



REQUEST: Historic Landmark Designation of Castro Convertibles at 2860 N. Federal Highway

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| Case Number | UDP-HPD21003 | FMSF# | |
| Applicant | City of Fort Lauderdale | | |
| Owner | June 36 Properties LLC | | |
| Address | 2860 N. Federal Highway | | |
| General Location | Located on the east side of North Federal Highway approximately 1200 feet south of the intersection of East Oakland Park Boulevard and N. Federal Highway | | |
| Legal Description | CORAL RIDGE GALT ADD NO 1 31-37 B POR LOT 3,4 BLK 61 DES AS BEG NE COR LOT 4,BLK 61 SLY 218.52,W 185,NLY 250,E 185,SLY 54.63 TO POB AS DESC IN OR 45071/1448 | | |
| Existing Use | Commercial - Retail | | |
| Zoning | B-1 – Boulevard Business | | |
| Applicable ULDR Sections | 47-24.11.C. | | |
| Landmark/Historic District | Castro Convertibles | | |
| Authored By | Trisha Logan, AICP, Historic Preservation Planner | | |

This staff memorandum was prepared using excerpts from the attached designation report that provides further information on the history and significance of this property.

Statement of Significance:

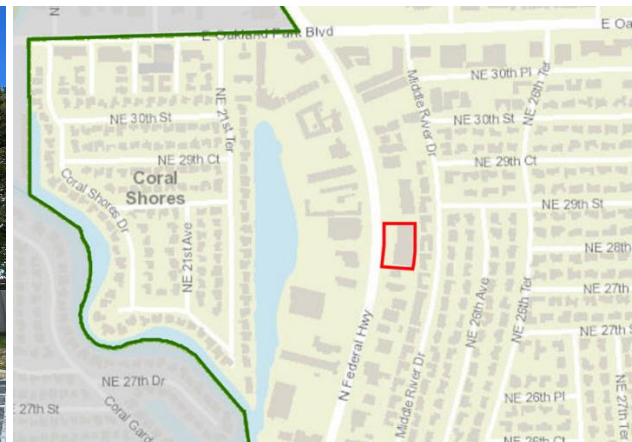
The Castro Convertible Showroom in Fort Lauderdale is significant for both its Mid-Century Modern architectural design by Fort Lauderdale master architect Charles McKirahan and for its association with Bernard Castro, an Italian immigrant who founded the furniture chain “Castro Convertibles” in 1931 beginning with a store in Manhattan. The relationship between noted architect McKirahan, and businessman and artisan Castro reflects the flamboyance and innovation they both shared and appreciated in each other. The high-end product Castro manufactured earned its cachet as a highly desirable and equally fashionable living room focal point. Beginning in the early 1950s Castro and his family in South Florida with a home in Fort Lauderdale (2300 N. Atlantic Boulevard--also designed by McKirahan,) and enjoyed the tropical lifestyle which included a yacht outfitted with Castro’s own furnishings. Displaying his memorable marketing style, Bernard Castro opened the Fort Lauderdale store with great fanfare, and catering to his local clientele, built a replica of a yacht to draw attention to his unique products.

Request for Historic Landmark Designation

Historic Landmark Designation is requested for the property located at 2860 N. Federal Highway, commonly known as Castro Convertibles.



Photo of Existing Site



Location Map

Criteria for Historic Designation

Pursuant Section 47-24.11.C.7 of the ULDR, the criteria for the designation of property as a landmark, landmark site or historic district shall be based on one (1) or more of the criteria and evaluated in conjunction with guidance provided within the National Register Bulletin series published by the National Park Service.

ULDR, Section 47-24.11.C.7

c. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the city, state, or nation.

Response

The Castro Convertible Showroom is significant for its association with both the owner of the business, Bernard Castro and its architect, Charles F. McKirahan. Bernard Castro has been recognized as an innovator for his contributions to American furniture design, while Charles F. McKirahan has become an acknowledged master of Mid-Century Modern architectural design.

In 2014 Bernard Castro was inducted into the American Home Furnishings Hall of Fame. National in its scope, the Hall of Fame was established to celebrate "...exceptional individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to the U.S. home furnishings industry, and to create a new class of innovation and leadership."

Charles McKirahan achieved prominence for his architectural designs on a statewide level and is acknowledged as one of the architects who created the character of Mid-Century Modern design in Florida.

Application meets this criterion.

d. Its identification as the work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the city, state, or nation.

Response

Charles F. McKirahan is the subject of considerable scholarship in Florida and is cited as one of the preeminent architects whose work made an indelible impact on Florida's Mid-Century Modern architecture. McKirahan's work is featured in the University of Florida's study "Florida's Mid-Century Modern Architecture (1945-1975)," funded in part by the Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State, and published in 2018. The publication selected fifty "flagship" structures that express the hallmarks of Mid-Century Modern design and includes McKirahan's 1960 Birch Tower. McKirahan's work is also featured on individual tours and is included in many scholarly references that address the quality of his architectural design. McKirahan's work is studied for its contribution to the uniqueness of Florida's historic architecture. His considerable, remaining work in Fort Lauderdale pays tribute to his ability to design all types of architecture including residential, both single-family and multi-family, commercial, and resort buildings.

Application meets this criterion.

f. Its distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials.

Response

The character of architecture during the seismic shift that was Post War America is evidenced by the change in building design. Initially influenced by European iconoclasts, America's Mid-Century Modern architectural design is uniquely recognizable. The design represents a departure from historicist references and the influence of a "modern" age.

With its shape, enormous pylon sign, cantilevered roof and emphasis on walls of windows and natural light, the Castro Convertible Showroom is an extraordinary example of Mid-Century Modern design.

Application meets this criterion.

Summary Conclusion:

In accordance with Section 47-24.11.C of the ULDR, staff finds that the application for Historic Landmark Designation located at 2860 N. Federal Highway under case number UDP-HPD21003 meets criteria (c), (d), and (f) as outlined in Section 47-24.11.C.7 of the ULDR.

Unless otherwise specified by the approving body, each designation of a landmark shall automatically include the designation of the site upon which the landmark exists as a landmark site.

Historic Preservation Board Suggested Motion:

I move to recommend to **(approve) (deny) (approve with conditions) (continue)** the request for Historic Landmark Designation located at 2860 N. Federal Highway under case number UDP-HPD21003 based on a finding this request **(meets) (does not meet)** criteria (c), (d), and (f) as outlined in Section 47-24.11.C.7. of the ULDR.