

MIAMI BEACH

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Staff Report & Recommendation

Historic Preservation Board

TO: Chairperson and Members
Historic Preservation Board

DATE: July 10, 2018

FROM: Thomas R. Mooney, AICP
Planning Director



SUBJECT: HPB18-0203, **2726 Alton Road.**

The applicant, Silvia Nunez, Trs., Silvia Nunez Revocable Trust, is requesting that the designation of Historic Single Family Residence be removed from the property.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approval of the removal of the historic designation

BACKGROUND

On August 10, 2010, at the request of the previous property owner, the Board reviewed and approved an application to designate the property located at 2726 Alton Road as a Historic Single Family Residence (HPB File No. 7187).

EXISTING STRUCTURE

Local Historic District:	N/A
Status:	Individually Designated Historic Single Family Residence
Original Construction Date:	1925
Original Architect:	Mead Construction Co.

ZONING / SITE DATA

Legal Description:	Lot 3, Block 11, Sunset Lake Subdivision, According to the Plat Thereof, as Recorded in Plat Book 8, Page 52, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.
Zoning:	RS-4, Residential Single Family
Future Land Use Designation:	RS-4, Residential Single Family
Lot Size:	~7,000 S.F.
Existing Use:	Vacant Lot

THE PROJECT

The applicant is requesting that the designation of Historic Single Family Residence approved in 2010, be removed from the property.

STAFF ANALYSIS

As noted in the 'Background' section of this report, the previous owner of the property voluntarily requested historic designation of the single family residence located at 2726 Alton Road in 2010.

In December of 2008, prior to historic designation, the residence suffered significant structural damage resulting from a fire and water intrusion. Shortly after the fire, all non-load bearing interior partitions and all interior finishes were removed (BD090076) exposing the existing structural elements of the residence. Although the previous owner obtained a building permit (B1100511) to repair the fire and water damage, the work was never performed and the residence remained vacant. On June 6, 2017, the City's Building Department issued an Unsafe Structure's Violation (US2017-01482) due to the deteriorated structural conditions of the home and on June 19, 2017, the Miami-Dade County Unsafe Structures Board (USB) issued an order requiring the demolition of the 2-story home. As a result of the USB order, the City Building Official issued a Demolition Order for the total demolition of the home on September 5, 2017, and the home was demolished.

Following the demolition, the property owner submitted an application to the Planning Department for an after-the-fact Certificate of Appropriateness for the total demolition of the home. Staff then met with the property owner to discuss the application and possible redevelopment options. After the loss of the structure including all original material, it is staff's opinion that the property no longer satisfies the minimum criteria required to retain the designation of Historic Single Family Residence. Specifically, the following three evaluation criteria that were determined to be satisfied in order to designate the home as a Historic Single Family Residence in 2010, are no longer applicable:

- (1) Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the history of the city, the county, state or nation.
Built on speculation as a middle-class home in 1925, this house is a remnant of the rapid development of South Florida during the boom of the 1920s, and locally, it was an early component of Miami Beach developer Carl Fisher's Sunset Lake Subdivision. Also typical of the 1920s boom, its first occupant was a realtor, James C. Armstrong.
- (2) Association with the lives of persons significant in the city's past history
This house is notable as one of the renowned and prolific Mead Construction Company's early investment properties. The Mead family contributed greatly to Miami Beach development, both in building construction and in civic life, over several decades.
- (3) Embody the distinctive characteristics of an historical period, architectural design style or method of construction
Although its architect is unknown, this house is a modest reflection of the Mediterranean Revival style of architecture, the predominant style in Florida in the 1920s. Some characteristics of the style seen here are the asymmetrical massing, stucco surface, clay barrel-tile hip roof, and pecky cypress elements.

Further, the previously existing home had been altered over the years and staff has not been able to locate any historical documentation showing the original design of the home.

Subsequently, the property owner submitted a new application requesting the designation of Historic Single Family Residence be removed from the property. Although a possible course of

action could be the retention of the historic designation and the reconstruction of the building, staff would not recommend this option for several reasons. First, sufficient documentation to reconstruct the home in accordance with its original design has not been able to be found.. No original plans for the subject house were found on microfilm in the Miami Beach Building Department, nor have any early photographs of the building been found.

Further, the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the *Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstruction of Historic Buildings* published by the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service 2017, only recommends reconstruction be considered as a treatment "when a contemporary depiction is required to understand and interpret a property's historic value (including the re-creation of missing components in a historic district or site); when no other property with the same associative value has survived; and when sufficient historical documentation exists to ensure an accurate reproduction. Additionally, the reconstruction of the building in its altered condition as it existed prior to its demolition would not be possible, as the finish floor would be required to be raised approximately 3.4 feet to meet current base flood elevation requirements. Further, the previously existing structure did not comply with current setback requirements.

In summary, staff believes the best course of action is to remove the designation of Historic Single Family Residence from the property due to the total demolition of the structure, including the loss of all original building material and lack of available information to facilitate an accurate reconstruction of the original design. Additionally, staff would note that the existing property is not located within any local historic district and there are no historically designated properties in the immediate vicinity.

RECOMMENDATION

In view of the foregoing analysis, staff recommends the application be **approved** as noted in the attached draft Order.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
City of Miami Beach, Florida

MEETING DATE: July 10, 2018

FILE NO: HPB18-0203

PROPERTY: 2726 Alton Road

APPLICANT: Silvia Nunez, Trs

LEGAL: Lot 3, Block 11, Sunset Lake Subdivision, According to the Plat Thereof, as Recorded in Plat Book 8, Page 52, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida

IN RE: The Application for the removal of the designation of Historic Single Family Residence from the property.

ORDER

The City of Miami Beach Historic Preservation Board makes the following FINDINGS OF FACT, based upon the evidence, information, testimony and materials presented at the public hearing and which are part of the record for this matter:

- A. The previously existing 2-story structure was designated as a Historic Single Family Residence on August 10, 2010.
- B. The 2-story structure was totally demolished in 2017, as a result from an Emergency Demolition Order issued by the Miami-Dade County Unsafe Structures Board.
- C. Based on the documents submitted with the application, testimony and information provided by the applicant, and the reasons set forth in the Planning Department Staff Report, the existing property no longer satisfies the minimum criteria required to be eligible for historic designation, as set forth in Section 118-592 of the Land Development Regulations of the City Code.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, based upon the foregoing findings of fact, the evidence, information, testimony and materials presented at the public hearing, which are part of the record for this matter, including the staff recommendations, that the request for the REMOVAL of the designation as an Historic Single Family Residence which was approved by the Board on August 10, 2010 for the subject property is APPROVED subject to the following, to which the applicant has agreed:

1. The Final Order is not severable, and if any provision or condition hereof is held void or unconstitutional in a final decision by a court of competent jurisdiction, the order shall be returned to the Board for reconsideration as to whether the order meets the criteria for approval absent the stricken provision or condition, and/or it is appropriate to modify the remaining conditions or impose new conditions.

2. Nothing in this order authorizes a violation of the City Code or other applicable law, nor allows a relaxation of any requirement or standard set forth in the City Code.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 20____.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA

BY: _____
DEBORAH TACKETT
CHIEF OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
FOR THE CHAIR

STATE OF FLORIDA)
)SS
COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE)

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this _____ day of _____, 20____ by Deborah Tackett, Chief of Historic Preservation, Planning Department, City of Miami Beach, Florida, a Florida Municipal Corporation, on behalf of the corporation. She is personally known to me.

NOTARY PUBLIC
Miami-Dade County, Florida
My commission expires: _____

Approved As To Form:
City Attorney's Office: _____ ()

Filed with the Clerk of the Historic Preservation Board on _____ ()

