

**745 Collins Avenue  
Miami Beach, Florida**

Premier Hotel, Miami Beach, Florida



## **Historic Resources Report**

prepared for  
The 5th Street Group  
129 W. Trade St, Ste 1630  
Charlotte, NC 28202

submitted by  
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Miami, FL 33138

May 8, 2023

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*Cover image: The Premier Hotel, Lawrence Murray Dixon, 1940.  
Historic postcard postmarked 1949, Ricky Flanagan Collection*

## **Preliminary Remarks**

The present report accompanies the project to preserve and adaptively reuse the existing building at 745 Collins Avenue. The building is a three-story structure built as a hotel in 1940, with two significant commercial renovations occurring in 1995 and 2007. During the 1995 renovation, the building was completely gutted for a retail tenant, and all interior floors and finishes were removed. When 745 Collins was renovated and expanded in 2007, the interior space was once again substantially rebuilt, and a recessed third floor added. Historic features of the facade were also restored at this time. The result is that while the building exterior has been retained, the interiors preserve none of the original use and layout, and are entirely recent.

The building remains a contributing historic site in the Miami Beach Architectural District. The current project proposes alterations to the non-historic commercial interiors to accommodate a two floor restaurant and finish kitchen. The existing third floor will be used for a prep kitchen and back of house offices. This project also proposes to remove approximately 809 square feet of non-historic floor area on the second floor (added in 2007) to create a double height space at the entrance. The attached study provides an historical overview of the 745 Collins building, based on available documentation. It includes microfilm copies of original building plans and the City of Miami Beach building card, as well as plans from the 1995 and 2007 renovations, and photos of current conditions and context.

# Historical Analysis and Imagery

## Historical Outline

The original building at 745 Collins Avenue in Miami Beach was designed by prolific Miami Beach architect Lawrence Murray Dixon and built by J. Albert and Son. It was completed in 1940, and comprised 30 rooms, and a ground floor lobby. It also comprised, unusually, a ground floor retail space. It stood 2 stories, at a height of 25 feet.

L. Murray Dixon's design for The Premier followed the parameters established by his other contemporary work. The front facade is fundamentally asymmetric, balancing popular motifs in alternation between the first and second floors. A projecting brise-soleil 'eyebrow' protects the ground floor lobby windows, while a smaller offset project crowns the plate glass front of the one-time store (both projections provide signage bands). Stucco 'racing stripes' accent the cornice of the building as well as its second floor windows. Score lines in stucco are laid out in a grid pattern, visually supporting a second floor window. Separating these elements is a vertical pylon with horizontal score lines in stucco which extends a few feet above the building parapet mimicking a vertical marquee or chimney. Glass block sidelights embrace the entrance doors. A low metal railing wraps the northwest corner containing a small raised porch designed for the hotel.

The Premier was one of over 300 Miami Beach properties that served as military barracks, mess halls, classrooms and other facilities for the approximately 500,000 troops that trained here during World War II. Commissioned in 1942, it was returned to the owner on July 29, 1944.

One of The Premier's unique features was the store, located on the southwest corner of the building and opening just after the war. The mix of retail and hotel use is rare in mid-block single-lot buildings. Originally, it featured a glass storefront with a recessed central door. The storefront was framed by fluted stucco pilasters, topped with a simple raised banding, and framed on the ground by planters extending to the sidewalk. According to Polk's City Directories, this store, found under the address of 743 Collins Avenue, was occupied by Merchants Tobacco Company Wholesalers from 1945-1969. Following 1969, it was left vacant. Microfilm original drawings indicate that a second retail space was planned for the center bay of the façade, although apparently this was never built. In 1962, the owner of the hotel blocked up the storefront windows with a repeated fluted stucco pattern, moved the center entrance to the right side of the building, and removed the southernmost planter. The owner also reconstructed the wrapped railing around the porch by putting in intermittent concrete posts, but maintaining the original pattern. At some point the original awning windows were replaced with jalousie windows.

The facades remained this way until 1994-1995 when the building was converted by architect Lane Pettigrew Karp from a hotel to a retail store for tenant The Limited/Express. The alterations included partial interior demolition and interior and exterior remodeling, as well as the installation of a new hydraulic elevator. During this renovation and conversion from a hotel to retail store, the main facade fronting Collins Avenue was largely retained, but the interior was entirely demolished and a new steel structure introduced. Other major exterior changes included the reopening of the southwest corner of the first floor facade and installing new fixed storefront windows flanked by the original fluted stucco pilasters. The original 1940 doorway was not reconstructed. A new

single door with a sidelight replaced the center double-door entrance retaining the vertical glass block strips. The first floor awning windows were replaced by fixed windows of the same proportion, the second floor jalousie windows were replaced with single-panel fixed display windows, and the windows on the north and south facades were removed and the openings filled in with glass block. The last original planter was removed in order to construct a new handicap ramp at the southwest corner of the building leading up to the center doorway. Palm trees were planted in the center of the existing raised porch, and a new metal railing was installed to match the historic profile.

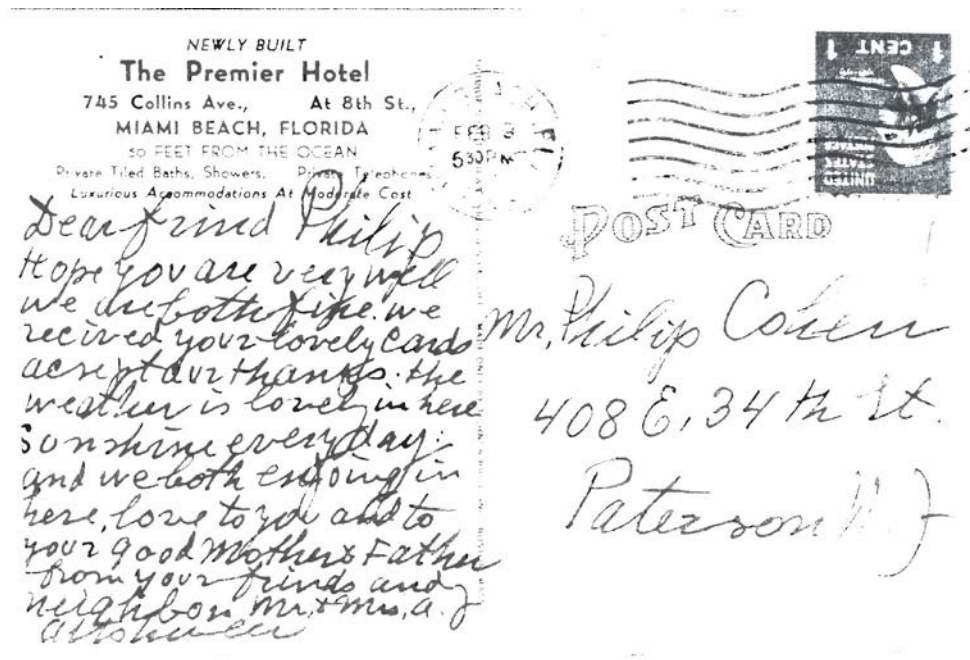
The interior hotel was completely gutted as part of the 1995 project, including the removal of a pierced metal panel and staircase with a decorative metal railing from the lobby. A new second floorplate and roof were constructed, and were located at higher elevations, so that the ground floor would have taller retail space; the second floor was used for offices and storage. At some point the original reverse channel and neon "Premier Hotel" sign was removed from atop the ground floor 'eyebrow'.

In 2007, the building was renovated and expanded by Shulman + Associates, and then built out and occupied by tenant Victoria's Secret. Most of the second floorplate was rebuilt at this time. The front facade was restored, with the historic Premier sign reinstalled. A recessed third floor level was added; it featured a horizontal band of glass clerestory windows and decorative glass mosaic tiles.

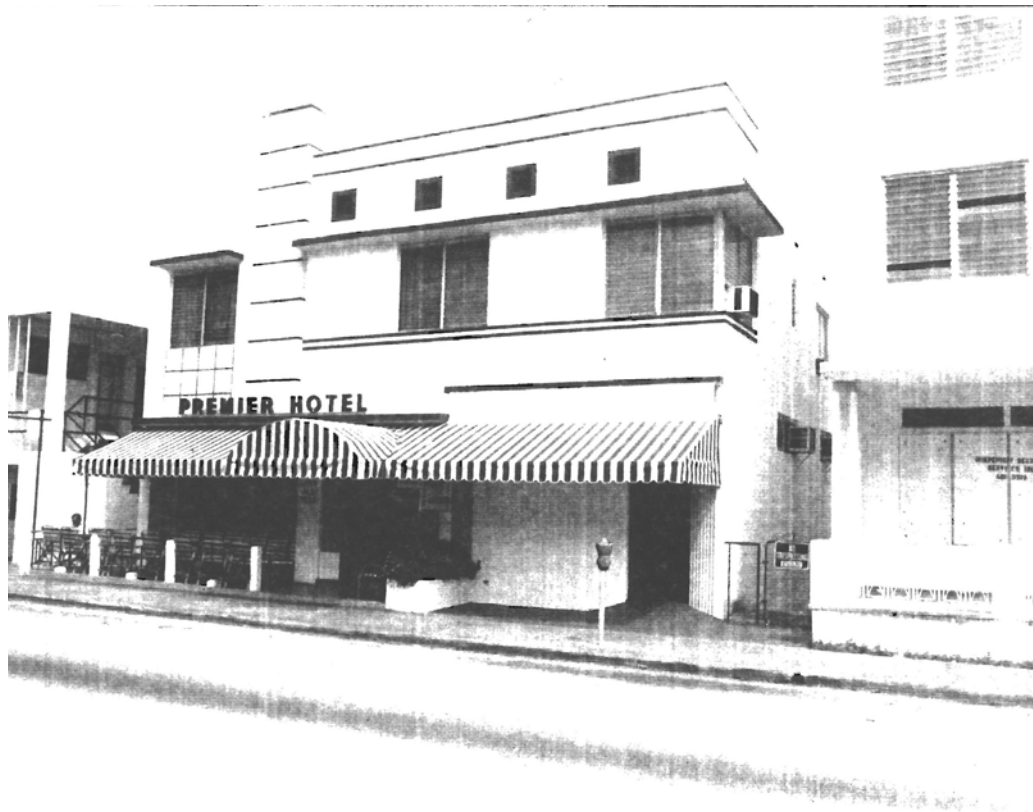
The proposed Project is largely interior in nature. It preserves the historic Collins Avenue façade, including original ground floor openings and vertical glass block panels. The impact glass and aluminum windows on the northwest corner, originally patterned to suggest the historic awning window profile, will be kept. The existing impact and aluminum floor to ceiling windows on the southwest corner will be kept as well. A new exit stairwell will be located facing the south side setback of the building, and mechanical rooftop equipment will be augmented and likely re-arranged. The historic Premier sign will be retained and restored. A discreet tenant sign, flush to the ceiling or pin-mounted, will be sited appropriately under supervision of Staff.

745 Collins Avenue  
Miami Beach, Florida

Premier Hotel, Miami Beach, Florida



Postcard of The Premier Hotel, postmarked 1949  
Courtesy of the Ricky Flanagan Collection



The Premier Hotel, circa 1985/87  
Courtesy of the City of Miami Beach Property Record Database



Sanborn map, 1921



Sanborn map, 1948



Sanborn map, 1950

## Building Data

USAFTTC  
PREMIER HOTEL -  
Owner LEWIS COMP.  
Lot 14 Block 12  
General Contractor J. Albert & Son  
Architect L. Murray Dixon  
Zoning Regulations: Use BB  
Building Size: Front 40' Area 18 Depth 129'  
Certificate of Occupancy No. 1153  
Type of Construction c-b-g  
Plumbing Contractor Markowitz & Resnick # 14054  
Foundation spread footing  
Use Hotel - 30 rooms and 1 store  
Stories 2  
Permit No. 14550  
Address 745 Collins Ave.  
Bond No. 2558  
Engineer  
Lot Size 50 X 140  
Height 25'  
Date Sep. 3 - 1940  
Cost \$ 35,000.

USAFTTC returned to owner - May 29, 1941

Plumbing Contractor  
Water Closets 34  
Lavatories 34  
Urinals  
Gas Stoves 5  
Gas Radiators  
Septic Tank Contractor  
Oil Burner Contractor Gibbs Oil Co. # 14549  
Sprinkler System

Bath Tubs 30  
Showers  
Sinks 1 (ss)  
Gas Heaters  
Gas Turn On Approved -- Bell 10/14/40  
Tank Size  
Tank Size 275 gals

Floor Drains 1  
Grease Traps  
Drinking Fountains  
Rough Approved  
Bell 10/14/40  
Date 11-12-40

Sewer Connection 1  
Temporary Closet 1  
Date 9-5-1940

Electrical Contractor Lyon Electric # 15923  
Switch 62  
OUTLETS Light 70  
Receptacles 90  
Range HEATERS Water Space  
Motors 2  
Refrigerators  
Irons  
Electrical Contractor #16497 GROSS ELECT. 12-12-40  
Date 10-17-1940  
Temporary Service #15640- Ideal Elec. 9-16-1940  
Fans Sign outlets 2  
Centers of Distribution 8  
#16496 GROSS ELECT. - 1 Tem. Ser. - - 12-12-40  
Sign Outlets  
Date 12-12-40

No. FIXTURES 82  
FINAL APPROVED BY Lincoln Brown, Jr Date of Service Dec. 17-1940

Alterations or Repairs—Over  
Electrical # 18806 - Lyon Electric- Correction of violations for Army- Sept. 2, 1942

Building Card. City of Miami Beach

# ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS

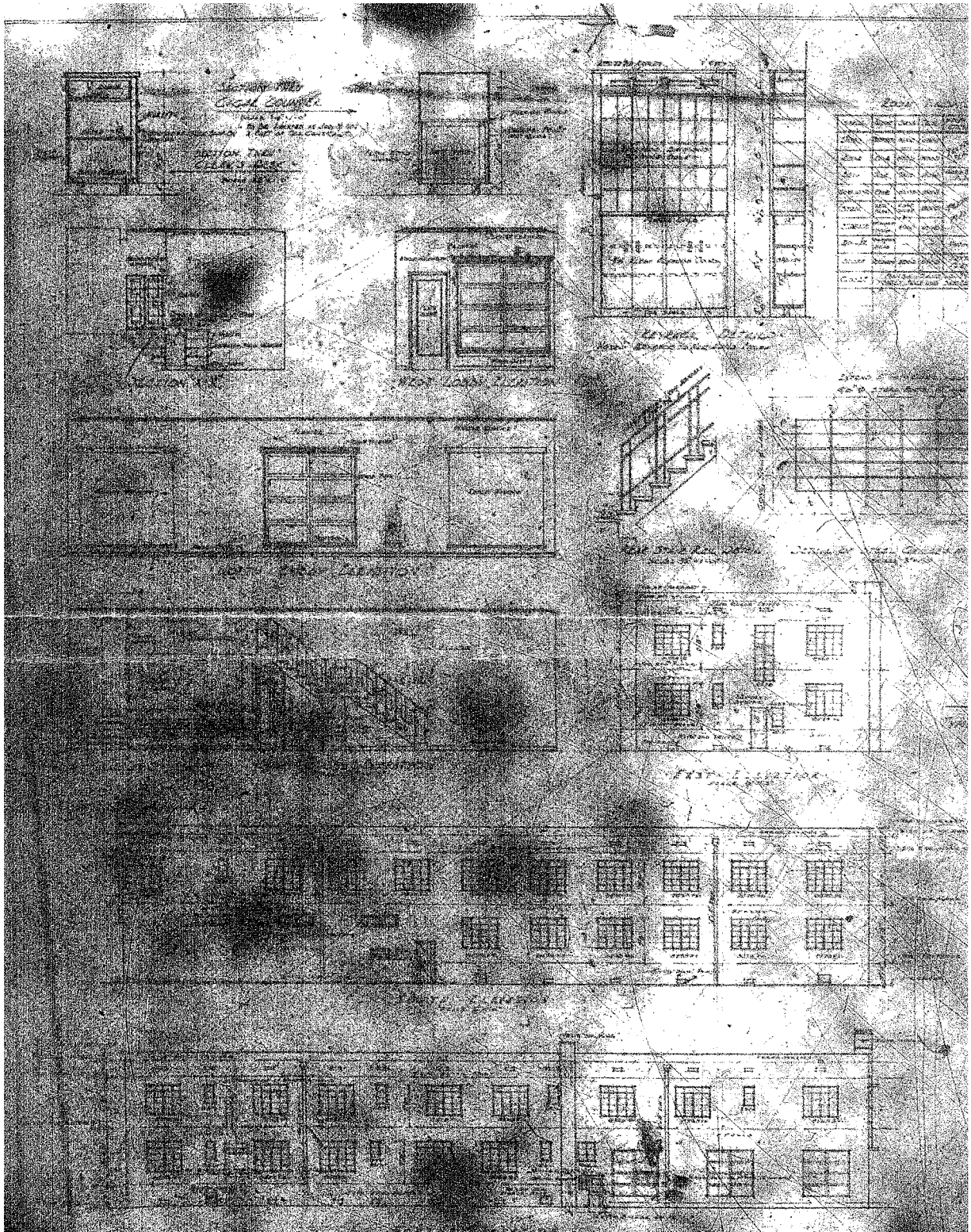
Building Permits: # 18483.. Painting (after Army Occupation) A. Petri, painter, \$ 1,200....June 9-14  
# 26241 Painting - outside - Thomas Goddard, painter \$ 900....Dgc. 1, 1947  
OT 15 ----# 33305 8" block wall not over 5' high- approx. 140 ft - 8 x 16 footings - 3 5/8 rods & 8" coping - columns every 20 ft. - AdlerConstruction Co. \$ 500.....August 8, 1950  
# 37194 Painting, inside & outside - Thomas Goddard, contr. \$ 1,000.... Oct. 19, 1951  
# 41336 Remodeling; new sidewalk on owner's property & 3 windows (no plan): owner: \$ 200: Apr 29, 1953

67611 Giffen Industries Inc.: Reroof - \$1350. - 7/12/62  
#04790-Owper-Repairs and painting-\$3000-12-19-73  
#62441 Owner: Exterior touch up painting - \$50.00 - Nov. 1, 1960  
#67417 Owner, Premier Hotel: Elock up existing windows - move center door to one side - \$150. - 6/11/62 Work Comp. 12/28/62 LML

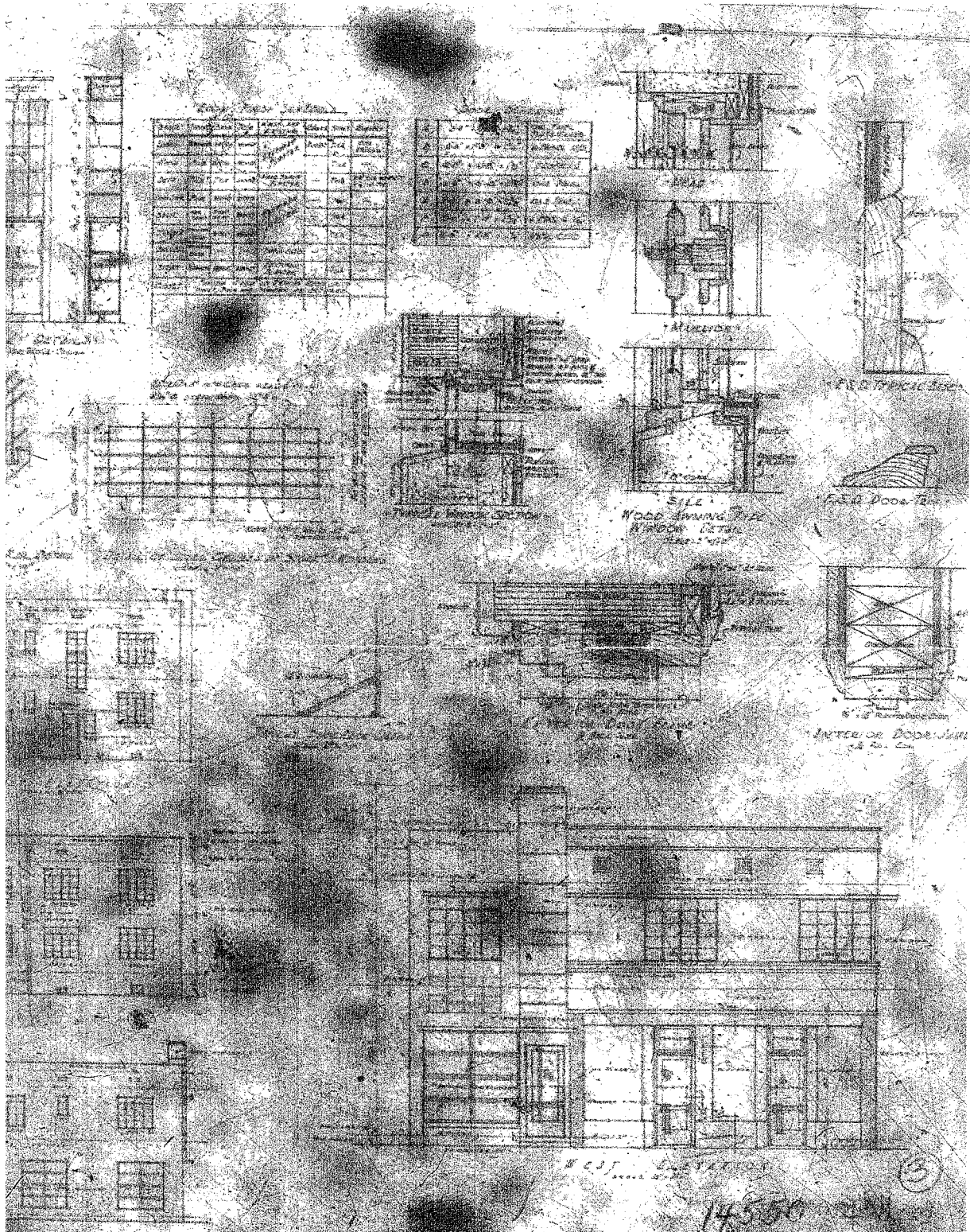
743 Collins # 25003 Maxson: 1 Well - 1 1/2" April 18, 1947  
745 Collins # 36587 Fuel Oil Equipment Co...one hot water boiler, replacement: Nov. 19, 1954  
745 Collins #46610 C.J. Pitsch 30 Lavatories, 30 Gas Ranges \$92.00, 6/13/68  
#50297-Peoples Gas System- nat gas meter set; 1 pool heater outlet and conn.-10-26-73  
#50304-Morgen Plumbing- heater-replace-10-29-73  
#50378-Peoples Gas- 1 outlet and conn. dryer-11-27-73

Electrical Permits: # 20560.. Biscayne Electric: 1 Receptacle. October 14, 1944  
743 Collins- # 24268 Astor Electric: 2 motors, 1 center of distribution, May 29, 1947  
743 Collins # 34277 Hill York Corp: 3 motors - June 14, 1951 Rosser 8/28/51  
745 Collins --#36011 Astor Electric: 1 Receptacle, 1 light outlet, 1 Picture, Nov.10,1952 ok 11-12 HOR  
743 Collins--#67044 C.J. Kay Elec: 5 fixtures, 1 motor 0-1 HF 5/29/69

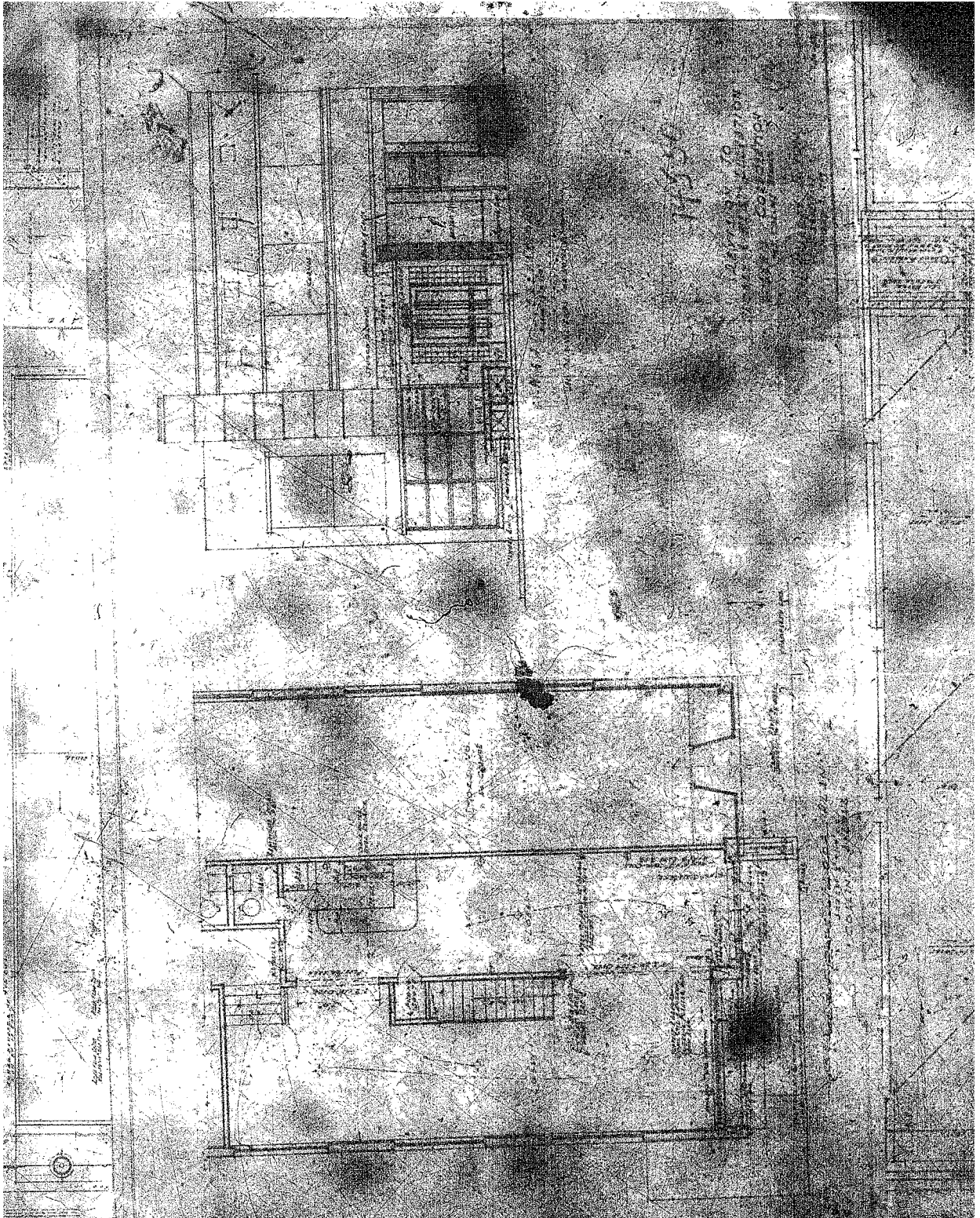
ELECTRICAL PERMITS: #83156 - Ocean Electric - 2 Smoke barrier doors - 4-26-88



Microfilm, City of Miami Beach



Microfilm, City of Miami Beach



Microfilm City of Miami Beach

# Photo Survey



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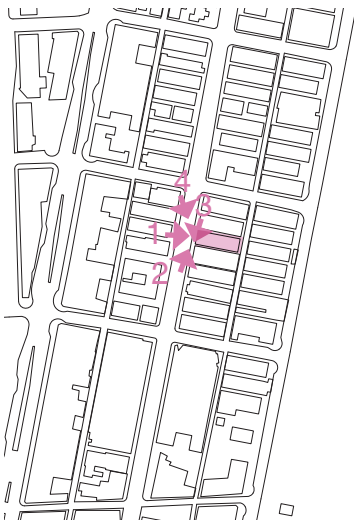
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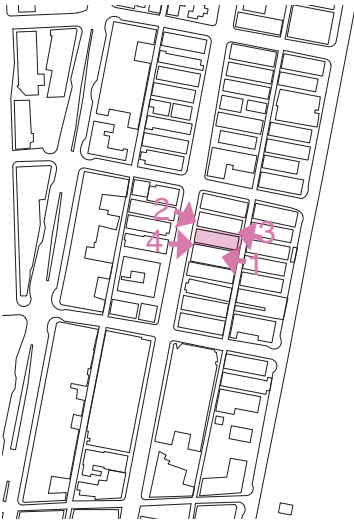
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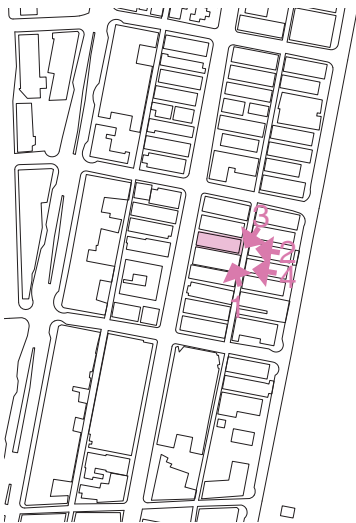
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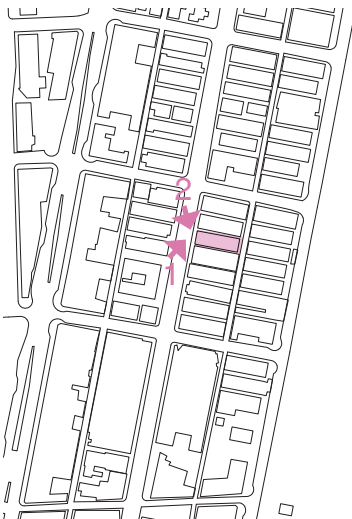
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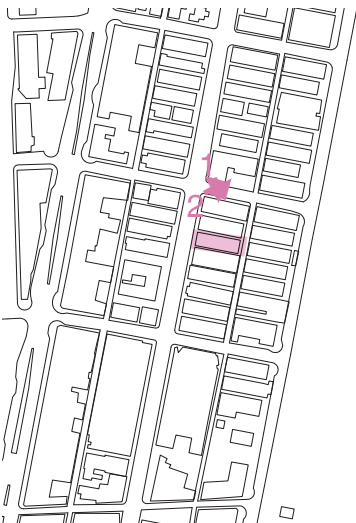
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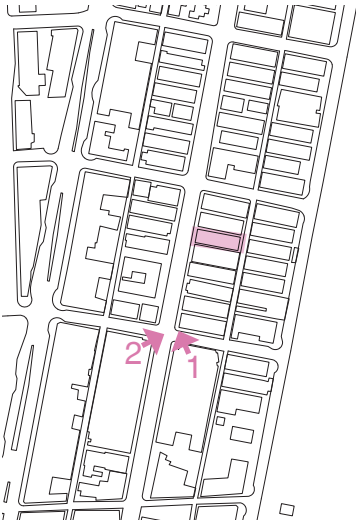
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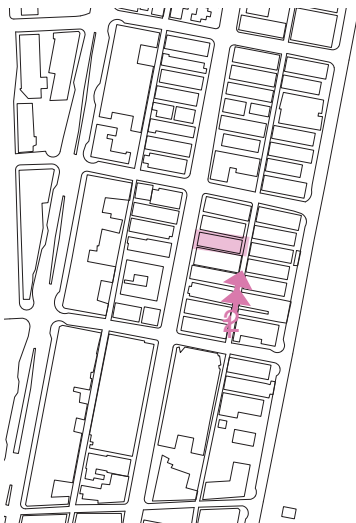
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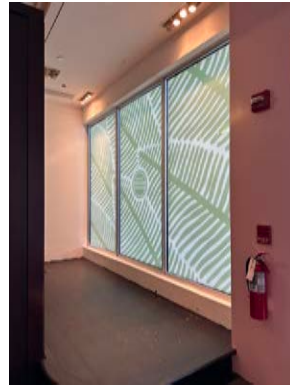
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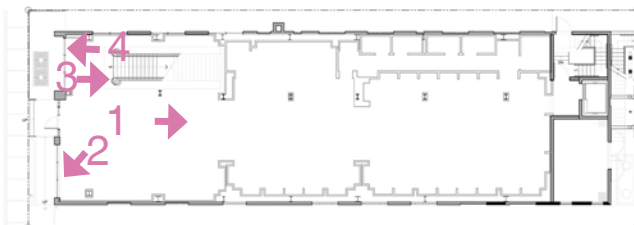
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Ground floor interior.



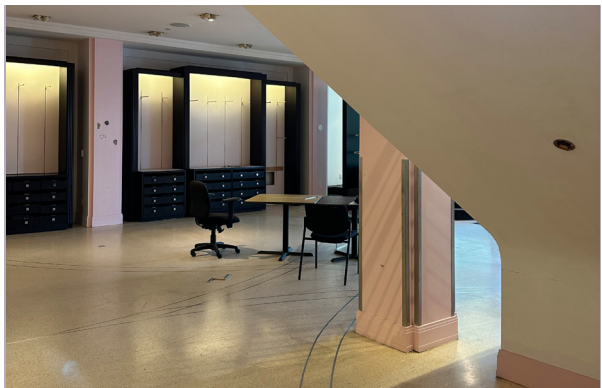
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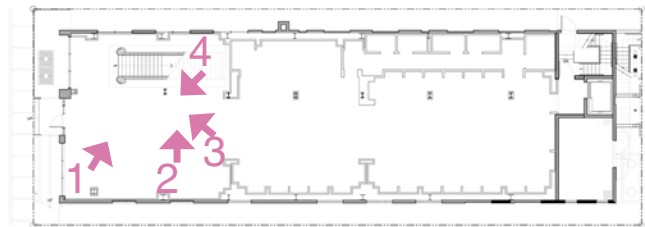
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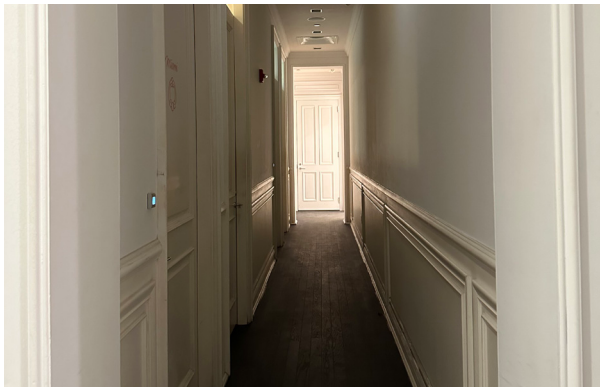


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Ground floor interior.



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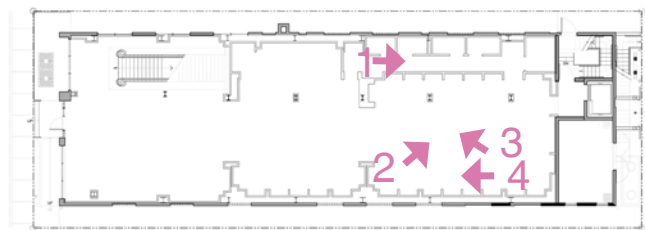
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Ground floor interior.



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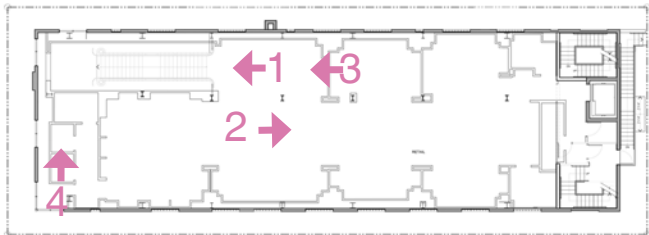
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Second floor interior.



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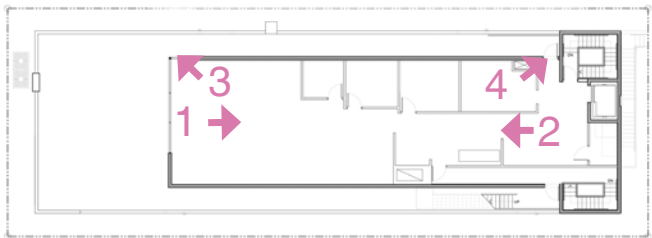
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Third floor interior.



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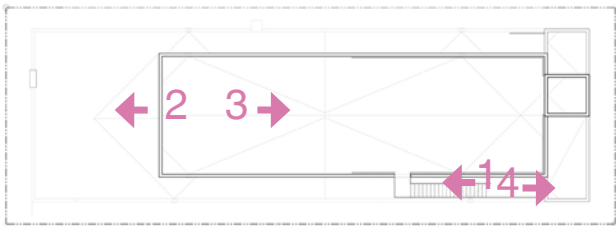
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PHOTOS TAKEN FEBRUARY 23, 2023

Roof top exterior.



Non-historic stair detail



Non-historic terrazzo floor pattern



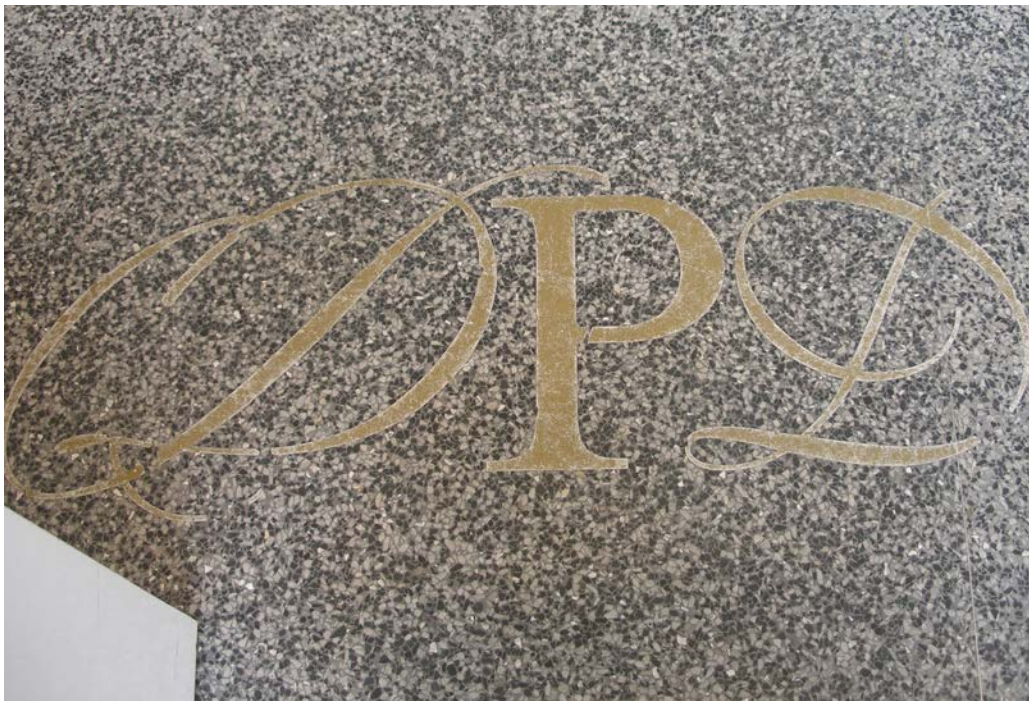
Reconstructed Premier sign



Entrance



Metal railing



Non-historic terrazzo detail