


MIAMI BEACH

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
Staff Report & Recommendation

Design Review Board

TO: DRB Chairperson and Members

FROM: Thomas R. Mooney, AICP
Planning Director 

SUBJECT: DRB20-0553
1801 Alton Road

DATE: August 3, 2021

An application has been filed requesting Design Review Approval for the reconfiguration and storefront addition to an existing office building, including one or more waivers.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approval with conditions.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

The East 50 feet of lot 6, Lot 10 LESS the North 2.8 feet thereof, and all of Lot 11, Block 11, of THE ALTON BEACH REALTY COMPANY'S PLAT OF ISLAND VIEW SUBDIVISION, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 6, Page 115. of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida, LESS those lands conveyed to the City of Miami Beach by Deeds recorded in Deed Book 1343, Page 69 and Deed Book 1343, Page 74, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

BACKGROUND:

At the May 4, 2021 Design Review Board meeting, this application was continued to a date certain July 6, 2021, in order to address the concerns expressed by the Board. The July 6, 2021 meeting was cancelled, due to the lack of a quorum, and the item was moved to the August 3, 2021 meeting.

SITE DATA:

Zoning: CD-1
Future Land Use: CD-1
Parking District: 1
Lot Size: 43,792 SF
Existing FAR: 22,071 SF / 0.47
Proposed FAR: 46,845 SF / 1.0*
Maximum FAR: 46,845 SF / 1.0

*As represented by the applicant

Height:
Existing: 38'-0"
Proposed: **45'-0" from BFE +1***
***DRB WAIVER**
Maximum: 40'-0"
CMB Grade: 4.3' NGVD
Base Flood Elevation: 8.0' NGVD

Existing Use: Office
Proposed Use: Office
Required Parking: 83 Spaces
Provided Parking: 85 Spaces
Bicycle Racks: 1 provided

EXISTING STRUCTURE:

Year Constructed: 1981
Architect: Isaac Sklar Assoc.

North: One-story Commercial
South: Canal
West: Five-story Commercial
East: Two-story Commercial

THE PROJECT:

The applicant has submitted plans entitled "Commercial Addition to an Existing Commercial Building", as designed by **Gonzalez Architecture**, signed, sealed, and dated June 7, 2021.

The applicant is requesting Design Review Approval for the reconfiguration and three-story addition of an existing two-story commercial building.

The applicant is requesting the following design waiver(s):

1. The height of the proposed structure is 45'-0" in accordance with Section 142-276 Maximum Building Height (Feet).

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:

- Maximum Building Height (Feet): 40' (except as provided in Section 142-1161). Notwithstanding the above, the Design Review Board, in accordance with the applicable review criteria, may allow up to an additional five feet of height, as measured from the base flood elevation plus maximum freeboard, to the top of the second floor slab.
- Sec. 130-69. URBAN HEAT ISLAND ORDINANCE. - Commercial and noncommercial parking lots. 3) Open- air parking lots, open to the sky, shall be constructed with (i) a high albedo surface consisting of a durable material or sealant in order to minimize the urban heat island effect, or ii) porous pavement. The provisions of this paragraph shall apply to all parking areas, and all drive lanes and ramps.
- The accessible roof deck of the three-story structure shall not exceed 50% of the area of the floor below.
- The transition of sidewalk shall not include railings and shall instead include a landscape transition.
- The proposed curb cut on Dade Boulevard shall be reduced in width.

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; However, the applicant is requesting a design waiver from the Board.
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; However, the applicant is requesting a design waiver from the Board.
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; However, the applicant is requesting a design waiver from the Board.
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; However, the applicant is requesting a design waiver from the Board.
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.

Satisfied

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; However, the applicant is requesting a design waiver from the Board.

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 Applicable
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.
Satisfied
3. Where feasible and appropriate, passive cooling systems, such as operable windows, shall be provided.
Satisfied
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.
Satisfied
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.
Satisfied
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.
Satisfied

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.

Satisfied

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

Satisfied

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 Satisfied

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

Satisfied; the applicant proposed a vegetated green roof.

ANALYSIS:

DESIGN REVIEW

The applicant is proposing to reconfigure and add to an existing two-story commercial building located on the corner of Alton Road and Dade Boulevard. The original structure was constructed as a bank building with offices and the applicant proposes to modernize the building with ground floor retail, two additional levels of office space, and a new two-story parking garage addition. The proposed design raises the ground floor retail along Alton Road to 7'-0" NGVD, with the remaining ground floor space located at the existing 6.25' NGVD. The application includes a request for one design waiver.

The requested design waiver pertains to the height of the commercial building. Development within the CD-1 zoning district can request additional height, up to five (5') feet, through the design review board process. The applicant is requesting 5' feet of additional height in order to construct a third story along the Alton Road portion of the structure. This new floor is slated for commercial spaces that flank a nearly 900 square foot roof deck. Across Alton Road is the edge of the Sunset Harbor neighborhood that is zoned CD-2, and where the maximum allowed height is 50', and such height can also be increased by five feet through the design review process. Subsequently, a five-story retail building (Michael's) was recently constructed. Staff is supportive of the waiver and finds that the proposed height, given its allocation, is in context with the neighborhood and will enhance the Alton Road commercial corridor.

The proposed building is designed in a contemporary style, where the ground floor facing Alton Road has been reclad in storefront glazing and the two stories above exhibit a new glass skin behind a perforated screen. The openings along these elevations provide architectural interest and movement. The new façade rounds the corner of Dade Boulevard and transitions into the existing façade that will be refreshed with new windows and a stucco finish. Two new levels of parking have been added to the internal portions of the key-shaped lot, connected to the existing building and infilling an otherwise unique property that not only fronts two main streets, but also cuts through the block to the secondary 19th Street frontage to the north. The design proposes significant landscape improvements that include a large roof garden, which straddles the better half of the new parking addition and the existing building, a roof garden above the new third story facing Alton Road, and a small park at the northwestern corner of the site. This green area is sited just north of the ramp into the garage and continues the architectural follies of concrete arches that are proposed at the entrance to the garage. These efforts continue the architecture of the refreshed building and provide a continuous and pleasant pedestrian experience.

Furthermore, with the revised plans submitted since the last meeting, the applicant has addressed the design concerns that were expressed by the Board at the May 4, 2021 meeting. The items revised include the following:

- Refined the design of the screen that clads the new building, providing details of the proposed perforated metal screen and attachment details, as shown on Sheet A029.
- Provided additional section details, as shown on Sheet A503.
- Introduced a three-story glass reveal where the new building and old building meet along the Dade Boulevard elevation.

In summary, staff is generally supportive of the design and recommends its approval with the design direction provided herein, and/or additional input and directions from the Board.

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.