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## **VIA ELECTRONIC & HAND DELIVERY**

September 11, 2023

Deborah Tackett  
Chief of Historic Preservation  
City of Miami Beach  
1700 Convention Center Drive, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Miami Beach, Florida 33139

Re: HPB23-0592 – Certificate of Appropriateness for  
New Restaurant at 624 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach

Dear Ms. Tackett:

This law firm represents Palm Avenue Hialeah Trust, a Delaware statutory trust (the "Applicant") with regards to the proposed development located at 624 Collins Avenue (the "Property") in the City of Miami Beach, Florida ("City"). Please allow this letter to serve as the required letter of intent in support of the Applicant's request for the conversion of the existing vacant building into a new, fine-dining establishment (the "Project"). The Applicant proposes to redevelop the currently vacant structure with an upscale restaurant that will serve British cuisine to 318 seated patrons. The Applicant has filed a concurrent application to the Planning Board for a Conditional Use Permit associated with the Project, PB23-0621.

Property Description. The Property is located on a single lot approximately 7,000 square feet (0.16 acres) in size and is located along Collins Avenue between 6<sup>th</sup> Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Street. See Figure 1, below. The Property consists of one (1) parcel identified by Miami-Dade County Folio No. 02-4203-004-0770. The Property is platted and is comprises Lot 7 of Block 34 of the Ocean Beach Florida Addition No. 1 plat recorded in Plat Book 3, Page 11 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County. Additionally, the Property is located in the Ocean

Drive/Collins Avenue local historic district. The existing building is classified as a contributing structure, built in 1922. The Property is currently vacant.



**Figure 1**

The Property is zoned MXE, the Mixed-Use Entertainment District ("MXE"). The MXE allows a range of commercial and retail use. Pursuant to City Code Section 7.2.13.2.f.6., buildings that are located in the MXE district and that front Collins Avenue from 6<sup>th</sup> Street to 16<sup>th</sup> Street are allowed uses as offices, retail, food service establishments, personal service, food service establishments serving alcohol, and residential uses or any combination thereof.

*Ocean Drive/Collins Avenue Local Historic District.* As stated above, the Property is located within the Ocean Drive/Collins Avenue Local Historic District. The Mediterranean Revival style is among the primary architectural styles seen within this historic district. The Mediterranean Revival style embodies a period of time, where property followed the same development pattern in an architectural style reflective of the economic boom of the 1920's and the influences of the Mediterranean coast emerged. This style takes inspirations from Italian, Byzantine, and Moorish themes from southern Spain and employs wide overhangs, open breezeways, and balconies to respond to local environmental conditions, mainly, the heat. Mediterranean Revival design is known for the prevalent use of applied Spanish baroque motifs throughout buildings, although

mainly around openings and cornices. Front porches are widely replaced by balconies and interior courtyards. Arches are also commonly employed throughout. Common building materials include stucco walls, red or ceramic roofs tiles, wrought iron grilles and railings, wood brackets and balconies, oolitic limestone, and terra cotta ornamentation.

Property History. The two-story, contributing structure on the Property was constructed the Atlantic Apartments, a multi-family apartment building in 1922 and designed by architect A. L. Sammons in the Mediterranean Revival architectural style. The structure's architectural features include an asymmetrical tripartite facade design, clay barrel tile roof, and rough stucco walls. Additionally, the building contains a recessed second floor level terrace with framing arch and pierced masonry balustrade. Interestingly, the building detailed early residential construction which is atypical of most buildings of the same period on this lower end of Collins avenue.

In 1938, the home was remodeled into four apartment units with additional bathroom space. In the 1940's it functioned as a hotel before it was redeveloped again into an apartment building containing sixteen (16) units.

Notably, in 2000 the Property was redeveloped from its original hotel/apartment use to a retail use. The plans were designed by Beilinson Gomez Architects, P.A. This redevelopment, constructed under Permit No. B0101147, included the removal of the existing second and roof level concrete slabs, and replacing with new concrete slabs placed on metal decks held by steel open web joists at the second and roof levels and roof structure. Additionally, many of side openings were filled, new aluminum and glass fixed windows were set the existing masonry on, and the main entrance steps and second floor balcony balustrade were redone.

Most recently, the Property was used as a retail merchandise store for the menswear brand Club Monaco which operated from approximately 2015 to 2019. The Property has sat vacant since Club Monaco terminated its operations at this location.

Please see the Historic Resources Report prepared by Beilinson Gomez Architects, P.A. included in the application materials.

Proposed Development. The proposed restaurant, will introduce a British-themed menu, featuring renditions of classic London working-class dishes. The Project proposes to redevelop the currently-vacant contributing building into a sit-down fine-dining restaurant with alcohol service. The commercial space was previously permitted as a retail

use with a total of 7,900 square feet of retail space. The proposed fine dining restaurant will offer 318 seats with a total occupancy load of 493. The Project will offer a combination of booth, table, and bar seating on each of three floors, and an elevator that will provide vertical access to patrons. The Project's third floor will require the addition of an open-air rooftop that will be partially covered and contain both seating and standing space. The Applicant will be seeking a waiver pursuant to Section 5.2.6 of the Resiliency Code, to permit on-street loading.

*Transportation Department.* On July 10, 2023, the Applicant met with the City's Transportation Department. The Applicant's traffic engineer has responded to Transportation's comments and provided the Department with an updated traffic study. A copy of the updated traffic study is included in the application materials.

*Parking Department.* On July 19 2023, the Applicant met with the City's Parking Department regarding the waiver request. The Parking Department reviewed the proposed use of on-street loading spaces and approved the use of up to three (3) city-owned on-street parking spaces. Prior to Certificate of Occupancy the Applicant will meet again with the Parking Department to obtain the appropriate signage required for the use of the spaces.

The Property is a single-occupant establishment and will manage all deliveries. The Property has access to an alley for garbage and back-of-house operations. The on-street loading is necessary to preserve the contributing building and incorporate a high-quality restaurant.

Compliance with the Certificate of Appropriateness Criteria. The Project complies with the criteria for the approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness provided in Section 2.13.7.d.(ii). of the Resiliency Code.

The Project fits well within the surrounding context of the area. The Property neighbors a 2-story, contributing commercial building to the south located at 614 Collins Avenue, constructed in 1926 and built in the Masonry Vernacular style. To the north of the Property is a 6-story City-owned parking garage, that retained the storefront of the building located 634 Collins Avenue that was constructed in 1925 and designed in the Mission Revival style. Across the street to the northeast at 635 Collins Avenue, is a 3-story contributing building that houses a hotel, the Metropole Suites South Beach, designed in the Streamline Moderne style. Directly across the street from the Property is a surface parking lot next to the non-contributing Miami-Dade County Health Department building located at 615 Collins Avenue that constructed in 1964. And

immediately south of the Health Department building is a contributing structure located at 601 Collins Avenue that was built in 1934 and contains mixed commercial and residential uses.

Notably, the Project will retain a number of the building's key architectural features. Among these, on the ground floor, the Project proposes to keep the recessed arched entryway and remodel the centered steps. On the second floor, the Project will preserve arched parapet wall and maintain the relief cartouche located on the wall above the center, and the alternative eaves that are located above the windows, clad with Spanish "S" clay barrel tiles. Additionally, along the remainder of the exterior, the Project will conserve the building's traditional, white smooth-stucco finish.

Overall, the Project ensures a high-quality development that respects the historic character of the surrounding community, and reimagines the Property as a fine-restaurant establishment with a new rooftop level while retaining key aspects of the Mediterranean Revival style of the original building.

Sea Level Rise and Resiliency Criteria. The Project complies with all sea level rise and resiliency review criteria provided in Resiliency Code Section 7.1.2.4., as follows:

**(1) A recycling or salvage plan for partial or total demolition shall be provided.**

**CONSISTENT** – The Applicant has provided plans for the partial demolition of the Property's interior and will provide a recycling or salvage plan during the permitting phase of the project.

**(2) Windows that are proposed to be replaced shall be hurricane proof impact windows.**

**CONSISTENT** – The Applicant's project will include hurricane impact windows.

**(3) Where feasible and appropriate, passive cooling systems, such as operable windows, shall be provided.**

**CONSISTENT** – Where feasible, the Applicant will include operable windows for passive cooling.

**(4) Whether resilient landscaping (salt tolerant, highly water-absorbent, native or Florida friendly plants) will be provided.**

**CONSISTENT** – Where applicable, the Applicant will provide landscaping on the Property, particularly, along the front entrance and the open-air rooftop floor, which will be resilient.

**(5) Whether adopted sea level rise projections in the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Action Plan, as may be revised from time-to-time by the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact, including a study of land elevation and elevation of surrounding properties were considered.**

**CONSISTENT** – The Applicant has considered the adopted sea level rise projections and the land elevations of the subject property and surrounding properties. The Project has been designed to accommodate the raising of the roads, and complies with the minimum elevation requirements of the Florida Building Code.

**(6) The ground floor, driveways, and garage ramping for new construction shall be adaptable to the raising of public rights-of-ways and adjacent land.**

**CONSISTENT** – The Project's ground floor shall be adaptable to the raising of public rights-of-ways and adjacent land, and will provide sufficient height and space to ensure that entry ways and exits can be modified.

**(7) Where feasible and appropriate, all critical mechanical and electrical systems shall be located above base flood elevation.**

**CONSISTENT** – All critical mechanical and electrical systems will be located above base flood elevation.

**(8) Existing buildings shall be, where reasonably feasible and appropriate, elevated to the base flood elevation.**

**CONSISTENT** – The existing building was constructed in 1922, prior to today's standards. The Applicant has considered the adopted sea level rise projections and the land elevations of the subject property and surrounding properties.

**(9) When habitable space is located below the base flood elevation plus City of Miami Beach Freeboard, wet or dry flood proofing systems will be provided.**

**CONSISTENT** – The Applicant will analyze and provide wet or dry flood proofing systems as required.

**(10) Where feasible and appropriate, water retention systems shall be provided.**

**CONSISTENT** – The Applicant will analyze and provide a water retention system, if feasible, during the permitting phase.

**(11) Cool pavement materials or porous pavement materials shall be utilized.**

**CONSISTENT** – The Applicant will utilize pavement materials or porous pavement materials where possible, including, but not limited to, the pathway along the main entrance on the ground floor, the outdoor stairwell, and the rooftop.

**(12) The design of each project shall minimize the potential for heat island effects on-site.**

**CONSISTENT** – The proposed design has considered the potential for heat island effects on-site and the Applicant will minimize this risk through the use of cool pavement materials on the rooftop floor, awnings, and energy-efficient stairwell glass-railing panels, building paint treatments, windows and doors.

Conclusion. The Project will activate and restore a contributing building in a local historic district that has sat vacant for almost five years. The proposed use is a fine-dining restaurant experience that will highlight the beautiful architecture of the building. The new restaurant will retain and preserve the building's original Mediterranean Revival style.

We respectfully request your recommendation of approval of the Applicant's request. Please contact me on my direct line at (305) 377-6236 should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Michael W. Larkin

Attachments

cc: Alejandro J. Moreno, Esq.  
Emily K. Balter, Esq.