★

HISTORIC RESOURCE REPORT

for the

PARK CENTRAL HOTEL

640 OCEAN DRIVE

MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA 33139

prepared by

ARTHUR J. MARCUS ARCHITECT P.A.

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION CONSULTANT

November 20, 2013

PHOTOGRAPHY UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED
by
ARTHUR MARCUS

(34)

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1450 Lincoln Road #806

Miami Beach, Florida 33139

November 20, 2013

for the

CITY of MIAMI BEACH HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
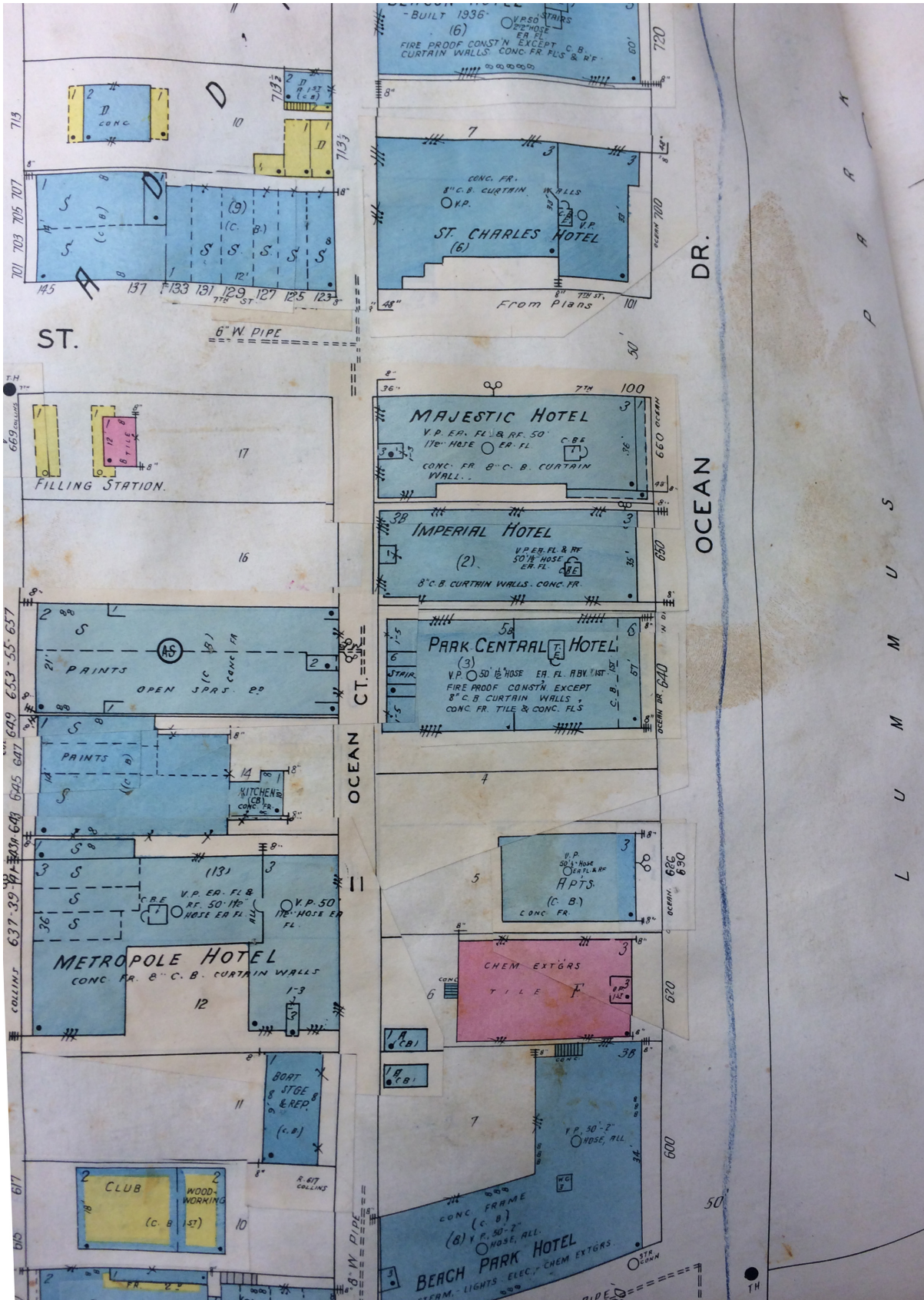
prepared for the Owner:

PARK CENTRAL PARTNERS, LLC

c/o Park Central Hotel

640 Ocean Drive

Miami Beach, Florida 3313

BEACON HOTEL
- BUILT 1936 -
(6)
FIRE PROOF CONST'N C.B.
CURTAIN WALLS CONC. FR. FL'S & R'F

720

D
CONC
713
712
7132
7133

7
CONC. FR.
8" C.B. CURTAIN WALLS
V.P.
ST. CHARLES HOTEL
(6)
700

S
S
(C.B.)
A
(9)
(C. B.)
S S S S S
701 703 705 707
145   137 133 131 129 127 125 123
7TH ST.

ST.
6" W PIPE

From Plans
101
50'

OCEAN   DR.

MAJESTIC HOTEL
V.P. EA. FL. & RF. 50'
170' HOSE EA. FL.
CONC. FR. 8" C.B. CURTAIN WALL.
7TH
100
660 OCEAN

669 COLLINS
TILE
FILLING STATION.
17

IMPERIAL HOTEL
(2)
V.P EA FL. & RF
50'½ HOSE
EA. FL.
8" C.B. CURTAIN WALLS. CONC. FR.
650

16

S
PAINTS
AS
OPEN SPCS. R'D
(C. B.) CONC. FR.
653-55-657
649

PARK CENTRAL HOTEL
(3)
V.P. 50'½ HOSE EA. FL. ABV. 1ST.
FIRE PROOF CONST'N. EXCEPT
8" C.B. CURTAIN WALLS.
CONC. FR. TILE & CONC. FLS
58
STAIR.
640

S
PAINTS (8)
(C.B.)
647
645

KITCHEN
CB.
CONC. FR.
14
OCEAN CT.

4

S
S
(13)
V.P. EA. FL. &
RF. 50' ½
110' HOSE EA. FL.
V.P. 50'
110' HOSE EA.
FL.
637-39-41-43-45-47
649

V.P.
50' HOSE
EA. FL. & RF
APTS.
(C. B.)
CONC. FR.
626
630

5

METROPOLE HOTEL
CONC. FR. 8" C.B. CURTAIN WALLS
12
COLLINS

CHEM EXTGRS
TILE
F
620

6

BOAT
STGE.
& REP.
(C. B.)
11

A
(CB)
B
(CB)

V.P. 50'-2"
HOSE ALL
600

CLUB
WOOD-WORKING
(C. B. 1ST)
10
617
615

R. 617
COLLINS

CONC. FRAME
(C. B.)
(8) V.P. 50'-2"
HOSE ALL
BEACH PARK HOTEL
STEAM, LIGHTS, ELEC., CHEM EXTGRS
50'

6" W PIPE

- SANBORN MAP of IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORHOOD in MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA.
- ORIGINAL COPYRIGHT 1921 with UPDATES TO JUNE, 1941

1941

4

"In the 1920's Miami Beach architecture consisted primarily of wood frame cottages, Mission-style apartment buildings and Spanish-Mediterranean homes and hotels. In the 1930's, after the stock market crash of 1929, a winter seasonal tourist economy developed, catering to visitors form the north with modestly-sized apartments and oceanfront hotels." (1)

"Inside the accommodations were modest. Most of the buildings were just two and three stories tall and served the 'walk-up' client - few had elevators." (2)

"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)

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

"As the country began to recover from the Great Depression, small investors began to build modest hotels on Miami beachfront land facing Lummus Park. (5)

The first major cycle of development in Miami Beach was the Great Florida Land Boom (1920-1926) which ended with the devastating hurricane in 1926.

"..Miami Beach began growing again in the early 1930's, setting the stage for another giant construction boom. As early as 1935 Miami Beach was once again the fastest growing city in the country with a per capita building rate twenty times higher than the next highest city.." (33)

"The sudden tower elements breaking Miami Beach's formerly consistent three-story baseline was especially remindful of Central Park West, where a similar effect was produced by the Multiple Dwellings Law of 1929. …In Miami Beach, however, it is particularly striking that the change occurred within only ten to fifteen years of its initial development. (6)

1979

MIAMI BEACH ARCHITECTURAL DISTRICT

PREPARED BY THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH PLANNING DEPARTMENT
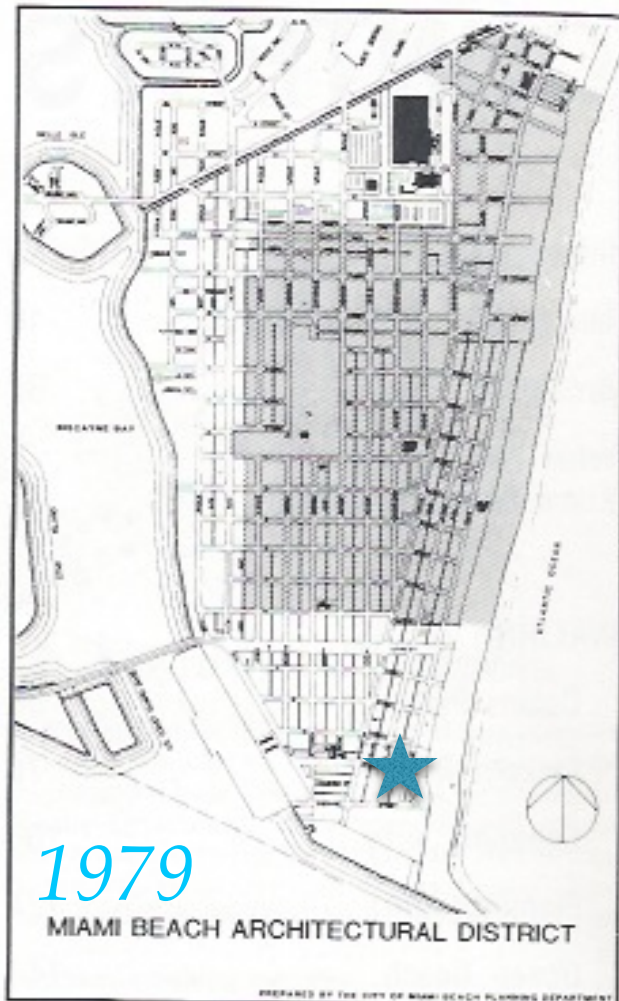
According to the City of Miami Beach Building Card the six story Park Central Hotel was designed by the Architect Henry Hohauser and constructed in 1937 at a cost of $150,000. The building was originally permitted with 80 guest rooms an a Dining Room.

On June 1, 1984 according to CMB file #1627 the 640 Ocean Corporation applied for the necessary variances to renovate and convert an existing apartment/hotel building into a total hotel building to include a Restaurant / Night Club with indoor / outdoor seating.

As part of this conversion the Applicant removed all cooking facilities from individual apartments.

It is interesting that also on the Building Card is note #4 on page 6 which states: *"The stipulation by the Applicant as contained in his July 5, 1984 letter to the Board confirming firm commitments from investors to invest in amounts in excess of $900,000.00 in order to complete the work outlined in the narrative aforesaid."*

Also in 1984 according to CMB file #1663 the Applicant applied to construct a glass enclosure around an existing terrace at the ground level and construct an addition at the top floor of the existing building.

"By 1985, Ocean Drive was becoming a mecca for the young and stylish. ...Tony Goldman, a New York restauranteur, 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 Park Central Hotel is located in the Art Deco National Register Historic District. The extent of the originally designated district is shown in the map above.

ABOVE: OCEAN DRIVE, 1992 (35)
BELOW: POSTCARD from cardcow.com (undated)

Park Central Hotel   Miami Beach, Florida
                              On The Oceanfront

"Driven by this friendly competition between architects and clients, the average quality of architectural design at the end of the 1930's was remarkably high...Hohauser's best works remained essentially symmetrical and flat compositions.....Most evident was the Park Central (1939) on Ocean drive, Hohauser's elegant response to Dixon's Tides. Its beautiful lobby ascended in separate platforms toward the alley and culminated in a n elevated dining room attached as a glazed box to the side of the hotel and providing superb views of the ocean." (8)

"The Park Central Hotel...1937 is one of Henry Hohauser's best efforts, and it has the high ceilings and spaciousness of a true oceanfront resort.(9)

Seven stories tall, it is scaled with such simplicity that it seems smaller. 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.. Designer Leonard Horowitz, who originated the Deco Revival paster palette, here used basic white spruced up by mauve and green verticals." (9)

"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)
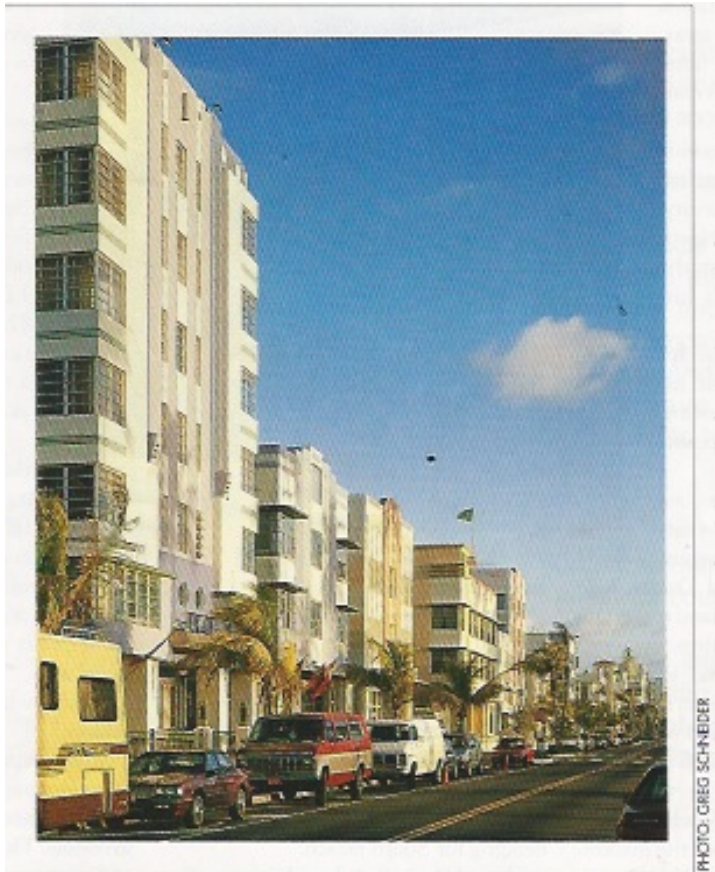

PHOTO: GREG SCHNEIDER

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