

# MIAMI BEACH

PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
Staff Report & Recommendation

Design Review Board

TO: DRB Chairperson and Members

DATE: December 10, 2024

FROM: Thomas R. Mooney, AICP  
Planning Director



SUBJECT: DRB24-1043  
**1015 Stillwater Drive**

An application has been filed requesting modifications to a previously approved Design Review Approval for the construction of a new two-story residence with an understory and a variance for the height of the home. Specifically, the applicant is requesting additional height as is permissible per the land development regulations.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Approval.

## **LEGAL DESCRIPTION:**

LOT 51, BLOCK 15, "BISCAYNE BEACH SECOND ADDITION", ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF, RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 46, AT PAGE 39, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF MIAMI DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA.

## **HISTORY:**

On October 4, 2022, the subject home was approved by the Design Review Board (DRB), pursuant to DRB22-0853. The application included understory review and approval of a variance to exceed by 1'-0" the maximum height of 24'-0" for a two-story structure with a flat roof. On November 5, 2024, the DRB reviewed the subject application for revisions to the home and continued the item to the December 10, 2024 meeting.

## **SITE DATA:**

Zoning: RS-4  
Future Land Use: RS  
Lot Size: 8,472 SF  
Lot Coverage:  
Proposed: 2,399 SF / 28.3%  
Maximum: 2,541.6 SF / 30%  
Unit size:  
Proposed: 4,228 SF / 49.9%  
Maximum: 4,236 SF / 50%  
Height:  
Proposed: **26'-7"** flat roof \*  
Maximum: 31'-0" flat roof\*

\*As measured from BFE + free board

Grade: +5.15 NGVD  
Base Flood Elevation: +8.00' NGVD  
Adjusted Grade: 6.57' NGVD  
First Floor Elevation: ~~+14.76' NGVD~~ +16.4' NGVD

## **EXISTING PROPERTY:**

Year: 1947  
Architect: J. Richard Ogden  
Vacant: Yes

## **SURROUNDING PROPERTIES:**

East: One-story 1947 residence  
North: Biscayne Bay  
South: One-Story 1948 residence  
West: Two-story 1947 residence

**THE PROJECT:**

The applicant has submitted plans entitled "1015 Stillwater, Miami Beach" as designed by **Preschel + Bassan Studio**, dated 09/08/2024. The applicant is proposing modifications to a previously approved single-family residence with understory and a height variance. The applicant is returning to the Board for modifications to the understory height and the overall height of the residence.

The applicant is requesting review for a modified understory area:

1. Understory area shall be subject to the review and approval of the Design Review Board in accordance with Section 7.2.2.3(b)(vi).

**COMPLIANCE WITH ZONING CODE:**

A preliminary review of the project indicates that the application, as proposed, appears to be consistent with the following sections of the City Code.

The above noted comments shall not be considered final zoning review or approval. These and all zoning matters shall require final review and verification by the Zoning Administrator prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.

**COMPLIANCE WITH DESIGN REVIEW CRITERIA, SECTION 2.5.3.1:**

Design review encompasses the examination of architectural / landscape drawings for consistency with the criteria stated below, with regard to the aesthetics, appearance, safety, and function of any new or existing structure and physical attributes of the project in relation to the site, adjacent structures and surrounding community. The design review board and the planning department shall review plans based upon the below stated criteria, criteria listed in neighborhood plans, if applicable, and applicable design guidelines. Recommendations of the planning department may include, but not be limited to, comments from the building department and the public works department.

- a. The existing and proposed conditions of the lot, including but not necessarily limited to topography, vegetation, trees, drainage, and waterways.  
**Satisfied**
- b. The location of all existing and proposed buildings, drives, parking spaces, walkways, means of ingress and egress, drainage facilities, utility services, landscaping structures, signs, and lighting and screening devices.  
**Satisfied**
- c. The dimensions of all buildings, structures, setbacks, parking spaces, floor area ratio, height, lot coverage and any other information that may be reasonably necessary to determine compliance with the requirements of the underlying zoning district, and any applicable overlays, for a particular application or project.  
**Satisfied**
- d. The color, design, selection of landscape materials and architectural elements of exterior building surfaces and primary public interior areas for developments requiring a building permit in areas of the city identified in section 2.5.3.2.  
**Satisfied**

- e. The proposed site plan, and the location, appearance and design of new and existing buildings and structures are in conformity with the standards of this article and other applicable ordinances, architectural and design guidelines as adopted and amended periodically by the design review board and historic preservation board and all pertinent master plans.  
**Satisfied**
- f. The proposed structure, or additions or modifications to an existing structure, indicates a sensitivity to and is compatible with the environment and adjacent structures, and enhances the appearance of the surrounding properties.  
**Satisfied**
- g. The design and layout of the proposed site plan, as well as all new and existing buildings shall be reviewed so as to provide an efficient arrangement of land uses. Particular attention shall be given to safety, crime prevention and fire protection, relationship to the surrounding neighborhood, impact on contiguous and adjacent buildings and lands, pedestrian sight lines and view corridors.  
**Satisfied**
- h. Pedestrian and vehicular traffic movement within and adjacent to the site shall be reviewed to ensure that clearly defined, segregated pedestrian access to the site and all buildings is provided for and that all parking spaces are usable and are safety and conveniently arranged; pedestrian furniture and bike racks shall be considered. Access to the site from adjacent roads shall be designed so as to interfere as little as possible with traffic flow on these roads and to permit vehicles a rapid and safe ingress and egress to the site.  
**Not Applicable**
- i. Lighting shall be reviewed to ensure safe movement of persons and vehicles and reflection on public property for security purposes and to minimize glare and reflection on adjacent properties. Lighting shall be reviewed to assure that it enhances the appearance of structures at night.  
**Not Satisfied; a lighting plan has not been submitted.**
- j. Landscape and paving materials shall be reviewed to ensure an adequate relationship with and enhancement of the overall site plan design.  
**Satisfied**
- k. Buffering materials shall be reviewed to ensure that headlights of vehicles, noise, and light from structures are adequately shielded from public view, adjacent properties and pedestrian areas.  
**Satisfied**
- l. The proposed structure has an orientation and massing which is sensitive to and compatible with the building site and surrounding area and which creates or maintains important view corridor(s).  
**Satisfied**
- m. The building has, where feasible, space in that part of the ground floor fronting a street or streets which is to be occupied for residential or commercial uses; likewise, the upper floors of the pedestal portion of the proposed building fronting a street, or streets shall have residential or commercial spaces, shall have the appearance of

- being a residential or commercial space or shall have an architectural treatment which shall buffer the appearance of the parking structure from the surrounding area and is integrated with the overall appearance of the project.  
**Satisfied**
- n. The building shall have an appropriate and fully integrated rooftop architectural treatment which substantially screens all mechanical equipment, stairs and elevator towers.  
**Satisfied**
- o. An addition on a building site shall be designed, sited and massed in a manner which is sensitive to and compatible with the existing improvement(s).  
**Not Applicable**
- p. All portions of a project fronting a street or sidewalk shall incorporate an architecturally appropriate amount of transparency at the first level in order to achieve pedestrian compatibility and adequate visual interest.  
**Satisfied**
- q. The location, design, screening and buffering of all required service bays, delivery bays, trash and refuse receptacles, as well as trash rooms shall be arranged so as to have a minimal impact on adjacent properties.  
**Satisfied**
- r. In addition to the foregoing criteria, subsection 118-104-6(t) of the General Ordinances shall apply to the design review board's review of any proposal to place, construct, modify or maintain a wireless communications facility or other over the air radio transmission or radio reception facility in the public rights- of-way.  
**Not Applicable**
- s. The structure and site comply with the sea level rise and resiliency review criteria in chapter 7, article I, as applicable.  
**Satisfied**

**COMPLIANCE WITH SEA LEVEL RISE AND RESILIENCY REVIEW CRITERIA**

Section 7.1.2.4(a)(i) of the Land Development Regulations establishes review criteria for sea level rise and resiliency that must be considered as part of the review process for board orders. The following is an analysis of the request based upon these criteria:

1. A recycling or salvage plan for partial or total demolition shall be provided.  
**Satisfied; additional information will be required at the time of building permit in order to demonstrate compliance.**
2. Windows that are proposed to be replaced shall be hurricane proof impact windows.  
**Satisfied**
3. Where feasible and appropriate, passive cooling systems, such as operable windows, shall be provided.  
**Satisfied**

4. Resilient landscaping (salt tolerant, highly water-absorbent, native or Florida friendly plants) shall be provided, in accordance with Chapter 4 of the Land Development Regulations.  
**Satisfied**
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.  
**Satisfied**
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 of up to three (3) additional feet in height.  
**Satisfied**
7. In all new projects, all critical mechanical and electrical systems shall be located above base flood elevation. Due to flooding concerns, all redevelopment projects shall, whenever practicable, and economically reasonable, move all critical mechanical and electrical systems to a location above base flood elevation.  
**Satisfied**
8. Existing buildings shall be, where reasonably feasible and economically appropriate, elevated up to base flood elevation, plus City of Miami Beach Freeboard.  
**Not Applicable**
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.  
**Satisfied; additional information will be required at the time of building permit in order to demonstrate compliance.**
10. In all new projects, water retention systems shall be provided.  
**Satisfied; additional information will be required at the time of building permit in order to demonstrate compliance.**
11. Cool pavement materials or porous pavement materials shall be utilized.  
**Satisfied; additional information will be required at the time of building permit in order to demonstrate compliance.**
12. The project design shall minimize the potential for a project causing a heat island effect on site.  
**Satisfied; additional information will be required at the time of building permit in order to demonstrate compliance.**

**STAFF ANALYSIS:**

The applicant is proposing modifications to a previously approved design for a new two-story single family residence on a vacant waterfront lot on Stillwater Drive. Specifically, the applicant is proposing a revised height for the understory area, resulting in a change in the overall height of the building.

This application was previously approved pursuant to DRB22-0858, including a 1'-0" height variance that resulted in an overall height of 25'-0" as measured from BFE plus 5-feet of freeboard. Since the original approval, the code has been modified to allow for homes with understories to have increased height, as measured from the maximum freeboard, to allow for ample and well-designed understory areas. In this instance, the design of the understory has been increased by 1'-8" to allow a floor to ceiling height of 9'-2". As such the overall height of of the residence increases to 26'-8", which is allowed by the current code.

With the revised understory height, the first habitable floor of the residence is designed at an elevation of 16.4' NGVD, or BFE plus 8.4' of freeboard. In this design, the project architect has incorporated an understory for the parking, outdoor recreational spaces, and access to the main level. The understory is intended to circulate the flow of air and light with the use of wood composition, lush landscaping, and the ornamental lattice walls. The majority of the first floor consists of the common living areas that are surrounded by floor to ceiling windows and overlook Biscayne Bay along an elevated terrace. Furthermore, the design makes a good use of both indoor and outdoor spaces. No other changes are proposed to the design of the home.

Staff is supportive of the modifications and recommends the approval of this application.

#### **UPDATE**

The item was discussed at the November 5, 2024 DRB meeting and concerns were raised over whether the new home was being built pursuant to the required and approved setbacks. To address the concern, the applicant has provided an as-built survey and photos of the construction site, which substantiate that the home is being constructed pursuant to the required setbacks. The concerns regarding required setbacks may have arisen due to temporary plywood extensions and framework needed to accommodate concrete pours and other construction activities. These temporary elements will be removed prior to the completion of the construction.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

In view of the foregoing analysis, staff recommends the application be **approved**, subject to the conditions enumerated in the attached Draft Order, which address the inconsistencies with the aforementioned Design Review and Sea Level Rise criteria.

**DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**  
**City of Miami Beach, Florida**

MEETING DATE: December 10, 2024

PROPERTY/FOLIO: **1015 Stillwater Drive**                      **02-3203-011-1510**

FILE NO: DRB24-1043

LEGAL: LOT 51, BLOCK 15, "BISCAYNE BEACH SECOND ADDITION", ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF, RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 46, AT PAGE 39, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF MIAMI DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA.

IN RE: An application has been filed requesting modifications to a previously approved Design Review Approval for the construction of a new two-story residence with an understory and a variance for the height of the home. Specifically, the applicant is requesting additional height as is permissible per the land development regulations.

APPLICANT: Stillwater Resources LLC

**SUPPLEMENTAL ORDER**

The City of Miami Beach Design Review Board makes the following FINDINGS OF FACT, based upon the evidence, information, testimony and materials presented at the public hearing and which are part of the record for this matter:

**I. Design Review**

- A. The Board has jurisdiction pursuant to Section 2.1.3.1 of the Land Development Regulations. The property is not located within a designated local historic district and is not an individually designated historic site.
- B. Based on the plans and documents submitted with the application, testimony and information provided by the applicant, and the reasons set forth in the Planning Department Staff Report, the project as submitted is consistent with the Design Review in Section 2.5.3.1 of the Land Development Regulations.
- C. Based on the plans and documents submitted with the application, testimony and information provided by the applicant, and the reasons set forth in the Planning Department Staff Report, the project as submitted is consistent with Sea Level Rise Criteria in Section 7.1.2.4(a)(i) of the Land Development Regulations.
- D. The project will remain consistent with the criteria and requirements 2.5.3.1 and/or Section 7.1.2.4(a)(i) with the following conditions:

1. Revised elevation, site plan, and floor plan drawings for the proposed new home at 1015 Stillwater Drive shall be submitted, at a minimum, such drawings shall incorporate the following:
  - a. All of the original conditions of approval by this Board, as reflected in the Final Order dated October 4, 2022, pursuant to DRB20-0853, shall remain in effect except as modified and approved herein.
  - b. The revised understory height **shall be** approved as proposed.
  - c. A copy of all pages of the recorded Final Order shall be scanned into the plans submitted for building permit and shall be located immediately after the front cover page of the permit plans.
  - d. Prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, the project Architect shall verify, in writing, that the subject project has been constructed in accordance with the plans approved by the Planning Department for Building Permit.

**In accordance with section 2.2.4.8 of the Land Development Regulations, the applicant, the City Manager, Miami Design Preservation League, Dade Heritage Trust, or an affected person may appeal a decision of the design review board for design review approval only to the city commission, except that orders granting or denying a request for rehearing shall not be reviewed by the commission.**

**II. Variance(s)**

- A. No variance(s) were filed as part of this application.

**III. General Terms and Conditions applying to both 'I. Design Review Approval and 'II. Variances' noted above.**

- A. A copy of all pages of the recorded Final Order shall be scanned into the plans submitted for building permit and shall be located immediately after the front cover page of the permit plans.
- B. The Final Order shall be recorded in the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.
- C. The Final Order is not severable, and if any provision or condition hereof is held void or unconstitutional in a final decision by a court of competent jurisdiction, the order shall be returned to the Board for reconsideration as to whether the order meets the criteria for approval absent the stricken provision or condition, and/or it is appropriate to modify the remaining conditions or impose new conditions.
- D. The conditions of approval herein are binding on the applicant, the property's owners, operators, and all successors in interest and assigns.
- E. Nothing in this order authorizes a violation of the City Code or other applicable law, nor allows a relaxation of any requirement or standard set forth in the City Code.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, based upon the foregoing findings of fact, the evidence, information, testimony and materials presented at the public hearing, which are part of the record for this matter, and the staff report and analysis, which are adopted herein, including the staff recommendations, which were amended and adopted by the Board, that the application for Design Review approval is GRANTED for the above-referenced project subject to those certain conditions specified in Paragraph I, II,III of the Findings of Fact, to which the applicant has agreed.

PROVIDED, the applicant shall build substantially in accordance with the architectural plans, entitled "1015 Stillwater, Miami Beach" as designed by **Preschel + Bassan Studio**, dated September 8, 2024; and as approved by the Design Review Board, as determined by staff. When requesting a building permit, the plans submitted to the Building Department for permit shall be consistent with the plans approved by the Board, modified in accordance with the conditions set forth in this Order. No building permit may be issued unless and until all conditions of approval that must be satisfied prior to permit issuance, as set forth in this Order, have been met.

If the Full Building Permit for the project is not issued within eighteen (18) months of the meeting date at which the original approval was granted, the application will expire and become null and void, unless the applicant makes an application to the Board for an extension of time, in accordance with the requirements and procedures of Section 2.2.4.6 of the Land Development Regulations; the granting of any such extension of time shall be at the discretion of the Board. If the Full Building Permit for the project shall expire for any reason (including but not limited to construction not commencing and continuing, with required inspections, in accordance with the applicable Building Code), the application will expire and become null and void.

In accordance with Chapter 2 of the Land Development Regulations, the violation of any conditions and safeguards that are a part of this Order shall be deemed a violation of the land development regulations of the City Code. Failure to comply with this **Order** shall subject the application to Chapter 2 of the Land Development Regulations, for revocation or modification of the application.

Dated \_\_\_\_\_.

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Rogelio A. Madan, AICP  
Development & Resiliency Officer

