

First Church of Christ, Scientist and Related Urban Share Vision For Historic Preservation and World-Class Architecture

Partnership could preserve the 89-year-old house of worship along the waterfront and answer the call for new Class-A office space in downtown West Palm Beach.

WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA, USA, July 10, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Nearly 100 community leaders gathered together for a reception inside the First Church of Christ, Scientist, an architecturally significant structure, located at 809 S. Flagler Drive in West Palm Beach FL on June 8, 2017. The church, which can be demolished at any time because it is not currently

landmarked, has received numerous development proposals over more than a decade, all of which covered the entire site with a new building; until a proposal from Related Urban with a bold new idea to preserve the house of worship through an endowment fund, protecting a part of West Palm Beach community history forever.



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Harvey E. Oyer III

Renowned architect David M. Childs, of Skidmore, Owens and Merrill, who designed One World Trade Center (Freedom Tower) in New York City, is the architect behind the plans for Related’s 25-story slender Class-A office building, spoke at the event. He shared Related’s solution that will preserve the church building, with its Greek-inspired columns, along with its history and heritage, in perpetuity. The plan’s proposed building would occupy a mere 17 percent of the site, sitting back 330 feet from Flagler Drive, providing 1.25 acres of public greenspace along the waterfront, and anchoring the

Flagler Financial and Okeechobee Business districts, said to be attractive to financial firms, family offices, hedge funds and corporations wanting to relocate to South Florida. An on-site restaurant would be open to the public. It is anticipated that Related’s project would also bring high-end companies to the area, construction, permanent jobs, and millions of dollars in tax revenues that could be used by the city to fund neighborhood projects, public safety initiatives or reduce taxes. The new structure would join three other West Palm Beach Class-A office buildings: Phillips Point, Esperante and CityPlace Office Tower.

“Landmarking the church, preserving greenspace and maintaining its original concept is important for the church and the West Palm Beach community at-large,” said Harvey E. Oyer III, a historian and

partner in the West Palm Beach office of Shutts & Bowen, who described the endowment plan in detail.

“Related’s creation of an endowment fund that ensures the historic preservation of the building, regardless of what happens to the congregation or office building, provides reassurance to the public and sets a new standard for historic preservation that may be followed in the future.”

Church member Gloria Hudspeth emceed the morning tour, which also included a presentation on the history of Christian Science by Cindy L. Minotte,

C.S., remarks from the Rev. Gerald D. Kisner, Pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist Church, the oldest church in West Palm Beach, and the Rev. William Washington, Pastor of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, discussed the importance of celebrating the work of Julian Abele, a prominent African American architect who designed the 89-year-old church as well as The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Widener Memorial Library at Harvard University, and the Duke University Quad and Chapel, and was the first African American to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture. He worked for Horace Trumbauer Architects of Philadelphia, one of the preeminent architectural firm of the 20th century. The proposed Related plan includes a way to honor Abele with public space named in his honor.



“The property is going to be developed,” said Rose Anne Brown, “The Related proposal presents a phenomenal opportunity for the community, particularly for people of color, to have more pride and more understanding. They want to partner and design this in a way that the public is totally included.”

Some of the founding families of Palm Beach have connections to the First Church of Christ, Scientist, like Marjorie Merriweather Post, who was a congregant, and architect Addison Mizner, whose local workshop crafted the limestone columns of the Classic Revival-style building. Esteemed event guests with ties to Palm Beach island included Laurel Baker, John Blades, Ted Cooney, David Hamilton, Maria Hamilton, and Amanda Skier. West Palm Beach leadership was represented robustly with Mayor Jeri Muoio, Commissioners Keith James, Paula Ryan, former Mayor Joel Daves, Rose Ann Brown, Joe Chase, Raphael Clemente, Beatrice Coleman, Jack Frost, Dennis Grady, Friederike Mittner, Melissa Nash, Bill Newgent, Michael Odom, Bob Sanders, David Smith, and Paul Twitty.

[Related Companies](#) is one of the single largest private investors along the Okeechobee Corridor and is committed to the long-term success of West Palm Beach. The developer has opened CityPlace, CityPlace Office Tower, and the West Palm Beach Hilton, Convention Center Hotel

For more information on the project [Click Here](#).

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