



Summary of Case Statement for ICRCM Expansion

4-2-2022

*For detail, see separate attached document, "Case Statement for ICRCM Expansion."
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The International Civil Rights Center & Museum's general plan for its next stage of development includes two major components, which are closely related and focused on the acquisition of the five-story former First Citizens Bank Building and the rest of the city block on which it and the landmark F.W. Woolworth's building are located in downtown Greensboro, N.C.

1. Meeting crucial criteria of eligibility for a nomination by the United States Department of the Interior (National Park Service) of the iconic property, where the national Sit-In Movement began in 1960, to be a key component of a serial inscription of approximately 10 American civil rights landmarks marking them as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). If successful, the landmark building near the center of downtown will be the only cultural site in North Carolina with this ultimate recognition for "universal significance," which is considered the "gold standard" for international travel destinations. At this time, there are only 10 such designations in the United States. We are currently at about the mid-point in a typical 10-year process for achieving this world-historical status.

For World Heritage qualification, one of the important criteria — which must be guaranteed over the long term as a condition for holding this designation — is that the site must ensure the control of its surroundings so as to preserve the commercial atmosphere and architectural feel of the immediate local, physical context of the landmark's moment in history which is the basis of its significance.

Because of its confined location on the corner of South Elm Street and East February 1 Place, the Woolworth's building was until this week especially vulnerable on the two non-street sides to the possible effects of closely adjacent development that might overwhelm the stature of the inscribed World Heritage structure and its visual relationship to the nearby urban fabric. In contrast, the well-established buildings on the other sides of South Elm and February One are largely contemporary with the

relevant period of the early 1960s; diligent recent efforts have been made to preserve them in essentially their historically appropriate appearance.

More than half of the city block on which the Woolworth's stands, however, is largely undeveloped, except for the other corner of South Elm, where the former First Citizens Bank Building is situated. Most of this remainder of the block is currently used as a surface parking lot and as an access lane to the lower-level parking under the bank building. The urgency we have faced is to control this full urban site of the landmark so that we can maintain the appropriate environmental and visual conditions required for the World Heritage designation and its continuation.

And so, it is with great relief that the Civil Rights Museum's parent non-profit corporation, Sit-In Movement, Inc., completed the process of acquiring ownership of this property on March 31, 2022. Our success with this project began with significant start-up funding from a grant by the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation of Winston-Salem. Next, both the City of Greensboro and the Guilford County, N.C., generously appropriated considerable sums for the immediate support of the purchase. The City and the County have also promised additional smaller grants spaced out over the next four or five years, with the total doubling their initial contributions. A substantial portion of the purchase price is being financed with very reasonably structured real estate debt, reflecting the accommodation of the previous owners, who have expressed enthusiasm for the Museum's success. So now there is a new urgency to begin substantially curtailing that obligation.

2. Expanding the exhibits, programs, and staff of the Civil Rights Museum, as well as the impact and thematic reach of the International Civil Rights Center.

Qualifying for the UNESCO inscription also entails the institutional capacity and public accommodation to respond to significant increases in visitation that are expected to come with the World Heritage recognition. The prominent designation of this historic site will provide a platform of international attention from which the ICRCM can more broadly and powerfully leverage its educational message about citizen engagement and non-violent direct action on behalf of social justice. In the more detailed Case Statement attached, we have sketched potential plans for **I. National, II. International, and III. Regional dimensions** of exhibit and program development and expansion.

We envision a substantial extension of the materials and themes that have previously met a high standard of public and professional endorsement for the galleries, tours, and educational events based on the existing Permanent Exhibit and the instructional standards already achieved as a result of the current performance of the Museum. Of course, the ICRCM will need to work with appropriate scholars and imaginative designers to plan for the use of added facilities and for the more substantive, high-profile functioning entailed by our expanded vision. Such planning

and development will also require appropriate funding. At least in the short term, however, it is possible for instance that it might be wise to shift space on the second floor of the restored F.W. Woolworth's landmark building, which has already been rehabilitated to offer convenient public access, from serving as office space to housing some of the new exhibits. We might then move staff accommodations to existing office layouts now vacant in the former First Citizens Bank building without the need for significant up-fitting. But, obviously, such moves will require greater study before we go forward.

These are exciting prospects that are arriving at a stage in the ICRCM's institutional progress when we are ready to move forward to greater effectiveness in pursuing our mission and making more valuable contributions to the civic state of the Greensboro-Guilford County community.

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Principal Scholar