

**Riviera Plaza**  
337 20th Street  
Miami Beach, Florida



Prepared for  
**Rüger Holding**  
Spichernstrasse 6A  
50672 Cologne  
Germany

Historic Resources Report  
submitted January 10, 2023 by  
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## **Preliminary Remarks**

The present study comprises a survey of the building at 337 20th Street in Miami Beach, a contributing historic structure located in a district that has been both nationally and locally designated: the Miami Beach Architectural District (NR 1979) and the Museum Historic District (City of Miami Beach, 1990). It is also part of the Collins Park Arts District Overlay. This report has been prepared by Shulman + Associates for R ger Holding in anticipation of restoration and modifications to the building, and conversion to hotel use.

This study presents the building historically, based on available documentation and site verification. It includes historical imagery and the Building Card information. A photo survey of current conditions is also included.

# **Historical Analysis and Imagery**

## **Historical Outline**

The project site comprises two 75'x125' parcels, Lots 6 and 8, Block E of the Miami Beach Improvement Co. PB 5-7 Subdivision.

Dating to 1924, a few years before the Great Miami Hurricane of 1926, the Riviera Plaza Hotel/Apartments was designed by architect Ralph. A. Preas (R.A. Preas) for owner C.A. Fowler. The builder is listed as O'Neill & Orr Co. The building is a Contributing Structure both in the Miami Beach Architectural District (National Register, 1979) and in the Museum Historic District (City of Miami Beach, 1990). Originally constructed out of reinforced concrete and cement blocks as a 42-room apartment/hotel (30 apartments and 12 hotel rooms), the building is primarily three storeys.

During World War II the building was one of many on Miami Beach used as a Training Center for the U.S. Army Air Corps. It was returned to owner on July 10, 1944 and was subsequently reconditioned by noted architect Roy France later that year.

Over the 1950's, 60's and 70's the building underwent minor renovations and repairs. In 1981 a portion of the decorative column and beam system above the roof parapet were removed, and in 1982 the superstructures on the roof were removed. By the late 1980s the building fell into disuse and was boarded up. In 1992, it underwent interior reconfiguration, creating 63 units, including 53 apartments and 10 hotel rooms. It is currently used as affordable housing.

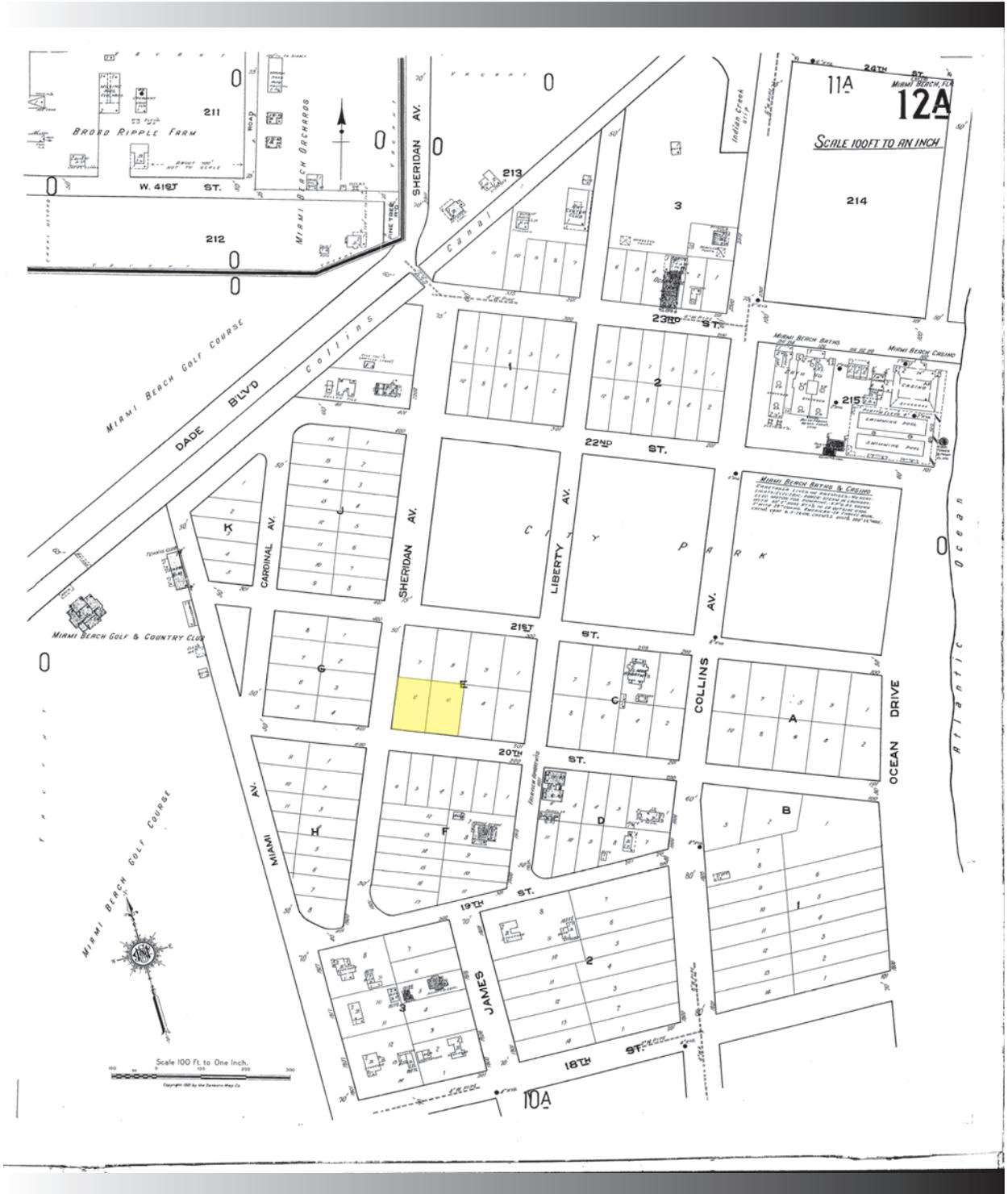
The Riviera Plaza was one of the first buildings in Collins Park, with proximity to the Roney Plaza Casino, Roman Baths and Miami Beach Golf Course a feature of early advertisements. Early photos show that the building predated the paving of 20th Street.

The building is classified as Mediterranean Revival, a style characterized by "the evocation of an Old World image, featuring decorative columns, arched windows, clay barrel tile roofs, rough stucco walls, wrought iron and spindle gates guarding picturesque courtyards" (Miami-Dade Preservation League).

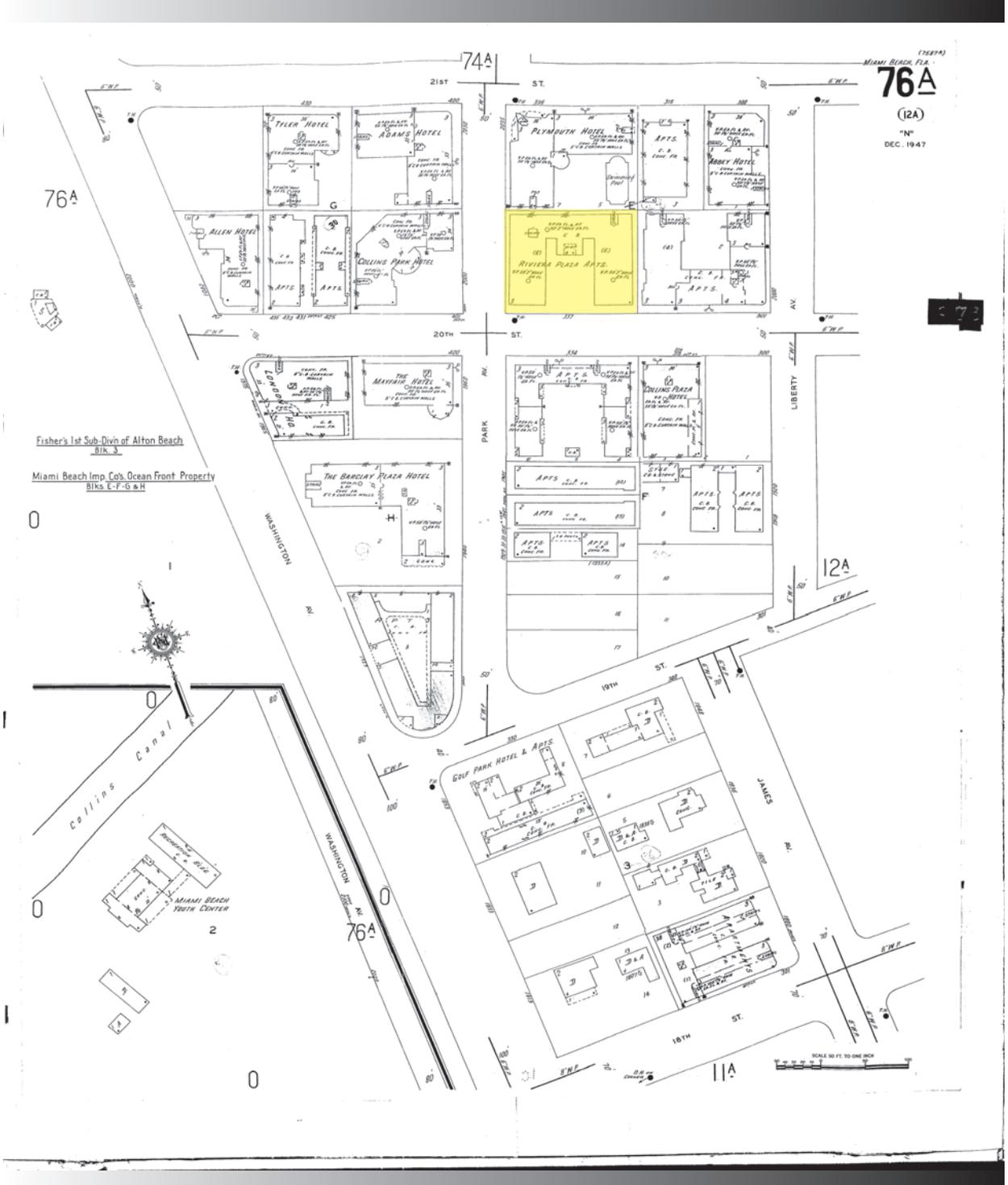
Original photographs of the building show balustrades, second floor balconies, carved masonry brackets, faux arcaded loggias, arched and moulded entries, twin arched windows and an arcaded entrance loggia, as well as Mediterranean-style awnings. The Riviera Plaza is an excellent early example of the style, with finely detailed, strongly representative Mediterranean Revival features and exhibiting an overall cohesion.

### **Architect:**

R.A. Preas was a Miami-based architect who specialized in Spanish-style architecture, with six known buildings on Miami Beach. In addition to the Riviera Plaza, others include the Van Ness Hotel at 1390 Ocean Drive and Habana Hotel at 1300 Drexel Avenue, in the Art Deco style; and the Euclid Apartments at 802 Euclid Avenue, Kew Gardens Apartments at 1619 Jefferson Avenue, and a duplex at 935 Meridian Avenue in the Mediterranean Revival style.



Sanborn map, 1921



Sanborn map, 1947



Historical photographs dated 1/2/1925, Matlack Collection at HistoryMiami Museum



Historical photograph dated 5/14/1925, Matlack Collection at HistoryMiami Museum



Historical photograph dated 6/7/1929, Matlack Collection at HistoryMiami Museum



Historical photograph dated 1936, Miami News Collection at HistoryMiami Museum



Historical photograph, undated. Miami News Collection at HistoryMiami Museum



Historical photograph dated 1988, City of Miami Beach DRB 1377



Historical photographs, 1990s Courtesy Robert Saland (prior Owner)



Historical photographs, 1990s. Courtesy Robert Saland (prior Owner)



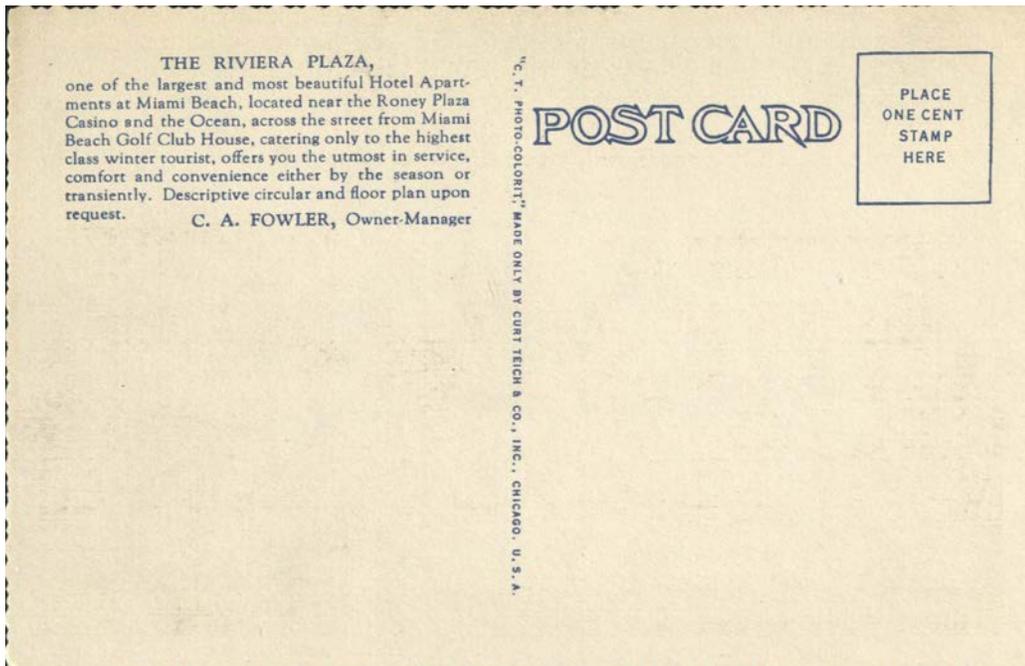
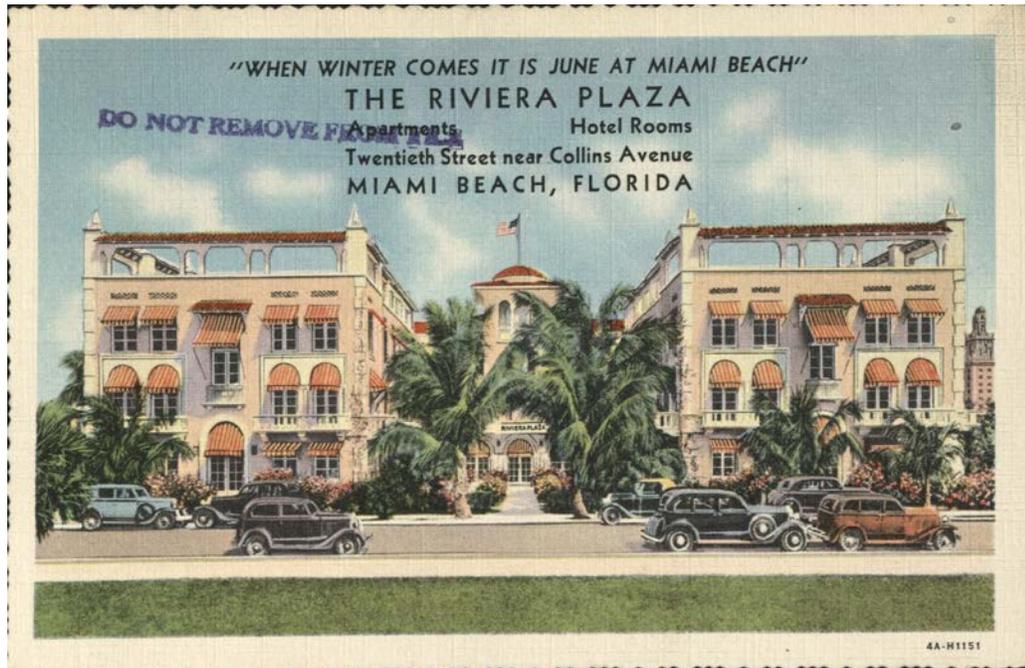
Historical photographs, undated. Courtesy Robert Saland (prior Owner)

**Riviera Plaza**  
337 20th Street  
Miami Beach, Florida



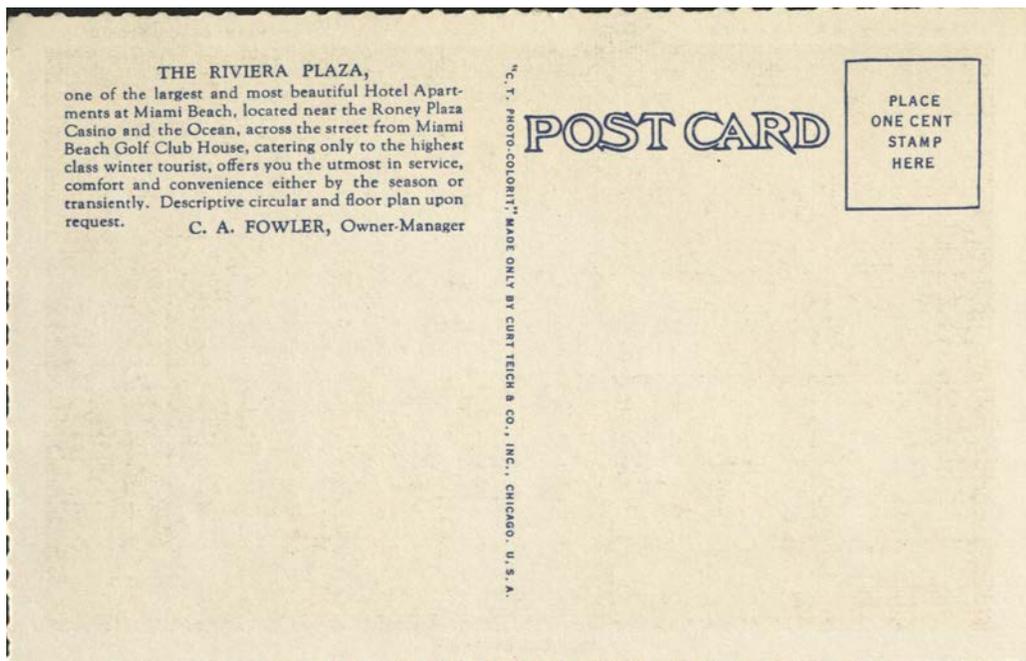
Historic postcard, Florida Postcard Collection at University of Miami Special Collections

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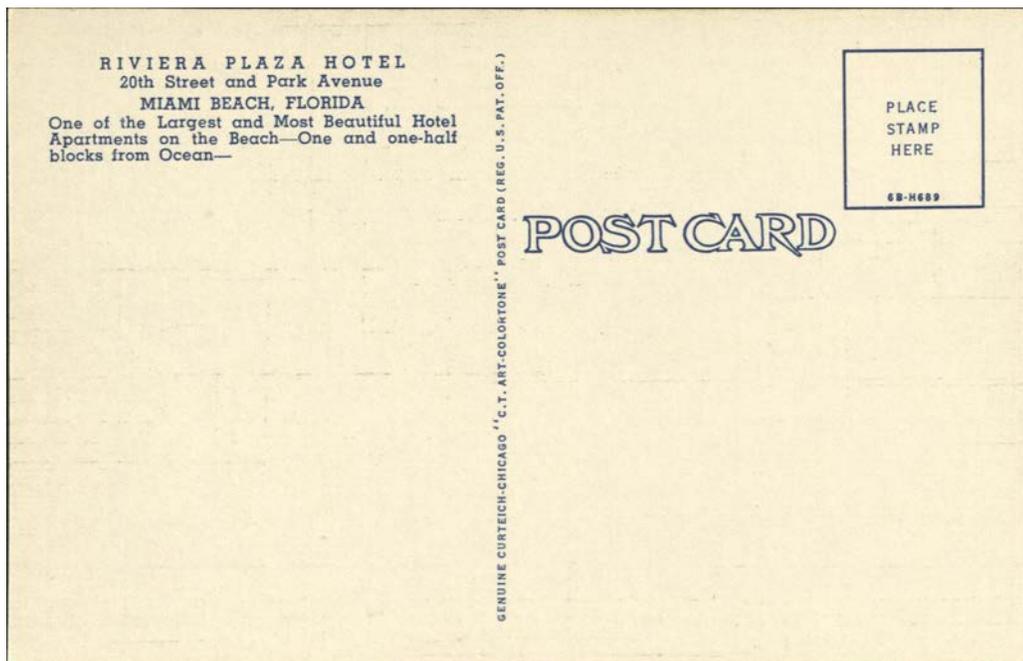
Historic postcard, Curt Teich Postcard Archives at the Newberry Library

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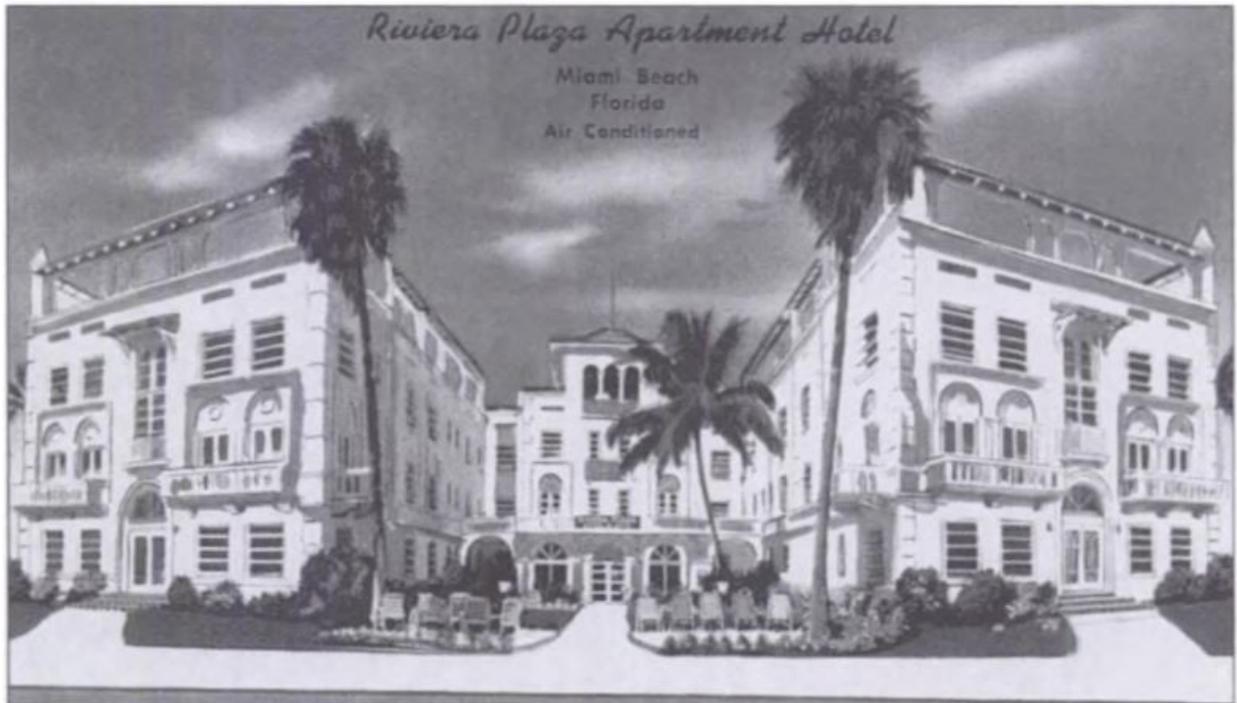


Historic postcard, Curt Teich Postcard Archives at the Newberry Library

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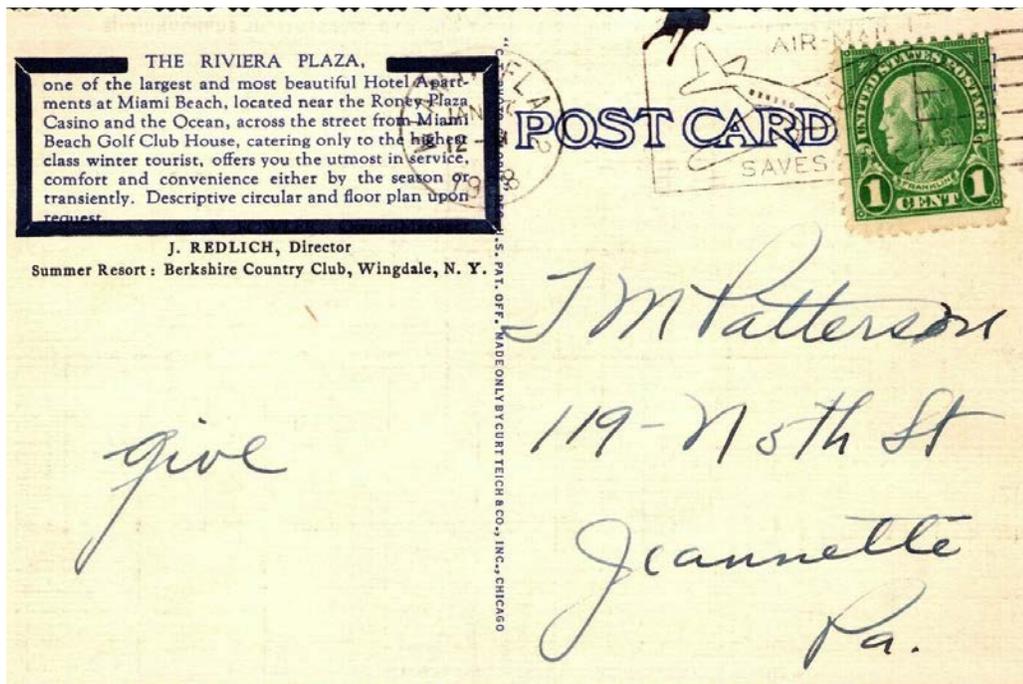
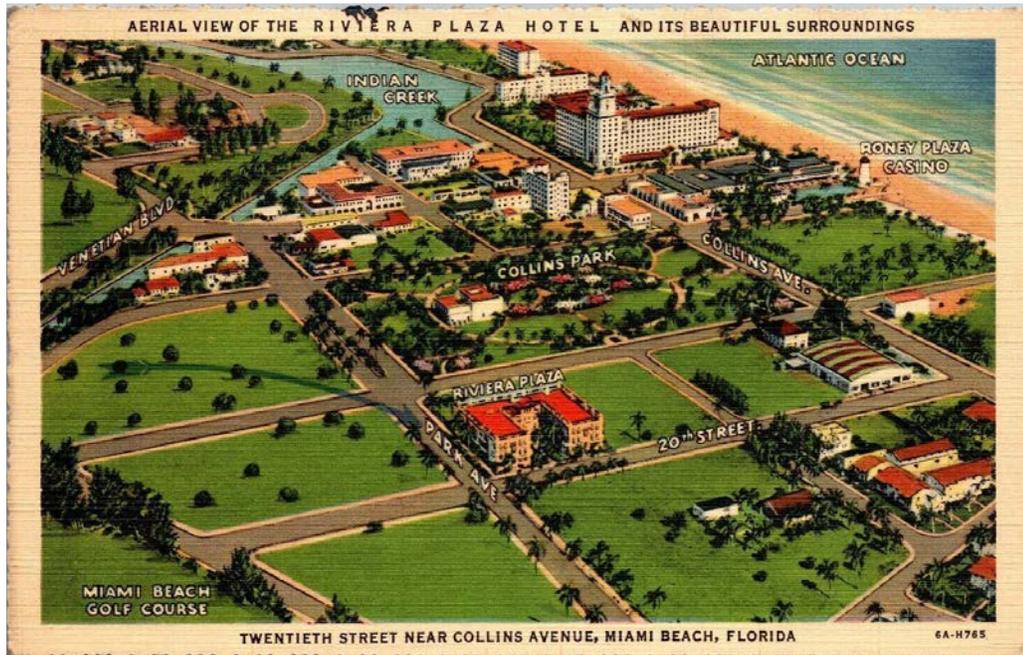


Historic postcard, Curt Teich Postcard Archives at the Newberry Library



The Riviera Plaza was built in 1924, when the Mediterranean Revival style was the prevalent architectural style in the area. With its barrel roofs, arched windows, and elaborate details, the hotel exudes a graceful ambience to this day. R.A. Preas designed the apartment-hotel, which is located at 337 Twentieth Street, across from the Collins Park Hotel. (Published by Colourpicture.)

Riviera Plaza  
337 20th Street  
Miami Beach, Florida



Historic postcard, Curt Teich Collection.

## RIVIERA PLAZA WILL BE READY DECEMBER 1

Stucco work on the Riviera Plaza apartment building at Sheridan Road and Twentieth Street is nearly completed and the interior decorating has been started. The building will be ready for occupancy about December 1.

Ninety apartments, all with private bath, are in the building, which will cost \$250,000 when finished. A feature of the design is cypress ceilings in foyer and lobby.

C. A. Fowler is the owner, R. A. Preas the architect and the O'Neill-Orr Construction Company the contractor.

Newspaper clipping dated November 21, 1924, Miami Herald

his office was opened June 1.

The Riviera Plaza is a three-story structure, built about a beautiful tropical plaza. It has 39 large apartments and a number of attractive hotel rooms. The structure was built last summer.

Newspaper clipping dated November 25, 1925, Miami Herald

**AT MIAMI BEACH, FLA.**  
**RIVIERA PLAZA**  
**HOTEL, APARTMENTS** 5 Minutes' Walk from  
North Beach Casino



**Largest and Most Exclusive on Miami Beach**  
Adjacent First Tee of Golf Course. Bathing from special entrance of Hotel.  
Two and three room kitchen apartments and hotel rooms.  
Catering only to a select clientele. Booklet B upon request.

Rate per day, week, month or season. Apartments fully furnished,  
including linens, china-ware and silverware. Write or wire direct  
to hotel.

Newspaper Clipping dated February 28, 1926, Miami Herald

**LIVE AT THE BEACH!**

Near Roney Plaza Bathing Pools. Cool breezes all the time. Large hotel  
apartments, \$5, \$4, \$3 per day for 2 or 4 persons. Daily maid service.  
Bath. Use the kitchens if you wish; but there are restaurants nearby.  
Rooms with bath, \$2, \$2.50, \$3.

**RIVIERA PLAZA**  
Park Avenue at 20th Street.  
Electric car service passes house. Liberal discount by the month.

Newspaper clipping dated August 26, 1926, Miami Herald

**LOCATION**  
**AWAY** from the congested apart-  
ment house section, up near the  
Roney Plaza Casino and golf club  
house—two streets from the ocean.

**RIVIERA PLAZA**  
Catering to the Winter Tourist  
**HOTEL ROOMS WITH BATH**  
By day, week, month or season.  
**HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS 4 PERSONS**  
**\$5 PER DAY**  
**APTS. BY WEEK, MONTH OR SEASON**  
Rates include daily maid service  
and electric service for cooking,  
lighting, refrigeration.  
**TWENTIETH STREET**  
**NEAR COLLINS AVE.**  
Telephone 5-3373.

Newspaper Clipping dated January 11, 1936, Miami Herald

# Building Data



**ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS**

61819 Pearce Roofing Co: Re-roof - \$175 - May 9, 1966  
**Building Permits:** # 23896 Roof repairs - Ideal Roofing Co: \$ 252.50 Jan. 7, 1947

# 33070 Gunite, wet sand-blasting, repairs to building: \$ 6,400.....July 17, 1950  
 # 33479 Watson Contracting Company \$ 2,900.....Sept. 5, 1950  
 # 33541 Painting inside only- Jack Greco, contr. Irving Fischer, contractor  
 Elevator shaft - 8' x 7' -3 stories- Riley & Ross, engr: \$ 3,850.....Sept. 13, 1950  
 # 33588 Installing awning type windows all over building- Miami Aluminum Products, contr: \$ 5,000.....Sept. 19, 1950

# 33693 Painting window frames - Martin Kirik & Clifford Crosby \$ 500..... Oct. 4, 1950  
 # 34340 Painting - Acarr Company, contr. \$ 225..... Nov. 28, 1950  
 # 36547 One pole sign-24 sq.ft. & One flat wall sign-22 sq.ft.- Total 46 sq.ft.- Acollite Neon, contr. \$ 400.....Aug. 10, 1951  
 # 38351 Installing 15 new bath rooms- all inside work- MacKay & Gibbs, arch: Herman Popkin, contr: \$ 7,500.... April 25, 1952  
 # 38542 Air conditioning -58 window units-United Engineering Corp. \$ 500..... May 22, 1952

# 46123 H. Popkin Remodel 10 old kitchens..no new kitchens added: \$ 2,000 Oct. 20, 1954  
**Plumbing Permits:** #54002 C. E. Morgan: 2-3/4 ton window air conditioners- \$400-7/26/57 OK 10/21/57 Plaag  
 #59013 Syjack Construction: remove 2 window overhangs fr. of bldg.; \$250, 5/18/59

# 30360 Pates - 2 Clean-outs - Aug. 25, 1950  
 # 30520 Chas. Pates; 20 sprinkler heads - Sept. 28, 1950  
 # 33353 Serota Plumbing Co.: 6 water closets, 6 lavatories, 6 bath tubs- May 15, 1952  
 # 33423 Nathan Serota: 6 water closets, 6 lavatories, 6 bath tubs- June 2, 1952

**a. Power & Light Co. #33851 Hurst Drilling & Equipment Co.: One 2 1/2" drain well for Vault Drainage (in front of 337 20th St.) - Sept. 3, 1952**  
 # 36639 Serota Plumbing....12 sinks, replace only.....December 9, 1954 OK, Kotaman 12/9/1954  
 #43613 M. S. Plumbing Co.: 1 gas heater - 1/10/63  
 #43629 Peoples Gas Co.: 1 gas heater - 1/22/63

**Electrical Permits:** # 20727 LaVigne Electric: 7 switch outlets, 7 light outlets, 1 receptacle, 7 fixtures, Nov. 29, 1944

# 20789 Biscayne Electric: 1 Receptacle Dec. 16, 1944  
 # 32920 Hosack Electric: 1 motor - Dec. 14, 1950 - P. Meginniss 12/15/50  
 # 34681 Acollite Neon: 3 Neon transformers, Aug. 10, 1951  
 # 36532 Lyon Electric: 86 appliance outlets, 4 centers of distribution, 1 services-equipment- 8-5-52 OK-P. Meginniss May 13, 1952

# 36616 Lyon Electric Co: 18 switch outlets, 18 light outlets, 18 fixtures 6 refrigerators 6 iron outlets, 6 space heaters(bath), 6 centers of distribution- May 28, 1952 OK P. M.  
 #36755 Lyon Electric: 18 Switch outlets, 18 Light outlets, 18 Fixtures, 6 Refrigerators, 6 Irons, 6 space heaters, 6 Centers of distributions, June 16, 1952 OK- P. Meginniss 8-5-52

#43282 Replace old surface boxes to recess.....October 27, 1954 (astor Electric) OK Rosser 2/24/55  
 #50609 Lyon Elec: 2 Motors (LHP) - August 6, 1957 OK 8-8-57 Fidler

LOT: 648 BLOCK: E SUBDIVISION: MB Corp. C O F ADDRESS: 337-20th

**ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS**

- #22099 4/30/82 George A. Simone - repair and replace roof joists and redeck existing roof \$1,000.
- BUILDING PERMITS** #22113 5/4/82 Robert Doug Clifton - exterior painting beige-white trim 16B \$3,270.
- #22187 5/13/82 Luster Stone demolition of existing slab, repour same cap w/epoxy chatt. sidewalk \$2,642.
- # #27519 10/10/85 owner replace 15 ft of ceiling paint hall lobby \$2,500.
- #27549 10/17/85 owner compy with letter - fire damage repair, replace doors, misc repairs, 10 doors interior x rated fire \$2,000.
- #28890 7/21/86 Tekva Inc - painting building \$5,500.
- #28957 8/1/86 Tekva Inc - exploratory permit under supervision of P.Eng. \$300. 1. special inspect required. 2 explorer only. repairs will require an additional permit
- #29541 12/9/86 Tekva Inc - covered exploration repairs per exploratory permit \$999.
- #29633 1/5/87 owner/bldger fireall construct at top of 2nd fl stairway and door \$500.

**PLUMBING PERMITS** #61645 7/17/84 Silver Plumb - gas piping repair

**ELECTRICAL PERMITS** #80375 7/19/85 Ocean Elect - repair fire damage

COASTAL CONTROL ZONE  
 CUMULATIVE COST OF CONSTRUCTION OF PERMITS ISSUED

DATE ISSUED	PROCESS NO.	DESCRIPTION OF WORK	WORK COST	CUMULATIVE WORK COST	APPRAISED BLDG. VALUE BEFORE REMODEL %	COMMENTS	BUILDING PERMIT NO.
1-5-87		CONSTRUCT FIREWALL AND FL. STAIRWAY	\$ 500	\$ 500			29633

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH

CITY HALL 1700 CONVENTION CENTER DRIVE MIAMI BEACH FLORIDA 33139



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

CITY HALL  
1700 CONVENTION CENTER DRIVE  
TELEPHONE: 673-7550

17020

TO: PAUL GIOIA  
BUILDING DIRECTOR

FROM: JUD KURLANCHEEK *(P)*  
PLANNING AND ZONING DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: DESIGN REVIEW FILE NO. 1377J  
RIVIERA PLAZA APARTMENTS  
337 TWENTIETH STREET

October 20, 1988

*P.G. Gioia*

**JAM**

OCT 20 1988

*Eng for Bldg Card*

At its October 11, 1988 meeting, the Design Review Board granted final approval of the above noted project subject to the following conditions:

1. Replacement windows shall duplicate size and pattern of originals and be historically documented, if possible;
2. Details shall be provided for replacement doors which shall be consistent with originals;
3. A detailed drawing of the new iron fence proposed for the entry to the courtyard shall be provided to staff for approval;
4. Existing iron railings shall be retained and restored;
5. Treatment of the lobby shall be detailed on the plans; and,
6. The applicant shall provide documentation to staff that the owner of the property is in support of the project application.

In order to ensure that the appropriate staff is aware of these requirements, please record this action on the building card for the subject property. If the building permit is not issued within one (1) year of the meeting date (October 11, 1988) the Design Review Board approval will become void.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

JK/JD  
METROPG

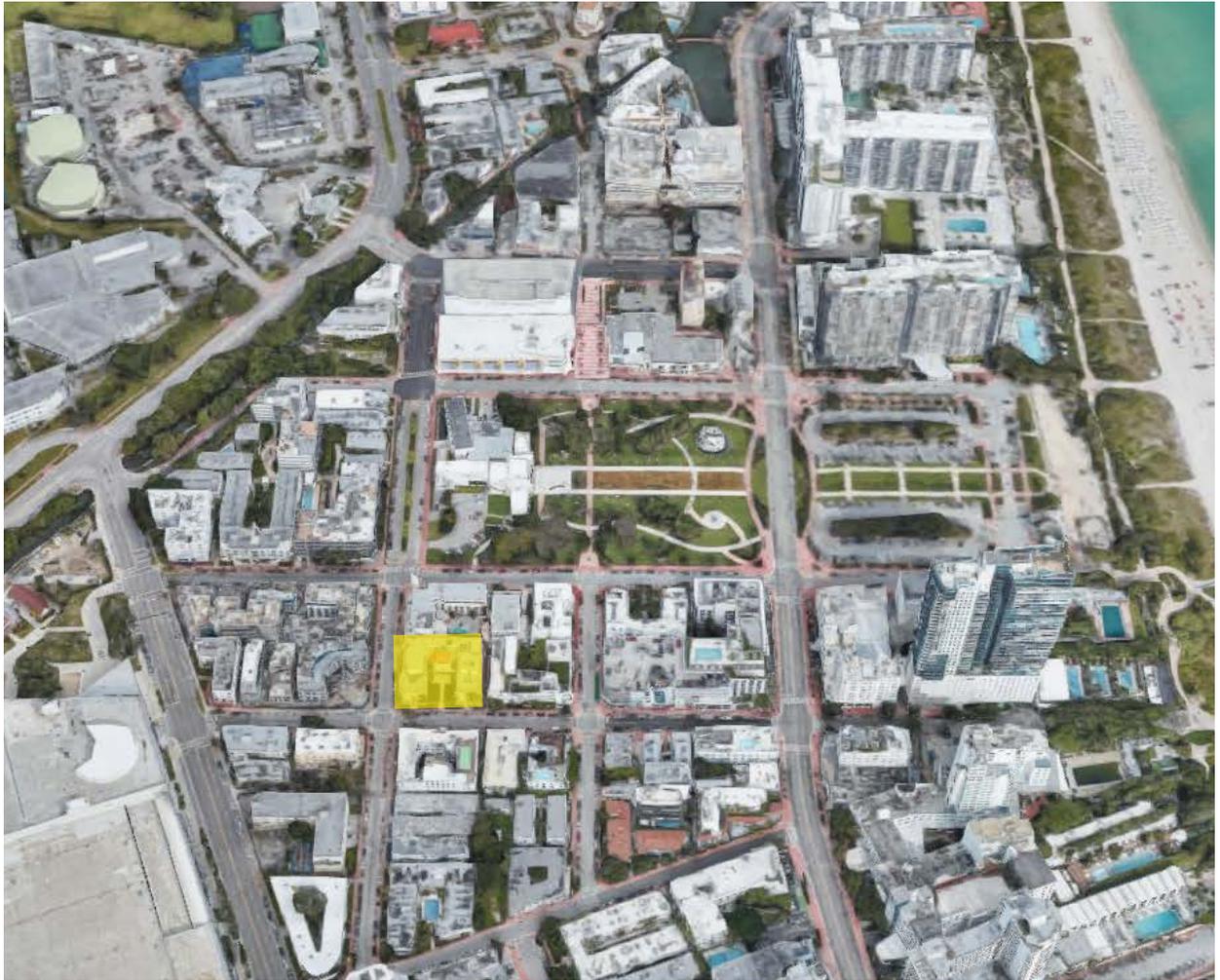
*Vertical stamp: OCT 20 1988*

COASTAL CONTROL ZONE  
 CUMULATIVE COST OF CONSTRUCTION OF PERMITS ISSUED

DATE ISSUED	PROCESS NO.	DESCRIPTION OF WORK	WORK COST	CUMULATIVE WORK COST	APPRAISED BLDG. VALUE BEFORE REMODEL %	COMMENTS	BUILDING PERMIT NO.
3-24-88		BOARD UP BUILDING	\$1,000.00				32040
4-5-88		EXTERIOR PAINTING	\$1,000.00				82097

Building Card. City of Miami Beach.

# Photo Survey



Aerial, 2022



1



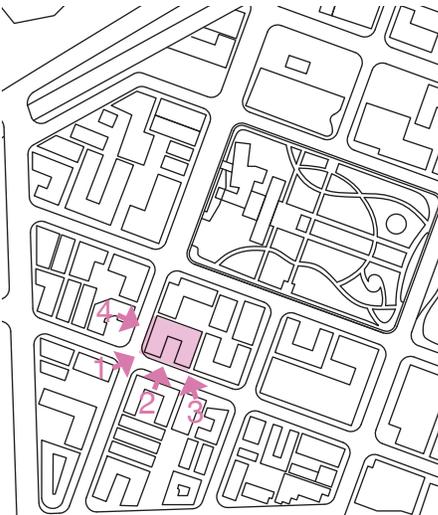
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PHOTOS TAKEN DECEMBER 16, 2022



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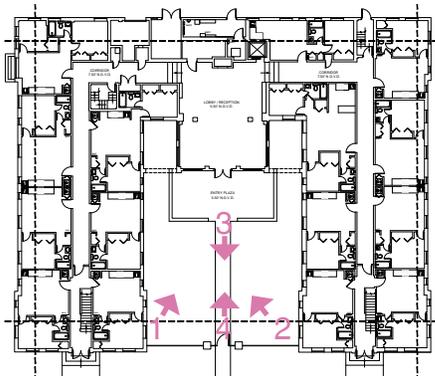
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PHOTOS TAKEN DECEMBER 16, 2022

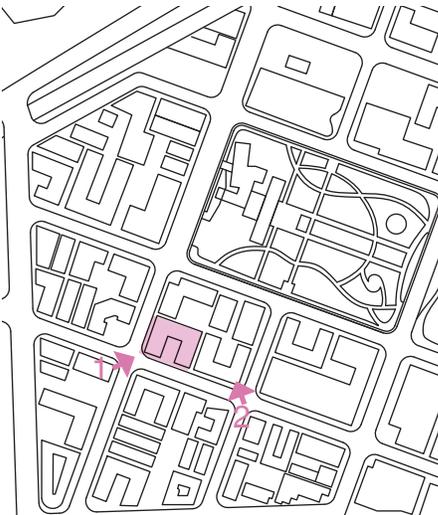
Context



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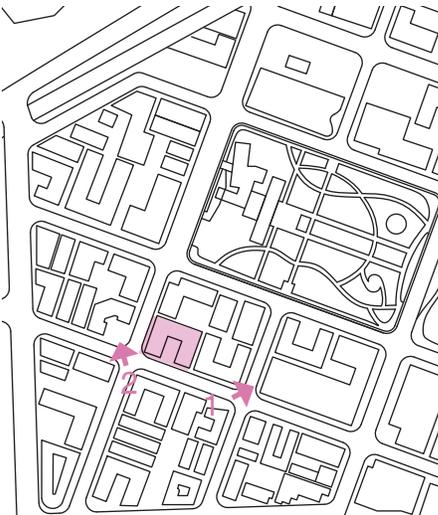
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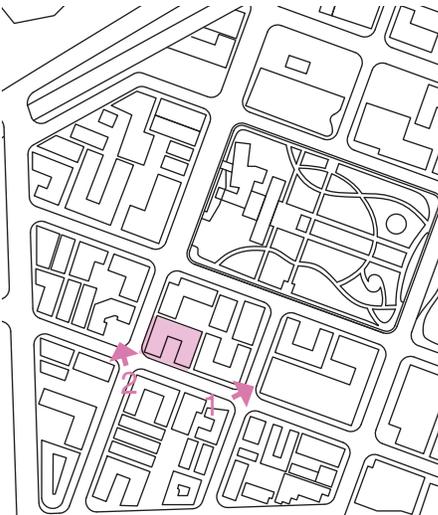
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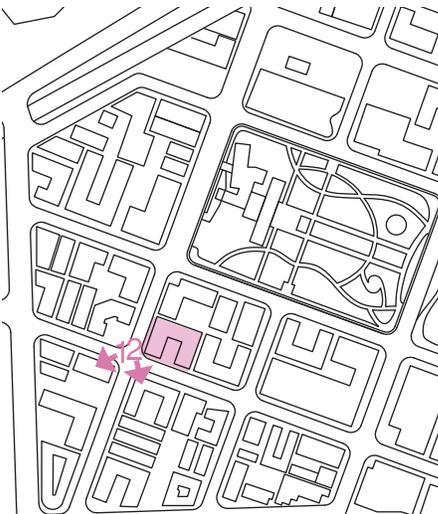
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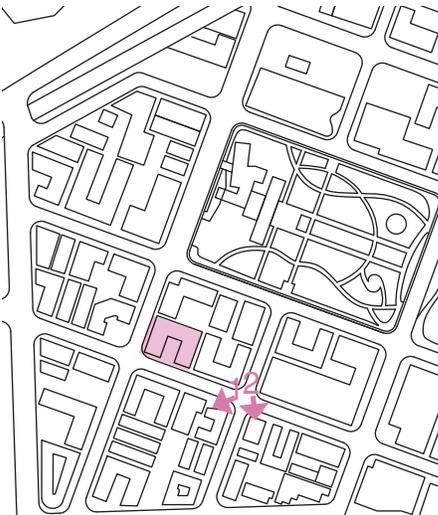
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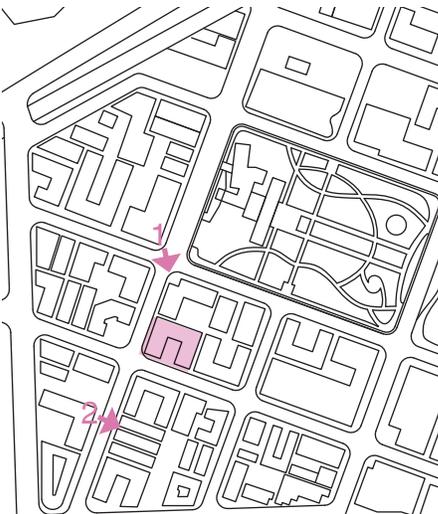
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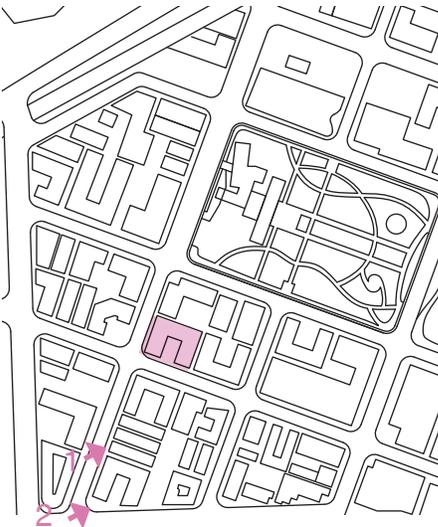
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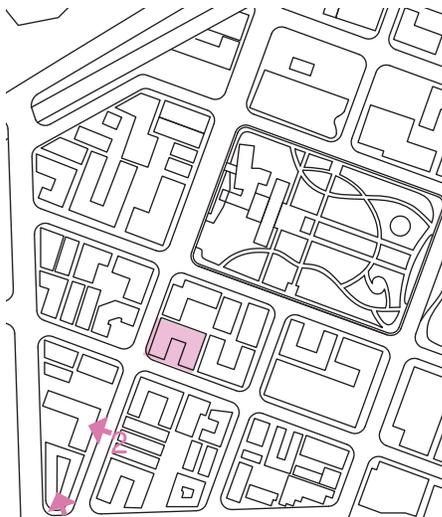
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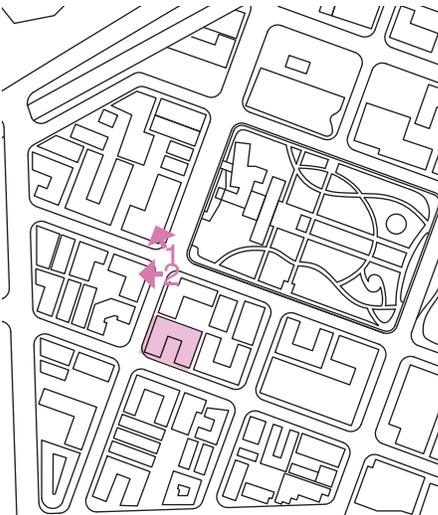
Context



1



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PHOTOS TAKEN DECEMBER 16, 2022

Context



Front facade of 337 20th Street



20th Street looking Northeast



20th Street looking Northwest



20th Street Facade - Main entry



20th Street Facade- windows at ground level



Facade Details



Park Avenue Facade



Park Avenue Facade - windows at ground level



(Rear) looking East



(Rear) looking West



Looking North through West sideyard



Looking South through West sideyard



Ground floor interior



Ground floor interior



Ground floor looking through main entrance toward 20th Street



Ground floor - historic fireplace