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GOOD GOVERNMENT
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Founded February 2009

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Valencia Avenue Under Major Re-Development

Just south of Biltmore Way and in the first and second blocks west of Le Jeune Road, two up-scale development projects are in the City's "pipe-line" for construction.



Seen here in a computer rendering, 444

Valencia Avenue is the site for this proposed four unit, three-story town house. Each unit will provide a two-car garage. The drawing also depicts an existing three-unit project immediately to the east.

A letter from the Coral Gables Historic Preservation Office indicates that the structures previously on the site were deemed not to be historic

According to documents submitted to the City's Planning and Zoning Department, the lot is currently platted as four lots with three being twenty-five feet in width and the corner being thirty feet in width.

The developer is requesting a minor re-plat which would reduce the interior lots by less than 1 foot and increase the corner lot to thirty-five feet.

Valencia: Con't. on Page 2

Gables Good Government Committee was organized to support issues and causes that preserve and improve the quality of life in Coral Gables and promote the effective and efficient management of its government.

Valencia: Con't. from Front Page



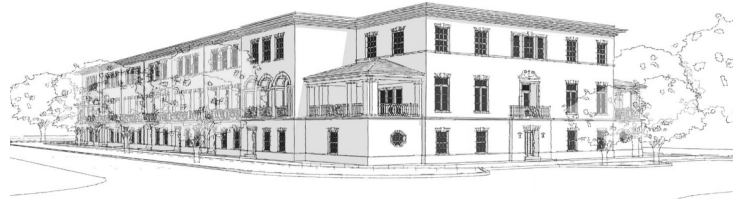
This aerial photograph pinpoints the location of the second project at 515 Valencia Avenue. Presently, the site is host to three two-story concrete block and stucco buildings. The zoning is multi-family.

Documents filed with the City are asking for 103 luxury rentals with up-scale amenities, open green spaces and other heavily landscaped areas.

The design calls for internal service and receiving areas to visually close off service functions.

Developers are asking for an amendment to the code from 100 units per acre with a height limit of 120 feet. Current code allows height up to 97 feet with architectural bonuses. However, the property is subject to site specific criteria which permits a maximum building height of 150 feet. The changes proposed encourage a decrease in maximum height by approving increased density.

A third project, shown below, located at 718 Valencia Avenue, is described by the developer in filing documents, as consisting of 32 residential units, with two and three bedrooms all of the required parking provided on-site and meeting all of the zoning setbacks, height limits, lot coverage, landscape requirements, open areas and FAR limitations.



Beatrice Row, above, slated for location at 745 Valencia Avenue, is depicted by the architect as nine townhouse units on Anderson Road with corner lots on Biltmore Way and Valencia Avenue following the requirements of the Coral Gables Zoning Code. The current three apartment lots will be re-platted into nine fee simple townhouse lots.

The proposed configurations include three stories with terraces and balconies on the second floor. Three different four-bedroom models, varying in size are being offered. Off street parking is being provided in individual private garage accessed from the existing alley.

According to the architect, Beatrice Row draws inspiration from the Coral Gables City Hall, American Colonial Architecture and the great row house projects of New York, Boston and London.

Casa Segovia: Con't. from page 3

Rony Mateau, the architect of record, for the sixth time, made a presentation to the Board, having brought to his latest design virtually all of the changes and suggestions previously made by the members. Even at this late juncture in the process more adjustments were being offered. After extended discussion with Mr. Mateau and among themselves and after meeting for four and one-half hours, the Board moved to approve the project by a vote of four to two.

If they wish, the aggrieved parties may appeal this decision to the City Commission for ultimate disposition. They have ten business days in which to request this action.

It should be recognized that under normal circumstances the Board of Architects does not entertain testimony or comments from residents. Additionally, individually, they are to focus their efforts entirely on the design quality, suitability of materials, massing, height, fenestration and other strictly architectural elements and details. As part of their charge they; however, also to consider the environment and neighborhood in which the structures will be set.

DRAMA ENSUES AS CASA DOBLES/SEGOVIA PROCESS CONTINUES

September 9, 2015: For the first time the Board of Architects, designated as a quasi-judicial board, convened to hear the sixth presentation of the three-part project known as *Casa Dobles*, *Casa Segovia* and *Casa Gran Dobles*. The Board



Grand Dobles de Segovia

members sat as judges and potential final arbiters of the project which has generated much concern in the neighborhood surrounding the site of the proposed project. An opposition movement has given the process of gaining Board of Architects approval an unusual, adversarial character.

Developer of the project and principal owner, Alberto Perez, represented by attorney, Peter Gonzales, presented the case as a “by right” situation. This project is asking for no change of land use, no variances, no zoning changes and is proposing a configuration which is less dense than is allowed by code. The code allows for five units, this project calls for four. A professional property appraiser, serving as an expert witness, provided information as to possible effects on real estate values in the area. His research showed no particular negative effects on property values in similar situations in Coral Gables. Additional in which the structures will be set well as owners of property in the target area, i.e., within 1,000 feet of the site. These property owners voiced favorable opinions of the project. It is noteworthy that essentially all of the properties on Segovia, except possibly four structures, are identified as rental units. A petition, signed by over 175 residents of the area and other residents of Coral Gables, was offered as supporting evidence of neighborhood approval.

For those opposing the project, Ernesto Fabre, owner of properties within the affected area, gave reasons for asking the Board of Architects to reject the development. Inserting such a stark, contemporary design into this traditional, predominately circa post-World War II neighborhood would be completely incompatible with the existing feeling of the adjacent community. He and Maria Longo, a resident/owner/real estate agent, presented a visual demonstration of the entire length of both sides of Segovia Boulevard with a photograph of every building shown on a connected, linear foam board. The display was dramatic and effective in showing the scale, height, massing and general harmony of the Segovia Boulevard corridor. Ms. Longo’s presentation included her knowledge as a real estate agent. She stated that, in her opinion, this unsuitable architecture would negatively impact sales in the area. In addition to the testimony given by Ms. Longo and Mr. Fabre, the respected preservation architect, Richard Heisenbottle; Arva Parks McCabe, well-known local historian and preservationist and Dolly MacIntyre, formerly Chairperson of the Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board all spoke against the plan. Mr. Fabre also presented, as supporting evidence, a petition signed by nearly two-hundred people. However, it was later determined on cross examination, that the petition contained misleading statements and included a visual representation of the project which was no longer accurate. Further, a significant number of the signatories lacked standing in this matter. Additional evidence revealed that Mr. Fabre had generated a letter to Mr. Perez suggesting that should he wish to engage a new architect for the project he should consider one of the architects who sit on the Board of Architects. A specific person was named.



CASA SEGOVIA

Casa Segovia: Con’t. on Page 2

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Miami Herald*, September 25, 2015: *Creating a new reality in Coral Gables.

Over the past few weeks, there have been many different opinion circulating about the real-estate renaissance taking place in Coral Gables.

In the past 11 years that I've operated and owned a restaurant in the City Beautiful, I have learned quite a few things about what it takes to be viable in this town.

The Gables is a unique community with loyal and passionate residents. However, what we also have is a central business district that is predominately bank-rolled by commuters and non-residents. The dramatic decrease in foot traffic that takes place on nights and weekends is undeniable, and asking a restaurant owner to be profitable on a 40-hour work week is unthinkable.

We need to build on the Gables incredibly strong foundation and bring new dining, entertaining and shopping options that will attract more than just the traditionalists.

Significant strides by city leadership to bridge this gap are well under way with the Streetscape project and other improvements that will resurrect the downtown corridor so it can once again thrive as the vibrant hub it was always intended to be. I have faith in our current leaders to keep it classy, but contemporary, and I hope our community can extend them the same trust.

Once these improvements are in place, we'll be creating and celebrating a new tradition, a new reality—one that cultivates a generation that wants to live, work, learn and play in Coral Gables.

Cheers for a noble nod to the past and an energized fist-bump to the future.

**Wayne Eldred, Kendale Lakes, FL
Owner, Tarpon Bend Restaurant
Coral Gables, FL 33134**

A Letter to the Miami Herald in Response to: ***Creating A New Reality in Coral Gables***, September 25, 2015

Dear Sir:

I was interested to read today's letter from Wayne Eldred, the owner of Tarpon Bend and his suggestions for keeping Coral Gables 'classy', whatever that might mean.

My wife and I moved to Coral Gables thirty years ago, attracted by its big-city/ small-town charms. We love living in the peace and quiet of its leafy, residential streets, yet just a ten minute walk from its sophisticated urban core. We are traditionalists in the sense of wanting to preserve the charms that first drew us here, but we also welcome the change and improvements of recent years. We are delighted with the Streetscape project for the downtown district, we support the Underline project along US1, we admire thoughtful modern architecture like the Alhambra Towers and we welcomed the creative transformation of the old Police and Fire Station into the culturally vibrant Coral Gables Museum. While national chains such as Starbucks and Barnes and Noble are an inevitable part of modern life, the Gables and its residents have also nurtured the charming intimacy of family owned businesses such as The Globe Café & Bar, Café Demetrio Coffee Shop, Books & Books, JohnMartin's Pub, Christies restaurant – to name just a random few of the many wonderful small, unique and locally owned businesses that make the Gables so vibrant.

And that's the point. Coral Gables does not need Mr. Eldred's 'New Reality'; Coral Gables is a vibrant place already, without the extra traffic, the millennials, the extra vacationers – however 'hip and cool', that Mr. Eldred wishes to attract. If I wanted the contemporary attractions of Ocean Drive or CocoWalk, I would sell my house and move there; as it is, I prefer the charms of Coral Gables – preferably without the "fist-bumps."

**Patrick Alexander
636 Alcazar Avenue,
Coral Gables, FL 33134**

The story of Coral Gables so far as it has been told, has been one of vision and achievement, the story of a community planned to be beautiful and livable. To attain, in fact an ideal..."

*Matlack Price, Coral Gables—Miami, Arts and Decoration, January, 1925**

Commission Denies Country Club Expansion

At the regularly scheduled meeting of the Coral Gables City Commission on September 22, 2015 the Commission denied a plan for out-door seating at the Coral Gables Country Club. After rounds of discussion from residents, including a few former elected officials, the Commissioners affirmed an appeal from the Preservation Board's ruling of May, 2014. The issue at hand was related to placing pavers at the Country Club in the area in front of the Liberty Café on the North Greenway entrance. Mayor Cason voted to up-hold the Preservation Boards ruling. Commissioners Keon, Lago and Quesada voted in favor of the appellant. Commissioner Slesnick recused herself.

Also denied was a request for conditional use for expanding the Country Clubs dining capacity to include six tables and 22 chairs located in the out-door area.



Tell a friend about
GGG

COMMISSIONER JEANNETT SLESNICK

WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU

Join her for an informal forum about what Coral Gables should look like in 2030!

Wednesday, October 7, 6-8 pm
Biltmore Hotel
Alhambra Ballroom
1200 Anastasia Avenue
Coral Gables, FL



This is your chance to bring your ideas to the table. This is a perfect opportunity for residents to join the conversation and express their vision of what Coral Gables should be in the future. Suggested topics include:

- North Ponce-Mixed use and affordable housing.
- US 1 Corridor-Douglas to Red Road. Master plan changes?
- Downtown Coral Gables-Central shopping/office areas.
- Ponce south of Christy's to Bird Road-Zoning changes: Townhome/expand commercial district.
- Traffic, transportation, parking, bike lanes.
- Possible annexations of Little Gables or High Pines.
- Discussion of open spaces, green initiatives, parks, schools & culture.

R.S.V.P. to: Commissionersvp@CoralGables.Com. or contact: Chelsea Granell, Commission Aide, at 305-569-1833 or via email at CGranell@CoralGables.Com. or Slesnick@CoralGables.com

HOW TO JOIN GGG

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Email us at DSwain@MilianSwain.Com
Phone: Debbie Swain 305 496-2374

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All computer generated images and the aerial photo are courtesy of the City of Coral Gables Department of Planning and Zoning and/or Board of Architects. Images and other information related to development projects may be accessed on-line at WWW.CoralGables.com/Department of Planning and Zoning.

* From Page 4: Quote from *Celebrate! The Preview Exhibition of the Coral Gables Museum*, Arva Moore Parks, Guest Curator

The GGG Newsletter is not a publication of the City of Coral Gables. It is a paid political advertisement paid for by the Gables Good Government Committee (GGG) a non-profit organization.