

# ISLAND

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# One small step for 3rd Avenue

Glavovic Studio's adaptive re-use project becomes their new studio and a cultural hub.



MARGI NOTHARD OF GLAVOVIC STUDIO ARCHITECTURE is best known for her exquisite take on contemporary modernism as displayed in such landmark projects as the Young At Art Museum in Davie, the Arts Park at Young Circle, Hollywood and Kennedy Homes on Broward Boulevard in Fort Lauderdale. Nothard is also an outstanding urbanist, in the true sense of the word — that is, someone who contributes to the city through both large and small projects — but as of yet, she is not as well known for this talent.

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Along with forgetting how to form towns, urban neighborhoods and downtowns with the advent of the automobile we also have seem to forgotten that these places are made of many sizes — or increments — of development. Individual storefronts, two-story mixed-use buildings and houses — from trinities to urban mansions, together with skyscrapers, civic buildings, parks and low-rise, block-long apartment residences are what make a complete downtown. It's also true that buildings can have many lives beyond their original use.

Downtown Fort Lauderdale is unique because it has been rebuilt nearly from scratch under Urbanist design guidelines. However, those design guidelines

*Rhythm of the neighborhood. A wraparound, sculptural railing adds texture to the warm black concrete and clear glass of the building's exterior.*

don't address the need for a *variety* of sizes of development in forming an ultimately urban place. We've got high rises, mid-rises, Washington DC-type boulevard buildings and townhouse rows





*While adaptive reuse is associated with the preservation of historically or architecturally significant buildings, it also can provide renewed vitality to any buildings that may be underused, abandoned, vacant, dilapidated, or functionally obsolete.*

*Reuse brings both older and newer underused structures such as empty warehouses, vacated former schools, abandoned department stores, large historic homes, dilapidated strip malls back to life. These structures have become senior housing, apartments, banks, municipal buildings, restaurants, and many other uses.*

— Chester County Planning Commission, West Chester, Pennsylvania

down pat, we've even got a block-long arcade, through block passages, courts and courtyards, but there is no mention of *small incremental development*.

In this breach stands Margi Nothard knitting the city back together one small urban bauble at a time. In this, lesser-known area of her work are the adaptive re-use of small increments such as the Girls Club, the Vanguard theater, and her previous office in a little house on NE 3rd Avenue. Now as Glavovic Studio celebrates its 20th birthday, the firm is moving into 511 NE 3rd Avenue, a mid-block, two story building designed to serve as a dance school in the 1950s.

## **By now, what constitutes good urbanism and best-practice adaptive re-use of existing buildings is becoming woven into how we build and conserve. In this regard, Glavovic Studio is leading the way in our small city.**

Glavovic Studio, which designed the renovation of 511 NE 3rd Avenue brings new uses to a building Nothard described as invisible before its beguiling reincarnation. Without being ostentatious, it is now happily hard to miss. Glavovic Studio takes up the second floor while the bar/lounge *Aqui* ("Here" in Spanish) takes up most of the ground floor. The third public space in the building is a double-height entry hall, generously

**Clockwise from top: 511 NE 3rd acts as a contrasting backdrop for mature vegetation on site. A back terrace serves as an arcade roof. The conference room opens to a terrace overlooking 4th Avenue. A ribbed and luminous corner of building opens to ample space for outdoor seating.**

glazed to act as a beacon on the avenue and with a double-height wall ideal for displaying large works of visual art perfect for catching the fleeting attention of passers-by.

It is Glavovic's generous use of

windows that most radically transforms the address. The north end of the façade, while split into first and second floors, nevertheless serves as a tower of light, with the corner-wrapping, floor-to-ceiling, sheer glass French doors of *Aqui* below and the corner conference room of Glavovic Studio above. Even when the conference room is dark, its striking ceiling light fixture will no doubt finish the work of making 511 NE 3rd into a Flagler Village fixture.

When asked, Nothard credits her desire to reuse and revive existing buildings to her growing up in Durban, South Africa. Her father — one of the first wildlife law experts in the country and founder of South Africa's first university Environmental Law program — was a huge influence. He imbued in her the knowledge of the fragility of our survival and our co-dependence with nature. She recounts that this knowledge readily translated to her interest in the city as a whole.

In fact, for decades architects were trained to see their designs like objects, sculptures so to speak, oblivious of any context, best seen by themselves out in a field. It wasn't until the advent of New Urbanism in the early 1980s that we began to see the whole again and not simply the object. By now, what constitutes good urbanism and best-practice adaptive re-use of existing buildings is becoming woven into how we build and conserve. In this regard, Glavovic Studio is leading the way in our small city.

As if reading a canon, Nothard asserts that we overlook the infill to regard the larger architecture as significant; but we can have large impact with small gestures. There are resources in old buildings. With bewilderment apparent in her voice she says, "There's no effort to conserve these resources, to adapt buildings to new uses. I think it's so obvious!"