

March 9, 2020

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: HPB19-0354 Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for Design and Demolition | Sanctuary Hotel | 1745 James Avenue, Miami Beach (the “Property”)

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Historic Preservation Board:

Our firm represents 1745 James, LLC (the “Applicant”), in connection with land use and zoning matters relating to the Property before the Historic Preservation Board (“HPB”). Please accept this Letter of Intent as part of the application, on behalf of the Applicant, for a Certificate of Appropriateness for design, total demolition and approval of variances (“COA”) in connection with the redevelopment of the Property (the “Project”).

I. The Property

The Property is located within the Museum Historic District and the Miami Beach Architectural District. The Property is zoned Residential Medium Density District (RM-2) on the City of Miami Beach Official Zoning Map and designated Residential Medium Density District (RM-2) on the City’s Future Land Use Map.

The Property contains what was originally 2 separate buildings, 1735 James Avenue, built in 1953 as a 2-story apartment-hotel building designed by Manfred Ungaro and 1745 James Avenue was built in 1951 as a 2-story apartment-hotel building designed by Leonard H. Glasser. Each was originally an apartment-hotel building for seasonal tourists with 18 units each, for the

total combined of 32 units. So from 1951 to the 1980s, both properties were two independent properties. The courtyard was divided by the property line, the first building opened to the south and then when the second building was built it opened to the north, giving the appearance of a shared courtyard. In 1984 both sites were unified, and the front façades demolished to create a combined new front façade with a lobby and then connecting the properties at the rear. Once combined in the 1980s it operated as an Assisted Living Facility (“ALF”) before its last use as a Hotel with a destination restaurant & bar and Spa. Separately enclosed with the submittal you will find a copy of a Historic Resource Report (“Historic Report”) prepared by Arthur J. Marcus Architect P.A., which includes the building cards for the Property.

II. Project

Applicant is submitting to the HPB for the total demolition of buildings which are currently unified. The Property is currently listed as contributing to the Museum Historic District. Originally when the district was created it was listed as conforming to the character of the historic district, when the City eliminated that classification, it was automatically listed as contributing. The original apartment buildings were two independent sites, having no public spaces and in the 1980s had their front façade demolished to build a new façade and lobby. The request for total demolition of the existing building would allow for a contemporary 5 story, 50’ building with approximately 90 hotel rooms and small restaurant.

III. Request for Certificate of Appropriateness

Applicant is hereby requesting an approval of the COA for the design and total demolition of Property. This would allow the continued use of the property as a boutique hotel within the Museum Historic district making it compatible with the surrounding properties which many have been renovated hotels with 5 story or larger additions and there are existing apartments of 5 to 11 stories. Since the Property should no longer be classified as contributing, allowing total demolition would permit a more compatible new building within the area.

IV. Compliance with COA Criteria

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.

V. Variance request

Under Section 130-101(a) the Project would require a minimum of 2 loading spaces in to build the 90 hotel rooms. The Project is not required to provide any parking spaces for the project, and to require the construction of the loading spaces would be out of character with the surrounding neighborhood. In addition, the previous hotel and destination restaurant already had a loading zone parking space designated on the public right of way, which is currently still located in front of the property. We are working with the Parking department to maintain the existing loading space and modify as needed.

VI. 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.*

N/A.

- (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.*

Yes, the new construction is being built at base flood elevation plus 1'.

- (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.*

N/A.

- (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.

VII. Conclusion


The Applicant is requesting the approval of the COA of design and total demolition. In addition, that the request for variance to not provide loading parking spaces is granted. The approval by Board would create a boutique hotel that would service the Miami Beach

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Convention Center. Based on the foregoing, we respectfully request your favorable consideration of this Application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alfredo J. Gonzalez', is written over the typed name. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Alfredo J. Gonzalez

Attachment