



October 24, 2016

Via Hand Delivery

Honorable Chair and Members of the Historic Preservation Board
c/o Thomas Mooney, Director
Planning Department
City of Miami Beach
1700 Convention Center Dr, Second Floor
Miami Beach FL, 33139

Re: Letter of Intent for Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a roof-top addition at Casa Coloretta located at 355 Washington Ave.

Dear Mr. Mooney,

Please allow this correspondence to serve as the Letter of Intent in connection with Casa Coloretta, LLC's application for a Certificate of Appropriateness and associated variances for a roof-top addition at 355 Washington Ave.

Description of the property. The property, identified with Folio Number 02-4203-003-0970, is located on the East side of Washington Ave, in Lot 15 Block 7 of Ocean Beach Florida Subdivision Plat Book 2-38. It is bounded by Washington Ave on the West, 363 Washington on the North (a condominium), Collins Ct (an alley) on the East, and 347 Washington (a hotel) on the South. The 50'x130' lot is zoned RPS-3 and is located within the Ocean Beach Historic District. The property is adjacent to a six story residential building to the North, a two story hotel to the South, and a three story residential building to the East across the alley.

Description of the Building. The property is currently developed with a one story CBS and stucco structure with 8 apartment units. Built 1953, it was designed by Architect August Swarz and it is listed as contributing to the Ocean Beach Historic District. The building is Art Deco /post World War II Transitional style and features a front (West) façade with layered boxed elements, a flat roof, a parapet with three projections, angled bean poles, a stucco wall with a scored grid, and decorative metal railings. These elements create a playful geometry of intersecting rectangles.



The existing 3,855 sf building contains eight (8) hotel units ranging in size from 453 sf to 478 sf, and a small 45 sf reception area. The apartment units have full kitchens and individual entrances from the North and South façades.

According to the most recent survey, the building sits on the West property line with a zero front setback, and very close to the East property line, with a 0.6' or 7." rear setback. The side setback to the North is 10' and the side setback to the South is 10.10'. Encroaching on these side setbacks are steps and entrances to the units on both sides, a terrace on the South West corner and a utility closet in the South East corner.

A window permit to replace all windows (B0605059) was finalized on Feb 10th 2007, and the building underwent an interior renovation in 2013 by which the use was converted to hotel use. It has been operating as a hotel since.

Description of Adjacent Buildings

The building to the South, the Hotel St Augustine, is a two story, 24 unit hotel whose main access is in the center of its West façade facing Washington Ave. Its North façade which faces Casa Coloretta, features window openings from the individual Hotel rooms. The Hotel St Augustine (like Casa Coloretta) has narrow or nonexistent front and rear setbacks, and approximately 5' side setbacks. There is no access to the interior from the North façade facing Casa Coloretta.

The building to the North, is a six story (five habitable floors over parking) condominium building with 24 units. Its main entrance is accessed through the lower level parking through stairways and elevator perpendicular to the South façade adjacent to Casa Coloretta. The ground level parking has zero front, rear and sides setback. The south façade facing Casa Coloretta has a zero setback for the stair and elevator towers which rise six stories tall. The units are accessed through open air corridors on the South façade facing Casa Coloretta.

Description of approval requested and Project History. On June 10, 2008 HPB File No. 5882 was approved by the Historic Preservation Board with the following description: "The applicant, C & D Miami Real Estate, LLC., is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the partial demolition, renovation and restoration of the existing single story structure, including the construction of a new roof-top addition and the construction of a new 3-story addition at the rear of the property." Since a building permit was never obtained within the allotted time, including the requested and granted one year extension, the project was



abandoned. Meanwhile, the structure underwent an interior renovation and change of use in 2013, which established its current hotel use. The Owner, Casa Coloretta, LLC seeks approval for a single story rooftop addition of 4,445 sf with seven additional units, to bring the total number of Hotel units from eight to 15. In order to satisfy the open space requirements of the RPS districts, a green roof is proposed. Also, in order to mitigate the visual impact of the six story structure to the North of the property, planter projections are proposed on that North façade. The following variances are also requested as part of this application:

Line of sight: a variance from Sec. 142-1161 to allow part of the roof and rooftop railings to be visible from the opposite side of the adjacent right of way.

Unit size: a variance from Sec. 142-1105 to allow suites-hotel units ranging from 492 sf to 533 sf, below the required minimum 550sf.

Rear setback: a variance of 12.4' or 12'-5" from the required 13' rear setback in order to continue the existing 0.6' or 7" rear setback into the second story rooftop addition.

Side setback: a variance of 1' 6" of the required minimum 5' interior side setback on the South East corner of the property, to allow for the stairs to the new addition, required for egress, to have the minimum width required for this occupancy. The resulting setback would be 3'6".

Satisfaction of the Variance Review Criteria. The project meets the variance review criteria contained in the city code; the following information is provided pursuant to Sec. 118-353 (d) of the City Code:

Special conditions and circumstances exist which are peculiar to the land, structure, or building involved and which are not applicable to other lands, structures, or buildings in the same zoning district;

Setback and unit size variances: Satisfied. The existing building is a contributing structure to the Ocean Beach Historic District with existing narrow (7") or nonexistent setbacks on both the front and rear. In order for the rooftop addition to be constructed with minimal demolition and intrusion to the existing structure, all new structural supports will be adjacent to existing load bearing walls. This requires that the new addition follow the existing setback on the rear, and that the egress stairs encroach by 1'6" into the required side setback. Furthermore, it restricts the size of the units to range between 492 sf and 533 sf. Additionally, volumetric studies show that, if available FAR and height in this property were maximized to the allowable 11, 375 sf and 40', the resulting building could comprise of 20 suites at the required 550sf, plus 14 parking spaces and a 40 seat indoor restaurant. This application is not requesting to maximize



available FAR for this property, which would require demolition of the rear two-thirds of the existing historic building; the applicant, and property owner, is therefore forfeiting 5 entire suite rooms, the increased size of remaining 15 rooms, parking and a restaurant, in order to respect and retain the existing historic building.

Line-of-sight variance: Satisfied. Two conditions exist that make the line of sight requirement particularly burdensome to this property. In the first place, the existing structure is only one story high, which gives less cover for the rooftop addition than would a two or three story existing structure as abound in the Historic Districts. Additionally, the existing building exists adjacent to an unusually wide right-of-way. At this location, Washington Avenue measures 77 ft 3 in from the façade of the existing structure. A line of sight taken from this point shows a small portion of the roof and rooftop railing as visible. However, landscaped median is located 38 ft 6 in from the façade, a more common width for two-lane plus one row of parallel parking right-of-way shows no portion of the addition is visible.

The special conditions and circumstances do not result from the action of the applicant;

Satisfied. The existing structure was built as it exists today with minimal setbacks to the rear property line abutting the alley.

Granting the variance requested will not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied by these land development regulations to other lands, buildings, or structures in the same zoning district;

Satisfied. The applicant is requesting approval to add a one story rooftop addition as allowed under Sec. 142-1161 (d); this will only increase the height of the building at the zero setback line to two stories, a condition that exists throughout the area, including the adjacent property, The St Augustine hotel.

Literal interpretation of the provisions of these land development regulations would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district under the terms of these land development regulations and would work unnecessary and undue hardship on the applicant;

Satisfied. Without these variances, the rooftop addition would be unviable. Also, as mentioned previously, granting the requested variances would allow for a two story height with a setback of 7", a condition which is present in six out of nine structures abutting the alley, Collins Court. Also, as previously mentioned, the literal interpretation of the line of sight requirement is particularly burdensome on this property, due to the combination of the existing being only a one story structure, and the right-of way being very wide at this location.



The variance granted is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of the land, building or structure;

Satisfied. These requests are minimal in scope, but they allow the construction of the roof addition to this Contributing structure. Furthermore, per City of Miami Beach code, this property would be allowed 1.75 FAR, which in a 6,500 sf lot translates to 11,375 sf. The applicant is proposing to increase its FAR square footage only to 8,300 sf with this 4,445 sf addition, a total resulting FAR of 1.3, much lower than if the proposal included significant demolition and a five-story addition within setbacks as allowed by code. As previously mentioned, should the applicant maximize the potential of the property as allowed by code, this application would be requesting 20 hotel suite units at 550 sf, 14 parking spaces, and a 40 seat indoor restaurant. With that in mind, the proposed use of 15 hotel suite units, with no parking and no restaurant, constitutes the minimum “reasonable use of the land, building or structure.”

The granting of the variance will be in harmony with the general intent and purpose of these land development regulations and that such variance will not be injurious to the area involved or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare; and

Satisfied. The granting of these variances is consistent with the general intent and purpose of the City’s Land Development regulations as it pertains to contributing structures within historic districts. These variances allow to increase the economic profitability of this contributing structure, while retaining the character and scale of the building and the neighborhood.

The granting of this request is consistent with the comprehensive plan and does not reduce the levels of service as set forth in the plan. The planning and zoning director may require applicants to submit documentation to support this requirement prior to the scheduling of a public hearing or anytime prior to the board voting on the applicant's request.

Satisfied. These variance requests are consistent with the City’s comprehensive plan and do not reduce the levels of service as set forth therein. The Code authorizes the Historic Preservation Board to grant variances using its discretion. Since the additional gross square footage of the project does not exceed 5,000 sf, the applicant is not required to submit a traffic study, but the applicant would be willing to discuss mitigation of any adverse effects as perceived by the Board.

Satisfaction of the Certificate of Appropriateness Criteria



This application complies with the criteria for issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness in accordance with Section 118-564 of the City of Miami Beach code. The proposal is compatible with the surrounding structures in its design, scale, massing, texture, materials and color. With the exception of the six story structure directly abutting the property to the North, the surrounding blocks are mostly comprised of two and three story structures, with zero front and rear setbacks. The second story roof-top addition is setback from the front to respect the historic parapet outline and to be mostly unseen from the street as required by code. Furthermore, the proposal features a green roof, a roof-top garden, and cantilevered planters, all designed to soften and camouflage the new addition.

Conclusion. In light of the foregoing, we respectfully request your favorable recommendation, and the Historic Preservation Board's approval of this application. Hotel Casa Coloretta is a family run business which has been an asset to the South of Fifth neighborhood for the last three years. They operate a quiet, small hotel, with large comfortable rooms that allow a longer stay. The hotel has received great reviews in all the online booking services and has a steady stream of returning guests. Approval of this application would allow this successful operation to expand and adds a passive rooftop garden as an amenity to the guests. If you require any additional information in the writing of your report and recommendations on this matter, please contact me at your convenience.

Regards,

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