

# MIAMI BEACH

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT

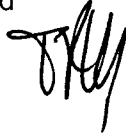
### Staff Report & Recommendation

### Historic Preservation Board

TO: Chairperson and Members  
Historic Preservation Board

DATE: September 12, 2017

FROM: Thomas R. Mooney, AICP  
Planning Director



SUBJECT: HPB17-0130, **2301 Normandy Drive – International Inn.**

A presentation by the City of Miami Beach Planning Department to the Historic Preservation Board of a Preliminary Evaluation and Recommendation Report relative to the possible historic designation of 2301 Normandy Drive, as an individual local historic site.

#### **SITE DATA**

Legal Description:

Lots 15 thru 18, Block 40, Miami View Section – Isles of Normandy Part 3, According to the Plat Thereof, as Recorded in Plat Book 40, Page 33, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Zoning:

RM-1, Residential Multi Family, low intensity

Future Land Use Designation:

RM-1, Residential Multi Family, low intensity

Lot Size:

36,558 S.F. / 1.25 Max FAR

Existing Use/Condition:

Hotel w/accessory restaurant, \*non-conforming use

#### **BACKGROUND**

On May 9, 2017, the Historic Preservation Board passed a motion (6-0, 1 absent), directing the Planning Department to prepare a Preliminary Evaluation and Recommendation Report relative to this possible designation of the property located at 2301 Normandy Drive as a local historic site.

#### **DESIGNATION PROCESS**

The process of historic designation is delineated in Sections 118-591 through 118-593 in Subpart B of the Land Development Regulations of the City Code (Chapter 118, Article X, Division 4). An outline of this process is delineated below.

Step One: A request for designation is made either by the City Commission, the Historic Preservation Board, other agencies and organizations as listed in the Land Development Regulations of the City Code, or the property owners involved. Proposals for designation shall include a completed application form available from the Planning Department.

Step Two: The Planning Department prepares a preliminary evaluation report with recommendations for consideration by the Board.

Step Three: The Historic Preservation Board considers the preliminary evaluation to determine if proceeding with a designation report is warranted.

The designation report is an historical and architectural analysis of the proposed district or site. The report:

- 1) describes the historic, architectural, and/or archeological significance of the property or subject area proposed for Historical Site or District designation;
- 2) recommends Evaluation Guidelines to be used by the Board to evaluate the appropriateness and compatibility of the proposed Developments affecting the designated Site or District; and
- 3) will serve as an attachment to the Land Development Regulations of the City Code.

Step Four: The designation report is presented to the Historic Preservation Board at a public hearing. If the Historic Preservation Board determines that the proposed site or district satisfies the requirements for designation as set forth in the Land Development Regulations of the City Code, the Historic Preservation Board transmits a recommendation in favor of designation to the Planning Board and City Commission.

Step Five: The Planning Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed designation, and shall consider the proposed historic designation as an amendment to the Land Development Regulations of the City Code and, subsequently, transmit its recommendation to the City Commission.

Step Six: The City Commission may adopt an amendment to the Land Development Regulations of the City Code which thereby designates the Historic Preservation Site or Historic District after (1) public hearing for a parcel of land less than ten (10) contiguous acres or after (2) public hearings for a parcel of land which is more than ten (10) contiguous acres.

## **PRELIMINARY EVALUATION**

### **Historical Context**

In 1923, Henri Levy purchased the area which would become Normandy Isles from Carl Fisher. Originally named Meade-Warner Island, the tract comprised 450 acres on two natural mangrove islands in Biscayne Bay. Much of the land was initially under water and for over two years, huge dredges pumped up the bay bottom to create additional land mass. In 1925, Henri Levy's Normandy Beach Properties Corporation began development of Normandy Isles. Isle of Normandy, the southernmost of the two islands shown in the photograph below, required two years to clear land, construct seawalls and dredge. The final and most challenging phase of the

project was dredging and filling a swampy land mass directly to the west extending the islands further in Biscayne Bay.



*Aerial photograph, 1923*



*Aerial photograph, 1929*

Levy then worked on realizing his dream of connecting his Miami Beach properties to the mainland with a causeway across Biscayne Bay linking North Beach to mainland Miami's

growing northern subdivisions. The Miami Beach City Council endorsed the causeway project in December 1925, making it possible to proceed with preliminary work. The causeway, completed in 1929, can be seen in the photograph below.

It is called the 79th Street Causeway for its western connection at 79th Street in Miami; at its eastern end it connects to 71st Street on Normandy Isle and Miami Beach. When completed in 1929, this causeway was a much needed new automotive link across Biscayne Bay, with the County Causeway farther south.

Although conceived, planned and themed in the 1920's, and initially developed in the 1920's and 30's, Normandy Isles was largely urbanized in the post-World War II period.

### **The Post War Modern Style of Architecture in Miami Beach (about 1945 to 1967)**

In order to better understand the Post-War Modern or Miami Modern (MiMo) style of architecture, it is important to view this architectural movement in the context of the historical, political, social, economic, and technological changes that were taking place during this period worldwide, nationwide, and locally.

Between 1942 and 1945 Miami Beach played a significant role WWII. Nearly half a million men took over more than 300 hotels and apartment buildings for housing and training headquarters by the Army Air Forces Technical Training Command. By the time the war ended, one-fourth of all Army Air Force officers and one-fifth of the military's enlisted men had been trained in Miami Beach. Hotel rooms became barracks, hotel dining rooms became mess halls, a movie theater became a testing center, hotels became administrative offices, hotel pools and the ocean were used to teach life saving techniques, golf courses became parade grounds, and the beach was used for rifle ranges and physical training. Another group of hotels and buildings served as an Army Redistribution Station for infantrymen returning from battle. Many of the buildings are still in operation today and are visited by thousands of tourists each year.

Many of these young servicemen and women returned after the war. The influx of new residents and visitors resulted in a housing construction boom during the 1950s, when hundreds of Post War Modern style buildings were erected throughout the City.

**Architectural Description** - After a hiatus in construction due to World War II, the Post- War Modern style picked up where Art Deco left off with the added influences of a booming post-war economy, new technologies such as air conditioning, the prevalence of the sophisticated, affordable, and reliable new automobiles, and a feeling of national optimism. The local expression of this style was dubbed Miami Modern or MiMo by the Greater Metropolitan Miami area's Urban Arts Committee in about 2004 (much as the term Art Deco was first applied about 1965 when the style actually first appeared in the 1920s).

From about 1948 to 1966, the widely popular Post War Modern style was frequently applied to hotels, commercial buildings, apartment houses, and single family homes throughout Miami Beach. Post War Modern style buildings generally made an extensive use of glass and poured concrete. They often mixed two or more textured surfaces together (i.e. stucco with stone, brick, or mosaic tile as well as contrasting smooth and patterned stucco surfaces). The style featured such dramatic elements as accordion-like folded plate roofs and walls, acute as well as subtle angles, dynamic parabolas, delta wing shapes, sweeping curved walls, and soaring pylons.



Other commonly occurring design elements and materials that were added to the architectural vocabulary of the Post War Modern style structures included: brise soleil, architectural accents with exotic themes and often wall sculptures in relief, brick or stone faced feature areas, cast concrete decorative panels with geometric patterns, and a remarkable use of architectural 'breeze block' in a wide variety of design patterns lending itself so well to natural air flow in this tropical environment . Architect Morris Lapidus further expanded the architectural language of this style when he made popular "cheese holes", "woggles", and "beanpoles".

The hotels in the Post-War Modern style often incorporated an expansive use of glass curtain walls, cantilevered asymmetrical roofs, leaping arches, dramatic fin walls, floating planes, architectural bridges, and grand entrance porte cocheres. Primary facades were sometimes graced with bold neon signs or logos in order to catch the eye of passing motorists. Sometimes, "sky signs" were mounted on rooftop features or on parapet walls. Color was an essential ingredient of signage. The fenestration was often highlighted with boxed or corner windows, as well as continuous ribbon windows and eyebrows. The hotels often took on exotic or futuristic forms, using architecture as advertising in an effort to outdo one another in competing for business.

### **2301 Normandy Drive – International Inn**

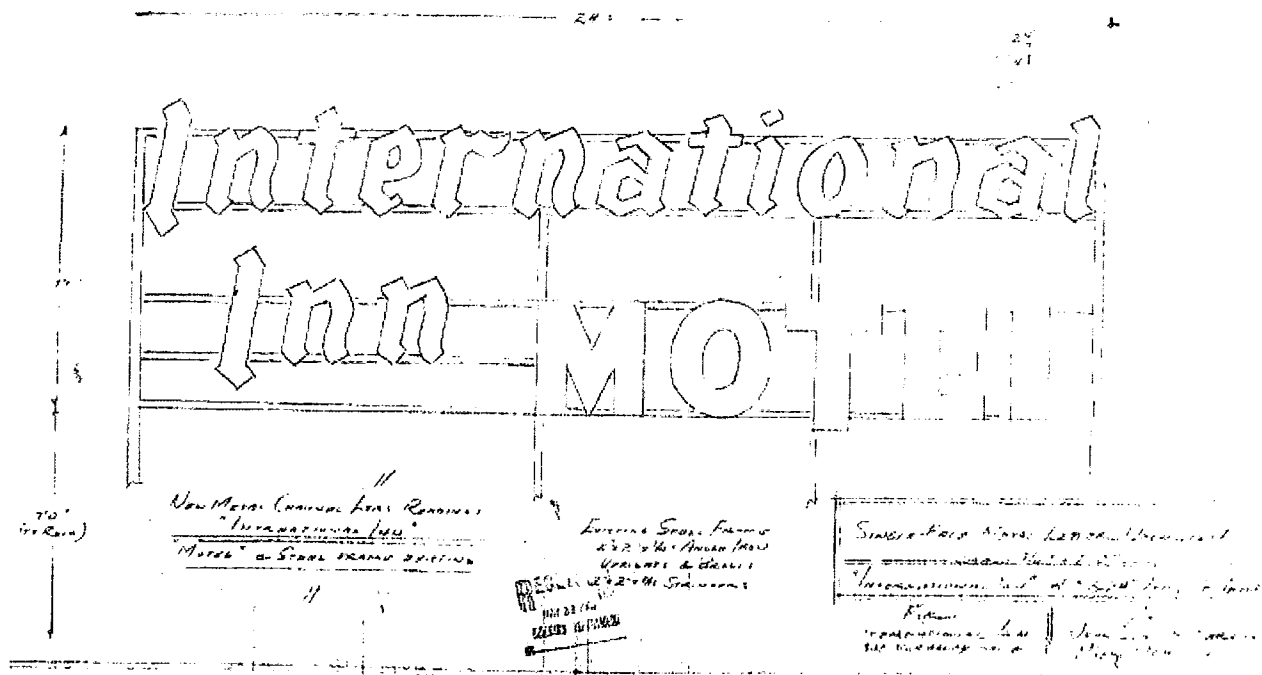
The International Inn is located at the western edge of Normandy Isles immediately adjacent to the 79<sup>th</sup> Street Causeway. This location was likely strategically chosen to capture motorist's attention as they were traveling eastward from the City of Miami into Miami Beach. The property consists of three lots and contains a surface parking lot on the eastern portion of the site and a pool deck along the western portion facing Biscayne Bay.



*Carnival Motel Postcard, undated*

The International Inn has an I-shape plan, with the central guest room bar flanked on the north by an additional guest room wing and on the south by a lobby and restaurant. Originally named the Carnival Motel, the existing 2-story building was constructed in 1956 and designed by architect Melvin Grossman in the Post War Modern style of architecture. City Building Department records indicate the property was originally built as an Apartment-Motel, with 34 1-bedroom, 2-bathroom apartments and 3 hotel rooms, and also contained a lobby and coffee shop.

The name of the motel was changed to the International Inn in 1963, as evidenced in Building Permit #69448 for the new roof signage. While the signage has been modified to remove the word 'Motel', it remains today.



Sign Elevation, Permit #69448, 1963

The existing building and site appear to be almost entirely consistent with the original design. Existing significant architectural features indicative of the Post War Modern style of architecture include exterior walkways and second floor catwalks accessing guest rooms, breeze block details, overhanging roof eaves, exuberant neon roof signage and a dramatic 2-story lobby with floor to ceiling glass, angled columns and sweeping roof structure.

A 40-year recertification (BR160143\_40YR2016-00130) approved on August 10, 2016, indicates the building is in good structural condition.

The International Inn was featured in 'Beyond the Box, Mid-Century Modern Architecture in Miami and New York', an exhibit curated by the Urban Arts Committee of Miami Beach and the Municipal Arts Society. The exhibit was showcased at the Municipal Arts Society of New York Urban Galleries between March 13th and May 8, 2002.



Beyond the Box Mid-Century Modern Architecture in Miami and New York

THE PROGRESSION FROM SOUTH TO NORTH ALONG MIAMI BEACH IS A PROGRESSION THROUGH RECENT AMERICAN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY FROM THE 1930s . . . THROUGH THE '40s . . . INTO THE FAMOUS HOTELS OF THE '50s AND '60s. WE FEEL THAT THIS PROGRESSION IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE ARCHITECTURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THIS COUNTRY AND SHOULD BE SEEN AS SUCH BY THOSE WHO CONTROL ITS SURVIVAL.

— DENISE SCOTT BROWN, 1973



International Inn/Miami Beach 1956

*Beyond the Box, Mid-Century Modern Architecture in Miami and New York' Exhibition Catalog  
2002, Page 14*

**Melvin Grossman** (d. 2003), an associate with Albert Anis in 1950, was also a protégé of master Post War Modern architect Morris Lapidus. In fact, all three collaborated on the Nautilus Hotel (1825 Collins Avenue) in 1950<sup>1</sup> and a year later on the Biltmore Terrace Hotel (8701 Collins Avenue).<sup>2</sup> Grossman and Lapidus partnered in designing the DiLido Hotel (One Lincoln Road) in 1953.

<sup>1</sup> M. Lapidus, *Too Much Is Never Enough*; Rizzoli, 1996, p.150; also "Hotel Roosevelt Plans Gala Birthday Opening, *Miami Herald*, Nov. 19, 1950

<sup>2</sup> Building Permit Card #27133 and Plans #37045, Miami Beach Building Department.

According to MiMo authorities Nash and Robinson, Grossman began as an engineer working for Lapidus and then, after turning down an offer to become partners, struck out on his own to become Lapidus' biggest imitator.<sup>3</sup>

Influenced by both Anis and Lapidus, Grossman would go on to design the Seville Hotel (2901 Collins Avenue) in 1955, the 593-room Deauville (6701 Collins Avenue) in 1957, and the Doral Beach Hotel (4833 Collins Avenue) in 1962. He also exported the MiMo style in designing the original Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas and the Acapulco Princess Hotel in Mexico.<sup>4</sup>

## **RELATION TO ORDINANCE CRITERIA – Preliminary Evaluation**

Sec. 118-592. - Criteria for designation.

(a) The historic preservation board shall have the authority to recommend that properties be designated as historic buildings, historic structures, historic improvements, historic landscape features, historic interiors (architecturally significant public portions only), historic sites, or historic districts if they are significant in the historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic or archeological heritage of the city, the county, state or nation. Such properties shall possess an integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling or association and meet at least one of the following criteria:

(1) Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the history of the city, the county, state or nation.

(2) Association with the lives of persons significant in the city's past history.

(3) Embody the distinctive characteristics of a historical period, architectural or design style or method of construction.

(4) Possess high artistic values.

(5) Represent the work of a master, serve as an outstanding or representative work of a master designer, architect or builder who contributed to our historical, aesthetic or architectural heritage.

(6) Have yielded, or are likely to yield information important in pre-history or history.

(7) Be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

(8) Consist of a geographically definable area that possesses a significant concentration of sites, buildings or structures united by historically significant past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development, whose components may lack individual distinction.

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<sup>3</sup> Nash and Robinson, *op. cit.*, p.73.

<sup>4</sup> Obituary, *Miami Herald*, November 12, 2003, p.4B.



- (b) A building, structure (including the public portions of the interior), improvement or landscape feature may be designated historic even if it has been altered if the alteration is reversible and the most significant architectural elements are intact and repairable.
- (c) The historic preservation board shall consider if the historic buildings, historic structures, historic improvements, historic landscape features, historic interiors (architecturally significant public portions only), historic sites, or historic districts comply with the sea level rise and resiliency review criteria in Chapter 133, Article II, as applicable, pursuant to Section 118-592.

Below are staff's preliminary findings:

- (a) **The historic preservation board shall have the authority to recommend that properties be designated as historic buildings, historic structures, historic improvements, historic landscape features, historic interiors (architecturally significant public portions only), historic sites, or historic districts if they are significant in the historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic or archeological heritage of the city, the county, state or nation. Such properties shall possess an integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling or association and meet at least one of the following criteria:**

- (1) **Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the history of the city, the county, state or nation;**

*Satisfied; the construction of the International Inn directly reflects the turn of events in America following World War II (WWII). The advent of reliable and affordable mass-produced automobiles and air transportation and the advent of air-conditioning during the early mid-century period, made year-round resort living in South Florida highly desirable and practical, as well as within the reach of America's middle class. Unprecedented development followed the American success in WWII when major new resort hotels and residential buildings were constructed. Development during this time was on a scale never before seen in South Florida. This event redefined the evolution of resort architecture in Miami Beach and Florida.*

*Furthermore, Miami Beach played a significant role as a training site and redistribution center for the U.S. Army-Air Forces during World War II. After the war, many veterans who had trained as recruits in Miami Beach returned here to vacation or to make their home.*

- (3) **Embody the distinctive characteristics of an historical period, architectural or design style or method of construction;**

*Satisfied; the International Inn embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Post War Modern style of architecture, the style of choice used by successful developers in the period that followed World War II in Miami Beach as well as other areas of South Florida. The structure incorporates cubic massing, dramatic angles, large expanses of glass, pipe columns, large roof overhangs, decorative breeze block elements, and exterior catwalks and outdoor stairways. Further, its*

*location adjacent to the 79<sup>th</sup> Street Causeway and exuberant neon roof signage facing Biscayne directly reflect the Post War automobile culture.*

**(4) Possesses high artistic values;**

**Satisfied;** *the International Inn, with its dramatic use of glass, acute angles and sweeping roof line, exemplifies high artistic values. A 2002 exhibit launched by the Municipal Art Society at the Urban Center Galleries on Madison Avenue entitled, "Beyond the Box – Mid-Century Modern Architecture in Miami and New York," which featured the International Inn, underscores the high artistic value of the architecture.*

**(5) Represent the work of a master, serve as an outstanding or representative work of a master designer, architect or builder who contributed to our historical, aesthetic or architectural heritage;**

**Satisfied;** *the International Inn was designed by Melvin Grossman, a prominent local architect who also designed the Seville, Deauville and Doral Beach hotels along Collins Avenue.*

**(b) A building, structure (including the public portions of the interior), improvement or landscape feature may be designated historic even if it has been altered if the alteration is reversible and the most significant architectural elements are intact and repairable.**

**Partially Satisfied;** the exterior of the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity with very limited modifications. The public interior areas have not been surveyed.

**(c) The historic preservation board shall consider if the historic buildings, historic structures, historic improvements, historic landscape features, historic interiors (architecturally significant public portions only), historic sites, or historic districts comply with the sea level rise and resiliency review criteria in Chapter 133, Article II, as applicable, pursuant to Section 118-592.**

(b) Criteria for ordinances, resolutions, or recommendations:

**(1) Whether the proposal affects an area that is vulnerable to the impacts of sea level rise, pursuant to adopted projections.**

[ESTIMATED from LIDAR and 1995 Partial Building Records] The building is located on a site that is at an elevation of approximately 2.9'NGVD. The ground floor elevation has not been determined.

At Mean High Water, Sea Level Rise is projected to be (NGVD Elevations):

- 2.31 to 2.64 by 2030 (near-term)
- 2.98 to 3.98 by 2060 (mid-term)
- 4.39 to 6.89 by 2100 (long-term)

**(2) Whether the proposal will increase the resiliency of the City with respect to sea level rise.**

The proposal complements near -term efforts to increase the resiliency of the City with respect to sea-level rise. Reevaluation may be necessary in the future for mid and long-term effects (year 2060 and beyond).

**(3) Whether the proposal is compatible with the City's sea level rise mitigation and resiliency efforts.**

The proposal is compatible with the City's near -term efforts to increase the resiliency of the City with respect to sea-level rise.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Therefore, based upon the evidence presented and the historical and architectural significance of the proposed historic site, and in accordance with Chapter 118, Article X, Division 4, of the Land Development Regulations of the City Code, the staff of the City of Miami Beach Planning Department recommends that the Historic Preservation Board direct staff to prepare a formal historic designation report for the proposed International Inn Historic Site.

Owner Tin - Lad Corp.

Lot 15-16-17 Block 40

General Contractor Robert L. Turpin

Architect M. Grossman

Zoning Regulations:

Building Size:

Certificate of Occupancy No. 3271 Feb. 25, 1957

Type of Construction #II & III CBS

PLUMBING Contractor #38535 Economy Plumbing Company

\*#38610 Economy Plumbing Co. 10/26/56  
(Coffee Shop) OK Rothman 1/22/57

Water Closets

74

Lavatories

75

Bath Tubs

71

Showers

Urinals

2

Sinks

34 - 1 slow sink

Dish Washing Machine

Laundry Trays

Laundry Washing Machines

Drinking Fountains

Floor Drains

2

Grease Traps

\*SINK 1

\* Safe Wastes

4

AIR CONDITIONING Contractor #52340 Airko Air Conditioning: One 5 Ton and One 10 Ton Package A.C. Units

SEPTIC TANK Contractor O.K. 1/30/57 15 Ton Cooling Tower: \$4500.00: December 19, 1956

OIL BURNER Contractor #38829 Fuel Oil Equip. Co. One Oil Burner - 550 Gal. Tank: Dec. 13, 1956: 437

SPRINKLER Contractor

ELECTRICAL Contractor #48780 B. Haskell Co.

OUTLETS

Switches 142

Ranges

Lights 240

Irons 32

Receptacles 300

Refrigerators 32

HEATERS

Water

Space

Motors 71, 0-1hp, 2, 2-5

Appliances

Centers of Distributions 9

Service 1

Violations

FIXTURES

Electrical Contractor

Date

Date

Permit No. 51603

Cost \$ 175 000

Subdivision ISLE OF NORMANDY

Miami View Section

Address

2100 Bay Drive 2120

Bond No.

6240

Engineer

Lot Size

160' x 150'

Height

21'

Use

APARTMENT-MOTEL: 34 Apartment Units, three

Roof built up

Roof built up

Down Spouts

Wells

Steam or Hot Water Boilers

ROUGH APPROVAL

OK ROTHMAN 10/5/56

FINAL APPROVAL

OK EMC 1/16/57

Gas Frylators

Gas Pressing Machine

Gas Vents for Stove

Gas Broilers

Gas Ranges 34

Gas Water Heaters

Gas Space Heaters

Gas Refrigerators

Gas Steam Tables

GAS Rough APPROVAL

GAS FINAL APPROVAL

OK Rothman 12/4/56

OK Cox 1/16/57

Temporary Service #48592 Haskell Electric 9/24/1956

Neon Transformers

Sign Outlets

Meter Change

Centers of Distributions 9

Service 1

Violations

FINAL APPROVAL

By Meginniss

Date 1/29/57

Alterations or Repairs Over



# ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS

Building Permits: #52177 50 x 20 Pool and 21 x 12 Underground Equipment Space. \$14,000.00  
Shim Construction Co.: November 29, 1956

OK Plaag 2/22/57

#52450 Watson Tanner: Seventy 3/4 Ton A.C. Units: \$14,000.00: January 9, 1957  
#52483 Electric Neon: 120 Sq. Ft. Roof Sign, 30 Sq. Ft. Pole Sign, 14 Sq. Ft. Wall Sign: \$2,000.00: January 7, 1957

#52965 Little River Marine: Dock- 6'x45' extending from the seawall into Biscayne Bay 45' with mooring piles- \$1700.00- ~~March 25, 1957~~  
#69448 Neon Sign & Service: Reletter existing roof sign 2' x 5.5 (11'); 24' x 2' (48'); Marquee sign 21 x 1 & 3 x 1 (27 sq.ft.) a total of 86 sq. ft. - \$1150. - 5/29/63

#69618 Owner, International Inn: Interior and exterior painting - \$1,000. - 6/24/63  
#69638 Dock & Marine Constr. Inc.: Repair existing dock and construct a 12' x 15' dock at west of existing dock - \$2000 6/26/63  
Plumbing Permits: #09556-Miami Marine Research-Restore 8 exist. wood piles cut off at sand line - \$1000 8-16-76  
(BUILDING PERMIT # 52405) One Ince Ince Salt Water Well: Shim Construction Co.: \$50.00: Jan. 4, 1957

#38883 B. K. Gunn & Sons, Inc.: 1 Pool Drain: January 7, 1957

#38984 Sungold Septic Tank Co.: 1-4 x 4 x 4 Drywell 1/29/57 O.K. Rothman 1/29/57

#58257 S & R Plumbing bus line 3-10-80  
#58495 - 1 meter set gas 5/30/80

Electrical Permits: #19271 Electro Neon Sign Co.: 11 Neon Transformers, 3 Sign Outlets: Jan. 11, 1957  
2301 Normandy Dr. #59933 Astor Elec: 2 cent. dist.-7/29/63  
2301 Normandy Dr. #62126 Frank Schafer, Inc.: 3 motors, 0-1 hp - 4/1/65

## BUILDING PERMITS - CONTINUED

#72876 Kennedy Roofing: Temporary roof repairs (approx. 25 sqs.) - \$850. - 11/4/64 OK Jenks 11/4/64  
#72902 Ed Bottom Roofing Co.: Roofing repairs - \$1,000 - 11/9/64 (2301 Normandy Dr.) OK Jenks 11/13/64  
#76098 - FLORIDA ROOFING CO.: - Roof Repairs - \$550.00 - 4/7/66







International  
Inn

INTERNATIONAL  
INN  
RM 5 \$45 SET 2 FREE

PHOTO  
BY  
JIMMY  
MAY  
GO TO THE  
MUSEUM



