



REQUEST: Historic Landmark Designation of War Memorial Auditorium at 1000 E. Sunrise Boulevard (aka 800 NE 8th Street)

Case Number	UDP-HPD24002	FMSF#	
Owner	City of Fort Lauderdale		
Address	1000 E. Sunrise Boulevard (aka 800 NE 8 th Street)		
General Location	Located at the western side of the intersection of Memorial Drive, Sandy Nininger Drive/NE 8 th Street, and G. Harold Martin Drive		
Legal Description	See attached sketch and description		
Existing Use	Event space and auditorium		
Zoning	P – Parks, Recreation, and Open Space		
Applicable ULDR Sections	47-24.11.C.		
Landmark/Historic District	War Memorial Auditorium		
Authored By	Trisha Logan, AICP, Principal Urban Planner		

This staff memorandum was prepared using excerpts from the attached designation report which provides further information on the history and significance of this property.

Property Background:

The unimaginable conflagration that was World War II left in its wake not only physical destruction but the devastation to humanity as measured by the wounded and killed in its worldwide theater of operations. At its end, a grateful nation sought to honor the former combatants in a variety of ways, one of which was the construction and dedication of buildings that served the public purpose. Fort Lauderdale’s War Memorial, where construction began in 1948 and was completed in 1950, was to become a “living memorial” to the war’s heroes. With the city’s donation of the land, a public subscription was begun to fund the massive auditorium designed to seat three thousand. Ultimately costs escalated to \$400,000 but through the city’s taxing initiatives and donations of materials and labor, the building was dedicated on January 14, 1950. Architects Gamble, Pownall, and Gilroy designed the massive structure, rising the equivalent of three stories, with a free-span barrel roof that allowed for uninterrupted views of the stage. Over the decades the War Memorial has been a venue for all manner of entertainment and a vital part of Fort Lauderdale’s cultural community. It is significant not only for its Depression Moderne design, but also in its continued historical role as a symbol of a local community’s gratitude.



Photo of Existing War Memorial Auditorium

Request for Historic Landmark Designation

Historic Landmark designation is requested for the War Memorial Auditorium. Located in Holiday Park, this structure is surrounded by ample green space and a wide variety of tree species. When entering Holiday Park from North Federal Highway and heading east along Sandy Nininger Drive, a four-lane boulevard with a large, landscaped median, War Memorial Auditorium can first be viewed.

In August 2019, negotiations began between the City Fort Lauderdale and the Florida Panthers National Hockey League. The intent was that for a nominal fifty dollars a year create a lease given to the War Memorial Benefit Corporation (the Florida Panthers) who operates and manages a complex of recreational and sports programs for the city. The Panthers have moved their training facilities here by building two indoor rinks, one for the team's use and the other for the public. The second rink is used for youth hockey leagues, figure skating, and access for all would-be skaters.

Criteria for Historic Designation

Pursuant Section 47-24.11.C.7 of the ULDR, the criteria for the designation of property as a landmark, landmark site or historic district shall be based on one (1) or more of the criteria and evaluated in conjunction with guidance provided within the National Register Bulletin series published by the National Park Service.

ULDR, Section 47-24.11.C.7

a. Its value as a significant reminder of the Cultural or archeological heritage of the city, state, or nation;

Response

The protection of a nation against enemies foreign and domestic is the key concept that holds a nation together. The brave men and women who have answered the call have insured a continuation of our way of life at times accompanied by a significant loss of life. As a culture, we hold these sacrifices with the highest honor.

While the War Memorial Auditorium may have some alterations to the exterior, the relationship between the remaining building mass and its context within Holiday Park remains a significant reminder to Fort Lauderdale of not only World War II but also of other wars in which members of the community served the nation, including Sandy Nininger. It also holds related significance in that it was designed by architects who also served in the Navy during World War II and were able to impress their mark on this imposing structure.

Application meets this criterion.

Summary Conclusion:

In accordance with Section 47-24.11.C of the ULDR, staff finds that the application for Archaeological Site Designation of War Memorial Auditorium located at 1000 E. Sunrise Boulevard (aka 800 NE 8th Street) under case number UDP-HPD24002 meets criterion (a) as outlined in Section 47-24.11.C.7 of the ULDR.

Historic Preservation Board Suggested Motion:

I move to recommend to **(approve) (deny) (approve with conditions) (continue)** the request for Archaeological Site Designation of the War Memorial Auditorium located at 1000 E. Sunrise Boulevard (aka 800 NE 8th Street) to the City Commission under case number UDP-HPD24002 based on a finding this request **(meets) (does not meet)** criterion (a) as outlined in Section 47-24.11.C.7. of the ULDR.