



COA (SP) 2020-014
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Historical Resources &
Cultural Arts

2327 SALZEDO STREET
CORAL GABLES
FLORIDA 33134

☎ 305.460.5093
✉ hist@coralgables.com

**STAFF REPORT
SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
FOR THE PROPERTY AT
1212 OBISPO AVENUE
A CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE WITHIN
THE "OBISPO AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT"**

Proposal: The application requests design approval for alterations to the auxiliary structure.

A variance has also been requested from Article 5, Section 5-502 (B) (4) of the Coral Gables Zoning Code for maximum frontage for a Coral Gables Cottage.

Architect: Michael Neil Reinstein

Owner: Frederic Poulet

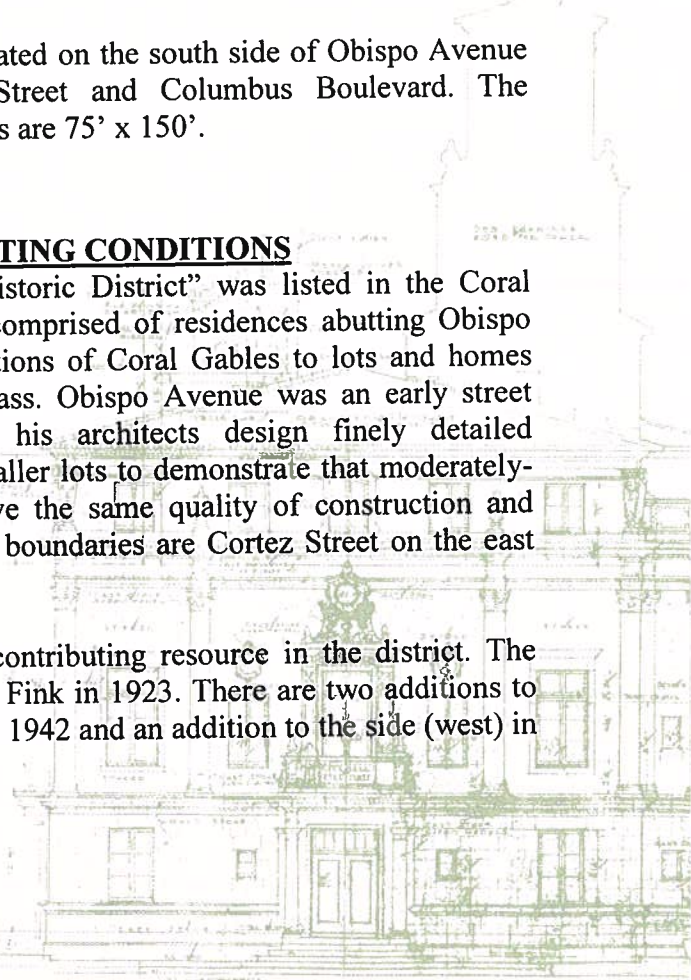
Legal Description: Lots 15 and 16, Block 5, Coral Gables Section "E," according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8, at Page 13 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida

Site Characteristics: The property is located on the south side of Obispo Avenue between Madrid Street and Columbus Boulevard. The property dimensions are 75' x 150'.

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. 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.

The home at 1212 Obispo Avenue is a contributing resource in the district. The original home was designed by H. George Fink in 1923. There are two additions to the original home: an addition to the rear in 1942 and an addition to the side (west) in 1995.



PROPOSAL

The application requests design approval for alterations to the auxiliary structure (original garage) which include changing windows to impact-resistant, reinstituting the 'appearance' of garage doors, enclosing a window opening and interior alterations.

The original detached garage was converted to living space without a permit at an unknown date. An incentive of a Coral Gables Cottage property allows for this conversion. The property meets the Cottage criteria except for the width of its street frontage.

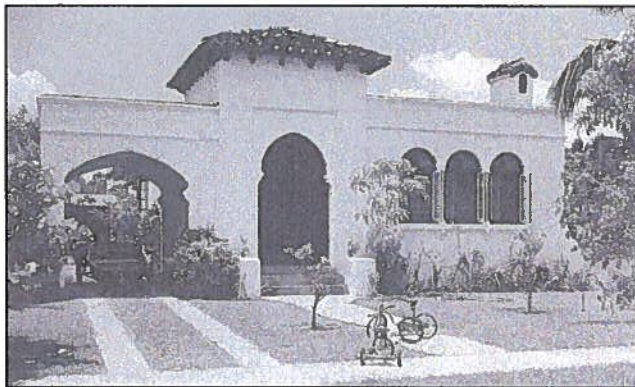
A variance has been requested from Article 5, Section 5-502 (B) (4) of the Coral Gables Zoning Code for maximum frontage for a Coral Gables Cottage.

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

The following Standards have application in this matter:

2. *The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*
3. *Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.*
5. *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.*

STAFF OBSERVATIONS



Coral Gables Cottage Features

The Coral Gables Cottage is defined as a detached, single-family dwelling which is distinguished by its movement in plan, projection and recessions, asymmetrical arrangement of entrances, frequently employed surface ornament for embellishment and at least twelve (from a list of nineteen) specific Mediterranean Revival Style features which are original to the cottage. A

cottage property must be no more than one story in height, zoned SFR, constructed prior to 1940, and have frontage no greater than sixty-five feet.

The residence at 1212 Obispo Avenue possesses the following thirteen requisite cottage features:

1. Coral rock or stucco finish
2. Combination roof type
3. Projecting bay on front elevation
4. Masonry arches or arches springing from columns on the front elevation
5. Decorative doorway surrounds
6. Decorative and /or predominant chimney
7. Detached garage to rear of property
8. Porte-cochere
9. Decorative wing walls
10. Varied height between projecting and recessed portions of the front elevation
11. Cast ornament and/or tile applied to front elevation
12. First floor above crawl space
13. Casement windows

As noted previously the auxiliary structure was converted to living space by a previous owner without a permit.

Alterations proposed in the application include:

- Removing the existing French doors on the front (north) façade and installing a faux carriage door on the exterior of the front (north) façade.
- Blocking up an existing window opening on the west façade.
- Replacing the window and door on the rear (south) façade with impact-resistant units. The rear door will be enlarged from 24" wide to 36" wide.
- Enlarging an existing window opening from 25"W x 37"H to 53"W x 50"H impact-resistant window for egress purposes and installing a mini-split A/C unit on the east façade.

Interior work consists of renovating an existing bathroom and the relocation of a closet.

VARIANCES

The following variance is requested in conjunction with this proposal:

Grant a variance to waive the requirement that a Coral Gables Cottage property must have a street frontage of no greater than sixty-five (65) feet as required by Section 5-502 (B) (4) of the Coral Gables Zoning Code.

One of the requirements for a Coral Gables Cottage designation is that the street frontage of the property may not exceed 65'-0." The property meets the criteria for a Coral Gables Cottage except that the street frontage is 75'-0" in width. The original footprint of the ca.1922 cottage (permit #415) was sited solely on Lot 13 when constructed. It is reasonable to assume that this was intended to be one of those smaller residences so prominently promoted by George Merrick

that we now call Coral Gables Cottages and granting this variance would ensure the Cottage character of this site is preserved. Staff supports the granting of the requested variance.

BOARD OF ARCHITECTS

The proposal was deferred administratively by the Board of Architects on September 28, 2020 with the following comments:

1. No horizontal roller windows
2. Windows and doors need muntins
3. Please provide detail of the connection for the proposed garage door

STAFF CONCLUSION

The application requests design approval for alterations to the auxiliary structure.

The proposed alterations to the property are in keeping with the Secretary of Interior Standards in that the essential form and integrity of the historic district and the property is unimpaired.

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

The alterations to the garage are minimal and the reintroduction of a carriage door will return the front (north) façade to a closer facimile of a garage structure. The original opening of the garage is clearly delineated in the stucco texture found on the auxiliary structure. The faux doors should only be the size of the original opening (which does not span the entire “dip” in the parapet. See blow up of the 1940s photo below.



The resized window on the east elevation is an awkward size. The notes indicate that it is being enlarged for egress purposes. If it is possible the new window should be some module of the existing 25”W x 37”H. A horizontal roller window is not appropriate for this property.

Staff agrees with administrative BOA comments and has incorporated their comments into the conditions of approval. Staff requests the following conditions to be incorporated into any motion for approval:

1. Windows are to be fixed or casement in type with muntins added with a pattern in keeping with the existing residence.
2. The proposed east window is to be resized to assume proportions similar to the existing openings on the auxiliary structure.
3. Window muntins are to be high-profile / dimensional.
4. Window glass is to be clear.
5. The faux garage door is to be resized to match the outline of the original opening.
6. Detail for garage door connection must be provided.

Therefore, Historical Resources Department Staff recommends the following:

A motion to **APPROVE WITH THE CONDITIONS NOTED ABOVE** the design proposal for an alterations to the auxiliary structure on the property located at **1212 Obispo Avenue**, a contributing structure on the Obispo Avenue Historic District, legally described as Lots 15 and 16, Block 5, Coral Gables Section “E,” according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8,

at Page 13 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** the following variance:

Grant a variance to waive the requirement that a Coral Gables Cottage property must have a street frontage of no greater than sixty-five (65) feet as required by Section 5-502 (B) (4) of the Coral Gables Zoning Code.

Respectfully submitted,



Kara N. Kautz

Interim Historic Preservation Officer