



# HISTORIC RESOURCES REPORT

FOR

AQUA aka SEA DECK aka SUN DECK HOTEL & APARTMENTS

1530 COLLINS AVENUE

MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA 33139

BY

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FOR

1530 COLLINS LLC

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BAY HARBOR ISLANDS, FLORIDA 33154

FOR THE

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD

October 10, 2019

# 1530 COLLINS AVENUE



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NOTE THAT THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH / BUILDING DEPARTMENT RECORDS DESK WAS NOT ABLE TO LOCATE ANY ORIGINAL ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS FOR THIS PROPERTY.

# 1530 COLLINS AVENUE

## NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

The basic form and layout of the neighborhood was established during the early platting of property between 1912 and 1916. (1)

During the earliest period of development, the majority of buildings were of relatively simple wood frame construction, often with stucco surface. As the level of development increased following World War I, new, larger buildings were constructed in the Mediterranean Revival style. (2)

During these early years of development most structures were single family residential. Carl and Jane Fisher had been the first ones to build their home, "Shadows" at the foot of Lincoln Road and the Ocean. Soon others followed.

By the 1930's a majority of structures in South Beach were constructed in the Art Deco and Streamline Moderne architectural styles. Yet even during these heady years of construction there remained much open land and open parking lots in the neighborhood, as attested by the aerial photographs on the following page in this report.

*"All of these houses (south of Lincoln Road) met their demise due to zoning changes. ...Newton Roney bought the east end of Lincoln Road from Carl Fisher in 1925. By the 1930's the zoning here allowed hotels and apartments buildings, but in 1940, the Roney family sued the city to change the zoning to commercial use, arguing that "the character of the neighborhood had changed since the creation of the subdivision." (6) The suit was successful and.. beginning in 1946 all of these residences were re-developed into hotels and apartment buildings." (6)*

The photograph at right is of the house formerly standing at 230 Lincoln Road (SW corner of Collins Avenue), built in 1922 and designed by the Philadelphia architectural firm of McLanahan & Bencker (the successor firm to the venerable architectural firm of Price & McLanahan). The design was very much ahead of its time and was inspired by the Paris Art Moderne style then popular in Europe. With its tall rounded ornamental arched windows and strips of bas relief at the parapet it was probably the first Art Deco building in Miami Beach.. (7)

This Art Deco estate was the first property to be affected by this change in Zoning, and was demolished in 1946. The estate had occupied more than eight building lots. (8) |

This house also appears in the photo on the previous page as the residence to the extreme left with one arched window appearing through the palm trees.

During the 1950's and 1960's these open properties became sites for new mid century modern MiMo structures such as 1530 Collins Avenue. The west side of the 1500 block of Collins Avenue contains a notable collection of MiMo buildings.

..The neighborhood began to decline in the 1950's and 60's as tourist patterns changed and newer/larger hotels and apartment buildings were constructed to the north. Evolving into a lower cost neighborhood for retirees, the neighborhood remained stable until the 1970's and 1980's when increasingly poor and more transient residents occupied the area. (3)

The physical deterioration of buildings continued through the 1980's until the reduced property values combined with the availability of Federal Investment tax credits attracted rehabilitation-oriented developers, Architectural interest, reasonable rents, proximity to downtown, increased entertainment/cultural activities in southern Miami Beach began to attract young residents seeking an avant-garde environment, reminiscent of Greenwich Village or Coconut Grove. (4)





# 1941

Top: Aerial Photograph courtesy:  
City of Miami Beach Public Works

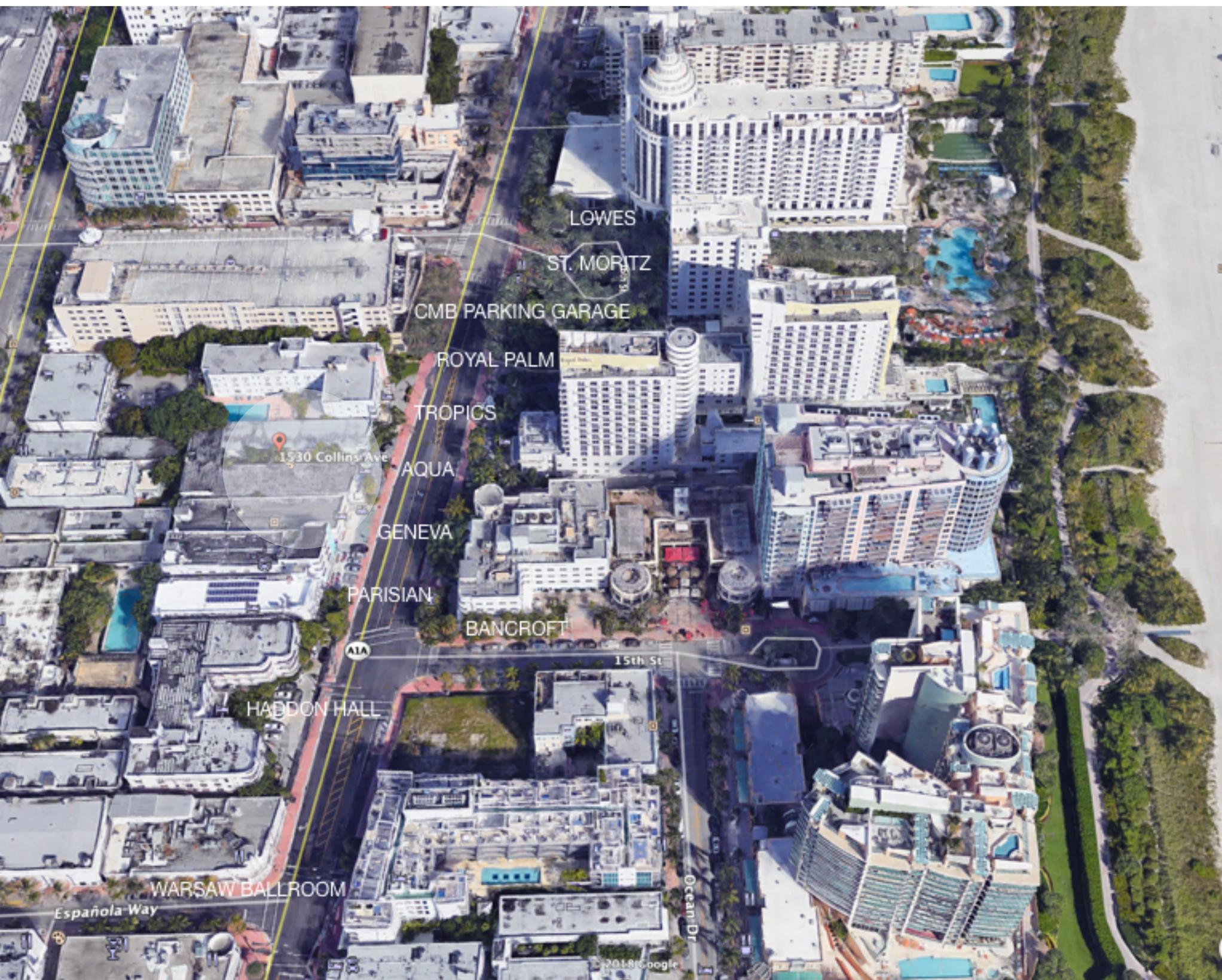
Right: 1924 photograph of homes on the south side  
of Lincoln Road between Collins and Washington  
Avenues when this was a residential neighborhood.  
(5)





1954

Aerial Photograph courtesy City of Miami Beach Public Works



# 2019

Aerial Photograph courtesy Google Earth

LOOKING NORTH ON COLLINS AVENUE IN MIAMI BEACH WITH NEIGHBORING BUILDINGS IDENTIFIED

The immediate neighborhood is a dichotomy of architectural forms. To the east of Collins are the large and tall oceanfront resort towers while to the west of Collins are the two and three story classic Art Deco and MiMo hotels of the 1930's through the 1970's retained with their facades intact - for the most part.

This block on the west side of Collins Avenue contains some of the most iconic smaller buildings in South Beach, including the Warsaw Ballroom and the Haddon Hall Hotel. It is ironic that 1530 Washington Avenue is by far the plainest building on the block.

NEIGHBORING BUILDINGS INCLUDE:

- \* TOP RIGHT: PARISIAN + GENEVA HOTELS (9)
- \* TOP LEFT: BANCROFT HOTEL (9)
- \* MIDDLE RIGHT: TROPICS MOTEL (9)
- \* BELOW: WARSAW BALLROOM WITH HADDON HALL BEHIND (10)





NEIGHBORING BUILDINGS:

\* TOP PHOTO: LOWES AND ST. MORITZ HOTELS (9)

\* LOWER PHOTO: ST. MORITZ + ROYAL PALM HOTELS (9)

# 1530 COLLINS AVENUE



ARCHITECTS: MacKay & Gibbs  
YEAR BUILT: 1953  
NAME ON BUILDING CARD: Sun-Deck Apartments  
NAME on 1953 SIGN: Sea Deck Apartments  
CURRENT NAME: Aqua Hotel & Suites  
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: MiMo  
HISTORIC DISTRICT STATUS: Contributing

#### LOCATED IN THE:

- \* 1979 National Register Miami Beach Architectural District
- \* 1989 Miami Beach Local Historic District

1530 Collins Avenue was designed and constructed in 1953 by MacKay & Gibbs Architects as a dual winged two story concrete and CMU multi-family hotel and apartment building.

The CMB Building Card states that this building was originally constructed with a total of 34 units. 22 units were 1-bedroom / 2-bath units and 12 were efficiency units.

1530 Collins Avenue is designed in the MiMo / Miami Modern style of architecture. See separate chapter on MacKay & Gibbs Architects in this report.

The front of the building is definitely the more important and interesting of the elevations. The photograph above was taken not long after the completion of the building.

The most prominent feature in this original front design is the center three-bay wide horizontal railings above the main entrance. The width of these railings looks to correspond with the width of the front entrance doors and window glass beneath.

The portion of the building enclosing the hotel common areas is lined up along the front main entrance street. This is a typical plan for this building type in showing double wings containing guest rooms with a 'head house' connecting building. In this case there is a connector building at both ends of the courtyard. And the variegated asymmetrical massing of this front elevation provides much visual relief in the view from Collins Avenue.

The railings as originally designed become part of the architectural design for the main entrance to the building. The railing adds to the importance of the central doorway entrance below. The infill of this railing area to a solid wall totally changes the architectural design intent for the front facade.

The partial open-ness as provided by the original second floor railings has been lost when the building was supposedly 'modernized'. This peek-a-boo view through the railings to the courtyard beyond also gave a certain depth to the front facade while visually enlarging the entrance.

In the photograph above the name of the building is the Sun-Deck Apartments. By 1966 new signage announced the Sea Deck Apartments according to the Building Card. However this name has changed through the years.



TYPICAL MiMO CHARACTERISTICS of 1530 COLLINS

- \* Overhanging roofs
- \* Horizontal emphasis of massing
- \* Asymmetrical massing on front elevation
- \* Railing Design
- \* Vertical Pole Sidewalk Sign
- \* Larger Glazed Areas

1530 Collins Avenue is unmistakably a product of its mid-century MiMo time period. The characteristics, the massing and the detailing certainly say so. However at the same time this design is not one of the unique examples of MiMo. In terms of either design or massing.

This is among the simplest architectural designs in this otherwise distinctive collection of buildings on the west side of the 1500 block of Collins Avenue. 1530 Collins harks back to a simpler time in Miami Beach when the small hotel / apartment house was the norm for more affordable accommodations.

1530 also represents a very typical building program in Miami Beach, with two 2-story guest wings joined in front by a 1 or 2 story connection housing the public spaces and with everything surrounding a public courtyard..

With the exception of the front second floor railing which has disappeared, the hotel as viewed from Collins Avenue, looks very much the same as in the historic photograph above from 1953.

As hotels on the ocean (eastern) side of Collins rose taller and taller, the zoning for the Historic District required that the low rise environment remain on the west side of Collins Avenue. Thus this west side of Collins appears as a timepiece, especially as compared with the high rise hotels directly across the street on the oceanfront.

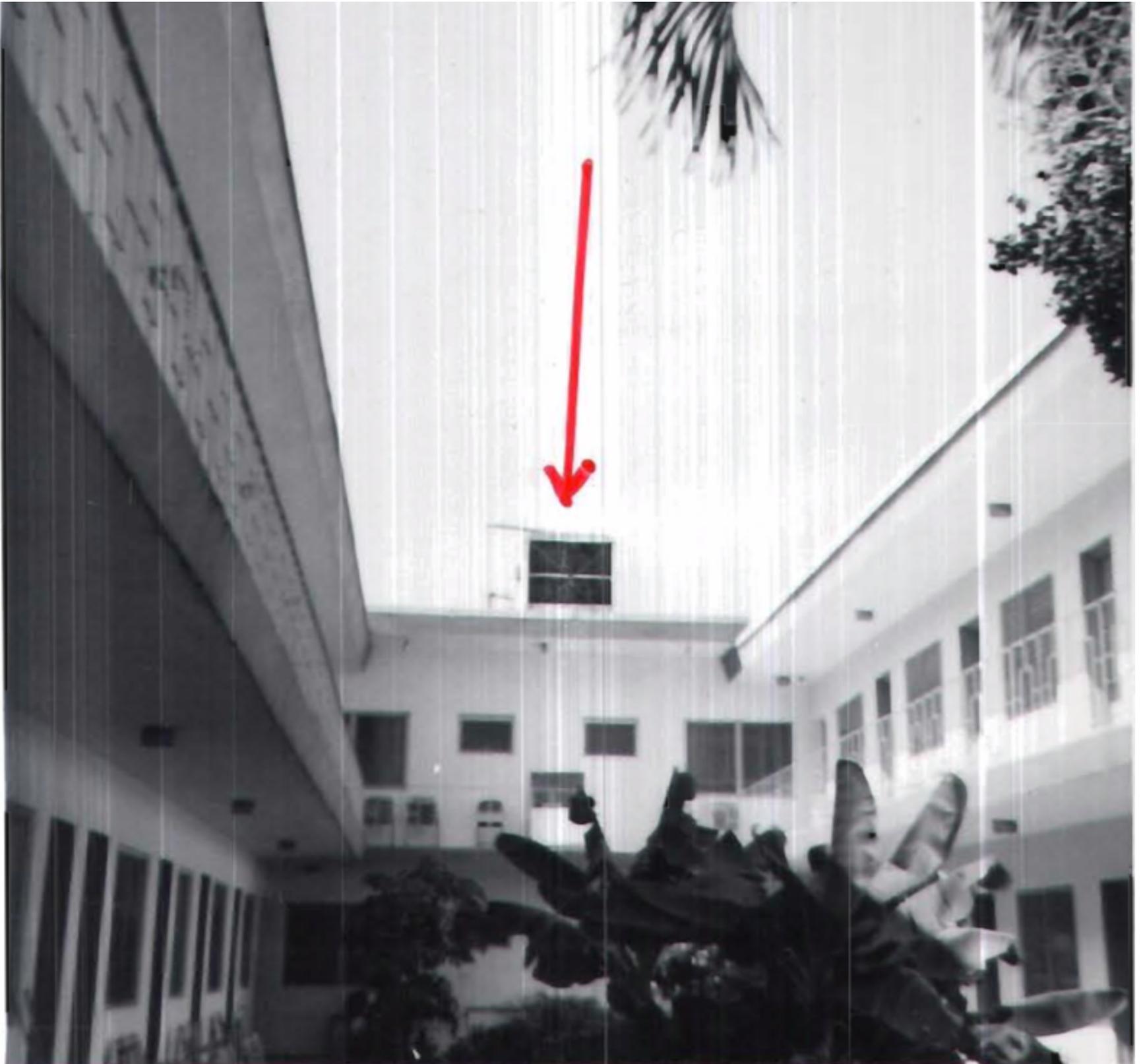
The small sculptures on the east facing south wall surface do seem to be original since they appear in this December, 1953 photograph - taken immediately after the building's completion months earlier.

1530 COLLINS AVENUE



CIRCA 1961 PHOTOGRAPH SHOWING SECOND FLOOR INFILL.

## 1530 COLLINS AVENUE



### INTERIOR COURTYARD WITH RAILINGS

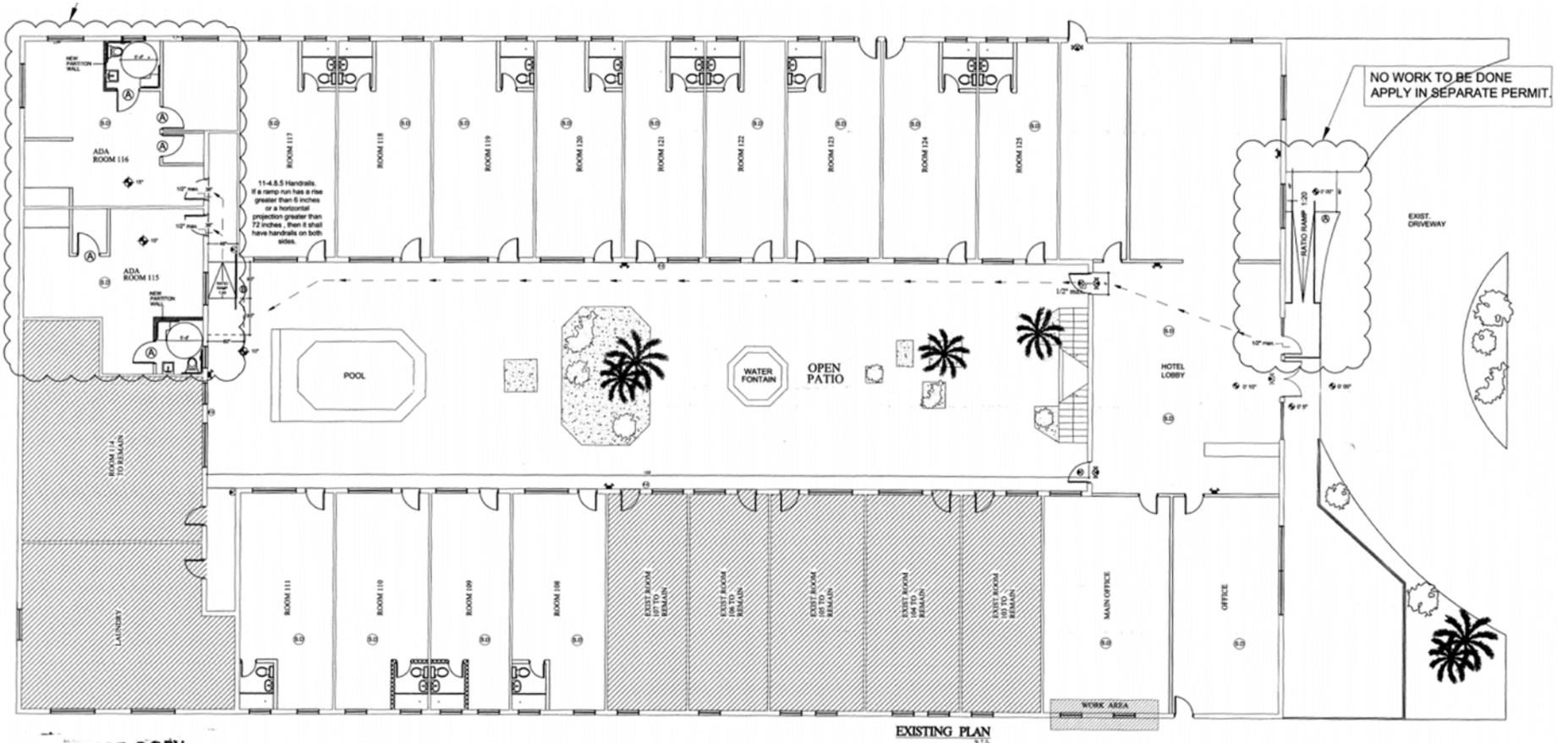
With its simple front elevation detailing and interior courtyard, 1530 Collins recalls the typical form of many Miami Beach motels and apartment buildings and assists in recalling the story of the evolution of Miami Beach architecture.

The current railings are newer since they look to comply with the 42" high and maximum 3.99" object width requirement. However the design for the new railings has been based upon the historic designs.

Another quirky feature fo this building is the window from the main entrance lobby looking out into the garden courtyard and tucked beneath the dual stair access to the third floor sun-deck as shown in the photo at right.

And the red arrow means nothing. It was already part of the photograph.





OFFICE COPY  
 CITY OF MIAMI BEACH  
 APPROVED FOR PERMIT BY  
 THE FOLLOWING:  
 BUILDING: *[Signature]*  
 ZONING: *[Signature]*  
 CONCURRING:  
 PLUMBING:  
 ELECTRICAL:

1530 COLLINS AVENUE  
 PREVIOUS INTERIOR RENOVATION PLANS  
 EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN

# CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHS

1530 Collins Avenue



PHOTOGRAPHS AT FRONT ELEVATION ALONG COLLINS AVENUE. (9)



1530 COLLINS AVENUE

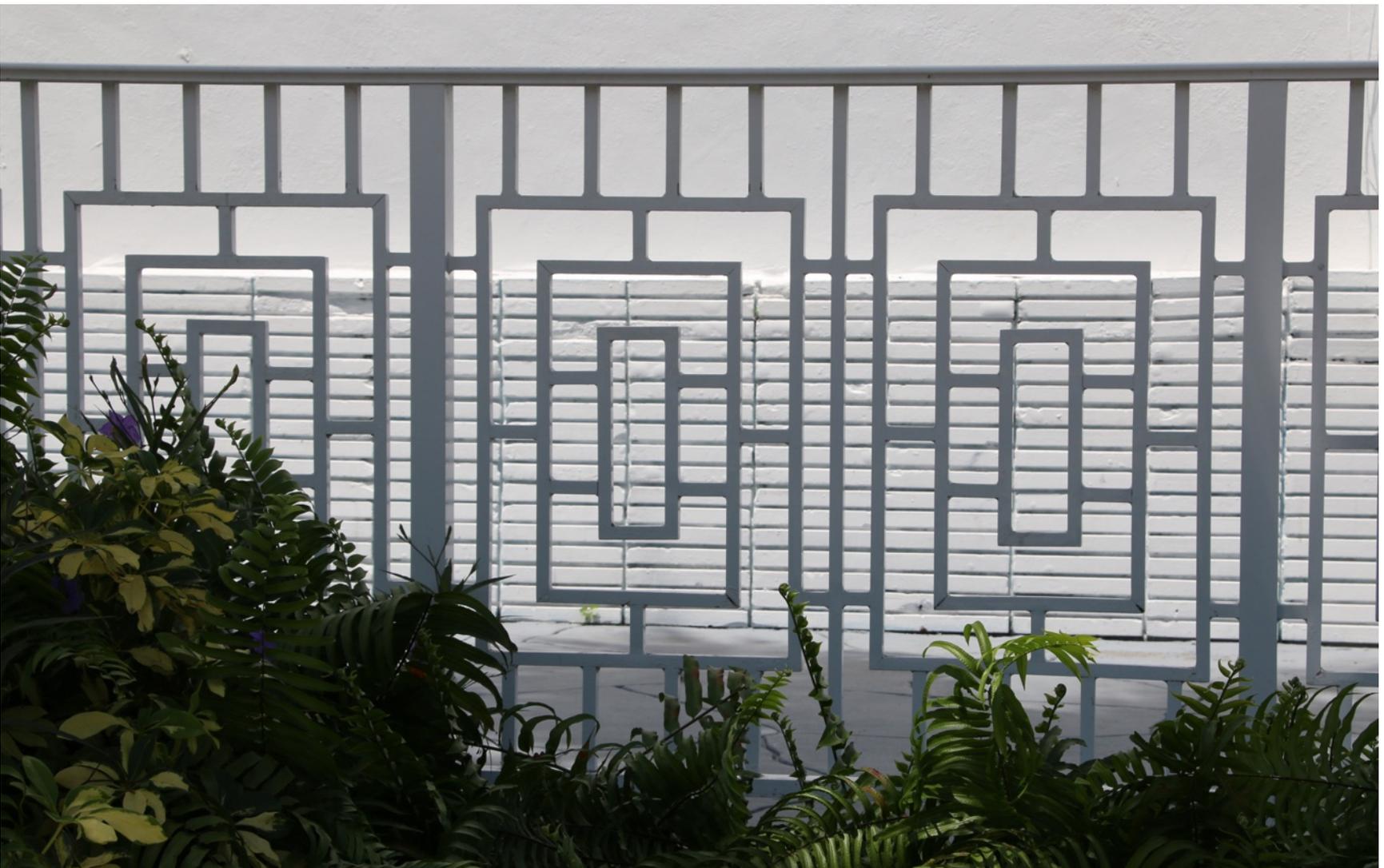


FRONT ENTRANCE DRIVEWAY (9)

# 1530 COLLINS AVENUE

## ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS (9)

- \* SEA LIFE MAQUETTES
- \* RAILINGS (NOT HISTORIC ORIGINAL BUT BASED UPON HISTORIC DESIGNS)
- \* HORIZONTAL SLUMP BRICK - TYPICAL MIMO DETAIL





COURTYARD RAILINGS (9)

1530 COLLINS AVENUE



1530 COLLINS AVENUE



COURTYARD VIEW LOOKING EAST TOWARDS DUAL STAIRS UP TO THIRD FLOOR SUNDECK ABOVE LOBBY. NOTE UNIQUE WINDOW BENEATH STAIRS INTO LOBBY. (9)



PHOTO ABOVE: COURTYARD (9)



PHOTO LEFT: FOUNTAIN AND POOL AT REAR OF COURTYARD (9)



INTERIOR OF MAIN ENTRANCE LOBBY FROM COLLINS AVENUE. POLYGONAL WINDOW LOOKS OUT INTO COURTYARD BENEATH DUAL STAIRS TO THIRD FLOOR SUNDECK. (9)

THE LOBBY HAS BEEN COMPLETELY RENOVATED WITH NEW TILE AND NEW RECEPTION DESK. THERE ARE NO HISTORIC ELEMENTS REMAINING IN THIS PUBLIC INTERIOR SPACE.

# MACKAY & GIBBS ARCHITECTS

Frederick Alton Gibbs was born in Miami in 1910 and studied at the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh. He returned to Miami and worked in association with Henry Hohauser, 1934-41.92

Edward A. MacKay was born in Flint, Michigan in 1908 and graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1934. (11)

MacKay formed a partnership with Gibbs in 1946, with an office at 927 41st Street in Miami Beach. Between 1947 and 1965, MacKay & Gibbs designed many buildings in the MiMo style in Miami Beach. (11)

Mackay passed away in 1966; thereafter the successor firm of Gibbs & Wang designed several larger apartment buildings in Miami Beach.

POSTCARD BELOW: SEACOMBER + SURFCOMBER HOTELS





SHERBROOKE APARTMENTS

## MACKAY & GIBBS ARCHITECTS

### REPRESENTATIVE PROJECTS IN MIAMI BEACH:

Amberle Apartments	1520 Euclid Avenue
Hotel del Caribe	1725 Collins Avenue
Tradewinds Apartments	2315 - 35 Pine Tree Drive
Sherbrooke Apartments	901 Collins Avenue 1947
Surfcomber Hotel	1717 Collins Avenue 948
Seacomber Hotel	1737 Collins Avenue 1948
Ocean Garden Apartments	120 Ocean Drive 1949
Aqua	1530 Collins Avenue -

In the late 1960's the successor architectural firm of Gibbs & Wang designed several larger apartment buildings including:

Carriage Club South	5001 Collins Avenue
Seacoast Towers West	5700 Collins Avenue
Byron Hall	6900 Abbott Avenue

PHOTO TOP RIGHT: SHERBROOKE APARTMENTS

# BUILDING CARD

*EAST VIEW APTS.*  
 Owner SUN-DECK APTS., INC.      Permit No. 42203      Cost \$160,000...

Lot 4 & 5 Block 57      Subdivision FISHER'S FIRST      Address 1530 COLLINS AVENUE

General Contractor Chaves Construction Co.      Construction Co. *5107*      Bond No. 5628      Engineer Riley & Ross

Architect MacKay & Gibbs      Zoning Regulations: Use RE      Area 13      Lot Size 100' x 214'

Building Size: Front 90'      Depth 182'      Height 24'      Stories 2

Certificate of Occupancy No. 2282, Dec. 4, 1953.      Use APARTMENTS: 34 UNITS: 22, 1-Bedroom & 2 Baths -and-  
 12, Efficiencies

Type of Construction #3 CRS      Foundation spread footing      Roof Flat      Date July 20, 1953

PLUMBING Contractor #35225 Murray's Plumbing Co:      Sewer Connection 1 (5")      Date Aug. 14, 1953  
 Temporary Water Closet 2

Water Closets 52      Swimming Pool Traps      Down Spouts  
 Lavatories 52      Oil-Fired- Hot Water Boilers 1      Wells  
 Bath Tubs 52      ROUGH APPROVAL E. Cox, 8-20-53  
 Showers      FINAL APPROVAL OK, L. Rothman, 11/21/53

Sinks ----- 24	GAS Contractor	Date
Dish Washing Machine	Gas Ranges ---- 34	Gas Frylators
Laundry Trays	Gas Water Heaters	Gas Pressing Machine
Laundry Washing Machines	Gas Space Heaters	Gas Vents for Stove
Drinking Fountains	Gas Refrigerators	
Floor Drains	Gas Steam Tables	
Grease Traps	Gas Broilers	
Safe Wastes		

\*\* AIR CONDITIONING Contractor # 42792 Airko Air Cond. Co: 40-tons (built-up) \$12,000: Sept. 30, 1953 - OK  
 SEPTIC TANK Contractor  
 OIL BURNER Contractor-#35246 Amber Fuel Oil: 550-gal: Aug 21, 1953  
 SPRINKLER Contractor

ELECTRICAL Contractor #40256 Lysinger & Wirick, Inc Date Aug. 27, 1953      OK 8-4-53 HOR

Switches 210	Ranges	17	Temporary Service #40050	Lysinger & Wirick, Inc.	7/29/1953
Lights 307	Irons	17	Neon Transformers		
Receptacles 341	Refrigerators	17	Sign Outlets	3	
	Fans	1	Meter Change		
	Motors	2	Centers of Distributions	6	
	Appliances	3	Service	1	
HEATERS	Water		Violations		
	Space				

FIXTURES 307      Electrical Contractor      Date

#40810 Tropicalites: 2 Neon Transformers: Nov 13, 1953

Date DEC 1, 1953  
 By H. ROSSER  
 FINAL APPROVAL

Alterations or Repairs—Over

BROWN  
 DEC 1, 1953

## ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS

nDeckAptBuilding Permits: #43288 Pole Sign: Tropicalites: (30 sq ft) \$ 450: Nov 13, 1953  
#47569 Miami Roofing & Sheet Metal Co: Re Roofing \$ 600 May 23, 1955  
#68204 Owner, Sun-Deck Apts, Inc.: Paint front of building and chalk doors - \$85. - 10/10/62  
#70425 Owner, Shapro: Paint exterior - \$400. - 10/25/63  
#74726 Dewey Hawkins Air Cond.: One 1-hp a.c. unit - \$200 - 9/10/65  
#77047 Airko Air Conditioning Co.: 1 - 50 ton cooling tower - \$5000 - 9/20/66 OK Plaag 3/24/67  
#1444 - Airko Air Cond Co. - air cond central - 2 - 20 ton 1/18/71

#00643-Capital Roofing Co.built up.- 120 squares.-\$8500-2-28-72  
#683-Nevada Painting-Cleaning and painting exterior-\$2500-8-30-72  
#07873-Crown Neon-Illuminated sign-Sea Deck Hotel-\$60-9-2-75

#13306-Owner-Exterior and interior painting, minor repairs-\$800-6-22-76

### Plumbing Permits:

#52754-Silver Plumbing- repair on water line-7-22-75  
2766-Silver Plumbing- water repairs-7-24-75  
#55804-Peoples Gas-meter set(gas)2-22-78

#55838-M S Plumbing-1 commercial heater-3-8-78

#62143 7/10/85 A & T Plumb - exist meter serv hot water heater

**Electrical Permits:** #40870 Lysinger & Wirick: 4 Motors (1 HP), 1 Motor (2-5 HP), 1 Motor (6-10 HP),  
2 Motors (11-25 HP): Nov 23, 1953 Rosser, 12/1/53  
# 44642 Emanuel Electric Co: three centers of distribution, 1 motor, 0-1hp, 5/31/1955  
OK, Rosser 5/31/1955

#54589 Astor Elec: 1 Motor (1HP) - Dec. 18, 1959 OK 1/13/60 Newbold

#56523 Jones Elec: 1 Telephone Booth - April 3, 1961

#56958 Astor Elec: 1 motor, 0-1 hp - 7/5/61 OK Scarborough 8/7/61

#63989 Gil McDonald Electric: 2 motors, 2-5 hp - 10/6/66

#72533-Crown Neon-Sea Deck Hotel- 6 sign tubes; 1 ballast-8 9-2-75

BUILDING PERMITS: #BS891882 - 8-17-89 - American Sign - 32 sq. ft. illuminated channel letters sign

\$900.00 *8*

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.
8-11-89		3859 ft. 110m. CHANNEL LETTERS sign	\$9000.00				85891888

# BIBLIOGRAPHY



VIEW EAST TOWARDS THE OCEANFRONT HOTELS FROM THE SECOND FLOOR SUN DECK.

- (1) Flamingo Historic Preservation District  
Designation Report, City of Miami Beach Planning &  
Zoning, 1990, p.7.
- (2) Ibid.
- (3) Ibid., p.13.
- (4) Ibid.
- (5) Courtesy HistoryMiami, Claude Matlack Collection.
- (6) "Lost Miami Beach" by Carolyn Klepser, 2014, p. 101.
- (7) Ibid., p.100.
- (8) Ibid., p. 101.
- (9) Arthur Marcus Photography
- (10) Steven Brooke Photography from Deco Delights by  
Barbara Capitman
- (11) Morris Lapidus / Mid-20th Century Historic District Des-  
ignation Report, by the City of Miami Beach Planning  
Department, 2009, p..88