



**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
City Commission Agenda Memo  
REGULAR MEETING**

**#15-0902**

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

**FROM:** Lee R. Feldman, ICMA-CM, City Manager

**DATE:** July 7, 2015

**TITLE:** Consideration of a Resolution Relating to the Landmark Designation of  
Villa Torino (formerly known as Willis Apartments), 3017 Alhambra Street –  
HPB Case H15010

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**Recommendation**

It is recommended the City Commission consider the request to designate the Villa Torino (formerly known as Willis Apartments) and property located at 3017 Alhambra Street as a historic landmark.

**Background**

An application for the historic designation of the structure location at 3017 Alhambra Street, Fort Lauderdale, Florida was filed on April 3, 2015 by Fort Lauderdale resident Charlie Esposito, and is attached as Exhibit 1. On June 1, 2015, the Historic Preservation Board (HPB) reviewed the application and recommended by a vote of 8-1 that the City Commission approve the landmark designation. HPB Draft minutes are attached as Exhibit 2.

The HPB considered the memorandum prepared by Merrilyn Rathbun, the City's Historic Preservation Consultant (Exhibit 3). Ms. Rathbun qualifies as a history and architectural history professional in accordance with the National Park Service, Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Architectural History as published in 48 Federal Registry 44716-01, previously published in the Code of Federal Regulations 36 CFR Part 61. The consultant's report concludes that the Villa Torino meets the criteria for designation under the Unified Land Development Regulations (ULDR) Section 47-24.11.B.6 under criterion e.

In addition to the submission by the applicant and the City's Historic Consultant memorandum, the HPB also considered information from party interveners. The property owner, James P. Ostryniec is not the applicant for this Landmark Designation and has retained legal counsel, Steve K. Tilbrook, Esq. of Gray Robinson. Mr. Tilbrook submitted documentation objecting to the request and is attached as Exhibit 4. In addition, Jordana L. Jarjura and Stephanie J. Toothaker of Tripp Scott are representatives of OTO Development who is a contract purchaser for the 3017 Alhambra Street property along with two other properties including 3029 Alhambra Street which was recently demolished.

Ms. Jarjura and Ms. Toothaker submitted documentation objecting to the request for historic designation (Exhibit 5). A testimony document from Steve Glassman, President of the Broward Trust for Historic Preservation was also submitted to the HPB, attached as Exhibit 8, and public comment letters were provided to the HPB, attached as Exhibit 9.

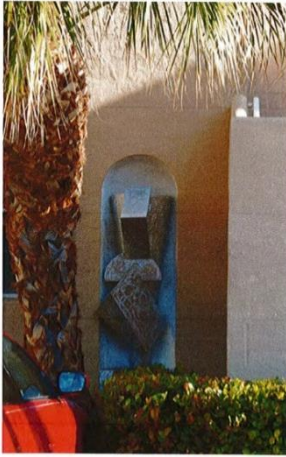
Subsequent to the HPB hearing supplemental application documentation was submitted by Dave Baber, of Historic Preservation Solutions, LLC, clarifying that he was the preparer of the application, including historic analysis for the landmark designation criterion and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Architectural History in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations 36 CFR Part 61, as a professional architectural historian (Exhibit 6). It also responds to assertions made in a document prepared by Amy Van de Riet, Associate for Anthony Abbate Architect, P.A. entitled, "An Evaluation of Qualification for Historic Designation" (Exhibit 5).

On June 22, 2015, Mr. Baber submitted additional documentation acknowledging that the preparation of the application was also in collaboration with Ms. Marla Sherman Dumas from MSSD Consulting Inc., and asks the City Manager and City Commission to allow his colleague, Ms. Dumas to represent the case at City Commission if he is unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances (Exhibit 7). On June 26, 2015, Michael Zimny, Florida Certified Local Government Coordinator of the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, submitted a letter to the City supporting the landmark designation (Exhibit 10).

### **Summary of City's Historic Consultant Memorandum**

The Consultant's report notes that the Willis Apartments at 3017 Alhambra Street were designed by prominent Miami architect Charles Paul Nieder. Mr. Nieder was a voting member of the Florida Association of Architects. In circa 1930, Nieder was the chairman of the committee writing the building code for the City of Miami.

The apartment building, now called Villa Torino, is two stories with a rectangular footprint, stucco wall cladding, and has a flat roof with a parapet. Stylistically the building is Art Moderne, however, it has elements of Art Deco such as the jagged design of the support brackets of an exterior staircase, and the dentil ornamentation just below the parapet coping. The Moderne style elements of the building are the corner wrapping windows and the use of horizontal striping.



Close-up of Stylized Brackets Supporting Staircase



Staircase to the Second Floor at the Southwest Corner

Two significant architectural elements dominate the south facing façade of the apartment building. The first is a centered, outside chimney. The second important exterior element is a half turn staircase with a cantilevered balcony at the second floor level.

The consultant concludes that because of the depressed economy of the 1930s, Fort Lauderdale has relatively few examples of the fashionable Art Moderne/Deco architectural styles of the period. Villa Torino is a very good example of the style and is worthy of historic designation under ULDR Sec. 47-24.11.B.6 criterion e. *"Its value as a building recognized for the quality of its architecture, and sufficient elements showing its architectural significance"*.

### **Required Designation Process**

Pursuant to Section 47-24.11.B.5, the Commission shall hold a public hearing to consider the application, the record and recommendation of the HPB review and shall hear public comment and determine whether proposed application meets criteria found in Section 47-24.11.B. If the Commission determines the proposed designation meets the criteria, the Commission shall approve the landmark designation by adopting a resolution accordingly. If the Commission determines that the proposed designation does not meet criteria for designation, the Commission shall deny designation.

The landmark designation shall automatically include the designation of the site upon which the landmark exists as a landmark site. As a result, once the City Commission approves the landmark designation, the property will be subject to the provisions set forth in the ULDR, Section 47-24.11. This includes the requirement that the property owner or designee shall obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Board prior to undertaking any of the following actions:

- Alteration of an archeological site, new construction, demolition, or relocation.
- Alteration of the exterior part of a building or a structure or designated interior or portion thereof of a building or structure, however, ordinary repairs and maintenance that are otherwise permitted by law may be undertaken without a Certificate of Appropriateness, provided this work on a designated landmark, a designated landmark site, or a property in a designated historic district does not alter the exterior appearance of the building, structure or archeological site, or alter elements significant to its architectural or historic integrity.

Additionally, any future proposed impacts to the historic resource such as development of adjacent properties may require said properties to report to the Historic Preservation Board for review and comment.

### **Resource Impact**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

### **Strategic Connections**

This item is a *Press Play Fort Lauderdale Strategic Plan 2018* initiative, included within the Neighborhood Enhancement Cylinder of Excellence, specifically advancing:

- Goal 6: Be an inclusive community made up of distinct, complementary, and diverse neighborhoods.

This item advances the *Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale Vision Plan 2035: We Are Community*.

Attachments:

Exhibit 1 – HPB-H15010 Application

Exhibit 2 – June 1, 2015 HPB Draft Minutes

Exhibit 3 – Consultant Memorandum

Exhibit 4 – Gray Robinson – Steve Tilbrook, Esq. counsel for property owner opposition

Exhibit 5 – Tripp Scott – objection letter and associated documents

Exhibit 6 – Application supplement by Dave Baber, Historic Preservation Solutions, LLC

Exhibit 7 – Dave Baber authorization for representation by Ms. Dumas

Exhibit 8 – Broward Trust for Historic Preservation, Steve Glassman

Exhibit 9 – Letters from the public

Exhibit 10 – Michael Zimny-State of FL CLG Coordinator

Exhibit 11 – Resolution Landmark Designation - Approving

Exhibit 12 – Resolution Landmark Designation – Denying

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Prepared by: Linda Mia Franco, AICP, Principal Planner, HPB Liaison

Department Director: Jenni Morejon, Sustainable Development