Request for Qualification

THE WARNER SWASEY GRAFFITI ARCHIVAL

MidTown Cleveland, Inc.
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REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION
THE WARNER SWASEY GRAFFITI ARCHIVAL PROJECT
MidTown Neighborhood
Cleveland, Ohio

Issued September 2020 by:
MidTown Cleveland, Inc.

Partners:
LAND studio

Proposals due no later than 5:00 PM EST on October 9, 2020

All inquiries should be directed to:
Samira Malone
Neighborhood Planning Project Coordinator
MidTown Cleveland, Inc.
smalone@midtowncleveland.org

Our Mission
is to leverage the MidTown neighborhood’s diverse assets to develop a dynamic neighborhood that unites Cleveland’s Downtown and University Circle.

Our Vision
is for a connected community in the center of it all, an inclusive place for people to innovate, create, prosper and live.
PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The Warner & Swasey Company, founded by Worcester P. Warner and Ambrose Swasey was once a leading manufacturer of machine tools with a worldwide reputation for its telescopes and precision instruments. Utilizing the same techniques and machinery used to make machine tools, the firm also created telescopes, inspired by Warner’s interest in astronomy. The company gained international notoriety in 1886 by building the largest telescope at the time for the Lick Observatory in California and large telescopes for the U.S. Naval Observatory and the Yerkes Observatory in Wisconsin.

Much like many other Rust Belt cities, the forces of deindustrialization, suburbanization, and racism made a significant impact on Cleveland’s economic decline, and by 1980, the Warner & Swasey Company was purchased by a competitor. Many of its locations were closed, including the E.55th and Carnegie site. The once-thriving and bustling urban structure fell out of use and, over time, has transformed into a canvas that is now home to a makeshift street art gallery that houses thousands of graffiti murals from top to bottom.

Fast forward to today. The site is in the process of redevelopment and will assume a renewed identity as a dynamic mixed-use, mixed-income, mixed population historic adaptive reuse of the former Warner & Swasey manufacturing plant. It will become a vibrant community providing workforce housing and office space oriented to the technology and manufacturing fields, emphasizing associated workforce development opportunities that connect residents to economic opportunity.

Source: The Cleveland Plain Dealer

Project and Approach

With the likely redevelopment of Warner & Swasey slated for Spring 2021, MidTown Cleveland, Inc. (MTC), is commissioning a project to capture the intersection of street art and history in this storied building. We are looking for a team to execute on the goals of the project through a multi-disciplinary approach, including but not limited to visual arts (photography and/or video), journalism, and other forms of storytelling.

Project Scope

Deliverables may include, but are not limited to:

- Visual arts, e.g. photography and/or video
- Database of interviews
- Formatted web content
- Community photography submissions of Warner & Swasey's artwork
- Any other visionary medium are welcomed
Submission Requirements

Please submit a response to this RFQ with materials (PDF preferred) that include the following:

- Name(s) of lead artist and team members (if applicable)
- Web link(s) to related work
- A summary of you/your team’s interest and approach (maximum 1,000 characters)
- Anticipated budget

Submission Timeline

Please submit your qualifications by Wednesday October 9th, 2020 by 5:00 PM EST. Submissions will be time-stamped – any submissions received after the deadline will not be reviewed.

Budget

MTC has confirmed seed funding of $15,000 for this project, but a final budget has not yet been determined. We look forward to receiving project submissions and will raise additional funds if compelled by the selected vision.

Process and Timeline

Project window: October 2020-April 2021

Selected artists will be notified via email for a final round interview. Once selected, they will work with the MTC project coordinator(s) to work out details of their individual projects, including a budget, concept development, and production needs. Artists will be contracted to provide project concepts and final deliverables.

Questions

If you have any additional questions about the project, application or the selection process, please e-mail Samira Malone at smalone@midtowncleveland.org. We look forward to receiving your submissions.