

February 22, 2023

441 Australian Avenue
Palm Beach, Florida
ARC 22-187
ZON 22-129
Re: Letter of Intent

To whom it may concern:

This letter is intended to describe the new construction proposal of main house and entry cabana porch at the property of 441 Australian Avenue, as well as to introduce design developments made following the December 16, 2022 ARCOM meeting. The design of the new single-family residence is intended to fit within the existing neighborhood in its scale, massing, materials, style, and coloration. The proposal is updated to include stucco veneer on both entry porch and main house. The canopy shading the entry porch is replaced by a balcony accessed from the guest suite above. The circular window of the guest suite is replaced by French doors accompanied by louvered shutters.

The proposed new residence provides 4 bedrooms and 4.5 baths within a height and mass compatible with the varied residential structures in this neighborhood. Proposed landscape planting is layered to maintain the streetscape edge and to soften and obscure landscape walls, steps, and handrails, providing a lush green environment around the white buildings. The style of the new construction derives from classic Palm Beach Modern and Art Deco structures, embracing the parapets and round windows frequently found in these styles, tying the structures to the local context while enhancing a stylistically diverse streetscape. The newly developed balcony and shutters on the entry cabana porch enliven the street elevation, while the material change to stucco roots the proposed home more deeply into the neighborhood. The proposed verdant and layered landscape planting grounds the structures within a tropical, modern aesthetic.

The new structures will be of highest quality construction method and materials, incorporating concrete block exterior walls, stucco veneer, and interior furring to meet structural codes and minimize sound transfer. HVAC units will be installed at main floor level and screened. Existing utilities and future power transformer locations are maintained with the proposed site plan. The proposed drive allows for on-property turning, safer, forward-facing auto street access, and maintains the existing number of on-street parking spaces immediately in front of and adjacent to the property. The main house can be accessed through the entry cabana porch and from the exterior on both sides of the cabana porch. Gates between the motor court and courtyard provide safety and ease of maintenance. Utilities can be accessed at the side yards of the cabana porch without entering the main house courtyard. Planting along a new, low perimeter retaining wall maintains appropriate site drainage, screens the proposed structures from neighbors and blends the new landscape with existing neighboring landscape planting.

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The proposed new construction is to be built on an existing property of 50'x140' (7000 square foot area) dimension which has been the site of an existing single-story residence since 1956 or earlier. The property dimensions cause it to be considered non-conforming due to the required R-C zoning 75' lot width. Therefore, a variance is requested, referencing Sec. 134-948(2)a and Sec. 134-446(b). The property dimensions also cause it to be considered non-conforming due to the required R-C zoning 10,000 square foot area. Therefore, a second variance is requested, referencing Sec. 134-948(1)a and Sec. 134-446(b). The proposed structures maintain the setbacks required within the zoning district and meet the maximum lot coverage requirements, despite the smaller-than-required lot.

The proposed drive and parking allow for forward-facing auto access to the street while requiring a minimum amount of paving, so that the proposed coverage amount is less than the existing. Moreover, the proposed orientation provides safer auto and pedestrian circulation, a distinct improvement from the existing scheme which requires backing out into the street across a sidewalk. Layers of planting, including a six-foot hedge, screen the drive and parking from the street.

The proposed buildings and landscape will enhance the existing property and neighborhood with an attractive and well-crafted small home that fully provides for the current needs of the property owners.

Thank you for your time and attention to this project.

Sincerely,

Lida Sease
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McAlpine Tankersley Architecture, PC

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