

URGENT REQUEST to Historic Preservation Board – June 1, 2015

My name is Nivea Cordova Berrios. I reside at The Seasons Condominium located in 209 North Fort Lauderdale Beach Boulevard, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33304. I purchased my home in September 2009 and I am permanent resident. I am the immediate past president of The Seasons Condominium. Our condominium was designed by famous architect Morris Lapidus. It is my desire that our building will be designated as historic in the near future.

I am in dismay and very concerned to observe how the Central Beach neighborhood's character and balance is changing. Right now too many buildings on the City's architectural resources survey are already demolished or threatened with demolition by large-scale development. I truly appreciate the various architectural styles from the 1920's through the 1960's. It is the City's duty to preserve this LEGACY.

I am so worry that these continued large –scale developments will choke the smaller historic buildings. The shade of the large structures will kill all of the small gardens among the smaller buildings.

It was nothing more than GREED that allowed the demolition of the pristine house located 3029 Alhambra Street, next to Casablanca Café. The objections of the Marriott lawyers and hired consultants are nothing more than an attempt to clear the land for an inappropriate monstrosity to be built in the middle of the quaint block, which will destroy our neighborhood.

We, the residents of this beloved neighborhood urge you as BOARD MEMBERS TO DO THE RIGHT THING. PLEASE DESIGNATE THE PROPERTIES UNDER REVIEW AS HISTORIC. They clearly meet the criteria for this designation.

PLEASE, WE NEED YOUR HELP IN THIS DAVID VS. GOLIATH STRUGGLE.

I am a former administrator for Maryland Montgomery County Public Schools, one of the largest and prestigious school systems. I served on many Boards for over 25 years such as: appointed to serve as advisor to two Montgomery County Executives, appointed by the City of Gaithersburg to serve as Chair of the

Multicultural Affairs Committee, appointed by the US Department of Education to represent Select Committee of Underserved Group of Parents, etc.

When I retired, The City of Fort Lauderdale became my permanent home. This is my City, and I want to serve and protect my beloved neighborhood.

Due to a family health need, I am out of town. I regret that I cannot deliver this message in person.

Dear Linda,

I am writing to let you know my displeasure with the owners of the torn down historic home on Alhambra. This operation was completed quickly without a demolition permit. These people appear to have total disregard of the city rules and regulations. Their actions should be taken into consideration when they apply to redevelop this property. This was done for greed and they couldn't care less about what people that live in the neighborhood think or want.

Fort Lauderdale Beach has a history that is quickly disappearing as multimillion dollar hotels are being developed along the beach. Preservation of historic properties demonstrates long-term vision by preserving irreplaceable cultural resources and promoting sustainability practices by conserving our limited environmental resources. It adds to tourism and makes the central beach area very special.

Please consider my letter to you. I am not alone in wanting Fort Lauderdale Beach to be a special place for many years to come.

Thanks,

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Presentation to the Historic Preservation Board, June 1, 2015
City of Ft. Lauderdale, Department of Sustainable Development

Historic Designation Application for

3017 Alhambra - Joe Willis property.

First - I like to request extra time, in case my presentation goes over 3 minutes, because I am testifying for many people in my neighborhood, who had to return north and their opinion cannot be represented at this time.
Can the commission grant me an exception?

Charlie, the applicant and I live in the Lauder-Del-Mar neighborhood ... we walk the streets daily ... we love our neighborhood ... feel lucky we live here. Charlie came to this neighborhood, long before me, he lives on Seville Street and I live in the Seasons

We care deeply about preserving our 80-year-old neighborhood. We also meet with some of our neighbors who feel the same way and we decided to file for historical protection with this petition. As more and more development is going on in this beach area, something needs to be done before all our historical places disappear.

My question to you and the commissioners is:

We heard that OTO Development is trying to demolish 3 (three) almost 80-year-old buildings on Alhambra Street in order to build a high-rise hotel. These places are of historical value, already registered with the Broward County Historical Central Beach Master Plan, the City's own Architectural Resource Survey and the State of Florida Master Site File **and yet they are in jeopardy.**

I ASK THIS BOARD TO PLEASE CONSIDER OUR PETITION AND PRESERVE ALHAMBRA STREET, THE WAY IT EXCISTED FOR 80 YEARS, REALLY OLD - for FORT LAUDERDALE HISTORY.

Let me paint you a picture:

Back in 1936, Ft. Lauderdale beach, had Hugh Taylor Birch Park, Bonnet House, etc. and the Casablanca Café, build in 1927, a private residence. The street was still

named 2nd Street when the first building permit was issued, re-named Alhambra Street, in 1936, later that year. The area is listed in the Central Beach inventory, as **Lauder-del-Mar, Architectural Area.**

I researched the records at the Historical Archives and found the original Building permit

6935, dated August 17, 1936, issued to Mr. J.G. Willis, for a 4-unit apt. by builder/architect F.J. Morton, estimated cost \$ 11,500.

(Cost was pretty high considering there was another building permit issued, almost back-to-back on 3015 Seville Street for an 8-unit place for \$ 18,000).

When I cross referenced the name in the city directory I found this listing

Mr. Jos G (Dorothy) Willis, homeowner, slsmn employed by Geo E Merrick Inc. Real estate Sales & Rental investments, 16 E Las Olas Blvd (see advertising on front cover of 1938-1939 city directory)

very, very impressive advertising, taking up a third of the directory front cover. This reference proves to me, that our Mr. Willis had great importance, working for the #1 real estate company in 1936, when Ft. Lauderdale was booming. Everybody who came to town, to invest in Ft. Lauderdale, did business with this company and possible Mr. Willis himself. I could actually feel this Mr. Willis in action, considering his development and building/living on Alhambra Street, as the same type buildings were build on Seville Street for less money.

I bet you this Mr. Willis, who lived in this house with his family, was the **Huzsinka** of his time, because a year later, in the 1940/1941 city directory, he is listed as

HOMEOWNER, employed by Willis Real Estate Co. (owner) East Las Olas Blvd.

making me guess ... that man did good! He now owns an income producing beach property, in a hot neighborhood, owns his own company also on Las Olas, has a wife and family and the Ft. Lauderdale real estate (beach!) market is HOT.

In 1942-1943 city Directory, the 3017 property is listed as

Dorothy Willis, homeowner (Wid Jos G) slsmn, sold to Mrs. Bonnie Smith (Home Owner) and renamed Bon Air Apt.

That short notation tells a lot. I went to the library, to research the micro fish hopefully to find an obituary but ran out of time. The Ft. Lauderdale newspaper was a huge publications back then in 1942-43, as America started to be involved in WWII, and Ft. Lauderdale was booming. (I will make it my personal mission, to research this Mr. Willis, but I need help, my resources are limited.)

I urge this commission to consider this place worthy of the Historical Preservation designation criteria due to the age of the building, the owner/builders background (Item "c" in Criteria for Historic Designation, stating *Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the city, state, or nation.*) and the architectural significance (Item "e" in Criteria for Historic Designation "*its value as a building recognized for the quality of its architecture, and sufficient elements showing its architectural significance.*")

Please preserve this place for future generations.

Thank you,
Erika E. Klee

Charlie Esposito
3009 Seville St. No.6
Fort Lauderdale, Fl. 33304

June 1, 2015

Department of Sustainable Development
Urban Design & Planning Division
700 NW 19th Ave.
Fort Lauderdale, Fl. 33311

Re. Case No. H15010 - 3017 Alhambra Street, Fort Lauderdale, Fl. 33304

Not long after my arrival to Fort Lauderdale in 1981 while working as night bellman I was asked to guide police to the Sheraton Yankee Clipper's roof where a jumper threatened suicide. Even though a security staff was on duty I provided the direction because I was the only one who knew how he got there - I had studied the building.

The hotel's owner settled a longtime feud by constructing a south tower building to block all but one hour of sun to the neighboring hotel's pool. I would not attend to make a judgment on his action because I don't know what the argument was about - it seemed a little severe.

We were surprised early one morning by an earthquake which turned out to have been a crane that fell at Marriott's Harbor Beach Resort then under construction on Holiday Drive next to the Yankee Clipper. Some might have complained of the rush to have completed the Marriott but it was largely viewed as a welcomed addition in part because nothing had to have been torn down to accommodate it. On the other hand one of the most outstanding archaeological discoveries in Fort Lauderdale's history was located on the other side of this same building B Ocean Resort (then Sheraton Yankee Clipper) in May of 2011. Musket balls and many valuable artifacts were unearthed from beneath Fort Lauderdale Beach Park's parking lot dating back to the third beach-side fort known to have been erected during the Second Seminole War from 1835 to 1842. Experts claim that the location was the site of both the U.S. Army fort built in 1939 and a prehistoric home of the Tequesta Indians and that the discovery remains the first proof. Lauded as a fantastic discovery it also remains the subject of a highly questionable if not high level cover-up.

It does not signal that future developments should be subordinated to archaeologists just that cooler heads must be allowed to prevail parsing benefits of development against potentially unreasoned destruction.

At meetings of the Central Beach Alliance the owner of historic Villa Torino at 3017 Alhambra Street has been outspoken regarding the importance of this street and property specifically. He has opposed the destruction of Casa Alhambra yet now his position has become conflicted by external interests and foreign money.

We must be able to rely on an integrity of governance melding community interests with properness, order and care.

North of Bayshore drive on Fort Lauderdale beach years of neglected and deteriorated properties and hotels begged for renovation. Every aged building is not worthy of historic preservation. Alhambra street having maintained its virtuous presence of "art moderne" require these properties to be left as signature to a now fragile and irreplaceable era of design.

Alhambra street is named for a fortress of palaces constructed in 889 AD in Andalusia Spain and does not simply form a welcome contrast to Fort Lauderdale's future beach development it presents as essential and imperative in terms of historic beauty, art, and design.

Within a scope of time an eight decade old landmark does not seem ancient but Fort Lauderdale is a young city - nineteen is old for a teenager. This city must be allowed to preserve essential remnants of its heritage.

The Villa Torino at 3017 Alhambra Street in Fort Lauderdale, Florida should be allowed to maintain within its historically pristine condition.

Truly,

Charlie Esposito