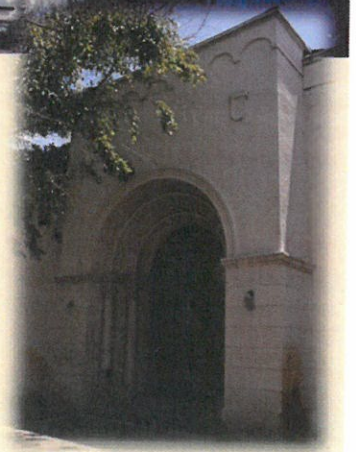


# OLD SCHOOL SQUARE

## DELRAY BEACH, FLORIDA



# DELRAY BEACH CENTER FOR THE ARTS



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# 2015 RUDY BRUNER AWARD PROJECT DATA



# PROJECT DATA

Please answer questions in space provided. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Project Name Old School Square Location \_\_\_\_\_ City Delray Beach State FL  
Owner Delray Beach Center for the Arts at Old School Square, Inc.  
Project Use(s) Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings (Cultural Center)  
Project Size 4 Acres Total Development Cost \$7,294,989  
Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate) \$2.7 million  
Date Initiated 1987 Percent Completed by December 1, 2014 100%  
Project Completion Date (if appropriate) 2002 Project Website (if appropriate) www.delrayarts.org

Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates

## Application submitted by:

Name Joe Gillie Title President/CEO  
Organization Delray Beach Center for the Arts at Old School Square, Inc.  
Address 51 North Swinton Avenue City/State/Zip Delray Beach, FL 33444  
Telephone (561) 243-7922 Fax ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail president@delrayarts.org Website (if appropriate) www.delrayarts.org

## Perspective Sheets:

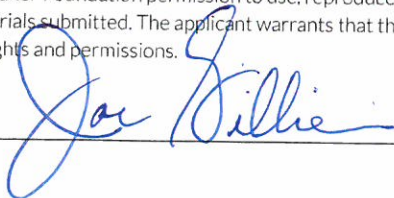
Organization	Name	E-mail
Public Agencies <u>City of Delray Beach</u>	<u>Bob Barcinski</u>	<u>Barcinski@aol.com</u>
Architect/Designer <u>Currie Sowards Aguilla Architects</u>	<u>Robert G. Currie</u>	<u>Bob@csa-architects.com</u>
Developer <u>BSA Corporation</u>	<u>Bill Branning</u>	<u>bbranning@bsacontractors.com</u>
Professional Consultant		
Community Group <u>Mayor's Task Force</u>	<u>Frances Bourque</u>	<u>babiedoc@comcast.net</u>
Other		

Please indicate how you learned of the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*. (Check all that apply).

- Direct Mailing     Direct Email     Previous Selection Committee member     Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Online Notice     Previous RBA entrant     Professional Organization  
 Social Media     Bruner/Loeb Forum

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Signature



Date December 8, 2014

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**2015**  
**RUDY BRUNER AWARD**  
**PROJECT**  
**AT-A-GLANCE**



# PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

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This sheet, the Project Data sheet, and the representative photo will be sent to the Committee in advance as the *Project Overview*.

Old School Square  
Project Name

Address 51 N. Swinton Avenue

City/State/ZIP Delray Beach, FL 33444

1. Give a brief overview of the project. Approximately 500 words.

Old School Square Cultural Arts Center is the center point of a major downtown revitalization in the small beachside community of Delray Beach, Fla. Three buildings in the heart of downtown, the 1913 Elementary School, the 1925 High School and the 1926 Gymnasium were abandoned in the mid-1980s and left to ruin. Scheduled for demolition, their fate was sealed until Frances Bourque, a member of the local historical society, felt there was definite honor in the architecture and maybe the revitalization of these buildings could rejuvenate a desolate and decaying downtown. She convinced the mayor to form a task team to study the possibility. A group of grass roots locals solicited opinions from the entire community and the consensus was a cultural center could possibly change the face of Delray Beach. The City of Delray Beach acquired the buildings from the School Board and Old School Square, Inc. with a non-profit Board of Directors was incorporated in 1987 with the goal of restoring the three original school buildings. When the National Register of Historic Places designation was completed, the community came together to create the "Decade of Excellence Bond" to start the restoration process and parallel the downtown revitalization. The citizens taxed themselves and Old School Square received \$2.1 million for exterior renovations and infrastructure. Since then, the project has raised nearly \$5 million to complete the restoration. The 1913 elementary school building is now the Cornell Museum of Art, featuring local, state, national and international exhibits, and a school of creative arts. The 1925 high school building is now the Crest Theatre, featuring professional world-class theatre, dance, music and lectures. The 1926 gymnasium is used for community gatherings and events.

In 2002 an outdoor pavilion was built and today hosts a series of festivals and events for the community. In 2012 Old School Square's name was changed to Delray Beach Center for the Arts at Old School Square (DBCFTA) to better define our four pillars of excellence: Events, Theatre, Exhibits and Learning. Old School Square, referred to by everyone as "the cultural heart of the community," has spawned a downtown revitalization, unequalled in the State of Florida. Beyond that, it has unified a community a recaptured our "sense of place."

2. Why does the project merit the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*? (You may wish to consider such factors as: effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.) Approximately 500 words.

Imagine a community where at 5 p.m. you could roll a bowling ball down the sidewalk of the entire downtown and not hit anyone, and the streetscape had disappeared. Almost 70% of the downtown stores sat empty and buildings were left to ruin. A place where three old, worn-out school buildings sat abandoned in what anyone would call an unsafe place to be at anytime, day or night. Now imagine that same community 20 years later. Ninety-nine percent of the buildings occupied with beautiful shops, galleries, and restaurants. Thousands of people, both young and old, stroll the streets nightly to enjoy the incredible ambiance of the downtown. A place where activities abound at the beautiful cultural center and host special events like Free Friday Concerts, which draws over 30,000 people annually to the Center. It is not a dream. It is a reality. It is downtown Delray Beach and it all started with the revitalization of three worn-out school buildings in the heart of downtown. Old School Square, now the DBCFTA has sparked a revitalization effort that has set the community on a new course and garnered local, state and national awards for its redevelopment effort. Community grass roots driven, the unique partnership of preservation, the arts and the city of Delray Beach has produced a cultural and economic renaissance. The Community Redevelopment Agency, which was created by the city to oversee revitalization, started with about \$50,000 in yearly tax increment funds and is now up to \$7 million annually, to invest in redevelopment. New urban housing has been introduced to the downtown as well. Property values in the Downtown Area have quadrupled. Development design guidelines are now in place. Communities from all over the United States come to Delray Beach to study the change. More importantly, the community has rediscovered itself. DBCFTA celebrates the cultural and ethnic diversity of our community. Proudly, we have one of the largest and most varied ethnic populations in the southeast. They are showcased and celebrated here at DBCFTA. This year there will be over 1,500 cultural activities and over 500,000 people will step on this site for a cultural activity. Old School Square was one of the projects that helped Delray win the All America City Award in 1993 and again in 2001, the only city in the state of Florida to do so. In 1994, the International City County Management Association named Old School Square one of its best practice winners (one of only three nationally) for the use of the arts to affect a positive change in the community. This project is proof that preservation and grassroots innovation can change a community.

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# 2015 RUDY BRUNER AWARD PROJECT DESCRIPTION



# PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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1. Describe the underlying values and goals of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required to implement the project? Approximately 500 words.

The cosmetic change certainly set a new standard for the Delray Beach community. It taught us to look beyond what was there and come together to save a landmark in Delray. Underlying that, it taught us how to be visionaries. One of the most difficult obstacles was to overcome the naysayers who felt the schools should be torn down. It wasn't always easy to get the support we needed, but with Frances Bourque as the true visionary behind the project, everyone persevered. The sense of unity the project created in the community was overwhelming. The first bond funding referendum passed with a huge margin. We envisioned what it could be and, more importantly, it was done by the community, not by government dictating what the project would be. More recently, we just passed another hugely successful bond and built a parking structure and city park in the downtown. The community support was again overwhelming as they are still tied directly to the original vision. Certainly, the value of the arts in the community has allowed us to enjoy a deeper appreciation of the day-to-day impact that culture has on our lives. Underlying that is the substantial economic impact this facility has on the area. Using an American for the Arts economic indicator, we estimate almost \$17 million of economic impact to the Delray economy each year. It's growing. The emotional impact as a "common ground" for the community certainly has a profound effect. More and more, as challenges with growth of Delray arise, everyone wants to meet here at DBCFTA. There is this unspoken rule that everyone is on equal ground here and their opinions count equally when they are meeting on this site. That says so much for the Center as the true cultural heart of the community.

2. Briefly describe the project's urban context. How has the project impacted the local community? Who does the project serve? How many people are served by the project? Approximately 500 words.

The restoration of Old School Square has changed the face of our community. Local citizens and business have embraced redevelopment and restoration as a means of "keeping the charm" of our village by the sea. That mantra is now the basis for our entire community redevelopment plan. In the 1920's and '30's Delray Beach had a real sense of place. We lost it due to the urban sprawl and shopping malls and mega complexes of the '70's. With the restoration of Old School Square, the community placed value on its past and created a new sense of place that is being molded by a new generation. On a deeper level, Delray experienced race relations issues that were deeply rooted and created dividing lines. Those barriers have dissolved at DBCFTA, a true community gathering place. One major milestone was the moving of the 25-year old Roots Cultural Festival from the black residential community to DBCFTA. It marked the true realization that the cultural center was there for the community. Along with Roots, we also host the Irish Fest, Cinco de Mayo, and the Haitian American Festival. It showcases the organizations in a unique and beautiful setting. There is a total ownership by the community of the Center. Most importantly, thousands of students come to the cultural center each year for hands-on arts programs. DBCFTA works in partnership with area schools to bring the children out of the classroom and experience the arts. Not only are we teaching them how to be arts patrons, we teach them the value of preservation in the community. Our demographic has changed—the median age went from 67 to 46 years old. Young families participate in the varied cultural activities at the center. Property values have increased, downtown townhouses continue to be constructed, and a plan for "smart growth" has set our course for the future. The restoration of these worn-out school buildings has changed the way we think and live in Delray. We host a number of other communities in partnership with the Community Redevelopment Agency to share our success story and help them identify their own redevelopment potential. Most recently, the City of Delray was named "The Most Fun Small Town in America" by Rand McNally and USA Today.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION (CONT'D)

3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate. Approximately 400 words.

Community impact was critical to the success of Old School Square. France Bourque developed a task team that spent countless hours out in the many communities of Delray, gathering ideas about what, if anything, the old buildings would be. As Old School Square, Inc. was developed in the 1980s, its primary function was to continue the development process. Two key components emerged. 1) The partnership with the City of Delray Beach and their willingness to "invest" in the project. 2) A management firm was hired to conduct a feasibility study, specifically to target high-end donor participation. When the bond referendum passed, we used those funds locally to match available county and state resources. Both preservation and cultural facility dollars were secured. Parallel to that, Frances Bourque asked two important community members, George & Harriet Cornell, for support and who then stepped forward with the first private donation to the project. It validated the project and other private donors and foundations followed. An important management agreement between the city and DBCFTA carefully defines our roles in the growth of the facility. We are now and always have been a line item with the city budget for general operations. Not as a handout, but as an investment that has shown substantial return, both economically and culturally. It is well documented yearly. Also key to the continued development of the Center is support from the Delray Beach Community Redevelopment Agency. They invest annually in the Center's programs to keep the arts accessible to the entire population of Delray and surrounding areas.

4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable. Approximately 400 words.

The funding for Old School Square has come from private donors and foundations, the State of Florida Division of Cultural Affairs and Division of Historic Resources, Palm Beach County and the City of Delray Beach/Community Redevelopment Agency.

Year Use (Renovation or New Construction) Source Amount

1988 Exterior renovations and infrastructure (R) City of Delray Beach \$2,100,000

1990 1913 Elementary School (Cornell Museum) (R) Private (\$300,000); State (\$450,000) \$750,000

1991 1926 Gymnasium (R) Div. of Historic Resources (\$492,872);

Div. Of Cultural Affairs (\$130,000) \$622,872

1993 1925 High School, Phase I (Crest Theatre) (R) Foundation (\$500,000); Private (\$100,000); State (\$250,000) City/CRA (\$350,000) \$1,200,000

1994 Administrative Offices (R) Private \$89,000

1998 Classrooms (1925 bldg.) (R) Private (\$220,000); State (\$395,444) \$615,444

2002 Outdoor Pavilion (NC) Private (\$1,400,000); County (\$400,000); City of Delray Beach (\$117,673) \$1,917,673

Total: \$7,294,989

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings? Approximately 400 words.

In every community in the United States, at some point, they reach this impasse. Save and restore old buildings or tear them down and build over. Save them yes, but what do we do with them? So many communities have lost valuable landmarks and significant history because the community could not come together to make a decision. That is what makes the Old School Square project unique. Historic buildings are saved, but the community decided what to do with them and that buy-in was critical to its success. We are approached constantly by other communities who have heard of our success. We share as much information as possible to them in the process. Inevitably, it always comes down to people cannot see or envision past the ugly structures sitting there and see the potential. By sharing the before and after of this facility, we have helped so many communities do the same. As a catalyst for further downtown redevelopment, DBCFTA continues to be a significant role model. The fact that we redeveloped former school structures makes us even more unique and adaptable as many communities also have the same issues. Also, many communities are experiencing a downtown rebirth and are not prepared for the influx of residents and the traffic it creates. The City of Delray believes in "smart growth" and has developed guidelines that preserve the character of the community. The President/CEO secured a grant from the State of Florida for \$1.2 million to create a park next to the cultural center that was formerly a parking lot. This "smart growth" application serves the Center for festivals and concerts but also as a "central park" for the new demographic living downtown. The city's green market brings in both vendors and consumers to this location during our season.

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**2015**  
**RUDY BRUNER AWARD**  
**COMMUNITY**  
**REPRESENTATIVE**  
**PERSPECTIVE**



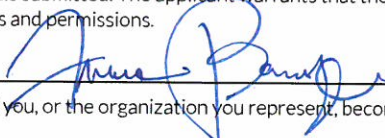
# COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name	Frances Bourque	Title	Founder and Chairman Emeritus
Organization	Delray Beach Center for the Arts at Old School Square, Inc.	Telephone	(561) 731-4311
Address	4780 South Lake Drive	City/State/ZIP	Boynton Beach, FL 33436
Fax ( )		E-mail	babiedoc@comcast.net

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Signature		Date	12-9-2014
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1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play? Approximately 400 words.

I was on the local Historical Society board and was becoming more active in the community. The society chose not to take the project on and I left their board and took the role as the person spearheading the project. It was a tremendous learning curve, yet I surrounded myself with passionate individuals who understood the possibilities of the project. I learned much quickly about the political process and how the very vocal minority can potentially derail an important project. I took it on as a labor of love. The buildings were like these majestic old ladies who just needed some special love and care. I helped organize a Mayor's Task Force, which gave legitimacy to the project and then began working toward securing state preservation dollars. I learned that political process as well. I guess you could say I was a person with passion and a quick study. I was quite surprised at how quickly two camps emerged. One very supportive and the other determined not to see the buildings restored and torn down. Clearly there needed to be a major education process but the key was bringing community leaders to the table from every part of Delray to have input on the possible uses of the facility. These leaders were civic minded and forward thinking, and the community followed.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project? Approximately 400 words.

As in every community, consensus for change is not always easy. Our downtown was spiraling downward. The major issue certainly would be could the revitalization of these old school buildings jumpstart the downtown redevelopment? At the time there was not a lot of strong case studies. Furthermore, there was major concern from the city commission regarding the sustainability after the restoration. Could the programs support the facility? How could they be maintained? Who would be the target audience? What were the intended uses of the center and who exactly would the center serve? Of course there was that vocal minority that I spoke of who only saw the buildings as unsalvageable. They really felt the buildings should be torn down, as it would not be cost effective to consider restoring the buildings. This group was initially successful as the buildings were scheduled for demolition. Fortunately, we were able to get the buildings on the National Register of Historic Places. That changed the entire direction of the project.

Other issues facing the development of the project included the development of two major performing arts centers being built 20 miles to the north and 25 miles to the south. Would the "local" community support a smaller center with a small stage and museum? How could we compete with the national tours and exhibits? The budget for our first year of operations was approximately \$200,000, today it is \$2.7 million. That growth is concerning to a Board of Directors who are charged with raising program and development dollars. Fortunately the Board took some major bequests and created an endowment fund, which has served us well throughout difficult economic times.

## COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how? Approximately 400 words.

Beyond my wildest dreams! Early on in the process, I made a video for Old School Square and I remember stating that once the restoration was complete the community would decide what Old School Square would become. That's exactly what happened. A phenomenal almost overwhelming growth fuelled by important partnerships has placed DBCFTA at the center of an economic and cultural renaissance that is envied by all of Florida. The City of Delray's investment of both time and resources into this project has created a special place that honors its residents and attracts hundreds of thousands of tourists each year. What gratifies me most though are the multicultural and ethnic celebrations that define our community and are celebrated at DBCFTA. We are learning about each other and that makes this little beach community a very special place to live. I walked downtown the other night and ate dinner at one of the new restaurants on the Avenue. Literally thousands of people were strolling, shopping and enjoying the 100-foot Christmas tree we put up in front of the museum after Thanksgiving. I attended Free Friday Night Concert at the Pavilion where over 2,000 people, mostly families, sat outside and enjoyed a free concert together. This is exactly what we envisioned!

I'm proud to continue to be a part of the ever changing growth of the Center. This year we have developed a new plan for the front of the Cornell Museum. It reflects the changes in the arts and technology. Our vision is that the City Plaza will be a gathering spot for all to be involved in a transformative arts encounter. The Plaza and a street side café will serve as a gateway to experience the Cornell Museum's contemporary art exhibitions. Interior and exterior art engagement pieces include fountains with digital projections, simulcast and live concerts, "Lunch & Learn" educational series, 3D projection mapping and dynamic murals will turn the exterior museum walls into the living story of our community.

A cultural center must reflect the changes around it to remain relevant and exciting for the seasoned resident or the first time tourist who has just arrived in our town. The Center has taken a leadership role in important education initiatives created by the City and we are receiving national recognition for our Grade Level Reading Campaign through arts infused programs.

4. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through? Approximately 400 words.

One of our biggest challenges was after we secured the bond to do the exterior renovations and necessary infrastructure. That changed the look of the facility immediately. That was a blessing and a curse. People would drive by and assume the interiors were complete as well. That made it difficult to raise the construction money to complete the interiors. It took almost eight years to complete the restoration, but we made it. Also, I would concentrate on developing more programming money while we were completing the reconstruction. We basically raised exactly enough to complete the buildings and very little programming dollars. Fortunately, we were creative and started building programming grants quickly. Now we have over \$3 million in program endowment and it's growing!

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**2015**  
**RUDY BRUNER AWARD**  
**PUBLIC AGENCY**  
**PERSPECTIVE**

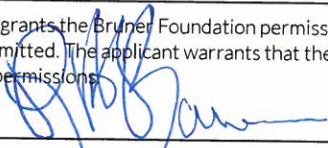


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This sheet is to be filled out by staff representative(s) of public agency(ies) who were directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

Name	Bob Barcinski	Title	Assistant City Manager (Retired)
Organization	City of Delray Beach	Telephone	(561) 496-5370
Address	3710 Lawson Boulevard	City/State/ZIP	Delray Beach, FL 33445
Fax ( )		E-mail	barcinski@aol.com

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Signature		Date	12-8-2014
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1. What role did your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g., zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements). Approximately 400 words.

One of the most critical roles in the development of Old School Square was the acquisition of the property. The Palm Beach County School Board owned the three buildings. They closed the school in 1985 and left the buildings to ruin. Fortunately, the city was able to negotiate a land swap so that the city took ownership of the property in exchange for land the city owned in other areas for school expansions. The City also facilitated changes in the land use and deed restrictions, allowing for the cultural center conversion. The City, via the mayor and some of the commissioners, supported the project and spoke on its behalf. Once the project had its 501 (c)(3) non-profit status, the City created the management agreement between the two, solidifying the relationship. The City was instrumental in the education process about the potential of Old School Square. In 1988 the City facilitated a charrette, "Visions 2000," which had a very aggressive plan for the parallel revival of the downtown area, concurrent with Old School Square's redevelopment. This charrette was community-driven and included stakeholders from every segment of our population. The result was the continued growth and funding through the "Decade of Excellence" bond. The City also includes DBCFTA in its budget each year for operational support. Realizing the cultural and economic value of the cultural facility, we support reduced fees and services for other non-profit cultural organizations that use the site to showcase their diversity. This year the City will support DBCFTA with \$250,000 in operational support.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them? Approximately 400 words.

The downtown area of Delray had fallen into major disrepair. By the mid-1980s many of the buildings were abandoned, there was no streetscape and many streets were in need of infrastructure repair and maintenance. From the very beginning, it was perceived that if Old School Square could be realized, it could jumpstart the redevelopment of the downtown. The CRA was just being organized by the City at that time and was charged with the task of overseeing the redevelopment effort. Our CRA director, along with several of their board members, supported Old School Square and, parallel to that, offered several low-interest loans and incentives for redevelopment in the area. The Old School Square Historic District was formed and business and redevelopment grew rapidly because of the successful growth of the cultural center. The tax increment funding for the CRA went from \$104,896 in 1987 to \$12,860,000 in 2014. The jumpstart that the City was looking for was realized!

## PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

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3. Describe the project's impact on your city. Please be as specific as possible. Approximately 400 words.

The visioning process worked! We have since held two more visioning processes to plan for everything from design guidelines to school issues to race relations. Old School Square was one of the three projects that helped the City win the coveted All-America City title in 1993 and 2001. It is the only city in Florida to have won twice. DBCFTA has provided an outlet for cultural growth of the community, particularly grass roots minority organizations that have traditionally not had the venue or resources to grow. The City now partners with DBCFTA to showcase a variety of cultural and ethnic festivals. It has increased tourism to the downtown and increased mixed-use downtown occupancy to record levels. More recently, 1,000 new townhouse units have been constructed and more are coming within a five-block radius of the cultural center. The City also created five historic districts that have developed their own strategic projects, as well as participated in our community wide initiatives for overall continuity. The arts have had a quantitative and qualitative impact on Delray Beach.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities? Approximately 400 words.

The City of Delray Beach/Old School Square partnership is a commanding success. The City recognizes and documents the return on their yearly investment. By anchoring the redevelopment with the arts, we have proven that the partnership is extremely valuable. We have presented our downtown success story to the International City/County Management Association as well as to the National City Managers Conference, Transforming Local Government. We are constantly approached, particularly the mayor, the CRA and Downtown Development Authority, to present our story, including DBCFTA, to communities both statewide and nationally. The redevelopment of abandoned schools is certainly topical in many areas of the country.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project? Approximately 400 words.

Some of the most successful aspects relate to the growth and revitalization of the downtown area. DBCFTA has become the center point of cultural activities and also a community gathering place. The City holds charrettes, summits, and town hall meetings at DBCFTA. The Center is the driving force behind our economic and cultural rebirth. Success is the hardest thing to manage. Parking issues, neighborhood growth and revitalization versus continued downtown redevelopment issues, rising production costs, maintaining historic structures and dedicated revenue sources are our most challenging issues.

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**2015**  
**RUDY BRUNER AWARD**  
**DEVELOPER**  
**PERSPECTIVE**



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This sheet is to be filled out by the person who took primary responsibility for project financing or is a representative of the group which did.

Name	Bill Branning	Title	President
Organization	BSA Corporation	Telephone	(561) 272-6350
Address	9 NE 2nd Avenue	City/State/ZIP	Delray Beach, FL 33444
Fax ( )		E-mail	bbranning@bsacontractors.com

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Signature		Date	12-8-2014
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1. What role did you or your company play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement. Approximately 400 words.

I have worked with the project since its inception. I started as a principal of another construction firm hired to do the first phase. Since that time, I have overseen and was contracted for the entire restoration of Old School Square and the subsequent new construction of the outdoor pavilion. My charge has been to develop a site that is functional and on budget. I worked very closely with the President/CEO and appointed board members to ensure that every phase of the construction was cost effective and the client was left with a workable and useful product when the architect and I left. Our role was critical to on the job construction change orders and implementation of plans that were overseen by the City as well as the board. Also critical to the project's success, I supervised the distribution and reporting of millions of dollars in grant funding, ensuring the client got the best use of their funds.

2. What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project? Approximately 400 words.

As with any construction project, you design for now and for the future. With this particular project, we were definitely charting new territory. It was extremely difficult to design for every future use of the facility. There were trade-offs, particularly when we had to build for the present and try to predict the future. Also, there were important and necessary compromises. A theatre consultant was engaged for the theatre phase. When the design and implementation term first started, they dreamed a \$4 million theatre. Not only was that way beyond budget constraints, but it would also leave the client with a theatre that could not be managed, particularly with the staffing restrictions that were there. The exercise of getting the theatre to a workable budget and design plan allowed us to get the best theatre for the dollars, forcing us to make choices as to what was really needed. My charge was to take that budget and design and develop further cost saving measures and never compromise design structure. The result is a viable and fully functional facility that has room for growth whenever new money is available.

Another challenge was taking away green space on the four acre property to provide necessary facilities for the growth of the Center. The Pavilion was new construction, along with that space bathrooms and a concession building to service the Pavilion when necessary to complete the function of the space. To offset the loss of green space, prime real estate in the Downtown was converted to a City Park adjacent to the Pavilion. New development will combine the arts and technology in exciting new applications.

3. How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used? Approximately 400 words.

The funding for Old School Square has come from private donors and foundations, the State of Florida Division of Cultural Affairs and Division of Historic Resources, Palm Beach County and the City of Delray Beach/Community Redevelopment Agency.

Year Use (Renovation or New Construction) Source Amount

1988 Exterior renovations and infrastructure (R) City of Delray Beach \$2,100,000

1990 1913 Elementary School (Cornell Museum) (R) Private (\$300,000); State (\$450,000) \$750,000

1991 1926 Gymnasium (R) Div. of Historic Resources (\$492,872);

Div. Of Cultural Affairs (\$130,000) \$622,872

1993 1925 High School, Phase I (Crest Theatre) (R) Foundation (\$500,000); Private (\$100,000); State (\$250,000) City/CRA (\$350,000) \$1,200,000

1994 Administrative Offices (R) Private \$89,000

1998 Classrooms (1925 bldg.) (R) Private (\$220,000); State (\$395,444) \$615,444

2002 Outdoor Pavilion (NC) Private (\$1,400,000); County (\$400,000); City of Delray Beach (\$117,673) \$1,917,673

Total: \$7,294,989

The bond referendum was a great way to get community buy-in for the project. One particular fundraiser was unique, we renamed City streets based on a bidding price fundraiser with the funds going to the Center.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of the project? Approximately 400 words.

A larger budget would have been nice, but I think the team was exceptionally creative. I would also like to have seen a complete master plan designed for the site that we built to accommodate new buildings rather than the phased work. We actually had to take down a few auxiliary buildings such as a shop/workspace. However, we were able to design larger, more efficient space into the new construction. We completed a ten-year master plan that addressed several major issues including parking and additional green space adjacent to the center.

I think from the family perspective it has definitely changed the face of the community. There is no question that most of Florida is perceived as a retirement mecca. There are more families and younger couples moving to and working in Delray. With the development of new stores, restaurants and galleries, more job opportunities are available. The nightlife on Atlantic Avenue now rivals South Beach. It is the place to see and be seen. Activities like the Free Friday Night Concerts, holiday activities and DBCFTA's outreach programs are drawing more and more people to the cultural center. I don't think any of us realized just how successful this center would be or the impact it would have on the community. My office is two blocks from DBCFTA. I take many clients to see our work firsthand, and it has afforded me many additional restoration jobs and new construction in the community.

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**2015**  
**RUDY BRUNER AWARD**  
**ARCHITECT**  
**OR DESIGNER**  
**PERSPECTIVE**



# ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by a design professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, or other services. Copies may be given to other design professionals if desired.

Name	Robert G. Currie, FAIA	Title	Principal
Organization	Currie Sowards Aguilla Architects	Telephone	(561) 276-4951
Address	185 NE 4th Avenue - Suite 101	City/State/ZIP	Delray Beach, FL 33483
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Signature

Date 12/8/14

1. Describe the design concept of this project, including urban design considerations, choice of materials, scale, etc. Approximately 400 words.

This abandoned school, initially named Old School Square, located in the urban center of downtown Delray Beach, had been long neglected and became an embarrassment to the community at large.

The design mandate was to restore these historic structures and create a cultural center for the entire town and in the process generate an urban renewal impetus for a downtown in decline. The buildings were redesigned under careful guidelines of The Florida Trust for Historic Preservation. The functions were for a museum of art, a theater with seating for 320 people, administration offices, classrooms for art and photography, and a gymnasium for multi-purpose activities.

The initial design concept was to give the site a unique identity. Each of the three buildings faced separate streets, and each site was designed with an identifying brick entry plaza of varying sizes. The entire site was surrounded by brick and coquina walkways, flanked by Royal Palms. At each corner of the site, a coquina bench with free standing Corinthian columns on each side defined the perimeter of the block, an implied fence. The architects persuaded the local planning department to provide perpendicular parking spaces in an adjacent side street, leaving the entire site free of on-site parking and allowing for an open multi-use park. This has become the town square for festivals, recreation, and outdoor concerts.

Over time the site has evolved, closing a side street and expanding the park. Links between the buildings provide shelter from the South Florida elements and the Pavilion for some two-thousand people has been added.

The Delray Beach Center for the Arts at Old School Square has not only become a beloved cultural institution but the symbolic heart and cultural center of the community.

2. Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design. Approximately 400 words.

With any redevelopment project it is difficult to anticipate the potential uses of the facilities. Historic preservation and adaptation of the buildings dictate function when determining how the space will be programmed and in turn used by the public. Certain design elements were established based on the original period of construction. Color choices, both interior and exterior were approved by the State Preservation Board. At the time, no formal design guidelines had been established by our local Community Redevelopment Agency. Functional changes in the 1913 Building included cutting a section of the second floor away to allow the two floors to relate. Sky lights were added for natural lighting to enhance the museum setting. In the 1925 Building, the entire second floor over the entrance was removed to create a "lobby" feel. The second floor ceiling was removed to reveal the cuppola from the ground floor. The original stage was only 12 feet deep and has been transformed into the current stage, which is 38 feet deep. With the original proscenium arch in place, the main floor and balcony was raked to create better sight lines. A new loading dock was added to accommodate national stage tours and ADA requirements were met fully throughout the site. The classrooms has to be retrofitted to accommodate art classes with sinks and storage. The 1926 Gymnasium is used for community events and especially wedding receptions. The redesign included a loading dock and a warming kitchen area for catering.

All three buildings face away from each other and the new outdoor pavilion was designed to relate the buildings in a more cohesive fashion and provide spacial function when they are being used together. The original 1913 and 1925 designs are maintained from a historic perspective. Any new additions to the buildings have been altered to clearly distinguish historic and new construction. The result is an overwhelmingly positive community response. Historic structures surrounding the buildings have also been preserved rather than demolished, keeping the character of the community and the "village scale" that so many towns around Delray Beach have lost.

## ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the major challenges of designing this project and any design trade-offs or compromises required to complete the project. Approximately 400 words.

The challenge with any adaptive historic reuse projects is in the marrying of modern functional systems and uses while still maintaining the historical integrity of the existing buildings. Society today has expectations in how buildings fulfill occupant needs, i.e. air conditioning, lighting, and safety features. The introduction of air conditioning duct work, the ability of lighting to enhance activities and accent art works, and the visual intrusion of sprinkler systems are challenges when integrating these systems in buildings constructed in much simpler times. New buildings and zoning codes as well must be addressed along with the American Disabilities Act requirements.

In the redesign of the buildings at the Delray Beach Center for the Arts at Old School Square, we accommodated these challenges in many different ways. Air conditioning ducts were carefully hidden behind wall-to-ceiling cornices. Ceilings were lowered just enough to accommodate sprinkler lines and recessed lighting yet did not intrude on the high vertical perimeter windows. Elevators were strategically located and necessary for second floor levels. Theater windows were built, covered internally, and painted with black backgrounds. All new additions from exterior connecting covered walkways to a pavilion with a snack bar and public toilets were architecturally designed with an eye to compatibility, yet a clear separation distinguished the new-from-the-old structures. This entire process was long and arduous, but with the active participation of many good citizens and implemented under the careful scrutiny of The Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, this august body has since bestowed on the Delray Beach Center for the Arts at Old School Square three Preservation Trust awards.

4. Describe the ways in which the design relates to its urban context. Approximately 400 words.

There are certain elements in a city's design that are givens when reintroducing historic structures to the landscape, particularly in a downtown grid. In Delray's case, the downtown area was in such disrepair that it needed a total overhaul. In some cities the grid is redesigned first and the specific structures are restored or demolished. In Delray Beach the redesign of the Center was the catalyst for the change in the restructuring of the downtown. Delray has a strong mainstreet that stretches from the interstate to the ocean, roughly two miles. The old schools were at the exact center of the two mile stretch. We had to overcome the Florida Department of Transportation's desire to widen the mainstreet to four lanes and maintain the day to day use by the general public.

Architectural features of the historic buildings were replicated throughout the designs of the downtown. The schools were expressly geographic in their original use by the community. This was translated into the spacial and functional design as redefined by the pedestrian uses of the site, as well as how it relates to the overall downtown corridor.

The Center created a new "town square" both physically and emotionally for the community. One of the challenges was to redefine the space as a cultural center and not confuse it with a municipal use such as a courthouse. Exterior color, line and form coupled with artistic landscaping has creatively enhanced the sensibility of the structures. Signage on the historic structures was also key. With definite design principals already established by the original architect, it was imperative to merge design and function into an elevated urban context. This set the stage for the entire downtown revitalization in building designs, infrastructure and streetscape. "The village" feel of Delray Beach is in tact.