



DDA PLAN FOR OLD SCHOOL SQUARE CAMPUS

September 2022



OLD SCHOOL SQUARE COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE PURPOSE: To develop a plan for the use and renovation of the Delray Beach Elementary School and site for recommendation to the City Council.

COMMITTEE GOAL: To develop the Delray Beach Elementary School as a people oriented activity center for the arts and culture.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT:

- To provide a facility for making the arts and cultural activities available to the community of Delray Beach.
- To create a significant public square or focal point for the City.
- To bring activity to the downtown area on a 24 hour, year round basis.
- To attract tourism activity to the community.
- To serve as the western "anchor" to the Central Business District.
- To stimulate the investment of private capital in the redevelopment of the surrounding area.
- To recognize the significance of the historic architecture of Delray Beach.
- To provide space for community activities.
- To create a passive "people park" in the center city.
- To establish a theme and standards for the architecture and landscape of the downtown.

TO: Mayor and City Commissioners
FROM: Old School Square Foundation, Inc.
SUBJECT: OLD SCHOOL SQUARE SITE
DATE: March 3, 1987

I. The Project

A. History

The Delray Beach Elementary School is a complex of three buildings located on nearly four acres of land at the northeast corner of Atlantic Avenue and Swinton Avenue in the center of Delray Beach. The oldest of the structures, a 9,000 square foot, two story school building was constructed in 1913, just two years after the incorporation of the Town of Delray. This eight room school building housed both the lower grades and the high school for twelve years and is still in use as classrooms for the elementary grades today.

A second building was constructed on the site in 1925 to serve the growing secondary school population. This 32,000 square foot building included a 300 seat auditorium that hosted many of the City's cultural and civic functions for many years. The high school continued in use until the construction of a new facility in the north section of town in the mid 1950's when it was converted for elementary school use.

A full size gymnasium with wooden basketball floor and balconies was also constructed in 1925 completing the school complex.

Each of the buildings is representative of the Spanish Mediterranean architectural style as interpreted by the early settlers of the area. All three buildings were designed by Samuel Ogren, a local architect, and most, if not all of the original plans have been located. Although the buildings have been "modernized" over the years, the basic elements of this vernacular style - the stucco exteriors, barrel tile and slate roofs, hardwood floors, etc. - remain intact. In testimony to their sturdy construction, the buildings have survived at least one major hurricane and have been in continuous use since their construction.

Under an agreement presently being negotiated between the City of Delray Beach and the Palm Beach County Board of Education, the City will take possession of the school complex upon the completion of a replacement facility late in 1987. The City is expected to pay approximately \$250,000 for the Elementary School, less than half of its appraised value.

ORIGINAL
DOCUMENTS
FROM OLD
SCHOOL
SQUARE
FOUNDATION
TASK FORCE

June 16, 1987

"The planning process for such a civic venture can be a powerful catalyst to produce change in Delray's estimate of itself, but it must work with and through agencies that can effect change."

- Allison J. Smith

WHAT WE KNOW

- City purchased school campus in 1987
- Created OSSF task force
- Task Force Goal: develop arts and cultural center
- OSS has a HUGE impact on downtown economic vitality
- DDA has responsibility to lead the effort
- Grounds need to be beautiful, accessible, well lit and activated
- Additional funding will be needed

Recommendation



The City designate the DDA to lead the effort of developing and implementing a phased plan for the use, management and activation of Old School Square Campus.

PHASE ONE

1. Create a Task Force

- Made up of industry experts and DDA stakeholders

2. Activate Museum and Grounds

- Collaborate directly with city staff to maintain grounds and understand plans/events for fiscal year '22 - '23
- Cornell: Programming inside & outside, install exterior lighting, implement local exhibits
- Park and Pavilion: Pop-up Activations
- Add holiday lighting to campus for December

3. Change the Narrative

- Rebrand (change the name?)
- Create & implement marketing plan for "Rebirth" of OSS campus

IMPORTANT POINTS

- **DDA "superpower" is collaboration**
- **Not cutting anyone out**
- **Initial goal: small but impactful changes**
- **Important that we get plan NOW through season & summer '23**