

CONTINENTAL HOTEL
4000 COLLINS AVENUE, MIAMI BEACH

Location: Lots 10-15, Block 34, Miami Beach Improvement Co. Oceanfront Subdivision

The hotel is situated on the northwest corner of Collins Avenue and 34th Street, with a surface parking lot adjoining it to the north.

Resource material:

1. Building Permit Card
2. Archival postcards
3. Article, "\$2 Million Lease Given at Beach," *Miami News*, Dec. 21, 1947.
4. Article, "Beach Hotel Continental Work Begins," *Miami Herald*, April 4, 1948.
5. Newspaper ad for condo sales by Crescent Heights, circa 1990s.
6. Tax jacket, incl. 1994 and 2012 photographs by Property Appraiser

Plans not found on microfilm:	#26925	Original plans, A.H. Mathes, April 4, 1948
	#34002	Enclosing porch on south side, A. H. Mathes, 1950
	#52036	New open terrace in front, ? architect, 1956.

Architect: **A. Herbert Mathes** (1912-1977) graduated from New York University in 1937 and came to Miami Beach in 1944. Previously he had designed stores for the National Shoe Company, shoe exhibits at the 1939 New York World's Fair, packing plants in Kansas, film labs for 20th Century Fox, and Forest Park Gardens in Rye, New York. During World War II he designed ships for the U.S. Navy.¹ In Miami Beach he designed a number of commercial, residential and municipal buildings, including:

Golden Gate Apartments	2395 Flamingo Drive
Parisian Hotel	1510 Collins Avenue
Geneva Hotel	1520 Collins Avenue
Continental Hotel	4000 Collins Avenue
Allison Hotel	6261 Collins Avenue
Miami Beach Public Library	2100 Collins Avenue (demolished)

Mathes is probably best known for designing the North Addition to the Fontainebleau Hotel in 1959, which included the "cheesehole" façade and the "Spite Wall."

¹ "Portraits and Projects of Architects," *Florida Sun*, May 21, 1951.

The Continental Hotel, constructed in 1948, is a fine example of the Postwar Modern architectural style in Miami Beach, although its front facade has been altered from its original design. It is a boxy, flat-roofed, five-story structure that originally cost \$350,000 and included 102 hotel rooms with baths, a dining room, and swimming pool. (1)

Even before the building permit was issued on April 1, 1948, information about the planned hotel appeared in an article in the *Miami News* in December 1947.(3) The original owner, Continental Hotel Inc, was a group headed by Bernard Cohen, “Miami Beach builder and investor,” who also owned the Cadillac Hotel in Miami Beach and the Alcazar in Miami.(4) The group took out a 99-year lease on the hotel's site in 1947.

In the absence of any original plans, the 1947 news article provides some information about the hotel's design:

The Continental will not only be unique in its facade but will be entirely different in many aspects of design and construction. Structural steel and bar joists will be used for the frame. Carrara glass and structural aluminum will be liberally employed throughout the building, while the columns will be sculptured mosaic tile. Rust-proof double-hung aluminum windows will also be another important feature. Each of the rooms will contain a built-in, individually controlled air conditioning unit. ...The public space, which will also be air conditioned, will feature a formal lobby furnished in the French provincial motif, and a card room.

This newspaper article is accompanied by a rendering of the planned “glass-accentuated hotel,” showing the upper four stories of the front facade as a continuous grid of windows. Although the rendering is only a drawing, an early color photograph of the completed hotel (2) confirms that the original front facade did indeed consist entirely of glass set into aluminum frames. At present, this front facade consists of 24 individual boxed windows, in rows of six per floor. This alteration probably occurred in the early 1990s; Design Review Board file #4341 (August 20, 1993) included “window replacement” at the Continental, and both a 1990s condo ad (5), as well as a 1994 photograph (6), show the boxed windows by that time.

As construction of the Continental got underway, the *Miami Herald* published a similar article in April 1948 (4), describing it as “a unique hotel” and “an unusual structure”:

One of the features is a swimming pool of unique shape and design. Facade of the hotel will be different from usual structures of this type, carrara glass and structural aluminum being used. Columns will be sculptured mosaic tile. The air conditioned public space will feature a formal lobby furnished in French provincial motif.

One of the archival postcards (2) from circa 1948 contains multiple images of the Continental, both exterior and interior, made from black-and-white photographs that have been hand-tinted. In the absence of original plans, these give the only clues about the original interior that have been found so far. The front facade is shown with its grid of windows, and inset on the sides are views of the “swimming pool,” which appears to be kidney-shaped; the “grill and cocktail lounge,” which was probably located on the north side of the pool; a guest “bedroom;” and the “spacious lobby.” While not much can be clearly discerned in this small photo, the lobby appears to have a bas-relief decorating its west wall, and a welter of chairs and sofas that do not seem particularly French provincial.

As a Contributing building in the Collins Waterfront Historic District of Miami Beach, the Continental retains many distinctive features of the Postwar Modern style, despite the alterations to the front facade. These include overall asymmetry, the grand-scale “boxing” of the upper front facade, the signage slab at the north end, and the channel-letter signs on the east and north parapets. On the ground floor in front, plate-glass windows are interspersed with round half-columns, which continue around the south elevation. A metal railing around the front terrace appears to be original.

---Carolyn Klepser, researcher

Feb. 4, 2017

Owner CONTINENTAL HOTEL	Mailing Address	Permit No.	Cost
Lot 10, 11 & Block 12, 13	Subdivision M.B. IMP. CO.	26925	\$ 350,000..
General Contractor Lincoln Construction Co. (Al.W.Smith)	OCEAN FRONT	Address 4000 Collins Avenue	
Architect A. Herbert Mathes	17186	Bond No. 3764	
Zoning Regulations: Use RE	Area 15	Engineer Alfred Oboler	
Building Size: Front 90'	Depth 120'	Lot Size 100-X 140	Stories 5
Certificate of Occupancy No. 950 (Dec. 14, 1948)		Height 67'	
Type of Construction #1 CBS	Foundation Spread Footing	Use HOTEL-102 rms, 102 baths, Dining Room, & SWIMMING POOL	Date April 1, 1948
Plumbing Contractor # 26353 Markowitz Brothers	Sewer Connection 2 - 6"	Roof Flat	Date Mar. 16, 1948
	Temporary Closet 4		

Plumbing Contractor	Bath Tubs	Floor Drains	Rain Leader	Date
Water Closets 111	102	8	Stand Pipe	
Lavatories 112	Showers 7	Grease Traps 1		
Urinals 2	Sinks 3 - 6 slop	Drinking Fountains 1		
Gas Stoves 6	Gas Heaters	Rough Approved		Date
Gas Radiators	Gas Turn On Approved	T. A. O'Neill, Dec. 14, 1948		
Septic Tank Contractor				Date
Oil Burner Contractor				Date
Sprinkler System				Date

Electrical Contractor # 26857 Haskell Electric
Switch 200 Range Motors
OUTLETS Light 451 HEATERS Water
Receptacles 418 Space
Refrigerators
Irons

No. FIXTURES 562
Electrical Contractor # 27855 B. Haskell Electric
Woodmansee
Date of Service December 14, 1948
Dated Dec. 8, 1948

ELECTRICAL PERMIT # 26426 Fla. Power & Light Co.: Transformer vault - June 2, 1948
Alterations or Repairs—Over

EXHIBIT 1

ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS

Building Permits: # 27643 Two passenger elevators 2,000 lbs. cap. - (#223069) - Otis Elevator Co.
 # 28256 Air Conditioning - Norton R. Ganger Company \$ 37,500... June 23, 1948
 # 28332 Fuel Oil Tank - 1,000 gals. - Fla. Fuel Oil Co. \$ 70,000... Sept. 15, 1948
 # 29075 3 flat wall signs - 130 sq. ft. - Claude Neon - \$ 200... Sept. 29, 1948
 # 34002 Enclosing porch on south side - A. Herbert Mathes, arch: Leifert Construction Co., contr. \$ 900... Dec. 10, 1948
 # 34513 Metal sign on post - York Sign Company \$ 1,000... Nov. 3, 1950
 # 43264 Painting: J. Weitzman: \$ 75... Dec. 3, 1950
 # 52036 Fence: 50 ft. concrete back fence at 10' wall height; 10 ft. of wall at 5' height as wing and paving area back of street - 12 x 24 footing - Liefert Construction Co.: \$2000. - 11/7/56
 # 52088 Parking Lot OK 11/8/56 - Approx. 180' of 6" curb and new open terrace in front of hotel (See Permit #52036 for Plan)
 *Plumbing Permits: S. Leifert Const. - \$600. - 11/14/56
 #52545 Claude Southern: 1 pole sign, 30 sq. ft.; 1 wall sign, 50 sq. ft. 1/25/57
 #57843 Ciffert Industries: Apply fiberglass set in gilsonite & marble chips over concrete deck - \$550. - 11/12/58
 #60669 Solon B. Riggins: Exterior Painting - \$1347 - 11/30/59
 #60720 Ward Roofing Co.: Repairs to roof - \$200. - 12/4/59
 #66305 Joseph A. Collins: Repair 134.7 ton cooling tower - \$3,000. - 11/7/61 OK Plaag 2/9/62
 #72043 Hy Weiss: Paint exterior - \$1850. - 7/20/64
 #74088 Owner, Continental Hotel - \$1300 - 5/18/65 - 300 ft cbs wall, 3 ft high - LK BROWN 6/11/65
 PLUMBING PERMITS:
 #42288 Pitch & Morgen: 1 floor drain, relocated - 4/5/60
 #42439 Pitch & Morgen: 1 water closet; 1 lavatory - 6/16/60 OK 6/27/60 Rothman
 #45344 Serota Plumbing: 10 lavatories - 6/22/60
 Electrical Permits: # 27877 Claude Neon: 14 neon transformers - Dec. 10, 1948
 #48944 B & W Elec. Co.: 7 receptacles OK HR 2/7/57 Nov. 16, 1956
 #49338 Claude Neon: 4 neon transformers, 1/25/57
 #54754 Astor Elec: 1 light outlet; 18 fixtures - 2/3/60 OK 3/10/60 Meginniss
 #57222 Astor Elec: 1 range outlet; 1 motor, 0-1 hp - 8/22/61 OK Scarborough 9/22/61
 #62058 Astor Elec. Serv. Inc.: 1 meter change - 3/5/65
 #62058 Claude Southern Corp.: 10 sign lamps - 6/23/65
 #6 C. J. Kay Electric Co.: 11 appliance outlets - 6/24/66
 #6298 - Astor Electric Ser. - 2 Fixtures - 10/21/68.
 BUILDING PERMITS - continued:
 #74299 Claude Southern Corp.: 4' x 6' pole sign, HOTEL CONTINENTAL - \$350 - 6/23/65
 #75286 Alert Sandblasting Co: Sandblast pool, \$295. - 11/18/65
 #76117 - SIDNEY HYMAN: - 25' x 33' Typel Stg. Room on Roof Hgt. 8'6" - \$1500.00 - 4/12/66 OK Brown 6/24/66
 #79166 Navildo Vichot; High pressure clean and paint exterior - \$630.00 - 10/23/67 OK QD 3/14/68

Lot Block Subdivision

ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS

Building Permits:

#82711 Capital Roofing Co. Re-roof job 25 squares \$2,000.00 7/23/69

#84725 - BB Rosman - Exterior painting & cleaning \$3,400.00 8/3/70

#84952 - Capital Roofing - 18 sq. built up \$1,260.00 9/2/70

FILE NO. 1632 - JULY 6, 1984 - BOARD OF ADJUSTMENTS - APPEAL FROM ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION-----
APPLICANT IS APPEALING THE ADMINISTRATIVE DETERMINATION THAT THE SUBJECT PROPERTY IS NOT A NON-CONFORMING
(ADULT CONGREGATE LIVING FACILITY - A.C.L.F.).

APPROVED - NON-CONFORMING USE OF AN 80-BED ACLF FACILITY, THEREBY REVERSING THE ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION
SUBJECT TO THE ACTING PLANNING DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATIONS WITH THE FOLLOWING CHANGES: 1. CONDITION NO. 3
CHANGE THE TIME FRAME FROM SIX TO NINE MONTHS. 2. CONDITION 5, AMENDED TO RESTRICT THE ACLF FACILITY
TO A MAXIMUM 80 BEDS: THE REST OF THE CONDITION 5 IS UNCHANGED. 3. CONDITION 7 - AMENDED TO READ:
COOKING FACILITIES SHALL BE PROHIBITED IN ANY ACLF UNIT.

SUBJECT TO ALL THE CONDITIONS AS RECOMMENDED BY THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS.

Electrical Permits:

ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS

Building Permits: #2164-Raisco Corp.- 2 Cooling Towers 90 Ton-\$6000-7-21-72
#04706-Dingle and Cooper-Re-roofing 10 sqs-\$500-12-5-73

#09240-Crown Neon-Continental Hotel-Two double face pdesigns-\$500-6-11-76

#26614 3/6/85 owner paint exterior \$110.

#26724 3/29/85 Candy Painting pressure clean and paint exterior white only \$10,000.

#91925 10/29/86 owner addition to dining area per plans \$5,000.

#MO8747 2/6/87 Chanin Air - 1-15 kw central heat, 1-7½ ton air cond central, 1 duct work only

Plumbing Permits:

#51912-Peoples Gas- set meter-12-26-74

#61985 2/27/85 Pro Plumb - fire pump, fire spkr heads 200

Electrical Permits:

#72165-B & G Electric- 1 insta. system fire alarm; 15 bells, 10 pulls-4-25-75

#53536-Stanley Bottacovallo-70 lavatory-3-12-76

#73193-Crown Neon-Continental Hotel- 6 sign tubes; 2 sign transformers-6-10-76

#73993-County Wide Electric- telephone booth-4-15-77

#81753 2/10/87 G.H.C. Elec - 1-5 ton air cond, 1-15 kw strip heater



EXHIBIT 2

\$2,000,000 LEASE GIVEN AT BEACH

A 99-year lease with rent aggregating \$2,000,000 has been made on the block on Collins ave., between 40th and 41st sts., Miami Beach, and a 102-room hotel to be known as the Continental will be erected on part of the property.

The lessor is Joseph Edell. The lessees are the Continental Hotel, Inc., and Coronet Hotel, Inc. Bernard Cohen, Miami Beach builder and investor, is president of both corporations. Al Goldberg, Morris Schaver, Jack Warsaw and Philip Cohen are associated with the corporations.

* * *

According to plans already completed by A. Herbert Mathes, architect, the Continental Hotel, Inc., will erect on the south portion of the lot, the 102-room Hotel Continental. In the Gold Coast area already known for beautiful and imposing structures, the Continental will not only be unique in its facade but will be entirely different in many aspects of design and construction.

Structural steel and bar joists will be used for the frame. Carvara glass and structural aluminum will be liberally employed throughout the building while the columns will be sculptured mosaic tile. Rust proof double-hung aluminum windows will also be another important feature.

Each of the rooms will contain a built-in, individually controlled air conditioning unit, to insure perfect air temperature at all times. In cool weather the same unit can be employed for heating. The public space, which will also be air conditioned, will feature a formal lobby, furnished in the French provincial motif, and a card room.

EXHIBIT 3

Beach Hotel Continental Work Begins

Work has begun on a unique hotel to be known as the Continental, Collins ave. at 40th ave., Miami Beach.

Lincoln Construction Co. has the contract. Al M. Smith, vice-president, and Stephen C. Lefter, secretary, announced that the hotel will be ready for occupancy by Nov. 1. Victor M. Bar is to be managing director.

Owner of the hotel is a group headed by Bernard Cohen, Miami Beach investor. His associates include Jack Warsaw, Philip Cohen and A. Goldberg, formerly of Lehigh.

Cohen is owner of the Miami Beach Cadillac hotel and the Atlantic hotel on Biscayne Blvd. in Miami. Prior to the war he operated such Miami Beach hotels as the Carillon, Betsy Ross and Victory Arms.

EXTENDS FULL BLOCK

The Continental site extends for a full block on the west side of Collins ave. between 40th and 41st sts., leased for 99 years at an aggregate rental of \$2,000,000. Lease was taken in the name of Continental Hotel, Inc., from Joseph R. Hall.

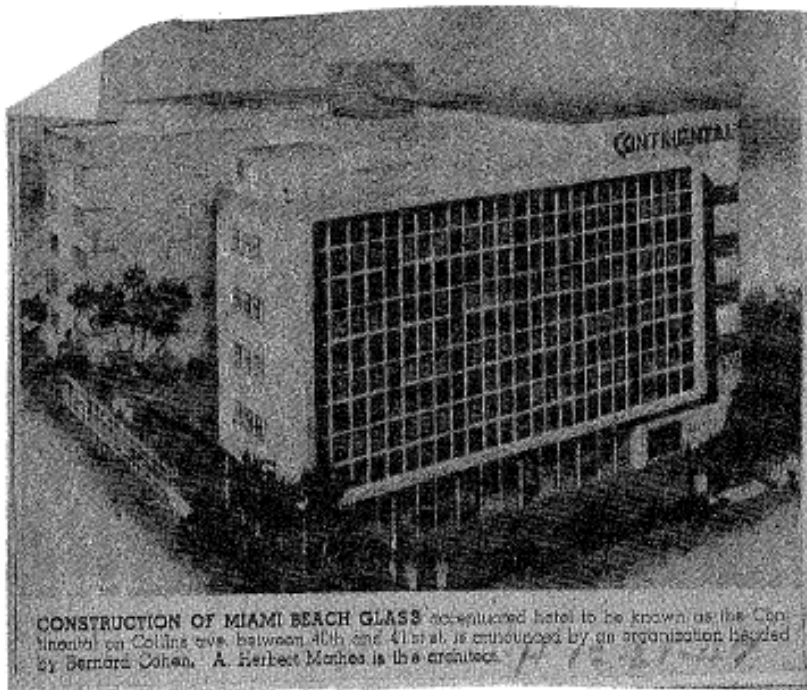
Blueprints from the drafting boards of A. Herbert Markes call for an unusual structure.

The Continental will have 100 individually controlled air conditioned guest rooms.

One of its features is a swimming pool of unique shape and design.

Facade of the hotel will be different from usual structures of this type, extruded glass and structural aluminum being used. Columns will be sculptured inside the.

The air conditioned lobby area will feature a formal lobby furnished in French provincial motif.



CONSTRUCTION OF MIAMI BEACH GLASS hotel-planned hotel to be known as the Continental on Collins ave. between 40th and 41st st. is envisaged by an organization headed by Bernard Cohen. A. Herbert Markes is the architect.

FORECLOSURE PRICES

STEPS TO THE BEACH!

Only 100 units available

CONDOS

from

\$29,900

THIS SUNDAY ONLY

Doors open at 10:00 am

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FIRST TIME OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

STEPS TO THE OCEAN

- ★ Hottest location ★ Sparkling pool ★ Security
- ★ Valet parking ★ Rental program available ★ Easy financing

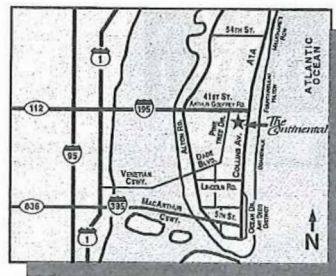
South of the Fontainebleau Hilton

South Florida's #1 Developer, **Crescent Heights**, offers the largest selection of condos on the ocean with all the amenities you can imagine. Now, **Crescent Heights** presents The Continental, located between South Beach and Millionaire's Row, just steps from the ocean. Foreclosure prices – never this low again!

The Continental

4000 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, FL 33140

1-800-327-0555



Oral representations cannot be relied upon for accuracy and/or details. For correct representation by the developer, refer to the documents which are to be furnished by the developer to a buyer or lessee as required by section 718.503, Florida Statutes.

EXHIBIT 5



Hotel Continental

Miami Beach, Florida

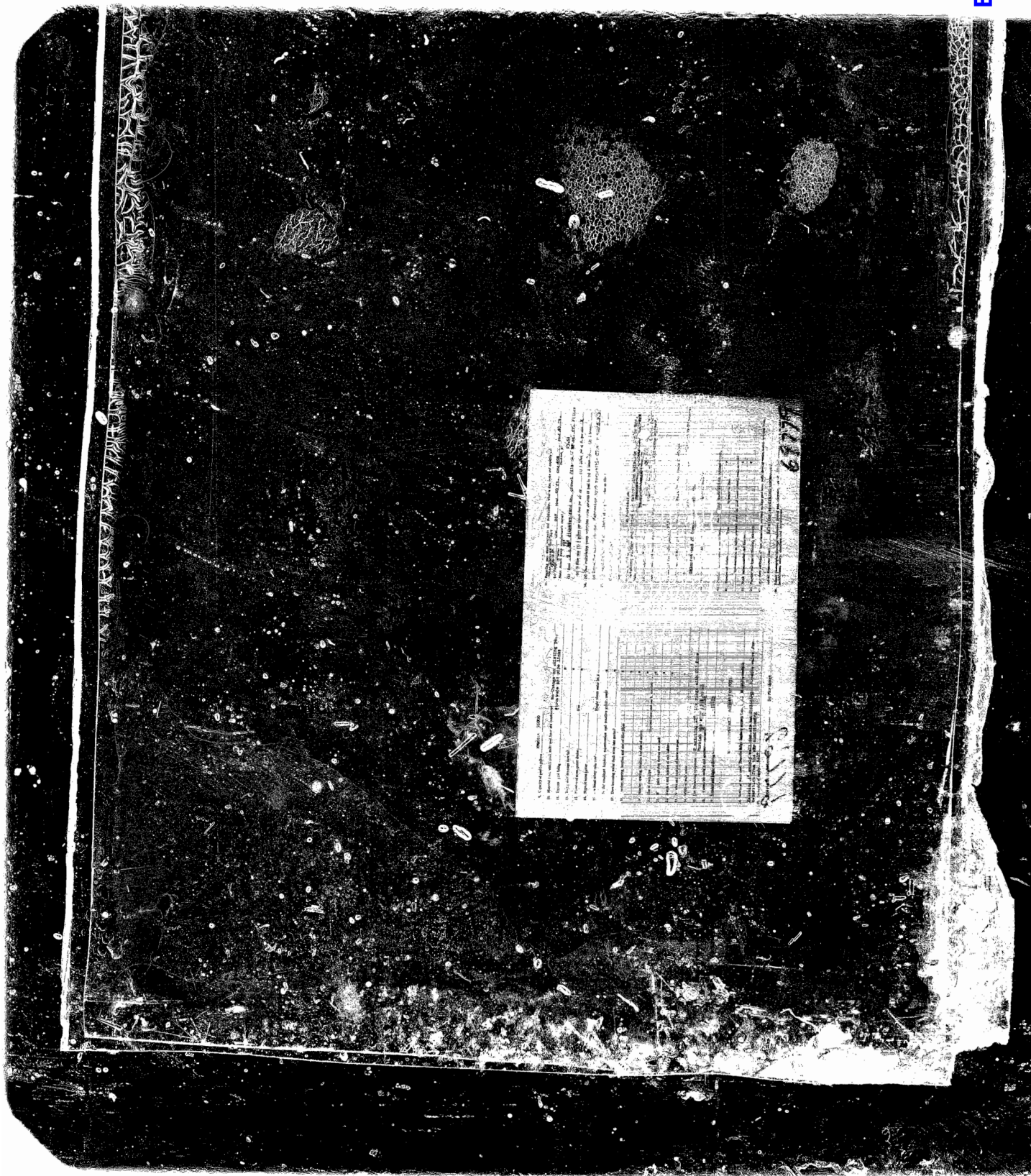
Grill & Cocktail Lounge

Bedroom

Spacious Lobby

Swimming Pool

www.swampysflorida.com



[illegible]

69779

FLORIDA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

(By State Board of Health on 10/1)

Name of Pool
Address
City
State

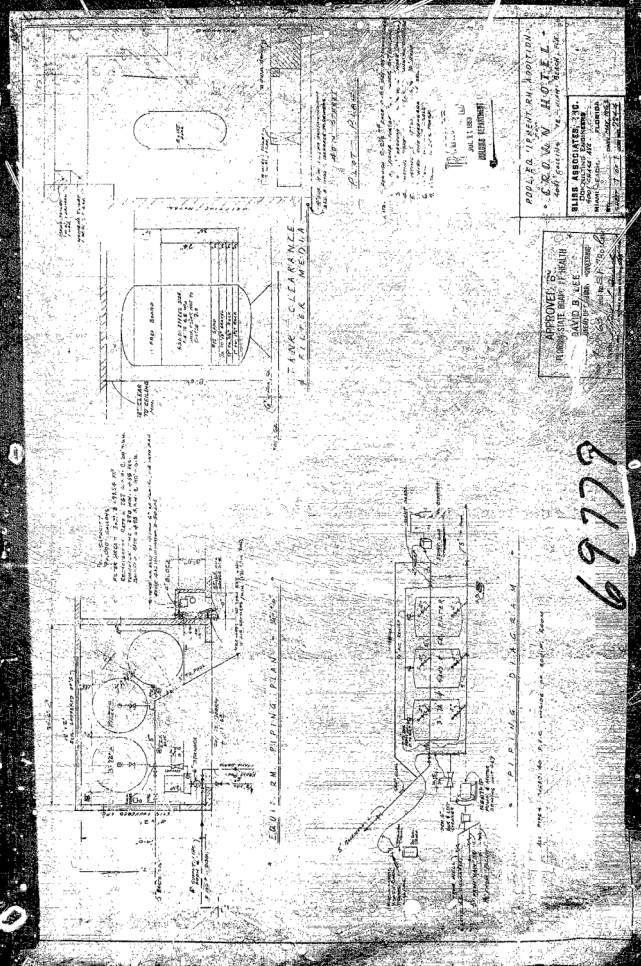
APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF PLANS
FOR SWIMMING POOLS

69779

DATE RECEIVED

10/1/51

69779



PTXM0175

VALUE INQUIRY

Conv

MCD 0200

034
 3226 001 1930 PROP ADDR 4000 COLLINS AVE
 LAST INSP 10/91 ZNG 6501 CLUC 0043 BLDG YR 1948 SLUC 0600
 AND LEGAL PREV CHG 07/05/94 VALUE HISTORY RES YR
 1992 1993 08/11/94
 728000 728000 728000
 952464 935917 935917
 1680464 1663917 1663917
 331395015 HEX
 WVD
 TOTEX 1680464 1663917 1663917
 NONEX
 SR EX 1680464 1663917 1663917
 CO NE
 STATE EXEMPT:

34 53 42 PB 5-8
 CH IMPROVEMENT CO SUB
 HRU 15 BLK 34
 200.000 X 140
 2723-294

TAX STATUS: TAXABLE
 PLATE 046
 2 BATH
 UNIT 98
 46347 BLDS 1
 DIST 01

SALE AMT DATE TYPE I/V TINC
 4566000 08/90 6 I SALE 1
 2910000 03/89 1 I SALE 2

LEGAL PF3-SPECIAL DIST PF4-FOLIO SEARCH
 PF8-INTVW MENU PF9-R/C/ MENU PF10-FINISH
 PTXM0181

LEGAL DESCRIPTION
 02 3226 001 1930
 4000 COLLINS AVE
 01 23-26-27-34 53 42 PB 5-8
 02 MIAMI BEACH IMPROVEMENT CO SUB
 03 LOTS 10 THRU 15 BLK 34
 04 LOT SIZE 200.000 X 140
 05 OR 16048-0352 0893 3

INQUIRY PF2-MORE LEGAL
 LEGAL INFORMATION HAS BEEN D
 LAND IN
 3226 001 1930 DIST 01 NEI
 S/Z 0000 CU 0043 SU 0600
 728000 AG VALUE
 081194 TYPE MISC DATE

***** CALCULAT

ACRES/
 FOOTAGE
 28000.000
 ADJ 1 PERCENT1
 D FAC/
 RATE
 26.0000



CONTINUE
 FRONT LANDLINES HAVE BEEN DISPLAYED ***

Current CAMA Data:

Folio	02-3226-034-0001
Folio Status	ACTIVE
Owner Name	REFERENCE ONLY
Property Address	4000 COLLINS AVE
District	1
Neighborhood	0.00
DOR Code	0000
Zoning	6501
Building Area	0
Lot Size	0
Market Value	\$0
Assessed Value	\$0
Picture FileName	0232260340001 20
Picture Number	0
Building	
Picture Location	Unknown
Picture Evaluator	WALDO I ALVAREZ
Picture Date	6/14/2012 10:46:10
Picture Note	PHOTO TAKEN JUNE 14, 2012
Camera Date	06/14/2012 10:46:10
Camera Make	PENTAX
Camera Model	PENTAX Optio WG-1

Picture 1 of 1 1 - 2012-06-14 10:46:10 ▼

**Audit History:**

AuditDateTime	User	Action	FieldName	OldValue	NewValue	Message
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10/6/2012 2:35:44 PM		Insert	EvaluatorID		18363	AddPicture
10/6/2012 2:35:44 PM		Insert	Folio		0232260340001	AddPicture
10/6/2012 2:35:44 PM		Insert	FolioType		R	AddPicture
10/6/2012 2:35:44 PM		Insert	PictureDate		6/14/2012 10:46:10 AM	AddPicture
10/6/2012 2:35:44 PM		Insert	PictureFileName		0232260340001 2012-10-06 14354429.JPG	AddPicture
10/6/2012 2:35:44 PM		Insert	PictureIsPublic		N	AddPicture
10/6/2012 2:35:44 PM		Insert	PictureLocationID		30	AddPicture
10/6/2012 2:35:44 PM		Insert	PictureNote		PHOTO TAKEN JUNE 14, 2012	AddPicture
10/6/2012 2:35:44 PM		Insert	PictureSequence		0	AddPicture



UNIT # 111 (LIVING ROOM)



UNIT # 111 (KITCHEN)



UNIT # 111 Bedroom closet

