

“In the 1930’s the move was towards austerity....The New Modernism designs were based on simplicity in ornamentation rather than excessive detail.” (4)

“Local architects adopted the Art Deco stylings and blended them with native materials and tropical motifs. Building facades were artfully decorated, putting up a front of culture and class. Inside the accommodations were modest.” (3)

According to the City of Miami Beach Building Card the three story Imperial Hotel was designed by the Architect L. Murray Dixon. Constructed in 1939 at a cost of \$60,000.00 the hotel originally contained 47 rooms.

On May 3, 1961 the City Council approved the conversion of 12 hotel rooms to six apartments.

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In 1984 according to CMB file #1582C the Applicant applied for the necessary variances to renovate and convert an existing apartment/hotel building into a total hotel building to include a Cabaret Restaurant / Night Club with indoor / outdoor seating.

“By 1985, Ocean Drive was becoming a mecca for the young and stylish. ...Tony Goldman, a New York restaurateur, bought two hotels, the Park Central and the Imperial, and opened them to night life. South Beach became a destination not only for stateside tourists and for locals, but for the European crowd as well.” (7)

The Imperial Hotel is located in the Miami Beach ‘Art Deco’ National Register Historic District.



ABOVE: SANBORN MAP OF MIAMI BEACH 1921

BELOW: OCEAN DRIVE, 1992

“The Imperial at 650 Ocean Drive is a fine example of the accord with which in 1939 the master architects worked. Designed in 1939 by L. Murray Dixon two years later than the Park Central (It’s next-door neighbor) it shares the white, mauve and green color scheme of the Park Central. Note the handsome floral plaques in the green vertical bands. As late as 1983 the Imperial and the 600 block were considered one of the worst crime spots on the beach. MDPL members repainted the lobby themselves and redesigned the facade. Also, they held parties there during an election campaign to prove that the lights and music of preservation activities could really change the neighborhood.” (10)

“Modernism resonated strongly in this tolerant new city, and its use spread to hotels, apartment buildings and even houses. The fullest expression of the period is found in Miami Beach, where L. Murray Dixon, Henry Hohausser and a small group of like-minded architects designed most of the resort district of South Beach, and in the process defined a truly regional urban architecture. The integrity of their vision is at the heat of today’s Miami Beach Architectural District.” (12)

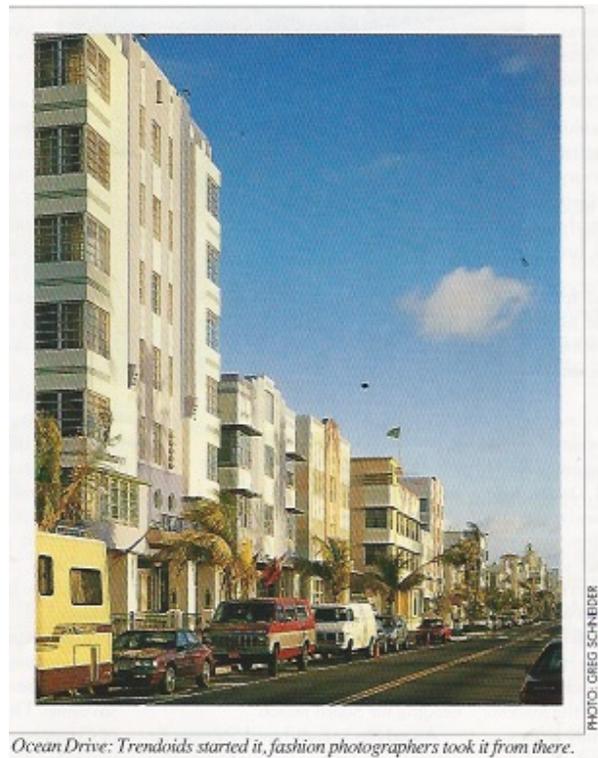
“...and two blocks south were three contiguous gems: the Majestic (Albert Anis, 1940), Imperial (L. Murray Dixon, 1939), and the Park Central (Henry Hohausser, 1937) hotels, whose facades present a harmonious blend of shapes and motifs, circular, foliate, octagonal, chevron, and horizontal, and vertical, with ubiquitous eyebrows over the windows. “ (13)

“Natural breezes blowing in off the Atlantic Ocean were the major source of ventilation. The cross-ventilation of rooms was important, so designers responded by putting windows on two sides of corner apartments.’ The buildings were then designed with as many corners as possible. “ (17)

Redeveloped by Tony Goldman, the Park Central and the neighboring Imperial will feature...etched glass, a deep porch shaded by a tin canopy, and gleaming terrazzo from the front steps through the vast lobby.. (9)



ABOVE: ARCHITECTURAL DETAIL at IMPERIAL
BELOW: PHOTOGRAPH by STEVEN BROOKE in DECO DELIGHTS 1988



Ocean Drive: Trendoids started it, fashion photographers took it from there.

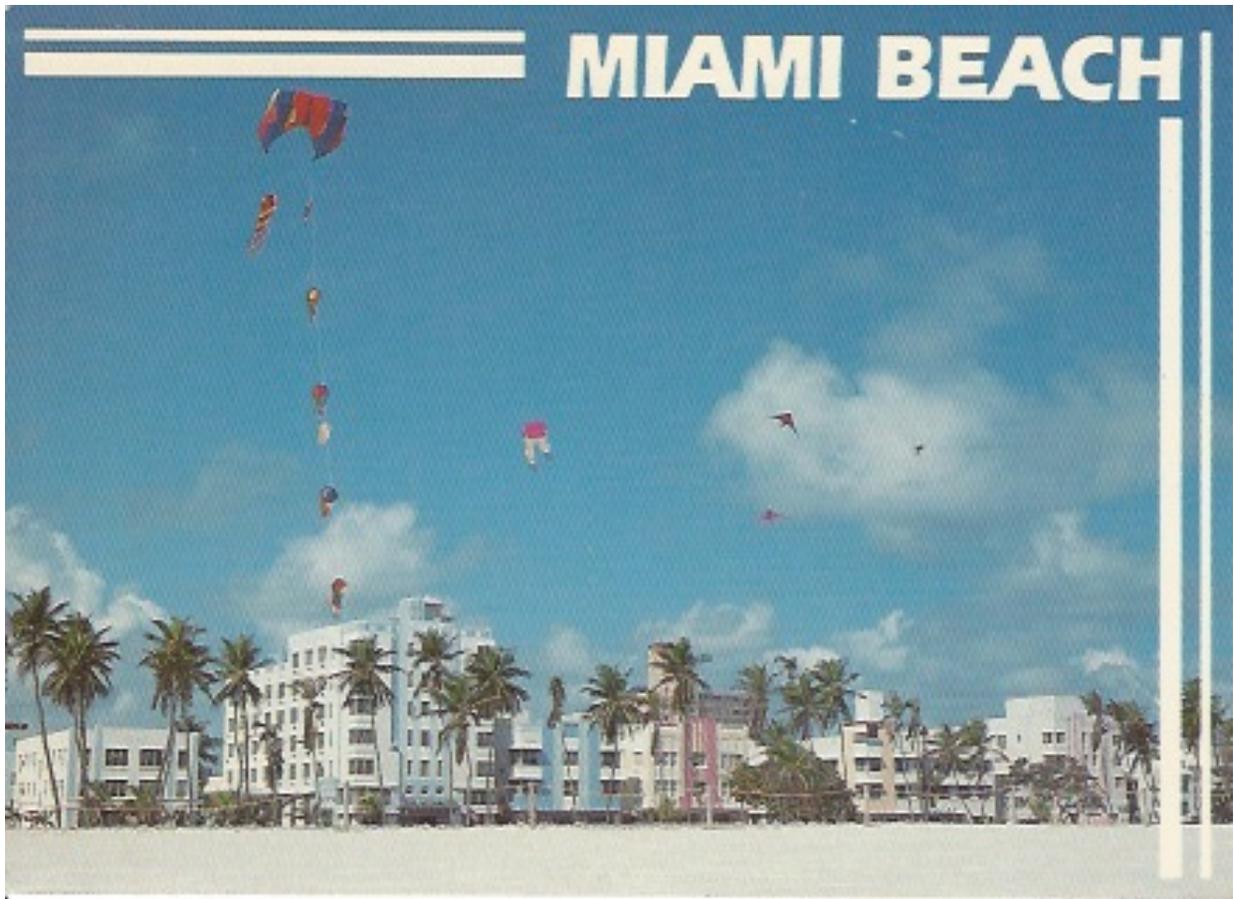
IMPERIAL HOTEL

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“Imperial Hotel - ‘Racing stripes, corner windows and eyebrows. Carved panels. Glass block. Three concentric circle bosses. Originally 47 rooms.” (24)





Lawrence Murray Dixon Architect



Lawrence Murray Dixon (1901 - 1949) was a native of Live Oak, Florida and was educated at the Georgia Institute of technology (1918-1919). After Dixon moved to Miami Beach, he designed beginning in 1933 over 100 surviving buildings in the Miami Beach Architectural District. In his short lifetime he became one of Miami Beach's most prolific and talented designers of hotels, residences and commercial buildings.

Representative Architectural Projects

- (C) Adams Hotel, 2030 Park Ave, 1938
- (B) Atlantis Hotel, 2600 Collins Ave (demolished)
- Beach Plaza Hotel, 1401 Collins Ave
- Caribbean Hotel, 3700 Collins Ave 1941
- Fairmont Hotel, 1000 Collins Ave 1936 now Fairway Hotel
- Haddon Hall Hotel, 1500 Collins Avenue 1941
- Imperial Hotel, 650 Ocean Drive 1939
- (D) Marlin Hotel, 1200 Collins Ave, 1939
- McAlpin Hotel, 1424 Ocean Drive, 1940
- Palmer House Hotel, 1119 Collins Ave. 1939
- (E) Raleigh Hotel, 1773 Collins Ave, 1940
- Richmond Hotel, 1757 Collins Ave
- Ritz Plaza Hotel, 1701 Collins Ave, 1940 nee Grossinger's Beach now SLS
- Atlantis Hotel, 1201 Collins 1939 -
- South Seas Hotel, 1751 Collins Ave, 1941
- Tides Hotel, 1220 Ocean Drive
- Tiffany Hotel now "The Hotel" Hotel, 1939 1144 Collins Avenue
- Tudor Hotel, 1111 Collins Ave. 1939
- 920 Bay Drive apartments
- 7345 Byron Avenue apartments
- 7625 Abbott Avenue apartments
- 320-328 80th Street apartments
- Miami Beach Main Post Office 1300 Washington Ave
- Pinecrest Apartments, 24th & Pinetree Drive
- Forde Ocean Apartments, 6690 Collins Ave
- (A) Seymour Building, Goldwasser's Shops 700-712 Lincoln Road, 1937

Lawrence Murray Dixon Architect



(A)



(D)
(E)



Leonard Horowitz / Art Deco Colorist

“This new wave of real estate investors is taking advantage of federal income tax incentives and local tax credits for restoration. The Department of the Interior, for example, provides a 20 percent tax credit for historic restoration investments. The state has created an enterprise zone from 11th Street on the north to Government Cut on the south. through a support assistance program from the State Community Development Corp., low interest construction loans are presently available for investors of properties in the enterprise zones.” (27)

“When New York restaurateur and art collector Tony Goldman bought the Metropole, Park Central and other buildings in South Beach, area movers and shakers jumped for joy. Known for his tremendous success in SoHo ..Tony prides himself on being a visionary. He deals in advance real estate in areas that are not yet trendy but have the potential. He hired Leonard (Horowitz) to design the exterior color plans for the Park Central and Imperial Hotels, Heathcote Apartments, 1350 Collins Avenue, 1200 Ocean Drive and the Metropole Hotel.” (28)

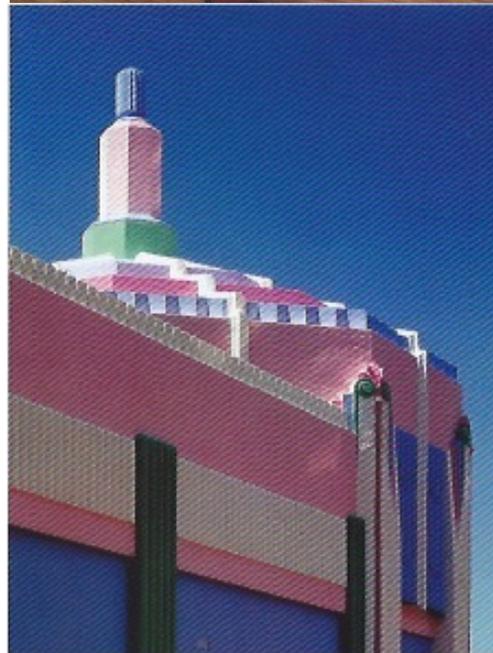
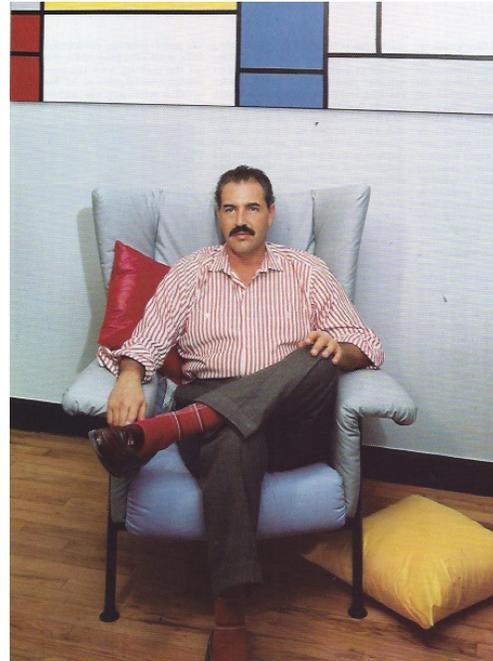
Tony Goldman: “Finding Leonard Horowitz was the answer to our problem. I wanted to incorporate fine art with decorative art and Leonard did it. Leonard’s strength is in his understanding of shape, awareness of form and sensitivity to color.” (29)

“Leonard Horowitz’s portfolio is the sidewalks of Miami Beach; he has completed over sixty projects which include paint specifications and interiors of apartments, houses and restaurants.” (30)

“According to Leonard, “...I envision South Beach as an adult theme park. As opposed to Disney World and Epcot which are manufactured environments, South Beach is a real neighborhood. it evolved...with lots of emotion and love going into thE preservation and development of the area. It will offer people the conveniences of the eighties with the wonderful romantic atmosphere of the thirties.” (31)

TOP: LEONARD HOROWITZ circa 1980

BELOW: FRIEDMANS BAKERY by STEVEN BROOKE



Polly Lux de Hirsch Meyer, Contractor

“Born in Pittsburgh in 1900 Pauline Lux or Polly as she preferred, dropped out of grade school, found her way to New York City and utilizing her god-given assets, became a model, actress and Ziegfield Follies showgirl.

She quite show business and opened the Lux Shop, a lingerie boutique on Broadway marketing some of her own designs.” (23)

“She sold the business and moved to Miami Beach in 1934 with her mother and brother and began a career as hotel owner, landlord and builder.

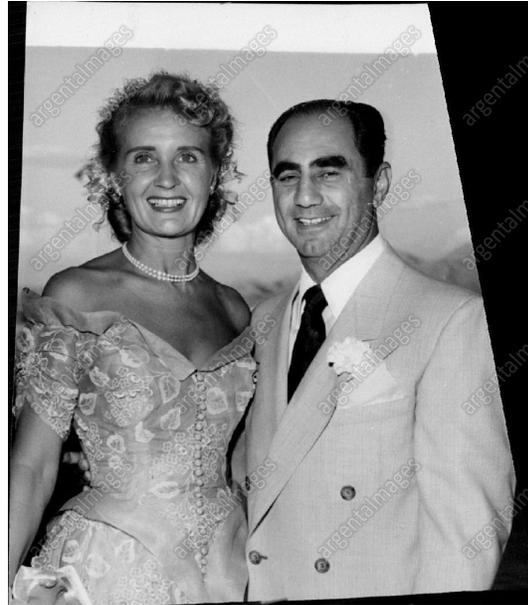
Polly Lux became the first woman building contractor in Florida and only the second woman in the United States to become such.” (23)

“She married the love of her life, Baron de Hirsch Meyer, an attorney, banker, businessman and city council member and together (they) became quite successful.

They then used their fortune to benefit philanthropic causes in the community... including Jackson Hospital, University of Miami, Camillus House, St. Patrick’s church and Mt Sinai Hospital where the main tower of the hospital is named for them.” (23)

“Polly Lux de Hirsch Meyer died in 1998 just one year short of witnessing every day of the 20th century.” (23) Their former home still stands in Miami Beach on Flamingo Drive. ,

“Polly Lux - Florida’s first woman licensed contractor and former Ziegfield Follies girl supervised the construction of the Majestic hotel at 660 Ocean Drive...and the Berkley Hotel at 1610 Collins Avenue” (23)



ABOVE: POLLY & BARON DE HIRSCH MEYER
BELOW: POLLY LUX



Polly Lux de Hirsch Meyer, Contractor

Polly's company, Lux Construction, was responsible for dozens of construction projects in Miami Beach including:

Imperial Hotel
Majestic Hotel
Royal Hotel
Trianon Hotel

It is ironic that on the Building Card for the Imperial Hotel - the mailing address is simply typed in "Polly Lux"with no additional address information apparently required.

"in the 1930s Miami Beach was full of opportunity for anyone with the means and the confidence to act...So who were the intrepid entrepreneurs with the means and the courage who rebuilt Miami Beach? One of them was Polly Lux de Hirsch Meyer, a trailblazing woman whose life embodied the American experience of the 20th century and whose creativity, adventurous spirit and generosity shaped her life and touched the lives of countless others."



VIEW LOOKING SOUTH TOWARDS THE MAJESTIC, IMPERIAL AND PARK CENTRAL HOTELS.

Tony Goldman, Visionary



No report on the Imperial Hotel could fail to mention the decades long ownership of the Park Central and the Imperial under Goldman Properties and Tony Goldman. Coming down to Miami Beach for the first time in 1985, Tony .."happened across the MacArthur Causeway and onto Ocean Drive.. (18)

"The minute I saw it, I realized that I was looking at the American Riviera." (18)

"Back then that was quite a stretch. Though suitably registered, the Deco District still looked like a sprawling, half-abandoned nursing home - the sort that begs for investigation by some local Action News team. Many of the shabby hotels had been shuttered. At others, the only sign of life was a row of folding beach chairs on the veranda on which, amid crumbling stucco and peeling paint, the last of the ancient retirees took their daily sun. " (19)

"Despite the squalor, Goldman was able to envision the neighborhood healed and whole. "I was ready, I was in love, and I was buying." he recalls. In fact he bought his first building then, and another one each month for the next year and a half." (20)

"Unlike a lot of other speculators, who've since treated South Beach like a Monopoly board, Goldman brought a civic booster's vision to the enterprise." (21)

"Goldman also understood that any Riviera worth its salt air is about more than attractive buildings, palm trees and sand. It takes people, particularly young and beautiful ones, walking along that widened promenade to make a glamorous resort. " (22)

"All over Miami, I'd noticed the kind of production vans they use on fashion shoots," says Goldman.... Eventually a number of international model agencies were persuaded to locate their Miami branches in two of his beachfront buildings. The result - a steady stream of beauties pouring in and out all day long - is perhaps his masterstroke." (23)

