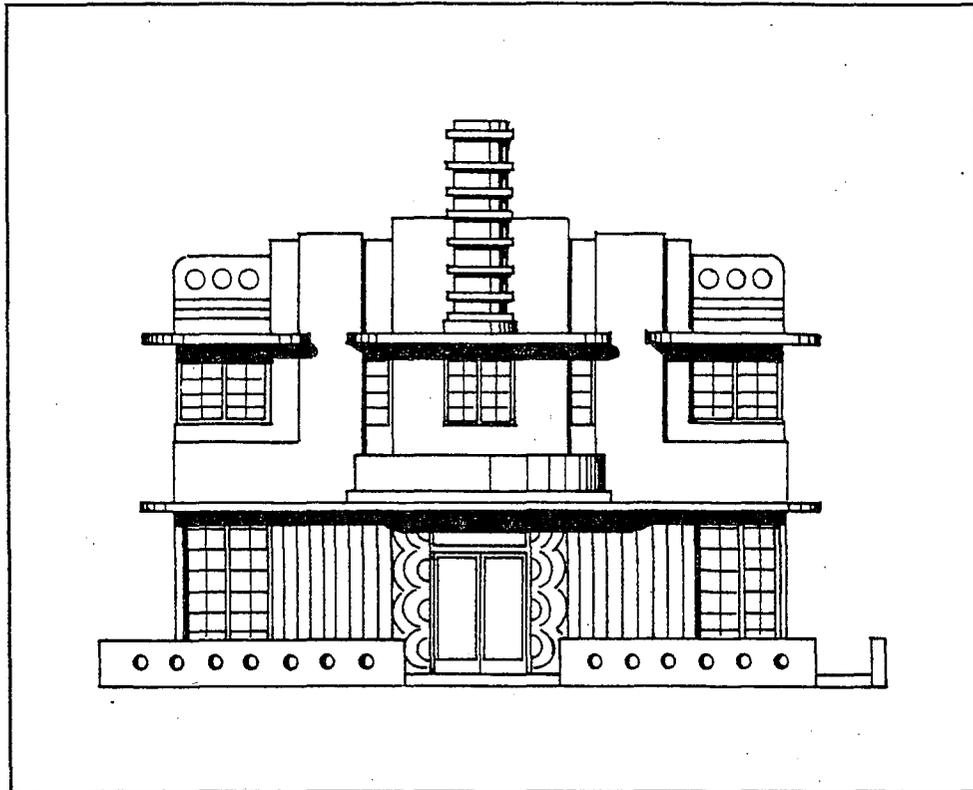


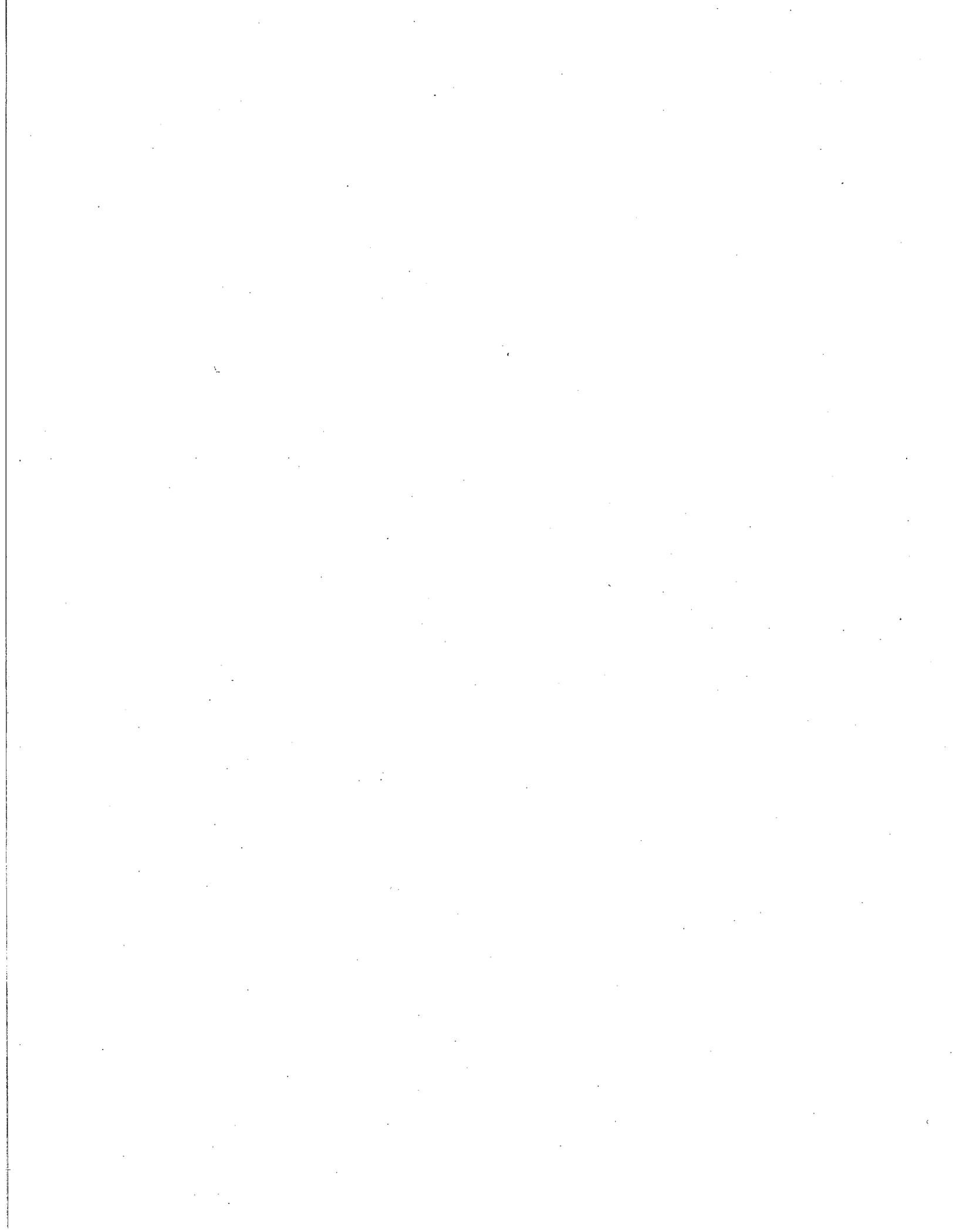
# OCEAN BEACH HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION REPORT



Century Hotel, 140 Ocean Drive, designed by Henry Hohnseder, 1939.  
Illustration by Richard Rickles

REVISED 12/10/95

Prepared By:  
City of Miami Beach  
Planning, Design and Historic Preservation Division  
1995

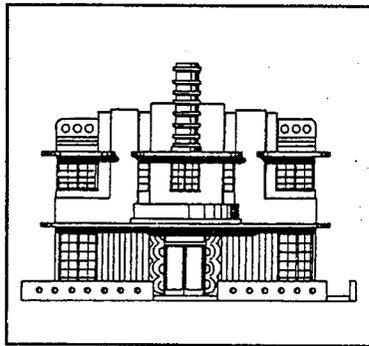


**CITY OF MIAMI BEACH**  
**HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION REPORT**  
**FOR**  
**THE OCEAN BEACH HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Prepared by:

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH PLANNING, DESIGN AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
DIVISION

OCTOBER 1995



Century Hotel, 140 Ocean Drive, Designed by Henry Hohauser, 1939.

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PROPOSED OCEAN BEACH HISTORIC DISTRICT  
DESIGNATION REPORT

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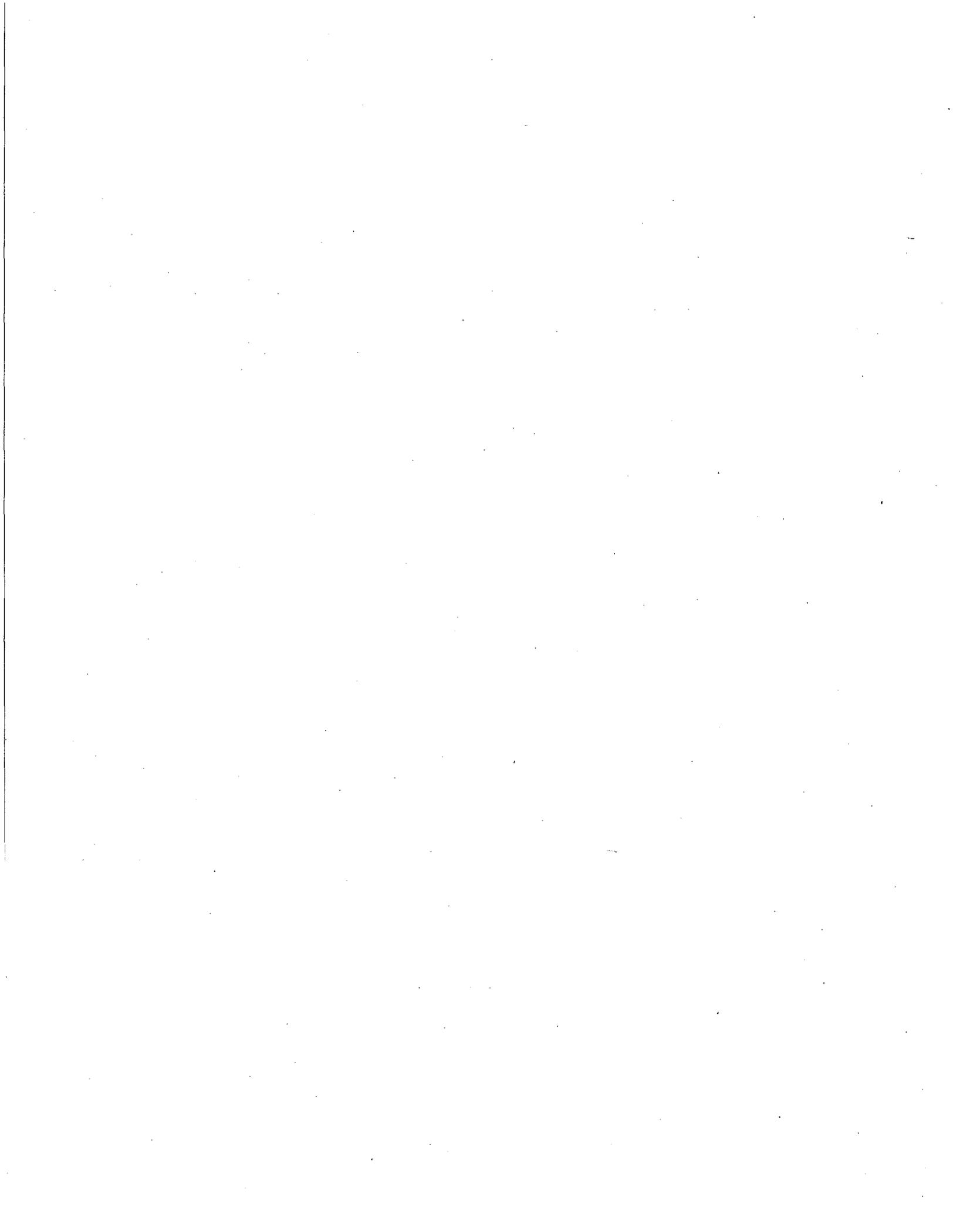
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## **I. REQUEST**

At its April 13, 1995 meeting, the City of Miami Beach Historic Preservation Board, noting the positive impact that preservation has had in the National Register Architectural District and further noting the potential loss of significant structures and sites in the South Pointe Redevelopment Area, requested the staff of the Planning, Design and Historic Preservation Division to prepare a preliminary evaluation and recommendation for the creation of a historic district south of Sixth Street. At its May 11, 1995 meeting, the Historic Preservation Board reviewed the Preliminary Evaluation and Recommendation prepared by the staff for the designation of this new historic district, to be known as the Ocean Beach Historic District, and found the structures and sites located within the proposed boundaries be in compliance with the criteria for designation listed in Section 19-5 of the Zoning Ordinance No. 89-2665. The Board further noted that the boundaries should be expanded in certain areas and directed the staff to prepare this designation report accordingly.

## **II. DESIGNATION PROCESS**

The process of historic designation is delineated in Section 19-5 of the Miami Beach Zoning Ordinance. An outline of this process is provided below:

Step One: A request for designation is made either by the City Commission, Historic Preservation Board, other agencies and organizations as listed in the Ordinance, or the property owners involved. Proposals for designation shall include a completed application form available from the Planning, Design and Historic Preservation Division.

Step Two: The Planning, Design and Historic Preservation Division prepares a Preliminary Review and recommendation for consideration by the Board.

Step Three: The Historic Preservation Board considers the Preliminary Review to determine general compliance with the criteria for designation and then votes to direct the Planning, Design and Historic Preservation Division to prepare a designation report.

The designation report is a historical and architectural analysis of the proposed district or site. The report:

- 1) serves as the basis for recommendation for designation by the Board;
- 2) describes review guidelines to be utilized

by the Board when a Certificate of Appropriateness is requested; and

- 3) will serve as an attachment to the Zoning Ordinance.

Step Four: The designation report is presented to the Board at a public hearing. If the Board determines that the proposed designation meets the intent and criteria set forth in the ordinance, they transmit a recommendation in favor of designation to the Planning Board and City Commission.

Step Five: The Planning Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed designation as a zoning ordinance amendment and, subsequently, transmit its recommendation to the City Commission.

Step Six: The City Commission may, after two (2) public hearings, adopt the amendment to the Zoning Ordinance which thereby designates the Historic Preservation Site or Historic District.

### **III. RELATION TO ORDINANCE CRITERIA**

In accordance with Section 19-5(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, eligibility for designation is determined on the basis of compliance with listed criteria.

1. The Historic Preservation Board shall have the authority to recommend that properties be designated as Historic Buildings, Historic Structures, Historic Improvements, Historic Landscape Features, Historic Interiors (architecturally significant public portions only), Historic Sites or Historic Districts if they are significant in the historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic or archeological heritage of the City of Miami Beach, the county, state or nation. Such properties shall possess an integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling or association and meet at least one (1) of the following criteria:
  - a. Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the history of Miami Beach, the county, state or nation;
  - b. Association with the lives of Persons significant in our past history;
  - c. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a historical period,

- architectural or design style or method of construction;
- d. Possesses high artistic values;
  - e. Represent the work of a master; Serve as an outstanding or representative work of a master designer, architect or builder who contributed to our historical, aesthetic or architectural heritage;
  - f. Have yielded, or are likely to yield information important in pre-history or history;
  - g. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places;
  - h. Consist of a geographically definable area that possesses a significant concentration of Sites, Buildings or Structures united by historically significant past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development, whose components may lack individual distinction.
2. A Building, Structure (including the public portions of the interior), Improvement or Landscape Feature may be designated historic even if it has been altered if the alteration is reversible and the most significant architectural elements are intact and repairable.

The proposed Ocean Beach Historic District is eligible for designation as it complies with the criteria as outlined above.

1. Staff finds the proposed district to be in conformance with Designation Criteria as specified in section 19.6 of the Zoning Ordinance for the following reasons:
  - A. Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the history of Miami Beach, the County, state or nation:

The proposed district represents a significant part of the first settlement on Miami Beach, becoming a magnet for pioneer tourists and adventurous residents of fledgling Miami in the early twentieth century. It is also the site of the first subdivision and infrastructure on the Beach, known as the Ocean Beach subdivision platted in 1912. The first hotel (still in existence at 112 Ocean Drive) is located within that original subdivision. The first recreational bathing facility, Smith's Casino, preceded even the original Ocean Beach subdivision. The "Ocean Beach" area was also at the site of Government Cut, which upon

opening enabled Biscayne Bay to be dredged for oceanliner use and influenced the development of the greater Miami area. Because it began the development that eventually grew into the City of Miami Beach, Ocean Beach significantly contributes to the history and development of the City.

B. Association with the lives of Persons significant in our past history:

The proposed district is associated with two of the most important real estate developers in the history of Miami Beach, J.N. and J.E. Lummus, as well as the very earliest recreation entertainment entrepreneurs on Miami Beach, Richard M. Smith (1904) and Avery Smith (1908, not related) and the developer of the City's first hotel in 1915, William Brown.

C. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a historical period, architectural or design style or method of construction:

The proposed district contains an array of eleven architectural styles, including a significant concentration of Mediterranean Revival and Art Deco styles. Present are examples of the earliest Wood Vernacular and Bungalow styles and many transitional (containing elements of two or more styles), up to the Garden Style apartment buildings of the late 1950's and the early 1960's. These styles collectively trace the historical progression of architectural design and construction in Miami Beach.

D. Possess high artistic values:

The Art Deco, Mediterranean Revival, and Post-World War buildings within the proposed historic district possess artistic value in building form, detail, ornamentation, interior design and site features. For example, the Century Hotel designed by Henry Hohausser and the Savoy Hotel by V.H. Nellenbogen are two of the finest Art Deco period buildings in Miami Beach. Also, Henry Hohausser's 1936 annex to the Beth Jacob Synagogue possesses rare and exceptional bas relief detailing and meticulously designed and executed stained glass windows incorporating religious symbols.

E. Represent the work of a master designer, architect or builder who contributed to historical, aesthetic or architectural heritage:

In the context of the proposed Ocean Beach Historic District, the term "master" shall relate to architects. The determination of master status is based on quality, quantity and relative importance of the buildings designed by a given architect. The buildings evaluated to make this determination need not be located within the nominated district, or even within the City of Miami Beach or Dade County; however, an architect who was particularly influential in determining the character of buildings within the City would have additional importance.

Many of the local "master" architects are represented in the proposed district including Henry Hohausser, L. Murray Dixon, Albert Anis, Anton Skislewicz, V.H. Nellenbogen, Carlos Schoepl and T. Hunter Henderson.

F. Have yielded, or are likely to yield information important in pre-history or history:

The proposed Ocean Beach Historic District traces the early development of Miami Beach through its remaining structures and sites, quality in workmanship and design from the first hotel, the Atlantic Beach Hotel, still located at 112 Ocean Drive, to the Beth Jacob Synagogue complex, located at 301-311 Washington Avenue and built between 1929 and 1936. It is also important to note that pre-World War II Ocean Beach, specifically the area south of 6th Street, saw the development of an enterprising and influential Jewish community which established its own institutions there and became a permanent part of the City's resident population.

G. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places:

The Beth Jacob Synagogue complex, located at 301-311 Washington Avenue within the proposed Ocean Beach Historic District, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is also designated as a local historic site in the City of Miami Beach.

H. Significant entity whose components may lack distinction, but possess a significant concentration of sites, buildings or structures united by historically significant past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development:

Consistency in land use, architectural style, scale and period of development within the proposed boundaries of the Ocean Beach Historic District has created

a significant example of the development of twentieth century oceanfront resort architecture. Not every building in the historic district may possess a high level of architectural significance when viewed by itself, but when viewed together with its neighboring buildings, it reinforces a unified aesthetic image which defines the community's special historic urban character. Many of the structures that survived demolition in Ocean Beach remained because of their architectural significance and viability.

2. Altered structures within the proposed Ocean Beach Historic District Boundaries may be designated historic structures if alterations are reasonably reversible and/or significant architectural elements are intact and repairable. In addition, staff expands its findings to include buildings which are contributing despite alterations as important factors in maintaining the special character of the neighborhood. An excellent example is the addition to the Pommier Building at 81 Washington Avenue.

#### IV. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF BOUNDARIES

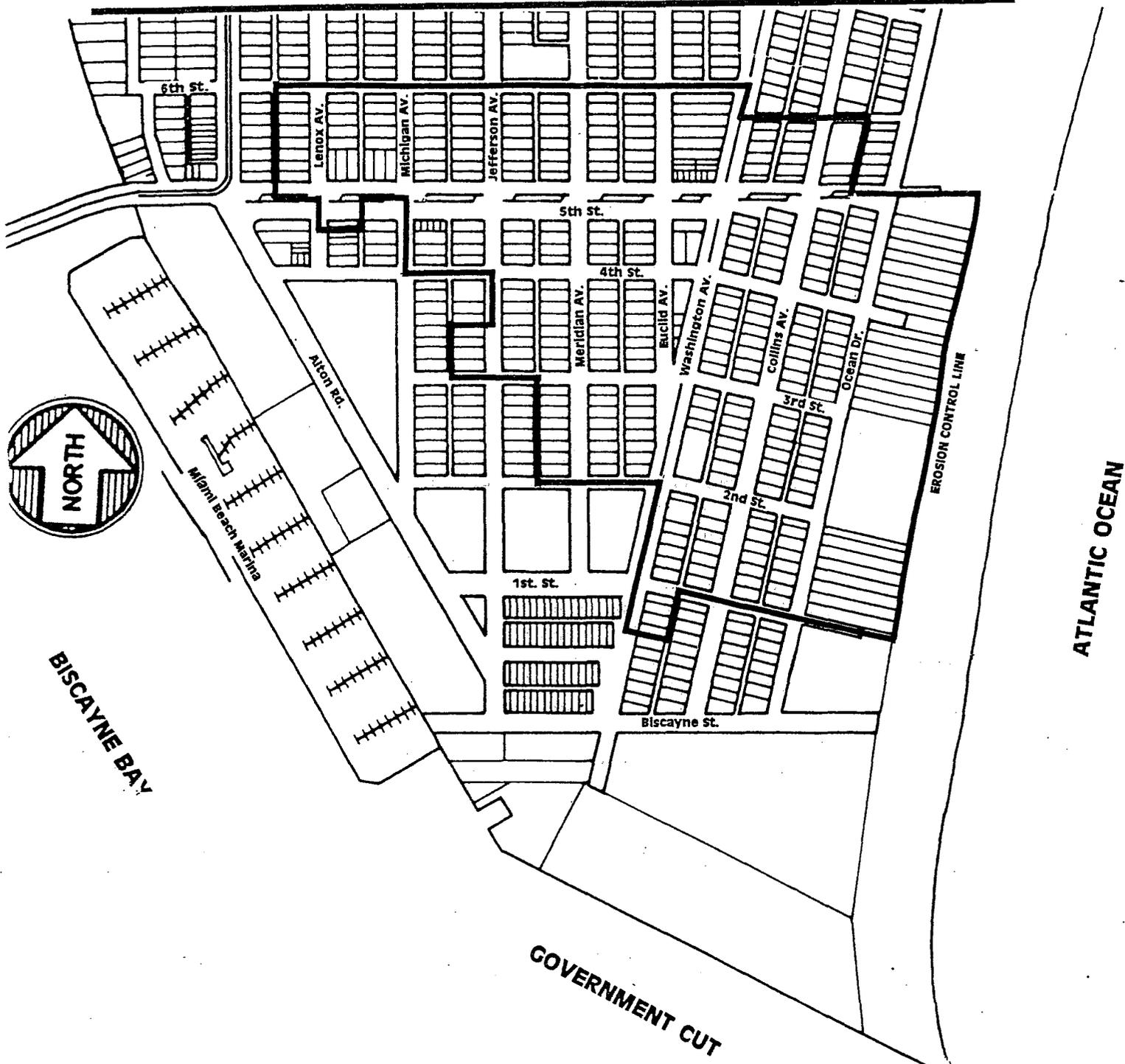
The proposed Ocean Beach Historic District includes parts of the original Ocean Beach Subdivision platted in 1912 and parts of Ocean Beach Additions 3 and 4 platted in 1914, as well as part of the Friedman and Cope Subdivision platted in 1917. The location of these boundaries has been determined through careful investigation and research of building records. They define a geographic area 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. The earliest origins of the City of Miami Beach are contained within this proposed historic district. A detailed description of the proposed boundaries is as follows:

The boundaries of the Ocean Beach Historic District commence at the intersection of the center line of 5th Street and the center line Ocean Court; thence run Easterly, along the extension of the center line of 5th Street to the Erosion Control Line of the Atlantic Ocean; thence run Southerly, along the Erosion Control Line to the center line of 1st Street; thence run Westerly, along 1st Street to the center line of Collins Court; thence run Southerly, along Collins Court to the south line of Lot 18 on Block 10; thence run Westerly along the extension of the south line of Lot 18 on Block 10 to the center line of Washington Avenue; thence run Northerly, along Washington Avenue to the center line of 2nd Street; thence run Westerly, along 2nd Street to the center line of Meridian Court; then run Northerly, along Meridian Court to the center line of 3rd Street; thence run Westerly, along 3rd Street to the center line of Jefferson Court; thence run Northerly, along Jefferson Court to the south line of Lot 4 on Block 82; thence run Easterly along the extension of the south line of Lot 4 on Block 82 to the center line of Jefferson Avenue; thence run Northerly, along Jefferson Avenue to the center line of 4th Street; thence run Westerly, along 4th Street to the center line of Michigan Avenue; thence run Northerly, along Michigan Avenue to the center line of 5th Street; thence run Westerly, along 5th Street to the center line of Michigan Court; then run Southerly along Michigan Court to the south line of Lot 8 on Block 99; thence run Westerly along the extension of the south line of Lot 8 on Block 99 to the center line of Lenox Avenue; thence run Northerly, along Lenox Avenue to the center line of 5th Street; then run Westerly, along 5th Street to the center line of Lenox Court; thence run Northerly, along Lenox Court to the center line of 6th Street; thence run Easterly along 6th Street to the center line of Washington Avenue; thence run Southerly, along Washington Avenue to the center line of 6th Street; thence run Easterly, along 6th Street to the centerline of Ocean Court; thence run Southerly, along Ocean Court to the point of commencement, at the intersection of the center lines of 5th Street and Ocean Court.

The northern boundary of the proposed Ocean Beach Historic District is co-terminus with the southern boundary of the existing National Register Architectural District (also known as the "Art Deco" District).

The described boundaries, as recommended by the Planning, Design and Historic Preservation Division and proposed by the City of Miami Beach Historic Preservation Board, are shown on the following Proposed Ocean Beach Historic District Map (Map 1).

OCEAN BEACH HISTORIC DISTRICT



Map 1: Proposed Ocean Beach Historic District boundaries as recommended by the City of Miami Beach Planning, Design & Historic Preservation Division and adopted by the City of Miami Beach Historic Preservation Board.

**V. PRESENT OWNERS**

Multiple owners including private individuals and development corporations. A list generated from the 1994-1995 Dade County Tax Assessment Records is available from the City of Miami Beach Planning, Design and Historic Preservation Division.

**VI. PRESENT USE**

The predominant current use is residential, followed by commercial, hotel, parks and recreational, and institutional use.

**VII. PRESENT ZONING**

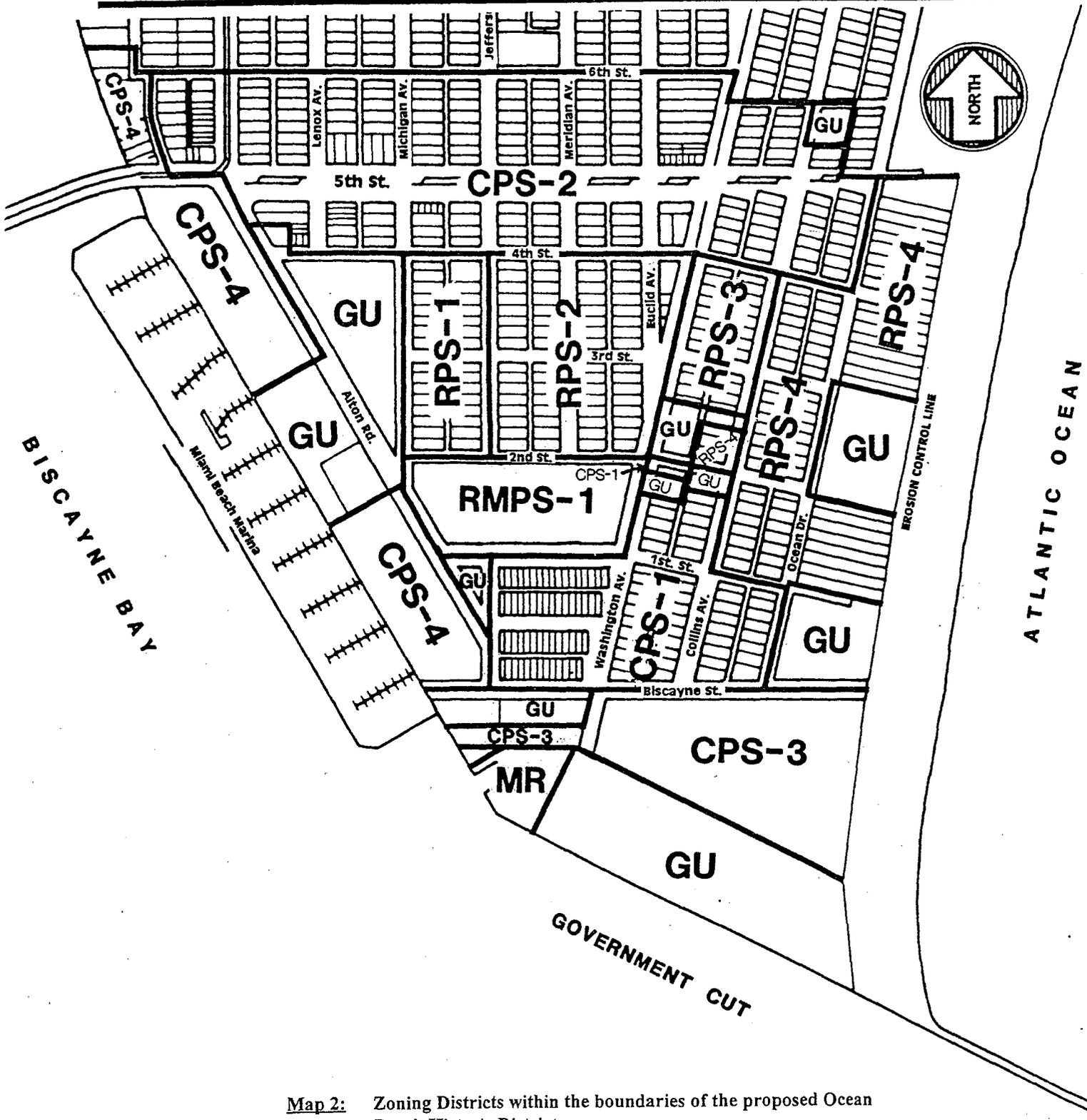
The majority of the nominated district is zoned residential and ranges from residential medium-low to medium-to-high densities. The portion of the proposed historic district abutting the existing National Register Architectural District is zoned commercial general mixed use. Those sites which are owned by the City are zoned GU.

Established Zoning Districts within the proposed boundaries of the Ocean Beach Historic District are as follows:

CPS-1	Commercial Limited Mixed-Use
CPS-2	Commercial General Mixed-Use
RPS-1	Residential Medium-Low Density
RPS-2	Residential Medium Density
RPS-3	Residential Medium-High Density
RPS-4	Residential High Density
GU	Municipal use

Please refer to the zoning map (Map 2) for further reference.

OCEAN BEACH HISTORIC DISTRICT

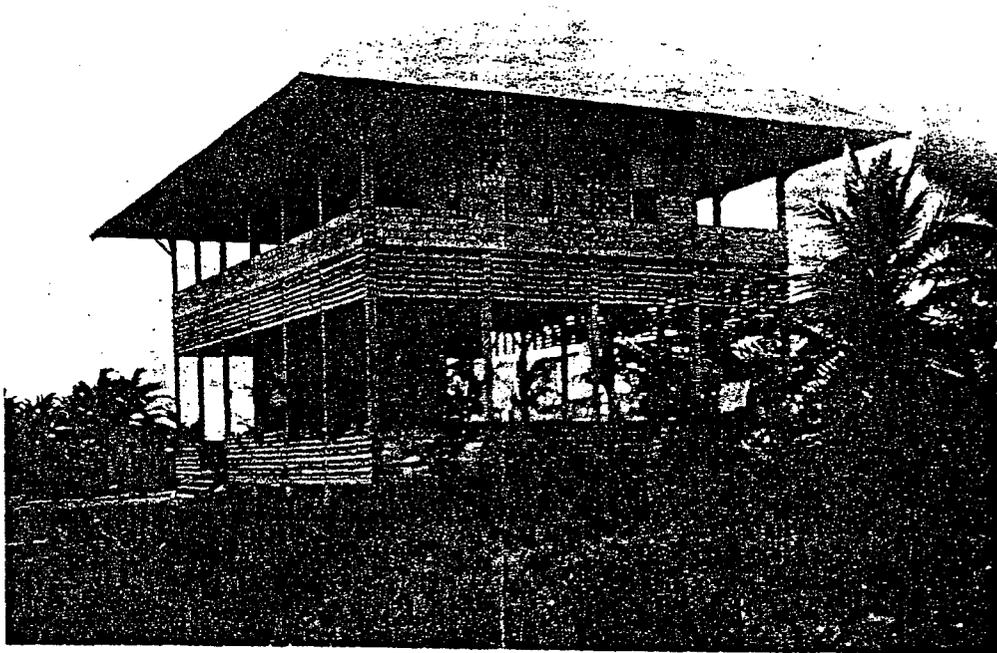


Map 2: Zoning Districts within the boundaries of the proposed Ocean Beach Historic District.

## VIII. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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. Today, this sweep of land remains a prime location at the edge of the Miami metropolis, connecting the Atlantic Ocean, Biscayne Bay and the downtown Miami skyline.

The first entrepreneur who dared to tap this virgin peninsula as an oceanside playground was Richard M. Smith, a former Connecticut schooner captain and Dade County Tax assessor, who is credited with inaugurating a rudimentary ferry service between Miami and the beach in 1904 and erecting a pavilion near the foot of present day Ocean Drive.

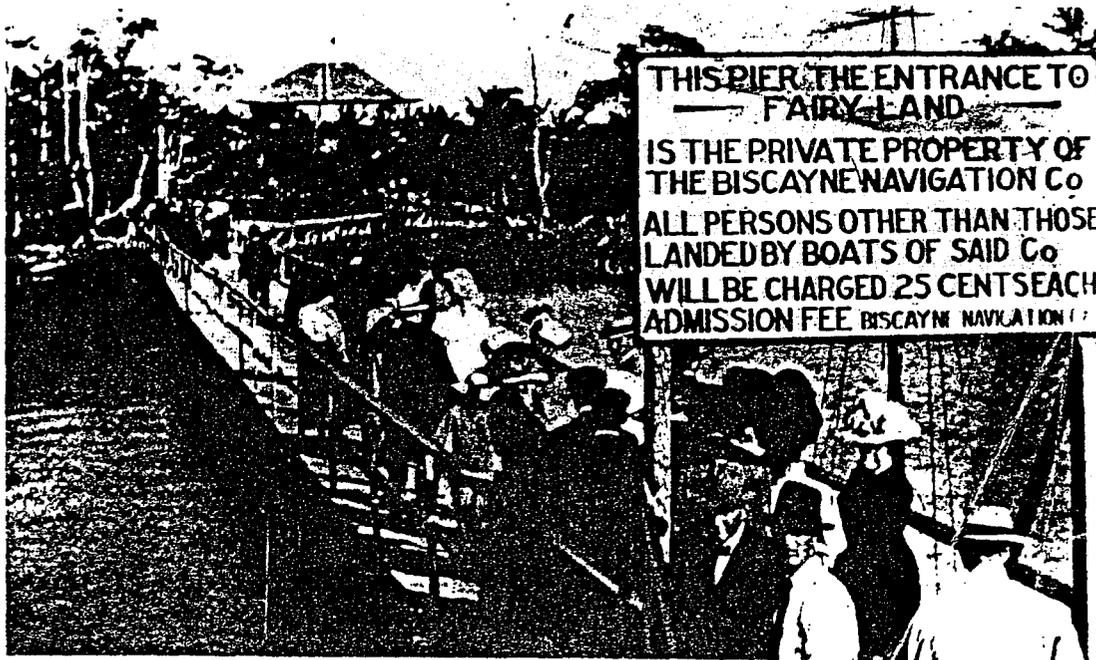


Smith's Casino, 1904 HASF

The pavilion, described as little more than an elevated open air dance hall and bathing house with a steep pyramid roof, was named Smith's Casino.(1) It was the first resort structure in Ocean Beach and preceded even the completion of Government Cut on March 14, 1905.

Following close on the heels of Richard Smith was another Smith from Connecticut, unrelated, with the first name of Avery. In 1908 Avery Smith purchased from Charles Lum the lease to a portion of land with Richard Smith's casino on it. In the same year he formed the Biscayne Navigation Company with a friend from Massachusetts, James C. Warr. They purchased and remodelled two boats, the *Lady Lou* and the *Sallie*, placing them into service between Miami on the mainland and the beach. This new transportation partnership put the ferries into service, renovated Smith's Casino, added a pier and boardwalk, and renamed the place Fairy Land.(2) An advertisement in the Miami Metropolis describes Fairy Land as:

The People's Playground. Excellent all year-round sea bathing establishment. Average temperature of sea water 76 degrees, winter season. All modern improvements. Large recreation for picnics. (2)



Afternoon landing at Fairy-Land & Boardwalk to Smiths Casino, 1909. HASF.

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. In that year James and John Lummus, established bankers who came to Miami in 1895, formed the Ocean Beach Realty Company and purchased 500 acres of agricultural land on the southern end of the beach from Charles Lum and Edward Wilson for the sum of \$80,000.00, and another 80 acres from Jennie Richardson of Detroit, Michigan.(3) It is believed the Lummus Brothers intended to develop this property as a modest seaside development resort community, not for agricultural purposes as was previously. On July 9, 1912 the company filed the first plat of the original Ocean Beach Subdivision, bounded by present day 5th Street to the north, Ocean Drive to the east, Biscayne Street to the south, and Washington Avenue to the west. The area itself was subdivided using a strict grid pattern with relatively small 50 x 130 foot lots and access via streets with 50-60 foot rights of way. The intended use for these properties was for the development of small seaside cottages and related commercial uses. Ocean Beach Additions 1,2,3 and 4 were quickly added in 1913 and 1914.

This major pioneering effort in land sales was particularly significant because the Lummus brothers did not place restrictions on property sales and rentals which excluded non-gentiles nor the middle class: "This territory, with its small houses, public beaches and bathing casinos, never lost its proletarian character."(4) Moreover, an analysis of the City's building card records indicates that, unlike in other development areas to the north of the Lummus Properties, at least twenty-five people believed to be of Jewish heritage owned residential or commercial property in the Ocean Beach Subdivision.

Also in 1912, Dan Hardie, a Dade County sheriff with a reputation as a no-nonsense law enforcement man, headed a group which built a second and much more elaborate casino in Ocean Beach, just north of Avery Smith's Fairy Land. The attractive new facility, known as Hardie's Casino, had an impressive list of officers, including John Lummus and Bobo Dean, editor of the local newspaper, the Miami Metropolis. (5)



John Levi, J.N. Lummus, J.E. Lummuss at 1st  
and Collins in 1913 HASF

Following the opening of the Collins Bridge in June of 1913, which the Lummus brothers helped to finance, the Ocean Beach Realty Company ran ads boasting lots for sale on the old Lum property from \$650-\$1000, with only 10% down. The Miami Metropolis reported on January 10, 1913:

**"Conditions are changing rapidly at the beach...It [Ocean Beach] is beginning to assume the appearance of a seaside resort. What the imagination of the incorporators of the Ocean Beach Realty Company depicted last summer is beginning to take definite shape. It took faith to undertake the job of making the waste of sand and the mangrove swamp into an attractive and habitable place, but faith marches at the head of progress, and there are now few doubters as to the ultimate outcome."(6)**

As early as January 1915, Ocean Beach Realty Company had cleared, graded and built streets on forty acres of property. It had also built a ten foot wide boardwalk along the oceanside and had constructed two cement bungalows for sale or rent on Atlantic Boulevard (today known as Collins Avenue). Ocean Beach was heralded as "A Tropical Isle, between the Mighty Atlantic and Beautiful Biscayne Bay."(7)

This acclaim did not go unnoticed by William H. Brown, a Scottish immigrant and plumber, who was already the proprietor of the Biscayne Hotel in Miami. On April 15, 1915, Mr. Brown bought a lot in Ocean Beach, west of the Boardwalk and just north of present day 1st Street. There he built Miami Beach's first hotel, the Atlantic Beach Hotel, which opened for the 1915-1916 tourist season in October 1915. It still stands today at 112 Ocean Drive. Seven years later, in 1922, Mr. Brown sold the hotel to Louis Levin and Charles Optener of Chicago, who almost immediately sold it to N.B.T. Roney, who would become a major figure in the development of Miami Beach.

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 catering to tourists and residents alike as shown below:

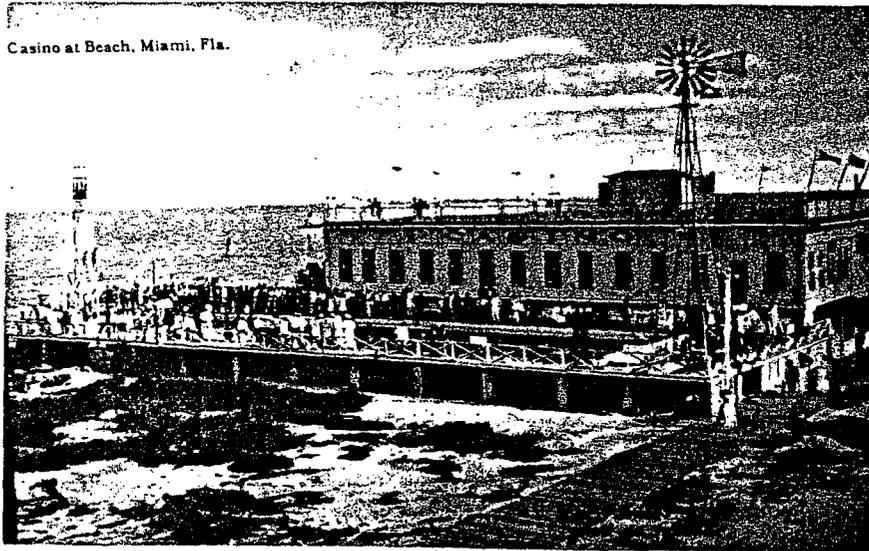
Hardie's Beach Casino -- on the Ocean between 1st and 2nd Streets

The Biscayne Plaza Theater--at the SW corner of Biscayne Street and Collins Avenue

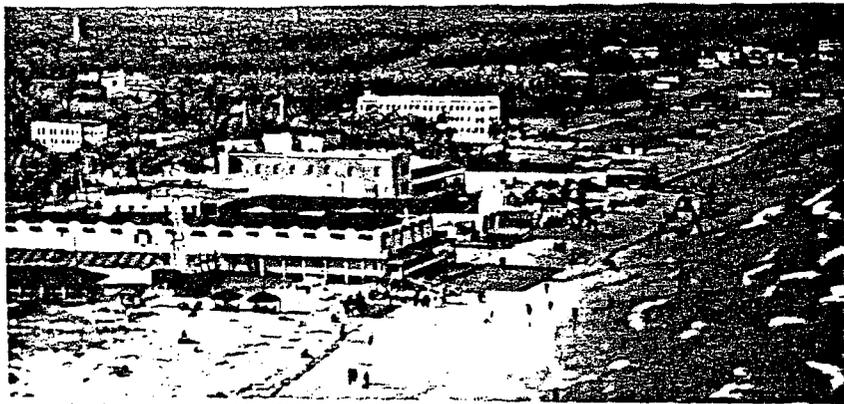
Collins Arcade--at the SE corner of 5th Street and Collins Avenue

Cook's Casino--at the SE corner of 5th Street and Ocean Drive

- Dixie Bathhouse--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  
The Million Dollar Pier--on the ocean at the east end of Biscayne Street  
Minsky Burlesque--on the Million Dollar Pier



Smith's Casino ca.1918 HASF



Hardie & Smith Casinos 1930 HASF

Likewise the 1935 Franklin Survey shows an impressive twenty-six hotels and forty-seven apartment buildings below Sixth Street. Preliminary field analysis reveals several of these structures have escaped the wrecking ball, including but not limited to the following:

- ◆ Hotel Nemo (1926)--100 Collins Ave
- ◆ Hotel Knickerbocker (c.early 1920's)--257 Collins Avenue
- ◆ Brown's Hotel (1915)--112 Ocean Drive (aka Rainbow Hotel, Star Apartments, Atlantic Beach Hotel)
- ◆ Madison Hotel (1922)--259 Washington Ave
- ◆ Hotel Lido (1932)--336 Collins Ave (now the Zilbert Center)
- ◆ Palm Royal Hotel (c.late 1920's)--816 Commerce Street
- ◆ Hotel Meridian (c. 1920's)--426 Meridian Ave
- ◆ Ambassador Hotel (1925)--227 Michigan Ave
- ◆ Hotel Seacrest (c.1920's)--150 Ocean Drive (aka Calvert Hotel, now an annex to the Century Hotel)
- ◆ Hotel Euclid (1937)--320 Euclid Ave
- ◆ Merrill Apartments (1923)--233-238 1st Street
- ◆ Delaware Apartments (1923)--227 1st Street
- ◆ Lorraine Apartments (1930)--941 1st Street
- ◆ Marylan Apartments (1930)--927 4th Street
- ◆ Bell Apartments (1935)--419-423 Washington Ave (aka Ros-Ann Apartments)

a ◆ signifies the building still exists in more or less its original form

Many of the surviving hotels, apartment buildings, commercial buildings, and even bungalows in the proposed Ocean Beach Historic District represent the work of master designers in Miami Beach from the 1920's throughout the 1950's. A preliminary list of architects based on current research includes the following:

L. Murray Dixon  
Henry Hohausser  
Carlos Schoepl  
Albert Anis  
V.H. Nellenbogen  
Anton Skislewicz  
Norden and Nagel

Henry Hohausser and V.H. Nellenbogen, in particular, designed many buildings in Ocean Beach. V.H. Nellenbogen's Savoy Hotel, built in 1935, and Henry Hohausser's Century Hotel built in 1939, are among the finest examples of the Art Deco Style in the City.

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.

Unlike in other developing areas of Miami Beach, non-gentiles felt welcome to invest and live in Ocean Beach, evident through examination of original building cards and plat survey books. The only unfortunate restriction imposed upon sales at Ocean Beach was that land was to be sold only to anyone who was "white and law abiding."<sup>(8)</sup> Of one hundred and forty-one building permit cards reviewed more than twenty-five percent, or forty cards, showed original owners believed to be of Jewish heritage. The dates of building permits issued to non-gentile owners span from 1922 to 1953, with the dominant period being in the 1930's and the very early 1940's. Examination of the 1935 Franklin Survey Company survey Atlas of Miami Beach to Golden Beach, and the 1952 G.M. Hopkins Company survey Platbook of Miami Beach, Golden Beach, reveals that five Jewish institutions were located in Ocean Beach south of Sixth Street. They include the following:

- The original Beth Jacob Synagogue--311 Washington Ave (1935 survey)-existing and in use today
- Beth Jacob Synagogue Annex--301 Washington Ave (1952 survey)-today home of Mosaic Museum
- Daughters of Israel Ritualism--151 Michigan Ave (1952 survey)--ritual baths, non-existent today
- The Hebrew Academy--550 Jefferson Ave (1952 survey)--non-existent today
- The Jewish Cultural Center--429 Lenox Ave (1952 survey)--building exists today as the 5th Street Club

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.<sup>(9)</sup> 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.<sup>(10)</sup>

The periods during World War I and World War II brought development on Miami Beach to a standstill. However, the period in between the two wars was one of intense

development, and based on building cards on record with the City of Miami Beach, the greatest development boom period in the City's history.

As World War II came to an end and mid-century approached, development in the original Ocean Beach neighborhood began to grow at a slower rate than in the more northerly areas of the Beach. This is especially true in the period following World War II through the 1960's, when newer hotels were being developed on former Millionaire's Row north of 16th Street and upward on Collins Avenue. It was the beginning of the modern resort hotel concept, complete with numerous restaurants, nightclubs, shops and private beaches--all of which drew many tourists away from southern Miami Beach. The nightclubs and restaurants in and around the Ocean Beach neighborhood closed or were converted to other uses, and the small hotels and seasonal apartments came to depend upon a more modest clientele. Minimal improvement was performed on buildings and many structures no longer enjoyed the maintenance they experienced in earlier years. Within the last ten years, however, the impact of historic preservation elsewhere on the Beach has encouraged substantial rehabilitation and adaptive re-use in the area, especially along the proposed Ocean Beach Historic District's boundaries.

Today approximately two hundred and fifty buildings are located within the boundaries of the proposed Ocean Beach Historic District, not including outbuildings. One hundred and fifty-three of these buildings, or sixty-three percent, have been preliminarily identified as contributing to the special character of the proposed Ocean Beach historic district. They embrace eleven architectural styles, which are referred to in the Inventory and Breakdown of styles in the architectural background section, ranging from 1910's Vernacular to the post WWII Garden Style. The majority of contributing buildings, over fifty percent, are of the Art Deco and Mediterranean Revival styles. Collectively these structures reflect and characterize the historical evolution of Ocean Beach south of Sixth Street as a modest and enticing early twentieth century seaside resort community from the construction of the City's first hotel in 1915.

## **IX. ARCHITECTURAL BACKGROUND**

As the first recorded subdivision in Miami Beach, the neighborhood within the proposed boundaries of the Ocean Beach Historic District deserves overdue recognition as the birthplace of the City of Miami Beach.

Analysis shows that the visual image of Ocean Beach today remarkably still illustrates the continuous development of architectural styles in an area built up over time, yet managing

to retain much of its significant open space throughout the years. The result is a visual cohesiveness leading into a logical progression of architectural styles northward from Biscayne Street across 5th Street and into the National Register Architectural District.

- There are still one story cottages forming small urban nodes, set amidst numerous Deco era gems. Blocks of 1920's Mediterranean Revival buildings create a neighborhood remarkable for its continuity, especially given that a number of buildings within the proposed Ocean Beach Historic District have been demolished(11): "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 from the north with modestly sized apartments and oceanfront hotels."(12) Examples of all these early styles of Miami Beach architecture still exist within the proposed Ocean Beach Historic District.
- The "openness" afforded the neighborhood by its vacant lots has been consistent throughout the history of Ocean Beach. The haphazard urbanity stamped upon the land of Ocean Beach, yet evident today, shows a neighborhood which still reflects its pioneer days. Examination of the Record Surveys of the area as early as 1935 reveals that Ocean Beach looks essentially the same today as it did in the twenties when development really started booming all over Miami Beach. The area was never really completely covered with structures, as has been true of the adjacent Historic "Art Deco" District where practically every lot has long been built upon.(13)
- "An aerial view of the island in 1924 shows moderate development near the Ocean and relatively little development west of Washington Avenue, although dirt roads are lined with trees."(14) "The same view of the island in 1939 shows the development of larger hotels along the oceanfront and an island full of apartment houses. The beach is substantially wider. At the southern end of the island the pier can be seen, just north of the dog track."(15)

- "There wasn't even a Miami Beach back in 1913 when Joseph Weiss established what would become Miami Beach's most famous restaurant. And the place wasn't even called Joe's, let alone Joe's Stone Crab. It was only a short-order sandwich counter located in Smith's Casino...By 1919, however, the restaurant was at last known as Joe's and, having moved a couple of times, it finally came to rest at its present site"(16) at Biscayne Street and Washington Avenue.
- "Miami Beach's first hotel was built by William J. Brown in 1915. Although modified significantly, it remains today as the Star Apartments at 112 Ocean Drive."(17) Many hotels constructed during the height of the Art Deco period in the 1930's are true classics of the style. "The Savoy Plaza Hotel, by Architect VH Nellenbogen in 1935, has a strong art deco theme."(18)
- During the 1920's, on Miami Beach, "the whole place was selling like mad."(19) "South Beach, too, was experiencing a boom in new but smaller hotels. The 55 room Seabreeze at Collins and Fourth Street and the 30 room Marlin at Collins and Fourth Street and the 18 room Carol, also at Collins and Fourth."(20) The former MacArthur Hotel Building fronting Fifth Street from Euclid to Meridian Avenue, designed by T. Hunter Henderson in 1930, still provides magnificent block-long frontage.(21) "New tropical colors accent the Art Deco architecture. Carved chevron banding and floral corner scroll work over first floor stores and apartments above. Cut corner entry. Reversed stepped pyramids cap corners. Consists of two three story buildings connected by an enclosed walkway at the second and third floors. Formerly 96 hotel rooms, the building now has 44 one and two bedroom apartments."(22)
- "Because of its southernmost location in Ocean Beach, the photogenic little Century Hotel at 140 Ocean Drive is often considered an early example forecasting future Miami Beach architecture. Actually, however, it is one of Henry Hohausser's 1939 fantasies, deriving its main impact from the concrete mast with fins that rises above the entrance."(23)

- Still existing in the 500 block of Washington Avenue, "the Paris Theater's marquee had once included a neon Eiffel Tower."(24) The "vertical marquee...was adapted from the word "Variety,"(25) the former name for the theater.(26)
- The Burgos Pharmacy building at 805 Fifth Street, designed by Walter DeGarmo in 1925 is "Spanish Mediterranean. Mission Tile. Corner Tower. Barrel Tile Roof."(27) Originally designed as a Western Union office, demolition for this building may be eminent (Design Review Board approval has been granted for a new building on this site).

Open development sites exist within the boundaries of the proposed Ocean Beach Historic District. These vacant properties are important factors in the designation report as future new development on these lots can greatly reinforce the special character of the historic district. An excellent example is the expansion of Joe's Stone Crab on the vacant lots north of the original restaurant. This project is a clear demonstration of the positive impact of appropriate and sensitive design, in scale with the character of the neighborhood.



The Joe's Stone Crab expansion with a new main entrance on Washington Avenue illustrates how well a new project can be sensitive to a historic structure its neighborhood

Inventory of Architectural Styles in the Proposed District\*

Vernacular (1900-1930s)	1
Bungalow (1910s-1930s)	10
Mediterranean Revival (1910s-1930s)	40
Mediterranean Revival-Art Deco Transitional (1920s-1930s)	7
Art Deco (1920s-1930s)	43
Moderne (1930s-1940s)	6
Classic Revival - Art Deco (late 1930s-1940s)	2
Post World War II Transitional Art Deco (ca. pre-WWII-1960)	11
Post World War II Modern (ca. post WWII-1965)	11
Eclectic (1920s-1950s)	2
Garden Style (1940s-1965)	9

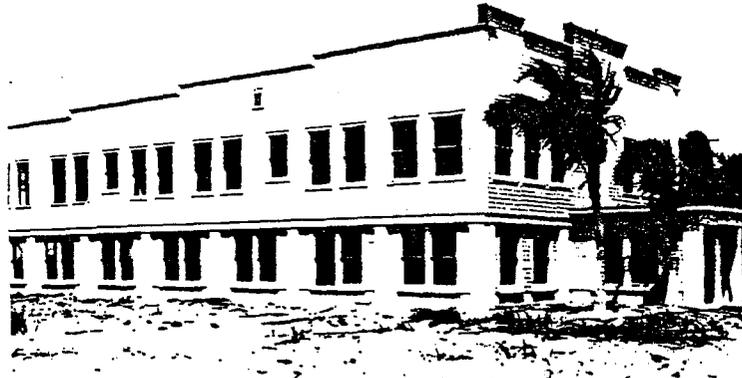
\*Approximately twelve structures are awaiting final stylistic classification

**ARCHITECTURAL STYLES REPRESENTED IN PROPOSED DISTRICT**

**Vernacular Style**

ca.1900-1930's

Vernacular is not a style "per se," but rather a common method of typical early construction in South Florida. The materials and forms encompassed wood frame and masonry construction. These materials and methods were transferred from abroad with the Beach's early settlers. Through time, many of these structures were replaced.



112 Ocean Drive. Currently modified with stucco on exterior HASF

Wood Frame construction was most evident in the earliest days of Ocean Beach and reflected a secluded resort-like character. Rooms were generous and well ventilated. Tall ceilings, large windows, and sometimes protective overhangs responded to the then untouched environment. Frame vernacular building flourished in the early twentieth century, with most examples in Ocean Beach being built between 1910 and 1920.

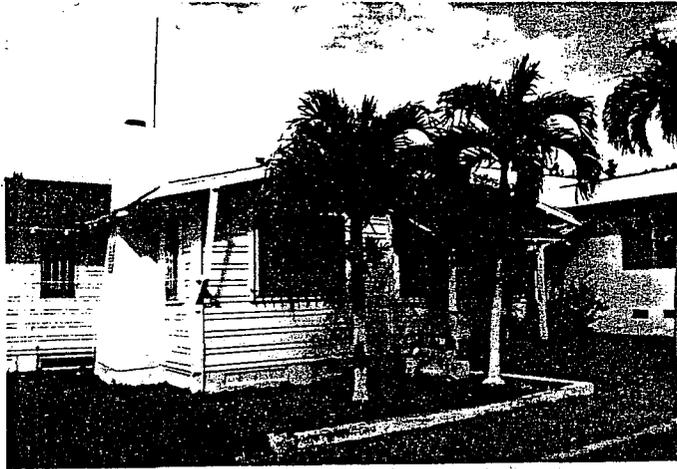
Noted for stark simplicity, vernacular structures are usually rectilinear in form with little or no elaboration. Functional elements supply the only elaboration or decoration except that occasionally modest Classical elements were referenced such as the engaged pilasters that were seen on the Atlantic Hotel at 112 Ocean Drive, built in 1915. Most are one and two stories in height with flat, gable or hipped roof and a single story porch extending across the front. Little or no ornamentation was intentionally applied to residential or commercial structures.

Remaining Examples of "contributing structures" in this style include:

Ocean Drive no. 112

**Bungalow Style**

ca. 1910s - 1930s



815 4th Street

Bungalows were a popular and economical form of middle class home built in Ocean Beach from the earliest development years through the 1930s. Many of these simple structures may have been constructed from mail order house plans gotten from catalogues published in southern California(29) but others were designed by local architects as distinguished as V. H. Nellenbogen. Three such modest residences located at 900, 906 and 918 Fourth Street were designed by Nellenbogen in 1934 but unfortunately demolished in September 1995.

Typically, bungalows were of wood frame construction, one to one and a half stories in height, with gable roofs, overhanging eaves, front porches, and large wood sash windows. They afforded good cross ventilation, a shaded outdoor area, and adapted well to South Florida coastal conditions, generally being elevated two to three feet above grade on foundation walls or masonry piers.

Surface materials used on the exteriors of bungalows in Ocean Beach varied. Narrow wood clapboards, stucco, and even oolitic limestone (locally referred to as "coral rock") provided for a pleasant diversity of outward appearances.

Remaining Examples of "contributing structures" in this style:

- Jefferson Avenue nos. 312 (altered), 361
- Meridian Avenue nos. 242, 313, 327
- Washington Avenue no. 355
- 4th Street nos. 815, 828, 912, 919 (Vanity Novelty Garden)

## Mediterranean Revival Style

ca. mid 1910s - early 1930s



727 Second Street

Mediterranean Revival architecture was the "style of choice" for the first major boom period in Ocean Beach. Its connotation of Mediterranean resort architecture, combining expressions of Italian, Moorish, North African and Southern Spanish themes, was found to be an appropriate and commercially appealing image for the new Floridian seaside resort.

During the mid 1910s through the early 1930s the style was applied to hotels, apartment buildings, commercial structures, and even modest residences. Its architectural vocabulary was characterized by stucco walls, low pitched terra cotta and historic Cuban tile roofs, arches, scrolled or tile capped parapet walls and articulated door surrounds, sometimes utilizing Spanish Baroque decorative motifs and Classical elements. Feature detailing was occasionally executed in keystone.

Application of the architectural vocabulary in Ocean Beach ranged from sparing to modestly exuberant, and building massing varied from simple rectangular form to stepped massing with recessed wall planes and tower-like corner features. Wooden casement or double hung windows of several configurations provided additional detail to the facades.

### Remaining Examples of "contributing structures" in this style:

Ocean Drive	nos. 126 (Red Sands (altered), 150 (Century annex), 222, and 312
Collins Avenue	nos. 100 (Hotel Nemo), 108, 157, 211, 221, 257, and 336

Washington Avenue	nos. 259 (The Madison - altered), 411 (Harrison Hotel), and 421
Euclid Avenue	nos. 334, and 400
Jefferson Avenue	nos. 321, 337-339, and 552
Meridian Avenue	nos. 234, 326, and 426
Michigan Avenue	nos. 321, 411, 532, and 560 (altered)
1st Street	nos. 227, and 233
2nd Street	nos. 723, 727, 735, 739, 803, and 819-821
4th Street	nos. 739, 741, 927, 935, and 941
6th Street	nos. 628-644

**Mediterranean Revival - Art Deco Transitional ("Med-Deco")**  
 (ca. late 1920s - mid 1930s)



344 Ocean Drive--The "Ocean Beach"

"Med-Deco" in Ocean Beach was a synthesis of Mediterranean Revival form and Art Deco decorative detail. This unique hybrid style became a fascinating bridge between the "familiar" and the "new" as the allure of Art Deco found its way into the Beach's architectural vocabulary. Clean ziggurat roof lines and crisp geometric detailing replaced scrolled parapets, bracketed cornices and Classical features on structures of clear Mediterranean Revival form. Likewise, sloped barrel tile roofs rested gracefully on edifices with spectacular Art Deco entrances and facade treatments.

Some of the most celebrated architects in Miami Beach designed structures in this brief-lived style, including V. H. Nellenbogen, Henry Hohausser and T. Hunter Henderson.

The predominant exterior material of Med-Deco was smooth stucco with raised or incised details. Featured stucco areas were often patterned or scored. Keystone, either natural or filled and colored, was frequently used to define special elements. Windows ranged from wood and steel casement to wood double hung.

*Remaining Examples of "contributing structures" in this style include:*

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Ocean Drive       | no. 344 (Ocean Beach Apartments - V. H. Nellenbogen) |
| Collins Avenue    | no. 201 (altered)                                    |
| Washington Avenue | nos. 245, and 350                                    |

Euclid Avenue  
5th Street

nos. 328, and 344 (La Belle Apartments - Henry Hohausser)  
nos. 705-745 (Lindberg Hotel - T. Hunter Henderson)

## Art Deco Style

ca. late 1920s - 1930s



140 Ocean Drive--Century Hotel

Art Deco is considered one of the first twentieth century architectural styles in America to break with traditional revival forms. It emanated largely from the impact of the 1925 Paris *Exposition des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes*, a design fair celebrating the reconciliation between the decorative arts and advancements in technology and industry.(30) Architects searching for design "purity" became eager to explore new possibilities afforded by the rapidly evolving Machine Age.(31) An architectural style unfolded which looked to both the past and the future for its design inspiration.

Building forms in the Art Deco style were typically angular and clean, with stepped back facades, symmetrical or asymmetrical massing and strong vertical accenting. The preferred decorative language included geometric patterns, abstracted natural forms, modern industrial symbols and ancient cultural motifs employing Mayan, Egyptian and Indigenous American themes.

In Ocean Beach and its immediate environs a unique form of Art Deco employed nautical themes as well as tropical floral and fauna motifs. Ocean liners, palm trees, flamingos and numerous related elements graced the exteriors and interiors of the new local architecture. The favored materials for executing this distinctive "art" decor included bas-relief stucco, keystone, etched glass, a variety of metals, cast concrete, patterned terrazzo, and others. Today this distinctive design vocabulary, which further incorporated glass block, vitrolite and stunning painted wall murals, has become the hallmark of Miami Beach's internationally recognized Art Deco gems.

Remaining Examples of "contributing structures" in this style:

Ocean Drive	nos. 140 (Century Hotel - Henry Hohausser), 201 Collins(may be altered Med.-Rev.), 304, 321 (Simone Hotel), 334, 335 (Sorrento Hotel), 412, 425 (Savoy Plaza), 436, 444, and 460
Collins Avenue	nos. 200 (Bell Ray Apts.), 212, 310, 345, and 361 (President Apts.)
Washington Avenue	nos. 101, 161, 235, 347, 354, 423-437,536 (Henry Hotel), and 540 (Paris Theater - formerly Variety - Henry Hohausser)
Euclid Avenue	nos. 266, 320, and 350
Jefferson Avenue	nos. 307, 316-320, 324-326, 327, and 343
Meridian Avenue	nos. 300, 308-314 (Marlis Apts), 359 (Forman Apts), 410 (Morea Apts), 411, and 540-550
Michigan Avenue	nos. 550, 551, and 559
1st Street	no. 230 (former Crystal Apts - Henry Hohausser - now Pommier Bldg)
6th Street	no. 1020

**Moderne Style (aka "Streamline" Moderne)**

ca. 1930s-1940s



349-351 Meridian



901-921 3rd Street

As "Art Deco" evolved on the Beach in the 1930s modern transportation and industrial design began to have an even greater impact upon new construction. The "streamlined" character of automobiles, airplanes, trains, buses, liners and even home appliances inspired powerful horizontal design compositions, accentuated by striking vertical features and punctuated by icons of the technological era. Continuous "eyebrows", racing stripe banding, radio tower-like spires, portholes, and deck railings like those found on grand ocean liners, were among the unique features to set this architecture apart from anything before it. The creative incorporation of nautical themes showed this form of Art Deco to be true to its origins in Ocean Beach.

Smooth, rounded corners often replaced sharp ones on Moderne buildings, especially on corner lots. "Eyebrows" swept around them as did other details. Street corners became inviting architectural focal points, whether the special treatment employed was based upon curves or angles.

Like earlier Art Deco buildings, the Moderne style incorporated smooth and articulated stucco, architectural glass block, keystone and a variety of metals used in detailing. Predominating surfaces became smooth, planer and aerodynamic in character.

Remaining Examples of "contributing structures" in this style:

Ocean Drive	nos. 125 (Villa Luisa), 350 (Lord Balfour - Anton Skislewicz)
Meridian Avenue	nos. 349-351, and 421
Michigan Avenue	nos. 521-539
3rd Street	nos. 901-921 (Carlos B. Schoeppl)

**Classical Revival - Art Deco Style**  
 ca. 1930s - early 1940s



455 Ocean Drive

During the 1930s in America, buildings of a religious or monumental nature often relied upon the form and language of Classical Revival architecture as a means of ensuring a traditional and formidable presence in the community. In Ocean Beach, however, the tide of Art Deco was strong. Buildings that exhibited Classical form, such as the Paramount Plaza (formerly the Hotel Arlington) and the 1936 annex to the Beth Jacob Temple, also displayed architectural features and decorative elements that were significantly influenced by the new Deco architecture of the Beach. Cornices and molding bands on the Hotel Arlington were designed to feel more like the continuous "eyebrows" of the Moderne style. Likewise, the columns of the Arlington were relieved of their Classical capitals and allowed to support the balcony above on clean cylindrical shafts. In the annex to the Beth Jacob Temple bas relief cast stone spandrel panels between the stained glass windows were executed in Art Deco stylized acanthus leaves flanking a central Star of David, and the octagonal drum at the "crossing" on the roof above was graced with eight octagonal windows.

Remaining examples of "contributing structures" in this style:

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Ocean Drive       | no. 455 (Paramount Plaza - formerly Hotel Arlington - Albert Anis)               |
| Washington Avenue | no. 301 (Beth Jacob Synagogue 1936 annex - Henry Hohausser - now home of MOSAIC) |

**Post World War II Transitional Art Deco (aka Post War Deco)**

ca. post World War II - 1960



121 Ocean Drive--Sea Crest Apartments

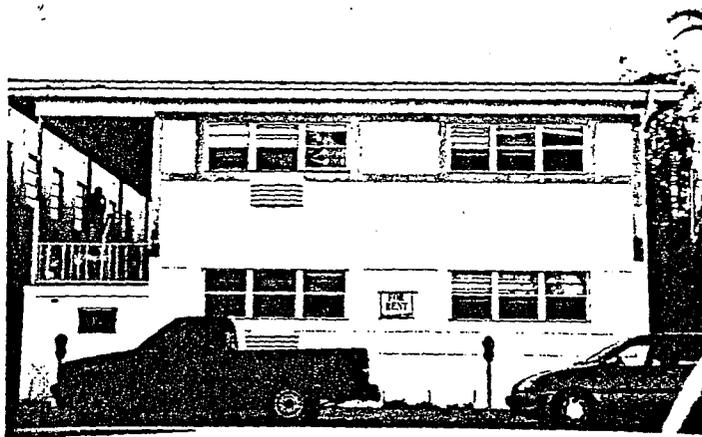
Post War Deco drew significantly from the form and decorative vocabulary of both early Art Deco in Miami Beach and Moderne. Although single block massing was predominant the emphasis could be placed on either horizontal or vertical composition, dependent upon the size of the structure, the character of the site, and the will of the architect. Frequently, continuous eyebrows would be extended to form side or front canopies, either cantilevered or supported on their furthest edge by columns. New decorative materials were introduced which reflected changing tastes nationally, including brick, permastone, and cast architectural block in a variety of "open" patterns. The latter was particularly favored for rails and screen walls. Although steel casement windows were predominant, aluminum "awning" type windows began appear latter. Many of these delightful structures in Ocean Beach paid wonderful tribute to their architectural origins while effectively addressing changing times.

Remaining examples of "contributing structures" in this style include:

Ocean Drive	nos. 121 (Sea Crest Apartments), and 158
Collins Avenue	nos. 301-309, and 428
Meridian Avenue	nos. 320, 336
2nd Street	nos. 201
4th Street	nos. 801-807
6th Street	nos. 1030, 1040, and 1050

**Post World War II Modern Style (aka Post War Modern)**

ca. post World War II - 1965



130 Ocean Drive

The Post War Modern style in Ocean Beach exhibited many elements of its companion style of the period, Post War Deco, but clearly established a path of its own in terms of modern functional simplicity. Essentially the strong design personality of Art Deco, as it evolved over two decades on the Beach, significantly gave way to the dictates of function in the Post War Modern seaside resort architecture.

Floor plans were commonly reorganized from interior double loaded corridors to "open air" verandas on one side or more. Single block massing remained a dominant characteristic but new functional exterior elements profoundly impacted on design. Overhanging roof plates and projecting floor slabs became typical of the new "style" along with paired or clustered pipe columns to support them. Symmetrical staircases became significant exterior design features.

Additional design elements and materials were added to the architectural vocabulary, including rounded eaves, rock face feature areas, cast concrete decorative panels, and applied masonry elements denoting marine and nautical themes, such as seahorses and anchors.

Remaining Examples of "contributing structures" in this style:

Ocean Drive                    nos. 130  
Euclid Avenue                nos. 518, and 536

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Meridian Avenue	nos. 220, 224, 250, 253, 350, and 422
Michigan Avenue	nos. 419
2nd Street	nos. 809-815

**Eclectic**

ca. 1920s - 1950s



321 Collins Avenue

Eclectic architecture in Ocean Beach includes buildings which adopt the style(s) of another time and/or another place selected by the architect, at will, for a purpose. Henry Hohausers fanciful English Tudor style cottage located at 321 Collins Avenue is an amazing example of Eclectic architecture in Ocean Beach. Its sharp gable roofs, half-frame (exposed) timbers, and Gothic window lintel details are clearly not a part of the natural architectural progression on the Beach, but yet they command the desired attention and assure a special place.

Remaining Examples of "contributing structures" in this style:

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Collins Avenue    | no. 321   |
| Washington Avenue | no. 311 (the original Beth Jacob Synagogue structure) |

## The Garden Style

ca. late 1940s - mid 1960s



101 Collins Avenue



Courtyard--Golden Dreams  
65 Washington Avenue

The primary defining characteristic of the Garden Style in Ocean Beach is that the entryway and public walkways are placed on the exterior, where they are open to the natural elements and surround a common garden area. A large central front entry leads to an open symmetrical staircase, ascending to the upper level(s), and behind it the courtyard. The plan is "U" shape and basically consists of two identical two to three story buildings facing onto a shared central garden/courtyard, often with a fountain in the center, and joined at the rear. Visually and structurally the buildings are united by a grand low pitched gable roof (typically) extending like gull wings across the front and over the open central entryway. The roof plate usually overhangs open walkways below and may be conclude in a rounded eave characteristic of late 1950s modern architecture in Miami Beach.(32)

Architectural ornamentation is generally modest and minimal in the Garden Style, normally consisting of cantilevered balconies with ornamental pierced block railings, and sometimes exuberantly detailed wrought iron rails on stairs and along open walkways. Occasionally the grand gabled roof visually rests on broad cut stone engaged pilasters.

In providing a large central open entry and situating the apartment units facing inward on a common garden area, this important modern building style in Ocean Beach provides a sense of community facilitating greater social interaction and

security for its occupants.(32)

Remaining Examples of "contributing structures" in this style:

Collins Avenue	nos. 101, 250-260 (Shalom House), 340-350, and 401(Southern Star)
Washington Avenue	nos. 65-75 (Golden Dreams)
Euclid Avenue	nos. 358 (Tranquility House)
Meridian Avenue	nos. 543, and 655
4th Street	nos. 901-911

**XI. PLANNING CONTEXT**

**Development of Vacant Lots:**

Examination of aerial photographs from the 1920s through the late 1950s, as well as survey books, including the 1935 Franklin Survey Company's Atlas of Miami Beach to Golden Beach and the 1952 G.M. Hopkins Company's Platbook of Miami Beach, Golden Beach, indicate that "open space" was a common factor historically in the development of Ocean Beach south of 6th Street. The least amount appears to have occurred by about mid century, when the area reached its peak development as a seaside resort community. This openness was seen in a number of ways, including private landscaped vacant lots and gardens, some associated with hotels and guest houses, park areas and open public recreational spaces such as Ocean Park, and Pier Park, and in the form of relatively broad avenues, like Collins and especially Washington Avenue. Other open sites seem to have been simply awaiting later development.

The presence of vacant lots over time would appear to be attributable to a number of factors. First of all, lots in Ocean Beach were relatively small when originally platted so prospective entrepreneurs and future residents of comparatively modest means could afford to invest here. This development philosophy or strategy resulted in a more casual development pattern than if large tracts had been developed, leaving numerous vacant lots dispersed among smaller developed sites. Second, air conditioning did not exist in the near-tropical climate of South Florida for the first half of the century. Vacant lots and open spaces provided places for landscaped and shaded outdoor seating and recreational areas. They also allowed for good natural ventilation, not blocking the ocean breezes so critical to buildings before the time air conditioning. Third, by the late 1930s

tourist development was marching uptown along Collins Avenue, slowing down land development south of 6th Street. By the mid 1950s it had shot all the way to 41st Street with the construction of the Fontainebleau Hotel resort complex. This significantly further reduced development in the south. Fourth, disastrous hurricanes in 1926 and 1947 took their toll on early architecture, some of which may not have been rebuilt.

Simply put, however, cities and their respective parts evolve and change over time, due to an array of circumstances. Ocean Beach, south of 6th Street is no exception. Historic district designation does not mean that privately owned vacant lots should remain undeveloped to preserve a current state of "openness". To the contrary, historic district designation is a vehicle which supports and promotes compatible contemporary development on vacant lots which were planned and zoned to be built upon. Appropriately developed new sites, in combination with municipal parks and planned public open spaces create the balance and richness of a successful urban environment.

The effective preservation and management of this area's historic resources is very much dependent upon quality new infill construction. This is essential in creating and maintaining an economically healthy and culturally vibrant urban context which is in sync with the future and sensitive to the past. World class as well as local architects and developers rise to this challenge regularly in historic districts across the nation, and especially right here in Miami Beach's own National Register Architectural District. The enlightened municipal vision which has united historic preservation and appropriate new development in the "Art Deco" District can be applied with equal success south of 6th Street in the Ocean Beach Historic District.

#### **Historic District Designation Promotes:**

##### **Continuous Neighborhood Enhancement**

The neighborhoods within the boundaries of the Ocean Beach Historic District are characterized by a remarkable number of "contributing" buildings reflective of distinctive architectural and development patterns from the earliest days of Miami Beach to the present. Ocean Beach in this area still appears much as it did in its rich past, despite the effects of dramatically changed times. Many significant structures, once neighbored by open spaces or buildings of complimentary scale and character, remain very much dependent upon a compatible and supportive environment in the future, which promotes sensitively designed new projects.

The review and approval of projects in the Ocean Beach Historic District under the City's Design Guidelines and the Historic Preservation Ordinance will ensure smart development which is sensitive to the unique aesthetic character of the area and respectful of its early origins. Miami Beach has one of the finest and most progressive historic preservation ordinances in the nation. It was custom designed to address the special needs of a rapidly redeveloping historic seaside resort community with a view toward wise management of historic resources in tandem with appropriate new development. Historic designation will reinforce and promote continuous quality enhancement of the neighborhoods within the Ocean Beach Historic District below 6th Street just as it has done with remarkable success in the National Register Historic District immediately to its north.

### **Increased Architectural Consideration**

Historic district designation is a means of maintaining unified special character through increased architectural consideration when the construction of new buildings or additions to existing buildings are proposed.

Buildings, old and new, are usually the major defining elements in the makeup of a neighborhood's character. The special character of a neighborhood can be maintained and reinforced by highlighting and preserving the significant architectural features of its contributing building stock and by understanding and being considerate of those special qualities in the design of new construction and infill buildings.

Although some buildings within the boundaries of the Ocean Beach Historic District are more representative of specific "styles" than others, there is an eclectic combination of architectural and historic periods here from the early 1900s to the present day which is special in itself. In several instances individual buildings contain elements of more than one period, and often these acquired elements assume a significance of their own and lend yet another facet to the architecture of Ocean Beach.

In other instances a single contributing structure may not seem to possess a special significance when viewed by itself, but when viewed together with its neighboring buildings it reinforces a unified image of a distinct and attractive neighborhood contributing to the special character of the community's urban fabric.

Historic District designation does not preclude the opportunity for appropriate new development to occur on existing vacant lots, it simply promotes compatible quality construction there.

### **Sensitive New Construction**

New buildings and additions to existing buildings can blend into a neighborhood without imitating or trying to replicate an historic architectural period. By incorporating the important architectural qualities of a particular neighborhood into contemporary design and properly siting the building, a new structure or addition can blend with its surroundings and be compatible with the neighborhood. In addition, by following existing design guidelines, renovations deemed appropriate by the Design Review and/or Historic Preservation Boards can be accomplished without being detrimental to the established character of the structure or to the neighborhood as a whole.

A number of elements work together to define not only a building's character but also a neighborhood. These elements include a building's scale, proportion, massing, directional expression, roof shape, placement on the lot, rhythm of openings, sense of entry, windows and doors, and materials and details. These basic elements found in all architecture and are varied to create different styles.

Understanding these elements and their relationship to each other is essential for designing compatible renovations, additions, and new buildings. Along with current Design Guidelines, historic district designation promotes an understanding of such design features and does not require or recommend reproductions of period architecture. To the contrary, compatible contemporary design is encouraged for new construction and additions.

Historic district designation affirms the Design Guidelines based on simplicity and design quality, and helps property owners make the most appropriate improvements to their properties.

**Compatibility with the Character of the Historic District Which Positively Influences:**

**Proportion and Scale**

Proportion deals with the relationship of the height to the width of the building and with the relationship of each part to the whole. Scale deals with the relationship of each building to the other buildings in the area, the part to the whole, as well as the scale of the pedestrian. When there is a combination of building types surrounding a project site, scale and proportion of the buildings closest to the proposed construction should be observed. Additions to buildings should respect the original scale and proportions.

**Sense of Entry**

Every building has an entry but each may be articulated differently. The entry may be a simple door or it could be steps and a door or it might be more strongly articulated by an enframingent, a portico, porch, or other prominent architectural feature. If the existing buildings have a strong sense of entry, new construction should respect this.

**Massing**

Massing deals with the volumes created by the sections of a building. For example, a simple Moderne structure may be one mass but a Mediterranean Revival building with a tower, wings, hip roof, etc., has varied massing. Placing a boxlike structure in a neighborhood of articulated buildings may not be appropriate. Renovations or additions should respect the massing of existing buildings.

**Roof Shape**

There are several different roof types such as flat, shed, hip and gable. The type and pitch/slope determine the overall roof shape. If one roof shape is predominant, any new buildings should take into consideration this shape and design a new roof that is compatible with the others. Additions and renovations should not adversely affect significant roof shapes, particularly in public view.

**Rhythm of Openings**

Rhythm of openings refers to the number and spacing of windows and doors in a facade. Most Moderne, Streamline and Vernacular and Garden-Style buildings have regularly spaced openings per floor. Other styles exhibit different rhythms. Any new construction should respect the predominant rhythm of other buildings in the area. Additions to an existing building should be harmonious with the original rhythm of openings. If renovations are planned, this rhythm should not be significantly changed by the removal or addition of openings.

**Placement on the lot**

A building may be close to the street or further back, parallel to the street or at an angle, and to one side or in the middle of the lot. Predominant siting patterns should be maintained, especially relative to front and side yard setbacks. In some neighborhoods, structures are placed on the front property line, creating a "street wall"; new construction is encouraged to respect prevalent placement characteristics.

**Directional Expression**

A building may have a vertical emphasis in its principal facade(s), a horizontal emphasis, a balance of the two, or no directional emphasis at all. Additions to existing buildings and new infill construction should be compatible with the predominant directional characteristics of significant structures in the area.

**Materials and Details**

Materials and details used on a building form an important part of a building's style and character. Materials used on the walls and roofs of new projects should be compatible with those on existing buildings. The use of appropriate materials and textures help new buildings fit into existing neighborhoods and help additions to blend with the original architecture.

**XII. PLANNING, DESIGN AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **Criteria for Designation:** The Planning, Design and Historic Preservation Division finds the Ocean Beach Historic District in compliance with the Criteria for Designation listed in Section 19-5 (B) of the Miami Beach Zoning Ordinance 89-2665.
  
2. **District Boundaries:** At its May 11, 1995 meeting the Historic Preservation Board requested that the proposed boundaries of the Ocean Beach Historic District be expanded beyond those recommended by staff and asked that the proposed expansion areas be investigated.

More particularly, the Board requested that the southern boundary of the proposed historic district be extended southward from 1st Street to Biscayne Street between the centerline of Washington Avenue and the Erosion Control Line of the Atlantic Ocean so that the full southern extent of the original Ocean Beach Subdivision platted in 1912 and the southern extent of Ocean Beach Addition 4 platted in 1914 could be included within the historic district boundaries.

Upon investigation and consideration staff determined that the aforementioned proposed southern expansion area is characterized predominantly by vacant lots (many of which are contiguous), contemporary residential buildings, and a large new beach side recreation facility and parking lot (Penrod's). Although a small and modest Mediterranean Revival style commercial building remains at 36-40 Ocean Drive, it stands in solitary isolation mid block between Biscayne Street and 1st Street. Joe's Stone Crab Restaurant, situated at 227 Biscayne Street on the corner of Washington Avenue, is clearly an architecturally and historically significant structure built in the Mediterranean Revival style in 1921, but it is already being meticulously restored on its exterior and sensitively expanded northward on adjacent lots. When completed it will be a highly compatible neighbor to the historic district. Staff believes that expansion of the proposed Ocean Beach historic district southward to Biscayne Street is unnecessary to either enhance its special character or to maintain its historic cohesiveness.

The board, at its May 11, 1995 meeting, additionally requested that the northern boundary of the proposed Ocean Beach Historic District be made co-terminus with the southern boundary of the existing *Miami Beach Architectural District* (a.k.a. National Register "Art Deco" District) to ensure

a continuity of urban scale and character between the two districts. Staff has examined this request thoroughly and fully concurs with the Board. The creation of the aforementioned northern boundary for the Ocean Beach Historic District will significantly underscore and preserve the historical, social and architectural progression of development in early Miami Beach, from the southern regions of Ocean Beach northward to 23rd Street and provide for a "seamless" and cohesive transition which might otherwise be lost to inappropriate development.

Finally, in light of demolition activity which has been approved or already occurred since May 1995 along the western end of 4th Street, staff has re-studied this area and recommended adjusted historic district boundaries. These new boundaries continue to include a significant concentration of surviving contributing structures united by the historical and architectural development of this western residential area.

The Historic Preservation Board, at its October 26, 1995 meeting, adopted the boundary recommendations of the City of Miami Beach Planning, Design and Historic Preservation Division, and recommends historic district designation in accordance with Section 19-5 of the Miami Beach Zoning Ordinance 89-2665, with boundaries shown on Map 1 and more fully described in Section IV (General Description of Boundaries).

3. **Areas Subject to Review:** All building elevations and public areas of interiors, site and landscape features, public open space and public right-of-way. All vacant lots included within the boundaries of the historic district.

Regular maintenance of public utilities, drainage, and mechanical systems, sidewalks and roadways shall not require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

4. **Review Guidelines:** The Planning, Design and Historic Preservation Division recommends that a decision on an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be based upon compatibility of the physical alteration or improvement with surrounding properties and where applicable in substantial compliance with the following:
  - a. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings as revised from time to time;
  - b. Other guidelines/policies/plans adopted or approved by

ENDNOTES:

1. The term casino is a lexicon of the early 1900's and describes a building used for dancing and other entertainment, but not necessarily for gambling.
2. Kleinberg, Howard. Miami Beach. Miami Beach: A History. 1994 p. 22.
3. ibid. 27-28.
4. Redford, Billion Dollar Sandbar: A Biography of Miami Beach. p.94.
5. Kleinberg, Howard. Miami Beach. Miami Beach: A History. 1994. p. 29.
6. ibid. 29.
7. ibid. 31-32.
8. The Miami Herald, Mostly Sunny Days: A Miami Herald Salute to South Florida History. p.99.
9. George, Paul Dr. "Building a Place in the Sun: Miami Beach Jewry, 1913-1945." p.3.
10. Allman, TD. Miami: City of the Future. 1987. p.221.
11. Marcus, Arthur. "Ocean Beach Historic District." Historical Data Base Expansion Committee Report. p.1
12. Miami Design Preservation League, Miami Beach Art Deco Guide. 1987, p.6.
13. Marcus, Arthur. "Ocean Beach Historic District." Historical Data Base Expansion Committee Report. p.2.
14. Miami Design Preservation League, Miami Beach Art Deco Guide. 1987, p.30.
15. ibid. p.31.
16. Allman, TD. Miami: City of the Future. 1987. pp.113-114.
17. Kleinberg, Howard. Miami Beach: A History. 1994. pp.21-22.
18. Miami Design Preservation League, Miami Beach Art Deco Guide. 1987, p.179.
19. Kleinberg, Howard. Miami Beach: A History. 1994. p.87.
20. ibid. p. 93.
21. Marcus, Arthur. "Ocean Beach Historic District." Historical Data Base Expansion Committee Report. p.2.
22. Miami Design Preservation League, Miami Beach Art Deco Guide. 1987, p.181.
23. ibid. p.181
24. ibid. p.179.
25. ibid. p.179.
26. Marcus, Arthur. "Ocean Beach Historic District." Historical Data Base Expansion Committee Report. p.3.
27. Miami Design Preservation League, Miami Beach Art Deco Guide. 1987, p.181.
28. A contributing building is one which by location, scale, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association adds to a local historic district's sense of time and place and historical development.
29. Metropolitan Dade County, From Wilderness to Metropolis, 2nd Edition, 1992, Metropolitan Dade County Office of Community Development Historic Preservation Division, p. 180
30. ibid. p.187.
31. Capitman, Barbara, Kinerk, Michael D. and Wilhelm, Dennis W., Rediscovering Art Deco U.S.A. A Nationwide Tour of Architectural Delights, 1994, New York, Viking Studio Books, p.2
32. Giles, Christine. An Essay on 65-75 Washington Avenue. A Garden Style Apartment Building Designed by Gerald Pitt in 1963. 1995.

resolution or ordinance by the City Commission.

- c. City of Miami Beach Design Guidelines as adopted by the Joint Design Review/Historic Preservation Board October 12, 1993 and Amended June 7, 1994.