



To: Dona Spain, Miriam Ramos, Yaneris Figueroa

From: Craig E. Leen, City Attorney for the City of Coral Gables

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "CL", is written over the name "Craig E. Leen" in the "From:" field.

RE: Legal Opinion Regarding Riviera Country Club - Demolition

Date: August 17, 2015

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I reviewed the letter, which is attached. The determination that it was not historically significant was based on additions/alterations/modifications to the clubhouse and golf course. There is a specific finding that the architectural integrity of the clubhouse has been "compromised," and the historical and cultural significance of site has been "diminished," which is why it was determined to not be historically significant. The letter and findings were not appealed to the Historic Preservation Board, and became final. The only way to reopen the matter would be if there was a material change in facts and circumstances that would cause you to change these findings. As no such changes have been brought to my attention, it is my opinion and interpretation that the letter is sufficient to allow the demolition to proceed. Of course, it is ultimately your discretion to determine whether you would like them to obtain another letter if you believed that there are changes in facts/circumstances that could change your opinion. As the time period has been short, and as no such changes in facts/circumstances have been presented to me, you are well within your discretion to permit the demolition to proceed without a further letter.

This opinion and interpretation is issued pursuant to section 2-201(e)(1) and (8) of the City Code, as well as section 2-702 of the Zoning Code.

## Herbello, Stephanie

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**From:** Leen, Craig  
**Sent:** Monday, August 17, 2015 6:38 PM  
**To:** Herbello, Stephanie  
**Cc:** Ramos, Miriam; Figueroa, Yaneris; Chen, Brigitte  
**Subject:** FW: Riviera Country Club - demolition  
**Attachments:** L3 Signed.pdf

Please publish.

### **Craig E. Leen, City Attorney**

*Board Certified by the Florida Bar in  
City, County and Local Government Law*  
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**From:** Leen, Craig  
**Sent:** Monday, August 17, 2015 6:37 PM  
**To:** Spain, Dona; Ramos, Miriam; Figueroa, Yaneris  
**Subject:** RE: Riviera Country Club - demolition

I reviewed the letter, which is attached. The determination that it was not historically significant was based on additions/alterations/modifications to the clubhouse and golf course. There is a specific finding that the architectural integrity of the clubhouse has been "compromised," and the historical and cultural significance of site has been "diminished," which is why it was determined to not be historically significant. The letter and findings were not appealed to the Historic Preservation Board, and became final. The only way to reopen the matter would be if there was a material change in facts and circumstances that would cause you to change these findings. As no such changes have been brought to my attention, it is my opinion and interpretation that the letter is sufficient to allow the demolition to proceed. Of course, it is ultimately your discretion to determine whether you would like them to obtain another letter if you believed that there are changes in facts/circumstances that could change your opinion. As the time period has been short, and as no such changes in facts/circumstances have been presented to me, you are well within your discretion to permit the demolition to proceed without a further letter.

This opinion and interpretation is issued pursuant to section 2-201(e)(1) and (8) of the City Code, as well as section 2-702 of the Zoning Code.

**Craig E. Leen, City Attorney**

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**From:** Spain, Dona  
**Sent:** Monday, August 17, 2015 3:54 PM  
**To:** Leen, Craig; Ramos, Miriam; Figueroa, Yaneris  
**Subject:** Riviera Country Club - demolition

Last year, we had an application to designated as historic the clubhouse building at the Riviera Country Club. On February 7, 2014, Kara sent them a letter saying that it was not eligible for designation (see attached). They are now scheduled for the DRC and have included that letter in their packet. My question is – do they still need to apply for a historical significance determination letter in order to demolish the building? The significance determination letter would only be good for six months and the letter Kara sent was over a year ago.

Dona M. Spain  
Historical Resources and Cultural Arts Director  
City of Coral Gables, Florida  
(305) 460-5095



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## The City of Coral Gables

*Historical Resources Department*  
February 7, 2014

Joan Bounds  
3241 Riviera Drive  
Coral Gables, FL 33134

Re: Local Historic Designation of The Riviera Country Club, located at 1155 Blue Road and legally described as Riviera Country Club PB 46-15 TR 1 to 5 Inc. & Miami Biltmore Golf Course bounded by BLKS 90-93 96-97-11 of CGCC Sec 5 per PB 23-55 & Str of Land Shown as Miami Biltmore Golf Course of CG Riviera Section 4 per PB 25-47 & Lots 10 thru 14 & that Portion of Ave. Mendavia Lyg E & adj. to Lots 11 thru 13 Closed by R-3946-52, Block 112 of Coral Gables Country Club Section 5, as recorded in Plat Book 23, Page 55 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Dear Ms. Bounds:

On June 10, 2013, our office received an application requesting local historic landmark designation for the Riviera Country Club located at 1155 Blue Road, legally described as Riviera Country Club PB 46-15 TR 1 to 5 Inc. & Miami Biltmore Golf Course bounded by BLKS 90-93 96-97-11 of CGCC Sec 5 per PB 23-55 & Str of Land Shown as Miami Biltmore Golf Course of CG Riviera Section 4 per PB 25-47 & Lots 10 thru 14 & that Portion of Ave. Mendavia Lyg E & adj. to Lots 11 thru 13 Closed by R-3946-52, Block 112 of Coral Gables Country Club Section 5, as recorded in Plat Book 23, Page 55 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Article 3, Section 3-1103 of the Coral Gables Zoning Code states that "in order to qualify for designation as a local historic landmark or local historic landmark district, individual properties must have significant character, interest, or value as part of the historical, cultural, archaeological, aesthetic, or architectural heritage of the City, state or nation." Please be advised that after careful research and study of our records, along with the information provided with the application, it is the determination of this office that the property located at 1155 Blue Road does not qualify for listing in the Coral Gables Register of Historic Places.

Historical Resources Department staff finds that the architectural integrity of the clubhouse has been compromised over the years. Successive additions and alterations have had a negative impact on its architectural character. Likewise, the golf course, designed in 1925 as part of the Biltmore Country Club by noted course designer Donald Ross, has also been renovated and modified from its original configuration. While the renovations were guided by Brian Silva who is noted for his work on Ross-designed courses, the numerous

modifications have diminished the historical and cultural significance of the site and affected the integrity of the property as a whole.

Please note that pursuant to Article 3, Section 3-1104 (A) (1), "If the department's initial determination is that the property does not meet the minimum eligibility criteria for listing, the applicant may present the proposal for designation to the Historic Preservation Board."

If you should need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the Historical Resources Department.

Sincerely,



Kara N. Kautz  
Assistant Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosure

cc: File: LHD 2013-01  
Mark Snure, General Manager, Riviera Country Club, 1155 Blue Road, Coral  
Gables, Florida 33146  
President, Board of Directors, Riviera Country Club, 1155 Blue Road, Coral Gables,  
FL 33146  
William Burdette, 2103 Coral Way, Suite 202, Miami, Florida 33145  
Craig E. Leen, Esq., City Attorney  
Bridgette Thornton, Esq., Deputy City Attorney