

# JOHNSTONMARKLEE

1545 Pontius Avenue  
Los Angeles, California 90025  
P 310 442 4886  
F 310 442 4896  
www.johnstonmarklee.com

City of Miami Beach Planning Department  
1700 Convention Center Drive  
Miami Beach, FL 33139

**Re: Letter of Intent – Historic Preservation Board Application  
Proposed Additions and Site Improvements at The Bass Museum of Art, 2100/2111 Collins Park / Collins Avenue  
Miami Beach, Florida 33139**

May 10, 2026

Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Board:

It is our pleasure to submit this application for your review and approval of the proposed addition and site improvements at The Bass Museum of Art. The project is located at 2100/2111 Collins Avenue, within the Collins Park/Museum district, on the museum campus immediately adjacent to Collins Park and in close relationship to surrounding civic and cultural buildings that define this portion of Miami Beach. The proposal acknowledges the long civic and architectural history of the site. Collins Park has its roots in land deeded for public use in 1917 and was established as one of Miami Beach's earliest public parks in the 1920s. The proposal reflects the layered architectural history of The Bass starting with the original library building designed by Russell Pancoast in 1930, followed by the 1937 south wing addition, the 1950 west and north wing addition, all clad in Florida keystone. Later transformations include the west-side expansion developed between 1993 and 2001 by Arata Isozaki, and the Isozaki and David Gauld renovation and expansion completed in 2016–2017, all clad in white stucco. The proposal has been developed to reflect this important historic site and civic context, with the intent of preserving the visual primacy of the historic museum building while enhancing the overall museum campus. The Bass Museum of Art Campus occupies an approximately 108,000 square foot site within Collins Park, and the current proposal focuses on the southwest portion of the property, in an area long identified for possible expansion and public-facing museum use.

## **Project Context**

The proposed design responds to its surrounding context, including Collins Park, the Plymouth Hotel, and the broader ensemble of neighboring institutional, residential, and cultural buildings. Attention to building scale, open space, setbacks, and the publicly accessible character of the museum campus contributes to this larger cultural landscape. The intent of the project is to reinforce the longstanding identity of The Bass as a museum in the park, while preserving important spatial relationships across the site and neighborhood.

The project has been designed in full compliance with the sea level rise and resiliency criteria outlined in Section 7.1.2.4 of the City of Miami Beach Resiliency Code, strengthening its ability to withstand flooding, rising sea levels, high winds, and extreme heat conditions.

Key design strategies include the introduction of a new ground floor gallery with a floor-to-ceiling height of 18 feet above the Design Flood Elevation (DFE), providing both protection and enhanced spatial quality. An outdoor patio, set above BFE, is partially covered by a large canopy to offer shelter from rain while maintaining an open-air experience.

In addition, the project incorporates an elevated landscaped plaza designed with resilient plantings, integrated on-site water retention systems, and targeted measures to mitigate the urban heat island effect, contributing to both environmental performance and user comfort.

# JOHNSTONMARKLEE

## Sea Level Rise and Resiliency Criteria

Per section 7.1.2.4 of the City Resiliency Code the project addresses sea level rise as indicated below:

1. A recycling or salvage plan for partial or total demolition shall be provided.  
**This shall be included in the construction documents.**
2. Windows that are proposed to be replaced shall be hurricane proof impact windows.  
**As per FBC 2023 edition, the project shall provide exterior hurricane proof impact windows and doors**
3. Where feasible and appropriate, passive cooling systems, such as operable windows, shall be provided.  
**The interior space is an art gallery and would not be suitable for operable windows due to the potential risk to art pieces.**
4. Resilient landscaping (salt tolerant, highly water-absorbent, native, or Florida-friendly plants) shall be provided, in accordance with chapter 4 in Land Development Regulations.  
**Resilient landscape is being provided in the project**
5. The project applicant shall consider the adopted sea level rise projections in the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Action Plan, as may be revised from time-to-time by the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact. The applicant shall also specifically study the land elevation of the subject property and the elevation of surrounding properties.  
**Sea Level rise projections are being considered in the project. The gallery and plaza are located at BFE or above.**
6. The ground floor, driveways, and garage ramping for new construction shall be adaptable to the raising of public rights-of-way and adjacent land, and shall provide sufficient height and space to ensure that the entry ways and exits can be modified to accommodate a higher street height of up to 3 additional feet in height.  
**N/A**
7. As applicable to all new construction, all critical mechanical and electrical systems shall be located above base flood elevation. All redevelopment projects shall, whenever practicable and economically reasonable, include the relocation of all critical mechanical and electrical systems to a location above base flood elevation.  
**All critical MEP systems are located above BFE with equipment at roof and not plaza level.**
8. Existing buildings shall, wherever reasonably feasible and economically appropriate, be elevated up to base flood elevation, plus City of Miami Beach Freeboard.  
**N/A**
9. When habitable space is located below the base flood elevation plus City of Miami Beach Freeboard, wet or dry flood proofing systems will be provided in accordance with chapter 54 in General Ordinances.  
**Habitable space is located at BFE plus freeboard**
10. As applicable to all new construction, stormwater retention systems shall be provided.  
**A stormwater retention shall be provided**
11. Cool pavement materials or porous pavement materials shall be utilized.  
**Cool pavement materials are being utilized**
12. The design of each project shall minimize the potential for heat island effects on-site.  
**White roofing material is being specified, light color floor finishes on exterior surfaces are being selected.**

## Variance Request

In order to accommodate the Project, the Applicant respectfully requests the following variance:

A variance from the parking requirements associated with Parking Tier 2D, including the requirements of Section 5.2.8 and related provisions of the City of Miami Beach Land Development Regulations, in order to permit satisfaction of the required parking demand through nearby municipal parking facilities in lieu of providing the full required parking count on-site.

# JOHNSTONMARKLEE

Pursuant to the City Charter Subpart B – Related Special Acts, variances may be considered where practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships exist. Here, the Applicant faces practical difficulties associated with accommodating the required parking within the context of the existing historic campus, while maintaining the design intent, preservation objectives, and pedestrian-oriented character of the Project.

The Project is uniquely situated within a dense urban and cultural district in close proximity to the publicly accessible Collins Park Garage (G12) and the nearby P49 Parking Lot, both of which provide transient public parking accommodation capable of serving the anticipated parking demand generated by the Project. Due to the immediate availability of these existing municipal parking resources within walking distance of the site, the provision of the full required parking count on-site would create unnecessary design and site planning constraints without materially advancing the intent of the parking regulations.

As reflected in prior project approvals, parking was not required for the 2001 addition designed by Arata Isozaki, nor for the alterations and additions completed in 2017 by David Gauld Architect. Accordingly, we respectfully request that the required parking spaces be permitted to be satisfied through the nearby municipal parking facilities and that the associated parking requirements be considered for waiver and/or variance by the Historic Preservation Board and/or the Miami Beach City Commission as part of the overall project review and approval process.

## **Project Description**

The scope of work consists of a museum expansion together with exterior improvements, accessibility improvements, and public realm enhancements. The proposal introduces a new gallery building, a new civic plaza, an elevated outdoor gathering space, and a generous canopy that extends the museum experience while providing shade, shelter, and a stronger public presence along the southwest portion of the campus. The proposal includes approximately 3,836 square feet of new building area, 12,771 square feet of raised platform area, 5,876 square feet of covered canopy area, and 4,471 square feet of streetscape improvements. Together, these elements create a more welcoming and clear visitor arrival, expand opportunities for exhibition and public use, and strengthen the relationship between the museum, the park, and the community.

The proposed material palette strengthens the project's architectural continuity across the campus. The new curved site wall will be constructed of oolite, establishing cohesion with the existing historic Florida keystone-clad building. The new building additions will harmonize in tone and texture with the historic building by integrating concrete or GFRC, which will also relate in material character and expression to the later Isozaki-era portions of the museum. These materials and formal relationships create a dialogue between the historic and new components of the campus, helping bring coherence to the site with a contemporary addition that adds to the Bass's ongoing evolution.

The proposal respects the original building in its siting and massing. The historic keystone-clad building is minimally altered: the raised platform meets the edge of the existing 1930 building at the finished floor elevation; the proposal does not alter the historic building envelope itself. In addition, the work within the existing loggia (1950 addition) is limited to raising the finished floor elevation of that exterior space to improve continuity, accessibility, and resiliency within the exterior plaza. The proposal also introduces a new point of entry to the Isozaki building (2016-2017) at an existing window, which we propose to replace with a code compliant entry vestibule. The overall approach is one of minimal intervention and maximum legibility of the historic building.

In summary, the proposed additions and site improvements have been designed to be compatible with the scale and character of Collins Park and its surrounding buildings, considerate of the broader museum campus, and appropriately restrained in relation to the historic Russell Pancoast building. The proposal preserves the essential identity and legibility of this historic structure and limits intervention into historic building. We believe the project is an appropriate and thoughtful

# JOHNSTONMARKLEE

evolution of The Bass Museum of Art campus and is consistent with the goals of the historic district and contextual compatibility.

Thank you for your consideration of this application. We appreciate the opportunity to present the project to the Historic Preservation Board and look forward to your review.

Sincerely,  
Johnston Marklee Architects

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sharon Johnston, FAIA  
Founding Partner