



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

**#17-0304**

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

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

**DATE:** May 2, 2017

**TITLE:** Quasi-Judicial Resolution Approving a Landmark Designation Commonly  
Known as the First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Fort Lauderdale and  
the Property Listed in the Legal Description Located at 441 NE Third  
Avenue – HPB Case H16016

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**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the City Commission consider the request to designate the First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Fort Lauderdale and the property listed in the legal description as a historic landmark per Section 47-24.11.B.6 of the Unified Land Development Regulations (ULDR) under criterion a, b, c, e, and f, located at 441 NE Third Avenue.

**Background**

At its February 21, 2017 City Commission Meeting the City Commission approved a motion to continue the public hearing to the May 2, 2017 meeting subject to the terms and condition set forth on the record and agreed upon by the property owner, developer and applicant, among which is that the no alterations are to be done to the church with the exception of those needed for maintenance, landscaping and upkeep. Compliance would be ensured by video recording the current state of the Church. Courtney Crush, Esq., representative of the potential developer, arranged for a videographer, Ms. Logan, and Ms. Franco (City staff) to access the church structure to record the existing conditions of both the interior and exterior of the church on February 22, 2017.

At its March 21, 2017 Conference Meeting, the City Commission inquired about the removal of the stained glass windows. Staff has confirmed that two permits were applied for on November 17, 2016 related to the windows and subsequently voided as it was determined by the Building Department that a permit was not required for the removal of windows. Those permits were:

Application Number: 16111691

Description of Work: *Remove seven windows, frame remain, and board-up for repair*

Status: Void

Application Number: 16111710

Description of Work: *Board-up of windows*

Status: Void

Subsequently, a third permit for boarding-up of the windows was applied for and issued on November 21, 2016. The permit is effective for 12 months.

Application Number: 16111920

Description of Work: *Board-up seven windows*

Status: Issued and Valid

John Travers, Building Official, and George Oliva, Chief Building Inspector, visited the site on March 24, 2017, to confirm if the building is secure and if the boards covering the seven window frames were installed correctly. Mr. Travers reported that the building was secure; and the boards were installed correctly and painted a color to match the surrounding stone.

Staff inquired into the status of the stained glass windows and received the attached response from Reverend William H. Knott (Exhibit 5). Rev. Knott indicated that the stained glass windows have since been sold to the Abiding Savior Lutheran Church in Fort Lauderdale on September 12, 2016.

An application for the historic designation of the structures located at 441 NE Third Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, Florida was filed on October 4, 2016 by Robin Haines Merrill, applicant, and the Rev. Paul J. Pfadenhauer, former pastor and co-applicant, (Exhibit 1). On December 5, 2016, the Historic Preservation Board (HPB) reviewed the application and recommended by a vote of 9-0 that the City Commission approve the landmark designation. HPB draft minutes are attached as Exhibit 2.

The HPB considered the memorandum prepared by Marilyn 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 First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Fort Lauderdale meets the criteria for designation under Section 47-24.11.B.6 of the ULDR.

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, First Evangelical Lutheran Church, is not the applicant for this

Landmark Designation. The owner's representative, Pastor Bill Knott, submitted testimony objecting to the request and it is attached as part of the minutes in Exhibit 2.

### Summary of City's Historic Consultant Memorandum



Figures 1 & 2 Saint Anthony Church & rectory on Las Olas Blvd. ca. 1921; congregation arriving for Mass.

The consultant's report notes that Saint Anthony's Church (now 1<sup>st</sup> Lutheran) was built in 1921 for Fort Lauderdale's Roman Catholic congregation. Saint Anthony's, established in 1921, is the oldest Catholic parish in Broward County. In that year Bishop Michael J. Curley announced that local Catholics would finally have a church. A lot on Las Olas Boulevard was selected as the building site. At that time the new parish had a resident priest, Father E.F. Callahan. In 1921 the "builder priest" Father G.J. Plunkett arrived and took up the duties of pastor. Father Plunkett specialized in building churches; he had worked as architect/builder for the church for 14 years. Local contractor John Olsson was hired to oversee the construction project.

Mr. Olsson had arrived in Fort Lauderdale about the time that the City was incorporated in 1915; he along with Edwin King and George Young, was one of the builders of the historic City. Olsson owned property in the Waverly Place subdivision, now SBHD, and was responsible for building many of our historic homes.

### Criteria for Historic Designation

ULDR Section 47-24.11.B.6	Consultant Response
<i>c. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the city, state or nation.</i>	CONSULTANT RESPONSE: Throughout his career, John Olsson contributed to the building of the historic fabric of the City. When the Catholics built a new church, Mr. Olsson, a founding member of the 1 <sup>st</sup> Lutheran congregation, arranged to purchase the old church for \$1 and moved the church to the present site on NE 3 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue for use by the Lutherans.

### **Building Description**

In style the church references Romanesque or Romanesque Revival churches although it does not have the characteristic semicircular arches of those styles. The church has a stone veneer; the stone was imported from North Florida. The façade is two stories in height with a gabled center section and is flanked at each corner by two attached square towers. Engaged columns are at the corners of both towers. At the original site on Las Olas the left hand tower was crowned with a battlement and the right hand tower roof was flat. When the church was moved to the NE 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue site, the tower positions were switched; the right hand tower now has the battlement.

The main entrance is centered at the gabled end. The double door entry, approached by five steps, is centered in a squared surround and topped by a segmental arched window. A rose window is positioned above the door, with a niche above the rose window. A saint's statue was positioned in the niche when it was Saint Anthony's. Narrow pointed arched windows are located at the first floor level of both towers. The battlemented tower has a pointed arch at the upper story. At the side elevation there is a row of segmental arched windows which are separated by engaged pilasters.

Once the church was moved to the NE 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue site, an addition was built to house offices, etc. The contractor, Mr. Olsson, used the same sort of stone for the new construction. The addition is two stories with an L shaped footprint. There is a street facing gable end at the short leg of the L. A large triple window is set in a segmental arched surround; other segmental arched windows are found on the second floor of the new addition. Some years later another addition was built at the rear of the church; however no attempt was made to match the older building.

### **Criteria for Historic Designation**

<i>ULDR Section 47-24.11.B.6</i>	Consultant Response
<i>e. Its value as a building recognized for the quality of its architecture, and sufficient elements showing its architectural significance.</i>	CONSULTANT RESPONSE: The 1 <sup>st</sup> Lutheran Church (Saint Anthony's as it was) is valuable because of the uniqueness of its architecture in Fort Lauderdale; there is nothing else like it in the City. It is also valuable because of the historic move. Historically, moving buildings, or recycling them, in Fort Lauderdale was quite common.

The consultant concludes that the 1<sup>st</sup> Lutheran Church is historically significant and is valuable because of the uniqueness of its architecture in Fort Lauderdale; there is nothing else like it in the City. It is also valuable because of the historic move. Historically, moving buildings, or recycling them, in Fort Lauderdale was quite common and its designation should be approved.

The applicants presented their case and concluded that the First Evangelical Church meets the criteria for designation under Section 47-24.11.B.6 of the ULDR under criterion a,b,e, and f, as follows:

- a) Its value as a significant reminder of the cultural or architectural heritage of the city,

state or nation; Ms. Merrill recalled the building's background and the fact that it had been moved brick-by-brick.

- b) Its location as a site of significant local, state or national event; Ms. Merrill stated the Catholic Church had sold the building to the Lutheran Church (the same denomination that began the Protestant Reformation away from the Catholic Church) for \$1 to an amazing display of generosity and defiance of prejudice.
- e) Its value as a building recognized for the quality of its architecture and sufficient elements showing its architectural significance; Ms. Merrill stated this was a rare, Romanesque-style building, unique to Fort Lauderdale and Florida. The architect was a builder-priest, Father G.J. Plunkett, also known as the first pastor of Fort Lauderdale.
- f) Its distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, method of construction or use of indigenous materials; Ms. Merrill reported the grey stones had been quarried in north Florida and the stained glass windows were by Willett.

#### **Required Designation Process**

Pursuant to Section 47-24.11.B.5 of the ULDR, the City 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 of the ULDR. If the City Commission determines the proposed designation meets the criteria, the City Commission shall approve the landmark designation by adopting a resolution accordingly. If the City Commission determines that the proposed designation does not meet criteria for designation, the City 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 Section 47-24.11 of the ULDR. This includes the requirement that the property owner or designee shall obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) 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 Application

Exhibit 2 – HPB Minutes

Exhibit 3 – Consultant Memorandum

Exhibit 4 – Warranty Deed (Added April 7, 2017)

Exhibit 5 – Pastor Knott Response

Exhibit 6 – Resolution Landmark Designation - Approving

Exhibit 7 – Resolution Landmark Designation - Denying

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Prepared by: Linda Mia Franco, AICP, Principal Planner

Department Director: Anthony Greg Fajardo, Sustainable Development