

## DEMOLITION JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT

### Seaboard Airline Railroad Station, Delray Beach, FL

The Mediterranean Revival-styled train depot located at 1525 West Atlantic Avenue was built circa 1927. The building was extremely significant in the early growth and development of Delray Beach since, as a railroad depot, the building was instrumental in transporting people, agriculture, and building materials in and out of the city. The building retained its architectural integrity

The architect was Gustav A. Maass, for Harvey & Clarke, and because of its significance and retention of integrity, it was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on September 4, 1986 and locally designated by the city on October 11, 1988. The building fell victim to arson in February 2020.

Fortunately, because of the multiple historic designations, there is ample documentation and research, including photography, which describes the structure and its architectural features. Additionally, RJ Heisenbottle Architects performed an extensive existing conditions survey which fully documented the building, allowing for the accurate restoration and reconstruction of this building.

### **Compliance with The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation**

**As is required for locally historically designated buildings, the restoration and reconstruction will follow all of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation**, in particular, the following:

**STANDARD 2.** The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided. *All of the historic materials and features on the exterior and within the building that are salvageable from the fire damage shall be retained and restored.*

**STANDARD 3.** Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken. *The restoration and reconstruction will not create a false sense of historical development, rather it will intend to bring back the structure to its physical appearance from the 1920s.*

**STANDARD 6.** Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence. *Historic features and elements that are salvageable shall be repaired, those that are beyond repair shall be replaced to match original features in design, color, and materials.*

Because of the unique situation present in that much of the building was recently destroyed by an act of vandalism, the restoration will not only follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards of Rehabilitation, but also the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Reconstruction. The reconstruction standards that will be utilized in this project will include:

**STANDARD 1.** Reconstruction will be used to depict vanished or non-surviving portions of a property when documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture, and such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property.

**STANDARD 2.** Reconstruction of a landscape, building, structure or object in its historic location will be preceded by a thorough archeological investigation to identify and evaluate those features and artifacts that are essential to an accurate reconstruction. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

**STANDARD 3.** Reconstruction will include measures to preserve any remaining historic materials, features and spatial relationships.

**STANDARD 4.** Reconstruction will be based on the accurate duplication of historic features and elements substantiated by documentary or physical evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different features from other historic properties. A reconstructed property will re-create the appearance of the non-surviving historic property in materials, design, color and texture.

### **Visual Compatibility Standards**

The restoration and the reconstruction will also conform to the requirements of City of Delray Beach's Land Development Regulations, in particular, Section 4.5.1 (E)(7). Section 4.5.1 is the Historic Preservation Section for Designated Districts, Sites, and Buildings, and Subsection (E) is Development Standards, subsection (7) is Visual Compatibility Standards.

The Seaboard Airline Railroad Station is a solitary structure that does not have other historic buildings in its immediate vicinity, nor is it located within a historic district. Therefore, the structure will not visually impact other buildings, since there is little development around it. However, the plans are to return the building to its original appearance, and thus will not change its previous compatibility with any nearby structures.

## Evaluation Guidelines for Demolition COA's

A significant portion of the building is planned for demolition (and reconstruction) as a result of the devastating damage due to fire. The following is a Justification Statement addressing the Standards in LDR Section 4.5.1 (F) *Demolitions*, specifically from subsection (6), which provides guidelines to the Board when evaluating applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness for Demolition. There are five evaluation criteria the board must consider (here, with a response as to how the demolition is justified, in this case):

*(a) Whether the structure is of such interest or quality that it would reasonable fulfill criteria for designation for listing in the National Register.*

The building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on September 4, 1986 and locally designated by the City on October 11, 1988. Therefore, the building clearly represents a unique part of Delray's history and exemplifies significant historic architecture.

*(b) Whether the structure is of such design, craftsmanship, or material that it could be reproduced only with great difficulty or economically nonviable expense.*

This is not a request for complete demolition, and the portion being demolished will be reconstructed to its historic configuration and appearance.

*(c) Whether the structure is one of the last remaining examples of its kind in the designated historic district within the city.*

The building is individually designated, and not within a historic district. The station was designed by Gustav A. Maass, who at the time was working for renowned West Palm Beach architectural firm of Harvey & Clarke. Though other stations were constructed in a similar manner at the time (including Deerfield Beach, Homestead, and Boynton Beach Seaboard Railway Stations,) the Delray Beach station is one of the last remaining examples of its specific design, and by architect Maass. The Boynton Beach station was demolished in the 1960s, and the Homestead station has been empty and derelict for several years.

*(d) Whether retaining the structure would promote the general and value of a particular culture and heritage.*

The portion of the building being proposed for demolition is going to be reconstructed, so the structure will continue to promote Delray's earliest architecture, commerce, and transportation heritage.

*(e) Whether there are approved plans for immediate reuse of the property if the proposed demolition is carried out, and what effect those plans will have on the historic district designation or the individual designation of the property.*

The demolition will not negatively affect the designation, since it is going to be reconstructed and rehabilitated with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as well as the Standards for Reconstruction guiding the process.

## Demolition Justification Statement

Certificates of Appropriateness that are requesting demolition of an individually designated historic structure must also be accompanied by a justification statement. Since the portion to be demolished will be reconstructed, many of these will not be applicable, but the following are the five requirements for the statement as identified in LDR Section 4.5.1 (F)(10):

*(a) A certified report from a registered architect or engineer which provides documentation explaining that the building is structurally unsound and is damaged beyond the ability to repair it at a reasonable cost. The report must include photographs to substantiate the damage.*

There are several reports available which detail the damage to the building, including photographs, but again, the plan is to reconstruct the demolished portion.

*(b) A certified report from an engineer, architect, general contractor, or other qualified professional which documents the projected cost of repairing the structure and returning it to a safe and habitable condition.*

Since the plan is to restore the portion that is salvageable, and reconstruct the portion that is not salvageable, there will be qualified professionals providing cost estimates and complete restoration plans to the City.

*(c) An appraisal of the property in its current condition, its value as vacant land and its potential value as a preserved and restored historic property.*

Not applicable, as there are no plans to completely demolish the structure and create vacant land.

*(d) Documentation that reasonable efforts have been made to find a suitable alternate location for the structure within the City of Delray Beach to which the contributing/individually designated historic structure could be safely relocated.*

Not applicable, as there are no plans to relocate the structure.

*(e) Documentation that the applicant or property owner has taken such steps as it deems necessary to preserve the structure requested for demolition including consultation with community groups, public agencies, and interested citizens, recommendations for acquisition of property by public or private bodies, or agencies and exploration of the possibility of moving one or more structures or other features.*

Not applicable, since the City will be restoring the historic structure.