



Neisen O. Kasdin

Akerman LLP
Three Brickell City Centre
98 Southeast Seventh Street
Suite 1100
Miami, FL 33131

T: 305 374 5600
F: 305 374 5095

July 13, 2025

City of Miami Beach Historic Preservation Board
c/o Deborah Tackett
Chief Historic Preservation and Architecture Officer
1700 Convention Center Drive
Miami Beach, FL 33132

Re: HPB25-0656: Certificate of Appropriateness for New Construction at 1600 Washington Avenue and 1601 Drexel Avenue, Miami Beach FL 33139

Dear Ms. Tackett:

Akerman LLP represents 420 Lincoln Rd. Development, LLC (the "Applicant"), Ambassador Paul Cejas' company, which owns the properties at 1600 Washington Avenue and 1601 Drexel Avenue (collectively, the "Property"). Please allow this to serve as our letter of intent in connection with a request to the City of Miami Beach's (the "City") Historic Preservation Board ("HPB") for a Certificate of Appropriateness ("COA") for demolition and new construction at the Property.

Property. The Property is generally bounded by Washington Avenue to the west, 16th street to the south, Drexel Avenue to the east and the iconic 420 Lincoln Road building to the north. See Figure 1, below. 420 Lincoln Road is also controlled by the Applicant, who effectively owns the full City block.¹ This CD-3 zoned Property sits at the cross-section of Lincoln Road and Washington Avenue which are two of the most important commercial and transportation corridors in the City – this is the City's urban core. Additionally, the Property is located within the Flamingo Park Historic District.

The Property is currently improved with three main structures. On the west side of the Property there is a main use parking garage with ground level commercial space, which last operated as the South Beach Food Hall and Time Out Market. On the east side of the Property

¹ To be clear, no work is proposed within the 420 Lincoln Road folio.

there are two structures, a two-story apartment building and a one-story commercial building. Both are proposed to be demolished to make way for the new residential development. The two-story apartment building, which is approximately 5,022 square feet in size, is a contributing building from 1938 designed by Henry Hohauser. These platted lots were intended for single-family homes, as that was the character of Washington Avenue at the time, and the apartments originally sat behind a grand single family home that has since been demolished. While the façade is articulated, Hohauser is known for his lodging projects and his legacy is best appreciated walking down Ocean Drive where the Colony, Cardozo and Park Central hotels still operate today. As discussed at length in the structural condition assessment prepared by Youssef Hachem Consulting Engineering submitted as part of this application, the apartment building is not compliant with current building code requirements and "lacks the load carrying capacities to make it safe to use." Further, it is unlikely that the structure would survive efforts to bring it up to code as "all the main structural members of the structure are compromised and need to be demolished and replaced." The existing parking garage on the west side of the Property will be retained in full and serve as parking for the new development.

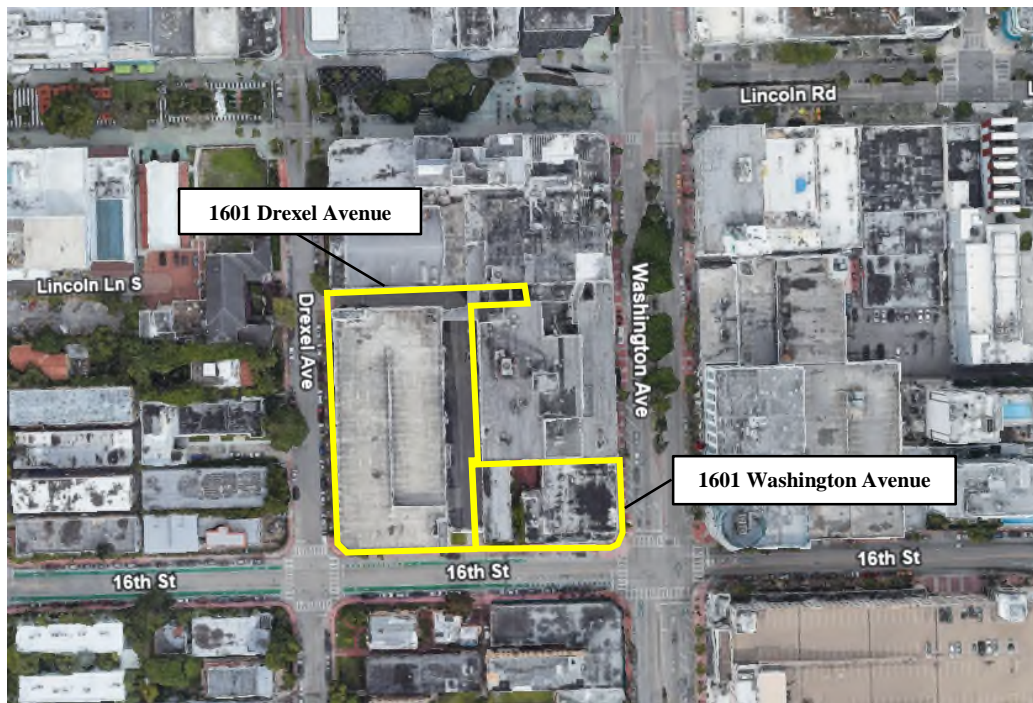


Figure 1. The Property

Neighborhood Context. Lincoln Road and its immediate surroundings are the cultural, commercial and office hub of the City and have historically functioned as the City's downtown. With over 200 businesses including major retailers like Zara and Apple and top caliber restaurants

such as Mila and Oro & Elixir, Lincoln Road's pedestrian mall is one of the premier retail streets in the country. This general area also serves as the cultural hub of the City featuring key institutions such as the Colony Theater, the New World Center, the Fillmore and the Miami Beach Convention Center, including the under construction Grand Hyatt hotel. Moreover, Lincoln Road and the parks surrounding it often feature activations such as farmer's markets, free art installations, block parties and more, making it one of the most cherished community spaces for City residents. The area is also an employment hub not only for retail and hospitality workers in the various restaurants, stores and civic institutions in the area, but also it is the most important office district in the City. Office buildings such as 1601 Washington Avenue, 407 Lincoln Road and 420 Lincoln Road are located here. Washington Avenue, another important commercial corridor in the City, is well-served by transit including stops for both the Miami Beach Trolley and various MetroBus routes.

As such, the intersection of Lincoln Road and Washington Avenue is an ideal location for development of residential units. The City Commission agrees; last year in response to the City's decline in population, which the Commission attributes in part to the lack of competitively priced housing options, various legislative items were proposed to incentivize development of long-term residential projects specifically on Washington Avenue and Lincoln Road. The goal is development of reasonably priced housing options for mid-level professionals, young families or others who work in the City. Most of these workers are currently forced to commute in because they are priced out of the City or find the modern housing options in nearby municipalities more appealing than the current housing supply in Miami Beach. Having more long-term residents in this urban core area can support existing and new businesses thereby reducing traffic as employees could walk or use transit to commute to places of employment. Further, a long-term residential population will also enhance public safety and stabilize the neighborhood. The existing low profile buildings at the eastern side of the Property have outlived their useful life, are no longer contextual with the urban core that has developed around them and, they don't serve the current needs of the City and its residents, namely middle market housing.

Project. Responding to the City's stated need for residential development, particularly in the urban core, the Applicant began working on a new residential project at the Property. Designed by world-renowned architect Enrique Norten, the project proposes 210 residential units and about 7,000 square feet of ground floor retail (the "Project").² With almost 40 years of experience and a reputation for expertly blending modernist principles with cultural and contextual sensitivity, Enrique Norten is responsible for some of the most imaginative buildings

² This Project proceeds under the Washington Avenue Residential Plan legislation which received favorable recommendation from the City's Planning Board on November 26, 2024 and is pending final adoption. The Applicant has provided a hold harmless to the City in order to proceed with this entitlement application prior to adoption of the enabling legislation. The Applicant has also put forth its own private legislative proposal which would enable development of the Project as a backup.

in north America including the Mercedes House and One York buildings in New York City and the Habita Hotel in Mexico City. Norton's architectural style is characterized by clean lines, the use of modern materials, and a strong connection between the building and its surroundings.

The Project was conceived with the intention of becoming a hub for community gathering and expression, harmoniously integrating contemporary language with the local context. From its conceptual phase, the design was conceived with a holistic vision, in which form, function, and the user's spatial experience would be intertwined. The building spreads over fifteen levels, with height transitions on the ground floor, housing retail and the distribution core, to the upper residential levels that respond to both the programmatic needs and the climatic conditions of the site. The orientation was carefully studied to favor the capture of natural light and promote efficient cross-ventilation. Its windows and balconies on the north and south facades provide sufficient openings, thus reducing dependence on mechanical systems and promoting passive thermal comfort. The volume is composed of two bodies articulated by a corridor and intermediate spaces that allow a clear interpretation of the program and, at the same time, encourage interaction between users.

Materially, the Project employs an austere yet warm palette: exposed concrete and metal, whose textures and colors contribute to a respectful dialogue with the immediate surroundings. These materials were selected not only for their low maintenance and durability, but also for their symbolic significance and their integration with the surrounding architecture. The use of metal lattices and perforated walls at strategic points filters the light and enriches the interior atmosphere with constantly changing shadow plays. The relationship with the landscape is also a fundamental component of the design. The exterior spaces are conceived as natural extensions of the interior program, with patios and terraces surrounding the building that enhance the environmental quality of the site. The vegetation used is water-efficient and is part of a design strategy for full integration with its context.

In short, the Project stands as an example of contemporary architecture committed to its physical, social, and climatic context. Every design decision seeks to enhance the human experience within the space, strengthen the community fabric, and offer a sensitive, functional, and integrative architectural response. Further, the Project directly answers the City Commission's call for additional housing in the urban core which can support the economy in the area, reduce traffic congestion and stabilize this neighborhood.

Sea Level Rise and Resiliency Criteria. The Project is consistent with the criteria in Section 7.1.2.4.a.1. of the Code, to the extent applicable, as follows:

A. *A recycling or salvage plan for partial or total demolition shall be provided.*
A recycling or salvage plan will be provided as part of the demolition permit application.

- B. Windows that are proposed to be replaced shall be hurricane proof impact windows.

All windows proposed are hurricane proof impact windows.

- C. Where feasible and appropriate, passive cooling systems, such as operable windows, shall be provided.

Passive cooling systems including operable windows and sliding doors are provided throughout the Project.

- D. Resilient landscaping (salt tolerant, highly water-absorbent, native, or Florida-friendly plants) shall be provided, in accordance with chapter 4 in Land Development Regulations.

Resilient landscaping, salt tolerant, highly water-absorbent, native, or Florida-friendly plants, is provided in the planting plan.

- E. 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.

Applicant considered the adopted sea level rise projections in the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Action Plan and specifically studied the land elevation of the subject property and the elevation of surrounding properties when designing the Project. Proposed elevations reflect that study.

- F. The ground floor, driveways, and garage ramping for new construction shall be adaptable to the raising of public rights-of-way 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 3 additional feet in height.

The ground floor of the project is adaptable to the raising of public rights-of-way and adjacent land and 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 3 additional feet in height. The parking garage is existing to remain, but was recently constructed in 2012 and its first level is 14' tall.

- G. 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.

All critical mechanical and electrical systems are located above base flood elevation.

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

New construction is proposed at NGVD 9' (BFE + 1). The existing garage structure was built in 2012; elevation of same is not necessary nor economically appropriate at this time.

- I. 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 54 in General Ordinances.

No habitable space below BFE is proposed.

- J. As applicable to all new construction, stormwater retention systems shall be provided.

Stormwater retention systems are provided.

- K. Cool pavement materials or porous pavement materials shall be utilized.

Cool pavement materials utilized.

- L. The design of each project shall minimize the potential for heat island effects on-site.

Design employs light colors, lush and dense landscaping and integrates passive cooling systems to minimize potential heat island effects.

We look forward on working on this Project with you. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

AKERMAN, LLP



Neisen O. Kasdin

Cc: Cecilia Torres-Toledo (cecilia.torres-toledo@akerman.com)