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Dear Miami Beach Commissioners,

On February 1, 2023, we will be putting 819 Fifth Street, the building that used to house Tap Tap Restaurant, on the market for sale.

Before doing so, we would like to offer the City of Miami Beach the opportunity to purchase the building at a fair price in the hopes that it could be preserved as a restaurant or some other cultural venue/museum, which would harken back to its storied past.

Tap Tap Haitian Restaurant was founded in 1994 after the overhaul of a former low-income hotel, which is one of the oldest buildings in Miami Beach. Its founder, Katharine Kean, wanted the establishment to be a tribute to the richness and vibrancy of Haitian art and culture. She commissioned the foremost Haitian artists at that time to paint the walls of Tap Tap, both inside an out, with murals, which remain fairly well-preserved to this day.

The restaurant became a haunt of celebrities, super-models, and artists, particularly during Art Basel every December. For two decades, Emmanuel “Manno” Charlemagne, often called Haiti’s Bob Marley, lived above the restaurant, coming downstairs to play with his band twice a week.

After Tap Tap closed its doors in December 2018, the [Miami Herald ran an article](#) about its role and importance in Miami’s Haitian community. It wrote [a similar tribute](#) following Katharine Kean’s death in July 2023.

For these reasons, we, Kean’s long-time collaborators who are handling her estate and legacy, hope that the City might be interested in preserving not just a building that stands as an example of the Miami Beach’s distinctive Art Deco architecture, but also the memory of a landmark restaurant that played a unique, important role in Miami Beach’s history and remains a symbol of Haitian culture.

Although I spoke in October to Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez and members of the City’s Historic Preservation Board, I would be pleased to meet with Miami Beach representatives again by Zoom or when I am in Miami Beach.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Kim Ives

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