

MIAMI BEACH

City of Miami Beach, 1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, Florida 33139. www.miamibeachfl.gov

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
Tel: 305-673-7550, Fax: 305-673-7559

October 31, 2014

Members of the Florida Building Commission & Accessibility Advisory Council
c/o Mary-Kathryn Smith
Office of Codes & Standard, Florida Department of Community Affairs
2555 Shumard Oaks Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-2100

RE: 626-650 Collins Avenue – Heathcote Apartments, Park Central Hotel and Imperial Hotel

Dear Ms. Smith and Members of the Commission and Council:

I am writing in reference to the above noted structures, and the request for an accessibility waiver.

The Park Central Hotel is an assembly of three (3) historic structures: the Park Central Hotel (640 Ocean Drive), the Heathcote (626 Ocean Drive), and the Imperial (650 Ocean Drive). These three structures are being developed into one hotel complex. The owner requires a waiver of the vertical accessibility requirement for some of the exterior terraces and interior public spaces of the Park Central and the Imperial, as well as the vertical accessibility to all levels above the ground floor.

The Heathcote Apartments. Located on the southern part of the Property, the Heathcote Apartments (the "Heathcote") structure was constructed in 1931 and designed by renowned architect B. Kingston Hall. As the name implies, the Heathcote was originally designed as a twelve unit apartment building.

The Park Central Hotel. Located at the center of the Property, the Park Central Hotel (the "Park Central") was constructed in 1937 and designed by esteemed architect Henry Hohaus. The Park Central was originally constructed with eighty hotel rooms and a dining room.

The Imperial Hotel. Located on the northern part of the Property, the Imperial Hotel (the "Imperial") was constructed in 1939 and was designed by famous architect L. Murray Dixon. The Imperial was originally constructed with forty-seven hotel rooms.

All three historic structures are invaluable members of the iconic Miami Beach Ocean Drive image and character and are located within the Ocean Drive/ Collins Avenue Local Historic District and the national Miami Beach Architectural District.

These structures have been well-maintained over time and individually, each retains an extraordinary degree of historic and architectural integrity, especially the front facades and

entranceways into the public interior spaces. The structures and their public interior spaces are representative of the rich diversity of architectural styles that have evolved within the City's Historic Districts. Through its approval of the hotel complex, the Miami Beach Historic Preservation Board required the renovation, restoration and preservation of the front portion of both structures, including the interior public spaces. The current proposal to retain, preserve, and restore the majority of these buildings is essential to the understanding of the development of architecture in Miami Beach.

The subject structures qualify as historic buildings under the federal ADA regulations, the ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) and Chapter 11 of the Florida Building Code. The requested waiver pertaining to vertical accessibility is critical to the restoration plan for the buildings. In order to accommodate vertical accessibility, substantial modifications and demolition to the tight spaces and facades of the historic structures would be required. Such interventions would irreparably harm the very significant design, style and layout of the exterior terraces and interior configurations of the structures.

The Planning Department, on behalf of the Historic Preservation Board, strongly supports the subject waiver request. If you have any questions relative to the historic significance of the existing structures, or you need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Debbie Tackett', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Debbie Tackett
Design & Preservation Manager