a lot of options that we can do
12 here. First of all, spaces like this are
13 why everybody in Coral Gables lives here.
14 They are what makes Coral Gables Coral
15 Gables. I understand competing economic
16 interests. I too, am a developer, but I've
17 re-developed and historically renovated
18 many, many historic buildings, Opa-locka
19 City Hall, a number of buildings Downtown.
20 I was president of the Dade Heritage Trust.
21 I understand what we have lost, and we've
22 lost a lot.

23 Old places matter, because they are the
24 places we love. We live here because of
25 them. What's important is that you seek

1 compromise. Yes, the application is
2 flawed. There's no doubt about that. It's
3 people who are seriously trying to preserve
4 our community. But there's also lots of
5 opportunity that the developer can take and
6 utilize for his own benefit, as well as the
7 benefit of the community.

8 This Garden is less than twenty percent
9 of the entire site. By the way, when you
10 go under construction, the school is going
11 to be out of business for a couple of
12 years, because it's going to take two to
13 three years to build that, and all of the
14 people in the neighborhood are going to be
15 moaning all of the traffic that's going to
16 be there, because, you know, you've got to
17 have 2.5 spaces, you know, for a two
18 bedroom unit, plus service. So traffic is
19 going to go up. But that's not at issue.
20 We all know that.

21 What's really important is that we all
22 look to see why all places matter. This is
23 a memorial, and we need to preserve and
24 work with the developer to preserve the
25 memorial.

1 Architecturally, I've heard a lot of
2 things. I disagree with Richard
3 Heisenbottle quite a bit. I also disagree
4 with Jorge Hernandez. I've worked on
5 Thomas Jefferson buildings, as well, and,
6 you know, I can tell you that those of us
7 in preservation all have different
8 opinions. And we talk about, something is
9 not architecturally important; that wall is
10 very architecturally important, and the
11 space even more so. Is it run down? You
12 bet. I can remember when Merrick Manor was
13 run down, so let's not look at that.

14 And Fewell Park, well, you know, some
15 of the things that the attorney showed
16 don't really go with the park. They're not
17 there. Fewell Park has no development in
18 it. It's just an open spot, okay. The
19 little wonderful garden, hey, that was
20 designed by George Fink, and H. George --
21 well, he was a pretty good architect.

22 So when we consider these things, let's
23 just think about that. It's a historic
24 green space, made by our community, to
25 remember our community.

1 MR. MENENDEZ: Ms. Spain.

2 MS. SPAIN: So I just disagree with
3 him. I'm sorry. I really apologize. But
4 if you're saying that we should designate
5 this as historic because it's a memorial to
6 War Veterans, it's very specific in the
7 Code that says a property primarily
8 commemorative and the intent of design is
9 condition of symbolic value has -- that
10 doesn't qualify. That's not part of the
11 criteria that we're bound to review.

12 I mean, I think it's interesting.
13 Maybe they can save the plaques somehow and
14 make a memorial somewhere else, but if
15 that's your rationale for designating this
16 as historic, I think it's flawed.

17 I will tell you, I very much appreciate
18 Warren's step by step thought process --

19 MR. FULLERTON: Me too.

20 MS. SPAIN: -- because I went through
21 the same thing, when I was reading the
22 designation report. I had the criteria
23 there. I was going through -- no one
24 mentioned in that designation report, the
25 very first -- and I'm just speaking about

1 the garden now. The very first sentence,
2 where it says, "Criteria for designation of
3 historic landmarks," that talks about
4 district sites, buildings, structures and
5 objects, and if we're only talking about
6 the garden, that doesn't qualify as any of
7 these.

8 I ran into this when Roxcy Bolton,
9 Bonnie Bolton's mother, who I battled for
10 thirty years and loved, but she wanted to
11 designate Merrick Park across the streets
12 from City Hall, but it didn't fit any of
13 the criteria, and that's why the end result
14 of that is that we added the sentence that
15 you referred to, "In the case of a park or
16 a landscape feature, it's integral to the
17 plan of such neighborhood or city," and
18 that was when that was added, because
19 otherwise that would not have fit any of
20 this. I don't believe that this project
21 fits the criteria.

22 I do so appreciate all of the people
23 showing up, though, and being for
24 preservation, because it's rare that we see
25 this many people. I honestly wish I could

1 say it fit the criteria, but, in my mind,
2 it doesn't.

3 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Ehrenhaft.

4 MR. EHRENHAFT: I agree with the
5 comments that Dona has made.

6 You cannot hear me? Okay.

7 I don't feel that the property, as it
8 is, fits into the criterion that are
9 mentioned for parks or green spaces. It
10 was part of a religious compound, a
11 religious institution, which is not exempt,
12 and I don't believe that the Garden stands
13 on its own. It is part and parcel of an
14 entire plat of land, and even if one were
15 thinking about doing a designation or
16 trying to do something to preserve whatever
17 aesthetics the wall has, and the space
18 inside of it, as Mr. Adams has said, the
19 condition of the rest of the property is
20 also not amenable to -- in his current
21 state or based on its history, to
22 designate.

23 If we do a designation, we're having to
24 designate, if I'm not incorrect, everything
25 that's within the periphery of that

1 property, and the rest of -- the built
2 environment of those buildings fails in
3 that respect.

4 I think that it is important to
5 remember and honor people who served in the
6 war, but I'm not sure that, in this case,
7 that that had anything to do with what the
8 Garden was originally. My understanding is
9 that it was part of a wall, it was part of
10 a compound for the church, and, then, after
11 it was built in 1951, then, in individual,
12 independent steps, those memorial plaques
13 were added to the wall. I think that --
14 not to dishonor any of these individuals,
15 but their possibly could be a way for the
16 developer to work with the people whose
17 families were involved in hanging those
18 plaques, and finding an appropriate way to
19 leave them, perhaps not on-site, and -- so
20 I don't feel that the wall, standing alone,
21 in its current state, is appropriate for
22 designation.

23 That doesn't mean that the people
24 involved or people that have interests in
25 having that wall not torn down or having

1 the Garden not torn down can't advocate
2 with the developer and try to find
3 accommodations in that way, but I do not
4 believe that this fits -- I'm sorry, I
5 don't think it fits in the criteria that we
6 have to follow.

7 MR. MENENDEZ: Ms. Bache-Wiig.

8 MS. BACHE-WIIG: I would like to echo
9 Ms. Spain's comments, Bruce's comments. I
10 think that the City Historic Preservation
11 Officer and Staff did an excellent job of
12 taking us through their report and their
13 findings. I think the most important
14 components of what they outlined was, you
15 know, the buildings, they're not just old,
16 but they have to be significantly
17 contributing and I think that's the
18 distinguishing factor.

19 I think, you know, just mention of the
20 construction type, the style of the
21 components that we're talking about being
22 significant here, you know, were not in the
23 spirit of the prevailing time, you know, at
24 that time, right, and there's nothing that
25 seems to be unique or significant with

1 those components; however, I think it's
2 important that we recognize, what is unique
3 is the connection, the devotion, the
4 experience and the honor that everyone has
5 had here, at this Garden, you know, the
6 local community has had, and I think it's
7 very palpable tonight. I think people have
8 come forward, and you can see that.
9 There's evidence of that. And I can
10 certainly appreciate that.

11 I mean, my church is the Church of the
12 Little Flower here in Coral Gables, and I
13 would just -- I can just appreciate the
14 experience one has with your, you know,
15 religious institution locally; however, I
16 think that that component, unfortunately,
17 doesn't fit into the criteria that's before
18 us today. We're not bound by that.

19 We're bound by very specific criteria
20 that talks about, you know, events and
21 aesthetics, that, in my professional
22 opinion, I don't think it's meeting it, you
23 know, in a significant way, that we can
24 call this property historic and designate
25 it accordingly.

1 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Durana.

2 MR. DURANA: I mean, you know, I'll
3 kind of piggyback on Dona's statements and
4 Bruce and everyone. I mean, I kind of want
5 to go -- off the bat, I mean, I want to
6 make it clear, I mean, you know, this
7 decision is more based on what we are --
8 you know, what we are responsible for
9 voting on. And, you know, I know what the
10 future of the site is. I don't necessarily
11 agree with it, what's going to get built
12 there, but, you know, our Historic
13 Preservation Board, we have very strict
14 guidelines, very thorough guidelines, of
15 what should be a designated historic
16 property, and I think Warren has done a
17 good job of explaining, you know, that we
18 don't meet those criteria for this specific
19 property.

20 While I wish we could preserve it, and
21 I like the idea of the park and I like the
22 idea -- you know, I don't necessarily think
23 the development fits in with the
24 neighborhood, but that's not what we're
25 here, you know, to decide. And so I have

1 to agree with what Warren presented to us,
2 which was a very detailed report, you know,
3 kind of outlining those points.

4 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Fullerton.

5 MR. FULLERTON: Well, I align myself
6 right now with Mr. Maxwell and his
7 comments. I don't think there's an
8 architect or designer or park or landscape
9 designer that does any of their work with
10 the idea that it's going to be historic
11 some day.

12 MR. MAXWELL: Right.

13 MR. FULLERTON: That project was done a
14 long time ago and they did what they did to
15 meet the requirements of the day, to which
16 things were added to make it even more
17 beautiful, the pond, the statute, the work
18 on walls, et cetera.

19 We're not just -- in my mind, we're not
20 just talking about a wall. We're talking
21 about an entire element of our City, which
22 has become important to a lot of people. I
23 mean, we've heard from a lot of people,
24 more than any other subject I've ever
25 witnessed on this Board, and I've served on

1 this Board probably a total of fifteen
2 years, not all in one shot, but a long
3 time.

4 I know I've designed a lot of buildings
5 in Coral Gables, and Miami, and around
6 South Florida, and none of them -- I'm not
7 assuming that any of them will become
8 historic some day, but if they are, good
9 for me and good for maybe somebody, but I
10 really feel that what was being -- what
11 we're looking at now is a part of our
12 community, which has evolved into something
13 that's valuable to the people who see it,
14 move around it, and hopefully be able to
15 participate in it.

16 I can't imagine that we have to be
17 bound by who designed it or -- I think
18 that's part of it, of course. Robert Fitch
19 Smith is a very important architect and
20 designer in our community, but I think it's
21 important to know that anybody can put
22 something together, that eventually could
23 become historic, and I don't think we
24 should have to say that that wall is
25 specifically something that we're

1 designating. We're designating an idea, a
2 place, which is made for people in our
3 community, and so I feel very, very solid
4 in the idea that it should be designated
5 and protected from development.

6 It doesn't mean that the owners
7 couldn't profit from their ownership. They
8 can sell off their air rights and so
9 forth -- I mean, the FAR and so forth to
10 other developments. I'm usually on the
11 side of development, because I have been an
12 architect in Miami, in Coral Gables, for
13 57 -- 56 years, I think it is now. So I've
14 done a lot of the things that I like
15 developments for -- developers for, but in
16 this case, I think that the needs of the
17 community exceed the value to a developer
18 at this point.

19 MS. SPAIN: So, John, can I ask you
20 what criteria you think it meets, which is
21 what I've struggled with --

22 MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

23 MS. SPAIN: -- because so I appreciate
24 the thoughts of everybody on it, but I
25 honestly just couldn't find a criteria

1 that it would meet.

2 MR. FULLERTON: Well, I think it's more
3 ethereal than that. It's a place.

4 MS. SPAIN: Well, you know --

5 MR. FULLERTON: I know, but it's a
6 place. It's a place --

7 MS. SPAIN: Okay. I understand.

8 MR. FULLERTON: -- that if people knew
9 more about it, maybe it would be something
10 that -- you know, it's a place of
11 reflection and a place of getting in touch
12 with the Lord, if you're of that mind. I
13 think that's important, as much as who
14 designed it and whether there are plants
15 there from Israel or not.

16 MR. MAXWELL: Right.

17 MR. FULLERTON: And that's not to say
18 that there couldn't be plants from Israel
19 in the future. So maybe with a little
20 notoriety, this place, this space, will
21 become something that is more special than
22 it ever has been.

23 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Garcia-Pons.

24 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Thank you,
25 Mr. Chairman. I do have a couple of

1 questions for Staff, Warren, and if you
2 could pull up your PowerPoint presentation.
3 It's really on a couple of slides. I have
4 three questions and a few comments.

5 MR. ADAMS: Could we have the Staff
6 PowerPoint up, please?

7 MR. GARCIA-PONS: And it's right at the
8 beginning.

9 MR. ADAMS: What slide?

10 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Right at the
11 beginning, the What Are We Not Doing Today
12 slide.

13 MR. ADAMS: It's the first one?

14 MR. GARCIA-PONS: The one with the
15 text. The text. Go back. It's the What
16 Are We Not Doing Today.

17 MR. ADAMS: Oh, sorry.

18 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Right. So I think
19 this is important, because some of the
20 members of the public and all of us on the
21 Board -- you know, I appreciated you
22 showing this, and I know that the
23 developer's attorney showed this, and some
24 of us mentioned it. As an architecturally
25 trained urban designer and planner, I have

1 thoughts and opinions on all of these
2 things, all of them. I just -- as a member
3 of the Historic Preservation Board, I
4 cannot take these into consideration today,
5 as far as the preservation of this
6 property. So I just want that to be clear.
7 And I know that's what Mr. Durana has said
8 as well, is -- and I believe all of us --
9 and I've heard all of us talk about what we
10 think about these things, outside of our
11 roles as Historic Preservation Board
12 Members, and it's maybe not the same
13 feelings on either side, but we have a duty
14 to do what we're required to do as part of
15 this Board.

16 The second slide is the site diagram
17 with the outline of the one lot, and it's a
18 question. You had mentioned that it is one
19 site.

20 MR. ADAMS: Yes.

21 MR. GARCIA-PONS: And that the
22 designation today is of a site and not of
23 an element of that site.

24 MR. ADAMS: Yes.

25 MR. GARCIA-PONS: There was a question

1 by one of the speakers, the last one,
2 talking about, can you dissect out the
3 Garden? And that's a great question, and I
4 hate asking you like this, but can you
5 dissect out the Garden from this site?

6 MR. ADAMS: I mean, my opinion, the
7 Code says you designee the site. That's
8 what you do. You don't designate the
9 building. You designate the site.

10 MR. GARCIA-PONS: So you designate the
11 site and then you can specify specific
12 elements within that site?

13 MR. ADAMS: Everything would require
14 review, because it's within the site. Some
15 elements may be more important than others,
16 but everything would require review within
17 the site.

18 MR. GARCIA-PONS: So any future
19 development on this site would have to go
20 through a Certificate of Appropriateness,
21 if it is designated, and, then, if there
22 are specific elements that were called out,
23 a future Historic Preservation Board would
24 have to take note of that?

25 MR. ADAMS: If the site were designated

1 and there was an application to demolish
2 the church, it would have to come to the
3 Board. If there was an application to
4 build something new, it would have to come
5 to the Board.

6 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Thank you.

7 And then the third question -- sorry --
8 has to do with the -- and I appreciate the
9 early site plans showing Merrick's drawings
10 of what was intended for this site, and I
11 think you had showed that the original ones
12 were from the 1920s, the original plan, and
13 this is leading to the question that I also
14 struggled with, which is what Ms. Spain
15 struggled with, which is, under what
16 Criterion can we designate? And the
17 closest one to me is C-2, which is the last
18 one that you mentioned.

19 MS. SPAIN: Right. That's the only
20 one.

21 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I'm just saying, the
22 closest one for me. You guys have your
23 thoughts.

24 Go to the historic drawing of the site
25 from Merrick that show the lots, the

1 residential lots, which is the last thing
2 you did. And I see it here, and there was
3 a comment, and I agree with this comment,
4 that preservation is an ongoing thing,
5 right. We're not going to freeze it here.

6 But the two questions are, on the plan
7 that was designated by the City, does it
8 have these lots or does it have something
9 else, the designated plan, not the original
10 plan?

11 MR. ADAMS: The designated street plan?

12 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Looking at the City
13 of Coral Gables Master Plan that is part of
14 our --

15 MS. SPAIN: That was designated.

16 MR. GARCIA-PONS: But what's the word?
17 It's the City of Coral Gables' Master Plan
18 or Street Plan or what is the plan that is
19 the historic --

20 MR. ADAMS: The Historic Street Plan.

21 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Right. So, in the
22 Historic Street Plan, does it identify lots
23 or uses on these lots? And just like you
24 have an image of this one, I was hoping
25 that we could have an image of the adopted

1 plan of that block.

2 MR. ADAMS: Okay. I can maybe pull one
3 up on the computer, but, remember, the
4 Designated Street Plan is for review of
5 alterations to the street only. So they
6 could potentially have used really any plan
7 to actually --

8 MR. GARCIA-PONS: No, actually, I
9 appreciate that. You're right. You're
10 right. I was going to see if there was --
11 if it's just of the streets, it's
12 irrelevant as to what the lots are. Thank
13 you very much for that.

14 (Simultaneous speaking.)

15 MR. GARCIA-PONS: No. He answered my
16 question. It's irrelevant to my question.

17 Thank you, Mr. Adams.

18 So the comments that I have is, first,
19 I'd like to thank Ms. Bolton and Professors
20 Martinez and Ceo and Lombard. I enjoyed
21 reading every word on every page of this
22 application and the letters of
23 recommendation, and there are a lot of
24 them. And as we can all see, the emotion
25 and the positive intentions of it are clear

1 as a bell.

2 I would also like to commend the City
3 Staff, because Mr. Adams' presentation of
4 what he believes is the requirement of the
5 City Staff and this Board to do, was as
6 equally as clear, and I believe,
7 well-intentioned, as the previous one. And
8 I'll also commend the owner's presentation,
9 as to what they believe is happening on
10 this site and how they think we should be
11 focused on what the requirements of the
12 conditions are.

13 As many of us, and I said it a little
14 bit earlier -- of all of the things that
15 could happen on this site, I think the
16 interest on that site is there. I think,
17 you know, the aesthetic significance to,
18 you know, is it prominent, in a special
19 location, its scale, it's an easily
20 identifiable and visible feature of the
21 neighborhood, contributes to the
22 distinctive quality and identity of the
23 neighborhood; where it falls down, in my
24 opinion, is, in case of a park or landscape
25 feature is integral to the plan of such a

1 neighborhood or the City.

2 MS. SPAIN: That's right.

3 MR. GARCIA-PONS: If it were in the
4 original plan to be a civic building, if it
5 were in the original plan to be a public
6 space, I think I would have a very
7 different opinion, but the fact that it
8 isn't, I don't, and I feel that, although I
9 want this site to be something, I don't
10 think it meets the criteria to be
11 historically designated, and that's my
12 comments.

13 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

14 Well, I think it's a great day for
15 preservation in the City of Coral Gables.
16 I can't believe the turnout of the
17 citizens, the residents, how passionate you
18 are and how much you care about our City.
19 I listened to Mr. Maxwell's comments, and,
20 you know, I can see his comments. I can
21 believe -- see what he's thinking.

22 But, also, we had a great report from
23 the City and the City was very thorough and
24 the City made their points very obvious.
25 They were very clear.

1 Ms. Bolton, you put together a great
2 presentation, a great report, and a great
3 team, and, obviously, there's a lot of love
4 for you and for that property. My hope is
5 that whatever happens to that property,
6 whether it gets developed, whether it gets
7 sold, whether it stays the way it is today,
8 that people can rally around it and there
9 could be some cohesion between all of the
10 different entities. That's my wish.

11 But right now, I'm leaning towards not
12 recommending it for designation.

13 MR. NAVARRO: Mr. Chairman, I had a
14 thought to talk to my client about some of
15 the concerns regarding the plaques. I
16 would like to state, for the record, that
17 my client is committed to safely removing
18 the plaques and any sculptures that are
19 within the Garden, at his own expense. He
20 will store them in a safe location and work
21 to re-incorporated them into our project,
22 or, as was recommended, perhaps some of the
23 war plaques, we could work with the City to
24 relocate to the War Memorial at the Youth
25 Center, and we could also work -- if we

1 could try to find some of the relatives of
2 the people that are referenced in these
3 plaques, we would be committed to doing so,
4 to make sure these memories are preserved
5 in one of those three ways, either
6 reincorporating them into the project,
7 returning them to the families or finding
8 another location for it.

9 MR. MAXWELL: I would encourage your
10 client to look at his open space
11 requirements and meet the community at a
12 minimum of halfway. Your client will
13 propose and exceedingly large building to
14 be on this property, which we'll be --

15 MR. NAVARRO: And we'd be happy to
16 discuss it with them during the --

17 MR. MAXWELL: If you'll excuse me,
18 please.

19 MR. NAVARRO: Yes, of course.

20 MR. MAXWELL: -- which will forever
21 change the nature of that community, okay,
22 and the scale of it, you know, will have an
23 impact, the traffic will have an impact.
24 It's going to impact everybody there, okay.
25 So rather than be negative, reach out to

1 the community and be positive. Look to
2 seek -- just as Mr. Menendez said, look to
3 seek a compromise. Don't talk about
4 removing plaques, don't talk about removing
5 walls, look and see what you can do to
6 create harmony within the community,
7 because that is what the community is
8 looking for. You don't have to save all of
9 the Garden, that's not what's at question.
10 The question is, you can't create more
11 green space, okay, and you can't recreate
12 the history and the love that is there.

13 So, that, I would ask you to get back
14 to Mr. Pino and to work with the community
15 to do something more than what you are
16 suggesting, and actually talk to people and
17 try to come up with what makes the
18 community great, rather than what is solely
19 financially most profitable. Thank you.

20 MR. NAVARRO: And we're committed to
21 doing that. We're committed to meeting
22 with the neighbors and discussing that
23 project, but I believe that discussion is
24 in a different setting. It's in our Zoning
25 hearing, and not in this legal proceeding,

1 which is a very serious legal matter, where
2 you have certain criteria, and we're only
3 looking at what the property is today, and
4 whether what's in that property is
5 significant and meets your criteria, but we
6 are committed to that, and obviously -- I
7 don't have your information. It's an honor
8 to be up here with you actually, but I
9 would love to, you know, obviously continue
10 those discussions.

11 MR. MENENDEZ: I'm sure, at your Zoning
12 hearing, you're going to have quite an
13 army.

14 MR. NAVARRO: Yes.

15 MR. MENENDEZ: So I would also
16 encourage you to work with the community,
17 and, yes, a compromise would be great for
18 all.

19 MS. BOLTON: And I had a question --
20 I'm a little confused, and maybe you can
21 explain to me --

22 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Ms. Bolton, can you
23 speak into the microphone?

24 MS. BOLTON: Oh. I'm a little confused
25 and I'm hoping you could explain to me

1 why -- because, to me, the Garden is a very
2 easily identifiable feature of the
3 neighbor, like distinct, very clear. Why
4 does it have to be attached to the other
5 elements in that paragraph on the criteria?

6 MS. SPAIN: By Code, that's a
7 requirement. That last sentence of C-2
8 specifically talks about a garden, a
9 landscape, and right now I don't have it in
10 front of me, but it says --

11 MR. CEBALLOS: Would you like me to
12 read it?

13 MS. SPAIN: Yeah.

14 MR. CEBALLOS: The last line of C-2
15 states, "In case of a park or landscape
16 feature is integral to the plan of such
17 neighborhood or the City."

18 MS. SPAIN: Which I don't believe it
19 fits that criteria. That was the issue for
20 me.

21 And I just want to tell you, your
22 mother would be so proud of you. I knew
23 her well and she would be so proud of you.

24 MS. BOLTON: But I think it is an
25 integral part of the neighborhood, because

1 it's in like the green corridor.

2 MS. SPAIN: It says to the plan,
3 integral to the plan.

4 MS. BOLTON: Of the City, but it was --

5 MS. SPAIN: The City.

6 MS. BOLTON: On one of the graphs that
7 Professor Martinez presented, the green
8 areas, the trees, the parks. You know, at
9 the beginning of East Ponce and Ponce,
10 there's the park, and all of the way when
11 you go to -- even once you reach the
12 Douglas Entrance, there's a continuous span
13 of green space, an open green space, park
14 like --

15 MR. NAVARRO: That was the North Ponce
16 Charrette, and what had happened was, our
17 property was highlighted in red in that
18 exhibit, and that's why I wanted to show
19 the North Ponce Charrette, which I was
20 actually honored to be a part of, when it
21 got approved. They designated certain
22 areas in the plan where perspective parks
23 could go, but this site was not one of
24 them, in that plan. And that's why I
25 think, in my exhibit, I just wanted to

1 clarify for the Board that this site, even
2 though it was identified on the plan --
3 even though it is identified on that plan,
4 I think it was more for showing the
5 relationship to it.

6 We are going to have to comply with all
7 of the beautification of East Ponce as
8 every other project does, but that site is
9 not a designated park in that plan.

10 MS. BACHE-WIIG: And I think that's
11 something that when they go to Zoning, for
12 example, that's something that is valid,
13 and they have to consider, where is that
14 green space, how does it affect the
15 corridor, I mean, what's the opportunity
16 there. And I just want to say to
17 Mr. Navarro, I think it's important -- you
18 know, our Board, we're obliged to look at
19 the criteria, but I think, like what John
20 was saying about -- this is more than --
21 it's beyond, it's ethereal --

22 MR. FULLERTON: Ethereal.

23 MS. BACHE-WIIG: -- ethereal -- and I
24 think -- you know, and even to Ms.
25 Carbonel's, you know, comment about, we

1 need something miraculous, like a
2 miraculous intervention, I think that all
3 of these words mean something, because this
4 is a sacred space, that is important, and
5 when you come in and develop, you have to
6 recognize that, and maybe just this is not
7 the forum for that, because it's the
8 Historic Board, but, definitely, I think
9 the Zoning, there's validity there.
10 There's a conversation that needs to be had
11 there.

12 MS. BOLTON: Okay. And I also have
13 another couple of other questions. I don't
14 understand why it doesn't exemplifies --

15 THE SECRETARY: Speak into the mike.

16 MS. BOLTON: I'm sorry. I don't
17 understand why it doesn't exemplify the
18 historical, cultural or social trends of
19 the community. Like why doesn't it?

20 MR. MAXWELL: It does. I believe that
21 it does.

22 MS. BOLTON: It does. Yes, I think it
23 does very clearly.

24 MR. FULLERTON: It does.

25 MS. BOLTON: Why are you saying it doesn't?

1 Dona?

2 MS. SPAIN: Oh, that's that general
3 comment -- we're bound to the individual
4 criteria that falls below what you're
5 reading.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. At this time --

7 MS. BOLTON: And can I make one more --

8 MR. GILLIS: Mr. Gillis, you can sit down.

9 MR. MENENDEZ: Go ahead.

10 MS. BOLTON: Another criteria is, is it
11 associated in a significant way with a past
12 or continuing institution, which has
13 contributed substantially to the life of
14 the City? You know, definitely the
15 school -- even, you know, the Crystal
16 Academy families that spoke, you know --
17 and there has been a school on that site
18 continuously since the '50s.

19 So why is it that it's not meeting that
20 criteria?

21 MR. FULLERTON: Good point.

22 MS. BOLTON: Dona?

23 MR. FULLERTON: Good point.

24 MS. BACHE-WIIG: I think, for me, at
25 least, is the level of accomplishing that.

1 So, for example, maybe the example that was
2 given by the client or the property owner
3 is -- by your client, the park that had the
4 tree, the friendship tree, where you had --

5 MR. NAVARRO: The soils came from all
6 of the states of the Union, yes. These are
7 really like significant major events.

8 MS. BACHE-WIIG: I think it's
9 significant on a broader level, and maybe
10 this is more local, and I think that that's
11 where -- at least, my -- for me --

12 MR. NAVARRO: Usually it's tied to the
13 significant --

14 MS. BOLTON: But this is one of the
15 first three Biblical gardens in America.

16 MS. SPAIN: But it's no longer a
17 Biblical Garden.

18 MR. MAXWELL: But it is.

19 MR. FULLERTON: It could become one.

20 MS. BOLTON: Well, I think it is,
21 because, actually, before Pino purchased
22 the property, there were little name plates
23 by every plant and tree and bush in the
24 garden, like a Carod bush, and there's
25 still like a little fragment of a couple of

1 those left on the property. Apparently,
2 right before or about the time that Pino
3 purchased the property, those name plates
4 disappeared, but there was Frankincense,
5 there were different little plates that
6 identified each plant and where they were
7 mentioned in the Bible. So that's --

8 MS. BACHE-WIIG: But I think what
9 Warren was saying is that there's no
10 planting plan, there's no landscape plan
11 that documents that. So the evidence is --

12 MS. BOLTON: That's another issue
13 that -- I spoke with Sallye Jude about a
14 week before she died about the Garden, and
15 I was talking to her about the water
16 features and why the plans didn't have a
17 lot of details, and she specifically stated
18 to me, and Professor Martinez substantiated
19 it to me, after I spoke to her, that during
20 the 1950s, and at that time, plans did not
21 have a lot of detail.

22 MR. MAXWELL: Right.

23 MS. BOLTON: It wasn't until recent
24 years, you know, developments and
25 technology -- so I think that that's the

1 reason why they're missing -- and the City
2 has had some problems with keeping their
3 records, as well. There are a lot of
4 records that are missing, that the City
5 had, but --

6 MR. NAVARRO: We're going to continue
7 to go in a back and forth here.

8 MR. MENENDEZ: No.

9 MR. NAVARRO: Because I'm going to have
10 to rebut everything you said.

11 MR. MENENDEZ: I know that now you have
12 to rebut, but we finished the public
13 evidence --

14 MR. NAVARRO: I'll just let the evidence --

15 MS. BOLTON: Okay. Yeah. Yeah.

16 MR. MENENDEZ: This is our
17 conversation, so that we can make a
18 determination.

19 MS. BOLTON: Okay.

20 MR. NAVARRO: If I can just say one
21 ten-second thing? I'd like to just say
22 that I rely on the substantial competent
23 evidence as part of this record that has
24 been established previously and your Staff
25 representations and the experts that have

1 spoken today. That's all.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Duly noted.

3 Would someone like to make a motion?

4 MR. FULLERTON: I move to designate the
5 property historic.

6 MR. MAXWELL: Second.

7 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay.

8 MR. GARCIA-PONS: On what condition?

9 MR. FULLERTON: None.

10 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Okay.

11 MR. MENENDEZ: So we have

12 Mr. Fullerton --

13 MR. ADAMS: Excuse me, if you're going
14 to recommend designation, please specify
15 the criteria. You have to specify which
16 criteria the property is eligible under.

17 MS. SPAIN: We always do that.

18 MR. FULLERTON: Help me out here.

19 MR. MAXWELL: Let me think for a
20 second. The property is associated with an
21 architect of local and national
22 significance and a historic space. I would
23 leave it at that. An architect of local
24 and national significance would be the
25 criteria, and that it fits everything about

1 what we built Coral Gables, which is
2 concrete, coral rock, and stucco and cast
3 stone, the essence of Coral Gables since
4 its beginning.

5 MR. ADAMS: Okay. With all due
6 respect, the essence of Coral Gables is not
7 a designation criteria. If this is to be
8 appealed --

9 MR. MAXWELL: I understand that, Mr.
10 Adams.

11 MR. ADAMS: A piece of advice, if this
12 is --

13 MR. FULLERTON: And it is an
14 outstanding work of a prominent designer or
15 builder.

16 MR. MAXWELL: That's what we said.
17 There you go.

18 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. It's
19 Mr. Fullerton, with Mr. Maxwell as the
20 second.

21 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

22 MR. EHRENHAFT: No.

23 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Fullerton?

24 MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

25 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Bache-Wiig?

1 MS. BACHE-WIIG: No.

2 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

3 MR. GARCIA-PONS: No.

4 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Durana?

5 MR. DURANA: No.

6 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Maxwell?

7 MR. MAXWELL: Yes.

8 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain?

9 MS. SPAIN: No.

10 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

11 MR. MENENDEZ: No.

12 THE SECRETARY: The motion fails.

13 MS. SPAIN: All right. I'll make

14 another motion.

15 MR. GARCIA-PONS: No, it doesn't --

16 MS. SPAIN: I think we need another

17 motion, don't we?

18 MR. MAXWELL: No, we don't.

19 MR. CEBALLOS: There needs to be an

20 affirmative vote.

21 MS. SPAIN: Right.

22 MR. CEBALLOS: The Board took no action

23 when the Board failed -- when the motioned

24 failed.

25 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Even if it's --

1 MR. MENENDEZ: Yeah.

2 MS. SPAIN: I've been through that
3 before.

4 MR. GARCIA-PONS: State it in the
5 positive.

6 MR. CEBALLOS: Basically the yeses have
7 to be dominant in order to pass anything.
8 It needs to be an affirmative vote.

9 MS. SPAIN: So I would like to make a
10 motion stating that the designation does
11 not meet the minimum eligibility criteria
12 for designation as a Local Historic
13 Landmark. What other motion is there? And
14 deny the designation.

15 MR. MENENDEZ: Do I have a second?

16 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I'll second it.

17 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. It's Ms. Spain
18 and Mr. Garcia-Pons.

19 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain?

20 MS. SPAIN: That would be a yes.

21 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Maxwell?

22 MR. MAXWELL: No.

23 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Durana?

24 MR. DURANA: Yes.

25 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

1 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.

2 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Bache-Wiig?

3 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes.

4 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

5 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

6 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Fullerton?

7 MR. FULLERTON: No.

8 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

9 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

10 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes.

11 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

12 MR. MAXWELL: All right. Then we need
13 a break.

14 MS. SPAIN: Thank you all very much.

15 MR. MENENDEZ: I'm going to recess for
16 ten minutes.

17 (Recess taken.)

18 MR. MENENDEZ: All right. Let's go.
19 Nancy, let's go.

20 Okay. The next Case File, Case File
21 LHD 2022-016; Consideration of the local
22 historic designation of the property at
23 1042 Catalonia Avenue, legally described as
24 the East 8.33 feet of Lot 1 and all of Lot
25 2, Block 21, Coral Gables Country Club

1 Section Part One, according to the Plat
2 thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8, at
3 Page 108 of the Public Records of
4 Miami-Dade County, Florida.

5 MS. KAUTZ: Thank you.

6 So you don't get a voice over today.
7 You actually have to pay attention.

8 The property at 1042 Catalonia Avenue
9 is before you for designation as a Local
10 Historic Landmark. It is the result of a
11 Historic Significance Determination filed
12 at the request of the Board of Architects.

13 The single-family residence was
14 designed in 1925 by prominent architects
15 Skinner and Pierson. As per Article 8,
16 Section 8-103 of the Coral Gables Zoning
17 Code, Criteria for Designation of Historic
18 Landmarks, a local historic landmark must
19 have significant character, interest or
20 value as part of the historical, cultural,
21 archeological, aesthetic or architectural
22 heritage of the City, state or nation.

23 For designation, a property must meet
24 one of the criteria outlined in the Code.
25 This property is eligible as a Local

1 Historical Landmark based on 4 criteria.
2 There are Historical, Cultural
3 Significance, Criteria 4, as it exemplifies
4 the historical, cultural, political,
5 economic or social trends of the community.

6 Architectural significance, Criteria 1
7 and 2, it portrays the environment in an
8 era of history characterized by one or more
9 distinctive architectural styles, and it
10 embodies those distinguishing
11 characteristics of an architectural style,
12 or period or method of construction.

13 This property is in the Coral Gables
14 Country Club Section Part 1, which is a
15 residential single-family home neighborhood
16 near the Biltmore Hotel. You can see the
17 location map on the screen. The Biltmore
18 is at the very bottom center. You'll
19 recognize some landmarks nearby, the De
20 Soto Fountain, the Coral Gables
21 Congregational Church, Salvadore Park, et
22 cetera.

23 It sits on -- the home sits on
24 approximately a 58 by 130 interior lot, on
25 the south side of Catalonia Avenue, between

1 Granada and Cordova Streets.

2 Coral Gables was originally conceived
3 as a suburb of Miami and attracted
4 investors from across the nation during the
5 South Florida real estate boom of the
6 1920s. Merrick drew from the Garden City
7 and City Beautiful movements of the 19th
8 and early 20th Century to create his vision
9 for a fully conceived Mediterranean
10 inspired city, which is now considered one
11 of the first modern planned communities in
12 the United States.

13 This City's developmental history is
14 divided into three major historical
15 periods. During the initial developmental
16 period architectural design specifically
17 combined elements commonly used in Spanish,
18 Moorish and Italian architecture and became
19 known as the Mediterranean Revival Style.
20 This home was constructed during that
21 initial phase.

22 The official launch of the George
23 Merrick's Coral Gables occurred on April
24 16th, 1921, with a front page article in
25 the Miami News. It announced that Merrick

1 was developing 1,200 acres of his land.
2 The boundaries were generally from Tamiami
3 Trail to Bird Road and east to west, from
4 Le Jeune Road to Red Road.

5 Initial sales were the direct vicinity
6 of the Merrick homestead in Section A,
7 which is outlined here on the maps in
8 purple. Sales were very successful and the
9 remainder of the land was divided into
10 Sections B through I, and offered for sale
11 throughout 1922.

12 In late 1922, with infrastructure of
13 roads, plazas and entrances progressing at
14 a substantial pace and the sale of lots and
15 construction of new homes and businesses
16 well underway, Merrick began to also
17 concentrate on other aspects of the
18 community, such as schools, churches and
19 additional recreational amenities. In
20 particular, he began to vigorously pursue
21 an endeavor near and dear to his heart, a
22 new congregational church.

23 In 1923, Merrick revamped Section G,
24 the area just south of his homestead, and
25 renamed it Country Club Section Part 1, and

1 you can see it on the right side map, and
2 that's from the 1923 outlined in blue.

3 The Coral Gables Congregational Church
4 was to be a tribute to George Merrick's
5 father, Reverend Solomon Greasley Merrick.
6 Solomon was a congregational minister in
7 Massachusetts in George's youth and after
8 the family moved to Florida in 1899, he
9 helped to establish the Plymouth
10 Congregational Church in Coconut Grove and
11 served as its first pastor.

12 In 1923, with the revamp of Country
13 Club Section 1, Merrick kicked off the
14 building campaign by funding 10 percent of
15 the church's projected building costs and
16 by donating prime real estate to the
17 church. The land that he donated is
18 circled yellow on the map and it's called
19 the Columbus Esplanade. He also donated
20 land for the parsonage of the church at
21 1014 Catalonia Avenue, which was recently
22 designated as a Local Historic Landmark
23 also, which he stated -- which Merrick
24 stated was sited at the midpoint between
25 the noble De Soto Fountain Plaza and the

1 church, in a residential neighborhoods, so
2 that the pastor would live amidst the
3 congregation. The parsonage location is
4 noted on the map by the yellow rectangle.
5 And just to the west is the home at 1042
6 Catalonia, which is denoted in green.

7 In 1925, the same year in which the
8 Congressional Church were completed, plans
9 for a premier hotel and golf course at the
10 end of the church's Columbus Esplanade were
11 announced. As seen here in photographs
12 taken from the tower of the resulting
13 Biltmore Hotel, the area surrounding the
14 church, the hotel complex, was primarily
15 undeveloped.

16 The golf course opened January 2nd,
17 1926, and while rapid development of the
18 area around the church and hotel complex
19 was anticipated, it was, however, decades
20 before the Country Club Section 1 was
21 developed. The home at 1042 Catalonia can
22 be seen in the photo on the right.

23 The combination of the devastating
24 Hurricane of 1926 and the Great Depression
25 had a dramatic impact on new construction.

1 In Coral Gables, few single-family homes
2 were built during the Depression Era. With
3 the implementation of the New Deal and
4 other incentives. The building industry
5 experienced a small resurgence in the late
6 1930s and early '40s. However, it abruptly
7 ground to a halt during the War years. As
8 illustrated in this 1948 aerial photo, the
9 area around the church and hotel complex,
10 unlike its northern counterparts, were not
11 developed at this time.

12 The Post-War prosperity that followed
13 these lean years created an optimism which
14 reigned through the 1950s and '60s and
15 resulted in an unprecedented building boom.
16 During this era, single-family homes in
17 Coral Gables followed national trends, both
18 in numbers and style and were a distinctive
19 departure from the ornamented and
20 picturesque Mediterranean Revival style
21 that had dominated this City's landscape
22 since its inception.

23 By the late 1950s, Coral Gables Country
24 Club Part 1 was built out with new
25 residences, and the area retains this

1 context of single-family homes to this day,
2 hence the home at 1042 Catalonia remains as
3 one of the few residences built in this
4 area during the early years of the City and
5 is representative of that era.

6 During this time, architecture was
7 primarily in the Mediterranean Revival
8 style. The home exhibits
9 character-defining features of the style,
10 including projecting and recessed planes,
11 including a projecting entry bay;
12 rectilinear massing and floor plan;
13 combination of roof types; clad barrel
14 tile; textured stucco; prominent and
15 distinctive chimney; decorative grooved
16 vents; arched openings; slightly raised
17 front entry masonry quoin surround the
18 front door; carved rafter tails; decorative
19 cascading protruding -- sorry, wrong one --
20 recessed casement windows of various shapes
21 and sizes with projecting sills.

22 The detached two-story auxillary
23 structure also exhibits many of the same
24 character-defining features of the style,
25 as seen on the residence. Additional

1 features include the exterior staircase to
2 the right, large scroll pieces that bookend
3 the terrace and barrel tile coping at the
4 terrace parapet.

5 The home was originally designed as
6 two-story, three bedroom home with a
7 detached two-story two-car garage at the
8 southeast corner of the property. In 1943,
9 a permit was granted for the extension of
10 the pergola screened porch at the southeast
11 corner of the home. This permit has not
12 been located to date. Historic photos seem
13 to indicate that this configuration has
14 been maintained since then.

15 In 1944, a permit was issued for the
16 construction of the screened porch on the
17 west facade. It is labeled as laundry
18 porch in the left image. The permit has
19 also not been located to date.

20 The original drawings of the home
21 indicate an interior porch that existed at
22 this location, that was subsequently
23 enclosed with this 1944 porch addition. No
24 other additions have been made to the home.

25 These photos show the north -- the

1 front, north facing facade of the home.
2 Many of the character defining features are
3 found on this facade, such as the prominent
4 chimney, the quoin surround, projecting
5 bays and varied roofs. Note that the
6 arched front door and the arched pairs of
7 French doors appear to be original to the
8 home. In the photo on the right, you can
9 see the 1944 porch addition to the west
10 facade, kind of in the background.

11 These are two views of the west side
12 facade. At the center of the right photo
13 is the shed-roofed 1944 porch addition.

14 These are views of the rear of the
15 home, which is compromised of the two-story
16 L-shaped living space, which opens onto a
17 second floor open air terrace that's
18 enclosed with a parapet wall along the
19 interior east facade.

20 The southern portion of the second
21 story was originally a sleeping porch, and
22 the windows that wrap around this area on
23 the west, south and east sides are
24 distinctly different in proportion than the
25 other windows on the home.

1 In the right photo, you can see the
2 porch at the southeast corner of the home,
3 that was originally a screened porch space.
4 As noted, this porch or Florida room was
5 roofed and expanded in 1943. Carved rafter
6 tails support a large eave on the east side
7 and keep the memory of the original pergola
8 feature. The current screened frame
9 configuration is also reminiscent of the
10 original feature.

11 The views of the east facade are
12 looking to the south on the left and
13 looking to the north on the right. This
14 facade retains its original fenestration
15 and the east facade of the porch is visible
16 on the photo on the left.

17 At the southeast corner of the property
18 is a north facing two-story auxillary
19 building. The first story is a two-car
20 garage, enclosed with carriage doors. The
21 second story is living space with an open
22 air terrace. Two scroll features bookend
23 the terrace wall along the east and west
24 sides, and an exterior staircase along the
25 west facade provides access to the living

1 quarters above. And these are photos that
2 range from 1926, 1968 and then current
3 photos.

4 So the property at 1042 Catalonia
5 Avenue retains its historic integrity and
6 significantly contributes to the historic
7 fabric of the City of Coral Gables. It is
8 part of a collection of quality buildings
9 that serves as a visible reminder of the
10 history and the cultural heritage of the
11 City, and we recommend approval of the
12 Local Historic Designation based on its
13 historical, cultural and architectural
14 significance.

15 MR. FULLERTON: Motion to designate.

16 MS. KAUTZ: I think the owner is in the
17 audience.

18 MS. SPAIN: Is the owner here?

19 MS. KAUTZ: You can take the PowerPoint
20 down, please.

21 MR. MENENDEZ: Would the owner like to
22 speak or --

23 MR. MAYER: We're just excited to, you
24 know, have the honor of owning this home
25 and we're looking forward to building --

1 THE SECRETARY: Please come up to the mike.

2 MR. MAYER: I'm sorry.

3 MR. MENENDEZ: I must apologize. I
4 know it's late and most of you sat through
5 the three and a half hour marathon. We
6 have those from time to time, but thanks
7 again. Go ahead.

8 MR. MAYER: You know, we're really --

9 THE SECRETARY; State your name, please.

10 MR. MAYER: Theodore Mayer. As I
11 mentioned, we are excited to be new
12 homeowners in Coral Gables of this
13 potentially historic home, we hope. It's
14 always been a dream of ours to own a
15 historic home, and we look forward to
16 building our family in this neighborhood
17 and look forward to collaborating to really
18 bring this preservation project to the
19 starting gate, really. So that's all.

20 MR. MAXWELL: Great.

21 MS. SPAIN: Great house.

22 MR. MENENDEZ: Is a beautiful home.

23 MS. SPAIN: Beautiful home.

24 MR. MAXWELL: Beautiful home.

25 MR. MENENDEZ: And as Mr. Fullerton has

1 already, you know, recommended --

2 MR. FULLERTON: This house used to be a
3 neighbor of mine. I was at 1026.

4 MS. KAUTZ: Don't you love the picture
5 with the flag? The flag is giant.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: It is giant.

7 MS. KAUTZ: I've never seen one like
8 that, though.

9 MS. SPAIN: It's probably against Code
10 now, but I'd love to see the flag --

11 MS. KAUTZ: A hundred percent against
12 the Code.

13 MR. FULLERTON: So I move to designate.

14 MS. KAUTZ: Based on?

15 MR. FULLERTON: Do I have to say
16 something else?

17 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Per the criteria
18 identified in the Staff report?

19 MR. FULLERTON: Okay.

20 MR. MENENDEZ: Do I have a second?

21 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I'll second.

22 MR. MAXWELL: Second.

23 Oh, Mr. Garcia-Pons --

24 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Garcia-Pons seconds
25 it.

1 MS. SPAIN: Do we have anybody from the
2 audience that wants to say anything?

3 MR. MAXWELL: Any public comments?

4 MR. MENENDEZ: If there's anyone in the
5 public who would like to speak regarding
6 this property? I think --

7 MR. MAXWELL: Do so now or forever hold
8 your peace.

9 MR. MENENDEZ: You've said that way too
10 often.

11 MR. FULLERTON: Call the question.

12 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

13 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.

14 THE SECRETARY; Ms. Bache-Wiig?

15 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes.

16 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Durana?

17 MR. DURANA: Yes.

18 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Fullerton?

19 MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

20 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

21 MR. EHRENHAFT: It's a beautiful home.
22 Congratulations. Yes.

23 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Maxwell?

24 MR. MAXWELL: Yes.

25 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain?

1 MS. SPAIN: Absolutely. Yes.

2 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

3 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

4 THE SECRETARY: Motion passes.

5 MR. MENENDEZ: There you go.

6 Congratulations.

7 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Congrats.

8 MS. KAUTZ: I just want to point out to
9 you that Elizabeth did prepare the report.
10 I'm just presenting it to all of you on her
11 behalf.

12 MR. MENENDEZ: Great task.

13 Okay. The next items, Special
14 Certificates of Appropriateness.

15 Case File COA (SP) 2022-036; An
16 application for the issuance of a Special
17 Certificate of Appropriateness for the
18 property at 126 Frow Avenue, a vacant
19 parcel within the "MacFarlane Homestead
20 Subdivision Historic District," legally
21 described as Lot 18, Block 2-A, MacFarlane
22 Homestead, according to the Plat thereof,
23 as recorded in Plat Book 5, at Page 81 of
24 the Public Records of Miami-Dade County,
25 Florida. The application requests design

1 approval for the construction of a new
2 residence and sitework.

3 MR. ADAMS: Okay. So the property is
4 at 126 Frow Avenue. It's currently a
5 vacant lot within the MadFarlane Historic
6 District, on both the Local and National
7 Register. The architectural types within
8 the MadFarlane Homestead Subdivision were,
9 in most cases, built by their owners,
10 without the assistance of an architect, and
11 are considered vernacular. And the two
12 most prevalent types of residential
13 architecture in the district are frame or
14 concrete block bungalows and the shotgun
15 house.

16 A new two-story residence is proposed
17 and -- so the parcel originally was
18 included as a contributing resource within
19 the MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision when
20 it was established in 1989. At the time of
21 designation, a one story wood frame
22 bungalow, constructed in 1935, was on the
23 property.

24 In 1993, the Preservation Board denied
25 the request to demolish the structure, but

1 the structure was demolished some time
2 after 1993. There is currently only one
3 historic two-story wood frame vernacular
4 residence remaining in the district is
5 located at 1198 Grand Avenue.

6 And a new two-story residence at 106
7 Florida Avenue was approved in 2011 and a
8 second new two-story residence at 112
9 Florida Avenue was approved by the Board in
10 2019.

11 The proposed residence is rectangular
12 in plan, consists of 1,200 square feet of
13 floor area on the first floor and 1,200
14 square feet on the second floor, and the
15 first floor consists of an
16 eight-foot-five-inch covered entry porch,
17 vestibule, bedroom with bathroom, living
18 room, dining room and kitchen.

19 To the west of the residence is a one
20 story hipped-roof carport, and the second
21 floor consists of three bedrooms with
22 bathrooms.

23 The structure has been designed with
24 many of the characteristics present in the
25 existing historic vernacular homes in the

1 district, including a front porch with the
2 roof supported by columns, hipped metal
3 roof, double-hung windows, Hardie Plank
4 siding to the second story elevations to
5 mimic wood siding, operable wood shutters,
6 brackets and rafter tails. There's also
7 some sitework.

8 No variances have been requested.

9 This proposal was reviewed and approved
10 by the Board of Architects on September
11 15th, 2022, with the following comments,
12 which were incorporated into the submission
13 you have; change the carport to be more
14 open, remove terrace on carport, remove
15 cupola and restudy materials of the front
16 porch.

17 The Preservation Office comment prior
18 to Board of Architects review stated, scale
19 massing architectural features not
20 consistent with Historic District.

21 The application presented requests for
22 a new construction. Per the applicant's
23 Letter of Intent, it states, at this time,
24 the Lola B. Walker Homeowners Association
25 cannot approve the submitted plans for

1 inclusion in our Historic neighborhood.
2 The design and scale are not compatible
3 with the character of the surrounding
4 structures. This design would set a
5 precedent leading to the demise of a
6 historic jewel within the City Beautiful.

7 I've included images in the report of
8 the two most recently approved two-story
9 homes at 106 and 112 Florida. And the
10 analysis shows the proposed new house at
11 126 is fairly consistent with the Zoning
12 requirements of the two recently approved
13 new homes; however, it is situated on a
14 slightly larger lot, which accounts for the
15 additional square footage.

16 With regard to setbacks, the subject
17 home has a 15-foot front setback, which is
18 allowed per Section A-66E of the Code for
19 the MacFarlane District. The large west
20 side setback for 106 Florida Avenue is due
21 to the property having a garage at the rear
22 incorporated into the residential structure
23 rather than a carport.

24 Although the subject is somewhat
25 consistent with prior approvals, the

1 proposed designs appears to be larger and
2 have greater massing. There are several
3 reasons for this. Firstly, the subject has
4 a shallow roof pitch and an eaves height of
5 21 feet nine, while 106 and 112 Florida
6 have a steeper pitched roof and eaves
7 heights of 20 feet and 19 feet six inches
8 respectively. This results in a greater
9 massing of the front facade, as there is
10 more wall area. This additional height has
11 been incorporated into the subject to
12 accomodate the first floor ceiling height
13 of approximately eleven feet six inches and
14 a second floor ceiling height of
15 approximately nine feet four. 106 Florida
16 has a first and second floor ceiling height
17 of nine feet. 112 Florida has a first
18 floor of ten feet and a second floor of
19 nine.

20 With regard to the carport, 112 Florida
21 has a simple design with slender columns
22 and shed-roofed, while the subject design
23 appears bulkier due to the thicker of
24 columns and beams and the hip roof.

25 With regard to the architectural

1 features, the porch columns and beams on
2 the subject are thicker than those normally
3 found in Frame Vernacular structures.
4 Additionally, the higher ceiling heights
5 have resulted in doors and windows which
6 are much longer than those found in
7 existing structures in the District. The
8 front door with transom height is eight
9 feet six. The first floor windows are five
10 feet ten and the second floor windows are
11 six feet. The height of the windows has
12 also resulted in the elongated appearance
13 of the shutters.

14 Based on the above, it is Staff's
15 opinion that the residence as proposed is
16 incompatible with the existing structures
17 in the Historic Distract and will detract
18 from the overall integrity of the Historic
19 District. So we're recommending a deferral
20 to work more with the property owners and
21 the architect to see if we can bring the
22 house more in line with the historic
23 architecture.

24 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Is the owner
25 here, present?

1 MR. FETT: Yes.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Would you like to speak?

3 MR. FETT: We have a presentation. I
4 don't know how that works, but --

5 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Speak into the mike.

6 MS. SPAIN: Did you submit it prior?

7 MR. FETT: Yes.

8 MS. SPAIN: So all you have to do is to
9 ask the people upstairs that are --

10 MR. MENENDEZ: There you go.

11 Please state your name.

12 MR. FETT: Thank you.

13 My name is Steven Fett. I'm the
14 architect. My office address is 25
15 Southeast 2nd Avenue, in Miami. These are
16 the owners.

17 Would you like to --

18 MR. SALCEDO: My name is Victor Salcedo
19 and my wife is Noemi Salcedo.

20 MRS. SALCEDO: Noemi Salcedo.

21 MR. FETT: Thank you very much. Thanks
22 for this opportunity to present and the
23 forum to do so, and your dedication to it.

24 Okay. So this has been a relatively
25 lengthy process. We have met, on a number

1 of occasions, with Staff Members from
2 Historic Preservation. First, we did so in
3 mid to late 2020.

4 You're seeing here four variations, in
5 fact, of this same property, the same
6 house, where we've worked -- the first two
7 have been presented to the Historic
8 Preservation Staff, to Ms. Kautz.

9 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Can you tell us which
10 was one, two, three, four?

11 MR. FETT: I'm sorry. Yes.

12 MS. BACHE-WIIG: No, it's okay.

13 MR. FETT: Let's say, the upper left is
14 one, upper right is two, lower left is
15 three, lower right is four.

16 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Okay.

17 MR. FETT: We presented to the Lola B.
18 Walker Homeowners Association on three
19 occasions, as well, meeting at their
20 facility in Coral Gables, within the
21 MacFarlane District. I don't know that
22 they've seen the latest version, but
23 nevertheless these are sort of four
24 iterations. We're constantly sort of
25 striving to reach a kind of compromise of

1 sorts.

2 Indeed, it is true, as Mr. Adams
3 suggests, the character of the neighborhood
4 is, generally speaking, of smaller
5 structures, particularly wood frame
6 structures, that were built in the 1920s.
7 We see a lot of these lots have been
8 vacated over the years. There are some
9 examples of variations, let's say,
10 within --

11 MS. SPAIN: What a nice drawing.

12 MR. FETT: -- within this site. Yes.

13 119 Frow is actually a duplex. The
14 shotgun houses, of course, represented by
15 Tom Spain, depict houses that are on
16 smaller lots, as well, 25-foot lots.

17 It would be interesting to know,
18 historically, this site, on the house that
19 we're proposing, whether or not it was
20 originally a 50 by 100 plat as it is today.
21 The current Code and Zoning does not allow
22 multi-family. It does not allow 25-foot
23 lots and such. It is, you know, set to
24 market at the price, with the expectation,
25 let's say, of being able to build a

1 single-family house on a 50 by 100 foot
2 lot.

3 Indeed, there are examples of two-story
4 buildings within the context of the
5 neighborhood, 106 Florida Avenue, a
6 historic example at 113 Grand.

7 I would say, also, in all of our
8 conversations with the homeowners
9 association, the conversation has never
10 been about architecture. It has always
11 been about size. The -- just maybe to
12 follow this sort of train of thought, in
13 the immediate adjacency, these are in the
14 City of Miami, but nevertheless within the
15 sort of Coconut Grove District, there are
16 other examples of two-story buildings.

17 And as has been mentioned, we did
18 present and were approved by the Board of
19 Architects, in fact, unanimously. The sort
20 of changes that they suggested helped to
21 reduce the scale of the house somewhat from
22 its initial sort of conception. We reduced
23 the floor height and we reduced a little
24 bit of the massing. We adjusted some of
25 the things, to make the house appear

1 smaller.

2 It does have some distinct sort of
3 historic features. Of course, it's not
4 wood framed, as is not allowed by Code. It
5 also has the presence of a carport, which
6 is also required by Code, indeed not, you
7 know, historic to the District.

8 Our initial proposal, if you remember,
9 from the upper left, actually proposed a
10 kind of independent carport, and one of the
11 recommendations by the Board was that, in
12 fact, we had to add an attached carport to
13 it.

14 So upon receiving this approval, this
15 is our happy homeowners here -- they, I
16 should say, also represent a family of six,
17 who will be living in the home. The house
18 requirement, let's say, of buildable space
19 within the lot, the 50 by a hundred foot
20 lot, is 35 percent, and so having, let's
21 say, a minimum four-bedroom house, on a lot
22 where 35 percent of it is allowed to be
23 built, makes it essentially impossible to
24 put all of the necessary program on one
25 floor. So, the option, really, is then

1 sort of directed towards having a two-story
2 home.

3 And, you know, indeed the owners
4 have -- I should say a bit about them, as
5 well. They've spent the majority of their
6 lives in Los Angeles. They're moving here.
7 Noemi's family, indeed, is from Miami, as
8 well, and so they hope to spend, you know,
9 God willing, a long healthy life in this
10 home, in this neighborhood. They're
11 excited to be a part of the neighborhood
12 and very much engaged in community affairs
13 in all of the places that they've lived.

14 They also had the reasonable
15 expectation, I should add, that when they
16 bought the property, that they would be
17 allowed to build per right, as is denoted
18 in the City's Zoning Code. We are asking
19 for no variances, no exceptions. By
20 extension, perhaps, one could assume that
21 by the Bert Harris Act of private property
22 protection from 1995, that there would be
23 no unnecessary obstacles, you know, in the
24 way. And so they pursued the purchase of
25 the lot, and we've been, you know, working

1 with them for some time now to try and
2 satisfy their needs and find a balance
3 between what they're after and what the
4 community is hoping to, you know, get out
5 of this, as well. And it should be noted
6 that it's a tricky situation.

7 The neighborhood is at a smaller scale.
8 It is in direct opposition to the allowable
9 Zoning Code. You know, this house, in some
10 ways, will set a precedent, because not a
11 lot of development has happened in that
12 neighborhood. You know, we've done our
13 very best to try and accommodate, to try
14 and compromise, but a family of six,
15 nevertheless, is a family of six, and if we
16 can, you know, sort of review some of the
17 floor plans, I mean, reducing a few inches
18 here and there are things that we've done,
19 and quite frankly, you know, the plan, we
20 believe, is compatible.

21 Here you see the plan view, as well as
22 a sort of street elevation. It's probably
23 sort of uniquely sited, in so much as the
24 fact that there is sort of a larger church
25 to the north -- I'm sorry, to the west,

1 which has a kind of, you know, even larger
2 scale to it. There is an empty lot, which
3 is owned by that same entity, which may or
4 may become a parking lot in the future. So
5 this sort of bookends one side of the
6 neighborhood.

7 And, you know, in plan view, certainly
8 the house is not larger, really, than
9 adjacent structures.

10 In elevation view, the ceiling
11 heights -- actually, I would dispute one
12 comment made about ceiling height. In
13 fact, our first floor ceiling height is
14 nine foot eight. The eleven foot eight
15 that was mentioned includes the height of a
16 presumed two foot wooden truss and the
17 second floor is nine foot four. So they're
18 not excessive heights, nor is the width
19 excessive. It's less than 25 feet wide.
20 Some of the adjacent other mentioned
21 properties are also above 20 feet.

22 So, you know, we're happy to certainly
23 answer questions about this, and I
24 understand that it's not an easy decision.
25 We would love to have gained the approval

1 of the Lola B. Walker Board, you know, and
2 it's -- well, I'll leave it at that. I
3 think -- you know, I think it's a
4 reasonable -- certainly we've done our best
5 to design something that resembles the
6 character of the historic structures within
7 the neighborhood, while also accommodating,
8 you know, the needs and desires of the
9 clients, you know, who are very invested in
10 the community.

11 So thank you.

12 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

13 MR. MAXWELL: Thank you.

14 MR. CEBALLOS: Just for the purposes of
15 clarification, because I feel the need to
16 make a comment, there was a reference to a
17 Bert J. Harris claim or act. I'm not sure
18 how that's relevant to this property. The
19 Board of Architects and the Historic
20 Preservation Board predate 1995
21 substantially. This District, I believe,
22 was designated in the '80s. I'm not sure
23 how that would factor into any of these
24 considerations.

25 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Is there anyone

1 in the audience who would like to speak in
2 favor or opposition of this case?

3 MS. SPAIN: Steven, did you say that
4 the Lola B. Walker Homeowners Association
5 has not seen this final version?

6 I'm sorry. I apologize. But I think
7 it's important.

8 MR. FETT: I can't -- it's my
9 understanding -- we've never presented it
10 to them.

11 MS. SPAIN: Okay.

12 MR. FETT: If they've seen it, it's not
13 because we've shown it to them.

14 MS. SPAIN: I see. Because it's
15 substantially different than the ones
16 before, so --

17 MR. PRIME: Good evening.

18 MR. MENENDEZ: Good evening.

19 MR. PRIME: Carl Leon Prime, 209
20 Florida Avenue.

21 Mr. Chairman, Members of the Board, I
22 stand before you today as a life-long
23 resident and citizen of Coral Gables,
24 life-long resident of the same
25 neighborhood. And I currently serve as

1 President of the Lola B. Walker Homeowners
2 Association.

3 Our namesake sought to the need to
4 preserve our unique community. In carrying
5 on in that vein, the late Mr. Cooper,
6 William Cooper, Carl Prime, my father --

7 MS. SPAIN: Nice man.

8 MR. PRIME: -- along with the City of
9 Coral Gables worked diligently to have our
10 neighborhood designated on the National
11 Register of Historic Places. And to that,
12 I must speak out against granting the
13 Special Certificate of Appropriateness for
14 126 Frow Avenue.

15 It's come back in many iterations.
16 It's large. It doesn't actually fit into
17 the same type of character, design as the
18 rest of the neighborhood.

19 I watched my playgrounds in Coconut
20 Grove become these huge sugar cubes that
21 are really just glorified duplexes, and I
22 don't want to see the precedent set where
23 that begins here in Coral Gables, and
24 especially in our historic neighborhood.
25 If we start, little by slowly, eroding the

1 little guidelines that say, no, you can't
2 build this huge thing here, it must also
3 adhere to some guideline to look something
4 like the others in the neighborhood, then
5 why are we here as a Historic Preservation
6 Board, and why are we trying to hold on to
7 a historic neighborhood, if it's just going
8 to be eroded away?

9 You know, our neighborhood is full of
10 bungalows, shotgun Miami style homes, as I
11 call them, and, yes, the property is Zoned
12 for two stories, but it doesn't have to be
13 that large. And this current version of
14 this is sort of large, it's a little bit
15 more boxy. It fits a little bit more in,
16 but it doesn't have any character, from
17 what I'm looking at.

18 Members of the Homeowners Association
19 said, no, come back, build something a
20 little smaller, try some split level,
21 something else. They didn't listen to us.
22 Progress is what it is. There comes a
23 point where you have to draw the line and
24 just say, "Look, you bought into a historic
25 neighborhood. There are certain

1 guidelines. We have design standards and
2 you need to fit in."

3 And I believe that basically -- let's
4 see, I think that covered most of what I
5 wanted to say.

6 As they always say, it's the remarks
7 you want to make, the ones you write down,
8 and then the ones that you think about at
9 2:30 in the morning as, this is what I
10 should have said.

11 With that -- okay, just one last thing
12 here. It's been said that a journey of a
13 thousand miles begins with a first step.
14 Do not let this be the first step of the
15 journey in degrading our neighborhood.
16 Thank you.

17 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

18 MS. SPAIN: Mr. Prime, I have a
19 question while you're up.

20 MR. PRIME: Sure.

21 MS. SPAIN: First of all, how are you?

22 MR. PRIME: I'm doing well. Thank you.

23 MS. SPAIN: I see you here all of the
24 time now.

25 MR. PRIME: Yes.

1 MS. SPAIN: And I loved your dad. He
2 was such a nice man.

3 But you don't have a problem with it
4 being two stories?

5 MR. PRIME: No, I don't.

6 MS. SPAIN: Okay. All right. You're
7 not saying that they should not build a
8 two-story home because there have been --

9 MR. PRIME: We have no problem with the
10 a two-story home.

11 MS. SPAIN: Okay. All right.

12 MR. PRIME: I believe it's zoned for
13 that and it would be appropriate. We're
14 not saying you can't build a home. It's
15 just -- let's keep it in the same style and
16 design of the rest of the neighborhood.

17 MR. DURANA: I have a question. Have
18 you guys seen the latest --

19 MS. SPAIN: Yeah, have you seen the
20 latest one?

21 MR. PRIME: No, I haven't seen that.

22 MS. SPAIN: Because, I will tell you,
23 it's substantially different than anything
24 before, and in my view, is in keeping with
25 the neighborhood.

1 MR. DURANA: Yeah.

2 MR. MAXWELL: Yeah, it does. Would you
3 like to see it?

4 MR. PRIME: Yeah.

5 MR. MAXWELL: Please.

6 MR. PRIME: Well, when I was before the
7 Board of Architects, this is even different
8 from the last plan that I saw there.

9 MS. SPAIN: Yeah, I think so.

10 MR. DURANA: Yeah, this one seems a lot --

11 MR. PRIME: Our main concern is that,
12 yes, it's getting closer and closer, but
13 still the size, and it's -- and in
14 comparison to the church, a church is a
15 church, you know. Churches are usually
16 large.

17 MR. MAXWELL: Yeah.

18 MS. SPAIN: Yeah, but I think that Mr.
19 Fett's comment about there being churches
20 next to it is relevant, because it's nice
21 that the church is there, in order for a
22 two-story residence not to stand out, being
23 surrounded by one stories. So I don't
24 know.

25 MR. PRIME: Yeah. Our thing is that,

1 if it could just be a little bit narrower,
2 no problem.

3 MR. DURANA: I have a question, though,
4 and this is for Staff, didn't we approve a
5 house at 4600 Booker Street a little while
6 ago?

7 MR. MAXWELL: Would you like the --

8 MR. DURANA: I mean, in my opinion, I
9 think this is a nicer --

10 MS. SPAIN: So much nicer.

11 MR. DURANA: A lot nicer. Like it's
12 way nicer. No offense to the other, you
13 know, architect, but this is really nice,
14 compared to 4600 Booker Street that was
15 approved. I mean, I understand the
16 neighborhood's concern, but to me, I mean,
17 this is a beautiful house, honestly.

18 But I get it, you know, they have
19 their opinion.

20 MR. MENENDEZ: You know, the size of
21 the house is not dictated by us.

22 MR. PRIME: Right.

23 MR. MENENDEZ: What about 112 Florida
24 Avenue?

25 MR. PRIME: 112 Florida Avenue?

1 Growing up -- let's see, those were already
2 Zoned as two-story. When I was growing up
3 there, there was one that was a two-story
4 wood frame house, and from what I was told,
5 there was another one there, but during my
6 lifetime, I don't remember it, but I was
7 told that it was there before. So with the
8 two properties there, between 112 and the
9 one next to it, those were always two
10 stories, as far as I know.

11 MR. MENENDEZ: And how do you like
12 those?

13 MR. PRIME: We love those.

14 MR. MENENDEZ: You love those?

15 MR. PRIME: Yeah. I have no problem
16 with those.

17 MR. MENENDEZ: Yeah, I don't think
18 you've seen the latest. I think you need
19 to take a look at that.

20 MR. PRIME: Yeah, I've looked at some
21 of them. As I was saying, our primary
22 concern is that, if it were a little bit
23 narrower, and other than that, it is
24 probably much better than some of the
25 others that have come through.

1 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Thank you.

2 Yes, sir, you would like to speak?

3 MR. PRICE: Good evening. I am a
4 resident of --

5 THE SECRETARY: Your name, sir?

6 MR. PRICE: My name is Llewellyn Price.
7 I'm a resident of 125 Florida Avenue, right
8 across from where the structure is supposed
9 to be constructed. And I've heard all of
10 the arguments, but my views are very, very,
11 very much different.

12 They said they are coming from
13 California. I happen to be born in Los
14 Angeles. Now, I've seen A-frame structures
15 that are also two-story high. They don't
16 like two-story buildings.

17 My mom, she's arguing the point about
18 her air quality, of a structure that is so
19 tall in front of her front door, that she
20 might not even get the sun, which is
21 questionable, but I really think that the
22 architects, they should get some more
23 designs on the board, because there's more
24 to a two-story structure than all of these
25 windows in front of the house.

1 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Mr. Price, can you
2 speak into the microphone? She can't hear
3 you. Thank you very much.

4 MR. PRICE: I'm sorry.

5 You know, I'm just thinking that, you
6 know, there is kind of like a narrow view
7 of what they want to put. I'm thinking
8 they just want to destroy the contour of
9 the neighborhood with this two-story
10 structure. Those houses that were done on
11 Booker, those are on the edge of the
12 neighborhood. The actual neighborhood
13 consists of a colonial style, Caribbean
14 historical wood frame, A-frame, homes.

15 I'm not against a two-story house, but
16 there are better constructions. They need
17 to get a real architect out in California.
18 He could show you something different.
19 Thank you.

20 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

21 MR. MAXWELL: Thank you.

22 THE SECRETARY: We have someone on Zoom
23 that wants to speak.

24 MR. MENENDEZ: Go ahead.

25 THE SECRETARY: Yes, we can hear you.

1 MS. SPAIN: No, we can't.

2 THE SECRETARY: You can't hear her?

3 MR. FULLERTON: No.

4 MS. SPAIN: No.

5 THE SECRETARY: Hold on one second.

6 Hold on one second, ma'am. Hold on one
7 second. The Board cannot hear you. Hold
8 on.

9 MR. DURANA: In the meantime, can I ask
10 Warren a question? Would it be possible to
11 get a variance to eliminate the carport, so
12 that the structure doesn't look as big? I
13 mean, is that allowable?

14 MS. SPAIN: To eliminate what -- oh,
15 the carport.

16 MR. DURANA: Yeah. I mean, maybe that
17 will help give it more that shotgun feel,
18 if we can get rid of the carport. I know
19 the Code requires a carport, but maybe we
20 can give a variance --

21 MR. ADAMS: Because it's a new
22 structure, it's sort of difficult to argue.

23 MR. DURANA: Because I like the design.
24 I think it fits in. I mean, it's a really
25 pretty -- what happened -- maybe the

1 carport -- you know, I think that's what's
2 kind of making it seem a lot bigger than
3 what it is.

4 MR. ADAMS: And this is one of the
5 reasons I included the chart in the report,
6 just so you can compare what had been
7 approved before with what's here.

8 MR. FULLERTON: That carport is set
9 back quite a bit.

10 MR. MAXWELL: Mr. Adams, in your
11 comments, you're requesting a deferral --
12 or recommending a deferral, excuse me. Can
13 you specifically say, you know, what it is
14 that you would like to work with --

15 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Maxwell, can you
16 hold, please?

17 MR. MAXWELL: Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

18 THE SECRETARY: Go ahead. I'll
19 transfer her --

20 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Go ahead, Mr.
21 Maxwell.

22 MR. MAXWELL: Okay.

23 MR. ADAMS: Well, as you heard them,
24 the architect, Mr. Fett, and Mr. Prime, and
25 when you see the examples that were given

1 before, I don't think anyone can deny it's
2 all moving in the right direction. So the
3 intent would be to try and get something
4 that everyone can live with and support. I
5 didn't want to recommend outright denial,
6 because that creates a big problem for the
7 property homeowner. But, also, creating
8 approval, when technically they don't have
9 the homeowners association on board -- I
10 suppose I'm hoping that now that we're past
11 the Board of Architects, if maybe there
12 aren't significant alterations that they
13 would have to go back, maybe there's a
14 middle ground that everyone can live with.
15 I don't know if that's possible.

16 But recommending either approval or
17 denial seemed to be -- it would be nice to
18 get the design finalized into something
19 that everyone can live with. But, again,
20 you know, the difficulty is, I did present
21 the chart showing what was approved before,
22 and all of the dimensions of the existing
23 home are sort of similar to what was
24 approved before.

25 I was just wondering if there was a way

1 to bring the scale down. As I said, I
2 believe the pitch of the roof in this one
3 is much shallower, so you've got much -- to
4 keep it within the height, if the pitch is
5 shallower, so there's more wall space,
6 maybe if that was reduced and the pitch was
7 increased, you know, that angle to bring --
8 you know, if you reduce the size of the
9 windows, it brings down the shutters, it
10 stops this vertical --

11 MR. MAXWELL: Yeah, the floors to
12 ceilings are higher than typical, you know,
13 in that neighborhood, too, right, because
14 they're contemporary.

15 MS. SPAIN: Well, yeah, but I wouldn't
16 want them to lower the ceiling height,
17 because then the proportion of the
18 residence would be off. It would be squat.

19 MR. MAXWELL: Sure. But for energy
20 efficiency standards, now you kill that.
21 So, you know, a compromise, but --

22 MS. SPAIN: I think it's a pity that it
23 didn't go to the Lola B. Walker Homeowners
24 Association, because it's so much more in
25 keeping with the neighborhood than the past

1 designs --

2 MR. ADAMS: Yeah.

3 MS. SPAIN: -- that I would imagine
4 that it would be -- if the others ones were
5 approved that we've seen, I would imagine
6 that this one would be, also.

7 MR. DURANA: I mean, I think this is
8 the nicest one that I've seen.

9 MS. SPAIN: Yeah. Beautiful plans, by
10 the way. The plans themselves are
11 beautiful.

12 MR. DURANA: I mean, is there a way to
13 show the original intent and then this new
14 design, because I think that's maybe where
15 the disconnect is?

16 THE SECRETARY: Can we let the person
17 on Zoom speak, because we're having --

18 Go ahead. Go ahead. Can you speak?

19 MS. SPAIN: We still can't hear this
20 person.

21 MR. MAXWELL: It's sign language.

22 MS. SPAIN: No.

23 THE SECRETARY: You can hear her?

24 MS. SPAIN: No.

25 MR. MENENDEZ: No.

1 MS. BACHE-WIIG: No. We can see --

2 MR. FULLERTON: That's her? Anybody
3 that can lip read?

4 MS. SPAIN: No.

5 MR. MAXWELL: We're not getting any
6 voice.

7 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Nancy, if you unplug
8 your headset --

9 THE SECRETARY: I hear her.

10 MS. BACHE-WIIG: No, but if you unplug
11 your headset, would that allow --

12 THE SECRETARY: No.

13 MS. BACHE-WIIG: No?

14 (Simultaneous speaking.)

15 (Inaudible.)

16 MR. FULLERTON: Can we proceed until we
17 find the problem?

18 MR. MENENDEZ: Yeah. Let's --

19 THE SECRETARY: Yeah, go ahead.

20 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Adams, what can we
21 do to move this project along for the
22 applicants and the community, as well?

23 MR. FULLERTON: Looking at the lot size
24 comparison with other properties, 106 and
25 112, this stacks up fairly equally to those

1 buildings, and maybe if a different
2 structural system were employed, it can
3 bring the house down a foot or so from the
4 second to roof, and increase the pitch of
5 the roof a foot, maybe that would help make
6 the house a little more compatible, and may
7 be a simple change.

8 MR. MENENDEZ: Could the carport be
9 detached and pushed back?

10 MS. SPAIN: Apparently that's what they
11 had, and the Board of Architects asked that
12 it be connected.

13 MR. FULLERTON: But it's already pushed
14 back. I don't see that the carport has an
15 impact on the --

16 MR. MENENDEZ: It just makes the
17 structure look wider. That's the thing.

18 MR. FULLERTON: Only from that one
19 vantage point, straight on. And as you're
20 passing the house, you're going to see the
21 front.

22 MR. DURANA: Yeah, but that's what
23 they're saying. I mean, the resident from
24 across the street is the one saying that he
25 feels it's too wide for the lot.

1 MR. MAXWELL: Yeah.

2 MR. ADAMS: I think, as well, the roof
3 in the carport isn't really consistent with
4 other carports in the District that either
5 have shed roofs or flat roofs and there is
6 more of a half of a hip roof, and the
7 thickness of the columns and -- you know,
8 when you compare it to a historic house, it
9 just looked heavier.

10 MR. MAXWELL: Yeah.

11 MR. ADAMS: Heavier. It doesn't seem
12 the have the lightness of --

13 MS. SPAIN: Well, yeah, but integral
14 buildings in historic districts don't have
15 to mimic exactly the historic properties.

16 MR. ADAMS: No.

17 MS. SPAIN: In fact, you don't want
18 them to look like the historic properties,
19 because then you can't differentiate them
20 from the historic ones and the non-historic
21 ones. So there is a --

22 MR. MENENDEZ: You know, to me, those
23 shutters make it look heavy on the front of
24 the building.

25 MR. FULLERTON: Yeah, those have an

1 impact, for sure.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Maybe if those shutters
3 came off, it wouldn't look so heavy.

4 MS. BACHE-WIIG: I think it's also the
5 color. I mean, they're green against
6 white. They pop too much.

7 MR. FULLERTON: Yeah.

8 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Maybe the color can
9 be -- do we have issues with the hip roof?
10 Was that --

11 MR. ADAMS: No.

12 MS. BACHE-WIIG: No?

13 MR. MAXWELL: No.

14 MR. FULLERTON: No.

15 MS. BACHE-WIIG: I agree, though, with
16 Warren, that the half hip kind of, you
17 know, dying at the house is a bit odd and
18 it's a bit high. Can we just adjust that
19 slope a little bit to minimize --

20 MR. FULLERTON: Which hip?

21 MS. BACHE-WIIG: You see this -- this
22 is pretty --

23 MR. FULLERTON: The carport?

24 MS. BACHE-WIIG: The carport. Can we
25 just -- what is it, like a twelve and four

1 right now, 4.5?

2 MR. FULLERTON: Like a three.

3 MS. BACHE-WIIG: I don't know. Can it
4 mimic the hip above, you know, the angle?
5 I think -- it's pretty big. I mean, I
6 don't want to play architect, but --

7 MR. GARCIA-PONS: You are.

8 MR. EHRENHAFT: I think the height of
9 the peak is going to be higher.

10 MS. BACHE-WIIG: No, just the carport
11 here.

12 MR. FULLERTON: I would say, pull the
13 eave down a foot, along with the floor plan
14 of the second floor, one foot, in structure
15 alone, and leave the pitch -- leave the top
16 of the roof exactly where it is. So it's a
17 higher pitch, but it looks a little thinner
18 from an overall standpoint.

19 MS. SPAIN: But that would still keep
20 the first floor at the same height --
21 ceiling height. You're just talking about
22 the structure itself.

23 MR. FULLERTON: Yes. Yes. Yes.

24 MR. MAXWELL: Yeah, and then they end
25 up with windows that are two different

1 styles and heights.

2 MR. FULLERTON: I don't think that
3 matters that much.

4 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Mr. Chair, can I ask
5 the architect a question?

6 MR. MENENDEZ: Go ahead.

7 MR. GARCIA-PONS: So, again, I also, as
8 you, would have loved to have Lola B.
9 Walker's approval on this before coming to
10 us today, and I would imagine that the
11 request is reasonable. I also think it's a
12 beautiful home. So it's a matter -- I can
13 see where Staff was torn between a
14 beautiful home and not meeting the
15 expressed wishes of the neighborhood.

16 I think, listening to my colleagues on
17 the dais, would the architect be able to
18 accomplish two things that I've heard,
19 which is rethink the roof of the carport,
20 so is not as tall? Again, I think the one
21 story in depth is fine. I think it won't
22 have the impact that some people think it
23 will have. But the roof is up to you,
24 right? You can do the roof many different
25 ways. It doesn't have to be that way.

1 And second, per Mr. Fullerton, is there
2 a way to lower the second floor eave,
3 maintaining the top of the roof, so that
4 you do get a little bit more pitch --

5 MR. FEET: Like bring the rafter over
6 the tie beam to lower it, kind of bring the
7 hat down a little bit.

8 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Not the hat, the
9 pitch. So keeping the top point, and
10 getting more --

11 (Simultaneous speaking.)

12 MR. GARCIA-PONS: -- so it appears
13 thinner, right? What I heard several times
14 was thinner. You're going to reduce from
15 three bays -- so I don't think you're going
16 to reduce from three bays, but can you do
17 things architecturally to make it look a
18 little bit thinner? And one of the things
19 that I think several of us are thinking is,
20 if it has a higher pitch, even -- not
21 exceeding height, dropping the beam -- I
22 don't know if you can, because I don't have
23 the interiors of this, but I think that is
24 what I'm hearing.

25 Beautiful home. Good comments from the

1 neighborhood. It's a tough decision.

2 MR. FETT: Maybe if I could address
3 that, before I say yes. With respect to
4 the carport, we have had it as a flat roof
5 in the past. We were told that we should
6 put a roof back on it.

7 MR. MAXWELL: Right.

8 MR. FETT: So we mimicked the hip roof,
9 as opposed to, let's say, a shed, because
10 we felt that the slope of the roof that
11 would come back would reduce the scale
12 somewhat.

13 MR. GARCIA-PONS: And I'm interrupting,
14 I would agree with you.

15 MR. FETT: What's that?

16 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I would agree with
17 that assessment.

18 MR. MAXWELL: Could you bring it down,
19 though, I mean, and then also look at the
20 column --

21 MR. FETT: Right now, it is a two and
22 seven and 12 pitch, 2.75 and twelve. It
23 gets a little bit tricky with the
24 manufacturer's requirements, you know.

25 MR. MAXWELL: Yeah.

1 MR. FETT: With respect to bringing the
2 roof down or the floor heights down, the
3 ground floor is now nine foot eight floor
4 to ceiling. The second floor is nine foot
5 four.

6 MS. SPAIN: I think they were't talking
7 about changing that. They were talking
8 about changing the structure, but still
9 maintaining the ceiling heights. I have
10 not a clue if that can be done.

11 MR. FETT: Right. The only thing is,
12 at the location at the tie beam, we want
13 that truss to be able to rest on the tie
14 beam. So if you're talking about adjusting
15 the roof pitch -- I mean, look, yes, of
16 course, yes, we can do it; however -- and I
17 would say one other thing about the Lola B.
18 Walker Foundation, they may not have seen
19 this very latest one, but they were at the
20 initial Board of Architects meeting, so
21 they saw that.

22 MS. SPAIN: Uh-huh.

23 MR. FETT: So I am skeptical that if we
24 went there again and presented it that --

25 MS. SPAIN: So they saw it with the

1 cupola and that? I see.

2 MR. FETT: With the cupola, yeah. Yeah.

3 The shutters, in terms -- to answer
4 your question about the colors, the reason
5 that we -- and we've gone, as you see, you
6 know, back and forth with colors and so on
7 and so forth. Certainly we're open to
8 that, as well. Those colors are distinctly
9 kind of Bahamian, you see. The most
10 typical example of a Key West house and the
11 most typical example of most Bahamian
12 neighborhoods would be a white painted
13 house with green operable shutters, which
14 is what we have.

15 Ana Alvarez did make an interesting
16 comment at the Board of Architects, meaning
17 that the windows maybe were slightly too
18 large and perhaps would -- or too
19 attenuated, actually. So I thought of
20 that, too, maybe reducing the size of it.

21 And maybe my last point would be, if
22 you consider two meetings with the Staff of
23 Historic Preservation, one meeting with
24 Mr. Adams and Mr. Riesgo at their office.

25 MS. SPAIN: That's the City Architect.

1 MR. FETT: That's three -- the City
2 Architect, correct -- plus three meetings
3 to the Lola B. Walker group, that is seven,
4 plus -- no, six, plus two meetings to the
5 Board of Architects, and now here. We can
6 keep changing, but at some point, you
7 know -- I mean, I can offer you a good
8 faith that we will do it, and, you know, I
9 don't know if that's good enough or we have
10 to present again, but at some point, when
11 is it enough, you know?

12 MR. GARCIA-PONS: We do have a history
13 on this Board to let you work out the
14 details with Staff. So if there is an
15 approval there could be a method to work it
16 out with Staff.

17 But I want to be clear as to, you
18 mentioned directly to reducing the height
19 of the floors. That's not what the request
20 is. I think there was a request to maybe
21 change the structural system. Maybe the
22 floor joists can be remodified. I'm not
23 going to get into the details of how to do
24 it. I think the intention is to create the
25 appearance of a slimmer building by --

1 MR. FETT: Oh, by raising the ridge?

2 MR. GARCIA-PONS: -- hold the ridge,
3 dropping the eave. Now, that could be in
4 the floor plates. That could be in the
5 edges. That could be in the window. I
6 think there's many ways to do that, and
7 we're not going to tell you how to do it,
8 which is why, if it's approved, we'll let
9 you work it out with Staff, but that's the
10 intent that I heard, I think, from Mr.
11 Fullerton.

12 MR. FETT: Okay. Okay.

13 MR. FULLERTON: Yeah. That floor has
14 quite a long span, if I'm reading your plan
15 correctly, at the living room and dining
16 room area.

17 MR. FETT: 24 feet at the widest point,
18 and then it telescopes back, which we
19 thought was also a good idea, for the side
20 of -- you know, from the side view, even
21 though you don't see it as much, down to
22 21.

23 MR. FULLERTON: There might be a way to
24 put a column between the kitchen and --
25 that island kitchen and the living room, so

1 you could reverse and use two by twelve or
2 do something like that, to go the other
3 direction, to take it from a two foot truss
4 to twelve inches of timber.

5 MR. FETT: Right. I think the issue
6 there might be the second floor just having
7 a reasonable bedroom width, and, you know,
8 access to the hall or to a bath that's on
9 the opposite side, but -- I mean, a foot,
10 is that what we're talking about here?
11 Because I think we're talking about
12 gentrification or we're talking about a
13 change in the neighborhood. It's something
14 much bigger than this house, frankly.

15 MR. FULLERTON: Well, in order to get
16 this house to fit into it, so you can make
17 that change, I think we just need to make
18 some tweaks.

19 MR. FETT: Understood.

20 MR. FULLERTON: And you have multiple
21 options for structural for the second
22 floor, for the roof structure. It's just
23 that first floor long span of the living
24 room which is a trouble spot.

25 MR. CEBALLOS: Mr. Chair, pardon the

1 interruption. Just FYI, it is 8:56 p.m.
2 As you recall, we cannot go past 9:00 p.m.
3 without a motion to extend the meeting past
4 9:00.

5 MS. SPAIN: I'll make that motion.

6 MR. MAXWELL: Second.

7 MR. MENENDEZ: Ms. Spain and
8 Mr. Maxwell.

9 MS. SPAIN: Thank you so much, Gus.

10 MR. FULLERTON: Sir, have you heard
11 anything that you disagree with?

12 MR. SALCEDO: Yes, Mr. Fullerton.

13 MR. MAXWELL: Excuse me just one
14 moment. We have to take --

15 MR. FULLERTON: Oh, sorry. Sorry.

16 (The Board voted aye.)

17 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Fullerton.

18 MR. SALCEDO: Yes. Okay. This design
19 that we have here, okay, as you know, has
20 gone through many modifications over many
21 years. Okay. The reason why this design
22 is so beautiful -- I get excited -- because
23 it has met the perfection of the Board of
24 Architects, but to get there, it took this
25 many years. And I understand you're an

1 architect. I'm a civil engineer. And when
2 you ask for these structural changes, it
3 costs money and it takes away from the
4 aesthetics, the way it is right now.
5 That's why I ask for the design to be
6 approved, please, because once we go
7 through another modification, we have to do
8 structural changes and that costs money and
9 aesthetically it will take away from the
10 beauty of this house.

11 MR. FULLERTON: You haven't started the
12 structural drawings as of yet, have you,
13 the working drawings, Mr. Fett?

14 MR. FEET: You mean, has the structural
15 engineer been engaged?

16 MR. FULLERTON: Yeah.

17 MR. FETT: No, not yet.

18 MR. FULLERTON: Okay. So we're not
19 causing you additional time. We're just
20 suggesting that you change the structural
21 system, maybe to a simpler one, actually,
22 lower the second floor height by a foot,
23 leaving the peak of the roof at where it is
24 today, not bringing it down like this, but
25 bringing it down like this, so you're

1 increasing the pitch of the roof by one
2 foot, which --

3 MR. FETT: Just to clarify, if I do --
4 if I'm here and I do this, I'm moving the
5 wall in.

6 MR. FULLERTON: No. No. No.

7 MR. FETT: Or I'm not resting it --
8 you'll do a sketch for me, right?

9 MS. BACHE-WIIG: The overhang --

10 MR. FULLERTON: You're just bringing
11 the structural connection down. You know,
12 it used to be up here, now it's down here,
13 and your ceiling heights are the same.

14 MR. FETT: I mean -- okay.

15 MR. FULLERTON: The only thing that
16 changes is the height of the roof -- sorry,
17 of the ceiling, the second floor, from the
18 first floor, by one foot. It takes away
19 stair treads. So you have two fewer treads
20 on your staircase, cheaper, by a long shot.

21 MR. SALCEDO: We're not looking for
22 cheaper. We're looking for a beautiful
23 home that we could live in and enjoy.

24 MR. FULLERTON: I don't think you can
25 tell the difference.

1 MR. SALCEDO: Yes, you can. I build
2 and you build.

3 MS. SPAIN: But that would not change
4 the ceiling height of the second floor.

5 MR. FULLERTON: No.

6 MR. MAXWELL: Nor the first floor.

7 MR. FULLERTON: Nor the first floor.

8 MR. SALCEDO: Any time you take away
9 using the stairs -- you're going to take
10 two stairs off --

11 MR. FULLERTON: Because I'm going to
12 take a foot out of your structural system.

13 MR. SALCEDO: We understand that. When
14 you do that, you have to lower the height
15 of the building. The walls have to come
16 down, because you're reducing the two
17 stairs.

18 MS. SPAIN: The walls come down, but
19 the height of the ceiling doesn't change.

20 MR. FULLERTON: And your tie beams
21 here --

22 MS. SPAIN: I'm talking to a civil
23 engineer. You must know that.

24 MR. FULLERTON: Yeah, but the roof
25 stays exactly where it is, and the ceiling

1 goes down one foot.

2 MR. SALCEDO: Okay. We could do that,
3 but let me tell you, aesthetically it won't
4 look as nice. That I agree.

5 MR. FULLERTON: I think it will look
6 nicer.

7 MR. DURANA: I mean, I kind of
8 disagree. I think it's a really nice
9 design. I don't know why we're giving him
10 such a hard time on this. I think it fits
11 in well with the neighborhood. I'm okay to
12 make a motion, if you guys are okay,
13 because I just don't see why this -- I
14 mean, I really feel bad for them. Like
15 this is a really nice design. It's a good
16 compromise for the neighborhood.

17 THE SECRETARY: We have the person --

18 MS. SPAIN: Does this person on Zoom --
19 isn't there some kind of rule that if
20 they're not in the meeting, we can't rely
21 on them? I mean, I don't know.

22 MR. CEBALLOS: They want to call into
23 the Zoom, but I think that's going to have
24 the same issue. I mean, if you want to
25 call on the phone, at the end of the day --

1 THE SECRETARY: I'm going have them
2 call --

3 MR. CEBALLOS: I'm not sure if that's
4 going to work, but you're more than welcome
5 to try it. She needs to be on Zoom video
6 to be sworn in. So she can provide public
7 comment, but she can't provide sworn
8 testimony.

9 MS. SPAIN: I knew there was some sort
10 of rule.

11 MR. CEBALLOS: If she can't be on video
12 and she can't be sworn in, then it's not
13 sworn testimony, it's only public comment.

14 MR. MAXWELL: I have one question to
15 address the comments of the community. One
16 of the things that was discussed was sort
17 of the -- the width, it was the bulk, and
18 just in looking at the carport, would it be
19 possible to reduce the width of the column,
20 so it appears lighter, at least in here, to
21 perhaps match the column from the front
22 porch? Would that be possible?

23 MR. FETT: I mean, how wide is the
24 column there?

25 MR. FULLERTON: Probably six by six.

1 MR. FETT: No, the width of it.

2 I think what we decided to do there,
3 first of all, because it's concrete block,
4 it's going to be, let's say, eight inches
5 for the block --

6 MR. MAXWELL: Oh, your columns are
7 concrete block?

8 MR. FETT: Because the construction is
9 concrete, yeah.

10 MR. MAXWELL: Because the ones on the
11 front are steel tubes and, you know,
12 they're sheathed in wood.

13 MR. FETT: Could be. I don't know, you
14 know, if I felt like it was a little
15 flimsy, like a spider leg or something. I
16 don't know. You know, like I'm doing my
17 best trying to make it --

18 MR. MAXWELL: Yeah, but we're also
19 trying to listen to --

20 MR. FETT: I know. I completely
21 understand.

22 MR. MAXWELL: If you could take a look
23 at that, that would really be good.

24 MR. FETT: Okay. I mean, I will
25 promise this, if we are approved, we will,

1 regardless -- if Mr. Adams will accept,
2 we'll sit with him and we can work out some
3 of these things, absolutely. You know, it
4 would be great to be approved and we would
5 do it anyway. I can swear on the Bible for
6 it. But, you know, like these poor
7 individuals here -- I shouldn't say it like
8 that, but, I mean, they've flown from Los
9 Angeles on multiple occasions to attend
10 meetings like this, to show their good
11 faith, like, you know, thank you.

12 MS. BACHE-WIIG: I just want to say
13 something.

14 THE SECRETARY: Okay.

15 MS. BACHE-WIIG: I'm sorry, go ahead.
16 I'm sorry, Nancy.

17 THE SECRETARY: Go ahead.

18 MS. HEMSING: Hello. Can you all hear
19 me? Oh, there we go.

20 Okay. Hi, everyone. Please let me
21 know if you can't hear me.

22 My name is Kathryn Hemsing. I am the
23 co-owner of 107 Frow Avenue, so I'm a
24 couple of houses down the block. And I
25 don't have an opinion on all of the

1 architectural modifications that you all
2 are discussing now, but -- and I don't have
3 a horse in this race, and I've never met
4 the homeowner, but, neighbor, I guess it's
5 nice to meet you.

6 Listen, I appreciate the work of this
7 Board, and I think its mandate is extremely
8 important in preserving the fabric of our
9 neighborhood, which I think is the best
10 neighborhood in all of Miami. I love my
11 neighbors and I love that we are a
12 historically Black community. I have a lot
13 of pride in where I live.

14 But I worry here that this Board is
15 being overly narrow in its view of
16 acceptable design, so much so that it is
17 potentially creating such an arduous and
18 bureaucratic process for what I believe is
19 a homeowner who's making a good faith
20 effort to, you know, meet us halfway, and I
21 think this design and how different it
22 looks from its first iteration is a
23 positive reflection of that.

24 You know, when I was reading the
25 report, a couple of things stood out for

1 me. Mainly, the key concerns were, you
2 know, scale, mass and architectural
3 features. I think this design adequately
4 addresses the architectural features that I
5 think are reflective of Bahamian, you know,
6 and Caribbean design, and I think you see
7 that with the metal roof, the front porch,
8 the hip roof, the siding, the double-hung
9 windows, the wood shutters and even down to
10 the color of the house. I'm even going to
11 paint my house white, with, you know, kind
12 of a light greenish-blue, because I want my
13 house to also reflect more the character of
14 the neighborhood. So I think that's an
15 important facet of the MacFarlane
16 Homestead.

17 I think the main concerns, and probably
18 the only criteria that is worth
19 entertaining, is around this idea of like
20 mass and the heaviness potential of the
21 design, but, frankly, I think it's
22 beautiful. I think it's a modern take on,
23 you know, what looks like the historical
24 character of the neighborhood. And you all
25 can continue to debate the architectural

1 components, but I do agree that at some
2 point you're now creating precedent for an
3 overly bureaucratic process, when the
4 homeowners have tried to engage with
5 stakeholders in the community, for which I
6 am one.

7 And so this is just to show support,
8 and I hope that if there's a motion to deny
9 this design request, that you all can move
10 to kind of a mutually amicable resolution,
11 that is efficient and takes everyone's
12 views and addresses everyone's concerns
13 adequately.

14 Thank you so much for your time and for
15 staying very late. We appreciate your
16 service.

17 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

18 Mr. Durana, you have a motion?

19 MR. DURANA: I make a motion to approve
20 the current design.

21 MS. SPAIN: I'll second.

22 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Mr. Durana, and
23 Ms. Spain seconds.

24 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Are there any
25 conditions with the approval?

1 MR. DURANA: No.

2 MS. BACHE-WIIG: No.

3 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Bache-Wigg --

4 MR. MAXWELL: Wait.

5 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Can we add like that
6 they would work with Staff on some of the
7 details, because I think the devil is in
8 the details? I know that the tweaking may
9 be overdone, but I think, because it's a
10 neighborhood that deserves just some
11 tweaking to make sure that we're being, you
12 know, as sensitive as possible to the
13 neighborhood, can we put that as a
14 condition, that they will address some of
15 the -- with Staff and let them move ahead?

16 MR. DURANA: I mean, I think the one
17 you have now, versus what they started
18 with, shows all of that, that they've done
19 that, but, I mean, if you guys -- I don't
20 know, I just think it's more -- it leaves
21 room for interpretation. You know, I think
22 we need to be clear about what we want in
23 the design, because, if not, they're going
24 to go change it more, and then present to
25 the Board of Architects, and the Board of

1 Architects is going to say, "No, we don't
2 like it like that. We want you to go back
3 to this." And then we're back to this
4 again.

5 I mean, I'd rather not add any
6 amendments. Let's try to pass it like
7 that, and let's see. If not, we'll change
8 it.

9 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. We have a motion
10 and a second.

11 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Bache-Wigg?

12 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Can we go back and put
13 a condition just to have them tweak it?

14 MR. GARCIA-PONS: He said no.

15 MS. BACHE-WIIG: So I have to say yes
16 or no?

17 THE SECRETARY: Yes.

18 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes. I hope, though,
19 they tweak it with Staff.

20 THE SECRETARY; Is that a yes?

21 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes. It is a yes.

22 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

23 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes. And I would
24 encourage the architect to reach out to the
25 Lola B. Walker Community.

1 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

2 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

3 THE SECRETARY; Mr. Maxwell?

4 MR. MAXWELL: Yes.

5 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain?

6 MS. SPAIN: Yes.

7 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Fullerton?

8 MR. FULLERTON: Yes, with the same
9 encouragement.

10 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Durana?

11 MR. DURANA: Yes. And I would say to
12 the architect, if you can, out of good
13 faith, you know, please try to coordinate
14 with Warren and even maybe one of the
15 members of the Association, just because I
16 think -- I have a feeling that they haven't
17 seen this, because this is a really
18 beautiful design and I think it's
19 respectful to the neighborhood and to the
20 design and the architecture and the history
21 of it.

22 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

23 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

24 THE SECRETARY: The motion passes.

25 MR. MENENDEZ: All right.

1 MR. MAXWELL: Thank you all.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

3 Next, Case File COA (SP) 2022-037; An
4 application for the issuance of a Special
5 Certificate of Appropriateness for the
6 property at 1800 Le Jeune Road, a Local
7 Historic Landmark, legally described as Lot
8 3, Block 1, Pilafian Properties, according
9 to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat
10 Book 169, at Page 5 of the Public Records
11 of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The
12 application requests after the fact design
13 approval for the removal of barrel tile
14 coping from the auxillary structure.

15 MR. SALCEDO: Thank you very much, all
16 of you, for approving our plan. I'm just
17 so excited, and come over and see it.
18 We'll have an open house. Thank you.

19 MS. BACHE-WIIG: It's beautiful.
20 Congratulation.

21 MR. FULLERTON: Thanks for stick around
22 for five hours.

23 MS. SALCEDO: Thank you. I'm excited at
24 the beautiful home and living in Florida.

25 MR. FULLERTON: Thank you.

1 MR. MAXWELL: Thank you.

2 MS. BACHE-WIIG: That's great.

3 MR. FULLERTON: Good luck.

4 MR. SALCEDO: Thank you.

5 MS. KAUTZ: So this is the location map
6 of the property. This was the home of
7 James Girtman, a Miami pioneer. He raised
8 the initial funds to build Le Jeune Road,
9 that you can see his house directly fronts.
10 This property was designated as a Local
11 Historic Landmark in February of 2007.

12 So this is a circa 1940s photo of the
13 house. When it was built, it was outside
14 of Coral Gables. It was on Girtman's farm
15 property, which is now known as Coral
16 Groves, when it was platted and brought
17 into the City.

18 So the gist of this is that the --
19 there's a roof permit for the property, for
20 the auxillary structure. You can see a
21 2007 photo in the top left, and prior to
22 the installation of the tile in 2022.

23 The drawings that were submitted with
24 the roof application didn't show any
25 engagement with the parapet in any way, and

1 what's now there is this, with an aluminum
2 cap and the barrel tile coping has been
3 removed, even though the permit was
4 approved with the condition that it was to
5 remain.

6 We asked them to put it back. The
7 homeowner chose to ask you all to let them
8 leave it off.

9 MR. DURANA: If you can leave the photo up.

10 MS. KAUTZ: Yes.

11 MR. MOLINA: Good evening, everybody.
12 This is my first time here. This has been
13 a very entertaining evening. I've learned
14 a lot.

15 My name is Xavier Molina. I'm the
16 roofing contractor, which we pulled the
17 permit. I'm a licensed roofing contractor,
18 a licensed building contractor. We did
19 pull the permit for this project and
20 performed the work, as stated.

21 We are seeking a request for an after
22 the fact approval to remove the coping
23 tile. The homeowner has requested to
24 remove the coping tile from the structure.
25 On the document in your case file, it

1 states our application was erroneous,
2 because we did not mention the coping tile
3 to be removed, and that is correct, to an
4 extent.

5 The application is correct, because in
6 this particular photo, if you look at it,
7 we detailed the back end of it and it just
8 didn't mention the coping. So this is an
9 open end. So this roof actually is -- has
10 the parapet on three sides, and one side,
11 it's open end. On that open end is like a
12 Mansard styled overhang, where the flat
13 tile just butts up flat against to, because
14 of the structure of this property.

15 The structure itself is sloped, so it
16 does have a low slope to it. It does have
17 positive drainage. That's nothing we
18 created. The structure itself has it. As
19 a result of that, if you can see in this
20 photo at the very top middle, where the
21 parapet actually begins, on that open end,
22 it's only about three inches, and, then,
23 obviously, as it slopes, it gets larger.

24 With that being said, I'm going to get
25 to a few points here. The side that faces

1 Madeira Avenue, that's the side that's
2 open, because this house is a corner house,
3 between Le Jeune and Madeira, and the only
4 accessible entrance is Madeira. There is
5 no access on Le Jeune. It's closed off.
6 It's got shrubs and the enclosure of the
7 property, so the access is actually off of
8 Madeira. Actually, if you search the
9 property, it's 405 Madeira. I guess the
10 plat says 1800 Le Jeune.

11 The structure in question, like it was
12 mentioned, is not the main structure of the
13 house. It's the back southwest auxillary
14 structure of the property. Upon removal of
15 the existing roofing system, the existing
16 membrane was tucked underneath the coping
17 cap. So in order for us to remove the
18 membrane correctly and to properly finish
19 that, we had to remove the coping tile. As
20 a result, that's where the coping tile
21 started to be removed.

22 Now, Florida RES 1-11, and I have it
23 here, it's RES 1117.2.2, the roofing base
24 flashing at a roof to wall juncture needs
25 to be a minimum of eight inches. So I

1 don't have that on the top left corner. I
2 have to wrap my membrane up above. I have
3 to remove the roofing tile in order to do
4 that, to seal it and flash it properly,
5 which resulted in us having to remove the
6 coping tile.

7 So, like I said, it has the three
8 tiles. We did proceed to call our building
9 inspections. We passed all of our
10 inspections. We got historical to come do
11 that, and that's when it got flagged, and
12 we failed our final historical because of
13 the coping cap removal.

14 One of the interesting things to note,
15 I did see -- I have a copy of our actual
16 permit that we got issued here, the
17 perforated copy. On our copy, that we
18 picked up from the City, our perforated
19 copy does not have the stamp of the
20 Historical Board mentioning of the coping
21 tile. So that was an oversight, on our
22 side, too, because it's not there. It was
23 e-mailed to us and then we see where it
24 specifically said, "Coping tile to remain,"
25 but it's not on our field copy that we

1 picked, our perforated copy from the City.

2 Regardless, with that said, even if I
3 wanted to put the coping cap tile back on,
4 by Code, I can't -- there's no -- it would
5 fail. From a pitch standpoint, the minimum
6 requirement for a roof pitch to put tile is
7 two and twelve. This is a straight flat,
8 zero and twelve, and it wouldn't meet the
9 wind uplift pressure requirement on that,
10 for the method of tile attachment, the way
11 the tile has to be attached to that. So I
12 can't put it back. I mean, I can try to,
13 but it just wouldn't meet any Code
14 requirement. Two, that there is no Code
15 requirement or Code approval for the coping
16 cap application -- excuse me, tile on top
17 of the coping.

18 MS. KAUTZ: So I spoke with the
19 Building Official and the parapet coping is
20 purely decorative. So there is no pitch
21 requirement. There is no uplift
22 requirement. It's decorative. There is no
23 issue with the application in that way.
24 Whether or not you can use it with this
25 system that you have installed is another

1 question.

2 MS. SPAIN: Did you get a Zoning
3 inspection? Did this pass Zoning, the
4 inspection?

5 MR. MOLINA: We have passed our roofing
6 final and zoning final. We're just waiting
7 for historical final.

8 MS. SPAIN: That type of coping is
9 allowed by zoning? Wow.

10 MR. MOLINA: So we've pulled multiple
11 -- we've done plenty of roof permits here
12 in the City and we've done many parapets
13 where the tile is -- you know, we specify
14 specifically that the coping cap tile is
15 off and -- or we're doing a coping cap or
16 we do a two Brad nailer, we do a strip or
17 we do a trip edge or something to make sure
18 that we create a water tight seal.

19 One of the things that I have
20 encountered myself is, the cause for a lot
21 of these structures to deteriorate,
22 especially at the parapet, are these coping
23 cap tiles. They sit at the top and then
24 there's no positive drainage. It
25 deteriorates the membrane, goes to the

1 structural concrete and now we've got
2 spalling on the concrete or you've got
3 issues leaking into the structure, because
4 these tiles are placed on top of these
5 coping caps.

6 I know aesthetically they look
7 fantastic. I agree. You know, they add to
8 the aesthetics of the home, but
9 functionality, from my perspective, as a
10 roofing contractor, trying to provide a
11 water tight system, it's just very
12 difficult to be able to provide a water
13 tight system that we can warranty and the
14 manufacturer can warranty with the
15 membranes -- sitting tile on top of that
16 coping cap.

17 MR. MENENDEZ: Any questions?

18 Anybody in the audience who would like
19 to speak on this? A lot of nos.

20 MR. MAXWELL: They all went home.

21 MR. MOLINA: I'll just close with this
22 one statement, sorry.

23 I just ask that the Board consider an
24 after the fact modification to allow the
25 roofing system to remain intact, without

1 insulation of the coping tiles, allowing
2 the roof to be Florida Building Code
3 compliant and also allowing the
4 installation of the roofing membrane to not
5 contribute to the deterioration of the
6 roofing membrane that was just nearly
7 installed, further deteriorating the
8 structure in the future.

9 MS. SPAIN: Can I make a motion?

10 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes, you can.

11 MS. SPAIN: I'd like to make a motion
12 to deny the after the fact design approval
13 for the removal of the barrel tile coping
14 from the auxillary structure on the
15 property located at 1800 Le Jeune Road and
16 deny the issuance of a Special Certificate
17 of Appropriateness.

18 MR. FULLERTON: Second.

19 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Ms. Spain, and
20 Mr. Fullerton seconds.

21 MR. DURANA: I have one question for
22 the applicant.

23 MR. MENENDEZ: Sure.

24 MR. DURANA: If you were to originally
25 do this with the barrel tile edge, you

1 would have done a different system or what
2 exactly would you have done in the parapet?

3 MR. MOLINA: You can't. You have to
4 remove the tile, because of the way the
5 membrane is underneath --

6 (Simultaneous speaking.)

7 MR. DURANA: What do you do on -- like
8 on the other houses, because there's other
9 houses that have the carports with the
10 barrel tile on the parapet --

11 MR. MOLINA: Either (A) Those are
12 original and they haven't been re-roofed
13 yet, because at the time of re-roof, it has
14 to be addressed. Or sometimes they're just
15 a concrete pillar. Because what I have
16 seen also is, it's a concrete and then you
17 have tiles that are mortar -- yes, stucco
18 mortar bed on that. That's not this
19 situation. That is actually a roofing
20 membrane underneath the coping and I have
21 to remove that membrane in order to
22 properly go over that tile.

23 MR. DURANA: This is hard, because
24 Historic is --

25 MR. MOLINA: I'm here because the

1 homeowner requested to remove the tile and
2 the homeowner is requesting to not put
3 those tiles back on.

4 MR. DURANA: I mean, this comes to us a
5 lot, and like the barrel tiles are a very
6 important feature.

7 MR. MOLINA: This particular structure,
8 we did roof barrel tile in the lower
9 section. That's barrel tile. The
10 overhang, we didn't touch, either. That
11 stayed barrel tile. Everything stayed like
12 on the top left -- sorry, the top of this,
13 that Mansard overhang, that remained. We
14 didn't touch it.

15 On the bottom left, there is also a --

16 MR. MENENDEZ: So, Mr. Durana, how do
17 you vote?

18 MR. DURANA: I guess we have to call
19 the roll, right?

20 MR. MENENDEZ: She did.

21 THE SECRETARY: I haven't yet.

22 MR. MENENDEZ: You did not? I thought
23 you did.

24 THE SECRETARY: No, I had not started.

25 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay.

1 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

2 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I'm sorry, what was
3 the motion, again?

4 THE SECRETARY: To deny.

5 MR. MAXWELL: Motion to deny.

6 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.

7 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

8 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

9 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

10 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

11 THE SECRETARY: Okay. I'm sorry.

12 Mr. Maxwell?

13 MR. MAXWELL: Yes.

14 THE SECRETARY; Ms. Spain?

15 MS. SPAIN: Yes.

16 THE SECRETARY; Mr. Fullerton?

17 MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

18 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Durana?

19 MR. DURANA: Yes.

20 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Bache-Wigg?

21 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Mrs. Bache-Wigg says
22 yes.

23 THE SECRETARY: I'm listening to
24 myself. I'm sorry.

25 MS. BACHE-WIIG: I'm just kidding.

1 THE SECRETARY; Ms. Bache-Wigg?

2 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes.

3 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

4 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

5 THE SECRETARY: Okay. The motion passes.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: Next, Case File COA (SP)
7 2022-038; An application for the issuance
8 of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness
9 for the property at Balboa Plaza, a Local
10 Historic Landmark located at the
11 intersections of Coral Way (a Local and
12 State Designated Highway and a contributing
13 resource within the "Coral Way Historic
14 District"), De Soto Boulevard, South
15 Greenway Drive, and Anderson Road. The
16 application requests design approval for
17 the alteration of the historic street grid
18 and the introduction of a vehicular
19 roundabout.

20 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Mr. Chair, before we
21 get started, is somebody from Miami-Dade
22 County here?

23 MR. ADAMS: That's what I was just
24 going to say. I don't see anyone here.

25 MS. SPAIN: I don't think we should

1 hear it.

2 MR. GARCIA-PONS: So if I could make a
3 motion to defer the item, as requested by
4 Staff, without presentation? If the City
5 Attorney, can we just --

6 MR. MAXWELL: I'll second your motion.

7 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I want to hear from
8 the City Attorney. Do we need to hear the
9 presentation?

10 MR. CEBALLOS: Is the question whether
11 you can hear the presentation without them
12 being here or if you can defer it?

13 MR. GARCIA-PONS: If we can defer it
14 right now.

15 MR. CEBALLOS: You can make a motion to
16 defer it. That's fine.

17 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Mr. Chair, would you
18 entertain a motion for deferral?

19 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

20 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I'd like to make a
21 motion for deferral per Staff comments.

22 MR. MAXWELL: Second.

23 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Mr. Adams, do you
24 want a date certain for this?

25 MR. ADAMS: Yes, please.

1 MR. GARCIA-PONS: What date certain
2 would you prefer?

3 MR. ADAMS: Next meeting.

4 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I would like to defer
5 it to the next meeting, per Staff

6 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Maxwell seconds.

7 MS. SPAIN: Did you advertise this?
8 Did you send notices out on that at all?

9 MR. ADAMS: I believe so, yes, and I
10 was in touch with them last week.

11 MS. SPAIN: Do you want us to not defer
12 it, but to continue it, so that he doesn't
13 have to send the notices out again?

14 MR. GARCIA-PONS: If I defer it to a
15 date certain, I understand that you don't
16 have to notice.

17 MS. SPAIN: Oh, is that true?

18 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I can use the word
19 continue if you'd like.

20 MR. CEBALLOS: That is correct. If he
21 defers to a time certain, you do not need
22 to renotice.

23 MS. SPAIN: Perfect.

24 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I would like to
25 continue it to the next meeting, which is

1 the same.

2 MS. SPAIN: Okay. So there's no notice
3 -- no mailed notices, then it doesn't
4 matter.

5 THE SECRETARY: Okay. Mr. Durana?

6 MR. DURANA: Yes.

7 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

8 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

9 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Maxwell?

10 MR. MAXWELL: Yes.

11 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain?

12 MS. SPAIN: Yes.

13 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Fullerton?

14 MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

15 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Bache-Wigg?

16 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes.

17 THE SECRETARY; Mr. Garcia-Pons?

18 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.

19 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

20 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

21 THE SECRETARY; Motion passes.

22 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Next Case File
23 COA (SP) 2023-001; An application for the
24 issuance of a Special Certificate of
25 Appropriateness for the property at 311

1 Romano Avenue, a Local Historic Landmark,
2 legally described as Lots 17 to 19
3 inclusive, Block 1, Coral Gables Coconut
4 Grove Section Part One, according to the
5 Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 14,
6 at Page 25 of the Public Records of
7 Miami-Dade County, Florida. The
8 application requests design approval for
9 the demolition of the existing garage,
10 addition and alterations to the residence
11 and sitework. Variances have also been
12 requested from Article 2, Section 2-101 D
13 (4) c and Article 10, Section D-102 (sic)
14 4a of the Coral Gables Zoning Code for the
15 minimum rear setback and minimum carport
16 dimensions.

17 MR. ADAMS: Okay. The application is
18 for design approval for demolition of the
19 existing garage, addition and alterations
20 to the residence and sitework.

21 The single-family home at 311 Romano
22 was designed by Samuel Ross Wyvill, built
23 in 1925, Mediterranean Revival style and it
24 was designated at the December 21st, 2022
25 meeting.

1 And two variances are requested, as
2 noted.

3 Demolition of the 906 square foot
4 existing garage; an addition of
5 construction of a two-story 1,793 square
6 foot addition to the northeast corner of
7 the residence, construction of a new
8 carport to the west elevation, installation
9 of new windows and pavers. To accommodate
10 the new addition at the northeast corner,
11 the applicant is requesting approval for
12 demolition of most of the existing garage.
13 The front and rear elevations of the garage
14 will remain and be incorporated into the
15 addition. The garage is original to the
16 historic house, but has been altered.

17 Construction of the addition will be of
18 concrete block and stucco, with a hip roof,
19 Spanish tile exposed outriggers. The
20 proposed windows appear to be single
21 casement with clear glass, raised muntins
22 and sills. And the first floor, there will
23 be -- contains stairs to the second floor,
24 a kitchen, dining room, bedroom, laundry,
25 cabana bathroom and covered loggia. The

1 second floor will have two bedrooms, master
2 bathroom, a bathroom and a reading area.

3 The primary facade faces south onto
4 Romano. The two-story addition is attached
5 to the northeast corner of the historic
6 structure and it will be visible from the
7 street. It will be setback approximately
8 27 feet 7 inches from the front facade and
9 will be partially obscured by the new
10 carport. And the first floor will
11 contained a wall, with a decorative water
12 fountain, which will be visible through the
13 proposed new carport. Again, casement
14 windows on the second floor, and the front
15 elevation of the carport will be flushed
16 with the existing front facade of the
17 historic house.

18 Construction will be of concrete block
19 and stucco, with a flat roof, with Spanish
20 tile shed element to the front. The
21 proposed alterations to the existing
22 historic structure here comprise the
23 installation of new impact windows, similar
24 to those on the addition and the
25 installation of decorative window grills.

1 The east elevation, again, casement
2 windows, French doors. On the east
3 elevation of the existing house it will
4 have a decorative metal grill over the
5 porch arched opening. The rear elevation,
6 again, similar windows. The windows in the
7 existing house, again, will be replaced.
8 On the west elevation, similar windows,
9 and, again, the windows on the existing
10 house will be replaced. Siteworks are
11 limited to the installation of brick pavers
12 to extend the pool deck and crushed shell
13 along the west, on the edge of the new
14 addition.

15 Two variances have been requested.
16 Article 2, Section 2-101 D (4), and this is
17 a variance to allow the proposed addition
18 to have a rear setback of approximately
19 four feet two inches versus ten feet. The
20 allowable rear setback for single-family
21 residences is ten feet. The rear setback
22 of the existing first floor rear addition
23 is four feet two inches. This was
24 permitted in 1929. The proposal retains
25 that rear wall, which will be incorporated

1 into the first floor of the addition. The
2 second floor of the addition will meet the
3 required ten-foot setback.

4 The second variance from Article 10,
5 Section 10-102, has to do with the required
6 interior length of a one-car carport and
7 the required interior length is 22 feet.
8 The applicant is requesting 20 feet 6
9 inches. The carport has been designed to
10 respect the location of the existing
11 windows in the historic structure.

12 And it was approved by the Board of
13 Architects on September 29, 2022, with two
14 comments, six-inch overhang with exposed
15 rafter tails to emulate the existing front
16 porch and use casement window profile.

17 The conclusion is, the proposed
18 addition is visible from the right of way,
19 but setback 27 feet 7 inches from the front
20 facade on the location of the existing
21 garage. The front and rear walls of the
22 garage and existing addition will be
23 retained; however, the east and west walls
24 will be demolished. The garage has been
25 altered in the front, as the garage door

1 has been replaced with a window and
2 pedestrian access door and on the rear, as
3 an addition has been added. Ideally, the
4 proposed addition would be placed to the
5 rear of the existing structure; however,
6 this is not possible due to the pool.
7 There is space for an addition to the east
8 elevation of the structure; however, the
9 septic tank is located here, and this would
10 likely lead to a negative impact on the
11 historic structure.

12 Based on this, the demolition of the
13 east and west walls of the original garage,
14 much of which is a later addition, can be
15 supported. The Board may wish to consider
16 the addition of a full garage door in place
17 of the proposed wall-mounted fountain to
18 retain a garage appearance. The carport is
19 set flush with the existing front facade.
20 The carport can be supported; however, it's
21 recommended that it be setback slightly
22 from the front facade, but if not, if the
23 Board supports this condition, the
24 requested variance for the interior length
25 may have to be adjusted.

1 The proposed design of the new addition
2 is in keeping with the style of the
3 structure. The proposed windows for the
4 addition can be supported; however, the
5 windows in the historic structure shall
6 match the original double-casement windows.
7 Staff does not support the addition of the
8 decorative metal window grills on the front
9 porch; therefore, the proposed addition is
10 in keeping with the standards. Although
11 visible from the right-of-way, the addition
12 is setback. The existing historic
13 structure is being retained, apart from a
14 small portion of the northeast corner. The
15 addition is compatible in design, massing
16 and scale with the existing structure. It
17 can be removed in the future.

18 Staff does have a number of conditions
19 there. The variances meet all of the
20 requirements; therefore, Staff supports
21 granting the requested variances. And that
22 is it.

23 MS. BLOCK: Hello. I'm Alisa Block,
24 the architect of record.

25 Do you have any questions for me?

1 Let me go through the PowerPoint.

2 So here I shows pictures of the
3 existing condition. This is to show you
4 the full width of the lot, where we have
5 the existing one story garage structure on
6 the west side, that is setback 57 feet --
7 I'm sorry, it is setback 59 feet 7 inches
8 from the front --

9 THE SECRETARY; Could you talk into the
10 mike, please?

11 MS. BLOCK: -- 59 feet 7 inches from
12 the front property line. That's the
13 existing garage structure. And that is
14 where the two-story structure will also be
15 set. So there is going to be the one story
16 carport, either at the front facade or set
17 in, perhaps, a couple of inches for, you
18 know, a definition of the new carport, but
19 the two-story structure is set
20 substantially back from the front property
21 line.

22 The other thing that you see is, there
23 is an empty space on the east side;
24 however, that is taken up by the septic
25 tank and drain field area, which we will

1 need to expand for the additional bedroom.
2 You know, so the existing one story
3 structure in the front, the main house,
4 will remain pretty much intact.

5 Here's another view, a little off to
6 the side, so you can see that that -- you
7 will perceive that two-story structure kind
8 of, you know -- you know, very far from the
9 street elevation. Here's another view
10 closer to the west, showing the three
11 windows on the west side that would be
12 impacted by the carport. Therefore, we
13 can't have the carport at 22 feet deep or
14 it wouldn't keep the third window.

15 Also, you can see -- there you go, the
16 existing south facade of the garage does
17 not have a garage door. It currently has
18 an -- A-300 -- currently has a French door,
19 steps, and a window, in place of the
20 original garage door.

21 Just another one showing the setback of
22 the original garage.

23 This is a photo of the house across the
24 street, where some substantial additions
25 were made, that don't seem to be very

1 sensitive to the historic structure. The
2 two-story structure is close to the front
3 property line, doesn't seem to harmonize
4 with the existing historic structure very
5 well and just seems very large and
6 imposing, in contrast to what we are
7 proposing.

8 This is our survey.

9 The original drawings, the garage
10 building was -- the garage structure was
11 altered in 1929, with the addition of the
12 additional area shown on my Sheet A-200.1,
13 which I will show you. These are more
14 pictures of the other areas of the house
15 and condition that are, you know, intact,
16 such as the barrel tile and parapet, shed
17 roof, barrel tile.

18 MS. SPAIN: Good call.

19 MS. BLOCK; The front porch is still
20 screened in and will remain screened in. I
21 mean, we're proposing the metal work,
22 because it looks a little blank. You know,
23 we love having the screened porch and we
24 want to keep it, but it just looks like
25 maybe it's missing something, but that's

1 just a design --

2 THE SECRETARY: You are not speaking
3 into the mike.

4 MS. BLOCK: It's a design sort of
5 preference.

6 Here's just another highlighted version
7 of the -- the yellow is the original
8 structure and the pink was added on, per
9 the permit, in 1929. The loggia that is
10 adjacent to the pool was added on at some
11 other time, and is not -- you know, it's
12 much more recent.

13 Here is our new site plan showing the
14 existing house, the addition, keeping the
15 front -- the south facade of the two-story
16 addition and the north facade of the
17 two-story addition at the same location.
18 We would like to keep the north facade at
19 the 4 foot 2 setback, just as what's
20 existing, and then the second floor will
21 step back to the 10-foot required setback.

22 There are Zoning diagrams showing the
23 various lot coverage details that the
24 Zoning Department requires for variances,
25 four pages of these.

1 Let's see. I made a note on mine
2 earlier -- I made some notes in my free
3 time during this meeting. Let's see.

4 Okay. Our ground area coverage on this
5 sheet is -- this is, maximum allowed, 35
6 percent. We have 26 percent. And on the
7 next sheet, maximum square foot floor area,
8 we are providing 77 percent of the maximum
9 allowable. So, in the lower right corner,
10 2,709 is 77 percent of the maximum
11 allowable -- maximum square foot area.

12 Let's see. Here's our A-200 showing
13 the first floor plan with the carport and
14 the conditions of the new structure and the
15 existing. The second floor plan, where we
16 step back, per the Board of Architects'
17 recommendation, instead of -- I had a
18 different condition at the north side, and
19 we provided like a shed-roofed over that
20 extended first floor area, so that it
21 breaks down the massing of the house, and
22 then we have a terrace on the east side,
23 above the loggia below, and the existing
24 house remains thoroughly intact.

25 This eave detail is per the Board of

1 Architects' recommendations to provide sort
2 of a thinner, more elegant historical type
3 eave detail for the addition. And here are
4 the various elevations. The -- you know,
5 the railing -- you know, the railing final
6 detail is to be determined, but we will
7 have a metal railing above the beam and
8 columns of the loggia below.

9 The rear elevation, we see the
10 shed-roofed breaking down the massing in
11 the back, and then we have the west
12 elevation, which is 5 feet from -- you
13 know, it's at the setback.

14 That's it.

15 MS. SPAIN: Alisa, have you read the
16 Staff conditions and do you have any
17 problems with what they're asking for?

18 MS. BLOCK: I don't. I don't have any
19 issues with that. I would prefer to
20 have -- I mean, I would prefer to have the
21 wall fountain at the south facade of the,
22 let's say, garage wall, because there has
23 not been a garage there. I think it's an
24 elegant detail from when you look through
25 the carport. However, if necessary, we

1 could provide that sort of garage door type
2 facade.

3 I think, for the most part, you know,
4 everything is acceptable, depending on what
5 you all propose that we do.

6 MS. SPAIN: And if you set back the
7 proposed carport like they're asking, does
8 that change the variance?

9 MS. BLOCK: It does, because if we set
10 it back two inches --

11 MS. SPAIN: So it would be like 20,
12 4 --

13 MS. BLOCK: Sorry?

14 MS. SPAIN: It would be 20 foot 4
15 inches instead of the 20 foot 6 inches or
16 something?

17 MS. BLOCK: Yeah. If it could be 20
18 foot 4, that would be the variance.

19 MS. SPAIN: Is that okay with you?

20 MR. ADAMS: Yeah.

21 MS. BLOCK; Setting back two inches --

22 MR. ADAMS: If that's okay with the
23 Board, we can amend the variance, and
24 you're okay with working with us on the
25 windows?

1 MS. BLOCK: Yes. I mean, I think we
2 have an issue with egress in many areas, so
3 I don't know -- I mean, you know, we could
4 do that, but then in some areas we would
5 have double casements and in some areas you
6 have single. Does that --

7 MR. ADAMS: Yeah, because we
8 understand you need the egress windows, but
9 we can work with you.

10 MS. SPAIN: You can do the muntins, so
11 that it looks like double. So you can do
12 the thick one in the center, so you don't
13 realize it unless you really look.

14 MR. ADAMS: And, again, you're trying
15 to keep it to the back as possible, so
16 they're off the front facade.

17 MS. BLOCK: Right. I mean, the other
18 thing is that, if we -- I mean, I haven't
19 mapped it out on the plans yet, but if
20 there is a way to keep it to one facade,
21 can we do it without having a thicker
22 muntins in the middle or do we need to do
23 that? Is that required?

24 MR. MENENDEZ: Work with Staff on that,
25 right?

1 MR. ADAMS: You can work with us on it.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: Yeah.

3 MS. BLOCK: I think we can show you
4 elevations with variance options.

5 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Mr. Garcia-Pons,
6 do you have a question?

7 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I have two questions
8 for Staff. One is the side setback. It
9 says it's five feet. Is that for a
10 two-story building at whatever length?

11 MR. ADAMS: Yeah. They've worked at
12 length with Zoning on this, I believe.
13 This was one of the issues in getting it
14 here. It was going back and forward
15 between Zoning for, I don't know how many
16 times, but you cleared -- because we
17 specifically said, make sure that you check
18 with Zoning exactly what variances you
19 require and that was done.

20 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I just want to triple
21 verify from Staff, because the architect
22 has drawn it, five-foot setbacks, the
23 two-story within the side setback. I just
24 want to make sure that is correct, because
25 I'm not a Zoning person.

1 MS. SPAIN: Unless they changed it, it
2 has been in the past.

3 MR. FULLERTON: That's right.

4 MR. GARCIA-PONS: One question with
5 regards to the last comment, which is the
6 fountain versus the door.

7 MR. ADAMS: I'll leave that up to the
8 Board as a suggestion.

9 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Then I don't have a
10 preference either way. I just want to
11 state that, for whoever the mover is going
12 to be.

13 THE HOMEOWNER: We do. We don't want a
14 garage door. We want a water feature.

15 MR. FULLERTON: Is it a requirement or
16 is there somewhere written that they'll
17 need to change the stucco texture to bring
18 the new and the old --

19 MR. MENENDEZ: Yeah, that's there.

20 MS. SPAIN: That's part of the
21 conditions.

22 MR. FULLERTON: That little two-inch
23 setback will th help you in that regard.

24 MS. BLOCK: Since this has be
25 texture -- I mean, do we have to have

1 smooth versus texture or could it be two
2 different textures of --

3 MR. ADAMS: Different people do it
4 different ways. Some people seem to like
5 one rough and the new completely smooth.
6 Other people go for a more subtle
7 difference.

8 MS. BLOCK: I think, if they reset it
9 back a little, I don't mind it being smooth
10 versus that texture.

11 MR. FULLERTON: So there's a textured
12 stucco there now on the building.

13 THE HOMEOWNER: Depends on the definition.

14 MR. FULLERTON: That's where it gets
15 kind of tricky, when you have new abutting
16 old at the same line.

17 MR. MENENDEZ: Well, I'm entertaining
18 any motions, if there are no other
19 questions.

20 MR. DURANA: I guess my only question,
21 the roof tile, is it barrel or Spanish S?

22 MR. FULLERTON: Barrel.

23 MR. DURANA: Barrel, right? Because it
24 says Spanish tile.

25 MR. FULLERTON: Yeah, Spanish barrel.

1 MR. DURANA: I would make sure -- put a
2 note, because your subcontractors, when
3 they bid on it, make sure that they're
4 bidding barrel tile, because there's a
5 difference and people have come to the
6 Board and been rejected after the fact.

7 MR. FULLERTON: There's no such thing
8 as S tile in Coral Gables.

9 MR. GARCIA-PONS: So I make a motion --
10 I'm going to make three motions. The first
11 motion is to approve with Conditions 1
12 through 6, not Condition Number 7, as
13 proposed by Staff, and adding the
14 clarification, Number 7, that it's a
15 two-piece barrel tile, would be the
16 condition that I would add to the Staff
17 requests.

18 The design proposal for the demolition
19 of the existing garage, addition and
20 alterations to the residence sitework on
21 the property of 311 Romano Avenue and
22 approve the issuance of a Special
23 Certificate of Appropriateness with the
24 conditions as stated.

25 MR. ADAMS: And for clarification, a

1 two-inch setback for the carport?

2 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes, correct. And
3 the two-inch setback for the carport.

4 MR. MENENDEZ: Do we have a second?

5 MR. MAXWELL: Second.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Mr. Maxwell
7 seconds.

8 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Durana?

9 MR. DURANA: Yes.

10 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain --

11 MR. DURANA: I just want to let them
12 know, if I can, just please, windows, roof
13 tile, stucco consult with Staff before the
14 contractor gets ahead of himself and does
15 something wrong. So just I wanted to make
16 that very clear, because it's been --
17 lately it's come to us a lot after the
18 fact, and you'll save yourself a big
19 headache.

20 MR. FULLERTON: Good point.

21 MR. DURANA: If in doubt, just ask
22 Warren.

23 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Durana?

24 MR. DURANA: Yes.

25 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain?

1 MS. SPAIN: Yes.

2 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Fullerton?

3 MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

4 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

5 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

6 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Bache-Wigg?

7 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes.

8 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

9 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.

10 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Maxwell?

11 MR. MAXWELL: Yes.

12 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

13 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

14 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I'd like to make a
15 second motion, to approve a variance to
16 allow the proposed addition to have a rear
17 setback of approximately 4 feet 2 inches.

18 MR. MAXWELL: Second.

19 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Mr. Maxwell seconds.

20 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain?

21 MS. SPAIN: Yes.

22 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Fullerton?

23 MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

24 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Bache-Wigg?

25 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes.

1 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Durana?
2 MR. DURANA: Yes.
3 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Garcia-Pons?
4 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.
5 THE SECRETARY; Mr. Ehrenhaft?
6 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.
7 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Maxwell?
8 MR. MAXWELL: Yes.
9 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?
10 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.
11 THE SECRETARY: Motion passes.
12 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I'd like to make a
13 third motion to approve a variance to allow
14 the interior length of the proposed one car
15 carport to be 20 feet 4 inches.
16 MR. MENENDEZ: Second?
17 MR. MAXWELL: Second.
18 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Maxwell seconds.
19 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Spain?
20 MS. SPAIN: Yes.
21 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Durana?
22 MR. DURANA: Yes.
23 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Bache-Wigg?
24 MS. BACHE-WIIG: Yes.
25 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

1 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.

2 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

3 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

4 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Maxwell?

5 MR. MAXWELL: Yes.

6 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Fullerton?

7 MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

8 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

9 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

10 THE SECRETARY: Motion passes.

11 MR. MENENDEZ: Great.

12 MR. MAXWELL: Thank you.

13 MR. MENENDEZ: Congratulations.

14 MS. SPAIN: Thank you so much for
15 waiting all of that time.

16 MS. BLOCK: Thank you all for your
17 time. We appreciate it.

18 MR. MAXWELL: Thank you for waiting.

19 MR. MENENDEZ: Do we have any Old
20 Business, New Business?

21 MR. ADAMS: Any what, sorry?

22 MR. MENENDEZ: Old Business, New
23 Business.

24 MR. ADAMS: We have a list. No, I
25 think we're good.

1 MR. MAXWELL: A question, when we
2 review the Balboa Plaza next time, will we
3 be able to have input into that design?

4 MR. ADAMS: Here's the thing, the
5 Board have to -- we have several things,
6 which include preservation and safety and
7 everything else. This is a fairly major
8 alteration to the Historic Street Plan. My
9 recommendation for deferral was to allow
10 time for us to hopefully look at possible
11 other solutions without something so
12 drastic.

13 MS. SPAIN: You know, that was one of
14 the reasons we designated the plan, was
15 because of traffic engineers.

16 MR. ADAMS: Yeah. And so, you know,
17 again, you only make a recommendation to
18 the Commission. They approve final COA.
19 So, ultimately, whatever you recommendation
20 is, it would still go ahead to Commission.
21 I just felt that maybe -- we could maybe
22 see if there's any other solution, but,
23 again, I don't know if these are things
24 that are pushed through.

25 MS. SPAIN: I understand.

1 MR. ADAMS: So, it is a difficult one,
2 because you do have -- we have safety and
3 everything else. But if you have any
4 ideas -- Gus, the alteration to the street
5 plan, the item that was deferred, if the
6 Board have any suggestions, that I can sit
7 down with the applicants to suggest to
8 them, can we do that? If a Board Member
9 calls and says, "We know this application
10 is coming back next month, we know you want
11 to work with the applicants, here are some
12 suggestions," can we do that or can they
13 not --

14 MR. CEBALLOS: Can one of our Board
15 Members reach out to the County, is that
16 what you're saying?

17 MR. ADAMS; Reach out to me and say,
18 "Warren, I know you want to look at other
19 alternatives for this traffic circle.
20 Maybe you can suggest this to them, maybe
21 you can suggest this to them;" so can they
22 give me any ideas they may have prior to
23 going to the next --

24 MR. CEBALLOS: I mean, any Board Member
25 can reach out to you directly to discuss

1 things, but anything that's going to come
2 before this Board for a decision, I would
3 probably encourage you not to do it.

4 MR. ADAMS: Can they give me
5 recommendations of what they would like to
6 see individually, just by calling me?

7 MR. CEBALLOS: Once again, it's not a
8 Sunshine Law violation for them to call you
9 and talk to you about anything, but
10 anything that's coming before this Board, I
11 would recommend against it.

12 MR. ADAMS: Okay.

13 MR. MAXWELL: Hold on. Would you
14 clarify that again, Gus?

15 MS. SPAIN: He said it's probably not a
16 good idea.

17 I have a very quick question. The
18 first agenda item, the Garden, that went to
19 the Landmark Committee. Is that their
20 purview? Why was that taken to them?

21 MR. ADAMS: It was -- Bonnie Bolton
22 took it to them. She turned up at the
23 meeting and requested -- she turned up at
24 one meeting --

25 MS. SPAIN: That's not normal, with

1 designations, right?

2 MR. ADAMS: No. No, it's not a
3 requirement and it's not -- but the problem
4 was, Ms. Bolton turned up at one of the
5 meetings and asked for their support.

6 MS. SPAIN: I see.

7 MR. ADAMS: They then said, well, it's
8 difficult to do, if we haven't seen the
9 application --

10 MS. SPAIN: But designations are not
11 under their purview.

12 MR. ADAMS: No. No. It was purely a
13 support and it was --

14 MS. SPAIN: And what was the vote? Do
15 you remember?

16 MR. ADAMS: There were only five
17 members there and the vote was three to two
18 to support it. But, no, it's not
19 typical --

20 MR. MENENDEZ: Won't happen again,
21 right?

22 MR. ADAMS: Sorry?

23 MR. MENENDEZ: It won't happen again,
24 right?

25 MR. ADAMS: If someone turns up at a

1 Board and asks for support for something,
2 and you don't know they're going, can the
3 Board -- I mean, the Board entertained it.

4 MS. SPAIN: It's fine. I thought that
5 you had taken it to them.

6 MR. ADAMS: No. No. No.

7 MR. MENENDEZ: You know, it puts us in
8 a situation where another Board has already
9 approved it.

10 MR. ADAMS: And the two people who
11 were not in support of it, their concern
12 was that this is a Preservation Board item
13 and it hadn't been to you. So two of the
14 Board Members --

15 MS. SPAIN: I think it would have been
16 probably a good idea, whoever staffs that
17 Board, to say, "This is not appropriately
18 before you," but, you know -- anyhow --

19 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay. Any other items?

20 MR. EHRENHAFT: This --

21 MR. MENENDEZ: Mr. Ehrenhaft, he's got
22 something to say.

23 (Inaudible)

24 MR. MENENDEZ: Go ahead.

25 MR. EHRENHAFT: If we can return to the

1 roundabout, the street --

2 MR. CEBALLOS: I would just encourage
3 us not to continue discussing items that
4 are going to come back before this Board.
5 If the item wasn't heard, I would not
6 continue discussing it, especially if the
7 approval is going to continue to come back
8 to you.

9 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. I just had --

10 MR. CEBALLOS: If it's a high level
11 question, that's not specific to the
12 application, feel free, but it's my job to
13 kind of remind you.

14 MR. EHRENHAFT: Fine. I'll save it for
15 then, but there were a couple of
16 observations about the intersection.
17 That's all. Thank you.

18 MR. MENENDEZ: Do I have a motion to
19 adjourn?

20 MR. MAXWELL: Motion to adjourn.

21 MR. MENENDEZ: Do I have a second?

22 MS. SPAIN: Second.

23 MR. MENENDEZ: Okay.

24 THE SECRETARY: All in favor?

25 (The Board Members voted aye.)

1 (Thereupon, the meeting was adjourned at
2 10:00 p.m.)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF FLORIDA:

SS.

COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE:

I, NIEVES SANCHEZ, Court Reporter, and a Notary Public for the State of Florida at Large, do hereby certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the foregoing proceedings and that the transcript is a true and complete record of my stenographic notes.

DATED this 6th day of February, 2023.



NIEVES SANCHEZ