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VIA ELECTRONIC SUBMITTAL

January 11, 2026

Michael Belush, Planning & Design Officer
Planning Department
City of Miami Beach
1700 Convention Center Drive, 2nd Floor
Miami Beach, Florida 33139

Re: **HPB25-0645 (Final Submittal)**
Certificate of Appropriateness for the Property
Located at 235 Washington Avenue

Dear Mr. Belush:

This firm represents 235 WASHINGTON LLC (the "Applicant"), the owner of the property located at 235 Washington Avenue (the "Property") in the City of Miami Beach ("City"). Please allow this letter to serve as the Letter of Intent supporting a request to the Historic Preservation Board ("HPB") for a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of the existing two-story structure and design of the proposed recreational open space to serve the abutting school, providing an integrated, safe, and functional area for students to assemble, exercise, and play.

Property Description. The Property is a midblock lot on the east side of Washington Avenue between 3rd Street and 2nd Street. The Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser identifies the Property with Folio No. 02-4203-003-1070. The total lot area is approximately 6,500 square feet in size, and surrounded by a variety of uses. The Property is zoned "Medium-High Density Residential Performance Standard" District ("R-PS3") and is also located within the Ocean Beach Local Historic District.

Existing Structure. As is set forth in detail in the professional Historic Resources Report prepared by Deborah Griffin and Steven G. Avdakov, R.A. of Heritage Architectural Associates and submitted with this Application (the "HRR"), the Property contains a two-story contributing structure built in 1938. See Figure 1, Historic Properties Database Excerpt, below.



Figure 1, Historic Properties Database Excerpt

The original architect was B. Kingston Hall. As explained in the HRR, the Parkside Hotel contained 48 rooms, and due to its modest size, it was not one of the hotels leased by the U.S. Army during World War II. See HRR at 10. The site served as a budget hotel in the post War years, until in the early 2000's, the Property was used as the Jazz Hostel and then as the South Beach or SoBe Hostel. *Id.* A seafood restaurant and bar operated out of the site until closing in 2019. *Id.* The building is presently nonconforming with regards to the Resiliency Code requirements relating to setbacks and there is no current landscaping or opportunity for water retention on the site.

The HRR includes a detailed architectural and current condition description, setting out details of the Property and the surrounding neighborhood. See HRR at 7-9 and at 18-29. To the immediate north of the Property, the private school owned and operated by the Applicant – BaseCamp305 (the "School") – is under active construction. *Id.* at 8. Notably, to the immediate south of the Property is Washington Park, which is owned by the City and features a small police office building and greenspace.

Project. The Applicant is proposing to demolish the existing structure and improve the Property with landscaped open space that will serve the students at the new adjacent School now under construction at 251 Washington Avenue. The proposed recreational open space, benches, hardscape, and fence will serve as a much-needed playground and outdoor space for exercise and recreation as an integral part of the abutting School (the "Project").

The front / west elevation facing Washington Avenue and the rear / east elevation facing the alley will be fenced and amply landscaped. These landscape improvements will further enhance the site's compatibility with surrounding civic uses. Along Washington Avenue, the Project introduces two Pigeon Plum trees and two Allspice trees, reinforcing and complementing the existing Live Oak canopy. Additional native shrubs, including Red Stopper, White Stopper, Jamaica Caper, Maidenbush, Key Locustberry, Broombush, and Dwarf Fakahatchee grass, will be provided along both Washington Avenue and Collins Court to create a cohesive, resilient, and visually appealing landscape edge. The Project will also incorporate an elegant historic display to honor the original Parkside Hotel in order to preserve and recognize the history of the site within the Ocean Beach Local Historic District.

The perimeter design incorporates a uniform 7-foot aluminum picket fence and coordinated solid aluminum gates, consistent with the School's fencing system and providing secure, controlled access from both Washington Avenue and the alley. Benches will be provided within the open space to support passive recreation, student supervision, and general usability during school programming. To comply with the Code's height allowances, the fence is set back four feet from the front property line, permitting a maximum height of seven feet (and avoiding the need for a variance).

For the interior of the site, a play and recreation area is planned. While use of sod was studied, the practical demands of maintaining the turf after high use, the requirement to ensure an even, clean area for the students, as well as the requirement that the surface maintain a consistent degree of "give" for student safety all require use of artificial turf for this area. The open-space area will be surfaced with pervious synthetic turf system specifically engineered for high-traffic school environments and designed to withstand continuous youth recreation while providing superior shock absorption, rapid drainage, and long-term durability, thereby enhancing overall student safety during daily use (TigerTurf Everglade Spring Pro). As the enclosed plans depict, the turf will be striped to create two mini soccer fields to support structured play, physical education programming,

and informal recreation throughout the school day. The TigerTurf product is certified for safe school playground use, and features a blend of field and lime green tones, with a brown thatch at the base, providing a very natural appearance.

Collectively, these improvements ensure seamless physical and operational integration between the Property and the abutting School, providing safe, functional, and intentionally designed open space for future students.

Compliance with Certificate of Appropriateness Criteria. An examination of the submitted architectural drawings for consistency with the certificate of appropriateness criteria (including aesthetics, appearances, safety, and function of any new or existing structure, public interior space and physical attributes of the project in relation to the site, adjacent structures and properties, and surrounding community), reveals that the Project satisfies the applicable criteria for demolition and new development in a local historic district. With the introduction of the new School to the immediate north, and Washington Park to the immediate south, the uses on the block are much more civil and institutional. The civil and government uses on this block are more consistent with the proposed additional open space, new landscaping, and secure fence. The Project introduces open space and landscaping that soften the streetscape and enhance the pedestrian experience along Washington Avenue, not to mention provide access to outdoor play and exercise for the children of the new School. The proposed improvements are consistent with the character and scale of the surrounding civic uses and maintain the historic district's overall visual continuity.

Structural Condition. The Applicant retained Youssef Hachem Consulting Engineering to conduct a structural analysis of the structure and prepare a Structural Condition Assessment Report (the "Structural Report"), dated December 16, 2025, which is included in the application materials. The Structural Report documents multiple site inspections, photographic documentation, and laboratory testing performed by NV5, Inc. to evaluate the feasibility of preservation of the structure. See Structural Report at 3. Based on site observations, a review of available City and County records, and material testing, the Structural Report concludes that the structure exhibits widespread structural deterioration, with several primary structural systems in poor condition, and does not comply with current building code requirements. Collectively, the conditions on the Property result in a situation that cannot be reasonably addressed through repair or rehabilitation, and Professional Engineer Youssef Hachem recommends complete demolition. *Id.* at 7, 11, and 12.

Wood and Concrete Structural Components. The structure consists of a masonry and wood structural system typical of 1938 construction. The roof waterproofing system has failed in multiple locations, resulting in prolonged moisture intrusion and deterioration of wood framing members. The Structural Report identifies moisture-related rot, sagging, and deflection of wood members, including roof framing, floor joists on all levels, and interior load-bearing stud walls, many of which are described as being in fair to poor condition. Evidence of active termite infestation and termite-damaged wood members, including within load-bearing walls, was also observed. *Id.* at 6 and 11.

Concrete structural components exhibit cracking, spalling, and delamination throughout the building. Laboratory testing confirms that the concrete compressive strength ranges from approximately 1,480 PSI to 2,560 PSI (2,005 PSI average), which is significantly below current Florida Building Code standards. Testing also identified elevated chloride content and deep carbonation, resulting in corrosion of reinforcing steel and further degradation of the concrete structural system. *Id.* at 7, 9, and 10. Previous repair efforts were observed throughout the structure; however, the Structural Report notes that these repairs have failed and now exhibit re-cracking, further demonstrating the systemic nature of the deterioration. *Id.* at 6.

Foundations and Flood Elevation. The building is supported by shallow foundations and concrete stem walls that are inadequate to meet current code requirements. The finished floor elevation of the structure is approximately 6.1 feet NGVD, which is below the FEMA base flood elevation of 8.0 feet NGVD and below the elevation required for new construction. See Structural Report at 11.

The Structural Report concludes that lifting the structure to comply with floodplain regulations is not feasible due to the deteriorated condition of the foundations, low concrete strength, corrosion of reinforcing steel, and compromised wood framing. Any attempt to lift or rehabilitate the structure would likely result in additional structural damage or failure. *Id.* at 11.

Summary of Findings. As documented in the Structural Report, the structure exhibits a moderate to bad overall structural condition, with multiple primary structural components in fair to poor condition, does not comply with current building code requirements, and would require a Level III alteration under the Florida Building Code. Given the extent of deterioration and the infeasibility of rehabilitation or elevation, the Structural Report recommends demolition of the structure. *Id.* at 12.

Sea Level Rise and Resiliency Criteria. The Proposed Project advances the sea level rise and resiliency criteria in Section 7.1.2.4 of the Resiliency Code as follows:

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

A recycling and salvage plan will be provided at permitting.

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

No windows are proposed.

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

The Applicant will provide, where feasible, passive cooling systems.

4. Whether resilient landscaping (salt tolerant, highly water-absorbent, native or Florida friendly plants) will be provided.

All landscaping will be Florida friendly and resilient.

5. Whether 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, including a study of land elevation and elevation of surrounding properties were considered.

The Applicant will proactively address sea level rise projections. The site will be properly sloped with the future crown of road and the surrounding properties.

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.

The proposed open space ensures that the Property is adaptable to the raising of the abutting streets and adjacent land in the future.

7. Where feasible and appropriate. All critical mechanical and electrical systems are located above base flood elevation.

All future mechanical and electrical systems will be located above base flood elevation.

8. Existing buildings shall be, where reasonably feasible and appropriate, elevated to the base flood elevation.

Future development of the Property will be entirely new construction located well-above base flood elevation.

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.

No habitable space will be located below base flood elevation.

10. Where feasible and appropriate, water retention systems shall be provided.

Where feasible, water retention systems will be provided.

11. Cool pavement materials or porous pavement materials shall be utilized.

Cool pavement or porous pavement materials will be utilized where any new pavement is proposed.

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

Redevelopment of the Property will strategically minimize the potential for heat island effects on site. The additional open space will be predominately grassed surfaces, which are cooler than impervious surfaces.

Conclusion. Approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition and design will permit a better use of the Property for future generations of Miami Beach residents. The Project is an integrated design that complies with the Resiliency Code and is more compatible with the surrounding uses.

Based on the foregoing, the Applicant respectfully requests your review and favorable recommendation of the application.

Based on the foregoing, the Applicant respectfully requests your review and favorable recommendation of this application. If you have any questions or comments with regards to the application, please call me at (305) 377-6231.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, flowing cursive 'M' followed by a wavy line.

Michael W. Larkin

Enclosures

cc: Debbie Tackett
Paul C. Savage, Esq.
Mickey J. Marrero, Esq.
Roberto A. Alvarez, Esq.