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## VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

January 10, 2023

Deborah Tackett, Chief of Historic Preservation  
Planning Department, Second Floor  
City of Miami Beach  
1700 Convention Center Drive, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Miami Beach, Florida 33139

RE: **HPB22-0554** – Request for Certificate of Appropriateness for  
a Hotel Located at 337 20 Street, Miami Beach, Florida

Dear Debbie:

This law firm represents Riviera Plaza Apartments, LLC (the "Applicant") in their application for the proposed development located at 337 20 Street ("Property"). Please consider this letter the Applicant's letter of intent in support of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the conversion of an existing apartment building into a hotel ("Project").

Property Description. The Property is a contributing structure located on a lot approximately 18,750 square feet (0.43 acres) in size and is located at the northeast corner of 20<sup>th</sup> Street and Park Avenue. The Property consists of one (1) parcel identified by Miami-Dade County Folio No. 02-3226-001-0210. The Property is located in the Museum local Historic District and is zoned RM-2, Residential Multifamily Medium Intensity District ("RM-2"), a zoning district allowing a wide range of residential uses, as well as hotel use as a main permitted use. See Figure 1, below.



**Figure 1**

*Museum Local Historic District.* As stated above, the Property is located within the Museum Local Historic District. The Museum Local Historic District represents the development in Miami Beach, beginning in 1912 through World War I, and continuing in the mid-late 1920s, through the Great Depression and World War II. There are four (4) main architectural styles represented in the Museum Local Historic District that include Art Deco, Streamline Moderne, Mediterranean Revival and Masonry Vernacular, as well as Combination or Traditional styles.

During the early periods of development of the area, between 1912-1916, the majority of buildings were of relatively simple wood frame construction, often with stucco surface. Following World War I, larger buildings were constructed in the area, incorporating the Mediterranean Revival style. The style is reminiscent of the Mediterranean coast incorporating building styles from Spain, Italy, and Greece, and was responsive to local environmental conditions with wide overhangs, open breezeways, and extensive use of cool tile and stone.

The majority of buildings in the Museum Local Historic District were constructed between the 1920s through World War II. During this period, as Miami Beach recovered from the Great Depression, architectural design shifted from traditional to modern. Architectural design followed the public's fascination with machinery, and the simplified form and orientation reflected the economic and social condition in Miami Beach. Many smaller buildings were constructed in order to cater to the more modest means of the middle-class visitors and seasonal residents in the area.

Proposed Development. The Applicant proposes to construct a 76-unit hotel on the Property that will align with the historical nature of the Museum Local Historic District and preserve the Mediterranean Revival features of the original building. The Project will include five (5) stories, and rise 48 feet. The rooftop of the building will contain a deck, which will include a rooftop pool on the western side of the building and a roof garden and mechanical equipment on the eastern side of the building. The Project will also include a terrace and outdoor dining area in the courtyard on the ground floor. The design of the Project will incorporate materials such as French patio doors, a Barrel Mission clay roof, Square Picket Terracotta tiles, and Pecky Cypress ceilings throughout.

*Parking.* The Property is located in Parking District No. 9. Properties in Parking District No. 9 are not required to provide off-street parking if the building existed prior to October 1, 1993 and is designated as a contributing building within the local historic district.

Evaluation of Appropriateness. The Project fits well within the surrounding context of the area. The Property is adjacent to a 4-story, 57-unit contributing apartment-hotel building located at 2000 Liberty Avenue, designed in 1947. Across 20<sup>th</sup> Street are two contributing buildings—the 5-story Berkeley Park Hotel located at 334 20 Street and the 4-story Riviera Suites Hotel located at 318 20 Street, each designed in 1936. The Project will retain the Mediterranean Revival style that symbolizes and represents the character of the Museum Local Historic District. Overall, the Project ensures a high-quality development that respects the historic character of the surrounding community, while it activates the Property with a high-quality hotel operation embracing the Mediterranean Revival style of the original building.

Compliance with Section 118-395(b)(2): The Project complies with the development regulations for building located within a designated historic district. The existing structure's floor area, height, and height may remain as the following portions of the building remain substantially intact, and will be retained, preserved, and restored, or do not apply to the Project:

- (i) At least 75 percent of the front and street wide walls, exclusive of window openings.
- (ii) At least 66 percent of the remaining interior side walls, exclusive of wall openings.
- (iii) The existing contributing structure does not contain any architecturally significant public interior areas,

Sea Level Rise and Resiliency Criteria. The Project advances the sea level rise and resiliency criteria in Section 133-50(a) as follows:

**(1) A recycling or salvage plan for partial or total demolition shall be provided.**

The Applicant will provide a recycling or salvage plan during permitting.

**(2) Windows that are proposed to be replaced shall be hurricane proof impact windows.**

The Project will feature hurricane impact windows.

**(3) Where feasible and appropriate, passive cooling systems, such as operable windows, shall be provided.**

Abundant landscaping and permeable materials contribute to passive cooling, which represents a significant improvement from the existing condition.

**(4) Resilient landscaping (salt tolerant, highly water-absorbent, native or Florida friendly plants) shall be provided, in accordance with Chapter 126 of the City Code.**

The Applicant has worked to provide landscaping that is appropriate for the Property. The proposed plantings are appropriate for the area and specifically selected to increase flood resilience and improve stormwater drainage on the Property.

**(5) The project applicant shall consider the adopted sea level rise projections in the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Action Plan, as may be revised from time-to-time by the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact. The applicant shall also specifically study the land elevation of the subject property and the elevation of surrounding properties.**

The Applicant will consider the sea level rise projections for the Project.

**(6) The ground floor, driveways, and garage ramping for new construction shall be adaptable to the raising of public rights-of-ways and adjacent land and shall provide sufficient height and space to ensure that the entry ways and exits can be modified to accommodate a higher street height up to three (3) additional feet in height.**

The Applicant will consider the raising of public rights-of-ways for the Project.

**(7) As applicable to all new construction, all critical mechanical and electrical systems shall be located above base flood elevation. All redevelopment projects shall, whenever practicable and economically reasonable, include the relocation of all critical mechanical and electrical systems to a location above base flood elevation.**

Proper precautions will be taken to ensure the critical mechanical and electrical systems are located above base flood elevation.

**(8) Existing buildings shall, wherever reasonably feasible and economically appropriate, be elevated up to base flood elevation, plus City of Miami Beach Freeboard.**

The existing ground floor areas will be, where feasible and appropriate, elevated.

**(9) When habitable space is located below the base flood elevation plus City of Miami Beach Freeboard, wet or dry flood proofing systems will be provided in accordance with Chapter of 54 of the City Code.**

Wet or dry flood proofing systems will be provided wherever habitable space is located below BFE.

**(10) As applicable to all new construction, water retention systems shall be provided.**

Where feasible, water retention systems will be provided.

**(11) Cool pavement material or porous pavement materials shall be utilized.**

Cool pavement materials and/or porous pavement materials will be utilized.

**(12) The design of each project shall minimize the potential for heat island effects on-site.**

The Project's landscaping features will serve to minimize heat island effect.

Conclusion. Overall, the Project will reinvigorate an apartment building into a new 76-unit hotel, while retaining and honoring the iconic Mediterranean Revival style that original building embraced. The Project meets the intent of the Code in all respects and improves resilience of the Property. We therefore respectfully request your favorable review and recommendation. If you have any questions or comments, please call me at 305-377-6236.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael W. Larkin".

Michael W. Larkin