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Aventura, July 25nd 2016, revised on August the 3rd 2016

City of Miami Beach
Planning Department
1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, Florida 33139

PLANNING & HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
PROJECT: 12-651BUS – New Commercial Building, 929 Alton Road, Miami Beach, FL. 33139

LETTER OF INTENT

To whom it may concern,
International Design Engineering & Architecture LLC has been retained by Alton Sobe LLC to be the architect of a new mixed use project located at 929 Alton Road in Miami Beach.

Final submittal – Board application (08-03-2016)

Summary of the project :

Legal Description:	Lots 9 and 10, Block 123 "Lenox Manor", according to the Plat thereof recorded in Plat Book 7, page 15 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida
Zoning:	CD-2, Commercial Medium Intensity
Lot Size:	20,000 SF (125' x 160')
Proposed FAR:	29,566 SF / 1.5, Maximum = 30,000 SF / 1.5
Proposed Height:	5-stories I 55 feet, ~ approx. 65 feet to highest projection
Prior Use/Condition:	Vacant Lot
Folio/Project Number:	PB-16-0051 / FOLIO 02-4203-014-0510

This project previously was approved as a Mixed Use Project. Process number at the City of Miami Beach was: B1502028. This revised project's overall description maintains the same heights, setbacks & architectural language. We previously has a loading zone variance approved as well that accommodates the lot's practical difficulties. Obviously, this version compliments the new code & zoning changes that occurred since then.

For any further questions, please contact IDEA at 305.792.0015

A. THE PROPERTY:

The property is located on the east side of Alton Road and consists of a 5 story commercial building. Proposed project contains retail space of 10,248 SF on the ground floor, office space of 11,062 SF on the top floor (5th) and 3 split levels of parking in between (levels 02A – 02B – 03A – 03B – 04). The property contains 125 feet of linear frontage along Alton Road and is 160' feet deep. Lots 9 and 10 of the property are vacant.

B. ZONING & LAND USE

CD-2, Commercial Medium Intensity (Alton Road Historic Buffer Overlay). Main use: Commercial.

C. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT and OPERATIONAL PLAN

The proposed commercial development is described in drawings A0 to A15 attached; it is a low rise, (highest habitable floor is elevated 43'-4" from the adjacent grade) consisting of 3 retail bays of 3 498 SF, 3 445 SF & 3 305 SF totaling 10 248 SF. The top floor will be office space and built on top of 3 split levels of parking garage. The concept is developed around an appealing modern architecture, which is in tune with the contemporary style & design of our era. The scale of the building relates well to the scale of the newest projects in the immediate area. The project includes 82 parking spots, including 3 handicap spaces. The lot is non-gated, but is constantly well-appointed with a surveillance monitoring system. A 10'-0" side alley will allow both for FPL access to the vault and a second means of egress to the occupants. This option has been reviewed and approved both by FPL and the Fire Department.

- The garage will function as an automated garage. During business hours the garage will serve as general parking to the public from regular business hours so that retail and office space clients/shoppers have a place to park when accessing the retail stores and office. Each car entering the garage will take a ticket regardless of time from an automated ticket/garage management system. Cars will be able to enter and exit the garage during regular hours at no charge. Once a vehicle enters the garage after hours, the vehicle will start to be charged an hourly rate. It is our belief that having a garage next to the restaurant Coco Bambu (400 seat restaurant which was approved with 0 parking spaces) will greatly benefit the area and reduce congestion caused by the restaurant's valet operations on Alton Road. We would like to apply to operate the garage after 12pm as many clients from the restaurant will be leaving after 12pm.

- In order to achieve a secure building, the entire premises will be under video surveillance.

- We are requesting a variance where the parking spots in front of the Lot on Alton road will become a loading zone which will allow deliveries to the building without congesting Alton Road, as trucks will have to make a simple maneuver in these easily accessible spaces. Retail shops will load merchandise from the front of the retail bay, deliveries and mail will be loaded through the lobby for the office space.

- We have designed the building in such a manner that the trash may be taken out of the lobby onto Alton Road directly. The trash pickup trucks will be able to utilize the loading zone in order to avoid congestion on Alton Road.

- Although it would be our preference to load trash and delivers through the south passageway and into the back of the building, we have refrained from designing the building this way due to the fire marshal's concerns about egress from the property. The passageway on the south side of the building will be used to for two reasons only- the first will be to provide access to FPL in the event they must service the transformer – they requested a 10 foot passageway in order for a forklift to access the transformer in the event of an emergency. The second is for fire egress only, the staircase located on the south side of the property will exit into the passageway, the fire marshal was adamant about having other doors opening into the passageway and block the egress from this staircase. People in the retail bays will have the option of exiting through the front of the bay, but will also have an egress access through the rear of the retail bay into this passageway.

D. DENSITY

Allowed FAR density for the site is 30,000 SF and we came upon 29,566 SF for our project.

E. HEIGHT

Allowed height is limited to 50 feet; provided height for the project is suggested to be 55'-0" at roof level from current grade, considering the possibility to raise the ground floor commercial space in the future by 5'-0" would conditions require it.

F. CONDITIONAL USE

Per section 142-303, the total area of the proposed building (retail, office & parking) is above 50,000 SF, and qualifies as conditional use. In respect of Section 118-192, we find the proposed building to be compliant.

Conditional uses may be approved in accordance with the procedures and standards of this article provided that:

(1)

The use is consistent with the comprehensive plan or neighborhood plan if one exists for the area in which the property is located.

We find the proposed use for the project to be compliant with neighborhood plan.

(2)

The intended use or construction will not result in an impact that will exceed the thresholds for the levels of service as set forth in the comprehensive plan.

The intended use of the project is on a modest scale, and will not have negative impact on the level of services as set for in the comprehensive plan.

(3)

Structures and uses associated with the request are consistent with these land development regulations.

The proposed structures and uses are consistent with land development regulations.

(4)

The public health, safety, morals, and general welfare will not be adversely affected.

The public health, safety, morals and general welfare will not be adversely affected.

(5)

Adequate off-street parking facilities will be provided.

As shown on parking calculations provided on sheet A -02/15, required off-street parking facilities are being provided.

(6)

Necessary safeguards will be provided for the protection of surrounding property, persons, and neighborhood values.

Necessary safeguards are provided for the protection of the surrounding property, persons and neighborhood values, as illustrated by our compliance with setbacks and other requirements set forth by the Alton road Historic Buffer overlay regulations.

(7)

The concentration of similar types of uses will not create a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

The modest scale of the project will not have a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

In reviewing an application for conditional use for new structures 50,000 square feet and over, the planning board shall apply the following supplemental review guidelines criteria in addition to the standard review guidelines listed in subsection a. above:

(1)

Whether the proposed business operations plan has been provided, including hours of operation, number of employees, goals of business, and other operational characteristics pertinent to the application, and that such plan is compatible with the neighborhood in which it is located.

The office use component of the building will be in operation during the day, roughly from 8:00AM to 6:00PM; this use is compatible with the activities of the neighborhood, and will have no adverse impact. After business hours, the parking dedicated to the office space will be made available to meet the need of the community. The commercial use of the ground floor is not determined at this point of time, as negotiations with potential tenants are ongoing.

(2)

Whether a plan for the mass delivery of merchandise has been provided, including the hours of operation for delivery trucks to come into and exit from the neighborhood and how such plan will mitigate any adverse impacts to adjoining and nearby properties, and neighborhood.

As part of our variance request, a loading zone is dedicated in front of the building as indicated on Architectural site plan A04/15. Deliveries to the building will be limited to daytime, and will reach out the office space through the Alton Road lobby, or the ground floor spaces through the retail front doors. Deliveries of merchandises will have no impact on the adjacent residential area.

(3)

Whether the scale of the proposed use is compatible with the urban character of the surrounding area and create adverse impacts on the surrounding area, and how the adverse impacts are proposed to be addressed.

As shown on site photographs on sheet A13c/15, the scale of the proposed project, which meets all setback and height requirements, is in scale with the surrounding area urban fabric.

(4)

Whether the proposed parking plan has been provided, including where and how the parking is located, utilized, and managed, that meets the required parking and operational needs of the structure and proposed uses.

The parking plans are shown on architectural sheets A-5 to A-8; operations are described in item 1 above; parking calculations are shown on sheet A02/15; Excess parking count will counteract the loss of street parking spaces for the dedication of the delivery zone on Alton Road.

(5)

Whether an indoor and outdoor customer circulation plan has been provided that facilitates ingress and egress to the site and structure.

Compliant. All building uses will be done from Alton Road; the exterior covered walkway to the south of the property is reserved to the exclusive use of life & safety egress, as shown on sheets A04/15.

(6)

Whether a security plan for the establishment and supporting parking facility has been provided that addresses the safety of the business and its users and minimizes impacts on the neighborhood.

Compliant. Security camera will monitor doors to retail and egress doors; office lobby will be open during the day, locked and accessible via electronic monitoring devices after business hours. Gate will control access to parking after hours, and all off street parking areas will be monitored with security cameras.

(7)

Whether a traffic circulation analysis and plan has been provided that details means of ingress and egress into and out of the neighborhood, addresses the impact of projected traffic on the immediate neighborhood, traffic circulation pattern for the neighborhood, traffic flow through immediate intersections and arterials, and how these impacts are to be mitigated.

Exhaustive traffic impact study has been prepared by Caltran Engineering Group, in their report dated 07-21-2016.

(8)

Whether a noise attenuation plan has been provided that addresses how noise will be controlled in the loading zone, parking structures and delivery and sanitation areas, to minimize adverse impacts to adjoining and nearby properties.

All deliveries will be done from Alton road; the office space or the ground floor activities have no spatial interaction with the residential neighborhood east of the property.

(9)

Whether a sanitation plan has been provided that addresses on-site facilities as well as off-premises issues resulting from the operation of the structure.

The building design includes a trash room located on the ground floor. Trash will be evacuated from trash room through the lobby opening up to Alton Road for curb side collection.

(10)

Whether the proximity of the proposed structure to similar size structures and to residential uses creates adverse impacts and how such impacts are mitigated.

The proposed structure is of modest size, and respect setbacks and height restrictions set forth by the Alton Road District buffer Overlay regulations.

(11)

Whether a cumulative effect from the proposed structure with adjacent and nearby structures arises, and how such cumulative effect will be addressed.

The proposed structure is of modest size, and in our view is a valuable contribution to the quality of the architecture of this neighborhood.

G. VARIANCE REQUEST

A variance to waive the parking requirement for an off street loading space in order to build a new 5 story commercial building with no off street loading space.
Variance requested from: section 130-101 space requirement. The applicant is respectfully requesting this variance as the site represents practical difficulties existing with implementing the proposed project at the subject property.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us at 305-792-0015

Sincerely,
Jean-Francois Gervais, AIA LLED AP
Director International Design Engineering & Architecture LLC