

# MIAMIBEACH

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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February 16, 2022

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: 1116 Ocean Drive – Support for Accessibility Waiver# 549-R1 for Casa Casuarina**

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

Casa Casuarina is located at 1116 Ocean Drive, Miami Beach, FL 33139 and listed as a contributing building in both the Miami Beach Architectural District (National Historic district, established in 1979) and the Ocean Drive/Collins Avenue Historic District (Miami Beach local Historic district, established in 1986). The original building was constructed in the 1930's and inspired by the Alcazar de Colon in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. In 1992, the property was purchased by Gianni Versace, being fully restored, and converted to his personal residence.

The Miami Beach Planning staff position is the original construction is contributing and had therefore recommended that a glass elevator would be tucked into the courtyard to provide greater vertical accessibility. When this Application (HPB19-0352) was before the Historic Preservation Board of Miami Beach ("HPB") at both the July 13, 2021 and October 12, 2021 meetings, the Board had expressed concerns locating the glass elevator within the courtyard, interfering with the Versace renovations completed in the 1990's. The HPB recommended that an elevator should be located inside one of the hotel rooms.

Planning staff has concerns in placing an elevator within the interior of the contributing structure because of the potential for irreparable damage of the 1930's building resulting from the floors and ceilings being cut open to install an elevator.

The Application after multiple hearings, was issued a continuance by the HPB but the applicant could not find a solution that would be supported by HPB members and Planning staff at the same time.

For the reasons stated above the City of Miami Beach Planning Department is in support of the state granting the requested accessibility waiver under application # 549-R1.

Sincerely,



Thomas R. Mooney, AICP  
Planning Director