

Testimony at Historic Preservation Board on June 1, 2015

Re: Case Number H15010 – 3017 Alhambra Street

Good evening members of the Board and City Staff,

My name is Steven Glassman; I am a resident of Fort Lauderdale and I am speaking as President of the Broward Trust for Historic Preservation in favor of the application you have before you. I want to commend Charlie Esposito for speaking up as a neighborhood resident who is concerned about the historic resources that surround him. He has good reason to be concerned as evidenced by the Letter of Objection you have received from Tripp Scott attorneys Jordana Jarjura and Stephanie Toothaker, the evaluation of qualification from Amy Van de Riet and Anthony Abbate, and the objections of Steve Tilbrook with Gray Robinson. These people are heavy hitters and Charlie is an ordinary guy from the neighborhood. Please know how much I respect and admire Stephanie, Jordana, Tony, Amy, and Steve but I have to tell you – each one has gotten it all wrong. When I read their reports to you, one thing stands out loud and clear – for them this is all about possibly building a new hotel in the middle of Alhambra Street, saying what they are getting paid to say, and these historical resources are simply in the way.

There is no supporting evidence in the objectors' submissions that 3017 Alhambra Street does not meet the qualifications for historic designation; there are just pages after pages belittling Charlie and citing meaningless case law claiming that he is not being qualified to prepare the application. But that's a moot point now because we know that Dave Baber prepared the application and he has more experience and knowledge in this field than all of them put together. The other objections focus on alterations which are merely maintenance and changes to windows which were necessitated by code. Lastly, there seems to be some confusion on the attorneys' part about definitions of Art Moderne which Baber clears up nicely. Money, power, and possible development at this location should not be driving the train here; the only thing you need to consider is criteria e: "Its value as a building recognized for the quality of its architecture, and sufficient elements showing its architectural significance." That has clearly been demonstrated.

Take a look at this 1936 building (show photo) and remember that if it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it's a duck. Because my time is limited, I will refer you to the excellent response paper that you received from Dave Baber where he methodically proves the architectural significance and blows out of the water the so-called inaccuracies asserted in the Van de Riet/Abbate paper. Look at the City of Fort Lauderdale Historic Preservation Guidelines, Architectural Styles Chapter, Page 6 – Modern (show photo). The example shown for Art Moderne is almost a mirror image of the building before you tonight.

I do want to make a comment concerning the land use issues presented in the Tripp Scott objection on page 11 of 13 where they assert that “b) historic designation would be inconsistent with the applicable land use and zoning regulations and the pertinent master plans.” Please know that historic preservation does not impact land use and if their assertion was correct, then we might as well all pack it in and call it a day and never preserve a single building. How could buildings constructed in the 1920s through the 1960s have had the premonition to be consistent with today’s land use and zoning regulations? This is an absolutely ridiculous claim. Furthermore, how can developer attorneys state that historic preservation is inconsistent with pertinent master plans when the 2009 Sasaki Central Beach Master Plan on Page 24 discusses architectural resources in depth and cites this very defined area and says that “these resources have been altered very little, have special visual merit or historical importance. Architectural Resources may qualify for local designation and may meet the national Register criteria. These resources add to the historic architectural qualities, historic associations, and/or architectural values of the area...Adjacent to Birch Estates is Lauder-del-Mar with key architectural resources (1) and architectural resources (32) representing 100% of the area...The most significant concentration of architectural resources are in Birch Estates and Lauder-del-Mar. (Their) Recommendations: Any revisions to the zoning codes for these zoning districts should consider the value of the architectural resources to the overall intent of the district and reinforce the potential for preservation and/or adaptive reuse of these resources. I say “Amen.”

Lastly, I want to remind the Board that not too long ago, a proposed hotel called Vintro came before the City Commission and even though it impacted a historic resource, it never came, as it should have according to Policy 1.11.2 and 1.11.3 of the Historic Preservation Element of our City’s Comprehensive Plan, before HPB. It only came to the attention of HPB under “Good of the City” on January 7, 2013 (minutes attached) because concerned citizens spoke to it. As a result, the HPB voted unanimously to request that the City Commission direct staff to apply for local designation of the Casa Alhambra (3029 Alhambra) and Café Casablanca (3049 Alhambra Street) properties. The other motion supported the position of the CBA regarding the Vintro Hotel project on the Casa Alhambra site and requested that the applicant present the project to HPB for review and comment. That never happened, and there was no follow-up as a result of both motions.

In conclusion, I hope you have all had the opportunity to walk Alhambra, Seville, and Granada Streets – so many gems that reflect amazing architecture from decades and development gone by and where the developer’s attorneys tell you that because there is a mix of styles and not

one is prevalent that we are to believe that none prevail and therefore none are significant on their own, I say rubbish - that's all the more reason to protect and preserve this amazing array of buildings most of which, like the ones before you tonight, are located on both the City's Central Beach Architectural Resources Survey and the State Division of Historical Resources' Florida Master Site File.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Glassman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

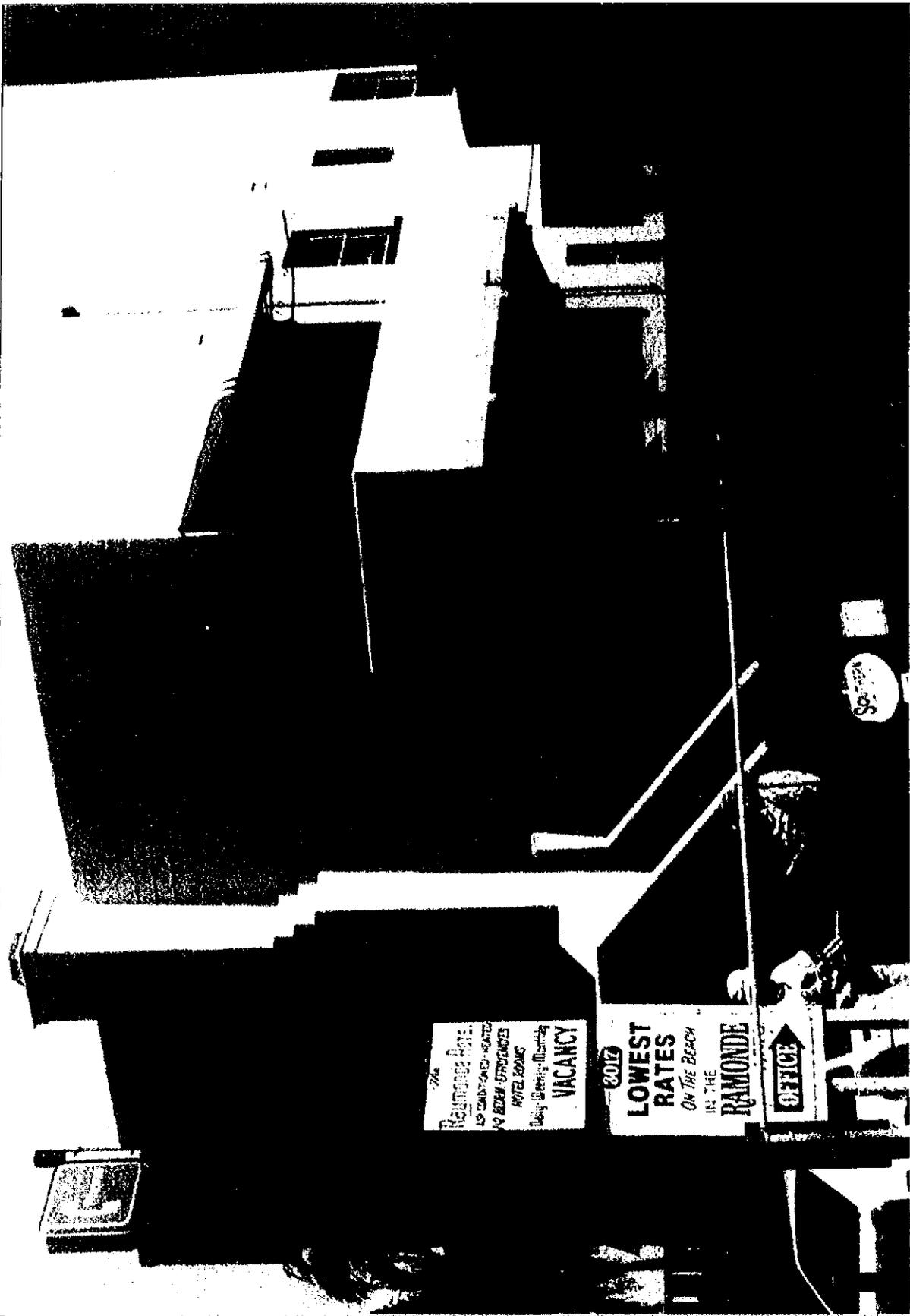
Steven Glassman

Attachment 1a

3017 Ahambra Street
Present Day



Attachment 1b,



2017 Alhambra from State Division of Historical Resources
Florida Master Site File

CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE HISTORIC PRESERVATION DESIGN GUIDELINES,
ARCHITECTURAL STYLES CHAPTER, Page 6 - Modern

MODERN



This residence has curved forms typical of the Art Deco period with decorative pilasters and cantilevered sun screen over window and door openings typical of the Art Moderne period.



This Art Moderne building has a 2 story main block with a 1 story wing usually joined by with a decorative band. Windows are in round corners and are covered by cantilevered sun screens.



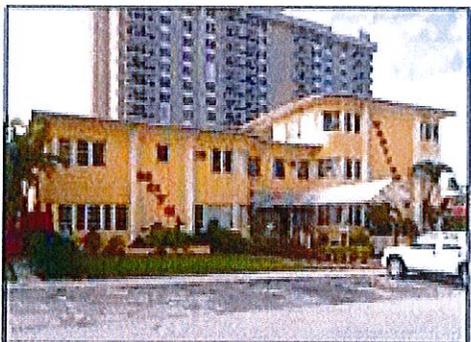
This Art Moderne residence has a central projecting portico tapered by a coping, corner wrapping windows with cantilevered sun screen, and a smooth stucco surface with horizontal grooves.

ART DECO

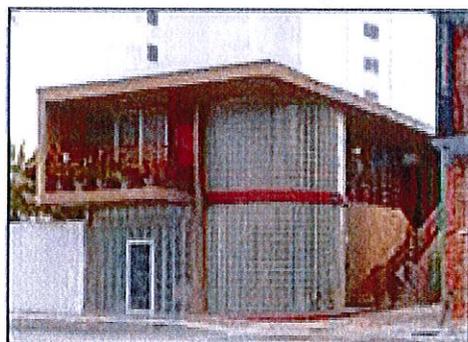
- Flat roof with vertical projections above roof line
- Smooth stucco wall surface with geometric designs

ART MODERNE

- Flat roof with a small ledge or coping at roof line
- Asymmetrical facade
- Smooth stucco wall surface with horizontal grooves or lines
- Horizontal balustrade elements
- Windows wrap corners



Fort Lauderdale's hotels and motels were constructed in a variety of styles including this Art Moderne example. Note the projecting roof line and wrapping corner windows.



This Mid-Century Modern building has a semi-enclosed, round glass block screen and a projecting balcony under a cantilevered flat roof slab.

DRAFT
11.30.09

CENTRAL BEACH MASTER PLAN



Assessment: Architectural Resources

Architectural Resources

The Central Beach has an architectural heritage that contributes to the overall character of the beach environs and represents the historical evolution of the barrier island. Buildings that contribute to this architectural heritage are from the early to the middle of the twentieth century. This period begins with the initial development by Hugh Birch and Frederick Bartlett on the northern half of the beach area. The area should be recognized as an integral resource of the beach community.

In August of 2008 the City of Fort Lauderdale Planning and Zoning Department completed its Architectural Resource Survey – Central Beach Neighborhood in an effort to document those resources that have “historical and architectural interest” in the evolution of the beach environs. The study area included the Central Beach areas extending from Holiday Drive on the south to Sunrise Boulevard on the north. The majority of the significant

architectural resources were located in either the northern and southern portions of the planning study area. The core area of the Central Beach was limited in its historical architectural resources.

Within the study area were defined four specific areas: Birch Estates, Lauder-del-Mar, Harbor Drive (outside the Master Plan area), and Sunrise Lane/Northeast 9th Street Commercial Area. Architectural styles represented in the Central Beach area included: Mediterranean Revival, Tropical Art Deco, Neoclassical Revival, Moderne, Modern Vernacular, Wrightian Modern, Iconic Modernism, and Subtropical Modernism.

The figure below describes the areas evaluated and the location of architectural resources. These resources have been altered very little, have special visual merit or historical importance. Architectural Resources

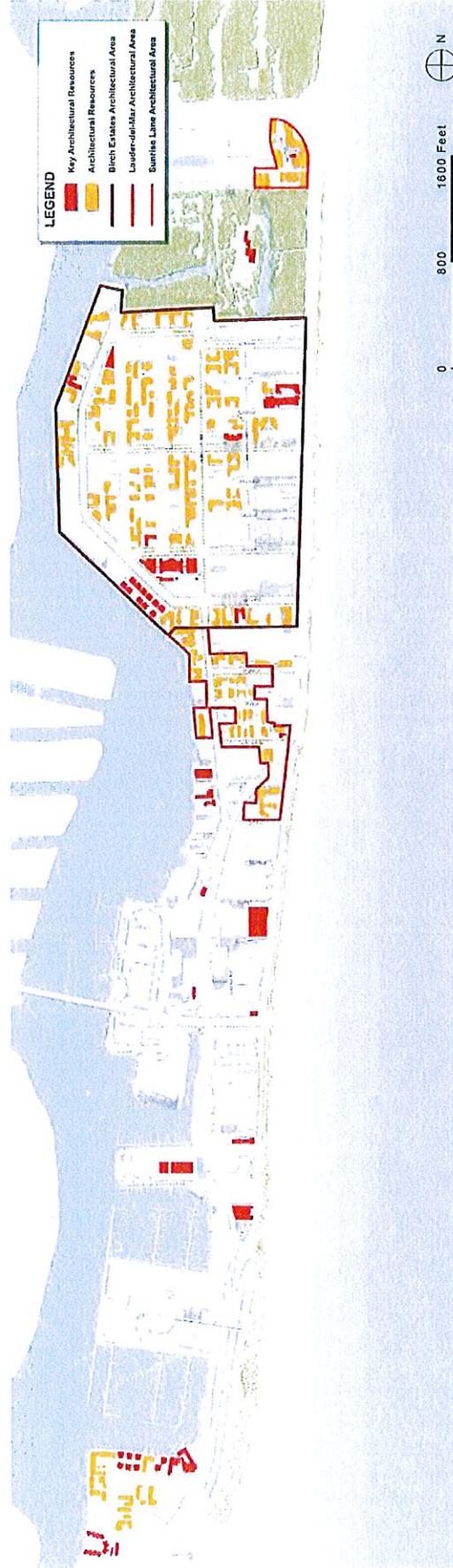
may qualify for local designation and may meet the National Register criteria. These resources add to the historic architectural qualities, historic associations and/or architectural values of the area.

The area with the greatest number of Architectural Resources is Birch Estates with 85% of the 120 buildings/lots evaluated as architectural resources (94) or key architectural resources (8) defining the character of the Area. Adjacent to Birch Estates is Lauder-del-Mar with key architectural resources (1) and architectural resources (32) representing 100% of the Area. Sunrise Lane Area, to the north, had key architectural resources (1) and architectural resources (22) representing 96% of the total building stock. Harbor Drive, outside the scope of this planning study, had key architectural resources (1) and architectural resources (22) representing 96% of that Area's buildings.

The most significant concentration of architectural resources are in Birch Estates and Lauder-del-Mar. The majority of the Birch Estates Area is located in the NBRA zoning district and the Lauder-del-Mar Area is split between the IOA and ABA zoning districts.

Recommendation

Any revisions to the zoning codes for these zoning districts should consider the value of the architectural resources to the overall intent of the district and reinforce the potential for preservation and/or adaptive reuse of these resources.



Architectural Resources

HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
 → **MONDAY, JANUARY 7, 2013 - 5:00 P.M.**
CITY HALL FIRST FLOOR COMMISSION CHAMBER
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA

| <u>Board Members</u> | <u>Attendance</u> | <u>Cumulative Attendance</u> | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| | | <u>6:2012 through 5/2013</u> | |
| | | <u>Present</u> | <u>Absent</u> |
| Matthew DeFelice, Chair | P | 7 | 1 |
| David Kyner, Vice Chair | P | 8 | 0 |
| Brenda Flowers [arr. 5:05] | P | 8 | 0 |
| Marie Harrison | P | 5 | 3 |
| Richard Heidelberg | P | 7 | 1 |
| Phillip Morgan | P | 8 | 0 |
| Richard Schulze | P | 5 | 3 |
| Jackie Scott | A | 3 | 1 |
| Gretchen Thompson | P | 7 | 1 |

City Staff

Merrilyn Rathbun, Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, Consultant to HPB
 Anthony Fajardo, Historic Preservation Board Liaison
 Lynda Crase, Board Liaison
 Linda Mia Franco, Board Liaison
 Carrie Sarver, Assistant City Attorney
 Brigitte Chiappetta, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc

Communication to the City Commission

Motion made by Mr. Schulze, seconded by Ms. Thompson to inform the City Commission that the HPB supports the position of the Central Beach Alliance regarding the Casa Alhambra/Vintro Hotel project and requests that the applicant present the project to the HPB for review and comment as part of the approval process. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Mr. Schulze, seconded by Mr. Morgan to request the City Commission direct staff to apply for local designation of the Casa Alhambra and Café Casa Blanca properties. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Mr. Schulze, seconded by Mr. Morgan to request the City Commission direct staff to explore options for protecting the umbrella tree on the old City Hall property. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

Regarding televising the Board's meetings, Ms. Sarver explained that this required a City Commission resolution. If the Board desired, they could discuss this and submit a request to the City Commission.

Ms. Sarver reported the City Attorney's office was commenting on the new ordinance and the document, with comments, would be submitted to the working group, Board members and the City Commission.

Ms. Sarver had no new information regarding designation of City park archeological sites. Chair DeFelice volunteered to attend a Parks and Recreation Board meeting to discuss this topic with them on behalf of the HPB.

Motion made by Mr. Schulze, seconded by Mr. Heidelberger to designate Chair DeFelice as the representative of the HPB to attend and Parks and Recreation Board meeting to discuss preservation of archeological and historic resources in City Parks. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

→ **3. Good of the City**

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Chair DeFelice said Steve Glassman had contacted him regarding a proposed project in the Central Beach area: the Vintro Hotel. Fred Carlson, representing the Central Beach Alliance (CBA), entered Mr. Glassman's letter into the record and Chair DeFelice read it. The plan was to demolish the 1925 Casa Alhambra and to build a 14-story Vintro Hotel and restaurant on the site. Mr. Glassman indicated that a CoA from the HPB was not required since the property was not designated or located in an historic district, but the HPB should review and comment on the plan as part of the DRC process. Mr. Glassman felt the City should codify the historic surveys that existed and "give some teeth to these lists."

Mr. Carlson stated at their last meeting, the CBA membership had "heartily" disapproved of the project. He remarked on the number of historic structures in the City that were not being protected and urged the Board to act to preserve these structures. Mr. Carlson described the Casa Blanca restaurant across the street from the Casa Alhambra as a "stellar attraction" in Fort Lauderdale with a feeling of history. He worried about the impact a 14-story building would have on a 100-foot by 125-foot lot. Mr. Carlson felt this project would be an insult to the Casa Blanca and other nearby two-story buildings and "rudely destructive" to ideas the CBA had for the future.

Ms. Thompson remarked this was happening all over the City.

Mr. Heidelberger stated a similar incident had occurred in his neighborhood years ago. He advised Mr. Carlson to monitor the project along the way.

Mr. Carlson requested the Board's support of the CBA's stance.

Charles Jordan endorsed the CBA's position. He stated the building had previously been a senator's house and was next to a Francis Abreu house.

Ms. McClellan said the house was eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Ms. Rathbun stated the Casa Blanca was no longer eligible since it had been redeveloped and the second floor removed. Ms. Rathbun informed Mr. Schulze that it was possible to request local designation of both buildings.

Chair DeFelice stated according to the Comprehensive Plan, any property on the Florida Master Site File should be presented to the HPB for review and comment. Mr. Fajardo said City staff was discussing this with Broward County; until this was concluded, the City would only bring locally designated properties to the HPB for review and comment.

Chair DeFelice reported he had reviewed the historic and archeological significance of this property for the County.

→ **Motion** made by Mr. Schulze, seconded by Ms. Thompson to inform the City Commission that the HPB supports the efforts of the Central Beach Alliance to prevent the approval of the Vintro Hotel project.

Mr. Morgan did not want to take a position without hearing from both sides. Mr. Heidelberger agreed, and suggested a general statement supporting the CBA's efforts to control development in their area.

Mr. Morgan amended his motion to request that the applicant present the project to the HPB for review and comment before the completion of the approval process.

Ms. Sarver restated the motion:

To inform the City Commission that the HPB supports the position of the CBA regarding the Casa Alhambra/Vintro Hotel project and requested that the applicant present the project to the HPB for review and comment as part of the approval process.

Mr. Schulze suggested the City apply to designate this property.

Chair DeFelice reminded the Board that A1A had been designated as a scenic highway and one of the recommendations was that an historic inventory of the corridor be conducted. If this were done, these two properties would be included.

Mr. Schulze stated there was an umbrella palm on the old City Hall property that was of historic significance but was not designated. Mr. Fajardo explained this could be declared a protected tree by the City Commission.

Chair DeFelice asked Mr. Fajardo if an archeological survey was required for a development planned on SW 12 Street and Mr. Fajardo explained that anything over four units required DRC site plan review but there was no trigger for an archeological survey. He was not aware of the project Chair DeFelice mentioned.

4. Communication to the City Commission

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Discussed earlier.



Motion made by Mr. Schulze, seconded by Ms. Thompson to inform the City Commission that the HPB supports the position of the CBA regarding the Casa Alhambra/Vintro Hotel project and requests that the applicant present the project to the HPB for review and comment as part of the approval process. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.



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Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:03.

Next Meeting

The Board's next regular meeting was scheduled for February 4, 2013.

Chairman,

Matthew DeFelice, Chair

Attest:

ProtoType, Inc./Recording Secretary

The City of Fort Lauderdale maintains a Website for the Historic Preservation Board Meeting Agendas and Results: <http://ci.ftlaud.fl.us/documents/hpb/hpbagenda.htm>