Sound Study Peer Review for Proposed Indoor Entertainment at 955 Alton Road, Miami Beach, Florida (Coco Bambu) PB18-0188

Prepared for:

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1 Introduction

This report documents a peer review of a noise impact study conducted for the City of Miami Beach related to a request for a Conditional Use Permit for an Entertainment License being proposed for 955 Alton Road (Coco Bambu). The noise impact study specifically addresses potential noise impacts due to the playing of prerecorded music by a DJ as well as live entertainment inside the venue. The reviewed report, prepared by Edward Dugger + Associates (ED+A) and dated March 19, 2018 describes the proposed project, summarizes results of a site noise survey, and presents a detailed analysis and conclusions.

2 Project Description

The property consists of an existing two-story restaurant at the southeast corner of the intersection at Alton Road and 10th Street. The front of the restaurant is on the west side of the building facing Alton Road while the back-of-house spaces occupy both floors on the east end of the building. At present, the venue has a distributed audio system on both floors through which background music is presumably played. A supplemental audio system is being proposed, for which there are currently no specifications, to accommodate the live music and DJ. Indoor entertainment is being proposed from 10 am until the "current allowance," which is not identified.

The report identifies the nearest potentially impacted residential properties as being directly behind the restaurant as well as multi-family units to the northeast (at 1000 Lenox Road) and southeast. Examination of GoogleEarth also reveals what appear to be nearby single family homes to the southeast of the property. There do not appear to be nearby residential properties to the west.

3 Comments

The sound study report prepared by ED+A specifically addresses many facets of the project, including existing sound levels on the site gleaned from what appears to be a well-executed site survey and building envelope construction. The report prescribes a maximum interior sound level to mitigate potential community noise issues given the building construction, specifically the glazing on the north and south facades of the building. In general, the study was performed diligently and we agree with many claims. However, we submit the following supplemental comments regarding the study and application.

3.1 No Identification of Ending Time for Indoor Entertainment

The sound study only states that entertainment may finish "no later than the current allowance." Identification of that time would assist in forming a complete understanding of the potential impact.

3.2 Acknowledgement of Residences to the Southeast

We concur with ED+A that of all residential properties near Coco Bambu, those directly to the east, behind the restaurant, will be the least impacted. This is due to the presence of numerous buffer spaces on both floors on the east side of the building, as

their report points out. The assertion that 1000 Lenox Avenue has a greater chance of impact is correct due to the line of sight between that property and windows along the north façade of the restaurant.

However, it appears to us that the impact to the residences to the southeast could be commensurate with that for 1000 Lenox Avenue. In fact, it appears that the nearest residence (which appears to be a single family home) is approximately 50’ from the nearest windows on the south façade of the restaurant.

3.3 Low-Frequency Concerns

The analysis presented by ED+A, while containing a few lapses in methodology (e.g., ignoring the reverberant field within the restaurant while calculating sound level diminution due to distance), provides valuable information and, in general, gets close to a valid conclusion.

However, the analysis does not address low-frequency sound which is often the problem in community noise issues. This is understandable due to the fact that transmission loss data for low frequencies (below 100 hertz) is often not provided by manufacturers.

Given that the low-frequency impact of the project is somewhat undefined, we recommend that the supplemental audio system (for which there are no specifications) allow for low-frequency limiting of sound level. In this way, whatever shortcomings the glazing may have in attenuating low frequencies may be addressed by electronic means.

Ideally, once the low-frequency nature of sound transmission has been established, perhaps via site sound testing, appropriate interior sound level limits could be set in terms of C-weighted decibels (dBC), which are the more appropriate metric when describing sound with significant low-frequency content.

4 Conclusions

The sound study report prepared by ED+A provides valuable information and generally addresses the potential impact upon the nearest residential properties. However, as described herein, we feel that certain points should be addressed in the study. Times of entertainment should be explicitly stated. More importantly, the study should elaborate on the potential impact of low-frequency energy, not just on the property at 1000 Lenox Road but on apparent single family homes nearby to the southeast.