

HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD

MEMORANDUM STAFF REPORT

Designation Request: "Ridley Temple Church of God in Christ, Inc."

Property Address: 102 SW 12th Avenue

HPB Meeting Date: November 18, 2015

File No: 2016-003

ITEM BEFORE THE BOARD

The action requested of the Board is that of making a recommendation to the City Commission on a privately initiated request for individual local designation of "**Ridley Temple Church of God in Christ, Inc.**" located at **102 SW 12th Avenue**, pursuant to Land Development Regulations (LDR) Section 4.5.1(C), Designation Procedures.

BACKGROUND

The subject property is located at **102 SW 12th Avenue** on the west side of the SW 12th Street at the corner of SW 1st Street. The property contains a significant example of masonry vernacular religious architecture in the Atlantic Park Gardens Neighborhood of Delray Beach, Florida. The property is zoned RM, multiple family residential (medium density). The subject property that the church owns consists of three lots, the building lot measures 57' x 138', the adjacent lot to the south measures 50' x 138' and the lot behind the church fronting SW 13th Avenue measures 57' x 138'.

The founding Pastor of the church Elder Andrew W. Ridley along with members from the community designed and built the church as you see today. The original building was one story and was completed in the year of 1949. The original one-story building was 18' feet wide x 24' long. The design concept of the church was influenced and inspired by AM Cohen Temple Church of God in Christ in Miami, Florida.

The second floor (Sanctuary) was added to the building in the year of 1956. The construction of the church is a combination of wood frame and concrete block. In 1962, a small one story kitchen was added to the north side building.

The local historic designation is now before the Board for consideration.

ANALYSIS

LDR Section 4.5.1(B), Criteria for Designation of Historic Sites or Districts:

Pursuant to **Section 4.5.1(B)(1)**, to qualify as a historic structure, individual properties, structures, sites, or buildings, must have significant character, interest, or value as part of the historical, cultural, aesthetic, and architectural heritage of the city, state, or nation. To qualify as a historic site, historic district, or historic structure, the property or properties must fulfill one or more of the criteria set forth in division (2) or (3) below;

The subject structure meets the following criteria:

(B)(2) Historical or cultural significance:

(d) Exemplifies the historical, political, cultural, economic, or social trends of the community in history;

STAFF COMMENT:

The church at **102 SW 12th Avenue** meets the above criteria in that since the 1940s it is the first church in this community to support the African American community by assisting migrant workers with a place of worship and a place of refuge for their families in a time of need. Elder Andrew Ridley spent his time traveling to the western farm areas ministering and providing religious leadership to those families who needed transportation, clothing, and food by bringing them to the church for fellowship with the congregation.

In the early 1960s the lower level of the church was utilized as a daycare to assist working mothers with a place to house their children while they worked. The daycare became a place to nurture, feed and teach children about the bible and the need to have God in their lives.

Today, "the main mission of the church is to enrich all involved by presenting the Word of God and exploring African American worship experience with all cultures and nationalities in a way that will inspire others to want to make significant changes in their life and well-being, be it spiritually, mentally or physically".

(B)(3) Architectural or aesthetic significance:

- (a) Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by one or more distinctive architectural styles;
- (b) Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, period, or method of construction;
- (d) Contains elements of design, detail, material, or craftsmanship of outstanding quality or which represented, in its time, a significant innovation or adaptation to the South Florida environment.

STAFF COMMENT:

The unique architectural design and presence of this two-story masonry vernacular style emanating from the 1940's-1950's is significant to the Atlantic Park Gardens community and Delray Beach for the its design, detail, material, and craftsmanship as outlined below:

The stucco covered building features a low pitched front gable roof with wall projections at either side of the gable and the roof is covered in shingles. The wooden brackets under the roof eaves follow the perimeter of the building with the exception of the front façade. The front façade wall projections appear straight, but as you turn the corner to the sides of the building, there is an interesting triangular form that covers a recessed entryway on the ground level.

The dual entries (at the front and the back of the church) are graced by two story double staircases with elaborately patterned with cast concrete breezeblock hand rails and balcony rails leading to the main upper level. The worshippers enter at the rear of the sanctuary on the second level through two large recessed red doors. In between those doors is an original glass block cross which brings a subdued light into the sanctuary. At the west (rear) side of the exterior of the church building there are double staircases with similar breezeblock hand rails which lead to interior offices flanking the altar.

The double staircases are indicative of earlier "Caribbean" style architecture from the islands. See the examples from Barbados, Jamaica, Antilles (figures 1, 2, and 3) attached at the end of this report. In addition, the modular breezeblock material found in the railings is commonly found in the Miami Modern, mid-Century style of architecture from the World War II era, 1945-1960's, and consists of concrete block styles ranging in several sizes and patterns. The modular breezeblock found on the frontal church railings are of two different styles, an "X" pattern, and stacked rectangular concrete blocks arranged in an offset pattern on the both levels. The "X" pattern is found on all railings at the rear elevation of the church.

The church sanctuary is flanked by five arched multi-colored stained glass windows. Two additional stained glass windows are located at the altar. The stained glass scenes depict various bible scenes. The original coved ceiling is covered in Dade County Pine wood planks and the walls are plaster. Recent additions are the partial wood wall paneling application and enlargement of the altar. Several future improvements to the church are planned such as replacing the damaged lower level windows, painting the church, and the addition of an elevator. At the current time many members of the congregation are elderly and can no longer climb the stairs to participate in the services.

An additional enhancement would be re-illumination of the neon cross, along with the name of the church painted on the front building as it originally appeared in documented photographs (see front cover of designation report).

Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use Objective A-4 *The redevelopment of land and buildings shall provide for the preservation of historic resources. The objective shall be met through continued adherence to the City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance and, where applicable, to architectural design guidelines through the following policies:*

Policy A-4.1 *Prior to approval or recommending approval of any land use or development application for property located within a historic district or designated as a historic site, the Historic Preservation Board must make a finding that the requested action is consistent with the provisions of Section 4.5.1 of the Land Development Regulations relating to historic sites and districts and the “Delray Beach Design Guidelines”.*

Policy A-4.2 *In order to protect the City’s historic resources, the Land Development Regulations shall include provisions for designation of historically significant buildings, structures, archaeological sites, or districts. The City shall conduct periodic neighborhood surveys to identify and evaluate potential historic resources at least once every five years.*

STAFF COMMENT:

The proposed designation meets the intent of the applicable Objective and Policies noted above, as it will provide for the preservation of the subject structure, thereby ensuring the protection of an example of this type of style and building. Further, the comments above illustrate that the request meets the criteria set forth in LDR Section 4.5.1 which provides for the designation of “historically significant buildings.” Therefore, the proposed designation is appropriate and a recommendation of approval should be forwarded to the City Commission. The Public Hearing dates for review of the subject designation by the City Commission have been tentatively scheduled for January 5, 2016.

COURTESY / PUBLIC NOTICES

Public Notice letters were mailed to the property owners within a 500’ radius of **102 SW 12th Avenue**. Courtesy notices will be provided to Delray Citizens Coalition, Atlantic Park Gardens, North/South Alliance, Gateway, Carver Memorial Park, and Lincoln Park.

Letters of support or objection, if any, will be presented at the Historic Preservation Board (HPB) meeting.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS

- A. Continue with direction.
- B. Move a recommendation of approval to the City Commission that **"Ridley Temple Church of God in Christ, Inc."** be listed in the Local Register of Historic Places at **102 SW 12th Avenue**, by adopting the findings of fact and law contained in the staff report, and finding that the request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and Sections 4.5.1(B) and 4.5.1(C) of the Land Development Regulations.
- C. Move a recommendation of denial to the City Commission that **"Ridley Temple Church of God in Christ, Inc."** not be listed in the Local Register of Historic Places at **102 SW 12th Avenue**, by finding that the request is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and Sections 4.5.1(B) and 4.5.1(C) of the Land Development Regulations.

RECOMMENDATION

Move a recommendation of approval to the City Commission that **"Ridley Temple Church of God in Christ, Inc."** be listed in the Local Register of Historic Places at **102 SW 12th Avenue**, by adopting the findings of fact and law contained in the staff report, and finding that the request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and Sections 4.5.1(B) and 4.5.1(C) of the Land Development Regulations.

Attachments:
"Ridley Temple Church of God in Christ" Designation Report
Location Maps
Photographs
Ordinance document

Staff Report Prepared by: Lynn Van Duyne, Historic Preservation Planner