

MEMORANDUM

TO: Historic Preservation Board
FROM: Trisha Logan, Planner III, City of Fort Lauderdale
SUBJECT: H18017 – 1100 SW 6th Street
DATE: November 5, 2018

Case	H18017	FMSF#	BD02877
Owner	Thunderbird LP, Tom and Holly Forney		
Applicant	Tom and Holly Forney		
Address	1100 SW 6 th Street		
General Location	At the southwest corner of SW 6 th Street and SW 11 th Avenue		
Legal Description	<p>A PORTION OF LOTS 2 AND 3, BLOCK 21, AMENDED PLAT OF RIVERSIDE ADDITION TO FORT LAUDERDALE, ACCORDING THE PLAT THEREOF, AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 1, PAGE 13, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA, MORE FULLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:</p> <p>Commencing at the Northwest corner of said Lot 3; thence South 00°00'00" East, on the West line of said Lot 3, a distance of 106.80 feet; thence North 89°53'13" East, a distance of 40.44 feet to the Point of Beginning; thence continuing North 89°53'13" East, a distance of 0.74 feet; thence North 00°57'31" West, a distance of 2.75 feet; thence North 89°41'07" East, a distance of 10.98 feet; thence South 00°04'35" East, a distance of 2.77 feet; thence North 89°36'16" East, a distance of 11.04 feet; thence North 01°22'05" East, a distance of 2.79 feet; thence North 89°11'52" East, a distance of 24.14 feet; thence South 00°31'05" East, a distance of 18.20 feet; thence North 90°00'00" West, a distance of 12.44 feet; thence South 00°24'52" East, a distance of 38.94 feet; thence South 89°40'48" West, a distance of 5.93 feet; thence South 00°10'46" East, a distance of 14.68 feet; thence South 89°44'02" West, a distance of 22.45 feet; thence North 00°24'52" West, a distance of 14.60 feet; thence North 00°24'52" West, a distance of 14.60 feet; thence South 89°40'48" West, a distance of 6.00 feet; thence North 00°31'37" West a distance of 54.15 feet to the Point of Beginning.</p> <p>Said lands situate, lying and being in the City of Fort Lauderdale, Broward County, Florida and containing 2,484 square feet or 0.0570 acres more or less.</p> <p>It is the intent of this Legal Description to follow the outside perimeter of the existing building.</p>		
Existing Use	Single-Family Residential		
Proposed Use	Single-Family Residential		
Zoning	RS-8		
Applicable ULDR Sections	47-24.11.B.6		
Request	Historic Landmark Designation of the Bender Residence		

Property Background:

The residence at 1100 SW 6th Street has a long and distinguished history, with connections to Florida pioneers, Europe, civic leaders and the aristocracy. Overlooking the South Fork of the New River, pioneers Harry and Lucy Bender (originally from Logansport, Indiana) would begin its construction in 1924, utilizing concrete and reinforced steel to build a virtual "bunker" in conjunction with two frame structure that were extant on the property at the time. The Bender Residence would easily survive in the strongest of hurricanes because of its construction, rarely used during this period of South Florida's history. Lucy Bender had spent four years in Europe, and was enamored with the designs for the grand homes found there. One journalist called the

design for this residence as “a cross between a Spanish and Italian villa.”¹ In the 1960s, the home was sold to the Countess Astrid Grabowski-Dewart, whose pedigree is astounding as she is related to the first King of Poland. The Countess would flee from the Nazi’s beginning in 1939 with the occupation of Poland and take her to Yugoslavia, Hungary and to Paris where she learned the art of fashion design from a leading French couturier. After arriving in the United States, and particularly Fort Lauderdale in 1966, she would buy the former Bender Residence and make improvements to its already impressive design. The residence became palatial in character, and survives in a pristine setting, on an estate comprised of three lots in the Riverside neighborhood of Fort Lauderdale.



For additional information, see attached Historic Designation Report.

Request for Historic Landmark Designation

Located on SW 6th Street in the Riverside Park Neighborhood, the main façade of the residential two-story structure faces north towards the street and its secondary façade faces south towards the banks of the South Fork of the New River. The intent of the owner is to only designate the two-story residential structure and to not include the overall site as part of the historic landmark designation with the following Legal Description:

A PORTION OF LOTS 2 AND 3, BLOCK 21, AMENDED PLAT OF RIVERSIDE ADDITION TO FORT LAUDERDALE, ACCORDING THE PLAT THEREOF, AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 1, PAGE 13, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA, MORE FULLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

¹ Yolanda Maurer “Old House is Restored” *Fort Lauderdale News*, 29 March 1972, p.11A

Commencing at the Northwest corner of said Lot 3; thence South 00°00'00" East, on the West line of said Lot 3, a distance of 106.80 feet; thence North 89°53'13" East, a distance of 40.44 feet to the Point of Beginning; thence continuing North 89°53'13" East, a distance of 0.74 feet; thence North 00°57'31" West, a distance of 2.75 feet; thence North 89°41'07" East, a distance of 10.98 feet; thence South 00°04'35" East, a distance of 2.77 feet; thence North 89°36'16" East, a distance of 11.04 feet; thence North 01°22'05" East, a distance of 2.79 feet; thence North 89°11'52" East, a distance of 24.14 feet; thence South 00°31'05" East, a distance of 18.20 feet; thence North 90°00'00" West, a distance of 12.44 feet; thence South 00°24'52" East, a distance of 38.94 feet; thence South 89°40'48" West, a distance of 5.93 feet; thence South 00°10'46" East, a distance of 14.68 feet; thence South 89°44'02" West, a distance of 22.45 feet; thence North 00°24'52" West, a distance of 14.60 feet; thence North 00°24'52" West, a distance of 14.60 feet; thence South 89°40'48" West, a distance of 6.00 feet; thence North 00°31'37" West a distance of 54.15 feet to the Point of Beginning.

Said lands situate, lying and being in the City of Fort Lauderdale, Broward County, Florida and containing 2,484 square feet or 0.0570 acres more or less.

It is the intent of this Legal Description to follow the outside perimeter of the existing building.

Lining the street is a coral rock wall rising approximately 4'-0" which is in a deteriorated state, which contains two openings to accommodate a circular driveway. Additionally, in the northwest corner of the site, there is a one-story one-bedroom structure that was built in 2002. Along the riverfront, there is an existing seawall and boat slip. Overall the property encompasses three lots, however the house is straddled over lots two and three of Block 21.

Criteria for Historic Designation

Pursuant to ULDR, Section 47-24.11.C.3.c.i, in approving or denying applications for COAs for alterations, new construction, demolition or relocation, the HPB shall use the following general criteria:

ULDR, Section 47-24.11.B.6	Staff Response
<i>a. Its value as a significant reminder of the Cultural or archeological heritage of the city, state, or nation;</i>	N/A
<i>b. Its location as a site of a significant local, state or national event;</i>	N/A
<i>c. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the city, state, or nation;</i>	Harry S. and Lucy E. Bender were Midwesterners who became local South Florida pioneers. They chose to winter in Fort Lauderdale as early as 1919, enduring the long and arduous trek from their home in Logansport, Indiana. By 1924 the Benders began construction on their permanent home which was completed in 1926. Their home was sited on a large parcel of land in the Riverside Addition and was covered in dense, lush vegetation fronting directly on the south fork of the New River. Mr. Bender was a highly respected businessman who was actively engaged in civic affairs, while Mrs. Bender was intent on making their home the center of the social circle in the city.
<i>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;</i>	N/A
<i>e. Its value as a building recognized for the quality of its architecture, and sufficient elements showing its architectural significance;</i>	The Bender Residence, as later renovated and added onto by the Countess Grabowski is an architectural anomaly rather than a portrayal of any one recognized, traditional style of architecture. It was the personalities of its owners that make 1100 SW 6th Street, first an idealized version of a Mediterranean palace and later into a grand Eastern European home that reflected an aristocratic pedigree. The residence, as it stands today is found to have more than sufficient integrity to qualify it as a historic landmark. Available records cannot

	provide us with detailed information about changes to the home, but most probably, with the exception of the grand staircase, they were interior in nature. The residence is a rare, surviving example of a home whose style was directly influenced by the desires of its owners. Its unusual qualities speak directly to the personalities of the owners and is a one-of-a-kind design in the City of Fort Lauderdale.
<i>f. Its distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials;</i>	N/A
<i>g. Its character as a geographically definable area possessing a significant concentration, or continuity of sites, buildings, objects or structures united in past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development; or</i>	N/A
<i>h. Its character as an established and geographically definable neighborhood, united in culture, architectural style or physical plan and development.</i>	N/A

Building Description:

The residence built by the Benders between 1924 and 1926 was substantial, reflecting the nature of the environment they were in, and perhaps some influences that came from the Midwest where the Bender's had met and married, and where Harry Bender accumulated his wealth. Their residence on the river was constructed of concrete and reinforced steel—said to be the first of its kind in the area.

The design for the home was unlike anything else built during that period. Lucy Bender is said to have spent four years in Europe, and was especially fond of the architectural designs she experienced there. Her instructions to the builders were to create “a cross between a Spanish and Italian villa.” Descriptions of the interiors speak to massive, ornate chandeliers and large open rooms with wrought iron embellishments throughout.

The residence faces north onto SW 6th Street and is set back from the roadway so it is closer to the New River. A circular drive extends across the property for ingress and egress. Presently there are the partial remnants of a coral rock wall on the front property line, however its' severely deteriorated condition, and its compromised integrity are not a part of this report.

In the previous history there are references to the both Mrs. Lucy Bender and the Countess Grabowski seeking a residence that had both references to European architecture, and a presence worthy of their stature. The result was a curious amalgam of design elements.

This two-story residence is impressive, while at the same time has “oddities” that can be assumed to be the result of either Mrs. Bender, or more likely Countess de Grabowski. The center bay, the focus of the composition, is approached by a series of risers that extend outward and terminate in two flanking piers. The stairs are faced in a limestone. This grand staircase, is not functionally unnecessary as the home is built at grade and is not elevated from the ground. As a result, the opening into the foyer, because it is so high required staircases on the interior that lead both upward and downward.

Beside the spectacular staircase which is disproportionate to the home, the eye focuses on the flat roof canopy above the entrance which extends the length of the double doorway, and is attached to the home with scalloped brackets. The roof is not actually flat but attempts to comport itself into a mansard roof. The space required to achieve that slope is simply not physically there. Another inexplicable detail is a smaller flat roof, with the same bracket detail that surmounts the larger flat roof canopy. The smaller, secondary roof structure serves no practical purpose in protecting occupants from inclement weather.

The arrangement of the bays of the house is symmetrical with the main entrance flanked by two garage bays. This photo provides a good detail of the ornate brackets that are below the eaves which extend out a considerable distance from the hip roof.

Description of Future Plans:

If designated as a historic landmark, the property owners plan to perform exterior modifications which include the following items:

1. Infill the window opening with the low header on the East Facade of the Great Room and replace with two windows that are on opposite sides of this same room and face.
2. Align headers and balance windows on the West face to "fix" the replacement windows that were added at some later year in the homes history.
3. Other nominal window re-alignments.
4. Remove windows from second story of rear porch while retaining the fenestration openings to create an open porch.

Summary Conclusion:

In accordance with Sections 47-24.7.B.6 of the ULDR, specifically under criterion (c) and (e), staff recommends that the application for the historic landmark designation of the Bender Residence located at 1100 SW 6th Street be **Approved with Conditions:**

1. Additional structures shall not be constructed directly in front of the main two-story residence that would obscure the view of the front elevation from SW 6th Street.

Historic Preservation Board Suggested Motion:

I move to recommend **(approval) (denial) (approval with the following conditions) (to continue)** of the request for historic landmark designation to the City Commission under case number H18017 for the Bender Residence located at 1100 SW 6th Street, based on a finding these requests **(are) (are not)** consistent with the criteria for designation, specifically criterion (c) and (e), as outlined in the Unified Land Development Regulations, Section 47-24.7.B.6 **(If conditions apply, state those conditions on the record).**