

Kautz, Kara

From: Josephine Johnson <jada39@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 11:35 AM
To: Kautz, Kara; Urquia, Billy
Subject: 603 Minorca. (Josephine Johnson)

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

First, thank you for your prompt response to my serious concerns re 603 Minorca. Because I shall not be restating these during the Zoom meeting, I am asking you to make this email a part of the proceedings. I live at 427 Alcazar and am therefore familiar with 603 Minorca, it being two blocks from my own property. I am also familiar with 603's twin on Alcazar. Fortunately, Alcazar's owner had the foresight to add an addition favorable to the original architecture.

Throughout the years, sometimes for sheer pleasure of gain, or desperation to keep their properties, north Gables owners have sold off their adjacent fifty foot lots. I can't think of one instance where the new buildings on these lots have improved the neighborhoods in architecture, density or loss of green space.

603 is a shining example of the history of north Coral Gables, its sheer simplicity, use of native rock and position on the site. With the guidance of your board the present house could be carefully expanded. What it doesn't require is to be moved and squished next to a towering residence.

I am not an engineer, but the probability of moving this beautiful historic home intact seems unlikely.

Moreover, it again sets a precedent of accomodation to unreasonable over-development.

Especially now, when many are fortunate to live in single family residences rather than in high rises, where we can breathe freely, neither encumbered by additional engine fumes of the plethora of automobiles and often trucks outside of residences, and the unwelcome auditory encumbrances of close neighbors aligned on fifty-foot lots, we MUST put a brake on further over development. We must take advantage of the small, remaining opportunities in north Gables to preserve every inch of its historic architectural integrity and to have the gumption to reject what obscures that vision.

Sincerely,

Josephine Johnson, Ph.D.
Chair and Professor Emeritus
University of Miami

Kautz, Kara

From: Sandra Scidmore <sscidmore@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 10:20 AM
To: Urquia, Billy; Kautz, Kara
Subject: 603 MINORCA - PLEASE DO NOT APPROVE RELOCATION REQUEST

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Board,

I am unable to attend tomorrow's meeting.

However, I wish to express my objection to City Staff's position of accepting of the owner's request to relocate a property with a historic, 100-year old coral stem.

Approving this request will jeopardize the delicate coral rock, negatively impact the historic integrity of the property, and set a bad precedent for the future of historic properties in Coral Gables.

This is one of the earliest homes built in Coral Gables designed by H. George Fink, and it has been a designated historic landmark since 2005. Please preserve our heritage.

Thank you.

Sandra L. Scidmore
100 Lincoln Road, Apt. 423
Miami Beach, Florida 33139
786-566-0422 C
sscidmore@hotmail.com

Dear Ms. Kautz, Mr. Urquia and members of Historic Preservation Board of Coral Gables:

I am writing tonight to express my concerns about the proposed plans for the property at 603 Minorca Avenue.

As a 32 year resident of Coral Gables, I have spent many years involved with historic preservation in Miami/Dade County. I am a member of DHT, a 31-year member of The Villagers, a past president of The Barnacle Society - the oldest home in M/D County, and a past member of the Merrick House Governing Board and I feel somewhat qualified to write about this issue.

First of all, the splitting of a residential lot in Coral Gables is a BIG deal! Traditionally, it has been done very rarely. I recall hearing Chip Withers, a past commissioner once say – “I can count on one hand the numbers of times we allowed a lot split in the 20 years that I served as a Commissioner!” And in 2015, I joined a group of my neighbors and we fought successfully a lot split in our neighborhood and that lot was 24,900 square feet - over twice the size of the 11,400 sq ft lot in question.

I went to see 603 Minorca Avenue today and drove through the neighborhood repeatedly. I was pleasantly surprised to see this H. George Fink “cottage” to be as large as it is and appearing to be in such good condition. It sits well on the corner lot and fits in beautifully with the surrounding homes. It also fit right into the “personality” of the north Gables – a community of “old Spanish” smaller homes and “cottages.”

And one thing that I have always admired about George Merrick and his team of early city planners and architects – they didn’t want neighborhoods of cookie-cutter lots – they set out to have diversity of lot-size within the same neighborhood. It is what has always made Coral Gables both unique and so appealing. Yes, this home does have more “green space” surrounding it but how pleasant for that lucky homeowner!

I built a new home on an 11,100 sq ft lot that was finished in 2017 and I remember how careful we had to be about lot coverage. Looking at the proposed plans for the new home *plus* the cottage sharing the 11,400 sq ft lot, I have a hard time picturing how 2 homes are going to fit on basically the same sized lot as mine!

And last but certainly not least – relocating an historic “cottage” designed by one of the City’s most prestigious architects that is close to 100 years old. I really question if it makes good sense to attempt to move a structure with a coral rock base and a coral rock chimney. Possibly it can be done but will this home ever be quite the same again? I wonder.....

Thank you for your time and service,

Marlin Ebbert
6510 San Vicente Street
Coral Gables 33146
305-665-5701
Marlinebbert@yahoo.com

Kautz, Kara

From: Howard Berman <habdc@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 10:47 AM
To: Kautz, Kara
Subject: 603 Minorca Avenue-For 8/19 Hearing

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Dear Ms. Kautz,

As a near neighbor of 603 Minorca Avenue, committed to the historic and cultural heritage of our community, I wish to submit this letter of opposition to the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness, designated as COA(SP) 2020-007, which provides for the relocation of this important historic landmark- one of the earliest houses constructed in Coral Gables a century ago.

Even with every precaution taken, any such alteration of this house will seriously threaten both its structural and historic integrity. There is ample evidence for the dangers of attempting to move such Coral stone based buildings, resulting in collapse and total destruction. In addition, removing this neighborhood landmark from its original setting, as conceived by First Generation master architect H. George Fink, would negatively impact the architectural coherence and cultural significance of this part of "Old Coral Gables."

I would hope that a creative and constructive resolution can be achieved that preserves this house, in its original location on its lot, while meeting the applicant's goals.

Respectfully,

Rabbi Howard A. Berman
501 Alcazar Avenue

Sent from my iPhone

From: Brett Gillis <brett.gillis@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 8:18 PM
To: Kautz, Kara
Cc: Urquia, Billy
Subject: 603 Minorca objection

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Dear Mrs. Kautz and the Historic Preservation Board:

I must respectfully object to the applicant's proposal to move the Fink-designed cottage at 603 Minorca and split the lot.

Whilst it is important that we be reasonable with owners of historic buildings I believe that moving this coral rock and wooden cottage and splitting the lot would be going too far.

1. The applicant purchased the home knowing that it was located in the middle of the lot. *What's fair is fair.*
2. Moving a historic structure should only be undertaken in rare cases when there is no suitable alternative such as when a historic home becomes totally surrounded by commercial development or engulfed by water. *In this case, they could just do a sensitive addition and still be surrounded by single-family homes.*
3. The fragile, heritage coral rock foundation, stem wall, and chimney are delicate, irreplaceable historic resources. The applicant is not guaranteeing that these resources will survive the move, nor have they included a coral rock expert in their plan. *Thus, the most special element of the historic nature of the property could be destroyed.*
4. No bond has been proffered by the applicant, so if the coral rock or wooden elements are irreversibly damaged during the move, then there is no guarantee that these elements could even be saved. *I am not accusing the owners or LLC of anything and am merely stating the obvious - nobody can predict the future, and many things are possible in life. How many projects have we seen end unfinished or be interrupted by a storm or other issue. Wouldn't it be terrible if they tried to move the structure, it fell apart, funding ran out, there was no way to finish it, and then the lot split ended up with 2 new houses being built?*
5. When 6801 Granada (the site of the beloved Parker design on the Waterway) was split - we must remember that this lot was 2.94 acres!!! And it was only split into 2 and the historic home was not moved or demolished. *This was a reasonable outcome. Let's be reasonable but not throw our historic fabric away.*
6. There are several other historic homes with encroachments that, if this move and lot split are approved, could likely trigger them to try and do the same or, possibly, even grieve in court for disparate treatment as they apparently were told they were not able to split their lots: 501 Aragon, 910 Capri, and 6810 Maynada, as examples. *Tread carefully as a new precedent could be very detrimental to the historic fabric of Coral Gables. A run on lot splits could ensue!*

Recommending for staff to work with the applicant on a sensitive addition similar to 637 Alcazar (recessed and differentiated from the original building).

Thank you,
Brett Gillis
915 Ferdinand

Kautz, Kara

From: patsypp@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 4:22 PM
To: Kautz, Kara
Subject: 603 Minorca

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Dear Ms Kautz

Please accept my opinion about the historic home at 603 Minorca, Coral Gables.

It seems a tragedy to risk the integrity of such an historic building designed by Fink in transferring it to another location.

I understand the coral rock support will be badly damaged in such a move, and the chimney as well. To risk further damage to this structure for a present day modern building is inconsiderate of the past.

I strongly feel as a member of this community for 45 years that such a thing should not happen.

Are we not here to preserve the history of our beautiful city and not make such allowances. When will it stop?

It was built in its present location over 80 years ago by an outstanding architect of the time, and should remain in that location. Removing the old for the new is a sad state of affairs!

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Patricia Button
1245 Obispo Ave.
Coral Gables, 33134



Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, Inc.

4800 S.W. 64th Ave, Suite 107 Davie, FL 33314

Phone: 954-792-9776 Fax: 954-792-9954

Email: archlgcl@bellsouth.net

Web: <https://florida-archaeology.org/>

August 18, 2020

Kara Kautz
Assistant Director, Historic Resources & Cultural Arts
City of Coral Gables
2327 Salzedo Street, Second Floor
Coral Gables, FL 33134

Re: 603 Minorca Avenue – Relocation of a Designated Historic Landmark

Dear Ms. Kautz and Members of the Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board:

As the Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables has asked us to comment, it is our opinion, as preservationists, that an expert on Miami oolitic limestone construction should be consulted prior to deciding on allowing relocation of the historic house at 603 Minorca Avenue. Relocation itself entails a loss of historical integrity. Potentially damaging and then attempting to recreate the look of the foundation and chimney with a rock veneer would add to the loss.

The National Park Service defines significance in historic buildings as possession of “integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.” The effect of this proposed relocation on the landmark’s integrity of setting should be part of your considerations. Coral Gables should treasure the examples of its early architecture that are sited on corner lots where they may be seen in the round.

Relocation of the existing house, and construction of a new house adjacent to it, will result in considerable ground disturbance. For this project to be approved, in our opinion, archaeological monitoring should be an additional condition.

We think the ideal preservation solution would be to restore the house in situ, with appropriate additions approved by the Board.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Carr
Executive Director

Tim Harrington
Architectural Historian

Kautz, Kara

From: Jose Valdes-Fauli <josevf1@me.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 8:33 PM
To: Kautz, Kara
Cc: Urquia, Billy; Gillis Brett
Subject: Fwd: 603 Minorca objection

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I completely concur with this letter and would like to add my name to the opposition

Jose Valdes-Fauli
536 Alhambra Circle
Coral Gables, FL 33134
305 588 1229

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Brett Gillis <brett.gillis@gmail.com>
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020
Subject: 603 Minorca objection
To: "Kautz, Kara" <KKautz@coralgables.com>
Cc: "Urquia, Billy" <burquia@coralgables.com>

Dear Mrs. Kautz and the Historic Preservation Board:

I must respectfully object to the applicant's proposal to move the Fink-designed cottage at 603 Minorca and split the lot.

Whilst it is important that we be reasonable with owners of historic buildings I believe that moving this coral rock and wooden cottage and splitting the lot would be going too far.

1. The applicant purchased the home knowing that it was located in the middle of the lot. *What's fair is fair.*
2. Moving a historic structure should only be undertaken in rare cases when there is no suitable alternative such as when a historic home becomes totally surrounded by commercial development or engulfed by water. *In this case, they could just do a sensitive addition and still be surrounded by single-family homes.*
3. The fragile, heritage coral rock foundation, stem wall, and chimney are delicate, irreplaceable historic resources. The applicant is not guaranteeing that these resources will survive the move, nor have they included a coral rock expert in their plan. *Thus, the most special element of the historic nature of the property could be destroyed.*
4. No bond has been proffered by the applicant, so if the coral rock or wooden elements are irreversibly damaged during the move, then there is no guarantee that these elements could even be saved. *I am not accusing the owners or LLC of anything and am merely stating the obvious - nobody can predict the future, and many things are*

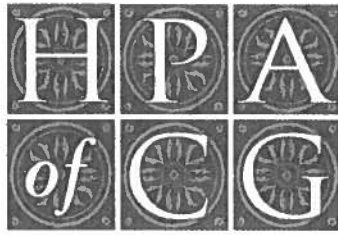
possible in life. How many projects have we seen end unfinished or be interrupted by a storm or other issue. Wouldn't it be terrible if they tried to move the structure, it fell apart, funding ran out, there was no way to finish it, and then the lot split ended up with 2 new houses being built?

5. When 6801 Granada (the site of the beloved Parker design on the Waterway) was split - we must remember that this lot was 2.94 acres!!! And it was only split into 2 and the historic home was not moved or demolished. *This was a reasonable outcome. Let's be reasonable but not throw our historic fabric away.*

6. There are several other historic homes with encroachments that, if this move and lot split are approved, could likely trigger them to try and do the same or, possibly, even grieve in court for disparate treatment as they apparently were told they were not able to split their lots: 501 Aragon, 910 Capri, and 6810 Maynada, as examples. *Tread carefully as a new precedent could be very detrimental to the historic fabric of Coral Gables. A run on lot splits could ensue!*

Recommending for staff to work with the applicant on a sensitive addition similar to 637 Alcazar (recessed and differentiated from the original building).

Thank you,
Brett Gillis
915 Ferdinand



HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ASSOCIATION OF CORAL GABLES

August 18, 2020

Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board Meeting August 19, 2020
Attention: Historic Preservation Board

Re: 603 Minorca Avenue, Coral Gables #COA 2020-007

On behalf of the Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables, please accept this letter in opposition to the issuance of Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the relocation of the historic residence designed by H. George Fink, and located at 603 Minorca Avenue.

"The uniqueness of this home is characterized by the size of the property...It is one of the few homes of this type to still exist on such a large parcel of land while maintaining its integrity." [2005 Local Designation Report, page 2]

In opposition to what is stated in the designation report [see quote above], the city staff's recommendation overlooks the fact that the lot is a significant characteristic trait. In effect, the subdivision of the lot will negate the designation.

Approving the staff's recommendation will not only negate the City's 2005 historic designation of 603 Minorca, it will:

1. jeopardize the delicate and environmentally protected 100- year old coral rock stem and ultimately damage [or destroy] the historic resource;
2. negatively impact the historic integrity of the whole property [including house and green space];
3. compromise the property's historic designation as per 2005 local designation report, and;
4. set a bad precedent for the future of historic properties in Coral Gables that sit on extra lots.

The Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables promotes the understanding and the importance of historic resources and their preservation in Coral Gables. Recommending the potential destruction of significant historic structures should always be a last resort, and an option only exercised in accordance to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation. We ask the Historic Preservation Board oppose staff's recommendation to allow the relocation of **603 Minorca Avenue**.

Sincerely,

Karelia Martinez Carbonell, President Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables

**Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables
Post Office Box 347944, Coral Gables, Florida 33234
info@historiccoralgables.org
www.historiccoralgables.org**

Kautz, Kara

From: Norma E Arenas <norma.e.arenas@us.hsbc.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 10:55 AM
To: Kautz, Kara
Subject: RE: 603 MINORCA AVENUE

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To the members of the Historic Preservation Board:

I am unable to attend the meeting but would like to express my opposition to the City staff 's position of accepting the owner's request of relocating the historic property with a 100-year old coral rock stem. Approving this request will jeopardize the delicate coral rock, negatively impact the historic integrity of the property, and set a bad precedent for the future of historic properties in Coral Gables.

Thank you,

NAME Norma Arenas
ADDRESS: 1231 Madrid St.

ORIGINAL 100-YEAR OLD CORAL ROCK FOUNDATION IN DANGER & MAY JEOPARDIZE THE HISTORIC INTEGRITY OF THIS 1922 FINK PROPERTY.

=====

Please pass by 2610 Alhambra Circle. The new owners divided the lot and built a house that looks like a big elephant that takes away the integrity of properties around and in Alhambra Circle. I do not know but would like to know who gave permission to build such monstrosity. Is that the kind of new houses you would like to see in THE CITY BEAUTIFUL!

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SAVE PAPER - THINK BEFORE YOU PRINT!

August 18, 2020

Historic Preservation Board
City of Coral Gables
405 Biltmore Way
Coral Gables, FL 33134

RE: 603 Minorca Avenue, Coral Gables, Florida

Dear Preservation Board Members,

As a past president of the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, the Vice Chairman of the President's Advisory Council for Historic Preservation and a practicing Historic Preservation Architect for the last 32 years, I would like to express my opposition to the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the relocation of the historic residence designed by H George Fink, located at 603 Minorca Avenue in Coral Gables.

This 1922 home is significant as one of the earliest residences built in Coral Gables. Relocating this historic property that is not only landmarked but has a 100-year-old coral rock stem as its foundation would be unwise. Damage to the foundation will undoubtedly occur. Further, moving the property from the middle of the two lots to one lot and then building a two-story on the property is contrary to its historical integrity as per the 2005 Designation Report.

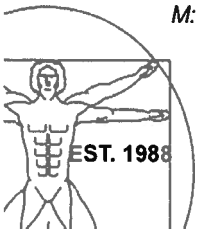
In light of these two factors, I must urge you to oppose staff's recommendation for the relocation and of this historic landmarked structure. Approval of this will send the wrong signal to other homeowners who should be encouraged to preserve and protect their historic properties.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.



Rick Gonzalez, AIA, President
REG Architects, Inc.

M: Letters>Ltr. of Opposition for 603 Minorca Ave.





Brito Design Studio, LLC

447 Alcazar Avenue

Coral Gables, FL 33134-4201

AA26002986

Architecture | Interior Design | Historic Preservation

TO: City of Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board
FROM: Herbert Brito (19 August 2020)
SUBJECT: 603 Madeira Avenue

I am writing to express my opposition to the issuance of Special Certificate of Appropriateness #COA (SP) 2020-007 for the relocation of the historic residence designed by H. George Fink, and located at 603 Minorca Avenue, for the following reasons.

First, the relocation of a historic residence is not an approved treatment according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation. When in certain rare cases, relocation is deemed preferable to the loss of a building or to preserve the sense of its setting, the relocation proposal must verify that all reasonable alternatives to relocation have been considered and documentation must be provided to confirm that relocation is the preferred alternative. In past legal challenges, the only accepted reasons for justifying a move are that the building has been moved in the past or that the only means of saving the building from certain loss is a relocation.

Second, architect H. George Fink located the house on a double lot with large side setbacks to maximize natural ventilation and views outward. The site and open space around the house contribute to its character. Crowding another house on the existing site will detract from its significance.

Third, there are high risks, both financial and material when moving a historic building. There is a chance that the architectural fabric of the building will be damaged or obliterated altogether. Recall the tragic 1995 collapse of the historic Brown House, in part due to its Coral Rock foundation, as it was being moved along the MacArthur Causeway to Watson Island.

Fourth, moving a historic house also sets an unfortunate precedent in Coral Gables that could result in more historic house relocations, the erosion of historic districts, and weaken our city's uniqueness. As a rule, houses that are moved usually lose their historic designation at the local, state, or Federal levels because their architectural integrity and site characteristics have been irretrievably altered.

Fifth, according to the City's Zoning Plan Reviewer, the proposed two-story house adjacent to the historic house exceeds the maximum allowed 1,969 SQ FT of Ground Area Coverage. With the numerous deficiencies cited by the Zoning Plan Reviewer, I believe that consideration of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness by the Historic Preservation Board is premature and unnecessary. The Zoning Plan Reviewer has stopped the review until a Building Site Determination Letter is issued for the approval of the split of the current Folio.

In closing, I reiterate my belief that there is no need to subdivide the existing Folio to add another residence or relocate the historic house at 603 Minorca Avenue. I strongly recommend that you vote to deny the issuance of Special Certificate of Appropriateness #COA (SP) 2020-007 as a denial is essential for the sake of our City's future and to retain our special sense of time and place.

Kautz, Kara

From: mervol@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 11:51 AM
To: Urquia, Billy
Cc: Kautz, Kara
Subject: Agenda item on August 19th 2020 Historic Preservation Board meeting

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To City Clerk Urquia and Interim Director of Historical Resources Kautz:

I am unable to attend today's Historic Preservation Board meeting, but wish to comment on the building relocation issue at 603 Minorca Avenue.

Relocation presents the distinct possibility of excessive damage to the structural integrity of the building in question -- in this case a home designed in 1922 by H. George Fink, City founder George Merrick's cousin whose studio on Ponce de Leon Boulevard remains a signature example of the architectural style that has defined Coral Gables since its founding.

An alternate solution to dividing this double-lot property would incorporate the historic Fink building into an expanded single-family home occupying the entire property. Several notable examples of this option are in evidence on Alhambra Circle today, no doubt approved by the Historic Preservation Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Fitzgerald
Coral Gables

Kautz, Kara

From: Roberta Neway <robertajn@att.net>
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 10:38 AM
To: Urquia, Billy; Kautz, Kara
Subject: 603 Minorca

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Dear Mr. Urquia and Ms. Kautz,

I am opposed to the moving of the above property as I feel this may harm the structure, and, moreover, remove the home from its 'context' without just cause, thereby, lessening its historical integrity.

Thank you for your time, and stay safe!!

Sincerely,
Roberta Neway
1236 South Alhambra Circle
Coral Gables, FL 33146



Florida Trust for Historic Preservation
906 East Park Avenue, Tallahassee, Florida 32301
(850) 224-8128

August 18, 2020

Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board Meeting August 19, 2020
Attention: Historic Preservation Board

Re: 603 Minorca Avenue, Coral Gables #COA 2020-007

On behalf of the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation please accept this letter in opposition to the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the relocation of the historic residence designed by H. George Fink located at 603 Minorca Avenue.

Through conversations with community members it is our concern that the lot itself is a significant characteristic of the historic resource, and relocation could negate the City's 2005 historic designation of the property, negatively impact historic integrity and create a precedent that will be detrimental to preserving historic resources in the future. Preserving historic buildings on the land where they originally were built with the original landscape, features and viewshed is the preferable preservation solution. Additionally, the continued subdivision of properties will significantly change the fabric and character of historic communities.

The Florida Trust advocates for the preservation of important historic assets like 603 Minorca Avenue, which serve to protect Florida's extraordinary history and heritage. Our organization has been dedicated to defending and celebrating the diverse heritage of our state ever since our nonprofit was founded in 1978.

We recognize that the most productive accomplishments are made at the local level, so we appreciate both the challenges and the opportunities your Board has to influence and serve your community. We ask that this Board consider preservation options that best align with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and best serve the long-term preservation of your community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melissa Wyllie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Melissa Wyllie
CEO & President
Florida Trust for Historic Preservation