



**TOWN OF PALM BEACH**  
Planning, Zoning & Building Department  
360 South County Road  
Palm Beach, FL 33480  
[www.townofpalmbeach.com](http://www.townofpalmbeach.com)

**PLANNING, ZONING, & BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

PZ&B Staff Combination Memorandum: Landmarks Preservation Commission and Town Council

FROM: Wayne Bergman, MCP, LEED-AP *WRB*  
Director PZ&B

SUBJECT: COA-24-0018 (ZON-24-0043) 100, 101, 102, and 103 FOUR ARTS  
PLZ—SOCIETY OF THE FOUR ARTS

MEETING: NOVEMBER 13, 2024, TC  
NOVEMBER 20, 2024, LPC

**COA-24-0018 (ZON-24-0043) 100, 101, 102, and 103 FOUR ARTS PLZ – THE SOCIETY OF THE FOUR ARTS (COMBO).** The applicant, Society of the Four Arts Inc, has filed an application requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for review and approval of: 1) demolition exceeding 50%, and the construction of a new one- and two-story additions and renovations to the existing two-story theater building (O’Keeffe), 2) demolition exceeding 50%, and the construction of a new three-story addition, and renovations to the existing three-story administrative building (Rovensky), 3) demolition exceeding 50% of the existing shade structure and construction of a new pavilion, 4) a Master Signage Plan, and 5) landscape and hardscape modifications, requiring a Special Exception with Site Plan Review, and one (1) variance for the reduction of on-site parking requirement for the landmarked property. This is a combination project that shall also be reviewed by Town Council as it pertains to zoning relief/approval.

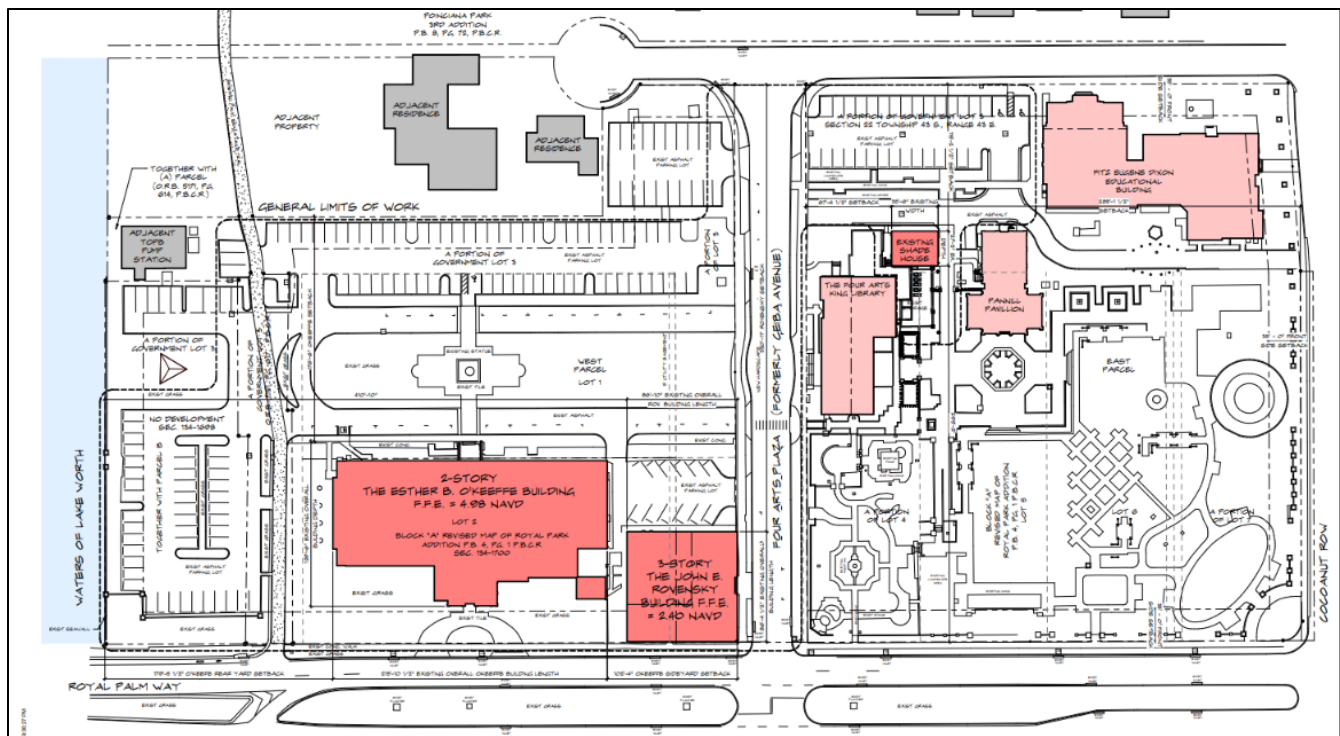
**ZON-24-0043 (COA-24-0018) 100, 101, 102, AND 103 FOUR ARTS PLZ—THE SOCIETY OF THE FOUR ARTS (COMBO)—SPECIAL EXCEPTION WITH SITE PLAN REVIEW AND VARIANCE.** The applicant, Society of the Four Arts Inc, has filed an application requesting Town Council review and approval for 2 Special Exception with Site Plan Review and one (1) variance for the reduction of on-site parking requirement for the substantial improvements to the Four Arts campus site including 1) demolition exceeding 50%, and the construction of a new one- and two-story additions and renovations to the existing two-story theater building (O’Keeffe), 2) demolition exceeding 50%, and the construction of a new three-story addition, and renovations to the existing three-story administrative building (Rovensky), 3) demolition of the existing shade structure and construction of a new pavilion, 4) a Master Signage Plan, and 5) landscape and hardscape modifications. The application proposes the abandonment and realignment of a portion of the existing Lake Trail. The Landmarks Preservation Commission will perform the design review.

Applicant: Society of the Four Arts Inc.  
Professional: Spina Orourke + Partners | Beyer Blinder Belle |  
SMI Landscape Architecture  
Representative: Harvey E., Oyer III, Shutts & Bowen LLC

## **HISTORY:**

The item was presented at the November 13, 2024, TC Development Review meeting, the outcome of which shall be provided as a verbal update. The Society of the Four Arts site has an east and west campus that is bifurcated by the Four Arts Plaza right-of-way. The east campus contains The Dixon Education Building, The King Library, and the Phillip Hulitar Sculpture and Botanical Garden. The west campus contains The Rovensky Building and The Esther B. O’Keeffe Gallery Building, surface parking areas, and a portion of the Lake Trail.

In 1979, three buildings (The King Library, The Rovensky Building, and The Esther B. O’Keeffe Gallery Building) and two Volk-designed piers at the entrance of Four Arts Plaza were landmarked. Of the three landmarked buildings, the proposal predominantly involves alterations, demolitions and substantial additions to the Rovensky and the O’Keeffe buildings.



*Existing campus site plan*

## **The Esther B. O’Keeffe Gallery Building**

This Mediterranean Revival structure was constructed in 1929. As indicated in the designation report: “The largest building in the complex is the two-story stuccoed gallery-auditorium. This was originally the Addison Mizner-designed Mediterranean Revival “Club de Montmartre” owned by Colonel Edward R. Bradley. Purchased from the Bradley estate in 1947 the building was renovated by John L. Volk for its present use. The



*asymmetrical building with multiple roof lines has many distinctive features that add to the integrity of the Mediterranean Revival style...The main north façade entrance designed by John Volk is enhanced by a covered arched portico...The Royal Palm Way entrance designed by Addison Mizner has an arched double doorway of planked wood and wrought iron hardware."*

### **The Rovensky Building**

This Mediterranean Revival structure was constructed in 1924. As indicated in the designation report: *"The third building in the complex also designed by Addison Mizner is the Rovensky Building, formerly the Embassy Apartments... Its stuccoed exterior is enhanced by sculpted stone blocks on the first level and a belt course with decorative medallions between the first and second story. A wrought iron railing covers the balcony that runs the length of the second story on the south elevation...A low-pitched hipped roof is covered with red barrel tile."*



A request was previously submitted to the Town in October of 2023, under applications COA-23-049, COA-24-051, ZON-24-004, and ZON-24-011. These applications did not move forward after the initial submission review comments were issued by City staff - largely due to the fact that comprehensive plan amendments and zoning text amendments would be required for the applications to be considered. Shortly thereafter, the Society of the Four Arts applied for and received said amendments from Town Council.

### **THE PROJECT:**

The applicant has submitted plans, entitled "The Society of the Four Arts", as prepared by **Spina Ourourke + Partners, Beyer Blinder Belle**, and **SMI Landscape Architecture**, received by the Town on October 7, 2024.

The applicant is requesting review and approval of the proposed partial demolition, new construction, additions and alterations. The following Special Exceptions, Site Plan review and/or Variances are required to complete the project, and shall be reviewed by Town Council:

### **SPECIAL EXCEPTION REQUESTS + SITE PLAN REVIEW**

1. **SPECIAL EXCEPTION 1:** Sec. 134-1484(3)(1): Three-story building. Only one three-story building is permitted per campus. Additions to existing three-story buildings are permitted provided the addition complies with the requirements of this Division.
2. **SPECIAL EXCEPTION 2:** Sec. 134-1484(4)(4): Building length greater than 150'. Except for any buildings existing on a campus as of the effective date of this ordinance, any new buildings greater than 150' in length shall require Town Council approval for a special exception to allow the O'Keeffe building length to increase from 215'-10" to 282'-7".
3. **SITE PLAN REVIEW:** For additions (including a third floor) and site changes per Sections 134-229, 134-329, and 134-1484.

### **VARIANCE REQUESTS**

1. **VARIANCE #1**, Sec. 134-2176: A variance to reduce the required parking spaces by 83 in order to provide 233 spaces in lieu of the required 316.

The applicant is requesting review and approval of the following scope of work for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed improvements that will be reviewed by the Landmarks Preservation Commission following action by the Town Council:

- O’Keeffe Building: Demolition exceeding 50%, and the construction of a new one- and two-story additions totaling 9,935 SF and renovations to the existing two-story theater building.
- Rovensky Building: Demolition exceeding 50%, and the construction of a new three-story addition totaling 10,738 SF, and renovations to the existing three-story administrative building.
- Demolition of the existing shade structure and construction of a new pavilion.
- Landscape and hardscape modifications.

Site Data			
<b>Zoning District</b>	C-I	<b>Future Land Use</b>	Private Group Use
<b>Lot Size (SF)</b>	304,920 SF (CAMPUS) (7.623 pb acres)	<b>Finished Floor Elevation</b>	8.0’ NAVD (O’Keeffe) 8.0’ NAVD (Rovensky)
<b>Building Size</b>	Existing (O’Keeffe): 22,565 SF Proposed (O’Keeffe): 32,500 SF Existing (Rovensky): 18,750 SF Proposed (Rovensky): 29,488 SF Existing (Shade House): 1,241 SF Proposed (Shade House): 1,241 SF	<b>Lot Coverage</b>	Existing: 15.3% (46,678 SF) Proposed: 20.2% (61,699 SF) Maximum: 30.0% (91,476 SF)
<b>Crown of Road</b>	5.60’ NAVD	<b>Flood Zone</b>	AE 6
<b>Required Parking Spaces</b>	Existing: 274 spaces Required: 316 spaces Provided: 233 spaces <i>Variance required</i>	<b>Overall Landscape Open Space</b>	Existing: 43.8% (133,588 SF) Proposed: 40.7% (124,179 SF) Minimum: 25% (76,230 SF)
O’Keeffe Building		Rovensky Building	
<b>Year Constructed</b>	1929	<b>Year Constructed</b>	1924
<b>Landmark Designation</b>	07/11/79	<b>Landmark Designation</b>	07/11/79
<b>Architect</b>	Addison Mizner John Volk (renovation) Wyeth, King and Johnson (renovation)	<b>Architect</b>	Addison Mizner
<b>Building Length</b>	Existing: 215’-10½” Proposed: 282’-7” Limitation: 150’-0” <i>Special Exception required</i>	<b>Building Length</b>	Existing: 86’-4½” Proposed: 144’-9 ½” Limitation: 150’-0”

Surrounding Properties / Zoning	
<b>North</b>	Two-story residence / R-B Two-story residence / R-A
<b>South</b>	Five-story office / C-OPI Three-story office / C-OPI
<b>East</b>	Two-story educational facility (Palm Beach Public Elementary) / R-B
<b>West</b>	Intracoastal Waterway

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:**

On May 15, 2024, the Society of the Four Arts received approval for a privately initiated text amendment to the Future Land Use Element of the Town of Palm Beach Comprehensive Plan (ORD. NO. 005-2024) and Zoning Code (ORD. NO. 006-2024). The amendments provided changes to the Private Group Use text and created a new Zoning district, the Cultural Institution District (CI), necessary to properly correspond to the Future Land Use category of Private Group Use. Ordinances 005-2024 (Comprehensive Plan) and Ordinance 006-2024 (Zoning) had second and final reading on May 15, 2024. The new CI District allows for uses such as museums, cultural institutions, and art institutions, in a campus setting at a scale and intensity intended to primarily serve the needs of Town persons. The subsequent map amendment to the Zoning Map (ORD. NO. 021-2024) changed the zoning for RB Low Density Residential to CI District and amended the Future Land Use Map (ORD. NO. 020-2024) for two parcels within the Four Arts property that currently did not have a Future Land Use designation of Private Group Use was approved on September 11, 2024.

A preliminary review of the project indicates that the proposed **application** appears **consistent** with the **PRIVATE GROUP USE** designation of the Future Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan; please consider the following Comprehensive Plan policies that address private group uses, historic preservation and perpetuation of properties of special significance, and the requirement for sufficient roadway capacity along with appropriate levels of service for Town roads:

**Future Land Use Element**

- 2.3.6 Private Group Use – Intended to provide for low intensity uses such as private clubs, golf and country clubs, public and private schools, houses of worship, museums, and non-commercial recreation-type or cultural uses at a scale and intensity intended to primarily serve the needs of Town persons.
  - a. The designation of a property for Private Group Use on the Future Land Use Plan Map recognizes the current use of the property.
  - b. In limited circumstances, the maximum building height maybe three stories with Town Council approval.

**Transportation Element**

**POLICY 2.2**

Prior to the issuance of a development order or permit for new construction or redevelopment, the Town shall make and record a determination that:



- 2.2a The project provides for safe and convenient on-site traffic flow and vehicular parking. Consider needed motorized and non-motorized vehicle parking commensurate with the requirements of the Town's land development regulations; and,
- 2.2b The traffic generation of the project will not reduce the level of service on roadways in the Town to a level of service category lower than that established in this Plan.

### **Historic Preservation Element**

#### **GOAL**

PRESERVE, PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE HISTORIC AND PREHISTORIC RESOURCES OF THE TOWN. THE TOWN SHALL PROTECT THE VISUAL APPEARANCE OF PALM BEACH THROUGH THE PERPETUATION OF PROPERTIES OF SPECIAL NOTABLE AESTHETIC, ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

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#### **STAFF ANALYSIS:**

The existing arts campus is a 7.6 acres waterfront site and situated on the southeast intersection of Royal Palm Way and Cocoanut Row a prominent location along one of the main gateways to the Town of Palm Beach. As discussed in the history section of this memorandum, the site has an east and west campus bifurcated by the Four Arts Plaza right-of-way. The east campus contains the Dixon Education Building, the King Library, and the Phillip Hulitar Sculpture and Botanical Garden. The west campus contains the Rovensky Building and the Esther B. O’Keeffe Gallery Building.

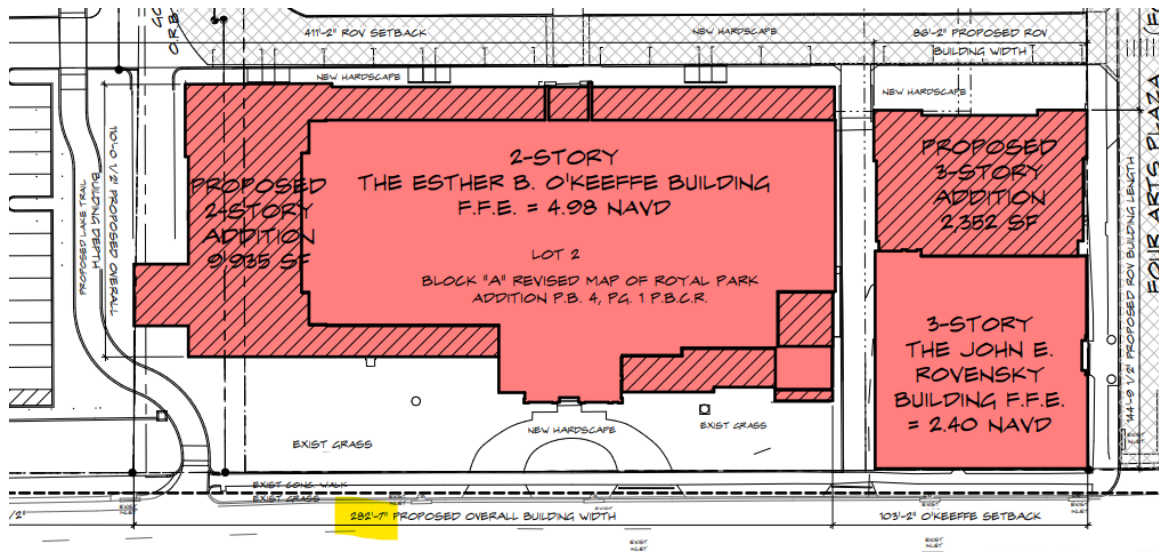
Three buildings (King Library, Rovensky Building, and Esther B. O’Keeffe Gallery Building) and two Volk-designed piers at the entrance of Four Arts Plaza were landmarked. Of the three landmarked buildings, the proposal impacts Rovensky and O’Keeffe Gallery buildings. Improvements are also proposed to the non-landmarked shade structure. The application includes substantial demolitions, renovations, and additions that will provide a significant increase in square footage. New one- and two-story additions are proposed for the existing two-story theater building (O’Keeffe) totaling 9,935 SF in floor area, and a new three-story addition is proposed adjacent to the existing three-story administrative building (Rovensky) totaling 10,738 SF of new floor area. In all, 16,747 SF of new footprints to the campus will occur bringing the total lot coverage of the campus up from 15.3% (46,678 SF) to 20.2% (61,699 SF), which is still 10% below the maximum lot coverage allowed of 30% (91,476 SF).

Additionally, the Lake Trail right-of-way bifurcates the west campus. The subject application seeks to abandon this easement to reconfigure the pedestrian path. The formal abandonment and new dedication will be processed separately, however, is it recommended that it be discussed during the site plan review since it impacts the proposed configuration of the site (and possibly additional parking space loss). Also, the applicant has provided a preliminary master sign program to provide a comprehensive way finding signage program apt for a campus-like setting. More specificity and design details regarding the proposed signage sizes, fonts, materials, and colors is needed to render a final decision. Therefore, it is recommended that a more detailed master sign program return to LPC at a later date for review.

### **SPECIAL EXCEPTION, SITE PLAN REVIEW AND VARIANCE REQUESTS**

As it pertains to the **Special Exception #1**, for a maximum building height of 3-stories in the C-I district, there are several buildings two-stories and higher in the immediate vicinity that can justify the granting as the approval would not necessarily be incongruous with the height of surrounding area. South of the property, across Royal Palm Way, there are three- and four-story office buildings. East of the property, across Coconut Row, there is a two-story educational facility (Palm Beach Public Elementary). Due to the sensitive nature of the landmarked Mizner-designed buildings, it remains to be seen whether the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds merit in the size of the additions, particularly the additions that envelop around the O’Keeffe building and the three-story addition to the Rovenksy building. The design is currently scheduled for design review at the November 20<sup>th</sup> LPC meeting. The newly adopted C-I Cultural Institution district provides that no three-story buildings, or portion thereof, shall be permitted within 150’-0” of a single-family use or single-family residential zoning district in an effort to further minimize the impact of the height and mass of three-story structures. The proposed new three-story building (addition) measures over 200’ from the closest single-family use to the north.

The applicant is seeking **Special Exception #2** to allow for building lengths greater than 150’-0”. Except for any buildings existing on a campus as of the effective date of this ordinance, any new buildings greater than 150’-0” in length shall require Town Council approval for a special exception. The existing O’Keeffe building measures 215’-10½”. The proposed additions will extend that length to 282’-7”, along Royal Palm Way, requiring Town Council approval. Again, due to the sensitive nature of the landmarked Mizner-designed building, it remains to be seen whether the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds merit in the size of the addition particularly along the south elevation of the building, fronting Royal Palm Way, where large expanses of the existing façade will be obscured. The design is currently scheduled for design review at the November 20<sup>th</sup> LPC meeting.



The existing Rovenksy building measures 86’-4½” in length. The proposed new three-story addition along Four Arts Plaza will extend that length to 144’-9½” which does not require Town Council Special Exception review and approval as it applies to the total building length.

**Variance #1** is to reduce the required parking spaces. Currently, the campus as a whole accommodates parking for 274 vehicles, which is nonconforming as it pertains to the required

parking for the uses. The existing theater accommodates 714 seats which requires 179 parking spaces (1 parking space for every 4 seats). The existing 17,035 square-foot professional office use area requires 68 parking spaces (1 parking space per 250 square feet). The 5,525 square foot museum use area requires 11 parking spaces (1 parking space per 500 square feet). The library encompasses 4,812 square feet which requires 10 parking spaces (1 parking space per 500 square feet). The total required parking for the existing campus is 268 parking spaces.

The proposed development program will increase the square footage of the office and library and eliminate an existing 12-space surface parking lot directly north of the Rovenksy building. The new three-story addition will encompass 10,738 SF of new floor area. The footprint of this addition will occupy the previously mentioned surface parking area.

The museum square footage will decrease slightly. The theater capacity will also be reduced to 656 seats. Therefore, the required parking is summarized below:

- Theater: 656 seats (1 parking space per 4 seats), requires 164 parking spaces
- Professional Office: 31,526 square feet (1 parking space per 250 square feet), requires 126 parking spaces
- Museum: 5,186 square feet (1 parking space per 500 square feet), requires 10 parking spaces
- Library: 7,800 square feet (1 parking space per 500 square feet), requires 16 parking spaces
- **Total Required Parking: 316 spaces**

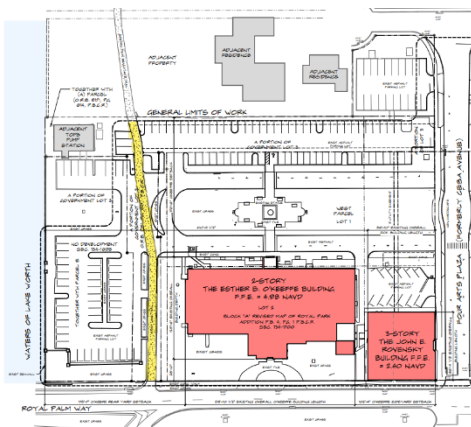
The variance request currently seeks to reduce the parking to 233 spaces, representing a reduction of 83 spaces (26%). A parking study by Kimley Horn was submitted that presents parking demand for visitors and employees. The study concludes that *“Accounting for variations in time-of-day demand for uses on site, the peak parking needs for the campus are anticipated to be approximately 232 spaces during the weekday peak period in which the theater is in use. Therefore, the parking needs for the site are anticipated to be met.”*

The Town’s code does not offer alternate parking requirements based on parking demand calculations.

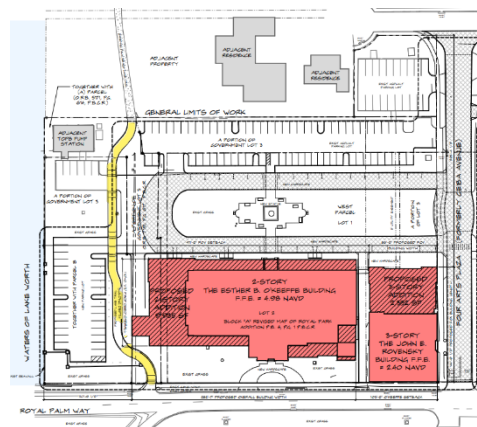
### LAKE TRAIL

As previously mentioned, the existing Lake Trail right-of-way traverses the west campus towards the western side of the site. To accommodate the proposed additions to the O’Keeffe building, the application seeks to abandon this easement to reconfigure the pedestrian path slightly to the west. The formal abandonment and new dedication will be processed separately, however, is it recommended that it be discussed during the site plan review since it impacts the proposed configuration of the site (and possibly additional parking space loss). A general consensus for the direction of the application as it pertains to the relocation of the Lake Trail would be appropriate.

**Existing Trail**



**Proposed Trail**





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## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

The Society of the Four Arts is an important resource to the Town of Palm Beach and the buildings that they are stewards of, are highly significant Landmarked structures that represent both the history and the architecture of the Town. Located at one of the main entry/exit points to Palm Beach, the landmarked O’Keeffe and Rovensky Buildings provide the first and last example of the Town’s early architecture and history to all using the Royal Park Bridge. The significance of these Town of Palm Beach landmarks warrants that extreme care should be taken to preserve the structures and respect their architecture and history.

### **O’Keeffe Building**

The proposed alterations and additions to the O’Keeffe Building could negatively affect the architectural and historic character of the building. The proposed design to envelop the north, west and south facades of the O’Keeffe Building will significantly impact the Addison Mizner designed structure. The proposal is particularly impactful to the south façade which fronts Royal Palm Way. A visible gateway to the Town that will, as proposed, have more structure and less greenspace adjacent to Royal Palm Way.

While there have been additions and alterations over the years, the essence of Mizner’s design has remained, especially on the south façade. The additions and alterations by other prominent Palm Beach architects, John Volk in 1947 and Wyeth, King and Johnson in 1957, respected the importance of Mizner’s design for the south façade and did not significantly alter its design or massing. Additions were set back from the main façade or located on other facades. From a historic preservation perspective, additions to the O’Keeffe Building should be designed to not obstruct the Mizner design, should read as additions, and complement the original design while not overwhelming it. If additional space is needed, the west façade would be the best one to explore for such opportunities since little to no architectural details exist on that façade. The north elevation modifications are more restrained. Since the north elevation was long considered more of a rear façade from a hierarchy standpoint, it is a more acceptable place for additions.



COLOR PROPOSED SOUTH ELEVATION WITHOUT LANDSCAPE

### **Rovensky Building**

The proposed addition to the Rovensky Building is sited in an appropriate manner, but the height and exterior details of the addition detracts from the landmarked structure. Additions to historic structures should not overwhelm original elements and massing and should read as secondary to the historic portion. As designed, the Rovensky Building appears subservient to the proposed addition. This three-story addition is most visible from the east and north elevations. The connector piece could benefit from further refinement. Modifications to the Rovensky building are also proposed such as window spacing and rhythm as well as the addition of a tiled sloped roof on the west façade.



OVERALL EAST ELEVATION WITHOUT LANDSCAPE



OVERALL NORTH ELEVATION WITHOUT LANDSCAPE

### Shade House



COLOR PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION WITH LANDSCAPE

The existing shade house/storage building is not landmarked. The proposed alterations and additions will be in keeping with nearby architecture and will not negatively affect the landmarked structures on the campus. One concern is the increase in size which blocks more of the view to the King Library.

Overall, the materials that have been selected for use on the new construction are suitable in terms of stucco, stone, wrought iron and true barrel tile. Windows are primarily proposed to be aluminum CGI-estate series or similar. It is the encapsulation of the original historic buildings and the significant amount of material loss, as proposed, that brings pause and concern for genuine preservation principals.

### TRAFFIC REVIEW

The applicant has submitted a Traffic Impact Statement, completed by Kimley Horn. The Corradino Group has performed three (3) rounds of peer review. The latest peer review will be provided to the Mayor and Town Council.

The Comprehensive Plan provides for the various Levels of Service within the Town, and the Transportation Levels of Service are found in the Transportation Element. Chapter 30, Consistency and Concurrency Management Systems, codify these Levels of Service and require the identified Levels of Service for transportation (traffic), sanitary sewer, solid waste, drainage, potable water, and recreation / open space. In the case of transportation (traffic) concurrency, commercial redevelopment is exempt from concurrency determinations if there is no increase in the intensity of use of the property from that prior to redevelopment (Chapter 30, Section 30-74(a)(2)). Intensity of use is defined in Chapter 134, Section 134-172(4)(b) as “including, but not limited to, increased tenant square footage, increased seating, increased off-street parking demand, and increased hours of operation of a special exception use.” As this Application appears to be meeting one or more of the listed intensities of use details found in 134-172(4)(b), this project is not exempt from traffic concurrency.

Simply stated, Chapter 30 provides the review process for development projects. This Application must comply with Chapter 30, as it is not exempt from the process. The segment of Royal Palm Way adjacent to the Society of the Four Arts property has a Level of Service designation of “D”. Knowing this, the question is whether the proposed changes place more vehicles into the available capacity of the roadway to a point that the existing Level of Service “D” would worsen to a Level of Service “E” or “F”? And if the introduction of additional vehicles into the available capacity of the roadway negatively affects the Level of Service to a lower designation, the Applicant must

participate in the Proportionate Fair Share Program with the Town, required by and in a manner consistent with Florida Statute 163.3180.

**CONCLUSION:**

Approval, approval with conditions, or denial of the project will require multiple motions to be made by the Town Council. There are:

- two (2) separate Special Exception requests; and
- one (1) Site Plan Review; and
- one (1) Variance request.
- one (or more) Declaration of Use Agreement(s).

All of the requests can be approved or denied in whole, partially or individually.

The application is presented to the Commission to consider whether all the criteria in Sections 54-122 and 54-123 have been met. Approval of the project will require one (1) separate motion to be made by the Landmarks Preservation Commission:

- (1) for the overall design of the project in accordance with aforementioned criteria, subject to any imposed conditions.

WRB: JGM: JHD: FHM:AF