

July 15, 2019

**VIA HAND DELIVERY**

The Chairperson and Members of the  
Miami Beach Historic Preservation Board  
c/o Ms. Deborah J. Tackett  
City of Miami Beach Planning Department  
1700 Convention Center Drive, 2nd Floor  
Miami Beach, Florida 33139

**Re: HPB19-0314 Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for Design & Partial Demolition and Sign Variance / 743 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, Folio, No. 02-4203-004-0690 (the "Property")**

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Dear Chairperson and Members of the Historic Preservation Board:

Our firm represents Jamestown Premier 755 Washington Avenue, LLC (the "Applicant"), relating to the Property before the Historic Preservation Board ("HPB"). On behalf of the Applicant, please accept this Letter of Intent as part of Application HPB19-0314, for a Certificate of appropriateness for design & demolition and sign Variances ("COA") in connection with the exterior renovations and signage proposed for the Property (the "Project").

**I. The Property**

The Property is located in both the Flamingo Park Historic District and the Miami Beach Architectural District with a historic classification of noncontributing. The Property is zoned Commercial Development, Medium Intensity (CD-2) on the City of Miami Beach Official Zoning Map and designated Commercial Development, Medium Intensity (CD-2) on the City's Future Land Use Map.

The Property contains a 1957 structure originally constructed as a financial institution for banks, saving and loans. Since that time, the Property maintained several bank tenants from 1957 through the 1980's. Additional parcels abutting the Property, completing the block between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> street, were constructed on the site in the 1980's and early 2000's, including 709 and 729 Washington Avenue. In 1993, the Property was renovated with a decorative screening on the west façade of the bank building designed by architect Marcus Frankel and approved by the DRB/HPB. A copy of the 1993 design approval is enclosed. Please note, the Application and corresponding requests solely relate to the 743 Washington Avenue Property, located on the southeast intersection of Washington Avenue and 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

## **II. Project**

Applicant is submitting to the HPB for the proposed exterior renovations to the Property, which includes the replacement of the existing exterior finishes and design modifications, new window treatments and door openings as well as updated signage compatible with design and character of the surrounding neighborhood. Specifically, the Project includes the removal of the decorative screening on the Washington Avenue frontage (added to the Property in the 1990's) as well as design modifications to the 8<sup>th</sup> street façade.

As reflected in the plans entitled "743 Washington Avenue" prepared by Makwork, Inc. and dated July 8, 2019 ("Plans") there are two alternative floor plan configurations for the commercial Property which include the following:

- a. **Option 1:** One (1) primary tenant with its primary frontage and entrance located along the 8<sup>th</sup> street façade, and secondary frontages along Washington Avenue; and three (3) additional tenants fronting Washington Avenue.
- b. **Option 2:** Two (2) primary tenants located on and sharing the 8<sup>th</sup> Street façade. Tenant 1 located at the intersection of 8<sup>th</sup> Street and the abutting alley and Tenant 2 located at the intersection of Washington Avenue and 8<sup>th</sup> Street; and three (3) additional tenants fronting Washington Avenue.

## **III. Request for Certificate of Appropriateness**

Applicant is hereby requesting an approval of the COA for the design and demolition of portions in the North and West facades of the Property in order to preserve the front structures which have the architectural design elements.

In accordance with Section 118-564 of the Code, the Application complies with the criteria for issuance of a COA. The proposed physical improvements and additions are designed to be compatible with the surrounding properties. The general design, scale and massing of the renovations to the Property are appropriate to the size of the lot and compatible with the surrounding properties. The scope of the Project and proposed modifications only include the demolition of the side and rear frontages which do not have design elements as the Property exists today.

## **IV. Request for Variance**

The Plans identifies certain projecting signs located on 8<sup>th</sup> Street that one under Option 1 requires a minimal variance for the Project. The requested signage for the Project will allow adequate identification and improve the visibility of the anchor tenant space (located along the 8<sup>th</sup> Street façade) from different vantage points. The variance requested below relate to the signage proposed for the Project. Therefore, the Applicant is requesting the following signage variance for Option 1:

**Sec. 138-18 – Projecting Sign.**

Maximum Area: 15 feet; Maximum Quantity: Multiple signs for the same establishment may be permitted through the design review process if the aggregate sign area does not exceed the largest maximum permitted area

- a. Variance # 1 (In Option 1): A variance to exceed by 15 square feet the maximum permitted sign area for the installation a projecting sign is 15 square feet, on the 8<sup>th</sup> Street/North façade, with the sign area totaling 30 square feet for the projecting sign.

In accordance with Section 118-353(d) of the City's Land Development Regulations, the Project complies with the following standards of review for a variance application

- (i) 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.
  - i. *The existing north façade is a curved wall and a projecting sign would provide clear visibility; and we are requesting a sign with the size of 30 square feet that would be permitted if a wall sign, since aggregate sign area does not exceed the largest maximum permitted area of 45 square feet.*
- (ii) The special conditions and circumstances do not result from the action of the applicant.
  - i. *The existing north façade is a curved not flat wall.*
- (iii) Granting the variance requested will not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied by these land development regulations to other lands, buildings, or structures in the same zoning district.
  - i. *If a Wall sign the total square footage permitted would be 45 square feet and Option 1 total square footage is equal or less than the aggregate sign area permitted.*
- (iv) Literal interpretation of the provisions of these land development regulations would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district under the terms of these land development regulations and would work unnecessary and undue hardship on the applicant.
  - i. *The existing north façade is a curved wall and a projecting sign would provide clear visibility; and we are requesting a sign with the size of 30 square feet that would be permitted if a wall sign, since aggregate sign area does not exceed the largest maximum permitted area of 45 square feet.*
- (v) The variance granted is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of the land, building or structure.
  - i. *The existing north façade is a curved wall and a projecting sign would provide clear visibility; and we are requesting a sign with the size of 30*

*square feet that would be permitted if a wall sign, since aggregate sign area does not exceed the largest maximum permitted area of 45 square feet.*

- (vi) The granting of the variance will be in harmony with the general intent and purpose of these land development regulations and that such variance will not be injurious to the area involved or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare.
  - i. *The existing north façade is a curved wall and a projecting sign would provide clear visibility; and we are requesting a sign with the size of 30 square feet that would be permitted if a wall sign, since aggregate sign area does not exceed the largest maximum permitted area of 45 square feet.*
- (vii) The granting of this request is consistent with the comprehensive plan and does not reduce the levels of service as set forth in the plan.
  - i. *Yes, it's consistent since the aggregate sign area does not exceed the largest maximum permitted.*

#### **V. Sea Level Rise and Resiliency Review Waiver**

Section 133-50(a) provides review criteria for compliance with the City's recently adopted sea level rise and resiliency criteria.

- (i) *A recycling or salvage plan for partial or total demolition shall be provided.*

The demolition of the Property may require recycling or salvaging. To the extent required, Applicant will comply with this requirement.

- (ii) *Windows that are proposed to be replaced shall be hurricane proof impact windows.*

Any new windows being replaced will be hurricane proof impact windows.

- (iii) *Where feasible and appropriate, passive cooling systems, such as operable windows, shall be provided.*

N/A.

- (iv) *Whether resilient landscaping (salt tolerate, highly water absorbent, native or Florida friendly plants) will be provided.*

All new landscaping will consist of Florida friendly plants.

- (v) *Whether adopted sea level rise projections in the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Action Plan, as may be revised from time-to-time by the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change compact, including a study of land elevation and elevation of surrounding properties were considered.*

The scope of the Project only includes demolition and renovations to the exterior facades and existing design elements at the Property.

- (vi) *The ground floor, driveways, and garage ramping for new construction shall be adaptable to the raising of public rights-of-ways and adjacent land.*

N/A.

- (vii) *Where feasible and appropriate, all critical mechanical and electrical systems shall be located above base flood elevation.*

Yes.

- (viii) *Existing buildings shall be, where reasonably feasible and appropriate, elevated to the base flood elevation.*

It is not feasible to raise the portions of the existing building being maintained.

- (ix) *When habitable space is located below the base flood elevation plus City of Miami Beach Freeboard, wet or dry flood proofing systems will be provided in accordance with Chapter 54 of the City Code.*

Yes.

- (x) *Where feasible and appropriate, water retention systems shall be provided.*

Yes.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The Applicant is requesting the approval of the COA for exterior renovations and variance related to proposed signage at the Property. Based on the foregoing, we respectfully request your favorable consideration of this Application.

Sincerely,



Alfredo J. Gonzalez

Enclosure