



STANTON HOTEL POSTCARD circa 1940's

HISTORIC RESOURCES REPORT

FOR

161 OCEAN DRIVE

AKA

THE STANTON HOTEL

MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA 33139

PREPARED BY

ARTHUR J. MARCUS ARCHITECT P.A.

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION CONSULTANT

January 30, 2017



CIRCA 1940 PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF HISTORY MIAMI
STANTON HOTEL IS FIRST BUILDING BEHIND MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS PARK @ LEFT

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PREPARED FOR

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848 Brickell Avenue #700
Miami, Florida 33139

FOR THE

CITY of MAMI BEACH HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD

January 30, 2017



1973 PHOTOGRAPH courtesy MIAMI DADE PROPERTY APPRAISER

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NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

Prior to the construction of the Stanton Hotel in 1939 this neighborhood - Ocean Beach - was a thriving hub of activity.

Once of the city's local 'epicenters' of activity... with three Casinos aka Bathing Houses within a three block walk of the Stanton on Ocean Drive plus the Dog Track and Joe's Stone Crab just around the corner.

"Situated at the southern tip of present day Miami Beach and surrounded by a magnificent expanse of tropical blue water and boundless sky, Ocean Beach became a magnet for pioneer tourists and adventurous residents of fledgling Miami in the early twentieth century." (1)



"The Ocean Beach Historic District includes parts of the original Ocean Beach Subdivision platted in 1912 and parts of Ocean Beach Additions 3 and 4 platted in 1914, as well as part of the Friedman and Cope Subdivision platted in 1917. The location of these boundaries has been determined through careful investigation and research of building records. The demographic areas south of Sixth Street which possess a significant concentration of buildings and sites that are united by the historical development of Ocean Beach as a vibrant but modest seaside resort, abundant with enticing recreational amenities for the working class, and unusually welcoming to persons of Jewish heritage." (2)



"By 1912, this idyllic aquatic resort area had begun to attract the interest of a cast of personalities who would, in their own ways, play important roles in the development of Miami Beach as a destination in the sun." (3)

"The first planning act occurred in 1912, when two Miami bankers, John N. Lummus and James E. Lummus, formed the Ocean Beach Realty Company and platted a small ocean-facing portion of their land at the southern tip of Miami Beach." (4)

TOP PHOTO: SMITH'S BATHING CASINO (22)

MIDDLE PHOTO: BEACH ALONGSIDE OCEAN DRIVE circa 1930

LOWER PHOTO: SMITH'S CASINO FROM OCEAN DRIVE



LOOKING WEST TOWARDS BEACH IN FRONT OF MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS GPARK CIRCA 1940 WITH STANTON HOTEL FIRST BUILDING AT LEFT

"...as late as 1917, Miami Beach was described as a wilderness. It was a sub-tropical barrier island comprising three interrelated ecosystems; a beach along the Atlantic oceanfront that merged with the dunes and the remnants of earlier coconut tree plantings; a low scrub forest in the interior; and a belt of mangroves facing Biscayne Bay on its west side." (5)

"In South Beach the Ocean Beach Realty Company assembled the traditional elements of a seaside resort city: an 'oceanfront' boardwalk' as the setting for an architectural promenade; 'bathing casinos' built along the ocean; an entertainment pier and a mix of homes, hotels and boarding houses." (6)

"During the 1920's and 1930's Ocean Beach south of 6th Street became a thriving seaside resort and recreational area. The 1935 Franklin Survey of Miami Beach records several substantial recreational facilities" - including: (7)

- * *Hardie's Beach Casino-- on the Ocean between 1st and 2nd Streets**
- * *The Biscayne Plaza Theater--at the SW corner of Biscayne Street and Collins Avenue*
- * *Collins Arcade--at the SE corner of 5th Street and Collins Avenue*
- * *Cook's Casino--at the SE corner of 5th Street and Ocean Drive.*
- * *Dixie Bath-house at the SE corner of 1st Street and Ocean Drive.*
- * *The Grandstand and Club House--at the foot of Collins and Government Cut*
- * *The Miami Beach Kennel Club (racetrack)--at the foot of Ocean Drive on Biscayne Street*
- * *Million Dollar Pier--on the ocean at the east end of Biscayne Street*
- * *Minsky's Burlesque--Million Dollar Pier*



PHOTO: LOOKING NORTH IN 1930 VIEW of HARDIE+SMITH'S CASINOS (COURTESY HISTORY MIAMI)

"Ocean Beach below Sixth Street was clearly not built for the social elite as areas further north were. The Lummus brothers development philosophy was to build a modest resort community by the sea welcoming to the common man. The small scale and simplicity of the architecture is reflective of this attitude and is a significant characteristic of the area. The generally modest Art Deco and Mediterranean Revival hotels on the east side of Ocean Beach were complemented by simple Bungalow blocks on the west side. Handsome two and three story apartment houses reflecting their period of construction filled the center of Ocean Beach. Some of these were small Art Deco gems."
(8)

"Eventually a strong Jewish retail, institutional and residential presence manifested itself in Ocean Beach, especially along Washington and Collins Avenues and Ocean Drive. In the middle decades of the twentieth century, these streets were dotted with small Jewish businesses and apartments filled with Jewish tenants.(9) In a two block area on Collins Avenue between Third and Fifth Streets, for example, four Kosher markets and delicatessens later opened to serve a growing clientele. T.D. Allman, Miami - City of the Future." (9)



CIRCA 1940 POSTCARD VIEW OF STANTON HOTEL

HOTEL STANTON

In 1939 the choice of Anton Skislewicz as the architect for this building would have been considered as cutting-edge. Starting his own architectural practice in Miami Beach in 1934 - he was already completing the Kenmore Hotel by 1936. He culminated his architectural career in Miami Beach with the spectacular Plymouth Hotel in 1940. Skislewicz's career in architecture was much too short, however what he lacked in time he compensated for with bold and brilliant architecture.

The years 1939-1940 truly marked the end of an era in many respects. Architecturally this was the twilight of the Art Deco years - which had remade large portions of Miami Beach - and in selected buildings there was a foretaste of the mid-century style to come

The architecture of Anton Skislewicz well reflected this particular time. While grounded in the Art Deco heritage of the Ocean Drive experience, The Stanton Hotel also heralds the coming mid-century modern style. With its irregular massing, window placement utilized as part of the design, horizontal concrete sunshades intersecting vertical mass lines as utilized as part of the design. The signage is also utilized as part of the overall design.

By the following year 1940 with the completion of the Plymouth Hotel by Skislewicz, his fame was sealed forever in that brilliant homage to the 1939 New York World's Fair emblems - the Tylon & Persisphere. However during World War II Skislewisc returned to shipbuilding in Tampa, Florida - where he remained.

STANTON HOTEL
161 Ocean Drive, Miami Beach

The Stanton Hotel was built in 1939 in the Ocean Beach Subdivision, Addition #4, part of the land holdings of banker brothers James E. and John N. Lummus that had been platted in 1914 and progressively developed since the 1910s. Most of the earliest buildings in this neighborhood were public facilities, including the popular oceanfront bathing pavilions, Smith's and Hardie's Casinos at the foot of Ocean Drive, and the later Cook's Casino at Fourth Street. The Miami Beach Kennel Club, a dog-racing track that opened in 1929, was two blocks south at the tip of the island.

In the 1930s, a number of modest hotels were also built here as the City entered a period of economic recovery from the Depression. "It was the south Miami Beach area which benefited most from the resurgence in construction. In 1936, 38 hotels, 110 apartment buildings, 320 houses and more than 1,000 other buildings were constructed. In 1937, another 150 hotels with 9,752 rooms and 508 apartment buildings with 6,120 units opened."¹ Despite this building boom, the oceanfront land between 2nd and 3rd Streets, immediately north of the Stanton, has always remained open as South Beach Park.

"The more southerly section of Miami Beach, those properties initiated by Lummus without legal or habitual restrictions on who may live there, were fast becoming a tourist and residential haven for Jewish people, most of whom were arriving from New York. By 1940, most of the residences south of Lincoln Road were owned by Jews. Jewish-owned and -run businesses dominated lower Collins and Washington Avenues."²

It was at this time that the Stanton, a two-story hotel with 35 rooms, was built for Mrs. Mollie Wasman, owner, at a cost of \$40,000. It was designed by

¹ Keith Root, Miami Beach Art Deco Guide, MDPL, 1987, p. 29.

² Howard Kleinberg, Miami Beach: A History; Centennial Press, Miami, 1994, p. 136.

architect Anton Skislewicz in Streamline Moderne style. Skislewicz was born in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, in 1895 and received a degree in architecture in 1929 from Columbia University in New York.³ He designed many notable buildings in Miami Beach in the 1930s and '40s, mostly in Streamline style, including:

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Kenmore Hotel | 1050 Washington Ave. |
| Breakwater Hotel | 940 Ocean Drive |
| Lord Balfour Hotel | 350 Ocean Drive |
| Plymouth Hotel | 2035 Park Ave. |

Building Department records, together with an early (undated) postcard, show that the Stanton has changed little over the years. Notable architectural features are its asymmetrical balance of horizontal and vertical elements, decorative roofline scuppers, three eyebrows that wrap around square corners, and an unusual line of transom windows at the upper first-floor level. Original wooden window frames were replaced by aluminum in 1956. A front entry awning, rooftop neon sign, and what appears to be a masonry wall around a front porch were removed at an unknown date.

Soon after its construction, the Stanton became one of about 300 buildings in Miami Beach that were leased by the US Army-Air Forces Technical Training Command for military use during World War II. Miami Beach became the training ground for over 500,000 troops from 1942-1945. Hotels such as this one served as barracks; restaurants became mess halls; golf courses and beaches were drill fields. Two blocks south of the Stanton, at the foot of Biscayne Street, the Servicemen's Pier served as a recreation center staffed by local civilian volunteers. The building card notes that the Stanton returned to civilian use on June 8, 1944.

-- Carolyn Klepser, researcher 8/20/00

³ Keith Root, Miami Beach Art Deco Guide, MDPL, 1987, p.33.



1973 PHOTOGRAPHS of STANTON HOTEL. (11)

ROOFTOP SIGN AND AWNING COVERED ENTRANCE STILL EXISTS IN TOP PHOTO AND HAVE ALREADY BEEN REMOVED IN MIDDLE PHOTO

LOWER PHOTOGRAPH AS VIEWED FROM THE BEACH



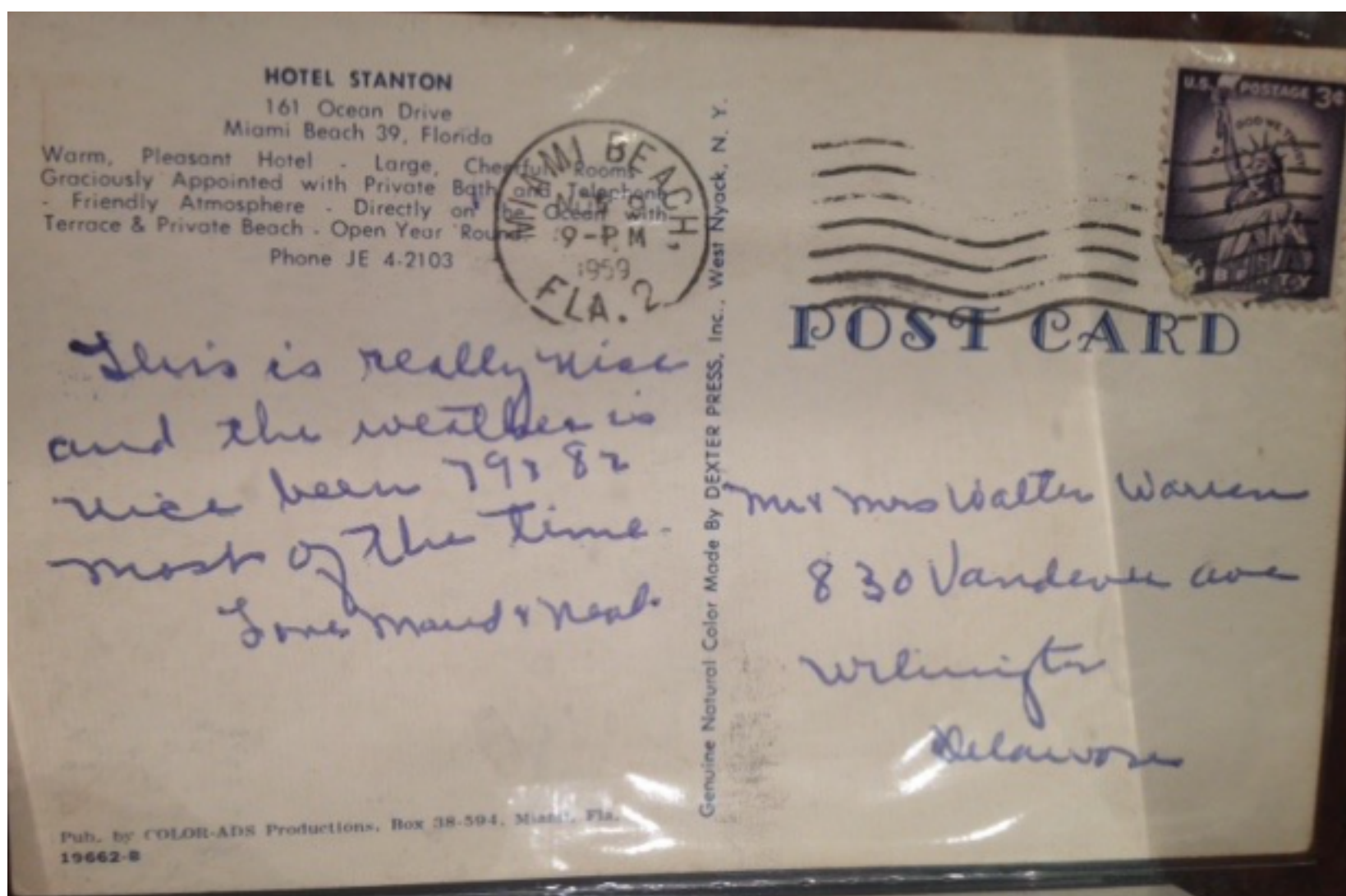


YEAR 2000 PHOTOGRAPHS OF CONSTRUCTION (ABOVE) AND COMPLETION (BELOW) OF THE NEW MARRIOTT HOTEL SOUTH BEACH WITH THE STANTON HOTEL INCORPORATED INTO HOTEL AT LEFT. (11)





CIRCA 1950 PHOTOGRAPHIC POSTCARD of STANTON HOTEL: FRONT & BACK



ANTON SKISLEWICZ ARCHITECT

(1895–1980) (5)

A native of Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia and a World War I aviator, he immigrated to New York after the war and graduated from Columbia University in 1929.

Drawn by the Depression-era building boom in Miami Beach, he opened a practice here in 1934 and contributed a European sensibility to local architecture.

His early work in naval architecture and aviation is clearly evident in his Streamlined buildings. (He also designed a limited-edition limousine for Lincoln Motors in 1938) During World War II, he closed his practice and returned to shipbuilding in Tampa, Florida.

Although there are comparatively fewer buildings by Skislewicz's than of others of his contemporary architects, this is an extraordinary collection. He was a master Architect of form and balance with a keen sense of the theatrical.

"..Anton Skislewicz's Breakwater Hotel displayed a soaring power inspired by the 1939 World's Fair." (10)

REPRESENTATIVE PROJECTS INCLUDE:

Kenmore Hotel 1936

Breakwater Hotel 1939

Plymouth Hotel 1940

Lord Balfour Hotel

Greystone Hotel 1939

Ocean Surf Hotel @

7435 Ocean Terrace 1939

TOP RIGHT PHOTO: BREAKWATER HOTEL HISTORIC PHOTO, circa 1940 COURTESY HISTORY MIAMI

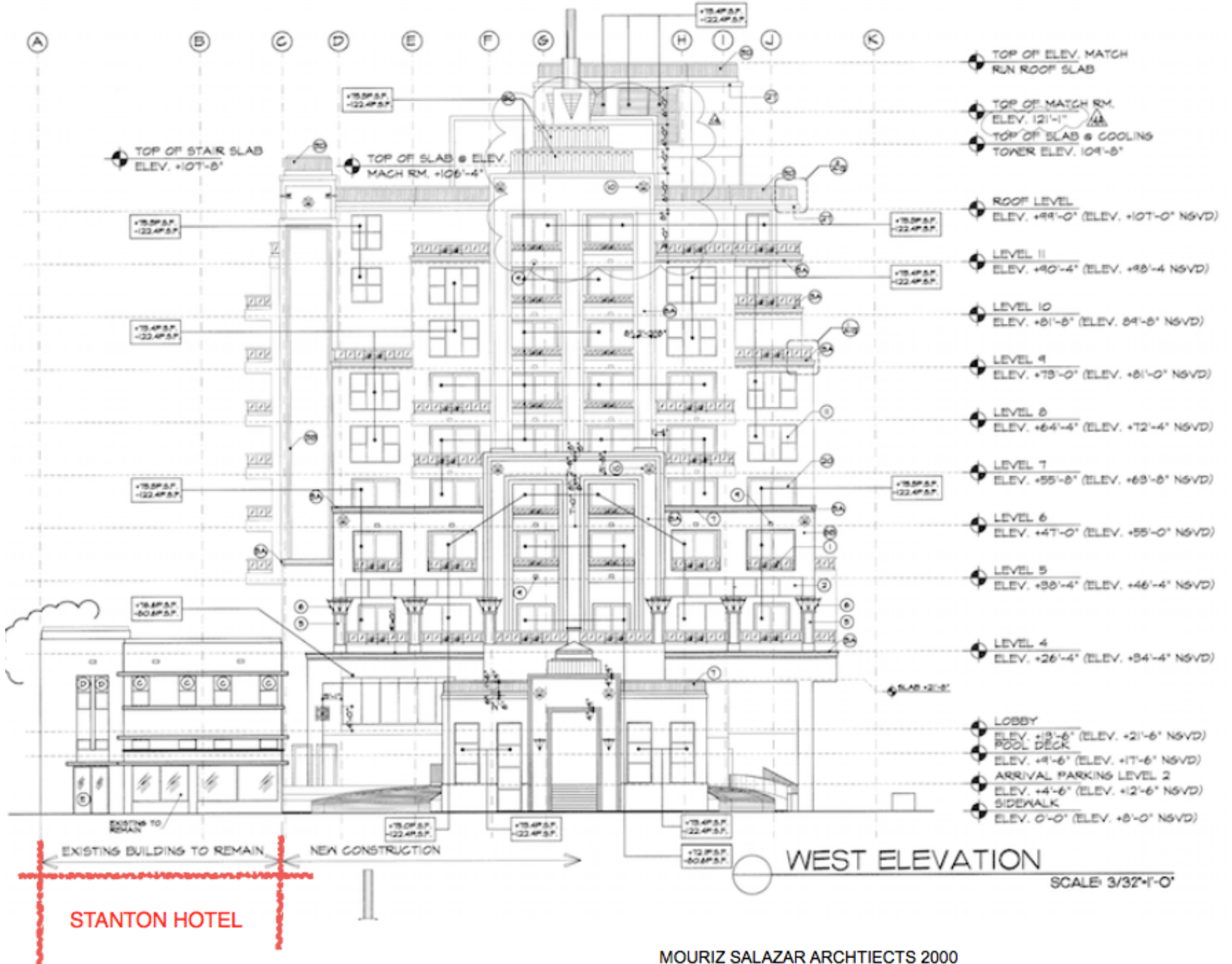
RIGHT PHOTO: KENMORE HOTEL HISTORIC POSTCARD COURTESY HISTORY MIAMI

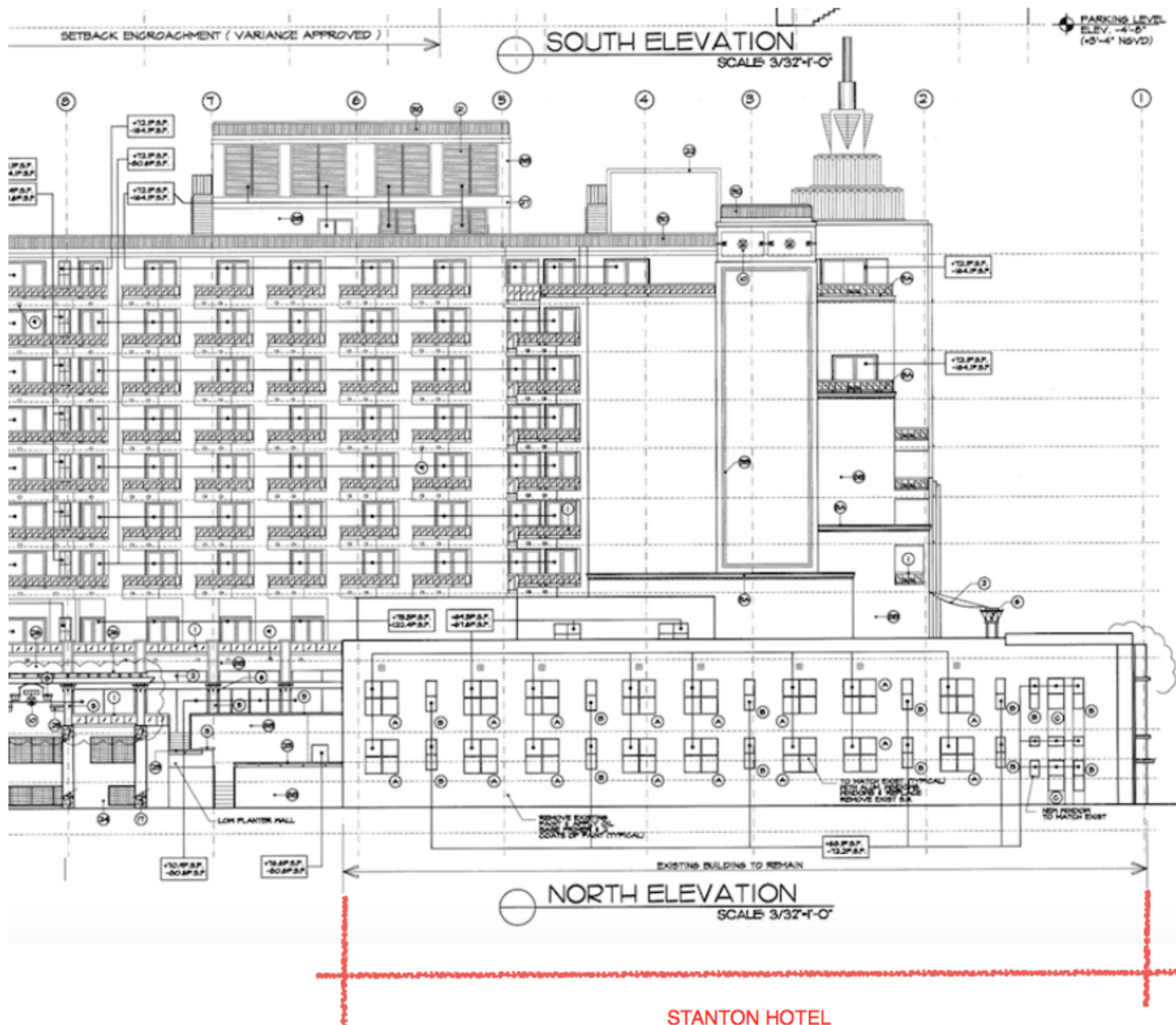
PHOTO BELOW: PLYMOUTH HOTEL PHOTO 2013 BY ARTHUR MARCUS



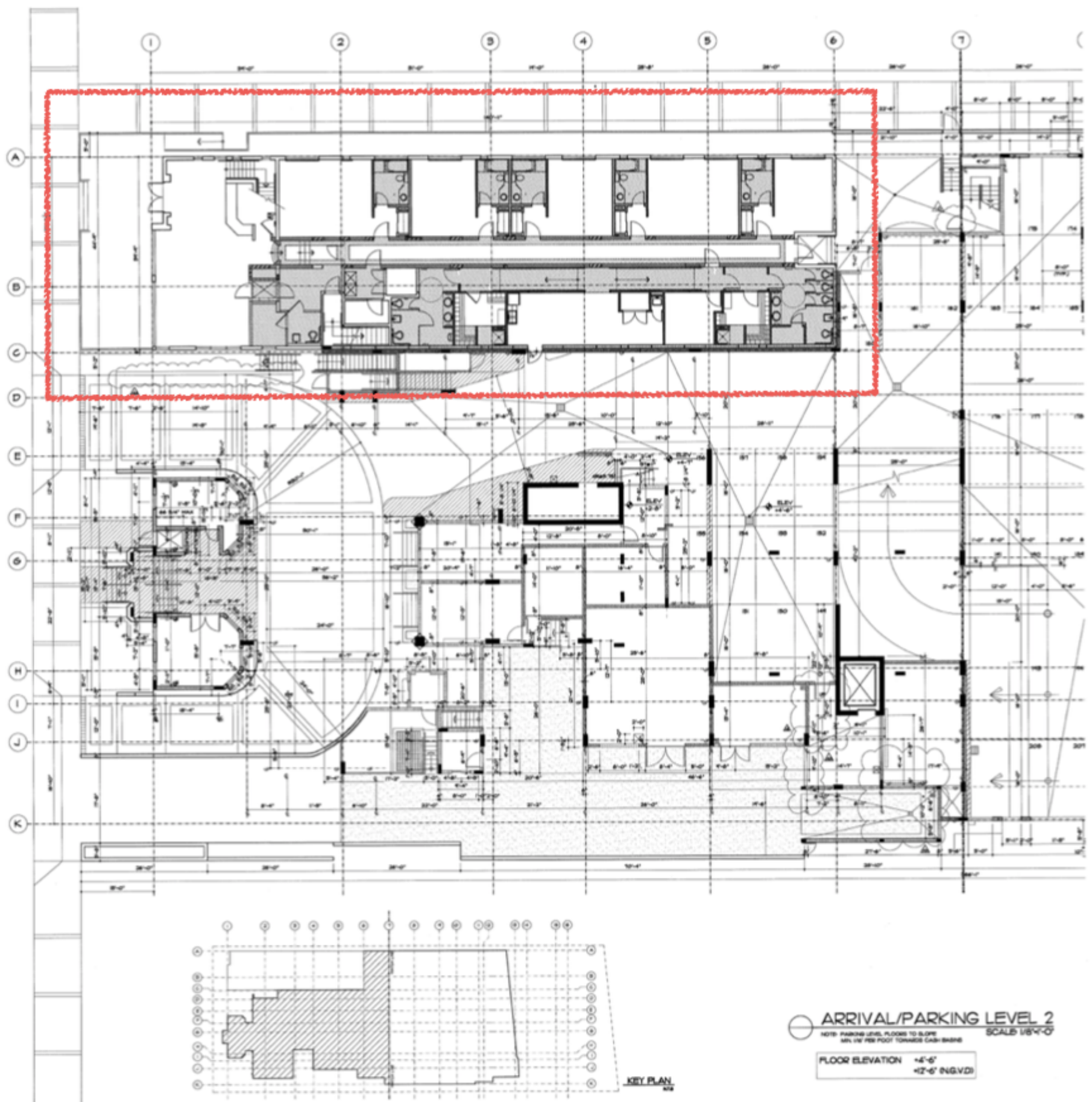
Stanton Hotel @ 161 Ocean Drive 1939

EXISTING WEST ELEVATION
ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS BY





EXISTING NORTH ELEVATION
ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS BY
MOURIZ SALAZAR ARCHITECTS 2000



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS BY
 MOURIZ SALAZAR ARCHITECTS 2000