

Draft
Proposal to the City of Coral Gables Development Department
for a
University of Miami School of Architecture
Center for Heritage Stewardship
at the H.G. Fink Building

August 17, 2016

This schematic proposal outlines terms and conditions derived from a series of discussions to establish a Center for heritage stewardship that promotes, protects, and advances the care and understanding of the legacy of Coral Gables as embodied in its architecture, planning and natural settings. The Center is to occupy the historic H.G. Fink office and studio building at 2506 Ponce de Leon Blvd and function as a portal of learning and engagement between the University, the City and the community, benefiting the natural and cultural environment of Coral Gables.

Both City and University have an inextricable history. Their mutual founding, a vision forged in the mind of George Merrick, has produced a continuum of shared and collaborative leadership for 90 years. The School of Architecture with the City, has participated in the stewardship of this heritage and its preservation and planning since the founding. Across the last nine decades, the community, elected officials, City leadership, University administration, faculty and students have joined in dedicating time and talent to promote the City's heritage and engender a future based on this heritage. The faculty, as practicing architects, has contributed to the City's building stock and sustained national and international attention in scholarly and creative works focused on Coral Gables' cultural heritage.

This proposal envisions a new chapter in the development of that historic relationship, where City and University are actively engaged in preservation, conservation, and planning, in collaboration with the citizenry and City leadership. From the H.G. Fink office and studio, lectures, seminars, continuing and professional education opportunities, charrettes, planning studies, resource surveys and other learning activities will be conducted in an open door manner. The Center will promote the integration of research and scholarship with public engagement as a tool for continuously refining a “culture of care” for the architecture, planning and natural settings of the City, all one extraordinary resource that merits and inspires such commitment.

The University of Miami School of Architecture will lease space in the H.G. Fink building for a nominal fee in exchange for the outreach, instructional, research and planning activities which will inform the content of the community based mission of this Center. The lease is proposed for a 10 year term with a threshold at the third year, when either party may elect not to continue. The following is a list of capital investment and academic activities which detail the in-kind contribution of the University in exchange for founding this Center at these premises.

Preservation Practice and the Pedagogy of an Ethics of Care at the H.G. Fink

The H.G. Fink Building will serve as a case study, exemplary of the “ethics of care” which the center will promote in its learning, research and engagement platforms. The following outlines a plan of stewardship for the H.G. Fink Building as an object lesson for preservation in this community.

- 1) Document and produce measured drawings of the existing conditions of the H.G. Fink building.

- 2) Complete a Historic American Building Survey set of record drawings and documents of the H.G. Fink building to submit to the Library of Congress.
- 3) Prepare and administer the nomination of the H.G. Fink building to the National Register of Historic Places.
- 4) Implement general tenant improvements compatible with the historic building. (UM capital contribution)
- 5) Restore the historic drafting room of the H.G. Fink building.
- 6) Apply for State and Federal funding for the restoration.
- 7) Assist in preparing full restoration documents.
- 8) Use the building restoration as a lab/class for the UM preservation program open to the community.

Academic Context of the Program for the Center

- 1) Conduct a historic preservation studio based on Coral Gables on a yearly basis.
- 2) Conduct classes, seminars, lectures, tours, continuing education and professional education on heritage stewardship. These will be scheduled during regular, evening and weekend hours to engage the community.
- 3) Use the City of Coral Gables as a living laboratory for heritage conservation.
- 4) Conduct charrettes and preservation planning exercises to assist the City.
- 5) Conduct heritage resource surveys using traditional and new technologies (drone, digital scanning and i-phone apps) to expand the existing documentation of our cultural resources.
- 6) Establish Heritage Network, an online platform and heritage data base to assist in preservation planning decisions and growth management practices for the City.
- 7) Promote an integrated understanding of sustainability, resilience and heritage conservation by incorporating ongoing research in multiple University departments and other national Centers engaged in this work. As an example, the School of Engineering and the School of Architecture is preparing research to study energy models on the performance of historic buildings in a tropical climate.

- 8) Coordinate the work of the Center with the Coral Gables Historic Preservation Department, the Coral Gables Museum, other heritage organizations and appropriate schools and departments at the University of Miami.
- 9) Provide multiple opportunities for community participation in the above mentioned academic activities.

Engagement

Provide access and forge partnerships with the Coral Gables community to promote a collaborative and open working relationship for the better understanding of the object and manner of our stewardship.

- 1) Outfit the building's historic interiors, the entry and Mr. Fink's personal office, as a shared public space for the City and the University. This space will serve as a public meeting space to use in engaging the community and an information center for the City and University.
- 2) The City/University partnership at the Center will be acknowledged by co-branding in all communications, materials, signs, media platforms and marketing.
- 3) Establish the H.G. Fink Preservation Fellowship.
- 4) Explore possible transit links between the commercial district and the University.
- 5) Engage the community with design assistance as part of the outreach of the Center.

Additional opportunities to extend the mission and purpose of this Center will be incorporated into the programming when appropriate.