



COA (SP) 2022-025
October 19, 2022

Historical Resources &
Cultural Arts

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**STAFF REPORT
SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
FOR THE PROPERTY AT
817 OBISPO AVENUE
A CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE WITHIN
THE OBISPO AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Proposal: The applicant is requesting design approval for an addition and alterations to the residence. A variance has also been requested from Article 2, Section 2-101 D (4) b.i of the Coral Gables Zoning Code for the minimum side setback.

Architect: Rahal Architects, LLC

Owner: John and Asra Lee

Legal Description: Lot 15, Block 28, Coral Gables Section "B," according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 5, at Page 111 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Site Characteristics: The property is located on the north side of Obispo Avenue between Cortez Street and Pizarro Street. The primary façade faces south onto Obispo. The lot size is approximately 50 feet by 150 feet.

BACKGROUND/EXISTING CONDITIONS

In May of 2008, the "Obispo Avenue Historic District" was listed in the Coral Gables Register of Historic Places. It is comprised of residences abutting Obispo Avenue. City Founder George Merrick dedicated numerous portions of Coral Gables to lots and homes that could be affordable to the middle class. Obispo Avenue was an early street dedicated to this vision. Merrick had his architects design finely detailed Mediterranean Revival style homes on smaller lots to demonstrate that moderately-priced homes in Coral Gables would have the same quality of construction and aesthetic as the larger homes. The district boundaries are Cortez Street on the east and Ferdinand Street on the west.

817 Obispo Avenue is considered a Contributing Resource within the district. It was designed, built, and owned by the Warren E. Richards Company. City records indicate that Permit No. 1622 was issued October 14, 1925 for this residence. The residence next door at 821 Obispo Avenue was also permitted under the same architect-owner-builder as permit No. 1623. Alterations to the property have been minor and the overall historic integrity of the home has been maintained.

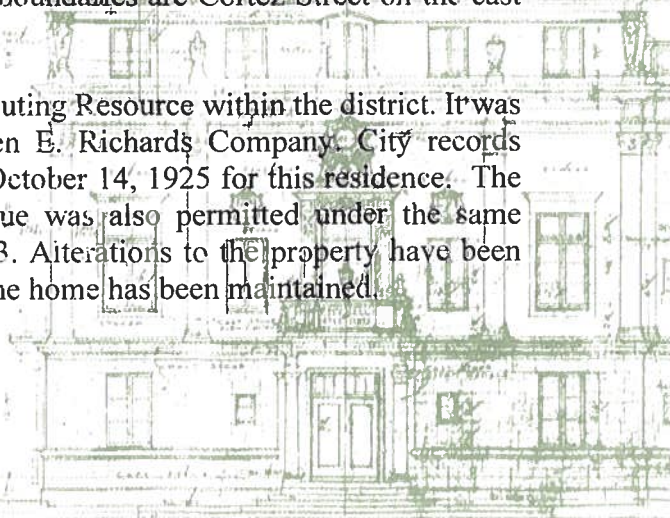




Figure 1: c.1940 photo

PROPOSAL

The applicant is requesting design approval for the construction of an approximately 275 SF addition to the northeast corner (rear) of the residence and some alterations to the existing window and door openings.

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

The following Standards have application in this matter:

9. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

STAFF OBSERVATIONS

The work proposed in the application consists of a 16'-2" x 17'-0" addition to the west side of the northeast corner of the residence. Placed behind the existing historic residence, the addition rises about a foot above the existing top of parapet. Under a flat roof, the addition comprises a master bedroom and walk-in closet. An existing bedroom will be reconfigured into a master bathroom and hallway.

To accommodate the addition, an existing bank of windows on the north (rear) facade will be removed and window opening on the east elevation will be resized. The elevations of the proposed addition are simple, but take their cues from Mediterranean Revival architecture. The parapet of

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the flat roof rises at the corners while the lower portions are topped with barrel tile coping. Windows are casement units with divided lites and protruding sills (which are depicted as less thick than the existing sills on the residence). Stucco is noted to have a texture that does not match the existing. To help facilitate the transition, a score line is being introduced on east and west elevations between the existing residence and the new addition. At the north (rear) façade of the addition, a pair of French doors without muntins lead out to a concrete landing and steps.

The proposed alterations to the residence consist of the conversion of a pair of windows on the north (rear) façade into a pair of French doors to provide access from the existing dining room to the rear yard. A concrete landing and steps will be provided. A west-facing window in the rear entry vestibule at the northwest corner of the residence is also proposed to be removed and the opening blocked up

VARIANCES

A variance has also been requested from Article 2, Section 2-101 D (4) b.i of the Coral Gables Zoning Code for the minimum side setback.

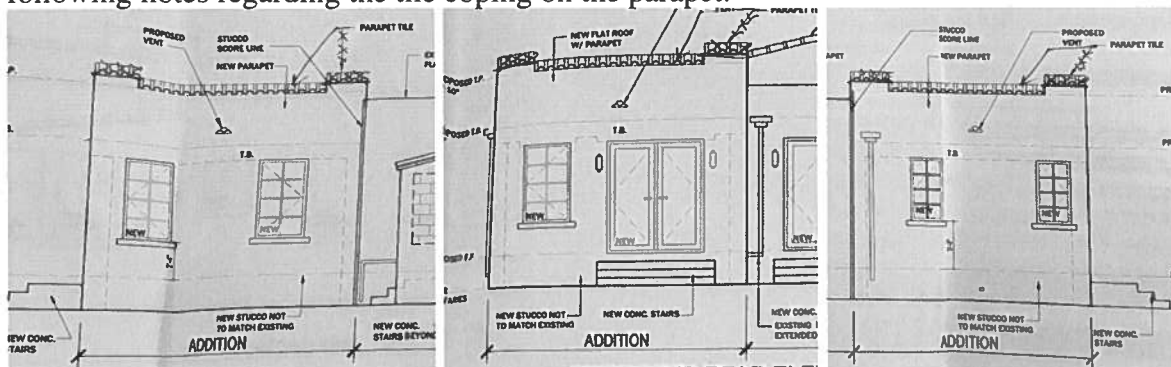
The following variance is requested in conjunction with this proposal:

Grant a variance to allow the addition to the residence to have a side setback of 3'-4" which provides a minimum total side setback of approximately 5 feet, 11 inches (5'-11") which totals eleven-point eight (11.8%) percent of the lot width vs. All Single-Family Residential building setbacks shall be as per Section 2-100, Residential Districts Table, and shall meet the following requirements: Interior side: Twenty (20%) percent of the total lot width, with a combined maximum of twenty (20) feet shall be equal on both sides. An existing contextual condition may allow an uneven distribution as determined by the Board of Architects, but in no case shall a side setback be less than five (5) feet, as required by Article 2, Section 2-101 D (4) b.i of the Coral Gables Zoning Code.

The Coral Gables Zoning Code requires that all properties maintain a 5'-0" minimum side setback. The existing residence currently has a side setback of 3'-4" on the east side of the property. The proposal requests that the proposed addition maintains this setback. As the addition is not increasing the non-conformity that exists with the historic residence, Staff supports the granting of the variance.

BOARD OF ARCHITECTS

The proposal was reviewed and approved by the Board of Architects on May 19, 2022 with comments made to change the addition roof to flat with a parapet, relocate windows in the addition. The corrections were made and approved by the City Architect on August 1, 2022 with the following notes regarding the tile coping on the parapet:



STAFF CONCLUSION

The application presented requests design approval for a small one-story addition to the northeast corner of the home. There is no impact on the integrity of the existing historic district and the proposal is in keeping with the Secretary of Interior Standards in that the essential form and integrity of the historic structure is unimpaired. Elements on the addition have been differentiated from the existing, however in those locations where windows are proposed to be resized or blocked up, the existing sills are to remain and a recess provided as a memory of the previous opening. Staff also requests that the applicant provide a full window and door proposal for the residence for future reference. The windows and muntin patterns are to match the original type and configuration found on the home and what is depicted for the addition does not do so. Staff can work with the applicant to finalize the window and door muntin configuration for the addition and resized window.

A variance from the Coral Gables Zoning Code has been requested. The Historical Resources staff finds that the following criteria, necessary for authorization of the variance, apply:

Criteria	Yes/No
1) That special conditions and circumstances exist which are peculiar to the land, structure or building involved and which are not applicable to other lands, structures or buildings in the same zoning district.	Yes
2) That the special conditions and circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant.	Yes
3) That granting the variance requested will not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied by this Ordinance to other lands, buildings or structures in the same zoning district.	Yes
4) That literal interpretation of the provisions of the Zoning Code would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district under the terms of the Zoning Code and would work unnecessary and undue hardship on the applicant.	Yes
5) That the variance granted is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of the land, building or structure.	Yes
6) That granting the variance will not change the use to one that is different from other land in the same district.	Yes
7) That the granting of the variance will be in harmony with the general intent and purpose of the Zoning Code, and that such variance will not be injurious to the area involved or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare.	Yes
8) That the granting of the variance is appropriate for the continued preservation of an historic landmark or historic landmark district.	Yes

Staff supports the granting of the requested variance and requests that the following conditions be incorporated into any motion for approval:

1. Roof tile is to be two-piece true barrel tile.
2. Elevations of the entire residence with impact-resistant windows and doors matching the original type and configuration are to be provided so that the muntin pattern of the windows on the addition can be finalized with Staff.

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3. Windows and doors are to receive high-profile muntins and glass is to be clear/no tint or reflectivity.
4. All existing window sills are to remain.
5. Provide a recess at the infilled window openings on the east and west elevations.


Therefore, Historical Resources Department Staff recommends the following:

A motion to **APPROVE WITH THE CONDITIONS NOTED ABOVE** the design proposal for an addition to the residence and sitework on the property located at **817 Obispo Avenue**, a Contributing Resource within the “Obispo Avenue Historic District,” legally described as Lot 15, Block 28, Coral Gables Section “B,” according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 5, at Page 111 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida and **APPROVE** the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness with the conditions noted above.

AND

A motion to **APPROVE** a variance to allow the addition to the residence to have a side setback of 3’-4” which provides a minimum total side setback of approximately 5 feet, 11 inches (5’-11”) which totals eleven-point eight (11.8%) percent of the lot width vs. All Single-Family Residential building setbacks shall be as per Section 2-100, Residential Districts Table, and shall meet the following requirements: Interior side: Twenty (20%) percent of the total lot width, with a combined maximum of twenty (20) feet shall be equal on both sides. An existing contextual condition may allow an uneven distribution as determined by the Board of Architects, but in no case shall a side setback be less than five (5) feet, as required by Article 2, Section 2-101 D (4) b.i of the Coral Gables Zoning Code.

Respectfully submitted,



Warren Adams
Historic Preservation Officer