



1086

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 VAGABOND MOTEL

other names/site number Vagabond Sunshine Motel, DA13723

2. Location

street & number 7301 Biscayne Blvd N/A not for publication

city or town Miami N/A vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Miami-Dade code 025 zip code 33137

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.)

Robert F. Bendas
Signature of certifying official/Title

10/24/14
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources
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

Jay Sulby

12-29-2014

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)

DOMESTIC/Hotel

COMMERCE/Restaurant

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Hotel

COMMERCE/Restaurant

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Miami Modern

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Stucco

roof Tar and Gravel

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

1953

Significant Dates

1953

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Arch: Swartburg, Robert

Blder: Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

#

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	5	8	1	7	8	7	2	8	5	8	5	4	3
	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 Gary A. Appel and Jennifer Warren

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date October 2014

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 Googie Enterprises, LLC

street & number c/o Gary Appel, 4770 Biscayne Blvd, Ste 1100 telephone 305-576-0033

city or town Miami state Florida zip code 33137

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.

**National Park Service NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section number 7 Page 1VAGABOND MOTEL
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
DESCRIPTION**SUMMARY**

The Vagabond Motel (Photo 1) was constructed along busy Biscayne Boulevard in 1953 during the postwar motel boom in Miami. The U-shaped property surrounds a courtyard containing a pool and parking area and occupies an entire block between NE 73rd and 74th Streets. The concrete and stucco building includes many Miami Modern details including covered exterior corridors along all three wings, cantilevered 'floating' stairs, geometric detailing, a fountain with nautical-themed sculpture, and an aerodynamic porte-cochere. Due to a long period of decline and lack of investment in the area, the property has survived in remarkably intact condition. The Vagabond retains integrity of design, location, materials, workmanship and association. However, the integrity of the building has been compromised due to deterioration. The recent reinvestment along the Boulevard and the present rehabilitation at the Vagabond has allowed this integrity of feeling to be recaptured.

SETTING

Biscayne Boulevard is a part of U.S. Highway 1, which runs north-south from Maine to the Florida Keys. The area of the Boulevard surrounding the Vagabond Hotel saw a sudden boom in the postwar years as the advent of the private automobile brought tourists down U.S. 1 to Miami in droves. Motels and gas stations sprang up along both sides of the Boulevard to accommodate these visitors. The motels vied for attention with flashy neon signs and striking designs. The Vagabond sits on the east side of Biscayne with its U-shape opening towards the Boulevard. The immediate neighborhood enjoyed a prosperous period of success; however, by the mid-1970s, the Boulevard was suffering from decay and destruction caused by urban renewal.¹ The benefit of this period of disinvestment was the preservation of architectural defining features, although it was more by neglect than by intent. As Miami Modern architecture aged and began to gain respect as a style with significance of its own, the concentration of significant resources in the area was recognized. A need to protect these historic motels was identified as some property owners called for the demolition of the dilapidated buildings. As a prime example of the style, the Vagabond Motel was the first example of historic Miami Modern architecture chosen for historic designation and in 2003, the City of Miami designated it a historic landmark.² Three years later, the significance of the entire area was recognized when the City designated the Miami Modern (MiMo)/Biscayne Boulevard Historic District.³ In the ensuing decade, the district has steadily improved with new restaurants and businesses opening within both new construction and rehabilitated historic buildings. This turnaround has been buoyed by the strong historic neighborhoods located just to the east of Biscayne Boulevard.

Detailed Description of Rehabilitation Work

The Vagabond Motel was constructed in 1953 by famed architect B. Robert Swartburg and is part of the motel row that grew up along Biscayne Boulevard post-World War II. The Motels along this strip catered to vacationers arriving down U.S. Highway 1 in their personal automobiles and were enormously popular in their

¹ Nash, Eric P. and Randall C. Robinson Jr. *MiMo Miami Modernism Revealed*. (San Francisco: Chrnnicle Books), 2003, 26.

² City of Miami Planning Department. "Vagabond Motel Designation Report." Histone Preservation Division, 2003.

³ City of Miami Planning Department. "MiMo/Biscayne Boulevard Historic District Report." Historic Preservation Division. 2006.

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day. By the 1990s the area had become rundown and the Boulevard was known for prostitution and drug activity. By the first decade of the 21st century, Miami's version of mid-20th century architecture, Miami Modern ("MiMo"), was obtaining national recognition. In 2006 the City of Miami, recognizing the architectural value of the buildings on the Boulevard, created a local historic district and designated the Vagabond Motel as a contributing resource in the district. As the district began to slowly improve, a former owner attempted a renovation that was ultimately unsuccessful due in part to the recent financial recession and the cost of undertaking the needed substantial rehabilitation. After completing the demolition phase of the project in 2010, the former owner lost the property to the City of Miami which immediately secured the property by boarding up the windows and filling the swimming pool with debris.

General Appearance

The Vagabond Motel retains its character-defining U-shaped form with a central courtyard for both parking and recreation (Photo 2). Beyond their first bays, which are oriented toward Biscayne Boulevard, the north and south wings of the motel are nearly mirror images of one another. The rectangular wings have gabled roofs covered with flat cement tiles which extend over the outdoor corridors and are supported by painted brick columns. The roof is framed in wood and the walls are masonry.

East Wing

The two-story east wing of the building is the center of the U-shape and is divided into three distinct sections. The center is defined by a squared concrete arch rising above the roof line with rectangular cutouts piercing the support columns. It features covered exterior corridors on the courtyard-facing elevation on both the first and second floors. Originally, "VAGABOND MOTEL" was spelled out along the parapet in a Googie style font, but this signage was missing at the time of the renovation. It has now been restored (Photo 3). Open air corridors along the first and second levels are enclosed by concrete balustrades with a rectangular pattern (Photo 4). This design continues on the railings of the two sets of concrete stairs that flank the central bay (Photo 5). The main face of the west elevation is smooth stucco on both levels with doors and windows. The original stairs, railings and pipe columns were retained, preserved, and protected. The rear elevation that faces N.E. 6th Court (Photos 6-7) is characterized by two floors of mostly single windows with simple wall piercings that formerly held air conditioning units. The last bay on the north and south is recessed. There is an overhanging roof on both sides with a central parapet rising above the roofline. An eyebrow is found above the four second story windows in the central section. The guestrooms each contain a door with an adjacent double window opening onto the covered open-air corridor.

North Wing

The northwest corner of the building is truncated with a flat wall featuring a stone sculpture of three women rising out of stone sculpted waves before a seashell backdrop with a fountain below (Photo 8). The fountain is no longer operable and has been painted white. The sculpture was restored to its original appearance, including materials and colors. The restoration work was based on photographic documentation. The western portion of this wing, which faces flush onto Biscayne Boulevard, has a flat roof and is characterized by a boxed row of seven windows with three aluminum "hubcap" accents above that serve to illuminate this elevation (Photo 9).

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A stone-faced trapezoidal projection rises from the southern end and features a vertical row of square cut-outs (Photo 10). The south side of the end of the elevation features an office section. Sculpted metal posts support a flat circular roof attached to the corner of the office section of the building. A sign bearing the word "Office" in simple open-work letters is found at the edge of the circular roof. The remainder of the north wing is fairly simple as it is primarily visible from the interior courtyard. It has a side gabled roof covered in flat cement tiles which extends over the outdoor walkway and is supported by painted brick columns. The site is slightly sloped and to account for this, the corridor ascends two steps about halfway along its length. The roof height steps up at this point as well, creating a second, slightly higher gable. A wide masonry column with three rectangular cut-outs stands at the north wing meets the east wing (Photo 11). At the junction of the north and east wings a masonry wall rises above the one story gabled roofline to the two story height (Photo 12). This wall is ornamented only with a vent and is topped with a shed roof that angles down to the north. The north elevation of this wing is very simple and unornamented.

South Wing

The south wing mirrors the north with the same side-gables, roofing tiles, columns, step-up, simple rear elevation and materials. The restaurant originally occupied the southwest corner, thus this area is highly stylized. It has an irregular shape full of geometric angles with walls of windows, stucco and stone veneer. The southwest corner of the building faces onto Biscayne Boulevard (Photo 13) and has an irregular ground plan full of geometric shapes and angles with stucco and stone veneer walls. Originally there were two main signs along Biscayne Boulevard. One was a free-standing sign in a traffic island by the driveway. It had a blue cloud-shaped light box with "VAGABOND MOTEL" spelled out in Google style font and metal truss-like support posts. When the freestanding sign was removed, the "VAGABOND MOTEL" signage was recreated at the rooftop frieze in the center of the two-story section of the building. A new sign recreating the original was placed in approximately the same location. A V-shaped column of painted Roman brick rises above the roofline on the southwest corner and supports a non-historic "Vagabond" sign. Neon-lit stars trail down the side of the sign. The words "VAGABOND MOTEL" also appear in the frieze of the fountain above the sculpture of the three women. The roof is flat with a parapet rising above a protruding eyebrow, which wraps around the courtyard facing porte-cochere whose roof is supported by metal pipe columns or "beanpoles" (Photo 14). The porte-cochere shelters a door that is flanked by plate glass windows above which are clerestory windows. Beyond the porte-cochere, the eyebrow continues around the eastern side. All of these features were repaired, restored, or replaced in the renovation work. The roof is flat with a parapet rising above a protruding cantilevered eyebrow. This eyebrow north over the driveway to create an entry porte-cochere. The ends are supported by V-shaped pipe columns with saucers on top (Photo 15). The edge of the porte-cochere roof swoops upward in an aerodynamic manner.

Swimming Pool

Originally an in-ground swimming pool with tile mosaics of dolphins and a mermaid occupied the eastern end of the Vagabond Motel courtyard. The city in-filled the pool to secure the abandoned property. The fill was removed and the swimming pool restored to the original dimensions (Photos 16-17) and new mosaic images similar to the original were installed on the bottom of the pool (Photo 18). The pool deck was historically landscaped and enclosed on the west by a low serpentine Roman brick wall. The original open air cabana

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structure that occupied the west side of the pool was reconstructed and the pool area was landscaped in a manner compatible to the character of the property

Guest Rooms (Photos 19-21)

The original windows in the guest rooms were jalousie, but were replaced with fixed or 1/1-light metal sash windows fitted within their original openings. The Florida Building Code required that the original windows be replaced with new impact rated windows; therefore, depending on location, the windows were replaced with fixed, awning, slider hung, or slider windows. All of the doors were replaced to match their original configurations. The doors and windows of the guest rooms were replaced and remain in their original locations. The rooms retain their original dimensions with some rooms adjoining. Where terrazzo floor existed, it was retained and repaired where necessary. The guest room closest to the store on the north wing was turned into a new reception area. A ground level guest room on the east wing has been converted into a gym. The interior of the northwest corner of the motel originally contained a gift shop and a restroom. The space was slightly reconfigured to be used as a salon. The main office and restaurant area, located in the south wing, have been returned to original purposes.

Vagabond Motel Officially Reopens

The restored Vagabond Motel officially reopened on August 23, 2014, with the cutting of a ribbon by Miami Mayor Tomas Regalado and the serving of drinks and food to specially invited guests at the newly constructed outdoor bar (Photos 22-23). Two arching jets of water at the corners of the azure swimming pool keep a steady gurgle going. Palms and an angular canopy shade the expansive bar from the summer sun. On three sides, guest rooms brought back to the jazzy pizazz of a bygone era look out into the lush pool garden. The restaurant, still being fitted out is scheduled for opening in October 2014.⁴

⁴ Miami Herald, August 23, 2014.

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SIGNIFICANCE**SUMMARY**

The Vagabond Motel is significant at the local level under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a distinctive example of the evolution of modern architecture in during the post-World War II era. This example embodies the characteristics of 1950s roadside motels that sprang up in Florida in the years following the war. The Vagabond is an excellent example of the local Miami Modern (MiMo) architectural movement that emerged as architects in South Florida began to adapt postwar sensibilities and materials to the state's subtropical climate. The Vagabond was designed by prominent local architect, Robert Swartburg, who designed many important buildings in Miami and Miami Beach over a thirty-five year career.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

In 1925, Pasadena real estate developer, architect and businessman Arthur S. Heineman coined the word "motel" (a combination of motor and hotel) to describe his roadside home-away-from-home giving to the Milestone Mo-tel in San Luis Obispo.⁵ As the origin of its name implies, the motel was created to serve the motoring public. At the turn of the century, car ownership had been attainable only by the elite, with a "popular" model costing \$4,000 (about 7 times the average yearly salary).⁶ Then in 1905, Henry Ford introduced the Model T. In the 19 years that it was produced, fifteen million were sold. The impact on the American lifestyle cannot be overstated. "It democratized mobility, opened up the suburbs, brought the farmer to town, emptied the churches on Sunday... and moved courtship off the front porch and into the back seat."⁷ With the growth of the automobile into the middle class, the travelling public began to move solely away from train and bus travel and increasingly opted for the freedom and flexibility afforded them when driving their own car, and those travelers needed a place to sleep. The number of motels increased in proportion to the number of licensed personal automobiles. In 1925, there were an estimated 3,000 motels in the United States. By 1939, despite the Great Depression, the number of motels had grown to over 13,500.⁸ Due to World War II and the resulting gas rationing, the 1940s saw a slowing in both automobile sales and all types of construction, including motels.

When the War ended, Americans were ready to shake off the years of restraint and sacrifice and the United States entered a new era of prosperity and optimism. The Interstate Highway Act of 1956 heralded a boom in road construction as the beginnings of the modern interstate system turned isolated farming towns into easily accessed suburbs which were quickly occupied by the newly affluent who wanted to escape city living, while often still working in the city.⁹ The pace of car sales picked up along with the economy, and the automobile industry raced to get new models onto the market. General Motors, the biggest name in the car business, led the

⁵ Sam Watters. "Milestone Mo-tel, California's first motel, was a landmark design" *Los Angeles Times*, July 2, 2011.

⁶ Jakie, John A. and Keith A Sculle. *Motoring: The Highway Experience in America*. (Athens, GA: University of Georgia July 2, 2011) 11.

⁷ Jakie, John A. and Keith A Sculle. *Motoring: The Highway Experience in America*. (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 9.

⁸ Peter Marsh and Peter Collett, *Driving for Passion: The Psychology of the Car*. (Boston, MA: Faber and Faber, 1986), 34.

⁹ John A. Jakie, Keith A. Sculle and Jefferson S. Rogers. *The Motel in America*. (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 20.

⁹ *The Motel in America*, 80, 288.

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industry by updating the look of their models to allude to speed, including wrap around windshields, elaborate tailfins, tail lights modeled after rocket exhaust pipes, and dashboards that resembled cockpits.¹⁰ By 1950, 45 million motor vehicles were registered in the United States.¹¹ Post-war affluence was manifested in many ways. Incomes increased dramatically over pre-war levels; new housing laws made homeownership more easily attainable; workers tended to earn an annual paid vacation, and by 1950, middle class people began spending twice as much on entertainment as they did on rent. "Leisure became an industry."¹² With money in their pockets, a car in the driveway, and a week of paid vacation, the middle class hit the road in unprecedented numbers.

As a result, motel construction again boomed, jumping from 25,874 motels in 1948 to 60,500 in 1959.¹³ The travelling automobile driver was looking for a different kind of accommodation different from the turn-of-the-century tourist. He wanted convenient access to major roads, somewhere to park near his room and perhaps an interesting site nearby. Motels provided on-site parking and featured exterior corridors, allowing visitors to park right by their own front door. Often, early motels had a U-shape, which created a courtyard for parking, and often included a pool in warmer climates. Simple I and L-shapes were also common - though these often reserved space "for complete courtyard configurations should the motel prove sufficiently profitable."¹⁴ The use of porte-cocheres by the office were also common to both shelter visitors from the elements as they registered and to visually show them the way to the front door. Motels often displayed "giant signs that dominated the motel grounds visually... intended to provide a vertical dimension to an otherwise low-to-the-ground building configuration. Located at the driveway entrance, the sign carried iconography symbolic of the motel's quality and range of services."¹⁵ In busy urban areas, these signs vied for attention with exotic or creative names and the use of bright neon along crowded motel rows, or "strips."

Though this scenario played out all across the country, motels flourished in sunny Florida and in Miami in particular. In fact, the reliable high volume of people driving to Florida has historically stimulated motel construction along Florida-leading routes in neighboring states.¹⁶ As a part of US Highway 1, which stretches from the state of Maine to Key West, Florida, Miami's Biscayne Boulevard was the ideal location for motels catering to the automobile-driving visitor. The warm weather attracted vacationers year-round, some of whom had been stationed for training in the Miami areas during World War II and returned to vacation with their families after the war.¹⁷ With such easy access from points north and so much appeal as a vacation destination, motels like the Vagabond proliferated along Biscayne Boulevard in this era. The names of these motels were advertisements in themselves, chosen to appeal to the nation's evolving sense of wanderlust and to evoke travel to tropical, exotic, and even celestial locations. Among them were: the 7-Seas, SeaCove (demolished), South Pacific, Shalimar, The Sinbad, Stardust, Saturn and the Vagabond. With the many motels competing for guests,

¹⁰ Motoring: The Highway Experience in America, 22-24.

¹¹ Ibid., 19.

¹² Ibid., 80.

¹³ Ibid., 20.

¹⁴ Ibid., 47.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 219.

¹⁷ MiMo Miami Modernism Revealed, 31.

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potential patrons were attracted by large brightly colored neon signs with whimsical shapes and lettering set atop pylon signs.¹⁸

Miami Modern Style

In Miami, the 1950s roadside motel form melded with the local expression of the Modern movement in architecture resulting distinctive architecture that we know today as Miami Modern or MiMo. These buildings featured all of the characteristics found in 1950s motels around the country. The proximity to highways and tourist locations, exterior corridors with porte-cocheres, ample "front door" parking, courtyards with a pool, exotic names, and bold colorful signage, but they also exhibit architectural detailing that is characteristically Miami Modern in style. MiMo buildings are found throughout the city of Miami and neighboring Miami Beach, with this section of Biscayne Boulevard considered particularly significant for its high concentration of intact MiMo buildings, especially motels. In 2006, the City of Miami, recognizing the value of these resources, designated the MiMo/Biscayne Boulevard Historic District. MiMo is less a strict architectural style and more the adaptation of elements of the Modern/International, Streamline Modern and Art Deco styles to contemporary buildings by local architects. "The common denominator is the time immediately after World War II and the subtropical environs of South Florida."¹⁹

What became known as Mid-Century Modern architecture emerged in the United States after World War II and "symbolized a... shiny new age of peace and prosperity... [with an] emphasis on rational and efficient building technology... yet not flashy or desirous of individual expression."²⁰ A strict adherence to the restrained design principles of Modernism would never do in post-war Miami where excess was king, so local architects set about experimenting with and adapting it.

MiMo buildings make use of some International/Modern forms, materials and principles, but also reflect the influences of the tropical heat and sun, and the national fascination with space, speed and aerodynamic motion. MiMo architects used Modernist geometric forms, cantilevered stairways, plate glass and ribbon windows. Modern materials included stone and slumped and/or Roman brick.²¹ Prior to World War II, the most popular architectural styles in southern Florida were Art Deco, Art Moderne, and Streamline Moderne, as adapted to the local climate. These buildings made use of decorative architectural features that offered sun-protection, such as eyebrows over windows, boxed windows, deep shaded porches and floor plans that encouraged cross-breezes. MiMo architects took those successful adaptations and applied them to more Modern building types. Brise-soleils, eyebrows, porte-cocheres, boxed windows, overhanging cantilevered rooflines and open-air floor plans are all typical sun protection devices found in MiMo buildings. Marine imagery was also a locally popular design element that transitioned from pre-to-post-War building styles and is regularly found in MiMo buildings. Common MiMo details that reflect the American preoccupation with speed and the space race include boomerangs, saucer shapes, space-imagery (planets, stars), fins and/or wings and aerodynamic shapes. Other common MiMo features include metal pipe columns or "beanpoles", cut-out patterns, saw-tooth floor plans, the use of carefree lettering and fonts, and pylons.

¹⁸ City of Miami Planning Department. "MiMo/Biscayne Boulevard Historic District Report." Historic Preservation Division. 2006.

¹⁹ Nash and Robinson, 9.

²⁰ A History of American Architecture, 263.

²¹ Nash and Robinson, 40-51.

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SIGNIFICANCE**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Vagabond exemplifies all the characteristics of the 1950s roadside motel. It caters to the automobile-driving visitor in every way, beginning with its location along Miami's busiest highway, which was the primary north-south route through the city at the time. Further, the Vagabond features prominent neon-lit signage right on the Boulevard (originally, the property had two such signs). A porte-cochere provided arriving guests wishing to dine in the restaurant shelter from the weather while motel valets park the car. The motel also had long exterior corridors so guests could move about from one part of the facility to another. The Vagabond's common U-shaped form enclosing a courtyard with a pool and parking was also typical for motels of this era, and of course the very name 'Vagabond' evokes a sense of wanderlust and exploration.

The Vagabond is considered among the finest examples of a MiMo motel in the district due to its exterior open-air corridor plan, use of geometric pylons and cut-outs, overhanging and shed roof lines, cantilevered 'floating staircases', bold signage with neon lettering, Roman brick, boxed ribbon windows, porte-cochere, dolphin fountain and mosaics, beanpoles with saucers on top, and open air corridors. The dramatic frontispiece of the main west facade is a major visual focal point of the motel. Its rectangular arch which rises above the roofline frames the two-story central structure and presents the viewer with a whimsical use of nontraditional letters that spell out Vagabond Motel on the frieze of the arch and the use of "cut outs," hanging panels, and "hubcaps" on the pilasters. The polished metal disks are also represented on the east elevation of the north wing of the motel. The rhythm of the balusters on the railing of the corridors and twin stairways also provide modern, nontraditional visual accents to what otherwise would have been dull functional features. The restored landscaped courtyard at the Vagabond is functional both as a circulation system for pedestrians crossing the property and as an attractive garden feature. The Vagabond exemplifies all the characteristics of the local historic district and was individually recognized as a City of Miami Historic Site in 2003.²²

B. Robert Swartburg

The Vagabond Hotel was designed by local architect B. Robert Swartburg, one of the most prominent and prolific architects of the time in Miami. Swartburg is credited with designing 1,000 buildings in his lifetime. He worked in Florida briefly from 1925 to 1927, then returned to New York, but moved to Miami permanently in 1944. He worked here until his retirement in 1972. The bulk of his work in Miami dates from 1944 until his death in 1975, though he also designed a few local buildings in the mid-1920s as well. Swartburg was educated at Columbia University, the American Academy in Rome, and the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris.²³

Swartburg designed the 1947 local landmark Delano Hotel at Collins Avenue and 17th Street. The Delano was one of the first hotels constructed on Miami Beach in the postwar era and at that time, it was the tallest building in Miami, surpassing the previous record-holder, the landmark Freedom Tower in downtown Miami. In the design of the Delano, Swartburg experiments with adapting emerging Modern sensibilities to the more traditional local forms and landscape. Thus, the Delano presents an interesting hybrid of the Art Deco style and the emerging MiMo style. On its Collins Avenue elevation Swartburg designed a tripartite form with a notably

²² City of Miami Planning Department. "Vagabond Motel Designation Report." Historic Preservation Division, 2003.

²³ "MIMO on the Beach". Visited 19 September 2013. <<http://www.mimoonthebeach.com/Jpdfs/Architect%20Biographies.pdt>>.

**National Park Service NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section number 8 Page 5VAGABOND MOTEL
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
SIGNIFICANCE

vertical thrust and a signature rooftop winged finial, which nicely complimented its Deco neighbors, the National Hotel (Roy France, 1940) and the Ritz Plaza (L. Murray Dixon, 1940) in height, massing, materials and decorative elements. However, on the beach-facing east elevation, Swartburg took a much more Modern approach with an asymmetrical building mass, glass-walled penthouses and a saw-tooth side elevation.²⁴ Swartburg also designed several civic buildings including the Metro Justice Building, Riviera Junior High School and the former Miami Beach Convention Hall; additionally, he adapted the 1930 Miami Beach Library to become the Bass Museum. His work in New York followed no particular style, but his Miami productions followed some variation of the MiMo style.

²⁴ Nash and Robinson, 54-55.

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CONTINUATION SHEET**Section number 9 Page 1VAGABOND MOTEL
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

City of Miami Planning Department. "MiMo/Biscayne Boulevard Historic District Report." Historic Preservation Division, 2006.

City of Miami Planning Department. "Vagabond Motel Designation Report." Historic Preservation Division, 2003.

Jakle, John A. and Keith A Sculle. Motoring: The Highway Experience in America. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2008.

Jakle, John A., Keith A. Sculle, Jefferson S. Rogers. The Motel in America. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

Miami Herald, August 23, 2014.

Marsh, Peter and Peter Collett. Driving for Passion: The Psychology of the Car. Boston, MA: Faber and Faber, 1986.

"MIMO on the Beach". Visited 19 September 2013, <<http://www.rnimoonthebeach.comlpdfs/Architect%20Biographies.pdt>>.

Watters, Sam. "Milestone Mo-tel, California's first motel, was a landmark design" Los Angeles Times, July 2, 2011

**National Park Service NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section number 10 Page 1VAGABOND MOTEL
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

RE PLAT OF BLK 6 OF BELLE MEADE
OF MIAMI SEC I PB 56-27
ALL BLK 6
LOT SIZE IRREGULAR
OR 13627-10590388 I
COC 23966-2388 10 2005 I

Tax Parcel #: 01-3207-034-0010
Township 54S, Section 7, Range 42E

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This developed property occupies the entirety of block 6, bordered by Biscayne Boulevard to the west, NE 74th Street to the north, NE 6th Ct to the east and NE 73rd St to the south. The building and site are all contained within the boundaries of these four streets.

**National Park Service NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section number _____ Photos _____ Page 1VAGABOND MOTEL
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

1. Vagabond Hotel
2. 27301 Biscayne Boulevard (Miami), Miami-Dade County, FL
3. Property Tax Adjusters
4. August 2014
5. 4770 Biscayne Blvd, Suite 1100, Miami FL 33137
6. Aerial Photo, Looking Northeast from Biscayne Boulevard
7. Photo 1 of 23

Items 1-5 are the same for the remaining photos unless indicated

6. Main (West) Facade and Courtyard, Looking East from Biscayne Boulevard
7. Photo 2 of 23

6. Main (West) Facade Detail, Looking East
7. Photo 3 of 23

6. Angle View of Main (West) Facade, Looking Northeast
7. Photo 4 of 23

6. View of the Junction of the North and East Wings, Looking Northeast
7. Photo 5 of 23

6. View of the Rear (East) Elevation of the Motel, Looking Southwest
7. Photo 6 of 23

6. View of the Rear (East) Elevation of the Motel, Looking Northwest
7. Photo 7 of 23

6. Motel Fountain, Looking Southeast
7. Photo 8 of 23

6. View of the West Elevation of the North Wing, Looking Southeast
7. Photo 9 of 23

6. Detail View of the West Elevation of the North Wing, Looking Southeast
7. Photo 10 of 23

6. View of the North Wing from Courtyard, Looking Northeast
7. Photo 11 of 23

**National Park Service NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section number Photos Page 2 VAGABOND MOTEL
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

6. View of the Junction of the East and South Wings, Looking Southeast
7. Photo 12 of 23

6. View of the Motel Restaurant from Biscayne Boulevard, Looking Southeast
7. Photo 13 of 23

6. View of the Main (North) Facade of Motel Restaurant and Sign, Looking South
7. Photo 14 of 23

6. View of the Main (North) Facade and East Wing of Motel Restaurant, Looking South
7. Photo 15 of 23

6. View of the East and South Sides of the Swimming Pool with Lounge Chairs, Looking Southeast
7. Photo 16 of 23

6. View of the North End of the Swimming Pool with Lounge Chairs, Looking Northeast
7. Photo 17 of 23

6. Looking at Mosaics on Bottom of Swimming Pool, Looking Northeast
7. Photo 18 of 23

6. View of the Corridor of the North Wing, Looking West
7. Photo 19 of 23

6. View of Interior of Guest Room in North Wing, Looking South
7. Photo 20 of 23

6. View of Interior of Guest Room in North Wing, Looking North
7. Photo 21 of 23

6. View of Open Air Bar, Looking West
7. Photo 22 of 23

6. Guests at Open Air Bar, Looking East
7. Photo 23 of 23



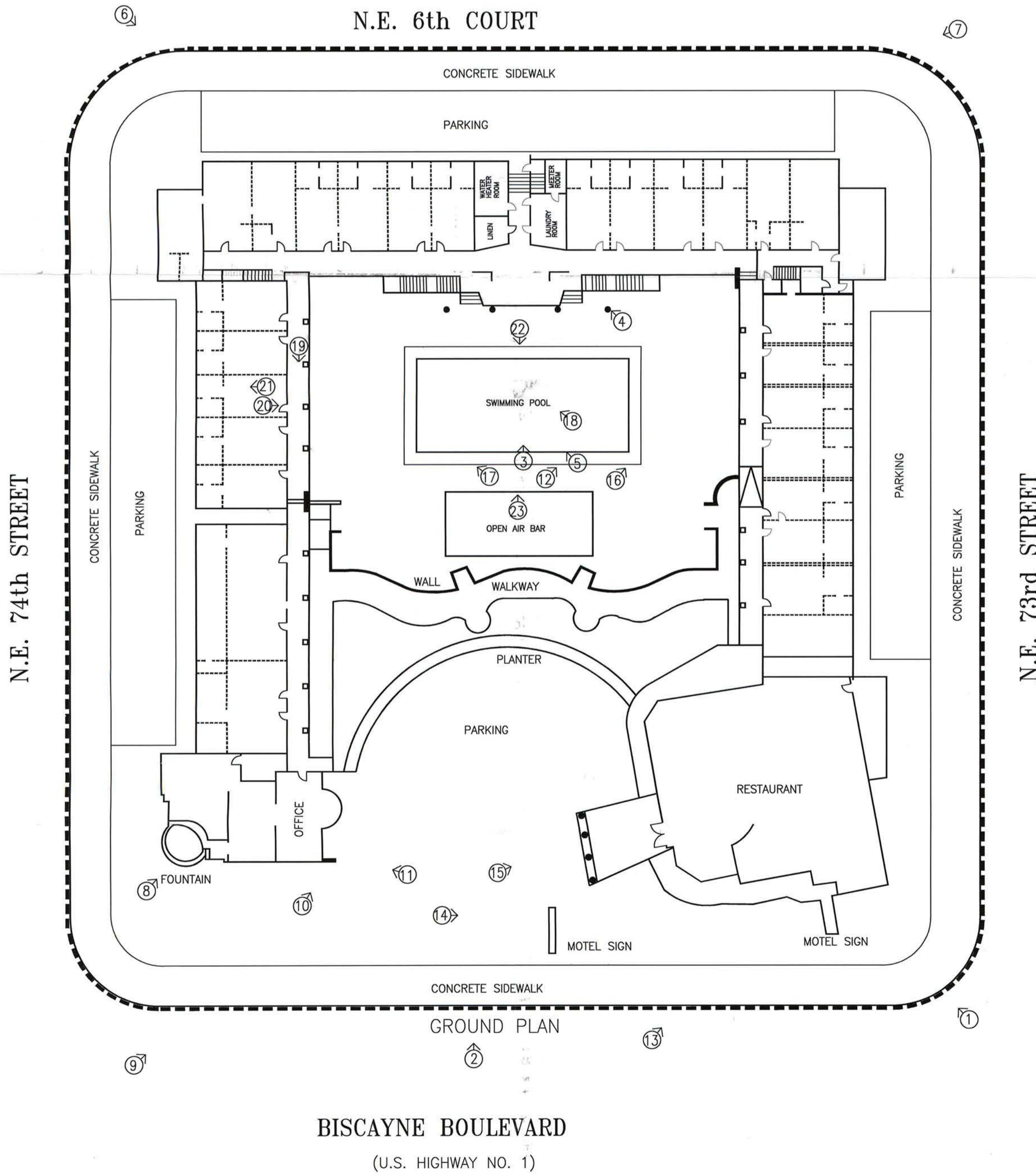
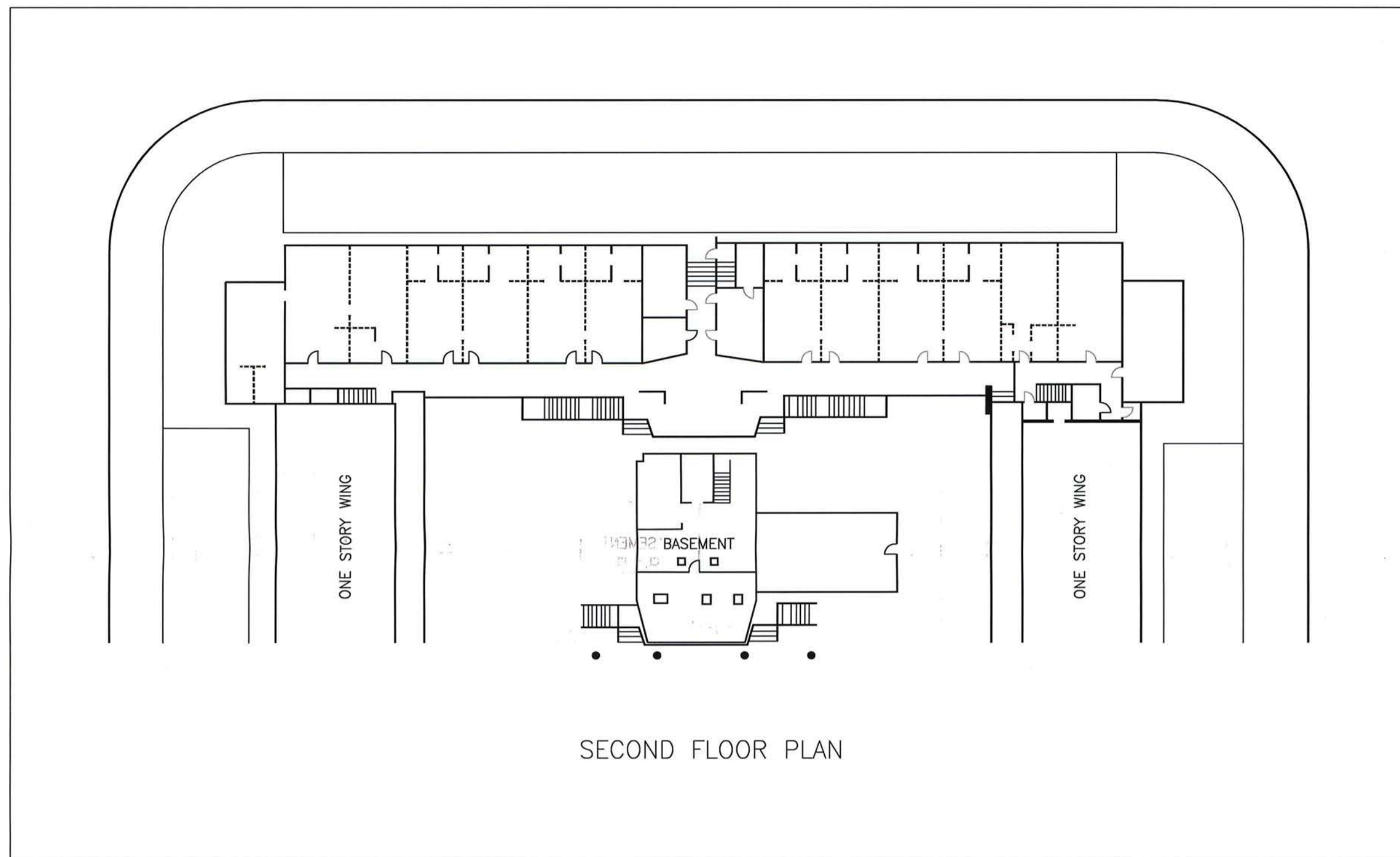
VAGABOND MOTEL
7301 Biscayne Boulevard
Miami (Miami-Dade County) Florida

Latitude: 25.842937°
Longitude: -80.183937°

UTM References

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
17	581787	2858543



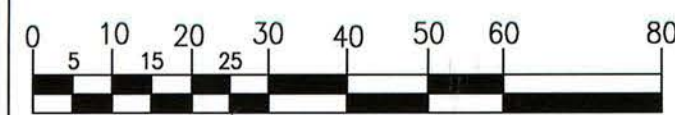


LEGEND

STREET NAMES	BISCAYNE BOULEVARD
HISTORIC BOUNDARY	-----
PHOTO NUMBERS	⓪

VAGABOND MOTEL
 7301 BISCAYNE BOULEVARD
 MIAMI (MIAMI-DADE COUNTY), FLORIDA

BISCAYNE BOULEVARD
 (U.S. HIGHWAY NO. 1)



ORIGINAL SITE PLAN PREPARED BY:
 DBLEWIS-ARCHITECT
 5910 N. BAYSHORE DRIVE
 MIAMI, FLORIDA 33137
 Phone: (305) 456-7252
 Email: dlewisarch@gmail.com

DRAWN BY: W. CARL SHIVER
 DRAWING DATE: OCTOBER 2014

THE VAGABOND SITE AND FLOOR PLANS WERE DRAWN IN AUTOCAD USING A VARIETY OF VISUAL RESOURCES INCLUDING INCLUDING A SCALED FLOOR AND SITE PLAN PROVIDED BY THE PREPARER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER PROPOSAL AND PHOTOS TAKEN ON SITE. THE CAD PLAN WAS DRAWN BY TRACING A RASTER IMAGE OF THE ORIGINAL HARD COPY PLANS.

DRAWING NO. SHEET NO. 1 OF 1
 N/A

PLAN REVIEWED BY: CARL SHIVER
 FLORIDA BUREAU OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 R.A. GRAY BUILDING
 500 SOUTH BRONOUGH STREET
 TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0250
 PHONE NUMBER (850) 245-6333
 TOLL FREE NUMBER 1-800-7278
 FAX NUMBER (850) 245-6439





VAGABOND MOTEL



VAGABOND MOTEL





VAGABOND





VAGABOND MOTEL





McALISTER HOTEL

McAlister
HOTEL









NER

AIR CONDITIONED

VAGABOND
MOTEL

VACANCY

COFF



DINER

Carroll Park
Community Center
1000 Carroll Park Blvd
Coral Gables, FL 33134







VAGABOND











VAGABOND MOTEL



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Vagabond Motel
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: FLORIDA, Dade

DATE RECEIVED: 11/14/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 12/11/14
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/26/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/31/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14001086

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 12-29-2014 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Excellent example of the localized Modernist style
known as MiMo - Miami Modern*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept C

REVIEWER J. Gabriel DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RICK SCOTT
Governor

KEN DETZNER
Secretary of State



November 6, 2014

Ms. Carol Shull, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
1201 Eye Street, N.W., 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed is a submission of the nomination and additional materials (nomination form, continuation sheets, site plan, GIS data, digital images and disk) for:

Vagabond Motel (FMSF #8DA13723), Miami-Dade County

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (850) 245-6333 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Desiree Estabrook".

Desiree Estabrook
Historic Preservation Supervisor, Survey & Registration
Bureau of Historic Preservation



Division of Historical Resources
R.A. Gray Building • 500 South Bronough Street • Tallahassee, Florida 32399
850.245.6300 • 850.245.6436 (Fax) flheritage.com
Promoting Florida's History and Culture VivaFlorida.org

