



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
City Commission Agenda Memo
REGULAR MEETING

#25-0766

TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of the
Fort Lauderdale City Commission

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager

DATE: September 3, 2025

TITLE: Public Hearing - Quasi-Judicial - Resolution Approving the Rescission of
Historic Landmark Site Designation of the Property Commonly Known as
the "Robinson Cobb House," Located at 1109 NE 16 Place, Fort
Lauderdale, Florida – Historic Preservation Board Case No. UDP-
HPD25001 – **(Commission District 2)**

Recommendation

Staff recommends the City Commission consider adopting a resolution approving the rescission of the Historic Landmark Site Designation of the property known as "Robinson Cobb House," located at 1109 NE 16 Place, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in accordance with Section 47-24.11. C.11. of the Unified Land Development Regulations (ULDR).

Background

The Robinson Cobb House (also known as the Leonard Glasser Model Home), located at 1109 NE 16 Place, was designated a Historic Landmark on September 4, 2002, by Resolution No. 02-138. The designation was requested by the property owners at the time, Jeffrey S. Cobb and Benny V. Robinson, who appeared before the Historic Preservation Board (HPB) on July 8, 2002.

On May 14, 2025, current owner Benny V. Robinson applied to the HPB to rescind the historic landmark status, explaining that the original application had been initiated by his partner, Jeffrey S. Cobb, who recently passed away. Mr. Robinson's request is based on the initial recommendation made by the HPB to the City Commission in 2002 which concluded that it did not meet the threshold of significance required for historic designation. The City Commission ultimately disregarded the HPB recommendation and voted to designate the property. According to Mr. Robinson, the request to rescind the designation is primarily driven by financial hardship and the challenges he has faced in selling the historic property.

The property consists of two segments: (1) the original one-story, minimal ranch-style home built in 1952 by architect Leonard H. Glasser, and (2) a 1970s addition designed by local architect Richard H. Mitchell, composed of an elongated hexagonal structure with a skylight. The original home has been further altered with the placement of an arcade along the front façade.

The application for the rescission of the Historic Landmark Site Designation, including the original historic designation resolution and staff report, was reviewed by the HPB on July 7, 2025.

The HPB concluded that the application meets ULDR Section 47-24.11.C.11 and voted unanimously, by a vote of 5-0, to recommend that the City Commission approve the request to rescind the historic landmark designation of the property. The July 7, 2025, HPB meeting minutes are provided as Exhibit 1.

In the 2002 designation, the City Commission found that the property met ULDR criteria (c), (f), (g), and (h) for historic designation. To rescind the historic landmark designation, the City Commission must find that the property no longer meets criteria (c), (f), (g), and (h) for historic designation.

City staff reviewed the designation criteria, the responses provided by the applicant at the time of the original designation, and the information provided for the request for rescission. Additional research was also conducted on the history and the potential significance of the property. City staff responses to each of the criteria are provided below:

- *Criterion (c): Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the city, state, or nation.*
 - **Applicant's Response in the 2002 Designation Application:** The property is associated with several individuals, including its first homeowner, Edward Palatki (also known as Eddie Weber), a virtuoso pianist and accordionist active in Fort Lauderdale's nightclub scene during the 1940s and 1950s. It is also linked to Leonard Glasser - the developer, architect, and contractor behind the Lauderdale Park subdivision.
 - **Applicant's Response in the 2025 Rescission Application:** In the original application included a list of people tracing the lineage of the house's ownership. With all due respect for their personal characters and the lives they have lived, no one would merit any consideration as noteworthy or having contributed to the broader scope of their existence.
 - **City Staff Response:** Designation under this criterion for the first property owner would be more appropriate if there was documentation directly linking Mr. Palatki, local musician and entertainer, to the property such as written or oral stories that demonstrate its association with his life. Given the modest historical relevance and limited documentation, the property does not meet this criterion. This criterion is also not applicable in relation to the architect who designed the structure.
- *Criterion (f): Distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials.*

- **Applicant's Response in the 2002 Designation Application:** The original design of the house was typical of 1950s residential architecture, reflecting the prevailing style of its era. A later addition, designed by local architect Richard H. Mitchell, was included in the application as a "more interesting feature of the house."
- **Applicant's Response in the 2025 Rescission Application:** Though many have been charmed by the uniqueness of the property, it is a uniqueness characteristic which only prevails in comparison to surrounding properties and accented by the scope of frontal and side yard landscape and roominess. It does not represent historical or architectural advancement by way of any innovative construction or composition that some might say deserves promotion and/or preservation. It has never been featured in any periodical locally, regionally or nationally for any of the concepts mentioned.
- **City Staff response:** Due to the multiple additions and the lack of significant architectural features on the exterior of the primary structure, this property does not meet this criterion.
- *Criterion (g): Its character as a geographically definable area possessing a significant concentration of continuity of sites, buildings, objects, or structures united in past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development.*
 - **Applicant's Response in the 2002 Designation Application:** The house was built in 1952 by Leonard H. Glasser and his company, Land of Sun Homes, Inc., as the model home for a new subdivision in Fort Lauderdale known as Lauderdale Park. Positioned alongside the house across NE 16th Place, the two properties formed a gateway into the planned community. Entry signs placed on the front corners of both lots welcomed visitors with the message: "Welcome to Lauderdale Park."
 - **Applicant's Response in the 2025 Rescission Application:** The additions of both the chalet-style wing (lofted ceilings and wooden beam structured) and front arcade built in the 1970s, regardless of degree of composite visibility from the street, in no way reflects Florida style architectural heritage and diffuses any consideration of the property as classic mid-century Florida ranch style home as argued back at the time of its designation. Some might even argue that these features hide and distract from the simplistic beauty and culture-based heritage of Florida homes built mid-century and even after.
 - **City Staff Response:** This criterion is generally applied to historic districts and is therefore not applicable to this property.

- *Criterion (h): Its character as an established and geographically definable neighborhood, united in culture, architectural style of physical plan and development.*
 - **Applicant's Response in the 2002 Designation Application:** Lauderdale Park was originally platted in 1925 along Dixie Highway, one of Florida's earliest north-south roadways. While limited construction took place in the 1920s, the neighborhood saw significant residential development beginning in the early 1950s, spurred by post-World War II migration to Florida's east coast. The original streets were named after trees - such as Cherry, Oak, and Pine - with the subject property located on what was then known as Spruce Street. The area is easily recognized as an early 1950s neighborhood characterized by numerous small, single-story homes in the "Atomic Style." This architectural style is distinguished by flat façades, front-facing roof pitches, and angular forms that evoke a subtle, space-age aesthetic.
 - **Applicant's Response in the 2025 Rescission Application:** Not provided.
 - **City Staff Response:** This criterion is intended to reflect the collective identity of a neighborhood or subdivision, such as a historic district, rather than an individual property. Therefore, it is not applicable in this case.

City staff's conclusion is that the original designation application lacked substantive evidence, and upon further review and evaluation, City staff finds the property does not meet the designation criteria for individual designation as a historic landmark. The original 2002 designation application (Case #25-H-02) received a mixed response from the HPB at its meeting on July 8, 2002, and was ultimately recommended for denial by a vote of 5-3. On September 4, 2002, the City Commission unanimously approved the designation application by a vote of 5-0, thereby designating the property, despite the HPB's recommendation for denial.

Additional information regarding the property's background, including the rescission application, the historic designation resolution and supporting materials, can be found in the HPB staff report, provided as Exhibit 2.

Designation Process: Rescission

In accordance with ULDR Section 47-24.11.C.11, the designation of any landmark and landmark site, historic building or historic district may be amended or rescinded through the same procedure utilized for the original designation. As such, for a structure to qualify for a rescission of a designation, it must no longer meet the criteria under which it was designated. In this case, the Robinson Cobb House was originally designated under criteria (c), (f), (g) and (h) as outlined in ULDR Section 47-24.11.C.7.

The applicant states that the property located at 1109 NE 16th Place, commonly known

as the Robinson Cobb House under case number UDP-HPD25001 no longer meets criteria (c), (f), (g) and (h) as outlined in ULDR Section 47-24.11.C.7.

Should the City Commission approve the rescission of the historic landmark site designation, the structure will lose its historic status and associated benefits, including eligibility for incentives available to historic resources in the City Fort Lauderdale. Furthermore, the property will no longer be subject to the requirement that the owner or designee obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the HPB before undertaking any alterations, new construction, demolition, or relocation.

Resource Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

Strategic Connections

This item supports the Advance Fort Lauderdale 2040 Comprehensive Plan specifically advancing:

- The Historic Preservation Element
Goal 1: The City shall prepare and adopt a long-term approach to historic preservation which identifies and evaluates the City's historic resources.

Attachments

Exhibit 1 – July 7, 2025, HPB Minutes

Exhibit 2 – HPB Staff Report

Exhibit 3 – Recission Application

Exhibit 4 – Property Survey

Exhibit 5 – Public Notices for the HPB Meeting

Exhibit 6 – Historic Designation Resolution and Backup Materials

Exhibit 7 – Resolution Approving Rescission of Historic Landmark Site Designation

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