

# MIAMI BEACH

PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
Staff Report & Recommendation

Design Review Board

TO: DRB Chairperson and Members

DATE: August 3, 2021

FROM: Thomas R. Mooney, AICP  
Planning Director

SUBJECT: DRB21-0664  
**3900-4000 Alton Road**

An application has been filed requesting Design Review Approval for the construction of a new 9-story multifamily building on the vacant portion of the site.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Continuance to a future meeting date.

## **LEGAL DESCRIPTION:**

See attached 'Exhibit A'

## **SITE DATA:**

Zoning:	RM-2
Future Land Use:	RM-2
Lot Size:	
Parcel A	49,083 SF*
Parcel B	99,240 SF*
Total	148,323 SF*

\*As indicated on submitted survey

Existing FAR:	72,775 SF   0.49
Proposed FAR:	271,625 SF   1.83
Maximum FAR:	296,646 SF   2.0
Proposed Height:	85'-0" / 8-story
Maximum Height:	85'-0"
CMB Grade:	6.03' NGVD

Proposed Units: 176 Units

Existing Parking:	35 Spaces
Proposed Parking:	269 Spaces
Required Parking:	241 Spaces

## **EXISTING STRUCTURE:**

4000 Alton Road (Talmudic College)  
Year Constructed: 1965  
Architect: R. Clayton Jr.  
3900 Alton Road

## **SURROUNDING PROPERTIES:**

West: Biscayne Bay  
North: Julia Tuttle Causeway  
South: I-95 Ramps  
East: One-story commercial | St. Patrick's Church | Single family residential

## **THE PROJECT:**

The applicant has submitted revised plans entitled "3900 Alton Road – DRB Final Submittal File No. 21-0664", by **Arquitectonica**, dated, signed, and sealed May 10, 2021. The applicant is requesting Design Review approval for the construction of a new multi-family residential building on a vacant portion of an existing site.

## **COMPLIANCE WITH ZONING CODE:**

A preliminary review of the project indicates that the application, as proposed, appears to be consistent with the applicable sections of the City Code.

- 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.
- Sec. 130-101. Space requirements and location.
  - A.B. For the new construction of multi-family, hotel, and commercial buildings utilizing enclosed structures for the storage and/or parking of vehicles, all required loading spaces shall be located internally.

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.  
**Not Satisfied; Further refinement of the exterior building surfaces and architectural elements is required in order visually break down the massing of the building volume, with an overall length of approximately 450 feet.**
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.  
**Not Satisfied; See No. 4 above. Additional refinement of the overall architecture is required in order to be more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.**
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.  
**Not satisfied; See Nos. 4 & 6 above.**
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.  
**Not satisfied; The proposed 30 foot driveway within the front yard is excessive and should be reduced.**
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; Additional details are required in order to ensure that any lighting does not have a negative impact on adjacent properties.**
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).  
**Not Satisfied; See No. 4 above.**

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.  
**Partially satisfied; The painted blank stucco walls of the 2-story parking pedestal do not adequately buffer the appearance of the parking structure from the surrounding area.**
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 Satisfied; See No. 4 above.**
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.  
**Not Satisfied; See No. 13 above.**
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; The proposed loading is visible from adjacent roadways. It must be fully enclosed in order to comply with Section 130-101 of the City Code.**
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.  
**Satisfied**

#### **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; a recycling or salvage plan shall be submitted at 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.  
**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.  
**Satisfied**
10. In all new projects, water retention systems shall be provided.  
**Satisfied**
11. Cool pavement materials or porous pavement materials shall be utilized.  
**Satisfied**
12. The project design shall minimize the potential for a project causing a heat island effect on site.

## **Satisfied**

### **ANALYSIS:** **DESIGN REVIEW**

The subject site is challenging as it is located south of the Julia Tuttle Causeway (I-195) exit to 41<sup>st</sup> Street and east of the Alton Road onramp to the causeway, with its frontage to the east on Alton Road, facing St. Patrick's Church. The unified parcel is comprised of vacant land, the Talmudic University, and FDOT land (which will be incorporated into the site).

The applicant is proposing a new nine-story residential building with 176 units ranging from studios of 550 SF to 3-bedroom units of up to 1,500 SF, along with 2 levels of covered parking and amenities. The proposed design of the building conforms to the unique configuration of the site, with its bar-like massing running along the southern property line and its short end obliquely angled at the front and rear. The building includes two floors of parking, with the tower extruding upwards in a u-shape, opening southwards. With the ground floor dedicated to covered parking, the residential units commence on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. The project also features an amenity deck on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and a mechanical roof top.

The site is accessed from Alton Road, where a driveway and pedestrian pathway cross an internal drive to the main drop-off and entrance on the north elevation, which is internal to the site. The building is designed in a contemporary style, predominantly finished in stucco and featuring broad roof parapets with striated stucco relief that enhances the curved planes at the short ends of the building. The projecting balconies are in staggered locations and the balcony rails contain zig-zag patterns alternating in white and bronze colored metal. Zig-zag striped color stucco has been applied along the ground floor elevations and a monolithic stair tower has been finished in zig zagged scored stucco.

Overall, staff finds that the design needs significant refinement, especially on the long expanse of the walls of the stair tower and along the north elevation. These portions of the building rely too much on stucco scoring to provide interest, as well as along the ground floor where walls are simply painted with stripes. While the design may be adequate for book ends of the building, which are approximately 150 feet in length, the overall building is nearly 450 feet long, with the center portion of building running over 250 in length along the south side. Staff believes that more effort is needed to break down the overall massing, including the various balcony structures with two railing colors, and additional refinement is required for such an extensive continuous elevation. In order to further enhance the overall design and its compatibility with the neighborhood, staff has the following recommendations:

- The elevations and overall design concept shall be further studied, refined and advanced; this may include, but should not be limited to, changes in plane, both in plan and elevation, to further break down the massing along the longer elevations.
- The loading area shall be fully buffered from the adjacent causeway with an architectural enclosure.
- The drive that connects the Talmudic College to subject site shall be reduced in width.
- The central portion of the north elevation, which lacks architectural interest, shall be further refined with materiality and fenestration.
- The stair tower on the north elevation shall be further refined; staff recommends the incorporation of more varied and higher quality, non-stucco materials.

- The exterior of the ground floor and garage / podium shall be completely rethought and redesigned; staff recommends the introduction of green walls or attached sculptural elements to provide some movement and break up the wall planes.
- The proposed glazing should be the same color, where proposal calls for two colors.

In summary, staff recommends that the application be continued to a future date, in order to allow for the applicant to address the recommend modifications noted above.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

In view of the foregoing analysis, staff recommends the application be **continued** to a date certain of October 5, 2021. However, should the Design Review Board move to approve the application, staff recommends that such approval be subject to the conditions enumerated in the attached draft Final Order, which address the inconsistencies with the aforementioned Design Review criteria.

**“Exhibit A”**

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:**

ALL OF LOT 53 AND A PORTION OF LOTS 52, 54 AND 55, BLOCK 1 OF NAUTILUS SUBDIVISION, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 8 AT PAGE 95, AND A PORTION OF LOT D OF RE-SUBDIVISION OF LOTS 48, 49, 50 AND 51 OF BLOCK 1, NAUTILUS SUBDIVISION, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 35 AT PAGE 46 OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, AND A PORTION OF SECTIONS 22 AND 27 IN TOWNSHIP 53 SOUTH, RANGE 42 EAST, CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, AND BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

BEGIN AT THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SAID LOT 54 OF BLOCK 1 OF NAUTILUS SUBDIVISION; THENCE NORTH 09 DEGREES 11 MINUTES 22 SECONDS EAST, ALONG THE EASTERLY LINE OF SAID LOTS 52, 53 AND 54, ALSO BEING THE WESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF ALTON ROAD (STATE ROAD 907) AS SHOWN ON THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION RIGHT-OF-WAY MAP SECTION 87090-2402 DATED 12-2009, SHEET 16 OF 18, FOR 228.03 FEET; THENCE NORTH 80 DEGREES 48 MINUTES 38 SECONDS WEST FOR 269.11 FEET; THENCE NORTH 09 DEGREES 11 MINUTES 22 SECONDS EAST FOR 144.42 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 55 DEGREES 48 MINUTES 22 SECONDS WEST, ALONG THE SOUTHEASTERLY, LIMITED ACCESS, RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF THE JULIA TUTTLE CAUSEWAY AS SHOWN ON STATE ROAD 112/I-195 OF SAID FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION RIGHT-OF-WAY MAP SECTION NO. 87090-2402, SHEET 16 OF 18, FOR 301.90 FEET TO A POINT ON A CIRCULAR CURVE, CONCAVE TO THE NORTHEAST AND WHOSE RADIUS POINT BEARS NORTH 42 DEGREES 50 MINUTES 30 SECONDS EAST FROM THE RADIUS POINT OF THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED CIRCULAR CURVE; THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY ALONG A 768.51 FOOT RADIUS, CURVE LEADING TO THE LEFT THROUGH A CENTRAL ANGLE OF 06 DEGREES 58 MINUTES 09 SECONDS FOR AN ARC DISTANCE OF 93.48 FEET TO A POINT OF TANGENCY (SAID POINT BEING COINCIDENT WITH STATE ROAD NO. 907, STATION 17+34.46, AS SHOWN ON SAID FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION RIGHT-OF-WAY MAP SECTION 87090-2402, SHEET 16 OF 18); THENCE SOUTH 54 DEGREES 07 MINUTES 39 SECONDS EAST FOR 218.45 FEET TO A POINT OF CURVATURE (SAID POINT BEING COINCIDENT WITH STATE ROAD NO. 907, STATION 15+16.00 AS SHOWN ON SAID FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION RIGHT-OF-WAY MAP SECTION 87090-2402, SHEET 16 OF 18); THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY ALONG A 600.92 FOOT RADIUS CURVE LEADING TO THE RIGHT, THROUGH A CENTRAL ANGLE OF 09 DEGREES 57 MINUTES 10 SECONDS FOR AN ARC DISTANCE OF 104.39 FEET (LAST MENTIONED THREE COURSES BEING COINCIDENT WITH THE NORTHERLY LIMITED ACCESS RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF ALTON ROAD (STATE ROAD NO. 25), AS SHOWN ON SAID FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION RIGHT-OF-WAY MAP); THENCE SOUTH 76 DEGREES 03 MINUTES 16 SECONDS EAST FOR 72.65 FEET; THENCE NORTH 41 DEGREES 11 MINUTES 22 SECONDS EAST, ALONG THE WESTERLY LIMITED ACCESS RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF ALTON ROAD (STATE ROAD 907) AS SHOWN ON SAID RIGHT-OF-WAY MAP SECTION 87090-2402, FOR 48.00 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 80 DEGREES 48 MINUTES 38 SECONDS EAST, ALONG THE SOUTHERLY LINE OF SAID LOT 54, FOR 26.00 FEET TO THE POINT



OF BEGINNING.

TOGETHER WITH THAT CERTAIN NON-EXCLUSIVE EASEMENT FOR PEDESTRIAN AND VEHICULAR INGRESS AND EGRESS AS DEFINED IN ARTICLE 1(C), A TEMPORARY NON-EXCLUSIVE EASEMENT FOR M-400 PHASE I CONSTRUCTION EASEMENT AS DEFINED IN ARTICLE 3(A), A NON-EXCLUSIVE EASEMENT FOR THE PURPOSES OF STORMWATER DRAINAGE AS DEFINED IN ARTICLE 6(B) AND A TEMPORARY NONEXCLUSIVE M-4000 CRANE SWING EASEMENT AS DEFINED IN ARTICLE 7(B) OF THAT CERTAIN EASEMENT AND OPERATING AGREEMENT EXECUTED BY AND BETWEEN TALMUDIC COLLEGE 4000 ALTON ROAD, INC. AND M-4000 ALTON OWNER, LLC, DATED OCTOBER 3, 2014 AND RECORDED OCTOBER 6, 2014 IN OFFICIAL RECORDS BOOK 29338, PAGE 3650, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA.

AND TOGETHER WITH ANY AND ALL RIGHTS IN AND TO THOSE CERTAIN COVENANTS, CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS CONTAINED IN THAT CERTAIN DECLARATION OF RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS IN LIEU OF UNITY OF TITLE DATED OCTOBER 1, 2014, RECORDED OCTOBER 6, 2014 AT OFFICIAL RECORDS BOOK 29338, PAGE 3635, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA; BUT ONLY TO THE EXTENT THEY ARE DETERMINED TO BE INTERESTS IN REAL PROPERTY.

LANDS SHOWN HEREON CONTAINING 99,240 SQUARE FEET, OR 2.278 ACRES, MORE OR LESS.

LYING AND BEING IN SECTION 22 AND 27, TOWNSHIP 53 SOUTH, RANGE 42 EAST, MIAMI BEACH, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA.