

# MIAMI BEACH

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Staff Report & Recommendation

Planning Board

TO: Chairperson and Members  
Planning Board

DATE: April 19, 2016

FROM: Thomas R. Mooney, AICP  
Planning Director

SUBJECT: **File No. 2312 – 1700 Alton Road – Historic Site Designation**

### **REQUEST**

**PB File No. 2312. 1700 Alton Road – Historic Site Designation. AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS OF THE MIAMI BEACH CITY CODE; BY AMENDING SECTION 118-593(E), ENTITLED "DELINEATION ON ZONING MAP" BY DESIGNATING ONE OR MORE BUILDINGS AT 1700 ALTON ROAD AS AN HISTORIC SITE TO BE KNOWN AS "1700 ALTON ROAD HISTORIC SITE," AS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN THE ORDINANCE; PROVIDING THAT THE CITY'S ZONING MAP SHALL BE AMENDED TO INCLUDE 1700 ALTON ROAD AS AN HISTORIC SITE; ADOPTING THE DESIGNATION REPORT ATTACHED TO THE STAFF REPORT AS APPENDIX "A"; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION IN THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS OF THE CITY CODE; REPEALER; SEVERABILITY; AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

The applicant for this request is AC 1700 Alton Owner, LLC.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Transmit the proposed ordinance amendment to the City Commission with a favorable recommendation.

### **ZONING / SITE DATA**

Legal Description: Lots 1 & 2, Block 17, of Commercial Subdivision 1<sup>st</sup> Addition, According to the Plat Thereof, as Recorded in Plat Book 6, Page 30, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Zoning: CD-2 Commercial, Medium Intensity District  
Future Land Use Designation: Medium Intensity Commercial Category (CD-2)  
Existing Use/Condition: Multifamily / Hotel / Retail

### **HISTORY/ BACKGROUND**

On January 12, 2016, at the request of the applicant, the Historic Preservation Board reviewed a Preliminary Evaluation and Recommendation Report relative to the possible historic designation of the existing structure as an individual local historic site. At this meeting, the

Board directed staff and the applicant to prepare a formal historic designation report. On February 9, 2016, the Board continued the application to the March 8, 2016 meeting, at the request of the applicant.

At its March 8, 2016 meeting, the Historic Preservation Board (HPB) made a recommendation in favor of historic designation to the Planning Board and the City Commission (HPB File No. 7590). Additionally, the HPB approved a Certificate of Appropriateness (HPB file No. 7595) for the partial demolition, restoration, and renovation of the existing structure as part of a new hotel development.

### **HISTORIC DESIGNATION PROCESS**

The designation report for a proposed historic site is required to be presented to the Historic Preservation Board and the Planning Board at separate public hearings. Following public input, the Historic Preservation Board votes on whether or not the proposed historic site meets the criteria listed in the Land Development Regulations of the City Code, and transmit a recommendation on historic designation to the Planning Board and City Commission. If the Historic Preservation Board votes against the designation, no further action is required. If the Historic Preservation Board votes in favor of designation, the Planning Board reviews the designation report and formulates its own recommendation. The recommendations of both Boards, along with the designation report, are presented to the City Commission. Because in this instance the proposed ordinance involves an area less than ten (10) contiguous acres, the City Commission must hold one public hearing on the designation. Upon conclusion of the hearing, the City Commission can immediately adopt the ordinance with a 5/7 majority vote.

### **HISTORIC DESIGNATION CRITERIA**

In accordance with Section 118-592, Criteria for Designation, of the Land Development Regulations, eligibility for historic designation is determined on the basis of compliance with the listed criteria set forth below:

- (a) The Historic Preservation Board shall have the authority to recommend that properties be designated as historic buildings, historic structures, historic improvements, historic landscape features, historic interiors (architecturally significant public portions only), historic sites or historic districts if they are significant in the historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic or archeological heritage of the city, the county, state or nation. Such properties shall possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling or association and meet at least one of the following criteria:
  - (1) Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the history of the city, the county, state or nation;
  - (2) Association with the lives of persons significant in the city's past history;
  - (3) Embody the distinctive characteristics of an historical period, architectural or design style or method of construction;
  - (4) Possesses high artistic values;
  - (5) Represent the work of a master, serve as an outstanding or representative work of a master designer, architect or builder who contributed to our historical, aesthetic or architectural heritage;
  - (6) Have yielded, or are likely to yield information important in pre-history or history;
  - (7) Be listed in the National Register of Historic Places;
  - (8) Consist of a geographically definable area that possesses a significant concentration of sites, buildings or structures united by historically significant past

events or aesthetically by plan or physical development, whose components may lack individual distinction.

- (b) A building, structure (including the public portions of the interior), improvement or landscape feature may be designated historic even if it has been altered if the alteration is reversible and the most significant architectural elements are intact and repairable.

### **HISTORIC DESIGNATION EVALUATION**

Below is a summary of the historic and architectural characteristics for the designation for the building. For additional information, see the “Historic Site Designation Report,” attached as Appendix “A”.

#### **Historic Significance**

The property was designed by noted local Architect Martin Luther Hampton in 1922 in Miami Beach. Designed in the Mediterranean architectural style, this was the second tallest high-rise hotel building constructed in the City in 1922.

The Building card lists two names for the building in 1922 - the Mayflower Hotel and the Variety Hotel. However in the Polk’s Business Directory for 1924 and 1925 the building is listed as the Marlborough Hotel. In the 1926 and 1927 editions of the Polk’s Directory it is listed as the Mayflower Hotel.

When constructed this neighborhood was a bit out of the mainstream of the city. However it was located in proximity to the Flamingo Hotel built by Carl Fisher in 1920 as well as close to the Miami Beach terminus of the Collins Bridge, the original vehicular connection to Miami. It was also located near to the future western end of Lincoln Road, although most development at that time on the Road was concentrated towards the eastern end.

By the 1930’s this section of Alton Road was developing into one of the major commercial thoroughfares in the City. The corner of Alton and Lincoln Roads - one block to the south of 1700 Alton - was an important corner housing the 3-story Altonia Hotel at the SE corner and the Miami Beach First National Bank at the NE corner.

One of the city’s earliest grocery stores – the Walker-Skagseth grocery store was located on the SE corner of 17th & Alton in a building from the 1920’s and which still currently exists and has been renovated as a bank. And the 1950’s saw the relocation of the Epicure grocery store from its previous location on Washington Avenue to 1/2 block south on Alton Road.

#### **Architectural Characteristics**

This hotel building is a good example of the Spanish Mediterranean style of architecture popular in the 1920’s.

The relatively austere original facade treatment contains a limited number of Mediterranean style details, including an articulated corner door surround extending up to and including the corner second floor window. This more detailed door and window surround contrasts nicely with the typical simplicity of the rest of the building as seen in the historic photographs.

In addition, there were recessed arches over the first floor windows and doors at both the five-story and one-story buildings. Above the fifth floor are hipped clay-tile roofs above the building parapets.

The building corner rises into an abbreviated angled corner tower with a higher roof, culminated with a flagpole.

The desire to transform Miami Beach into a Mediterranean city corresponded with the ascendancy of the Mediterranean revival style in Florida. Its appearance in Florida was contemporary with the Spanish Colonial style, also popular in the early twentieth century.

Spanish Mediterranean architecture was the "style of choice" for the first major boom period in Miami Beach. Its connotation of Mediterranean resort architecture, combining expressions of Italian, Moorish, North African, and Southern Spanish themes was found to be an appropriate and commercially appealing image for the new Floridian seaside resort.

During the mid-1910s through the early 1930s, the style was applied to hotels, apartment buildings, commercial structures, and even modest residences. Its architectural vocabulary was characterized by stucco walls, low pitched terra cotta and historic Cuban tile roofs, arches, scrolled or tile capped parapet walls and articulated door surrounds, sometimes utilizing Spanish Baroque decorative motifs and Classical elements. Featured detailing was occasionally executed in keystone.

#### **AMENDING ORDINANCE REVIEW CRITERIA**

Pursuant to Section 118-163 of the City Code, in reviewing a request for an amendment to these land development regulations, the board shall consider the following when applicable:

**1. Whether the proposed change is consistent and compatible with the comprehensive plan and any applicable neighborhood or redevelopment plans.**

**Consistent** – The proposed ordinance is consistent with the Goals, Objectives, and Policies in the Comprehensive Plan, as the proposed does not affect the density, intensity, or uses permitted on the site.

**2. Whether the proposed change would create an isolated district unrelated to adjacent or nearby districts.**

**Not applicable** – The proposed amendment does not modify zoning district boundaries.

**3. Whether the change suggested is out of scale with the needs of the neighborhood or the city.**

**Consistent** – The proposed change does not affect the permitted scale of development on the site, and the designation of this structure as a local historic site may help to encourage further rehabilitation that is compatible with the scale, characteristics, and needs of the surrounding neighborhood.

**4. Whether the proposed change would tax the existing load on public facilities and infrastructure.**

**Consistent** – The proposed ordinances will not affect the development intensity of the

site, and therefore not affect the load on public facilities.

**5. Whether existing district boundaries are illogically drawn in relation to existing conditions on the property proposed for change.**

**Not applicable** - The proposed historic district will not change the existing underlying zoning district for any property.

**6. Whether changed or changing conditions make the passage of the proposed change necessary.**

**Consistent** – Past demolition of historic structures demonstrates the necessity of this amendment to maintain the historical integrity of the area.

**7. Whether the proposed change will adversely influence living conditions in the neighborhood.**

**Consistent** – The proposed change will not adversely affect living conditions in the neighborhood.

**8. Whether the proposed change will create or excessively increase traffic congestion beyond the levels of service as set forth in the comprehensive plan or otherwise affect public safety.**

**Consistent** – The proposed change will not create or increase traffic congestion from what is currently permitted.

**9. Whether the proposed change will seriously reduce light and air to adjacent areas.**

**Consistent** – The proposed ordinance will not seriously reduce light and air to adjacent areas. Historic designation normally results in the retention, rather than the reduction of light and air to adjacent properties.

**10. Whether the proposed change will adversely affect property values in the adjacent area.**

**Consistent** – The proposed change should not adversely affect property values.

**11. Whether the proposed change will be a deterrent to the improvement or development of adjacent property in accordance with existing regulations.**

**Consistent** – The proposed amendment will not change the development regulations for adjacent properties, which must comply with their own site specific development regulations. Furthermore, the proposed ordinance should not affect the ability for an adjacent property to be developed in accordance with said regulations.

**12. Whether there are substantial reasons why the property cannot be used in accordance with existing zoning.**

**Not applicable.**

- 13. Whether it is impossible to find other adequate sites in the city for the proposed use in a district already permitting such use.**

**Not applicable.**

### **ANALYSIS**

The designation of the site will not create any negative impacts for the surrounding areas. The proposed Ordinance amendment to designate the building located at 1700 Alton Road as a Historic Preservation Site is consistent with the applicable Planning Board review criteria.

The Designation/Historic Resources Report (Attached as Appendix “A”) describes the significance of the building and of the neighborhood in which it is located. Based on the Historic Resources Report and the Historic Designation Evaluation above, it is apparent that the building is consistent with the Historic Designation criteria.

This designation will further benefit the purpose of historic preservation in Miami Beach and preserve an important historic resource.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

In view of the foregoing analysis and the recommendation of the Historic Preservation Board, staff recommends that the Planning Board transmit the proposed ordinance amendment to the City Commission with a favorable recommendation.

TRM/MAB/RAM