

A. CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS - OLD BUSINESS

2. COA-24-0022 (ZON-24-0055) 120-132 N COUNTY RD—PALM BEACH

SYNAGOGUE (COMBO) The applicant, Palm Beach Orthodox Synagogue INC (Rabbi Moshe Scheiner), has filed an application requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for review and approval of: demolition exceeding 50%, construction of new one- and two-story additions, renovations to the existing two-story building, and landscape & hardscape modifications including a new surface parking lot, requiring three (3) Special Exceptions with Site Plan Review and nine (9) variances to reduce the minimum required front yard setback and the pedestrian walkway, reduce the minimum required overall landscape open space and front yard open space, increase the maximum permitted building length, reduce the on-site parking requirement, elimination of the on-site berths (loading spaces), increase the maximum permitted gross building area, reduce the minimum required side yard setback, and reduce in the minimum required rear yard setback for the landmarked property. This is a combination project that shall also be reviewed by Town Council as it pertains to zoning relief/approval.

Ms. Mittner provided staff comments for this project.

Several members disclosed ex-parte communications.

Attorney Harvey Oyer, on behalf of the applicant, provided an overview of the requests for the proposed project. Kyle Fant of Bartholomew + Partners presented the architectural plans for the project. Mr. Fant discussed the proposed reductions the applicant has made after the recommendations from the Commission.

He answered questions from the Commissioners on the reductions. Mr. Oyer reviewed the requested zoning relief needed for the proposal.

Ms. Patterson asked about the width of the proposed parking space. Mr. Fant responded.

Assistant Director James Murphy further explained the space and discussed the space when it would be used for queuing.

Ms. Patterson called for public comment.

Aimee Sunny of the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach commented that the professionals addressed the comments they received. She thought the design was sensitive to the surrounding area

and Palm Beach's architectural heritage. She acknowledged that the character-defining features of the existing landmarked buildings were being retained and preserved. She believed the proposal complied with the code criteria in 54-122 and 54-123.

Anne Pepper, 333 Seaspray Avenue, did not believe the project had been reduced enough to make a difference.

Attorney John Eubanks, representing the owners of surrounding condominiums, presented his clients' objections to the proposed project. He argued that the proposal intensified its use and violated the comprehensive plan.

Martin Klein, 1060 N. Ocean Blvd., spoke in favor of the project. He argued that the space was needed for the unique Jewish ceremonies. He provided the reasons the renovation should be approved.

Cathy Hershcopf, 2773 S. Ocean Blvd., stated that while she was not a member, she attended many of the facility's events and believed it needed to be expanded. She favored the proposed architecture and how much the building served the community.

Harris Fried, 250 Seminole Avenue, thought the synagogue was extraordinary. He thought the proposed project was being mischaracterized.

Rabbi Moshe Scheiner, 180 Atlantic Avenue, acknowledged the traffic problem in Palm Beach but argued that the synagogue's attendance was not a contributing factor, as the hours of service were mainly on Saturday and Sunday mornings. He thought a religious institution was ideal for the neighborhood.

Anita Seltzer, 44 Cocoanut Row, argued that the program was increasing; however, the restrooms proposed were inadequate. She thought more study was needed in the interior spaces to ensure their functionality.

Town Attorney Francisco reminded the Commission to review the architecture, how the new architecture was compatible with the old, and how the variances affected the architecture.

Mr. Oyer argued that the project had been significantly reduced and that the public-facing building on County Road would not change. The main change would be the public-facing building on Sunset Avenue. He explained the classroom sizes and stated that there were no new uses. Mr. Oyer also added that the neighbors had supported the renovation. He further provided rebuttal arguments to the comments

by Mr. Eubanks.

Ms. Damgard thought the proposal was beautiful but added that the north side was still very large and should be reduced further. She also wondered if the construction parking could be handled entirely on-site.

Mr. Oyer responded and allowed Mr. Fant to explain how he calculated the amount of square footage. Mr. Fant reviewed the plan and further explained the design.

Rabbi Scheiner spoke about the tradition of Shabbat and the need to accommodate the attendance.

Mr. Oyer stated that the declaration of use agreement addressed the outside use of the facility. He argued that the sanctuary was similar in size to others in the town.

Ms. Coleman wondered if the membership would grow due to Palm Beach's growth. She understood the need for larger buildings and thought the architecture was nice; however, she expressed concern about the density of growth in the area. Mr. Oyer responded and stated that 72 seats were being added to the sanctuary but that they were not trying to increase the membership. He also argued that it was the smallest sanctuary in the town.

Town Attorney Francisco stated that the Commissioners' comments should focus on the architecture rather than the use of the building.

Mr. Griswold acknowledged that the Commission liked the previous presentation and that the Preservation Foundation supported the project. He also stated that the applicant reduced the size and retained much of the façade. He thought the applicant listened to the comments and designed a beautiful building. He supported the project.

Ms. Fairfax agreed with Mr. Griswold. Ms. Patterson agreed as well.

Assistant Director of Planning, Zoning, and Building James Murphy stated that while the Commission supported the application at their previous meeting, the Town did not have a formal set of reduced plans to approve.

Ms. Albarran thought that the project was one of the most beautiful projects brought to them and preserved the existing landmarked architecture. She supported the project.

A motion was made by Mr. Griswold and seconded by Ms. Fairfax to approve the project as presented. The motion carried unanimously, 7-0.

A motion was made by Ms. Albarran and seconded by Ms. Brooker that the implementation of the proposed variance will not cause a negative architectural impact on the subject landmarked property. The motion was carried unanimously, 7-0.