

MIAMIBEACH

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PLANNING DEPARTMENT
Tel: 305-673-7550, Fax: 305-673-7559

April 20, 2018

Members of the Florida Building Commission & Accessibility Advisory Council
c/o Chip Sellers, Operations Consultant
Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation
2601 Blair Stone Road
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

RE: 230 20th Street, Miami Beach, Florida – Santa Barbara Hotel & Apartments

Dear Mr. Sellers and Members of the Commission and Council:

I am writing in reference to the above noted structure, and the request for an accessibility waiver.

The Santa Barbara Hotel & Apartments (the "Santa Barbara"), located at 230 20 Street, was constructed in 1947 and designed by Norman M. Giller, an influential architect of the postwar style of architecture in Miami Beach. The Santa Barbara was conceived as a garden-style apartment building, a popular postwar concept in Miami Beach. The U-shaped structure features an open courtyard leading to the main entrance at the south end of the property. The interaction of the outdoor courtyard to the indoor spaces is purposefully tiered and creates the signature design of the building. All units are accessed from exterior catwalks with decorative iron balustrades that face the courtyard, with the ground level catwalk raised a few feet above the courtyard. The units themselves are further raised above the catwalks by about half a foot. This structure is designated as "Contributing" in the Miami Beach Historic Properties Database, and is located within the Museum Local Historic District as well as the Miami Beach Architectural National Historic District.

The subject structure, with the exterior catwalks, balustrades and tiered levels, retains an extraordinary degree of historic and architectural integrity and is representative of the rich diversity of architectural styles that have evolved within the City's Historic Districts. The Historic Preservation Board approved a renovation that retains the open courtyard and the east and west wings of the structure, complete with the tiered catwalks and room elevations, as well as an addition connecting them on the south side. The current proposal to retain, preserve and restore the east and west wings of the Santa Barbara in their original state, including the open courtyard, is essential to the future understanding of the development of architecture in Miami Beach.


The subject structure qualifies as a historic building under the federal ADA regulations, the ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) and Chapter 11 of the Florida Building Code. The requested waiver pertaining to the vertical accessibility to the units in the east and west wings is critical to the restoration plan for the building. In order to accommodate vertical accessibility, substantial modifications to the historic public exterior spaces – the courtyard and the catwalks – would be required, including extensive ramps and adjusting the tiered nature of the catwalks that is essential to the historic integrity of the building. Such interventions would irreparably harm the very significant design, style and configuration of the subject structure.

The Planning Department, on behalf of the Miami Beach Historic Preservation Board, strongly supports the subject waiver request. If you have any questions relative to the historic

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significance of the existing structure, or you need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Debbie Tackett
Chief of Historic Preservation