

Letter of Intent

TO: Florida Building Commission
FROM: Carlos A. Markovich
DATE: September 25, 2024
RE: Vertical Accessibility Waiver for 2897 NW 5th Avenue Miami FL, 33127

The property located at 2897 NW 5th Ave, Miami, features a two-story building originally constructed in 1940. The second floor is an addition to the building that was made in 1957. This upper level, accessed via an external staircase, was initially designed as office space for the mechanic's garage situated on the ground floor.

Over the years, the building's use has evolved. The second floor, which was once configured as office space, was reconfigured at some point during the last 67 years to serve as warehouse storage. This reconfiguration involved the removal of interior walls, reflecting a shift from a service-oriented facility to a storage space. Consequently, the current interior layout of the second floor bears little resemblance to its original design.

In accordance with the City of Miami's 40-year recertification process, the property has been inspected to ensure compliance with the Florida Building Code. A building permit was submitted as part of this process, with a scope of work focused on repairs, life safety improvements, electrical upgrades, and structural enhancements. During the review of this permit, the City identified a discrepancy between the current interior layout of the second floor and its original 1957 configuration. As a result, the City has mandated compliance with the elevator provision specified by the Florida Building Code.

This requirement is based on the change in occupancy of the second floor. Due to the lack of formal documentation regarding the change in use, the City is strictly applying the vertical accessibility trigger, which necessitates the installation of an elevator. This requirement presents a significant financial and logistical burden for the property owner.

Financially, installing an elevator would impose a substantial strain on the owner's resources. The cost of the elevator installation would cost a minimum of \$206,462. The 40-year recertification, as presently proposed in the attached permit set, without the elevator, would cost \$367,887. The elevator requirement would raise the cost of the 40-year recertification by another 56%, totaling more than \$574,349. Practically, the current use of the second floor as warehouse storage does not require vertical connectivity with the ground floor. The lower floor operates independently from the second floor and is accessed from NW 5th Ave, with no direct connection to the second floor. Additionally, the existing external walk-up staircase provides adequate access for maintenance personnel and occasional visitors.

It is important to note that the building permit application submitted for the 40-year recertification does not propose any changes to the existing interior layout or the building's use. The application solely aims to fulfill recertification requirements without altering the building's current configuration or function. For the foregoing reasons, we respectfully request a waiver from the vertical accessibility requirement for this property.