

SG 2291



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Giller Building

other names/site number FMSF DA15235

2. Location

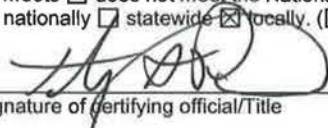
street & number 975 West 41st Street not for publication

city or town Miami Beach vicinity

state Florida code FL county Miami-Dade code 025 zip code 33140

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 SHPO 2/16/2018
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) _____


Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action
3-29-2018

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

Name of related multiple property listings

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

"N/A"

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE AND TRADE/business

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE AND TRADE/business

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Concrete

Stucco

roof Asphalt

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1957-1962

Significant Dates

1957

1962

Significant Person

Norman M. Giller, F.A.I.A.

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Norman M. Giller

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of Repository

Giller Building
Name of Property

Miami-Dade County, FL
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _____

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	5	8	6	6	6	7	2	8	5	5	3	0	1
	Zone		Easting					Northing							
2															

3															
	Zone		Easting					Northing							
4															

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Max Adriel Imberman

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date October 23, 2017

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Giller Group LTD

street & number 975 W 41st Street telephone (305) 538-6324

city or town Miami Beach state FL zip code 33140

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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SUMMARY

The Giller Building was opened in 1957 to serve as an office building as well as the offices for the architectural firm Norman M. Giller and Associates. Located toward the western end of Miami Beach's Nautilus neighborhood, the Giller Building was built on a corner lot between two of the city's main thoroughfares, Alton Road and 41st Street. The building was designed in the Miami Modern style by noted Miami Beach architect Norman M. Giller, and was developed to house his architectural firm as well as renting to other businesses to make a profit. The Giller Building is placed near the Julia Tuttle Causeway, a highway which stretches across Biscayne Bay connecting Miami Beach and mainland Miami. While the Giller Building was originally designed as a four-story office building, the development of the Julia Tuttle Causeway in 1961 inspired its expansion. The next year, Giller built a six-story addition to the building, which added more rental space. The building's character-defining feature is its front façade's colorful rectangular tower, which is notable for its red, blue, green, and yellow glass-tile mosaic and interior floating staircase.

SETTING

The Giller Building is located at the western end of Miami Beach's Nautilus Neighborhood, on a double corner lot between Alton Road, 41st Street, and Nautilus Drive. A residential neighborhood is located to the north and northwest of the building, and the Interstate 195 freeway begins just to the west of it, heading across Biscayne Bay on the Julia Tuttle Causeway. The Mount Sinai Medical Center hospital complex is also around 1,500 feet to the west of the Giller Building. To the south and east of the Giller Building is the 41st Street shopping district, which runs over half a mile to the east. The building touches but is not connected to its neighbor to the east, a synagogue. When the building was first constructed, its location was the quiet western edge of Miami Beach, a populated area with shops and residences, and this has remained consistent, though the construction of the Julia Tuttle Causeway necessitated the dredging of additional land out of Biscayne Bay a quarter-mile to the west. Much of this development happened during the building's period of significance, so the integrity of setting is sufficient for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

South Façade (Main Entrance)

The building's south façade, which contains the entrance, faces 41st Street. It consists of three sections, which are each visually distinguished from each other in appearance and design. This façade is dominated by a colorful rectangular tower covered with glass-tile mosaic (Photo 1). The tiles are green, red, blue, and yellow, with the majority of the tower being green. Near the bottom of the tower is metal lettering reading "GILLER BUILDING" placed over red tiles, as well as numbering reading 975, the street address of the building. Blue tiles cascade in a repetitive pattern that stretches in squares from the left edge of the tower to the right edge, with five squares making up each cascading row. Red and yellow tiles are seemingly randomly scattered around the tower, with two yellow squares and six red squares

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being placed among the blue cascading pattern. The glass-tile mosaic is a bit weathered, with some of the mosaic tiles showing rain damage or being peeled in small sections. The glass-tile mosaic wraps around the right and left sides of the tower, which contains the elevator and stairs for the front four-story section of the building. Under the glass-tile mosaic section of the tower is the entrance, which is characterized by a glass door and a plate-glass window, through which one can see the entrance hallway and the first floor of the building's floating staircase.

To the left of the entrance section of the southern façade is a wall signifying the presence of office suites on the west façade of the building (Photo 2). Each floor is identical, with a projecting cantilevered sunshade (which in local architectural tradition is described as an "eyebrow" feature), and a set of thin ribbon windows. This pattern of construction wraps around the west façade of the building and is echoed on the east façade.

To the east of the entrance section of the southern façade is a set of balconies with railings on the second, third, and fourth floors (Photo 3). The ground floor features an entrance door as well as commercial plate-glass windows. Each balcony's railing consists of two metal railings which emerge from the colorful central tower, ending at a point at the building's corner, and wrapping around to the wall next to the sliding-glass doors and full-length windows which lead onto the balconies. The balcony floors are exactly on the level with the eyebrow features on the west side of the building. Each balcony also features a small window cut out of the colorful glass-tile tower, which provides light for the building's interior staircase. Each balcony also has a metal column at the corner (called a "beanpole" in the local architectural jargon).

The colorful central tower extends above the west and east sections, and is essentially a story taller than the top of the interior parts of the building.

East Façade

The east façade (Photo 4) faces and surrounds a parking lot which serves the Giller Building. The eastern façade meets the south façade at approximately a 60° angle. The south façade is not parallel to the street, but a segment on the curved property line. The east façade's wall is perpendicular to 41st Street and does not meet the main façade of the building at a right angle, as is the case with most buildings. The east façade is painted white. At the southern end of the east façade, the balconies from the main façade are visible, with the railings and openings on the second, third, and fourth floors able to be seen from the parking lot. Next to the balconies, at the level of the highest balcony's floor, is a set of black lettering reading "GILLER BUILDING."

Much like the west end of the south façade, the bulk of the eastern façade is defined by eyebrows and ribbon windows on every floor. On the fourth floor, the ribbon windows start a bay after on the other floors, but apart from that the windows and eyebrows line up perfectly on every floor. A small projecting maintenance room extends from the north end of the east façade of the original building.

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The 1962 six-story addition (Photo 5) follows the design plan of the 1957 original building. The wall of the addition meets the original wall at a 90° angle and maintains the eyebrow and ribbon window plan on the second, third, and fourth floors. The first floor of the addition extends only slightly east from the original building, leaving a wide gap that can easily be driven through. The original section of the building features doors leading to air conditioning and maintenance rooms. This covered area features a door (Photo 6) that serves as the first-floor entrance of the addition. Ribbon windows are placed in all five bays. The fifth floor of the addition, which is taller than the lower floors, only has ribbon windows in the third, fourth, and fifth bays. It has an eyebrow like the lower floors, which extends the length of the façade. The windows on the sixth floor are not the ribbon windows of the rest of the building, but are larger, mostly following the spacing of the windows on the lower floors.

North Façade

The north façade (Photo 7) overlooks an alley that runs between the Giller Building and the condominium to the north. This façade has no ornamentation, merely white painted walls and windows which match the windows seen on other façades. There are ribbon windows (Photo 8) on the first, second, third, and fourth floors of the original building; the six-story addition has larger windows which generally complement the placement of the lower ribbon windows on the fifth and six floors.

West Façade

The west façade (Photo 9) of the building faces a public parking lot, as well as Alton Road. It is characterized only by white paint, ribbon windows, and projecting cantilever eyebrows serving to provide shade. The four floors have an identical layout of ribbon windows. The west façade meets the main entrance at an approximately 120° obtuse angle (Photo 10).

Interior

Each of the first four floors of the building has an identical layout of the core areas. The central corridors (Photo 11) from which individual offices are reached runs from south to north from the southern façade to the northwest corner of the building, and then west to east from that corner to the northeast exit on the eastern façade. The hallway is a double-loaded corridor, with each door denoting access to a rented office. The offices on each of the first four floors closest to the southeast corner of the building have access to the balcony. Every office up for rent on these floors has access to ribbon windows along the adjoining walls. The hallway on the first floor has a turquoise Cuban tile floor, and the upper floors are carpeted. The building has two sets of stairs and two elevators.

The first set of stairs (Photo 12) is a floating staircase visible in the center of the southern façade. This floating staircase is characterized by its terrazzo steps and aluminum-encased rods hanging from the ceiling. The stairs don't float all the way up to the fourth floor, but are a decorative element meant to provide an interesting visual impression through the plate-glass window of the first floor, as the staircase rises into the colorful glass-tile tower, which leaves the upper floors a mystery from the outside. The

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stairs on the upper floors are carpeted with black balustrades. Each flight of stairs emerges on the next floor facing the first elevator, which is located near the building’s center, on the left side of the north-south hallway. This elevator only accesses the first four floors, because it is original to the building from before the addition was built.

The second northern staircase accesses all six floors of the building, since it was built as part of the addition. This staircase doesn’t have the same decorative features as the southern one. It is carpeted with black railings. The second elevator also accesses all six floors, and is located near the northeastern corner of the building.

Roof

The roof is accessible from two places: the top of the southern staircase, as well as from doors emerging from the fifth and sixth-floor offices. The southern staircase has its terminus at the top of the colored tower visible from 41st Street. The northern side of the tower (Photo 13) is unadorned, featuring only a door for accessing the roof. The fifth-floor exit onto the roof is accessible by door, and the sixth-floor exit onto the roof leads to a staircase which goes down to the roof. The fifth and sixth floors of the addition create a tower for the building (Photo 14) which somewhat resembles a beach house with large windows and lots of access to the sun. One of the tallest buildings in the area at the time of construction, the roof of the Giller Building provides an expansive view of 41st Street and Alton Road, as well as Biscayne Bay.

ALTERATIONS

The Giller Building has only had one major alteration, and the building otherwise looks nearly identical to 1962. In that year, a rectangular six-story addition was built off of the northern end of the originally-four-story building, jutting off to the northeast. Apart from this, the building’s exterior appearance is almost entirely intact. The character-defining colorful rectangular tower has been a bit weathered over the decades, with rain and age taking a slight toll on the vibrancy of its mosaic. The only major alteration to the building’s interior since 1962 has been the conversion of the sixth floor of the addition from an apartment with an indoor pool and retractable roof into an architectural office. The design of the building is overall intact.

INTEGRITY

The Giller Building retains a very high degree of integrity. The most significant alteration to the building, the six-story addition to its north end, happened during the period of significance. No significant changes have been made to the building since 1962. The building retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to a very high degree.

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SUMMARY

The Giller Building is significant at the local level under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Its period of significance ranges from 1957, when it was constructed, to 1962, when its only major alteration, a six-story addition, occurred. The Giller Building is an iconic mid-century Miami Beach office building in the Miami Modern (MiMo) style, constructed by one of the city’s great MiMo architects, Norman M. Giller. It evinces the colorful optimistic nature of the MiMo style in its central glass-tile tower, while utilizing the architectural features, such as projecting cantilevered sunshades, which were aimed to protect the building’s occupants from the hot, sunny Miami Beach climate. Situated at an entrance to Miami Beach from the mainland at the very eastern end of the Julia Tuttle Causeway, the building represents a grounded use of an often-flighty style.

HISTORIC CONTEXT



Figure 1: An east-facing view of Miami Beach’s second polo field, located just north of today’s Forty-First Street. The photograph was taken from the roof of the Nautilus Hotel. Today, the land once occupied by the polo fields are home to residences, a middle school named after the historic hotel, and the western terminus of a business district along Forty-First Street. The Giller Building was built at the southwestern corner of the former polo field. Source: Florida Memory

Miami Beach’s Nautilus Neighborhood

Miami Beach was officially incorporated as a town on March 26, 1915, in response to multiple efforts by developers to create livable communities on a barrier island that at the turn of the century had been almost entirely enveloped in mangrove swamp. Perhaps the most successful and influential of these developers was Carl Fisher, a tycoon in the automotive industry who had been heavily involved in the innovation of car racing, as well as being a co-founder of the Prest-o-Lite company, which produced the first automobile headlamps, enabling easier and safer night driving.¹ In the first decade of the twentieth century, Fisher opened one of the nation’s first automobile dealerships, in the city of Indianapolis, as well as designing and building the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, a racecourse which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975, and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1987.

Fisher was also heavily involved in the creation of the Lincoln Highway, which spanned the continental United States, and the Dixie Highway, which connected Michigan and South Florida. An enormously successful and ambitious man, Fisher always sought opportunities to make money and to make his mark on the nation.

¹ “Prest-O-Lite History,” Firstsuperspeedway.com, <http://www.firstsuperspeedway.com/articles/prest-o-lite>, Accessed October 3, 2017.

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Carl Fisher made his first acquaintance with Miami on his honeymoon in 1910. He and his wife Jane immediately sought to make a winter home in South Florida.² Around this time, Miami developers were trying to make something out of the island to the east of the city, a large barrier island accessible only by ferry. Far from the popular tourist destination Miami Beach would eventually become, this barrier island was overgrown and unfriendly. Despite this, developers such as John Collins, a New Jersey Quaker, aimed to connect the island to the mainland, seeing a large amount of land that was, at the time, cheap to acquire and imbued with boundless potential, if some work was put in to make it usable. Collins built the first bridge connecting mainland Miami to the island that would house Miami Beach. Two and a half miles long and built of Dade County pine wood, the Collins Bridge was the longest wooden bridge in the world. The bridge was completed in 1913, and laid the groundwork for future development on Biscayne Bay, both along its path and to the north.³ A series of artificial islands, now known as the Venetian Islands, were constructed along its path, and were to be accompanied by other east-west roads over water to the north, as well as a north-south road over Biscayne Bay connecting the Venetian Islands with man-made islands to the north. Today’s Julia Tuttle Causeway, a freeway which connects Miami Beach to Miami and joins with Miami Beach at Forty-First Street, follows the path of these original plans. With the decline of the Florida Land Boom, as well as the Great Depression, these ambitious plans were abandoned.⁴



Figure 2: 1920s postcard depicting the Nautilus Hotel and its accompanying polo field. The Mediterranean Revival-style hotel provided easy access to watch and play a game which was gaining in popularity in the heady days of the Roaring Twenties. Source: University of Miami Libraries Digital Collections

The development of Miami Beach was characterized by the idea of connection, not only to Miami’s mainland, but also to the rest of the country and world. The city was branded as a fantastic tropical paradise that would draw visitors from elsewhere. Fisher’s view of Miami Beach’s ultimate destiny was for it to become “America’s playground,” a place where people could relax, shop, and participate in strenuous exciting activities like boat racing, golf, polo, tennis, and fishing.⁵ Fisher’s conception of Miami Beach was to grow it into a place that could attract captains of industry from the Midwest and Northeast, to draw in hot-blooded and excitable visitors. Carl Fisher was primarily a land developer. His main interest was selling property for the construction of homes and businesses. Fisher saw luxury hotels

² Jane Watts Fisher, *Fabulous Hoosier: A Story of American Achievement*, (Harry Coleman & Company, Chicago, 1947), 17.
³ Carolyn Klepser, *Lost Miami Beach*, (The History Press, Charleston, 2014), 34.
⁴ “Discussion of Biscayne Bay,” Nova.edu, <https://web.archive.org/web/20010212140902/http://www.nova.edu/ocean/eglades/sum00/biscayne.html> Accessed October 3, 2017.
⁵ *Miami Herald*, “Nautilus Hotel Special Advertising Section,” January 24, 1924.

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as a key venture for attracting people to view the land he would later want them to purchase. His hotels functioned as a place to give a visitor a taste of Miami Beach that would compel them to buy a home there. Fisher’s long-term plan was to develop a series of up to twenty hotels of 150 guests each that would each make the land of Miami Beach more valuable and draw in more tourism and more future residents.⁶ Each hotel had associated infrastructure that benefited tourists and locals, whether they were looking for entertainment, relaxation, or excitement.

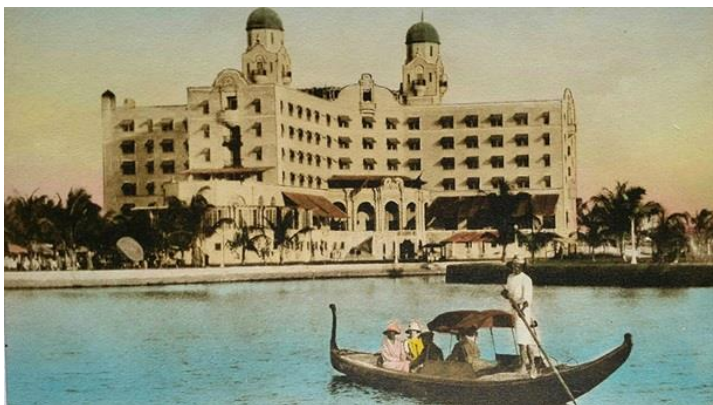


Figure 3: 1929 postcard featuring the Nautilus Hotel’s façade facing Biscayne Bay. Millionaire developer Carl Fisher brought gondolas to Miami Beach to add an air of exotic elegance to the city and his hotels. The boats are also a reference to the Venetian Causeway, a chain of bridged man-made islands located approximately two miles to the south of the Nautilus Hotel. Source: The Bramson Archive

By the mid-1920s, Miami Beach’s rampant growth within the Florida Land Boom was in full swing. Across the state, land prices skyrocketed and housing developments were constructed, many out of previously-uninhabited areas. Carl Fisher’s third luxury hotel, the Nautilus Hotel, marked the city’s northward expansion. While Miami Beach’s development had begun at the southern end of the barrier island, the Nautilus Hotel’s placement in today’s mid-Beach area, located just north of today’s 41st Street, was the result of cheaper land prices in the relatively-undeveloped northern section of the Miami Beach community. Fisher envisioned a facility that would serve as a center of the community for both tourists and locals. The Nautilus Hotel officially opened on January 10,

1924.⁷ The hotel was surrounded by polo fields owned and operated by Fisher, who was very interested in the sport. Miami Beach’s original polo fields were built on South Beach by Carl Fisher, accompanying his second hotel, the Flamingo Hotel. Fisher had aimed to make polo the one sport easily watched in Miami Beach, and opened his first polo field in 1919.⁸ The polo grounds were moved north to surround the Nautilus Hotel because of the increasing land prices in South Beach. Fisher’s plan to inflate land value had worked, and he was moving his endeavors northward to continue developing the city and to further his investments.⁹

Fisher, in his decade of heavy involvement with the development of Miami Beach, honed a certain philosophy that informed the placement and amenities of his hotels. His main innovation was to avoid oceanside properties. Land adjoining the beach was already valuable, and development along the coast was inevitable. Fisher’s hotels were built along the Biscayne Bay, which served two purposes: it encouraged development across the bay, such as future bridges and causeways like the Collins Bridge,

⁶ Carolyn Klepser, *Lost Miami Beach*, (The History Press, Charleston, 2014), 110.
⁷ Howard Kleinberg, *Miami Beach: A History*, (Centennial Press, 1994), 91.
⁸ Abraham D. Lavender, *Miami Beach in 1920: The Making of a Winter Resort*, (Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, 2002), 122.
⁹ Carolyn Klepser, *Lost Miami Beach*, (The History Press, Charleston, 2014), 115.

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and also allowed for guests at Fisher’s hotels to easily watch the boat races he organized in Biscayne Bay, which generally ran from south to north, starting at his Flamingo Hotel and ending at his Nautilus Hotel.¹⁰

The Nautilus Hotel was designed to be elegant and awe-inspiring in the Spanish Colonial style. Designed by Schultze and Weaver, who had been the architects behind the Los Angeles Biltmore, as well as the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City and the contemporary Roney Plaza Hotel in Miami Beach, the hotel was built facing Biscayne Bay, and designed with an X-shaped floor plan which maximized the number of rooms with a view of the water. A six-story building with domed towers, the hotel had a total cost of \$1.25 million.¹¹ This price included the development of two man-made islands in



Figure 4: Postcard depicting the Nautilus hotel as well as Johns Island, a man-made island which featured the hotel’s pool and cabanas, connected to the hotel by a small bridge. Source: Digital Commonwealth – Massachusetts Collections Online



Figure 5: 1923 photograph of Rosie the Elephant moving concrete blocks at the construction site of the Nautilus Hotel. Carl Fisher purchased two elephants to serve as the mascots of Miami Beach in promotional images. Rosie was an extremely popular figure in early Miami Beach, performing at public events, including serving as United States President-elect Warren G. Harding’s golf caddy when he visited the city in 1921. Source: Florida Memory

Biscayne Bay, where hotel amenities were located. Named Collins Island and Johns Island after John Collins and John Levi, fellow Miami Beach developers, the islands hosted a swimming pool, cabana area, as well as eventually in 1926 the radio station WIOD, which has lasted to 2017, though now headquartered in Miramar, a city in Broward County. The call-sign of the radio station stood for Wonderful Isle of Dreams, which was meant to refer to Collins Island, where the station was hosted, but could have been extended to Miami Beach’s island as a whole. While the Nautilus Hotel was meant to be the height of class and style, its clientele was “restricted,” which meant Jewish people were not allowed, as was the case in many Miami Beach hotels and businesses.¹²

South of the Nautilus Hotel and running from east to west was Forty-First street, which had originally

¹⁰ Howard Kleinberg, *Miami Beach: A History*, (Centennial Press, 1994), 91.
¹¹ Carolyn Klepser, *Lost Miami Beach*, (The History Press, Charleston, 2014), 115.
¹² Howard Kleinberg, *Miami Beach: A History*, (Centennial Press, 1994), 93.

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been an unpaved farm road serving John Collins’ avocado orchards. Fisher planned to use some of the land off of Forty-First street as a “colony” to host the many craftsmen, including carpenters and gardeners, who were developing his properties. To the south of Forty-First Street, very near the Nautilus Hotel, was an amphitheater known as the Miami Beach Garden, which hosted events from boxing to opera. The building was converted into a closed-roof auditorium in the wake of the Miami Hurricane of 1926, and included a stage for the production of shows, including Broadway shows. The space also hosted the annual International Tropical Flower Show. By 1938, the building had been taken down. Despite this, the area still held entertainment and social amenities.¹³

The Second World War was immensely transformative for the city of Miami Beach, as the United States military used the hotels and amenities of the city to host and train soldiers going to the Eastern and Western fronts of the war. In 1942, the Nautilus Hotel was affected by the war when it was turned into a military hospital. It would never again serve as a hotel, after operating for only 18 years. By that time, the street and the area surrounding the Nautilus Hotel had already begun to develop into a business and residential district. After the Second World War ended, and the military no longer needed a hospital on Miami Beach, the property was purchased by a Jewish non-profit medical organization to serve as a hospital, which opened in 1949. A hotel that had not allowed Jewish people had become a hospital operated by them.¹⁴ Carl Fisher’s impact on Miami Beach ended in the mid-1920s, when he faced financial difficulties as a result of the crash of the Florida Land Boom, an overextension into a resort community in Montauk, New York, and the Great Depression. Despite this, Fisher still had laid the groundwork for a thriving city, and created conditions that led to the development of the district surrounding and adjoining the Nautilus Hotel.

Miami Beach’s Modernist Architecture

The City of Miami Beach’s architecture was on the cutting-edge from very early on in its history. While Carl Fisher and the other early boosters of the city were early adopters of the Mediterranean Revival style, the end of the Florida Land Boom of the 1920s inspired the next generation of Miami Beach’s boosters and designers to pursue architectural styles that looked to the present and future instead of the past. Miami Beach’s tourist industry quickly regained its luster during the Great Depression, inspiring a lasting construction boom of hotels and tourist attractions in the city. The style now known as Art Deco was prevalent in Miami Beach throughout the 1930s, and lasted longer in Miami Beach than the rest of the country. Like the previous Mediterranean Revival Buildings built in Miami Beach, Art Deco and its contemporary style Streamline Moderne were characterized by flat roofs, symmetrical design, stucco, and terrazzo flooring.¹⁵

Art Deco and Streamline Moderne had their origins in Europe, as modern architecture emerged out of an international deliberation on how the built environment could influence society in the wake of the First

¹³ Carolyn Klepser, *Lost Miami Beach*, (The History Press, Charleston, 2014), 117-120.

¹⁴ Howard Kleinberg, *Miami Beach: A History*, (Centennial Press, 1994), 146.

¹⁵ Hap Hatton, *Tropical Splendor: An Architectural History of Florida*, (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1987), 95-96.

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World War. Miami Beach’s renditions of these styles were heavily impacted by the hot, humid climate, as escaping the oppressive heat became a primary consideration of design. In addition, Miami Beach’s branding as a tourist destination encouraged a more imaginative use of design. With Miami becoming known as the “Magic City,” architects found themselves with the ability to push their designs in new whimsical directions, contributing to the development of the city’s reputation as a tropical paradise. Art Deco and Streamline Moderne began to reflect nautical themes, with Miami’s seaside environment being a primary draw of the postcards that publicized its tourist destinations. Miami Beach’s modernist architecture was driven by its straight lines, which often pointed in unconventional directions, eschewing the perception of a building as a simple box consisting of 90 degree angles. Buildings were also designed to incorporate artistic elements and to be considered as art themselves, often featuring murals or carvings that were meant to enhance the glamour and attractiveness of an already-unconventional building.¹⁶ Art Deco, Streamline Moderne, and their successors were meant to offer a siren song to visitors elsewhere in the country and the world, a tantalizing view of a magical city on the ocean. Postcards of Miami Beach’s buildings complemented the city’s reputation and brand to draw tourists to South Florida.

Norman M. Giller, Miami Modern Architect

Norman M. Giller was one of South Florida’s pre-eminent modern architects. Headquartered throughout his career in Miami Beach, Giller nonetheless received contracts around the nation and throughout the Western Hemisphere. Giller was born in Jacksonville, Florida, in 1918, but spent his youth moving between Miami Beach and Washington, D.C. After developing an interest in architecture in high school, he was hired by a Washington, D.C. architect. By 1941, when Giller was 23 years old, he was recruited for an architectural position with the United States Navy prior to the United States entry into the Second World War and was stationed at the Key West Naval Base. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Giller was moved to the Jacksonville district office of the Army Corps of Engineers to contribute to the design of military bases in Florida and Georgia.¹⁷ At this point, Giller had not received a bachelor’s degree in architecture, but as part of his military position, he was required to receive one, and did so from the University of Florida in 1945. After graduation and discharge from the armed services,

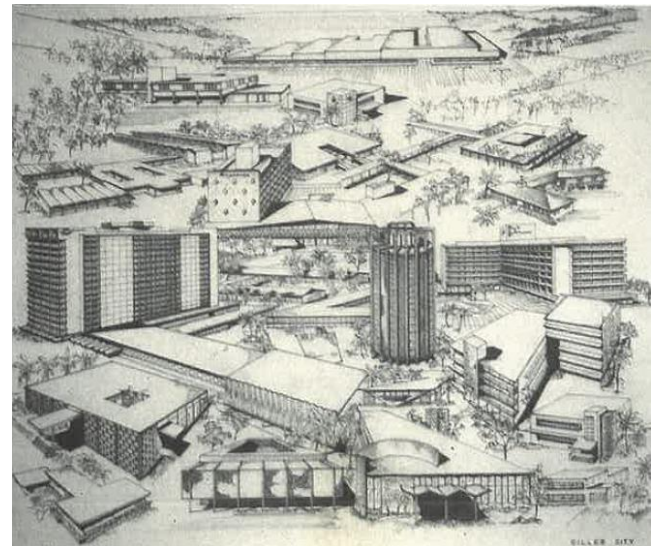


Figure 6: A drawing entitled “Giller City” depicting the breadth of Norman M. Giller’s architectural work. In this picture can be seen hotels, motels, houses, apartment buildings, and office buildings, each designed in a modernist style. The Giller Building is located on the right side of the image, near the middle. Source: Designing the Good Life

¹⁶ City of Miami Beach Planning Department, *Miami Modern Architecture on the Beach, 1945-1965*, MiMoOnTheBeach.com, <http://www.mimoonthebeach.com/pdfs/MiMoTutorial.pdf>, Accessed November 3, 2017.

¹⁷ Norman M. Giller, AIA, *An Adventure in Architecture*, (Virgo Press, Miami Beach, 1976), 23-24.

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Giller opened up his own architectural firm in Miami Beach, the city he considered his hometown.

While leading his architectural firm, Giller spearheaded many innovations in design and construction in South Florida. Perhaps most importantly, he was among the first architects to use central air conditioning in the tropical, humid South Florida climate. Giller had been hired to design housing for a South Florida Air Force base. The regulations followed by the military required architects to install heating units in each building, a feature perhaps unnecessary in South Florida, while not requiring cooling. Giller found a device which both heated and cooled buildings for a comparable cost, and convinced the Air Force to substitute those units for the traditional heaters.¹⁸



Figure 7: Norman M. Giller’s Thunderbird Motel, built in 1955 along “Motel Row.” This motel was designed to be luxurious, with its most significant feature being its entrance lobby. The building was designed to be seen from the road, situated along the eastern side of Collins Avenue. When a driver approaches the building from the south, the entrance obscures the motel rooms in the back of the building, providing privacy to the guests. Source: Postcard

Uploaded to Flickr by Cardboard America

Giller is perhaps most notable for his innovations in the field of motels. Starting in the 1950s, Giller was hired to design motels in a relatively-undeveloped area miles to the north of Miami Beach, which is today known as Sunny Isles Beach. The land in this area was inexpensive, but was easily within driving range of the tourist attractions to the South, providing a perfect area for the cost-conscious travelers who the motels would be marketed to. The beachside strip where dozens of motels would be constructed was quickly nicknamed “Motel Row,” and Giller became known as a luxury motel designer, receiving commissions throughout the country from Florida to Arkansas to California.¹⁹

By 1957, when Giller designed and built the Giller Building, his firm was the tenth largest architectural firm in the nation by volume, as ranked by *Architectural Forum*. In that year, the firm had \$101 million worth of ongoing projects, despite having a much smaller staff than many of the other firms on the top of the list. By that time, Giller had established a local and national reputation as a designer of hotels and motels, with a keen insight into the modern amenities that drew customers to houses of lodging.²⁰

In the following decade, with a reputation for modern architecture, Giller’s firm was contracted to design government buildings nationally and internationally. Giller continued to design military and civic installations, including buildings at the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, now named the Kennedy Space Center. Giller was heavily involved with the Alliance for Progress program, an initiative started by United States president John F. Kennedy to encourage economic partnerships between the United States and Latin America. Giller designed diplomatic, educational, and health buildings in Panama,

¹⁸ Eric P. Nash & Randall C. Robinson Jr., *MiMo: Miami Modern Revealed*, (Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 2004), 92.

¹⁹ Norman M. Giller, AIA, *An Adventure in Architecture*, (Virgo Press, Miami Beach, 1976), 41.

²⁰ Eric P. Nash & Randall C. Robinson Jr., *MiMo: Miami Modern Revealed*, (Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 2004), 92.

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Colombia, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Brazil. His architecture was used as symbolic of the American ethos and way of life in an international setting, intended to represent the country and modern capitalism in the midst of the Cold War.²¹ Giller passed away in 2008, and was active and practicing with his firm until the early 2000s.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE

The Giller Building is an iconic example of the Miami Modern architectural style. According to Eric P. Nash and Randall C. Robinson, Jr., Miami Modern (MiMo) is “a manifestation of a dream: post-World War II American society’s faith in progress and a future that rolled ahead endlessly like a shiny new stretch of Interstate.”²² Designed by one of the architects who eventually defined the Miami Modern architectural style, the Giller Building is an expression of the design philosophies and considerations which characterized MiMo.

Most construction in South Florida takes the heat and humidity natural to the environment into account. The MiMo style aims to maximize the comfort of a building’s inhabitants, not only as they enter or exit the building, but also during the workday. For this reason, the Giller Building’s projecting cantilevered sunshades (or “eyebrows”) are a defining feature of the MiMo style. The eyebrows provide shade for the windows, while allowing for the sun to brightly shine into the office building. Since they were so thin, occupants of the building could maximize their available wall space. At the same time, the building’s three balconies and the open roof, which is accessible from the fifth and sixth floors of the building, allow for building occupants to take in the air and breeze of coastal Miami Beach.²³

The Miami Modern style is also characterized by the use of vivid color, a tropical expression of excitement and effervescence. In the case of the Giller Building, which was designed to be mostly plain and white in terms of coloring, the cascade of color present on the southern façade’s central tower offers the type of effusive optimism that was characteristic of MiMo. Made of glass tile imported from Italy which had only recently become available to the United States, this central tower presents passers-by with a lasting impression, offering onlookers the spirit generally applied to the resorts and motels built in the MiMo style to an office building that was a place of business for not only an architectural firm but also its many renters.²⁴ Also on the entrance façade, the interior floating staircase, a traditional Modern architectural feature, was intended to titillate and fascinate viewers, hopefully inspiring them to walk inside and examine the stairs in detail.²⁵

²¹ Norman M. Giller, AIA, *An Adventure in Architecture*, (Virgo Press, Miami Beach, 1976), 82-83.
²² Eric P. Nash & Randall C. Robinson Jr., *MiMo: Miami Modern Revealed*, (Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 2004), 9.
²³ Norman M. Giller and Sarah Giller Nelson, *Designing the Good Life: Norman M. Giller and the Development of Miami Modernism*, (University Press of Florida, Gainesville, 2007), 93.
²⁴ Eric P. Nash & Randall C. Robinson Jr., *MiMo: Miami Modern Revealed*, (Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 2004), 153.
²⁵ Norman M. Giller and Sarah Giller Nelson, *Designing the Good Life: Norman M. Giller and the Development of Miami Modernism*, (University Press of Florida, Gainesville, 2007), 93.

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The Giller Building serves as an excellent example of the Miami Modern architectural style, applied to an office building which combines the logistical and decorative elements of the style for climate and attractiveness. The building is situated at the very western end of Miami Beach, one of the first buildings seen by visitors driving across the Julia Tuttle Causeway, and serves to welcome visitors by showing them a style representative of the city's personality and culture.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Section number 10 Page 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

41 ST BUSINESS SUB PB 34-92
LOTS 1 & 2 BLK 8
LOT SIZE 11057 SQUARE FEET
OR 17374-0044 0296 5

Comprising the entire lot bounded by 41st Street to the south, Alton Road to the west, Nautilus Drive to the northwest, property folio 02-3222-027-0001 to the north, and property folio 02-3222-030-0001 to the east.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The above property description contains all of the historic resources associated with the Giller Building.

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Section number Photos Page 1

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND SUBJECTS

Photograph Subject: Giller Building

Photograph Address: 975 W 41st Street, Miami Beach (Miami-Dade County), Florida

Photographer: Max Adriel Imberman

Date Taken: September 1, 2017

- 1:** Central Colorful Glass-Tile Tower, Facing North
- 2:** Main Entrance, Facing Northeast
- 3:** Southern Façade Balconies, Facing Northeast
- 4:** Eastern Façade, Facing Northwest
- 5:** Six-story Addition, Facing North
- 6:** Eastern Façade Exit, Facing Northwest
- 7:** Southern Façade of Addition, Facing South
- 8:** Southern Façade, Facing Southwest
- 9:** Western Façade Close-up, Facing North
- 10:** Full View of Southern Façade From Across 41st Street, Facing North
- 11:** First-Floor Corridor, Facing West
- 12:** First-Floor Floating Staircase, Facing Southeast
- 13:** Back End of Colorful Tower Feature on Roof, Facing South
- 14:** Top of Six-Story Addition on Roof, Facing Northeast

Giller Building

975 West 41st Street
Miami Beach, Miami-Dade Co.
Florida

Lat./Long. Coordinates:
25.831481 -80.135452

UTM:
17R 586667 2855301

Datum: WGS84

Legend

 Giller Building

Date: 10/23/2017

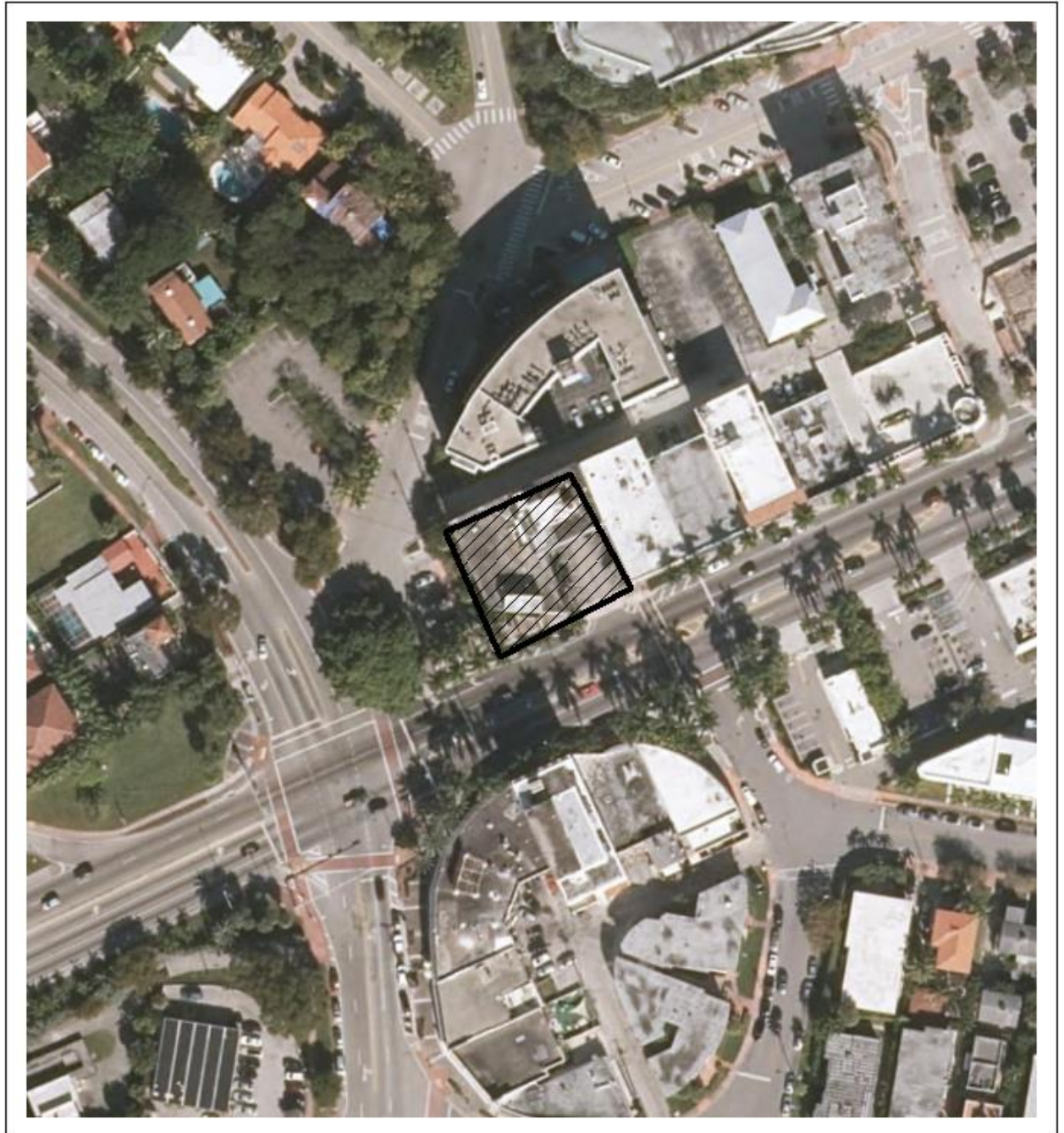
N

1:1,500

0 62.5 125 250 Feet

0 15 30 60 Meters

Basemap Source: Source: Esri,
DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar
Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS,
USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping,
Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo,
and the GIS User Community



Giller Building

975 West 41st Street
Miami Beach, Miami-Dade Co.
Florida

Lat./Long. Coordinates:
25.813481 -80.135452

UTM:
17R 586667 2855301

Datum: WGS84

Legend

 Giller Building

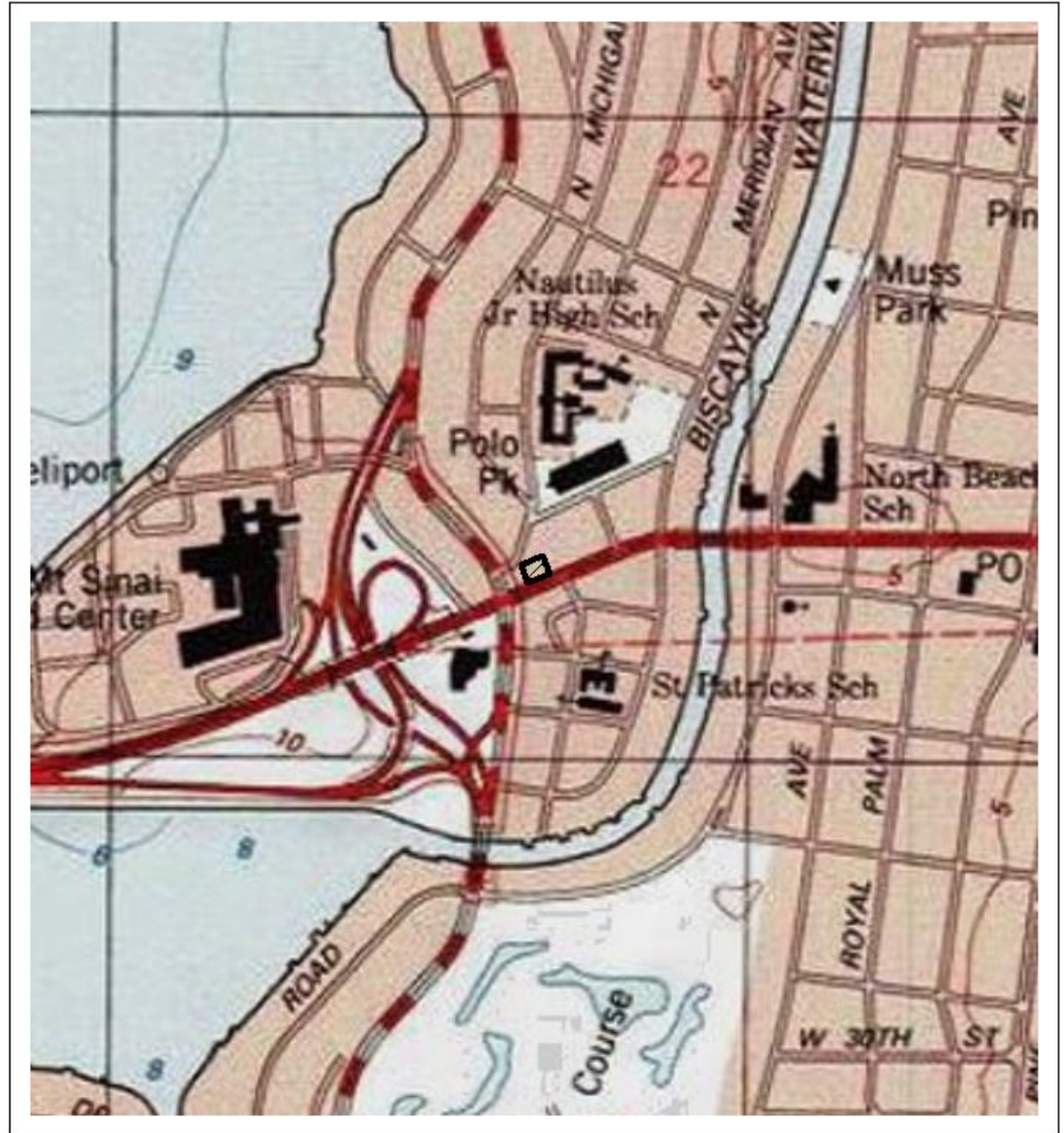
Date: 10/23/2017

1:10,000

0 425 850 1,700 Feet

0 105 210 420 Meters

Basemap Source: 2013 National Geographic Society, i-cubed





GILLER BUILDING



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GILLER
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 2/20/2018 Date of Pending List: 3/14/2018 Date of 16th Day: 3/29/2018 Date of 45th Day: 4/6/2018 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 3/29/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

Acosta, Ruben A.

From: Tackett, Deborah <DeborahTackett@miamibeachfl.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 26, 2018 12:08 PM
To: Acosta, Ruben A.
Cc: Seiberling, James; Imberman, Max A.
Subject: RE: NR Nominations for CLG review

Hi Ruben,

I have reviewed the reports and have no edits. I agree with your analysis that both of the properties are eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. I had prepared a resolution in support of the application to discuss with the City's HPB, but our January meeting ran 12 hours, ending about 9:00 p.m. and we did not have a chance to have the Board discuss to vote on the resolutions.

I was planning on trying again at the February 13th meeting, which should be a more manageable agenda. I understand that the timing is past the 60 days, but wanted to see if you would like me to forward any resolution of the Board to you that may be approved on February 13th. Let me know if that will work.

Hope you have a great weekend!

MIAMIBEACH

Debbie Tackett, *Chief of Historic Preservation*

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, FL 33139

Tel: 305-673-7000 Ext 6467/ Fax: 305-673-7559 / www.miamibeachfl.gov

We are committed to providing excellent public service and safety to all who live, work and play in our vibrant, tropical, historic community.

From: Acosta, Ruben A. [mailto:Ruben.Acosta@dos.myflorida.com]
Sent: Thursday, January 25, 2018 5:42 PM
To: Tackett, Deborah
Cc: Seiberling, James; Imberman, Max A.
Subject: RE: NR Nominations for CLG review

Debbie,

I am following up with you regarding two National Register nominations that we sent you back in November for the local historic preservation commission to review. I was wondering if the commission had an opportunity to review these nominations, and if they agreed that the properties are eligible for the National Register. My National Register Review Board meeting is in two weeks and I would like to let my board members know the status of the local reviews.

Thanks for your help!

Ruben

From: Tackett, Deborah [mailto:DeborahTackett@miamibeachfl.gov]
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2017 1:12 PM
To: Acosta, Ruben A. <Ruben.Acosta@dos.myflorida.com>

Cc: Seiberling, James <JamesSeiberling@miamibeachfl.gov>

Subject: RE: NR Nominations for CLG review

Thanks Ruben,

I received the nominations, and will get back to you with any comments ASAP.

MIAMIBEACH

Debbie Tackett, *Chief of Historic Preservation*

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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From: Acosta, Ruben A. [<mailto:Ruben.Acosta@dos.myflorida.com>]

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2017 5:10 PM

To: Tackett, Deborah

Subject: FW: NR Nominations for CLG review

Deborah,

I forgot to attach the letter we mailed today as notice for these nominations. I have attached it to this email.

Ruben

From: Acosta, Ruben A.

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2017 5:07 PM

To: Miami Beach--Deborah Tackett <dtackett@miamibeachfl.gov>

Subject: NR Nominations for CLG review

Deborah,

Attached are two National Register nominations for review by the City of Miami Beach historic preservation board—one for Public Store 91 on Dade Blvd, and the other for the Giller Building on 41st St. cemeWe plan to present this nomination before the Florida National Register Review Board on Thursday, February 8, 2018. Please have your local historic preservation board review the application and send us a letter stating if the board agrees the property meets the National Register criteria for eligibility and their support for listing, or if the board disagrees, and any comments you or the board may have. Your letter will be shared with the National Register review board as part of its meeting materials.

If you have any questions regarding the nomination or the role of the CLG in the National Register process, do not hesitate to call or email me.

Ruben

Ruben A. Acosta

Survey and Registration Supervisor | Bureau of Historic Preservation | Division of Historical Resources | Florida Department of State | 500 South Bronough Street | Tallahassee, FL 32399 | 850.245.6364 |

Ruben.Acosta@dos.myflorida.com www.flheritage.com



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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RICK SCOTT
Governor



KEN DETZNER
Secretary of State

February 16, 2018

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief,
National Register of Historic Places
Mail Stop 7228
1849 C St, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **Giller Building (FMSF#: 8DA15235), in Dade County**, to the National Register of Historic Places. The related materials (digital images, maps, and site plan) are included.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (850) 245-6364 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Ruben A. Acosta
Supervisor, Survey & Registration
Bureau of Historic Preservation

RAA/raa

Enclosures