



**TOWN OF PALM BEACH**  
Planning, Zoning & Building Department  
360 South County Road  
Palm Beach, FL 33480  
[www.townofpalmbeach.com](http://www.townofpalmbeach.com)

PLANNING, ZONING, & BUILDING DEPARTMENT  
PZ&B Staff Memorandum: Landmarks Preservation Commission

FROM: Wayne Bergman, MCP, LEED-AP<sup>WB</sup>  
Director PZ&B

SUBJECT: COA-23-040 (ZON-23-109) 134 EL VEDADO ROAD(COMBO)

MEETING: NOVEMBER 17, 2023, LPC  
DECEMBER 13, 2023, TC

**COA-23-040 (ZON-23-109) 134 EL VEDADO RD (COMBO)**. The applicant, Elizabeth and Jeffrey Leeds, have filed an application requesting Landmarks Preservation Commission review and approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for additions and alterations to an existing two-story Landmarked residence and accessory structures, including window, door and roof replacement, modifications to opening sizes, demolition of rear porch, construction of an enclosed rear addition, addition of covered rear terrace, covered walkway and second floor addition to tennis house, and landscape and hardscape modifications. Additionally, requesting construction of front wall with new vehicular driveway gates, including a variance from the backup/cueing distance requirement. The Town Council shall review the application as it pertains to the zoning relief/approval.

**ZON-23-109 (COA-23-040) 134 EL VEDADO RD (COMBO)—VARIANCE**. The applicants, Elizabeth, and Jeffrey Leeds filed an application requesting Town Council review and approval for a variance to provide vehicle queuing space deficient in depth between the driveway gate and edge of roadway. The Landmarks Preservation Commission shall perform a design review of the application.

Applicant: Elizabeth & Jeffrey Leeds  
Professional: Asbacher Architecture

**HISTORY:** The property at 134 El Vedado Road was designated a landmark in 1991 under Resolution No. 22-91. Built in 1935 in the French Eclectic Style by John L. Volk the residence faces north. The main section of the house is half timbered, which is rare for a home in Palm Beach. Many original elements remain, and its integrity is intact, including its steeply pitched roof with wooden brackets and flat clay tiles. Additions such as the pool house were later constructed but are in keeping with the characteristics of the complex.

**THE PROJECT:**

The applicant has submitted plans, entitled "Alterations to 134 El Vedado Road", as prepared by Asbacher **Architecture, Inc.** dated October 13, 2023.

The following is the scope of work for the Project:

- Addition of a covered terrace to rear of the main house.

- Addition of a pitched roof to replace the existing flat roof on the rear of the main house.
- New exterior doors and windows for all three structures on the property.
- Reverting what is currently a sunroom on the rear of the existing main house back to an open loggia as originally designed.
- Remodel the existing tennis house to include the expansion of the first floor and the addition of a second-floor guest quarters.
- Addition of new front wall with two sets of gates. Variance required for gates.
- Revised landscape and hardscape by Nievera Williams.
- **Variance #1. Section 134-1668:** Variance to reduce the required vehicular backup driveway space to install a driveway gate with an 8-4” setback from the edge of pavement in lieu of the 18’-0” minimum required.

Site Data			
Zoning District	R-A	Future Land Use	SINGLE FAMILY
Lot Area	57,789 SF	Year of Construction	1935
Designation	7/22/91	Architect/Builder:	John Volk
Lot Coverage	Required: 25% Existing: (8,317 SF) 14.4% Proposed: (8,824 SF) 15.27%		
Surrounding Properties / Zoning			
North	135 El Vedado Road / Single Family Residence / R-A		
South	105 Jungle Road / Single Family Residence / R-A		
East	100 El Vedado Road / Single Family Residence / R-A		
West	150 El Vedado Road / Single Family Residence / R-A		

**STAFF ANALYSIS**

The application is seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations to a landmarked property. This property was landmarked in 1991 due to its unique architecture and association with John Volk. A preliminary review of the project indicates that the application, as proposed, appears to be inconsistent with the abovementioned sections of the Town zoning code as it pertains to the backup distance in junction with the new gates.

The applicant seeks to replace doors and windows with a new wood product, primarily Tischler and Sons casements. No other modifications will occur to the front façade. The rear (south elevation) proposal includes converting the current sunroom back to an open loggia and adding a new covered terrace (approximately 492 SF). The rear elevation will also have a modification to the roof line to a pitched roof instead of the flat. The tennis house (constructed circa 2020) will be connected to the main house via a covered walkway and expanded on the ground floor plus a proposed two-story guest addition (approximately 654 SF). Finally, the landscape and gate modifications will be the most visually noticeable changes to this property.

As historic preservation best practices are concerned, the building modifications are compatible in design and sensitivity, the proposal modifies very few original elements and utilizes historic

documentation for reference to restore areas such as the opening of the sunroom. However, the opaque gate design, location and height could be restudied to let the architecture on site shine.

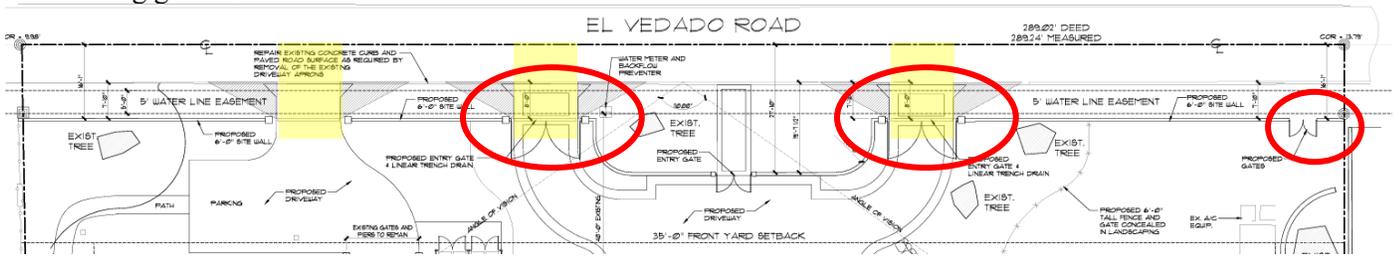


Demolition plans have been provided primarily on sheets D119.00, D211, D212, D213, D214, D215, D216, D217, EX315, EX316, EX317, EX318, EX319, EX320, EX 321, EX 322 (and EX 322A) and clearly depict all portions of the property being demolished and modified.

In addition, Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach has provided historical photos to aid in implementing as many historical details as possible to the additions.



Additionally, the applicant is proposing a new 6'-0" high site wall along the front property line facing El Vedado Way, setback 8'-0" from the edge of the curb. Where two vehicular curb cuts are currently existing, the applicant is proposing three. A new dual access vehicular entrance sequence shall be differentiated from a secondary means of vehicular access and shall be delineated with two swing gates.



The new gates are proposed solid wood, in a diagonal Chippendale style. The site wall, front landscaping and solid panel gates and pedestrian gate will further obscure the landmarked property from view.

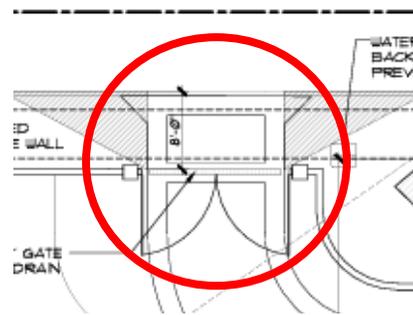


There is an existing gate setback considerably from the roadway currently. And this portion of the

proposal will alter the view that is currently offered.



El Vedado Way is a narrow (20'-0") wide from curbs edges) roadway. There are some properties with dense landscaping along the front property line, and also those with property walls. In fact, directly across the street is a property at 135 El Vedado Rd that also has vehicular gates, albeit in a transparent metalwork design that affords views into the site. Otherwise, vehicle gates seem more common on the western block portion of El Vedado Road, across South County Road, rather than along this eastern 100 block towards the ocean. There is also a variance associated with the proposal, to reduce the required vehicular backup driveway space to install a driveway gate with an 8'-4" setback from the edge of pavement in lieu of the 18'-0" minimum required which does not appear to be consistent with the streetscape.



The proposed landscape plan does contain several inconsistencies. The proposal indicates the removal of trees and shrubs and lists other ones to remain. However, the Seagrape on the northeast is no longer shown on the new plan (LP1) in its existing location but called out in the location of the existing strangler fig. On the northwest corner the Ficus and banyan are remaining to serve as a bookend. Staff has some concerns as the pictures seem to represent different tree species and the proximity of the proposed site wall does not guarantee their survival or ability to flourish.

*NE corner of site, existing stranger fig landscaping*

*SE corner of site, existing stranger fig landscaping*



Staff would recommend further study on the wall placement in order to ensure the survivability of all three of these tree resources. Additionally, a more transparent fencing and gate should be studied as well as lowering the site wall to a height more similar properties to those along El Vedado.

**CONCLUSION:**

The application is presented to the Commission to consider whether all the criteria in section 54-122 have been met. Approval of the project will require two separate motions to be made by the Commission:

- (1) for the overall design of the project in accordance with the aforementioned criteria subject to any imposed conditions, and
- (2) that the implementation of the proposed variances will/will not cause negative architectural impact to the subject property. The variance portion of the application is scheduled for review by the Town Council on December 13, 2023.

Approval of the project will require one separate motion to be made by the Town Council:

- (1) for final determination of approval or denial of the variances by the Town Council, and that the variance **shall or shall not** be granted that all of the criteria applicable to this application as set forth in [Sec. 134-201\(a\)](#), items 1 through 7 have been met.

WRB: JGM: FHM