



MIAMIBEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
NO. 148-2008

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Matti Herrera Bower and Members of the City Commission
FROM: City Manager Jorge M. Gonzalez
DATE: May 27, 2008
SUBJECT: Status of Abandoned Bungalow Structure at 311 Meridian Avenue

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2008 MAY 28 PM 3:42
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

This letter is to inform you of the status of the currently abandoned historic wood frame bungalow structure located at the front of the lot at 311 Meridian Avenue. Recently, several members of the Commission received inquiries related to the subject property. The subject building, constructed in 1924, was designated as a contributing structure in the locally designated Ocean Beach Historic District when the district was created by the City Commission on February 20, 1996, at which time it was still occupied. A non-contributing, one story concrete block structure is located directly behind the bungalow. Both structures are now vacant and in highly deteriorated condition.

Between 1998 and 2003, three separate new development projects were approved for the subject property. Each project was approved by the Board to demolish the non-contributing rear structure, restore the wood frame bungalow structure and relocate it to the northwest corner of the site, and to construct a new multi-story residential building on the balance of the property. None of these projects were built, and the two existing structures still remain in their original locations. In April of 2004, the property was sold to an out of state buyer.

As a consequence of the rapidly deteriorating conditions of these two buildings and the legitimate growing concerns of surrounding residents, Planning staff have located and spoken directly with the current owner, who resides in Washington, D.C. The owner has been advised by Planning Department staff that because of the threat these structures now pose to public safety, the Building Official has informed the City Manager's Office that unless the owner demonstrates serious intent to remove both structures from the property immediately he will have no recourse other than to issue an Emergency Demolition Order and have the structures demolished by a City contractor.

However, the Building Official has offered to withhold issuing the Emergency Demolition Order immediately if the owner agrees to apply for and is granted a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of both structures at the June 10, 2008 Historic Preservation Board meeting. Upon being granted a Certificate of Appropriateness, the owner will be required to pull demolition permits and demolish both structures at his own expense immediately. The owner has now agreed to these conditions and will request the Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition at the June 10, 2008 meeting.

In November of 2007, the property owner commissioned a 40 Year Recertification Inspection and Report for both structures. This report concluded that both buildings are in extremely deteriorated condition, with roofs and floors partially collapsed, termite and other serious damage extensive throughout, and both structures are beyond the ability to be repaired. The report finally concluded that each "building must be demolished immediately".

At the explicit urging of the Planning Department, the owner has commissioned a local architect to prepare and submit the application to the Historic Preservation Board for a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition as well as for the landscaping and proper fencing of the site. Planning staff have met with the architect and he is currently preparing the submission.

At this time, if all proceeds as stated, I anticipate the Historic Preservation Board will grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition on June 10, 2008. I am confident the Board will impose whatever conditions of approval it deems necessary and appropriate for restoring the wellbeing of the historic site, the district, and the peace of mind of the surrounding community. The Building Official has advised the Planning Department that he will allow a maximum of four (4) weeks from June 10, 2008, for the property owner to pull the required demolition permits and completely remove both buildings from the site.

If you have any questions or need any additional information about this property, please do not hesitate to contact me.


JMG/TH/JGG/whc

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