

February 20, 2018

**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: MODIFIED SUBMITTAL FOR HPB17-0177 | Application for a Certificate  
of Appropriateness for Design & Demolition | CASA CASUARINA | 1116  
Ocean Drive, Miami Beach (the “Property”)**

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Dear Chairperson and Members of the Historic Preservation Board:

Our firm represents VMSB, LLC (the “Applicant”), in connection with land use and zoning matters relating to the Property. Please accept this Application, on behalf of the Applicant, for a Certificate of Appropriateness for design and demolition (“COA”) in connection with the enhancement of the Property (the “Project”).

**I. The Property**

The Property is located in the Ocean Drive/Collins Avenue Historic District and the Miami Beach Architectural District. The Property is zoned Mixed Use Entertainment (MXE) on the City of Miami Beach Official Zoning Map and designated Mixed Use Entertainment (MXE) on the City’s Future Land Use Map.

The Property contains a 3-story Hotel from 1930 originally called Casa Casuarina designed by Arthur Laidler-Jones for Mr. Alden Freeman. Mr. Freeman, was inspired by the Alcazar de Colon in Santo Domingo, Christopher Columbus family home designed by his son in 1510. Freeman built Casa Casuarina so when his friends visited Miami Beach they would have a place to stay. Enclosed please find a copy of the building cards for the Property and a Historic Resource Report (“Historic Report”). After Mr. Freeman’s ownership it transferred several times and the property was renamed the Amsterdam Palace for many decades becoming a poorly maintained apartment complex. Then in 1992 Gianni Versace purchased the property and fully

renovated and expanded the property living there until his murder in 1997. The Applicant has retained its original name as Casa Casuarina.

## **II. Project and Modifications**

Applicant is submitting to the Historic Preservation Board ("HPB") for a COA to install 2 retractable canopies', one is located over the interior courtyard of Casa Casuarina and the second over the courtyard and pool area (created by Gianni Versace period) on the southern end of the property. Based on comments from the Board at the February 13, 2018 meeting the Applicant requested the architect to further refine the canopy over the courtyard and pool area. The following are the modifications that have been introduced in the February 20, 2018 plans:

1. The front wall originally proposed at 28', which was reduced in response to February 13<sup>th</sup> staff report to 24'3" has been further reduced down to **22'10"**, a **total reduction of 5'2"**.
2. The width of the canopy over the pool and terrace has been reduced from 62' to **43' in width, a 19' reduction.** With this change, the canopy will not extend past the wall.
3. When the canopy is retracted, it will **now retract to the East**, so it will be completely hidden by the wall, originally the plans had it retracting to the west and it was visible and interfered with the arches.
4. The new front wall, upper columns, arches, base and capitals **will have the detail of the existing courtyard west evaluation,** bringing the architectural features easier to view by the public.

## **III. Request for Certificate of Appropriateness**

The Applicant is hereby requesting an approval of the COA to permit the addition of the two retractable canopies. With the installation of the two retractable canopies, the property will continue to meet the operation needs of today's market while continuing to be compatible with the surrounding properties and provide.


## **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. Conclusion**

The Applicant is requesting the approval of the COA to approve adding the two retractable canopies within the Property. These canopies will enhance the existing architectural features created by both the Freeman and the Versace ownerships. 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', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alfredo J. Gonzalez