

MIAMI BEACH

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Staff Report & Recommendation

Design Review Board

TO: DRB Chairperson and Members

DATE: June 1, 2021

FROM: Thomas R. Mooney, AICP
Planning Director



SUBJECT: DRB21-0651
1688 Meridian Avenue

An application has been filed requesting Design Review Approval for the exterior and interior design modifications and tenant signage to the first floor of an existing ten-story office building.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approval with conditions

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

North ½ of Lot 7 and all of Lot 8 of Block 36 Golf Course Subdivision Amended Plat, According to the Plat Thereof, as Recorded in Plat Book 6, Page 26, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

BACKGROUND:

On November 1, 2016, the Design Review Board approved an application for exterior and interior design modifications to the first and second floor of an existing ten-story office building pursuant to file no. DRB16-0061. The application also included approval of the following variances:

1. A variance to exceed by 3'-9" the maximum allowed projection of 25% (1'-3") in order to install a new eyebrow with zero setback from the rear property line.
2. A variance to exceed by 45 SF the maximum permitted area of 15 SF for a projecting sign for a business (Tenant 1) in order to allow the installation of two (2) projecting signs facing Meridian Avenue with a total of 60 SF.
3. A variance to relocate an allowable building identification sign from the parapet of the building facing 17th Street to the new eyebrow at the rear of the building.
4. A variance to allow a projecting sign as a building identification sign in order to install a projecting sign on the eyebrow at the north side of the building facing 17th Street.
5. A variance to relocate an allowable projecting sign for a business facing 17th Street to the new eyebrow at the rear of the building.

6. A variance to exceed by 15 SF the maximum permitted area of 15 SF for a projecting sign for a business in order to allow the installation of a projecting sign at the rear of the
7. A variance to relocate a projecting sign on the rear facade from the ground floor to the 2nd floor of a multistory commercial building.
8. A variance to exceed by 15 SF the maximum permitted area of 15 SF for a projecting sign for a business (Tenant 2) in order to allow the installation of a projecting sign facing Meridian Avenue with 30 SF.

SITE DATA:

Zoning: CD-3
Future Land Use: CD-3
Lot Size: 11,250 SF
Tenant Space: 2,795 SF
Proposed Use: Restaurant
83 indoor seats | 24 outdoor seats

EXISTING PROPERTY:

Ten-story office with round floor retail
Year: 1961
Architect: Morris Lapidus

SURROUNDING PROPERTIES:

East: Two-story Macy's department store
North: Five-story building
South: Six-story building
West: Surface parking lot

THE PROJECT:

The applicant has submitted plans entitled "1688 Meridian Ave", as prepared by **KoDA Architecture + Interior Design**, dated signed and sealed April 5, 2021.

The applicant is proposing exterior and interior design modifications related to tenant improvement for a small portion of the ground floor area of the existing first floor space to create a new restaurant. In addition to these modifications, the applicant is also proposing four (4) new signs for business identification.

COMPLIANCE WITH ZONING CODE:

A preliminary review of the project indicates that the application, as proposed, appears to be inconsistent with the following sections of the City Code:

- The pedestrian egress (concrete slab on grade) at 17 Street adversely impacts the major root zone of the adjacent and closely located existing Royal Palm.
- Elevations, sections and details of signs A, B, C, and D are inconsistent and shall be revised to include visible supporting structure, dimensions of signage and square footage area of respective sign.
- Building elevations shall include the actual signs and the visible supporting structures.
- Details of sign D, shall be revised. The area of the sign is measured by a rectangle around the entire sign. The height of the sign is larger than 1'-3". Specify if sign is illuminated or non-illuminated.
- Any horizontal or angled supporting elements for the signs must be shown on elevation/ section details. Detail width/section of supporting elements shall be

provided. Indicate materials, color and specifications.

- The total sign area indicated on 17th Street shall be revised with accurate area consistent with the dimensions provided.
- The trash room shall be air conditioned.
- The location of trash room does not facilitate access for pick up. Operational details shall be provided at permitting that identify how the trash will be taken to the main building trash room, including its route.

The above noted comments shall not be considered final zoning review or approval. These and all zoning matters shall require final review and verification by the Zoning Administrator prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.

COMPLIANCE WITH DESIGN REVIEW CRITERIA:

Design Review encompasses the examination of architectural drawings for consistency with the criteria stated below with regard to the aesthetics, appearances, safety, and function of the structure or proposed structures in relation to the site, adjacent structures and surrounding community. Staff recommends that the following criteria are found to be satisfied, not satisfied or not applicable, as hereto indicated:

1. The existing and proposed conditions of the lot, including but not necessarily limited to topography, vegetation, trees, drainage, and waterways.
Satisfied
2. The location of all existing and proposed buildings, drives, parking spaces, walkways, means of ingress and egress, drainage facilities, utility services, landscaping structures, signs, and lighting and screening devices.
Satisfied
3. The dimensions of all buildings, structures, setbacks, parking spaces, floor area ratio, height, lot coverage and any other information that may be reasonably necessary to determine compliance with the requirements of the underlying zoning district, and any applicable overlays, for a particular application or project.
Satisfied
4. The color, design, selection of landscape materials and architectural elements of Exterior Building surfaces and primary public interior areas for Developments requiring a Building Permit in areas of the City identified in section 118-252.
Satisfied
5. The proposed site plan, and the location, appearance and design of new and existing Buildings and Structures are in conformity with the standards of this Ordinance and other applicable ordinances, architectural and design guidelines as adopted and amended periodically by the Design Review Board and Historic Preservation Boards, and all pertinent master plans.
Satisfied

6. The proposed Structure, and/or additions or modifications to an existing structure, indicates a sensitivity to and is compatible with the environment and adjacent Structures, and enhances the appearance of the surrounding properties.
Satisfied
7. The design and layout of the proposed site plan, as well as all new and existing buildings shall be reviewed so as to provide an efficient arrangement of land uses. Particular attention shall be given to safety, crime prevention and fire protection, relationship to the surrounding neighborhood, impact on contiguous and adjacent Buildings and lands, pedestrian sight lines and view corridors.
Satisfied
8. Pedestrian and vehicular traffic movement within and adjacent to the site shall be reviewed to ensure that clearly defined, segregated pedestrian access to the site and all buildings is provided for and that all parking spaces are usable and are safely and conveniently arranged; pedestrian furniture and bike racks shall be considered. Access to the Site from adjacent roads shall be designed so as to interfere as little as possible with traffic flow on these roads and to permit vehicles a rapid and safe ingress and egress to the Site.
Satisfied
9. Lighting shall be reviewed to ensure safe movement of persons and vehicles and reflection on public property for security purposes and to minimize glare and reflection on adjacent properties. Lighting shall be reviewed to assure that it enhances the appearance of structures at night.
Not Satisfied; a lighting plan has not been submitted.
10. Landscape and paving materials shall be reviewed to ensure an adequate relationship with and enhancement of the overall Site Plan design.
Not Satisfied; proposed pedestrian egress impacts the major root zone of adjacent Palm Tree.
11. Buffering materials shall be reviewed to ensure that headlights of vehicles, noise, and light from structures are adequately shielded from public view, adjacent properties and pedestrian areas.
Satisfied
12. The proposed structure has an orientation and massing which is sensitive to and compatible with the building site and surrounding area and which creates or maintains important view corridor(s).
Satisfied
13. The building has, where feasible, space in that part of the ground floor fronting a street or streets which is to be occupied for residential or commercial uses; likewise, the upper floors of the pedestal portion of the proposed building fronting a street, or streets shall have residential or commercial spaces, shall have the appearance of being a residential or commercial space or shall have an architectural treatment which shall

buffer the appearance of the parking structure from the surrounding area and is integrated with the overall appearance of the project.

Satisfied

14. The building shall have an appropriate and fully integrated rooftop architectural treatment which substantially screens all mechanical equipment, stairs and elevator towers.

Satisfied

15. An addition on a building site shall be designed, sited and massed in a manner which is sensitive to and compatible with the existing improvement(s).

Not Applicable

16. All portions of a project fronting a street or sidewalk shall incorporate an architecturally appropriate amount of transparency at the first level in order to achieve pedestrian compatibility and adequate visual interest.

Satisfied

17. The location, design, screening and buffering of all required service bays, delivery bays, trash and refuse receptacles, as well as trash rooms shall be arranged so as to have a minimal impact on adjacent properties.

Not Satisfied; location of trash area does not facilitate access for pick-up.

18. In addition to the foregoing criteria, subsection [118-]104(6)(t) of the city Code shall apply to the design review board's review of any proposal to place, construct, modify or maintain a wireless communications facility or other over the air radio transmission or radio reception facility in the public rights-of-way.

Not Applicable

19. The structure and site complies with the sea level rise and resiliency review criteria in Chapter 133, Article II, as applicable.

Not Satisfied; see below

COMPLIANCE WITH SEA LEVEL RISE AND RESILIENCY REVIEW CRITERIA

Section 133-50(a) of the Land Development establishes review criteria for sea level rise and resiliency that must be considered as part of the review process for board orders. The following is an analysis of the request based upon these criteria:

1. A recycling or salvage plan for partial or total demolition shall be provided.
Not Satisfied; Applicant will provide a recycle/salvage plan for demolition at time of permitting.
2. Windows that are proposed to be replaced shall be hurricane proof impact windows.
The existing windows are hurricane proof impact windows
3. Where feasible and appropriate, passive cooling systems, such as operable windows, shall be provided.
Not Applicable

4. Resilient landscaping (salt tolerant, highly water-absorbent, native or Florida friendly plants) shall be provided, in accordance with Chapter 126 of the City Code.

Not Applicable

5. The project applicant shall consider the 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. The applicant shall also specifically study the land elevation of the subject property and the elevation of surrounding properties.

Not Applicable

6. The ground floor, driveways, and garage ramping for new construction shall be adaptable to the raising of public rights-of-ways and adjacent land and shall provide sufficient height and space to ensure that the entry ways and exits can be modified to accommodate a higher street height of up to three (3) additional feet in height.

Not Applicable

7. In all new projects, all critical mechanical and electrical systems shall be located above base flood elevation. Due to flooding concerns, all redevelopment projects shall, whenever practicable, and economically reasonable, move all critical mechanical and electrical systems to a location above base flood elevation.

Not Applicable

8. Existing buildings shall be, where reasonably feasible and economically appropriate, elevated up to base flood elevation, plus City of Miami Beach Freeboard.

Not Applicable

9. 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 of 54 of the City Code.

Not Applicable

10. In all new projects, water retention systems shall be provided.

Not Satisfied

11. Cool pavement materials or porous pavement materials shall be utilized.

Not Applicable

12. The project design shall minimize the potential for a project causing a heat island effect on site.

Not Applicable

ANALYSIS:
DESIGN REVIEW

The applicant is proposing design modifications to the exterior and interior of an existing ten-story office building originally designed by Morris Lapidus. Specifically, the applicant is

proposing interior tenant improvements to the northeast portion of the ground floor that faces both Meridian Avenue and 17th Street.

The proposed tenant is Tacombi, a Mexican taco restaurant. The entrance to the restaurant space is sited on Meridian Avenue, under the recently constructed and historically accurate butterfly canopy. The application includes minor exterior improvements to the ground floor façade along 17th Street, specifically to add an egress door to the west of the second retail bay. Given that this particular elevation was modified in the previously approved application with the demolition of the ground floor walls and installation of new glass storefront systems to pedestrianize this façade, staff is supportive of the proposed egress door but does have concerns with the egress slab's impact on the major root zone of the adjacent Royal Palm. Staff recommends that either the palm be relocated further to the east to allow for sufficient clearance of its root zone, or alternatively, a different hardscape material that will not impact its root zone.

In addition to the exterior and interior modifications, the applicant is proposing four (4) new signs; one above the main entrance canopy on Meridian Avenue (Sign D) and three (3) along the 17th Street elevation (Sign C, Sign B and Sign A). The Meridian Avenue sign, or Sign D, and the central sign on 17th Street, Sign B, are dedicated to the restaurant name '*Tacombi*'. The remaining signs on 17th Street - Sign C and Sign A, flank Sign B - are smaller in size and feature additional signage to the restaurant name, respectively '*Cerveceria*' and '*Taqueria*'. Aside from the restaurant name, staff does not support the additional signage, specifically the '*Cerveceria*' and '*Taqueria*' signs.

In addition to the modifications noted herein, the following summarizes staff's recommendations:

- The proposed signage above the canopy and the storefront bays shall be individual pin-mounted letters, per the existing order DRB16-0061.
- The depth of the proposed signage shall not exceed 4 inches.
- All signs facing 17 Street shall be non-illuminated as they face a residential neighborhood.
- The addition of the mosaic tile to the underside of the concrete canopy is not recommended.

RECOMMENDATION:

In view of the foregoing analysis, staff recommends the application be **approved** with conditions, subject to the conditions enumerated in the attached Draft Order, which address the inconsistencies with the aforementioned Design Review and Sea Level Rise criteria.