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July 13, 2025

Chair and Members of the Historic Preservation Board  
City of Miami Beach  
1700 Convention Center Drive  
Miami Beach, FL 33139

**RE: Modifications to the previously approved COA for modifications to exterior design of residential tower and guardhouse; HPB25-0662.**

Dear Mr. Mooney,

Our firm represents 3425 Collins, LLC ("Owner" or "Applicant") the owner of the parcel of land located at 3425 Collins Avenue (the "Property"), which is improved with the Versailles Hotel, a contributing historic structure in the Collins Waterfront Historic District.

### **History of Approvals**

On January 12, 2021, the Historic Presentation Board ("Board") reviewed and approved a COA for modifications to the contributing Versailles Building (HPB20-0389) ("Versailles Approval"); on February 9, 2021, the Board approved a COA for the approval of the redesigned new detached residential condominium tower (HPB20-0430) ("Aman Approval") (collectively the "Proposed Project"). Thereafter the board approved the design of the landscaping and hardscaping (HPB20-0441) and additional details related to the basement (HPB21-0451) in May of 2021. The board also approved the lobby design for the historic Versailles Building (HPB22-0548) in January of 2023, and most recently approved certain modifications to conditions in the consolidated order (HPB23-0600) in January of 2024.

### **The District**

The redevelopment of the Property is the last piece of the larger Faena District, stretching in part from 32nd Street to 35th Street. The District includes the neighboring Faena Hotel (formerly the Saxony and also a Roy France designed building), the Faena House condominium (designed by Sir Norman Foster and Brandon Haw), the Casa Faena (formerly the Claridge), the Faena Parking Garage, the Bazaar (the historically replicated Atlantic Beach Hotel and another Roy France building), and the Forum (designed by Rem Koolhaas of the Office of Metropolitan Architecture).

The Proposed Project is being developed by Aman Resorts/OKO Group in partnership with Owner as the last element of the Faena District. The Proposed Project will continue the pattern that

has made the District a special place for residents and visitors alike — the preservation of important and invaluable historic buildings while introducing modern, yet contextually sensitive, new buildings into the neighborhood.

### **Proposed Design of the Residential Tower**

The design evolution of the Aman Residence, initially envisioned by Kengo Kuma & Associates (KKAA), prominently featured lattice profiles as a defining architectural element. However, as a result of thorough engineering and architectural analysis, "critical concerns necessitating their removal have arisen" as described in the enclosed report prepared by Lindner Group, ("Engineering Report") enclosed as **Exhibit A**. Key issues include structural integrity challenges, design and engineering limitations, operational and maintenance constraints, and safety concerns related to façade access and cleaning, as set forth in the Engineering Report and as described below:

- **Approved design fails to meet structural integrity standards.** *"The initial conceptualization featured thinner, more numerous lattice profiles intended to complement the building's aesthetic. However, engineering analyses revealed that these profiles, constructed from aluminum, presented significant structural challenges. The slender design threatened to bend or even break under environmental stresses such as wind loads. This deformation risk was heightened by the proximity of the lattice to the facade glass, posing potential contact and damage — scenarios unacceptable by structural integrity standards. Additionally, compensatory design adjustments necessitated the profiles' thickening, deviating from the architectural intent and introducing further complications.*
- **Operational and Maintenance Impediments.** *The lattice profiles, in their original and modified forms, severely obstructed access to the building's glazing for routine cleaning and maintenance. This obstruction not only raises operational costs but also diminishes the building's sustainability by increasing the difficulty of maintaining the glass surfaces in prime condition. The lattice thus emerges as a prohibitive factor against maintaining the building's aesthetic and functional longevity....*
- **Safety Concerns Regarding Facade Cleaning.** *Incorporating the lattice profiles induces potential hazards for maintenance personnel tasked with facade cleaning. The presence of these architectural elements introduces collision risks that could compromise safety during cleaning operations. Furthermore, any accidental impact with these profiles during maintenance activities could lead to facade damage or personnel injury, warranting significant concern and revision."*
- **Substantially increases obstruction of views.** *In addition, the increased dimension of the lattice (to meet wind load requirements), substantially increases obstruction of residents' views, and fails to meet the original design intent.*

Ultimately, the Engineering Report concludes that "the decision to remove the lattice profiles is both prudent and necessary."

The removal of the lattice screen has exposed the refined articulation of the original architectural intent, allowing the building's form, proportion, and materiality to emerge with enhanced clarity and visual coherence.



### **Proposed Guardhouse**

The Proposed Project incorporates a guardhouse at the front of the Property for the safety and security of the residents and hotel guests. A proposed redesign of the primary ingress and egress driveway from Collins Avenue was undertaken in response to requirements set forth by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). As part of the revision, the dedicated right-turn (rejection) lane was eliminated, resulting in a reduced curb cut length along Collins Avenue. This modification contributes to an improved streetscape and enhances the pedestrian experience through increased continuity of the sidewalk and reduced vehicular conflict zones.

As a consequence of the revised driveway configuration, the two originally proposed guardhouses were deemed unnecessary. A single guardhouse is now proposed, aligned with the consolidated point of entry. This reduction in built elements minimizes visual clutter and enhances the prominence of the adjacent historic Versailles facade when viewed from Collins Avenue.

The newly proposed guardhouse, designed by Kengo Kuma & Associates, reflects the architectural language and materiality of the condominium tower, establishing a cohesive and unified design expression at the project's main entrance.

The previously proposed guardhouse closer to Collins Avenue, previously required a variance (to construct the guardhouse at 9'4" instead of 20'). However, the current proposed guardhouse is setback 31 feet, in compliance with the front setback; therefore the variance has been eliminated.



### **Sea Level Rise Criteria**

In order to ensure that the Project is resilient in light of the effects of sea level rise, the sea level rise and resiliency review criteria from Section 133-50 of the LDRs is addressed below:

- 1) **A recycling or salvage plan for partial or total demolition shall be provided.**  
Not applicable to the new residential tower.
- 2) **Windows that are proposed to be replaced shall be hurricane proof impact windows.**  
All windows in the residential building will be hurricane proof impact windows.
- 3) **Where feasible and appropriate, passive cooling systems, such as operable windows, shall be provided.**  
Sliding glass doors and operable windows where possible have been proposed in all residential units and hotel guestrooms.

- 4) **Resilient landscaping (salt tolerant, highly water-absorbent, native, or Florida-friendly plants) shall be provided, in accordance with chapter 126 of the city Code.**

Resilient landscaping has been provided (see HPB20-0441).

- 5) **The project applicant shall consider the adopted sea level rise projections in the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Action Plan, as may be revised from time-to-time by the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact. The applicant shall also specifically study the land elevation of the subject property and the elevation of surrounding properties.**

The proposed residential building has the lobby set at 14'-0" NGVD, which is six feet above flood requirement.

- 6) **The ground floor, driveways, and garage ramping for new construction shall be adaptable to the raising of public rights-of-way and adjacent land, and shall provide sufficient height and space to ensure that the entry ways and exits can be modified to accommodate a higher street height of up to three additional feet in height.**

All ramps will be able to absorb the additional 3 feet in height based on the current street elevation of Collins Avenue.

- 7) **As applicable to all new construction, all critical mechanical and electrical systems shall be located above base flood elevation. All redevelopment projects shall, whenever practicable and economically reasonable, include the relocation of all critical mechanical and electrical systems to a location above base flood elevation.**

All critical mechanical and electrical equipment will be located between 1 and 2 feet above base flood elevation with the exception of the FPL vault, which will be located at grade elevation as required by FPL.

- 8) **Existing buildings shall, wherever reasonably feasible and economically appropriate, be elevated up to base flood elevation, plus City of Miami Beach Freeboard.**

The existing building is located 2 feet above the base flood elevation but it cannot be raised up to the proposed freeboard due to its historic designation.

- 9) **When habitable space is located below the base flood elevation plus City of Miami Beach Freeboard, wet or dry flood proofing systems will be provided in accordance with Chapter of 54 of the City Code.**

All proposed construction located below BFE will be dry flood proof construction up to the BFE plus freeboard. All entrances to the basement located below BFE plus freeboard will be protected with flood panels or gates.

- 10) **As applicable to all new construction, stormwater retention systems shall be provided.**

The project's Stormwater Management System will be designed to meet the requirements for on-site retention for the State of Florida Department Of

Environmental Protection, the City of Miami Beach and the State of Florida Department of Transportation.

**11) Cool pavement materials or porous pavement materials shall be utilized.**

Cool pavement materials have been proposed.

**12) The design of each project shall minimize the potential for heat island effects on-site.**

The project's parking is located below grade, eliminating parking lots which contribute to the heat island effect. Hardscape areas will be limited. Landscaped areas will be planted with green lawns, bushes and trees for shade.

For all of the aforementioned reasons, we respectfully request your favorable review of the proposed project and we look forward to presenting the project to the Historic Preservation Board. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,



Neisen O. Kasdin