



## The City of Coral Gables

*Historical Resources Department*

**COA (SP) 2009-19  
AUGUST 20, 2009**

### **STAFF REPORT**

**SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS  
FOR AN ALTERATIONS TO  
THE CORAL GABLES COUNTRY CLUB LOCATED AT  
997 NORTH GREENWAY DRIVE  
A LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK**

Proposal: The applicant is requesting design approval for alterations to the existing structure. Variances are requested from the Coral Gables "Zoning Code" for setbacks, minimum landscape open space, open air dining, the construction of a trellis, and to allow structures to be closer to the street than the main building.

Architect: Ted Faust, CCI Club Design

Owner: The City of Coral Gables

Legal Description: Lots 1 through 9 and Lots 37 through 39, Block 32, Coral Gables Section B, PB 5-111

Site Characteristics: This property is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Granada Blvd. and North Greenway Drive. Alhambra Blvd. is on the north side of the property. The primary elevation faces south on North Greenway Drive

Folio Number: 03-4108-001-5090

### **BACKGROUND/EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The Country Club of Coral Gables was built in 1922 and designed by Hampton and Reimert. It served an important role in entertaining prospective buyers for the germinating development. The Granada Golf Course was the City's first golf course, and opened January 1, 1923. Originally called the "Coral Gables Golf Course," the nine-hole course was designed by the firm of Langford and Moreau of Chicago, then the leading

golf course architects in America. The Country Club was the focus for the city's social activities in the 1920s. There were numerous additions and alterations to the club throughout its history and much of the building was destroyed by fire in 1983. In 1996 a new south tower was built to replace the tower destroyed by the fire and the "Lady Tweed Room" was added in 1997 to replace the Living Room destroyed in the fire.

### **PROPOSAL**

The applicant is requesting design approval for alterations to the interior and exterior of the existing structure. Variances are requested from the Coral Gables "Zoning Code" for setbacks, minimum landscape open space, open air dining, the construction of a trellis, and to allow structures to be closer to the street than the main building.

### **SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION**

The following Standards have application in this matter:

1. *A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.*
2. *The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*
5. *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.*
9. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

### **STAFF OBSERVATIONS**

The proposal calls for interior and exterior alterations. (See the applicant's Letter of Intent for a detailed description of all interior changes.) The exterior alterations are concentrated in four areas: the Alhambra Circle entrance, the "Colonnade Plaza," and the

“Liberty Café” and the “Nove Nove 7” restaurant. At the Alhambra Circle entrance, the application proposes to move the exterior wall and entrance doors to the north to be flush with an existing exterior wall, installing an additional pair of French doors, adding two new fountains to flank the entrance doors, adding pavers and altering the drive lanes. The “Colonnade Plaza” will be a new feature on the site. This area, currently a grassed area within the service yard, will be enhanced with brick pavers, a trellised colonnade, and a low four foot high masonry wall. The current Meeting Room at the southwest corner of the building will be converted into the “Liberty Café.” At the “Liberty Café” the applicant proposes introducing a walk-up café area, small outdoor seating area and landscaping. This includes the addition of an outdoor patio (pavers), and changing an existing window to a pair of doors within the existing opening. At the “Nove Nove 7” restaurant, the applicant proposes a new brick paver patio for outdoor dining at ground level, the addition of an exterior stair to provide access to and from the existing upper level dining area (the “garden seating area” and pool deck), and the alteration of an existing window into a pair of French doors within the existing opening. Replacing the window with a door is the most significant change to the existing historic fabric of the Club. However, the existing arched opening will be maintained. The application also proposes site landscaping and the introduction of a lighted truss feature to act as screening at the south west side of the pool.

## VARIANCES

The sections of the Zoning Code from which variances have been requested are:

### ***APPENDIX A - SITE SPECIFIC ZONING REGULATIONS***

#### ***Section A-7 - Section B.***

##### ***C. Setbacks-Minimum front.***

- 1. Facing upon North Greenway Drive or South Greenway Drive (except building sites in Block 33)-Thirty-five (35) feet.***
- 4. Facing upon Granada Boulevard (except building sites in Block 35)-Fifty (50) feet.***

### ***Article 4 – Zoning Districts***

#### ***Division 2. Overlay and Special Purpose Districts***

##### ***Section 4-204. Special Use (S) District.***

##### ***D. Performance standards:***

- 3. Landscaped open space: Not less than thirty-five (35%) percent of the area of the building site.***

### ***Article 5 – Development Standards***

#### ***Division 1. Accessory Uses***

##### ***Section 5-101. General.***

***Accessory uses, which do not alter the character of the premises in respect to their basic use, shall be permitted in connection with all uses. Specific enumeration of permissible accessory uses shall not be deemed to prevent other proper accessory uses not so enumerated. All accessory uses shall comply with the following general standards:***

- C. In no case shall an accessory building or structure be located closer to the front or side street of a lot or building site than the main or principal building.***

**Section 5-113. Trellises.**

*Trellises shall be permitted as an accessory use in a single-family district or as an accessory to a multi-family dwelling subject to the following conditions and restrictions:*

**Section 5-119. Restaurant, open air.**

*A. Open air dining on private property, as accessory to a restaurant, provided that:*

- 4. That the open-air dining area shall be unenclosed and shall be open except that it may be covered with a canvas cover or structural canopy of a building's arcade, loggia or overhang.*

The following variances are requested from the Coral Gables Zoning Code:

Grant a variance to allow the proposed brick pavers (approximately 1290 square feet) to have a front street setback facing upon North Greenway Drive of approximately nine feet, ten inches (9'-10") vs. maintaining a minimum front setback of thirty-five feet (35'-0") facing upon North Greenway Drive or South Greenway Drive as required by Appendix A – Site Specific Zoning Regulations, Section A-7 – Section B, C (1) of the Coral Gables “Zoning Code.”

AND

Grant a variance to allow the proposed brick pavers to have a front street setback facing upon North Greenway Drive of approximately twenty feet, eight inches (20'-8") vs. maintaining a minimum front setback of thirty-five feet (35'-0") facing upon North Greenway Drive or South Greenway Drive as required by Appendix A – Site Specific Zoning Regulations, Section A-7 – Section B, C (1) of the Coral Gables “Zoning Code.”

AND

Grant a variance to allow the proposed brick pavers to have a front street setback facing upon Granada Boulevard of approximately thirty feet, four inches (30'-4") vs. maintaining a minimum front setback of fifty feet (50'-0") facing upon Granada Boulevard as required by Appendix A – Site Specific Zoning Regulations, Section A-7 – Section B, C (4) of the Coral Gables “Zoning Code.”

AND

Grant a variance to allow the proposed brick pavers (approximately 1465 square feet) and proposed colonnaded trellis to have a front street setback facing upon Granada Boulevard of approximately nineteen feet, seven inches (19'-7") vs. maintaining a minimum front setback of fifty feet (50'-0") facing upon Granada Boulevard as required by Appendix A – Site Specific Zoning Regulations, Section A-7 – Section B, C (4) of the Coral Gables “Zoning Code.”

AND

Grant a variance to allow the proposed relocated irrigation pump and tank to have a front street setback facing upon Granada Boulevard of approximately forty-one feet, five inches (41'-5") vs. maintaining a minimum front setback of fifty feet (50'-0") facing upon Granada Boulevard as required by Appendix A – Site Specific Zoning Regulations, Section A-7 – Section B, C (4) of the Coral Gables “Zoning Code.”

AND

Grant a variance to allow the property to provide seventeen point eight percent (17.8%) landscaped open space vs. property shall provide landscaped open space of not less than thirty-five (35%) percent of the area of the building site as required by Section 4-204 (D) (3) of the Coral Gables “Zoning Code.”

AND

Grant a variance to allow the proposed trellis as an accessory use in a Special Use (S) District vs. trellises shall be permitted as an accessory use in a single-family district or multi-family district as required by Section 5-113 of the Coral Gables “Zoning Code.”

AND

Grant a variance to allow the proposed colonnaded trellis to be located closer to the front or side street of a lot or building site than the main or principal building vs. in no case shall an accessory building or structure be located closer to the front or side street of a lot or building site than the main or principal building as required by Section 5-101 (C) of the Coral Gables “Zoning Code.”

AND

Grant a variance to allow the proposed open-air dining area to occupy an area of eighty-two (82%) percent of the public indoor area of the primary restaurant operation vs. open-air dining on private property, as an accessory to a restaurant, provided that the open-air dining area shall not occupy an area of more than thirty (30%) percent of the public indoor area of the primary restaurant operation as required by Section 5-119 (A) (3) of the Coral Gables “Zoning Code.”

### **BOARD OF ARCHITECTS**

The Board of Architects reviewed this project on August 13, 2009 with comments. Those comments were:

- Consider a single central door at the porte cochere at the Alhambra Circle entrance.
- Show the proposed trellis on the drawing of the north elevation.\
- Final color scheme to be submitted to BOA for review and approval.

The BOA also discussed the four-foot high wall at the “Colonnade Plaza” with the architect and offered suggestions for this wall.

**.STAFF CONCLUSION**

The application presented requests design approval for interior and exterior alterations to the Coral Gables Country Club building. The interior alterations serve to make the building more functional as both a rental and restaurant facility. None of the interior alterations detrimentally affect the historic nature of the building. The exterior alterations also have very little effect on the historic nature of the building. The alterations to the Alhambra Circle entrance serve to enhance the entrance and make the arrival experience more comfortable for patrons. The alterations to the “Colonnade Plaza” also seek to make the experience nicer for patrons. This area is currently behind a nine-foot tall screen wall that already encroaches into the Granada Boulevard setback and lush landscaping. Therefore, the alterations will not be readily visible from the street. The alterations to the “Liberty Café” and the “Nove Nove 7” restaurant will have the most impact on the most historic section of the building, but the changes are minimal and reversible. The changes proposed are intended to increase the flexibility of the structure and give the users (tenant and patrons alike) more options for its use.

The overall design of the alterations does not detract from the historic nature of the structure.

Variances from the Coral Gables Zoning Code have been requested. Granting the requested variances will not be detrimental to the historic nature of the property. The Historical Resources staff finds that the following criteria, necessary for authorization of a variance, apply:

Criteria	Yes/No
(a) That 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.	Yes
(b) That the special conditions and circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant.	Yes
(c) That granting the variance requested will not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied by this Ordinance to other lands, buildings or structures in the same zoning district.	Yes
(d) That literal interpretation of the provisions of the Zoning Code would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district under the terms of the Zoning Code and would work unnecessary and undue hardship on the applicant.	Yes
(e) That the variance granted is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of the land, building or structure.	Yes
(f) That granting the variance will not change the use to one that is different from other land in the same district.	Yes
(g) That the granting of the variance will be in harmony with	Yes

the general intent and purpose of the Zoning Code, and that such variance will not be injurious to the area involved or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare.	
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Although some of the variances requested are the result of the applicant (i.e. requesting encroachments into the existing setbacks), the placement of the building is not. The existing building abuts the existing setback lines on Granada Boulevard and North Greenway Drive and actually partially encroaches into the Granada Boulevard setback. Therefore, any opportunity to enhance the southern façade and encourage use of this side of the building would most likely require a variance. In this case, the encroachment is for pavers, not a permanent structure and the impact is minimal. It is important to note that historically, the entrance to the Club was from North Greenway. In recent years, the primary entrance to the Club has been shifted to Alhambra Circle side. The requested variances will give the tenant the opportunity to enhance this corner and engage the public in the building's use. Overall, the variances are not detrimental to the historic structure and will allow the Country Club of Coral Gables to remain a viable and occupied building. In Staff's opinion, if the variances are necessary to make the building palatable to a tenant, thus ensuring that the structure remain inhabited, maintained and well-cared for, then the variance request is a valid one. Therefore, to maintain the ongoing use and enjoyment of the site by the residents of the City, Staff recommends in favor of the requested variances.

**Therefore, Staff recommends the following:**

A motion to grant design approval for the alterations to the Coral Gables Country Club located at 997 North Greenway Drive, a local historic landmark, and **APPROVE** the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness.

**AND**

A motion to grant the requested variances associated with this Certificate of Appropriateness application as enumerated within this report.

Specifically, those variances are:

Grant a variance to allow the proposed brick pavers (approximately 1290 square feet) to have a front street setback facing upon North Greenway Drive of approximately nine feet, ten inches (9'-10") vs. maintaining a minimum front setback of thirty-five feet (35'-0") facing upon North Greenway Drive or South Greenway Drive as required by Appendix A – Site Specific Zoning Regulations, Section A-7 – Section B, C (1) of the Coral Gables "Zoning Code."

**AND**

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kara N. Kautz", written over a horizontal line.

Kara N. Kautz  
Historic Preservation Officer