



Memorandum

Memorandum No: 22-133

Date: November 3, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Commissioners

From: Greg Chavarria, City Manager

Re: Florida Historical Markers for Parker Playhouse and West Side Fire Station

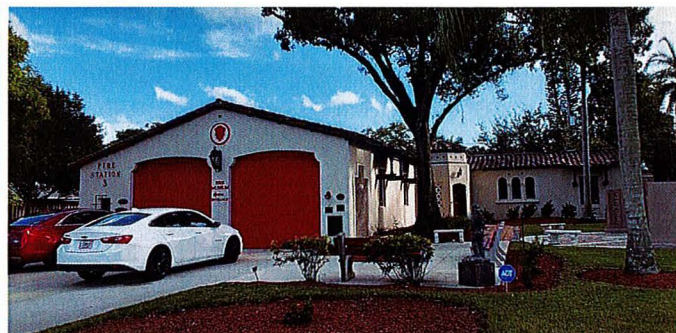
Florida State Historical Markers have been proposed for two properties, the Parker Playhouse and the West Side Fire Station, to commemorate their histories.

The City of Fort Lauderdale is preparing an application to the Florida State Historic Preservation Office to place a historical marker at the Parker Playhouse. The Parker Playhouse, now known as “the Parker,” is an active theater located in Holiday Park that recently underwent extensive renovations including an addition to the front facade. Although this structure is not a designated historic landmark, its cultural history is an important aspect of the City’s past that can be represented through the placement of a historical marker in this location.

The Fort Lauderdale Fire and Safety Museum is also preparing an application to place a historical marker at the West Side Fire Station located at 1022 W. Las Olas Boulevard. This property is designated as a Historic Landmark and is in the Sailboat Bend Historic District.



Parker Playhouse – 707 NE 8th Street



West Side Fire Station – 1022 W. Las Olas Boulevard

Below is the proposed text for both markers which was shared with the Historic Preservation Board at their October 17, 2022, meeting. The board members expressed that they were in favor of the markers and the proposed text but did not vote on a motion to express their support for either marker.

Proposed Marker Text – Parker Playhouse

The Parker Playhouse, built on land donated by the City of Fort Lauderdale in Holiday Park, opened in 1967. The sole benefactor was Dr. Louis W. Parker (1906-1993), whose contributions to groundbreaking technology advanced the television and space industries. Parker partnered with producer Zev Buffman to bring legendary performers to the venue. Resplendent with marble, red velvet, crystal, and elaborately painted ceiling panels, the almost 1,200 seat, million-dollar theater was designed by influential and prolific Palm Beach County architect John L. Volk (1901-1984). Volk began working in the 1920s during Florida's real estate boom and during his long career he designed many impressive residential, civic, and public buildings. The theater operated continuously for over fifty years playing host to innumerable theatrical and musical events that immeasurably enriched the City's cultural climate. In 2021, the Parker Playhouse underwent extensive renovations including a front addition, partial retention of the original front façade in the newly created lobby, restoration of decorative painted and coffered ceilings in the side lobbies, and the refurbishment of the main theater space.

Proposed Marker Text – West Side Fire Station

Constructed in 1927, West Side Fire Station No. 3 served Fort Lauderdale's Fire Department until 2003, and then was restored by volunteers as the Fort Lauderdale Fire and Safety Museum. Built following the cataclysmic hurricane of 1926, its construction reassured hard-hit residents that the City was rebuilding. Designed by Francis Abreu, a prominent local architect responsible for other significant residential and civic structures. Blending into the surrounding neighborhood, this one-story Mediterranean Revival style structure extends at angles from the central multi-sided tower serving as the front entryway. Rich in detail, the building features a tile roof, arched window and door openings, decorative ornaments, turned stone columns, exposed rafter tails with corbels, and roof eave extensions over windows with turned supports. A decorative tile fountain was actually a watering trough for horses and mules pulling wagonloads of produce to sailing ships at the then nearby New River freight docks. The restored interior includes crown molding, a fireplace, and a glass-walled kitchen and bathroom. West Side Fire Station was designated a Historic Landmark in 1991 and as part of the Sailboat Bend Historic District in 1992.

Next Steps

Applications to the Florida Historical Marker Program will be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office for review. If approved, the markers will be ordered and installed at each location in coordination with the Parks and Recreation Department. It is expected that this process will take approximately six to nine months to completion.

If there are suggested changes to the proposed text for either marker, please contact Trisha Logan, Principal Urban Planner, at tlogan@fortlauderdale.gov or 954-828-7101.



Sample Marker

- C: Anthony G. Fajardo, Assistant City Manager
Susan Grant, Assistant City Manager
Alain E. Boileau, City Attorney
David Soloman, City Clerk
Patrick Reilly, City Auditor
Department Directors
CMO Managers