



City of Coral Gables Planning and Zoning Staff Report

Applicant: Cosentino North America
Application: Sign Variance
Property: 355 Alhambra Circle – BA-18-04-3745
Legal Description: Lots 9 Thru 18 & Lots 32 Thru 40 Block 26 Section “K”
Present Owners: PRII 355 Alhambra Circle LLC
Present Use: Office Building
Zoning District: Commercial
Public Hearing: Board of Adjustment
Date & Time: May 7, 2018; 8:00 a.m.
Location: City Commission Chambers, City Hall,
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

1. APPLICATION REQUEST

Request for Variances for the property located at 355 Alhambra Circle pursuant to the provisions of Ordinance No. 2007-01 as amended and known as the “Zoning Code.”

- 1. Variance to allow a building wall sign to be located at fifty-eight (58) feet, below the minimum required height of ninety-seven (97) feet, pursuant to Section 5-1904 of the Coral Gables Zoning Code.*

2. BOARD OF ARCHITECTS REVIEW

Final approval on October 11, 2017.

3. ADVERTISING

This application was advertised in the Miami Daily Business Review on April 27, 2018. Letters were mailed to properties within one thousand feet of subject property and the property was posted on April 27, 2018.

4. STAFF OBSERVATION

The subject property, 355 Alhambra Circle is generally located mid-block between Le Jeune Road and Salzedo Street, to the north is Alcazar Avenue, and to the south is Alhambra Circle. It has a Land Use designation of Commercial, High-Rise Intensity and is currently zoned Commercial. It is located within the Central Business District and has an underlying Site Specific Regulations of A-63 Section K.

It is approximately 51,760 square feet in land area and houses a 16-story office building with a height of approximately 200 feet. Various prominent companies are located in this building including Merrill Lynch.

The Applicant, Cosentino North America occupying the entire 10th floor, proposes to place a wall sign at the entrance's archway, the front elevation facing Alhambra Circle. Currently, there is an existing wall sign for Merrill Lynch. The Zoning Code allows for two wall signs for buildings 97.1 feet or more in height. The building is approximately 200 feet in height, therefore a second wall sign is allowed. However, such sign shall be at a minimum, located above 97 feet in height. The Applicant is requesting a Variance to allow the proposed sign to be located at fifty-eight (58) feet, below the minimum required height of ninety-seven (97) feet. The sign will display the text, "Cosentino" including a logo, on reverse-lit channel letters with total sign area of 21.55 square feet.

The building was built in 2001 by the Codina Group, who was previously granted a sign Variance approval to allow a Codina Group sign at the entrance's archway, generally on the same location as the proposed Cosentino sign. The Codina Group sign has since been removed from the property.

The Planning and Zoning Division staff has reviewed the application and find the above requests reasonable in order to use the property as proposed.

This request requires a public hearing, including review and approval by the Board of Adjustment. The Board provides relief from hardships and errors in the application of the regulations.

5. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Pursuant to Section 5-1918 of the "Zoning Code," the Zoning Division staff finds as follows in regard to the applicant's proposal as presented in their application for a variance from the provision of Ordinance No. 2007-01, as amended and known as the "Zoning Code," and makes the following findings:

- 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.**

Does meet the standard required for authorization of variance.

The special condition in this case is the existing design of the building facade, specifically the entrance archway. This feature serves as a primary logical location for signage, except it is lower than 97 feet. The Applicant is seeking a Variance to be able to locate a sign that is consistent with the building's design.

- 2) That the special conditions and circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant.**

Does meet the standard required for authorization of variance.

The building was built in 2001 by the Codina Group, who was previously granted a Variance approval in 2003 to allow a sign that reads "Codina Group" at the building entrance's archway. The Codina Group sign has since been removed from the property. The proposed sign is similar to

what was granted to the previous tenant. Additionally, in 2003, the City has amended the sign code by Ordinance No. O-2003-16, to include height requirement of wall signs for buildings 97.1 feet or more in height. The existing building is approximately 200 feet in height, built in 2001 with its current design, prior to the height requirement of wall signs. Therefore, special conditions and circumstances do not result from the actions of the Applicant.

- 3) That granting the variances requested will not confer on the applicant a special privilege that is denied by these regulations to other lands, buildings or structures in the same zoning district.**

Does meet the standard required for authorization of variance.

Considering the design of the building, granting the Variance requested will not confer on the Applicant a special privilege but an opportunity to construct a sign in a logical and harmonious location respective to the building's architecture.

- 4) The literal interpretation of the provisions of these regulations would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district under the terms of these regulations, and would work unnecessary and undue hardship on the applicant (see also definition of "necessary hardship").**

Does meet the standard required for authorization of variance.

There used to be a sign "Codina Group" on generally the same location as the one currently proposed, which was previously granted a variance approval back in 2003. Literal interpretation of the provisions of these regulations would deprive the Applicant of right to have an appropriately-sized signage in relationship to the scale and design of the building, the same rights enjoyed by the previous tenant and other properties in the same zoning district.

- 5) That the variance granted is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of land, building or structure.**

Does meet the standard required for authorization of variance.

The proposed sign will display the text, "Cosentino" including a logo on reverse-lit channel letters with total sign area of 21.55 square feet, to be located at 58 feet above established grade. The proposed sign is proportionate to the façade on which it is located.

- 6) That granting the variance will not change the use to one that is not permitted in the zoning district or different from other land in the same district.**

Does meet the standard required for authorization of variance.

The request is for a sign variance for an office use occupying the entire 10th floor of the existing office building. Granting the sign variance requested will not change the use to one that is not permitted in the zoning district.

- 7) That the granting of the variance will be in harmony with the general intent and purpose of these regulations and that such variance will not be injurious to the area involved or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare.

Does meet the standard required for authorization of variance.

The proposed sign is proportionate to the façade on which it is located. It is consistent with the building's architecture and consistent with the previously approved sign "Codina Group." Therefore, the Variance requests will not be injurious to the area involved or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare.

The Planning and Zoning Division staff recommends **APPROVAL** of Item No. 1.

6. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Applicant's submittal package.
- B. Property Appraiser Summary Report.
- C. 04.27.18 Legal advertisement published.
- D. 04.27.18 Courtesy notice mailed to all property owners within 1,000 feet.

Please visit the City website at www.coralgables.com to view all application materials. The complete application also is on file and available for examination during business hours at the Planning and Zoning Division, 427 Biltmore Way, Suite 201, Coral Gables, Florida, 33134.

Respectfully submitted,



Ramon Trias
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for Planning and Zoning
City of Coral Gables, Florida