



WILTON MANORS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

IMPORTANT UPDATE!

JULY 2014

WILLINGHAM CARRIAGE HOUSE RENOVATION AND REPURPOSING

Wilton Manors Historical Society

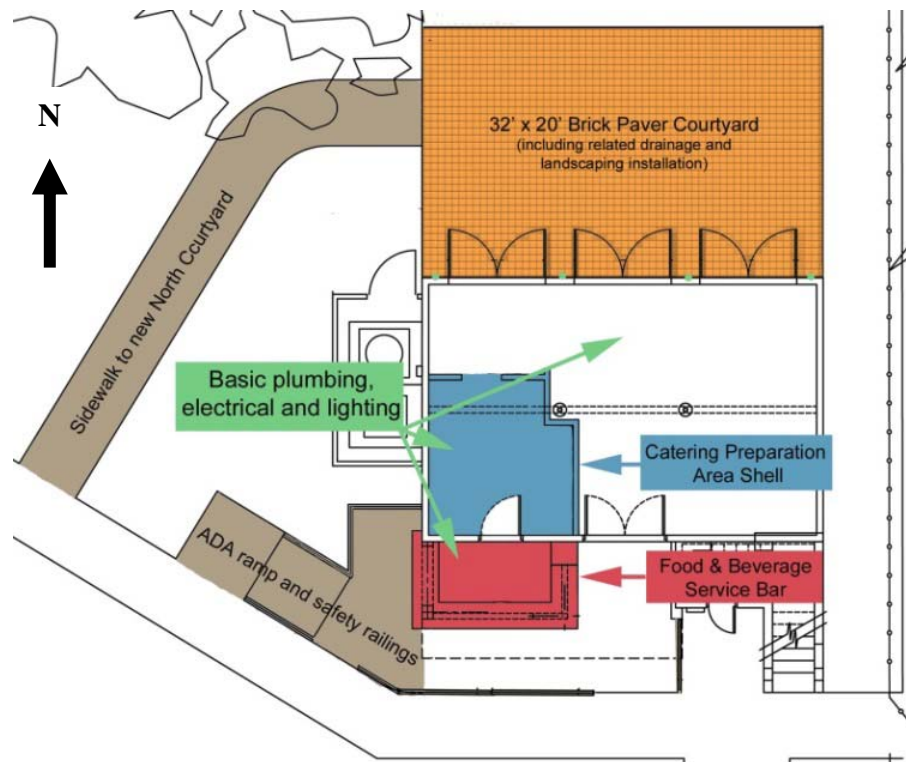
The Plan

After much planning, selecting experts in the restoration of historic buildings, signing contracts, and detailed assessments of the current condition of the building, we are making visible and measurable progress!

In collaboration with the Wilton Manors Leisure Services Department, we have developed a plan which will not only secure this important historic building for another 100 years, but also make an important addition to the attractiveness and flexibility of the Richardson Historic Park and Nature Preserve. It will be a place where the City, residents and visitors can host both fun and important events.

When completed, the repurposed Willingham Carriage House will have an outdoor food and beverage service bar, a catering preparation area, and a covered courtyard with seating.

Since the City acquired the Richardson property in 2002, the focus has been on the Manor House, the waterfront, and the grounds. The time has now come for the Carriage House!



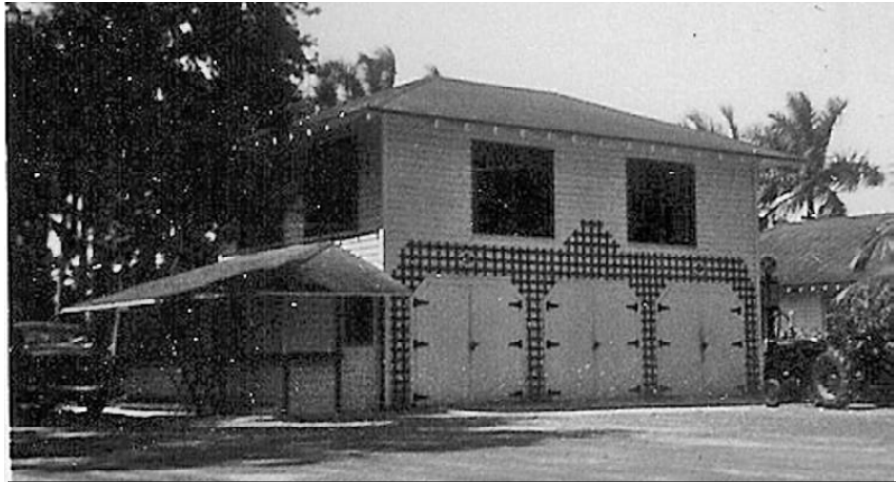
The History

The Carriage House was built about 1925 on the estate of E. J. Willingham, next to his house.

Willingham laid out what was to be the upscale neighborhood of Wilton Manors in 1925. The Carriage House has had an illustrious career. It supported Perry Mickel's farm when Mickel took over the Willingham house and property in 1928.

Mickel went on to become the second Mayor of Wilton

Manors. When George Richardson, Sr. constructed Broward County's first public golf course, he converted a portion of the Carriage House to a snack bar for guests. The structure's upstairs served, off and on, as an apartment for staff, friends, and family.



Carriage House, with Richardson's Snack Bar on the east wall

The Phases

Phase One - Phase One focuses on fixing termite damage, reinforcing the supporting columns for the second floor, replacing the concrete floor on the main level, adding electrical and plumbing basics, and installing doors on the south side for access to both the catering preparation area and the main part of the downstairs. These doors needed to be appropriate to the age of the building and consistent with its historic uses to allow consideration for future preservation related grants or recognition. These doors must also be hurricane code compliant, and are not a standard size. They are being custom made.

Work is well underway, and we expect it to be completed by the end of the summer of 2014.



Service Bar on the south side of the building.

Phase Two - The exterior service bar, with plumbing and electric will be completed. ADA compliant ramps and walkways will be installed, as well as the addition of a brick courtyard on the north side of the building. The shell of the catering preparation area will be roughed in.



Phase Three - The catering preparation area will be completed with counters, a sink, a commercial refrigerator, warming ovens and microwaves. The interior of the big room will be finished, with appropriate lighting and fans. The catering preparation area will get air conditioning.

Depending on funding and timing, we may be able to construct a pavilion over the courtyard, allowing for a flow from the bar, through the

building, to covered seating. Do we see a string quartet playing Mozart in the corner?

The Process

To date, it has been a challenge. The building is old, and historic, which presents two sets of conflicting “opportunities.” How do we address fixing a structure which does not conform to modern building codes, and still maintain its historic status? Reconciling questionable 1920’s engineering (and 90 years of “fixes”) with 21st century engineering standards is tricky. Happily, our contractors are adhering to old school craftsmanship values and standards.

Well-known historic preservation architect Susan McClellan (who recently completed the Fort Lauderdale Woman's Club restoration) has been guiding us. Contractor Charles Jordan (recently honored for his work on the historic Hollywood Woman’s Club), is the project manager and consultant.



The new floor, showing the restored and reinforced lamp posts holding up the second floor. Double doors in the center of the wall will lead out to the Manor House. A single door will allow access from the catering preparation area, in the back right, to the service bar.

Ronald Ulm, the Historical Society's "volunteer" Project Manager, has been working closely with Leisure Services Director Patrick Cann, Community Services Department staff and C.A.P Government, Inc., the City's Building Officials, and City Finance Director Bob Mays. They have been making sure that, in the words of our Memorandum of Understanding with the City, the project progresses "consistent with historic preservation and safety, directed toward maximizing its functionality and usability for the benefit of the City and its residents and visitors".

The old cement floor was ripped out and replaced, revealing a surprisingly strong foundation. Two Willingham-era street lampposts were stripped and refinished courtesy of Gulf Plating and John "The Greek" Painting Specialists and reinforced so that they can continue to support the second floor for another 90 years! Numerous structural elements have been reinforced or replaced to compensate for the damage caused by (the now departed) termites. The framing for the new doors on the south side has been completed.

Much of the work has been accomplished by noted restoration contractor Ted Arpin, of Arpin & Sons, LLC, in collaboration with structural engineer Associated General Kinetics. (Arpin's grandfather dated E.J. Willingham's daughter!) City staff, including Ernesto Sanz and his crew, have enthusiastically participated in the effort.

The project also has benefitted from the advice and assistance of a number of experts in historic renovation. David Baber, respected historian and advocate for important old buildings and Broward County Historic Preservation Officer, has consulted with us. Electrician Art Dance and plumber, Mike Delegal, both of whom have family histories in Broward County dating back to the early 1920's, have drawn on their experience working on historic buildings in the area to help us get to the 21st century. Don Biehn, the City's designated landscape and project management consultant has updated the Parks Master Plan to support this effort, at no charge.

The Funding

Funding has been from a combination of private fund-raising efforts of the Historical Society, grants from the City of Wilton Manors, and complimentary or deeply discounted services from historic preservation craftsmen and professionals.

Even with the revenue expected for FY 2014-2015, a great deal of funding will still be needed to bring this project to the completed stage rendered above. If you would like to help, please contact a member of the Historical Society Board of Directors or send us a message using the "Contact Us" button at the top of this page.