

STOREFRONT ANALYSIS
716-720 Lincoln Road
Miami Beach, Florida



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INTRODUCTION

720 Lincoln Partners LLC (the Client) has commissioned Heritage Architectural Associates (HAA) to provide a Storefront Assessment for the property at 716-720 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach, Florida. This report presents a general history of storefronts, the evolution of storefronts on Lincoln Road, a description of the property at 716-720 Lincoln Road, and the evolution of that property from construction to the current day. Additionally, this report presents a description and an analysis of the proposed modifications in context of the evolution of the storefront and historic preservation standards and guidelines.

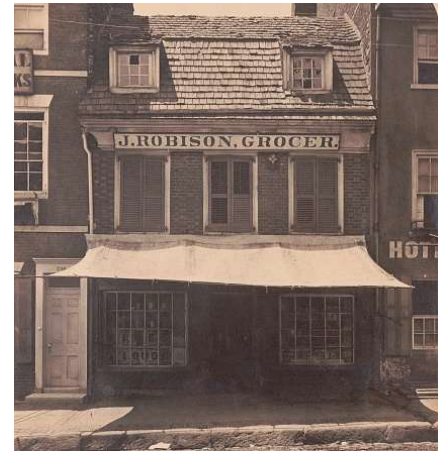
To prepare this report, research was conducted to locate documentation of the original appearance of the property and other stores on Lincoln Road. On-site photography was conducted to document the subject buildings and other buildings with modified storefronts. Additionally, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines and other reference materials were consulted.

This work was overseen by Steven G. Avdakov, R.A., principal of HAA. The report was written and compiled by Deborah Griffin of HAA. Unless otherwise specified, all photographs were taken by Steven Avdakov of HAA.

STOREFRONT HISTORY

18th and 19th Centuries

Storefronts in the United States in the 18th and early 19th centuries were basically indistinguishable from neighboring residential properties. Due to technological limitations, glass lights were small, with many lights in one window sash. Awnings and signage were used to draw attention to commercial establishments. (Figure 1) Larger commercial buildings often featured a series of entrance doors and small-paned windows along the front façade. Some larger establishments featured open spaces at the first level.



*Figure 1. J. Robison, Grocer,
Philadelphia, 1868.
(Library of Congress)*

Architectural cast iron, which became widely available in the mid-19th century, transformed the appearance of commercial buildings. The ability to cast metal into forms allowed for the development of very elaborate designs in architectural styles that included Italianate, Gothic and Second Empire. Two of the most prominent storefront manufacturers were founded by three brothers – the Mesker Brothers Iron Works of St. Louis and the George L. Mesker & Company of Evansville, Indiana. Storefronts were advertised in catalogs, and standardized parts could be selected and arranged to create a storefront of a size and configuration to fit any commercial building, whether existing or new construction. Galvanized sheet metal storefronts became popular in the 1870s and could also be customized to fit the building. Additionally, advances in the production of window glass allowed larger panels of glass to replace the multi-light panes of the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Cast storefronts featured iron columns and lintels at the ground floor and cornices at the top. (Figure 2) Sometimes, the storefront extended from the ground floor to the cornice. (Figure 3) The iron storefront became part of the advertising of the business, and sometimes the name of the business was integrated into the storefront. Storefronts were also manufactured with wood components. Due to the availability of individual elements and moldings, wood storefronts could be as elaborately detailed as those fabricated of cast metal. In the 19th century, iron storefronts were sometimes added to existing buildings to modernize the building's appearance.



Figure 2. Catalog page depicting galvanized iron storefront and cornice, 1900. (George L. Mesker & Co., p. 5)

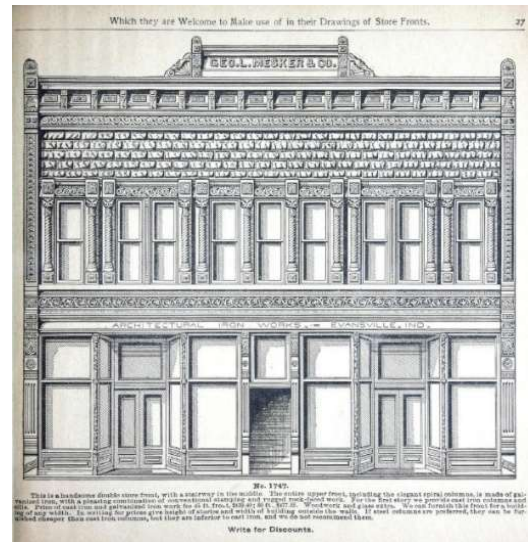


Figure 3. Catalog page depicting galvanized iron full-height storefront, c. 1900. (George L. Mesker & Co., p. 27)

Typically, storefronts featured a central door flanked by display windows, although larger stores often had multiple entrance doors. Entrances were often recessed, which allowed for additional display space in the windows. The windows were usually elevated above the ground by wood or metal bulkheads. Often, transom windows were located above the windows and entrance door. Signage was located on the sign band above the transom and on the windows themselves. Canopies and awnings also drew attention to the establishment.

20th Century

Further innovations in glass production in the early 20th century provided new types of glass materials that altered storefront design. The new technology allowed for larger panes of glass to be produced. Other new uses of glass include prismatic glass lights in transom windows, pigmented structural glass, such as Carrara and Vitrolite, glass block and tinted glass. (Figure 4) Aluminum and stainless steel allowed for less visible framing. The use of electricity, including neon lights, enhanced the visibility of the business establishment. Storefront designs evolved along with the current architectural styles, with many featuring Art Deco and Streamline Moderne features and ornamentation. As in the past, stores often modernized by installing new storefronts to draw attention to the business.



Figure 4. Modern glass materials at Greyhound Bus Station, Columbia, SC, 1986. (Historic American Buildings Survey)

STOREFRONT EVOLUTION ON LINCOLN ROAD

Commercial development on Lincoln Road began in the 1920s and accelerated in the 1930s. Over time, many of the storefronts were modified to appear more modern and thus attract new customers. Some of the modifications were fairly minor, but others were unsympathetic to the original construction. The modification of existing storefronts continues to the present day.

Although 625-631 Lincoln Road retains its original recessed storefronts, the windows and the entire upper façade of this one-story building have been completely covered. (Figure 5, Figure 6)



*Figure 5. 625-631 Lincoln Road, c. 1936
(Phillip Pessar, Flickr)*



Figure 6. 625-631 Lincoln Road, April 2026.

The building at 635-639 Lincoln also retains its recessed storefronts, but the upper façade above the outer stores has been covered. (Figure 7, Figure 8)



*Figure 7. 635-639 Lincoln Road, c. 1936
(Phillip Pessar, Flickr)*



Figure 8. 635-639 Lincoln Road, April 2026.

The Mediterranean Revival building at 607-611 Lincoln Road has lost its very distinctive pointed arch window. (Figure 9) A door was also removed to accommodate the large rectangular replacement window. (Figure 10)



*Figure 9. 607-611-Lincoln Road, c. 1936.
(Phillip Pessar, Flickr)*



Figure 10. 607-611-Lincoln Road, April 2026.

The storefront at 605 Lincoln Road has been modified extensively. The east façade formerly contained two windows at each of the first two levels. (Figure 11) This façade has been modified to include multiple storefront windows. (Figure 12) In addition, an entrance has been added to the corner, where originally the entrances were exclusively along Lincoln Road.



*Figure 11. 605 Lincoln Road, 1945.
(Florida Memory)*



Figure 12. 605 Lincoln Road, April 2026.

The building at 918-932 Lincoln Road has experienced substantial changes to the storefront. (Figure 13, Figure 14) The central bay has been replaced by a modern storefront element that bears no resemblance to the original. The windows at the east wing were reduced in size, and the upper part of the wing has been covered in a fluted material that appears to be painted metal.

(Figure 15) Although the windows have been modified in the west wing, the window size was retained, and the upper façade retains its original cladding. (Figure 16)



Figure 13. 918-932 Lincoln Road, 1944.
(Florida Memory)



Figure 14. 918-932 Lincoln Road, April 2026.



Figure 15. Detail of east wing and central bay
at 918-932 Lincoln Road, April 2026.



Figure 16. Detail of central bay and west wing
at 918-932 Lincoln Road, April 2026.

716-720 LINCOLN ROAD

Current Description

The one-story building at 716-720 Lincoln Road features a tripartite system at the storefront level. (Figure 17) The building is clad with stucco. The upper façade has two sets of horizontal fluted bands that extend the full width of the building, and the storefronts are separated by pilasters with fluted bands at the top. (Figure 18) The recessed areas of the fluted bands are painted gray to contrast with the rounded projecting portions, which are painted white. The bands in the upper façade are punctuated by two vertical pilasters with a raised chevron motif. Like the horizontal bands, the recessed areas of the chevrons are painted gray.



Figure 17. 716-720 Lincoln Road, April 2026.



Figure 18. Detail of upper façade at 716-720 Lincoln Road, March 2026.



Figure 19. Detail of 716 Lincoln Road, March 2026.



Figure 20. Detail of 718 Lincoln Road, March 2026.

The easternmost bay, at 716 Lincoln Road, has a flat aluminum storefront system. (Figure 19) The other two bays have original recessed entrances and angled storefront windows. (Figure 20, Figure 21) All of the entrance doors are replacements. The storefront at 716, which has been modified, has a plain band of terrazzo in front of the storefront. (Figure 22) The entrances at 718 and 720 Lincoln are paved with the original terrazzo in different decorative motifs. (Figure 23 Figure 24)



Figure 21. Detail of 720 Lincoln Road, March 2026.



Figure 22. Detail of plain terrazzo at entrance to 716 Lincoln Road, March 2026.



Figure 23. Detail of decorative terrazzo at entrance to 718 Lincoln Road, March 2026



Figure 24. Detail of decorative terrazzo at entrance to 720 Lincoln Road, March 2026.

Building Evolution

716-720 Lincoln Road (originally known as 714-718 Lincoln Road) was constructed in 1936 for the Saul Investment Corporation. Victor Nellenbogen (1888-1959) was the architect, and the general contractor was L. & H. Miller Company. The one-story building was constructed of concrete block and had a flat roof. The tripartite front façade had two wide storefronts flanking a narrower storefront. Each of the three stores had a separate recessed entrance. The building was designed in the Art Deco style.

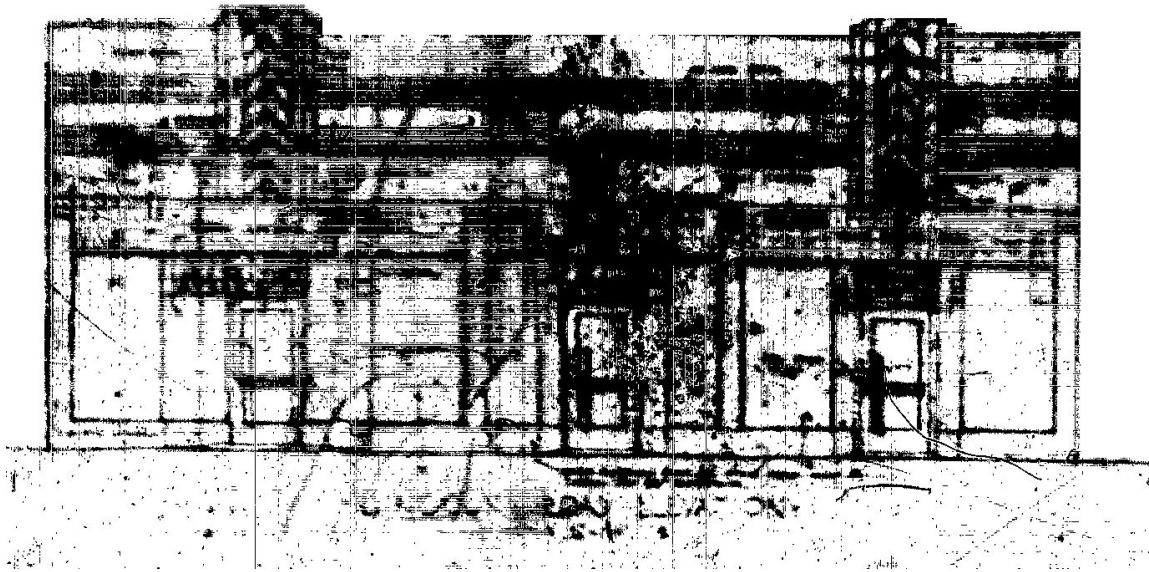


Figure 25. Original Front Elevation drawing of 716-720 Lincoln Road, 1936. (Miami Beach Building Department)

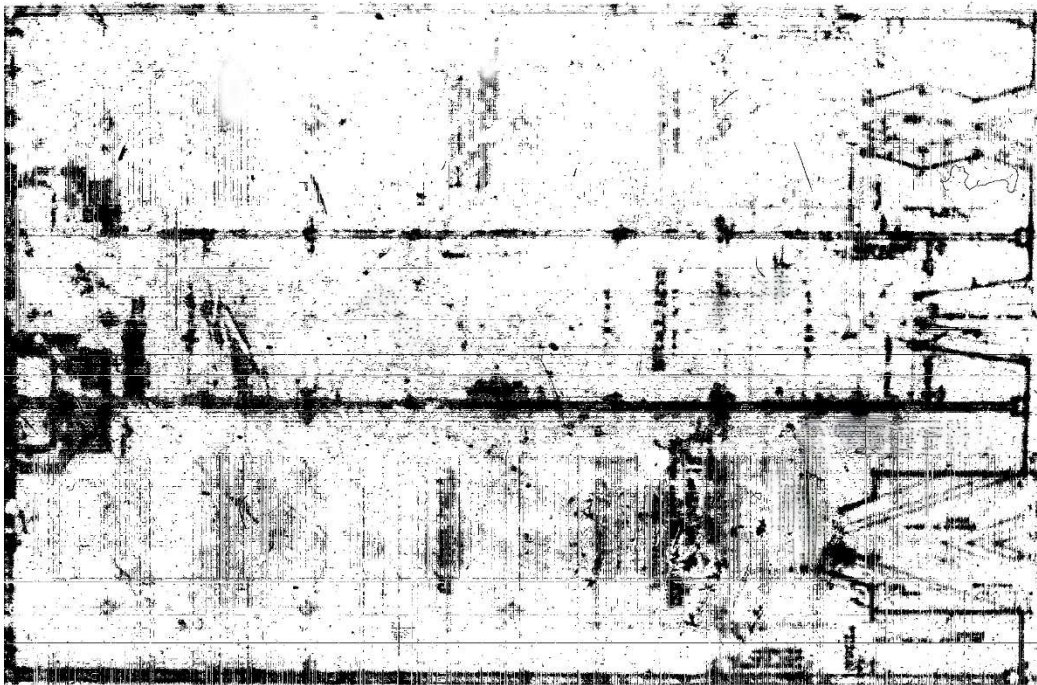
Recently discovered photographs indicate that the building was not constructed according to the drawings submitted for the building permit. (Figure 25) Instead, the building was covered with black Vitrolite or Carrara glass panels. (Figure 26) Two white pilasters with ziggurat tops were located on the upper portion of the façade. Horizontal bands stretched across the façade, and small prismatic glass blocks were located in the transom area. As in the original drawing, the storefront windows were situated on glass-paneled bulkheads, and the windows at the center storefront were shorter than those at the outer stores. (Figure 27) Each store had a different design in the terrazzo flooring leading to the entrance door. (Figure 28)



*Figure 26. 716-710 Lincoln Road, looking south, c. 1936.
(Phillip Pessar, Flickr)*



*Figure 27. 716-720 Lincoln Road, looking southwest, c. 1936.
(Phillip Pessar, Flickr)*



*Figure 28. Original First Floor Plan showing patterned terrazzo at entrances, 1936.
(Miami Beach Building Department)*

A permit for the remodeling of the storefront was issued on June 25, 1952. It appears that the prismatic glass blocks in the transoms were replaced by individual sign boards for each store. (Figure 29) The architect was Gilbert Fein.



*Figure 29. View of 716-720 Lincoln Road and adjacent buildings, c. 1954.
(Shulman + Associates)*

A permit to remodel 716 Lincoln Road was issued in September 1961. The permit was for a storefront of porcelain and aluminum and a new door, which was “not to swing on public property.”¹ The recessed storefront was replaced with a flat storefront system that was slightly recessed from the front of the building. The floor design at the entrance was replaced with plain terrazzo. In November 1961, a permit was issued for 718-720 Lincoln to cover the façade in porcelain panels. Photos taken by the property tax assessor in December 1961 reflect these changes. (Figure 30, Figure 31) Another storefront remodel was permitted in October 1966, but no specific addresses were included. The two vertical pilasters in the upper portion of the façade were removed at some point before October 1971. (Figure 32)²

¹ Permit Card, 714-718 (716-720) Lincoln Road, 1936-1988.

² The red arrow exists in the original photo and does not indicate anything in the context of this report.



*Figure 30. View of 716 Lincoln Road, 1961.
(Miami-Dade County Property Assessor)*



*Figure 31. View of 718 and 720 Lincoln Road, 1961.
(Miami-Dade County Property Assessor)*

At some point before 2003, the front façade was remodeled according to the original drawing. (Figure 25) A photograph from October 2003 shows the storefront at 718 Lincoln Road covered with plywood. (Figure 33) The three horizontal lines at the upper façade that are visible in current photos were extant, but the horizontal lines at the top of the pilasters flanking the storefront were not yet in existence. (Figure 33)

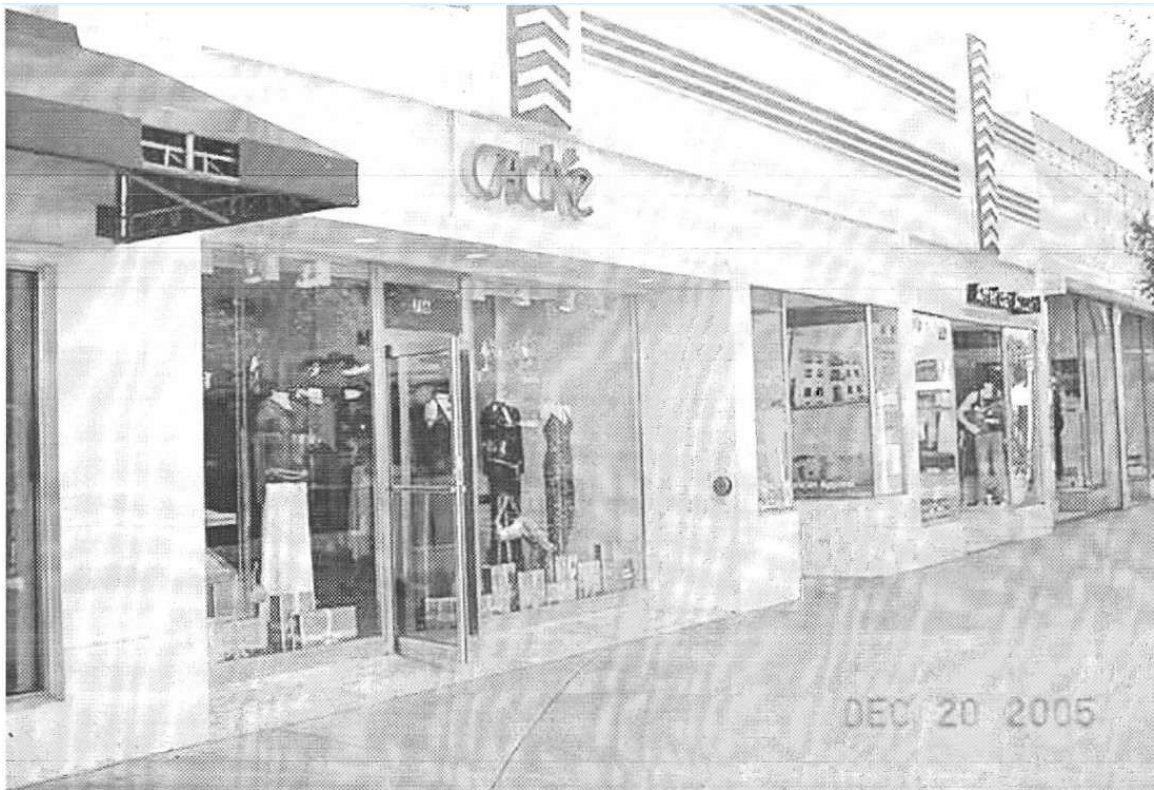


*Figure 32. View of upper façade showing absence of
vertical piers, 1971.
(Miami-Dade County Property Assessor)*



*Figure 33. View of 718 Lincoln, 2003.
(Miami-Dade County Property Assessor)*

The building had the same appearance in a 2005 photograph. It is unclear when the porcelain panels were removed and the current stucco application was installed. Between 2007 and 2009, permits were issued to replace the existing storefront and repaint the front façade.



*Figure 34. View of storefront at 716-720 Lincoln Road, 2005.
(Miami-Dade County Property Assessor)*

PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

The proposed modifications include the removal of the recessed entrances, including bulkheads, windows and doors, at 718 and 720 Lincoln Road. The two storefronts would be replaced by a single glass entry door at the central bay (718) and one set of glass double doors at the west bay (720). The new storefronts would align with the entrance at the east bay (716) and create a unified storefront system across the three bays. The existing terrazzo at the entrances to 718 and 720 will be retained. The upper façade will also be retained.



Figure 35. Current view of 716-720 Lincoln Road, March 2026.



Figure 36. Rendering of proposed modifications to storefronts at 718-720 Lincoln Road, March 2026. (Final Submittal 03-08-26, HPB26-0687)

ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

“Storefronts are typically altered more than any other building feature to reflect the latest architectural styles and appear up-to-date to attract customers.”³ As a general rule, storefronts are evaluated separately from the rest of the front façade, as often, the storefront reflects a later time period than the other components of the building. In evaluation of historic integrity, more latitude is generally given to storefronts within the context of the overall building.

The front facade at 716-720 Lincoln Road has been substantially modified from its original appearance, not once, but twice since its construction. Major revisions include:

- Replacement of prismatic glass block at the transoms with sign boards
- Removal of original black Vitrolite or Carrara glass panels and replacement with white porcelain panels
- Removal of original decorative pilasters at the upper facade
- Removal of white porcelain panels and replacement with stucco coating and fluted banding, which reflects the original design but does not resemble the original as-built appearance of the building
- Introduction of Art Deco styled vertical pilasters at the upper façade that reflect the original design but do not resemble the original as-built pilasters
- Alteration of consistency at the front façade by the elimination of the recessed entry at the east bay (716)

The proposed alterations will improve the appearance of the building and enhance its functionality. The book *Guiding Design on Main Street* states: “Large storefront display windows blur the distinction between the public sidewalk and the private shop space, making it more inviting for customers to wander in.”⁴ Larger display windows will allow the interior of the store and its products to be more easily from outside the store, which will likely draw shoppers into the business.

Regarding new construction or alterations, Standard Number 9 of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation states:

New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

³ Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, 15.

⁴ National Main Street Center, 9-1.

The Secretary of the Interior’s Guidelines for the rehabilitation of storefronts recommends “Identifying, retaining, and preserving storefronts and their functional and decorative features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the overall historic character of the building.”⁵ The recessed storefronts at the central (718) and west (720) bays are not character defining, especially since the storefront at 716 Lincoln has already been altered.

The proposed modifications to the storefronts at 718 and 720 Lincoln Road:

- Will retain the historic tripartite architectural rhythm of the storefronts
- Will retain the terrazzo flooring at the entrances to 718 and 720
- Will not affect the upper façade
- Will restore consistency of the front façade by aligning the storefront systems
- Will provide a unified entrance with large display windows, which will make the space more inviting to potential customers
- Will not adversely impact the historic character of the building, which has already been compromised by previous alterations

CONCLUSION

The proposed modifications will have no adverse effect on the existing building and should be approved.

⁵ Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, 113.

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