



MIAMI MODERN ARCHITECTURE ON THE BEACH

1945 - 1965

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EVOLUTION OF ARCHITECTURAL STYLE



VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE

Vernacular architecture is usually the first style of architecture to appear in newly founded settlements. It is owner-built, rustic and intuitive in character. Its intent is to resolve the need for shelter in an expedient manner, so it usually reflects the fact that its builder is not a trained architect. In the same way, folk art is created by people without formal art training, and it shows a degree of naïveté and spontaneity not found in more academic graphic expressions.



MEDITERRANEAN REVIVAL ARCHITECTURE

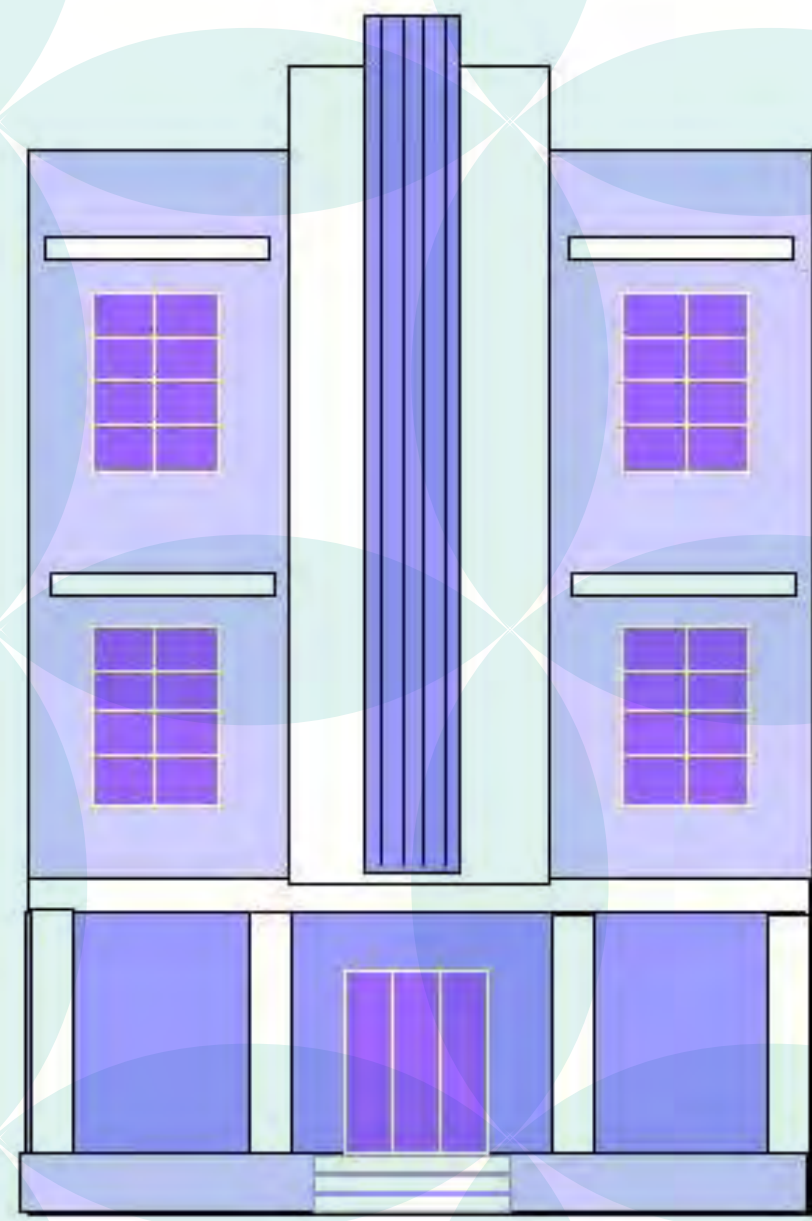
Mediterranean revival architecture was used in South Florida beginning in the 1910s and 1920s. It was part of a conscious effort by land developers and speculators to market South Florida as the “Southern European” resort that could be reached by train. As such, its intention was to evoke an emotional response of nostalgia by recreating a romantic “Old Europe” setting. Similarly, Impressionist painters seek to create a feeling of romance by their brush stroke techniques. The subjects of impressionist paintings are people and landscapes. These subjects are depicted in such a way that they are recognizable and they are specially successful in evoking emotional responses.



ART DECO ARCHITECTURE

As painting evolved so did architecture. Painting began to be more abstract and its forms more stylized. The subject matters are still clearly recognizable, but they are suggested rather than stated. Color and geometry begin to take on a more pronounced role. There is less interest in merely reproducing the artist’s outer world and an increased interest in the act of painting itself. Similarly, while earlier architecture maintains a sense of historical reference, Art Deco begins to shift its focus to pure symmetry and order.

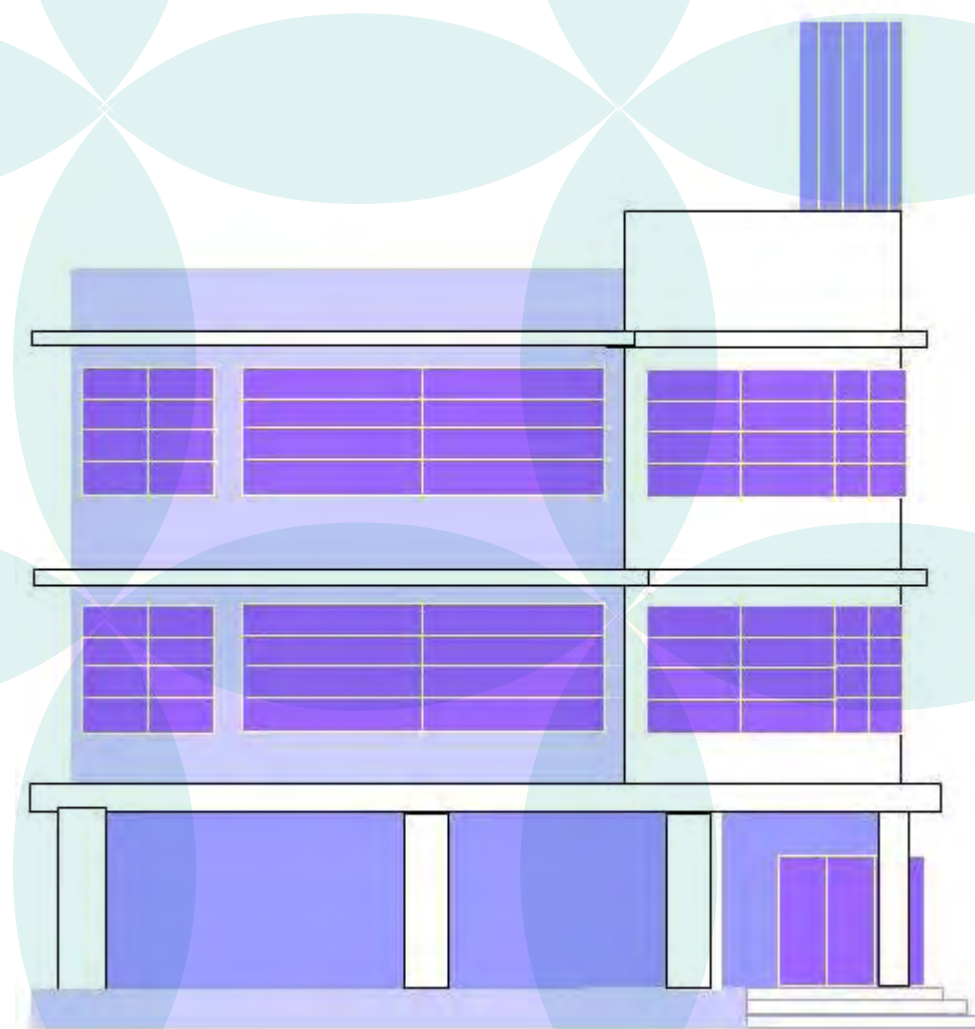




ART DECO (LATE 1920S TO EARLY 1930S)

The evolution of 20th century 'modern' architecture in Miami Beach begins with the Art Deco style. Art Deco had its origins in Europe, and particularly France, in the mid-1920s. Its primary form in Miami Beach is a vertical oriented rectangle which is divided into three parts, both horizontally and vertically.

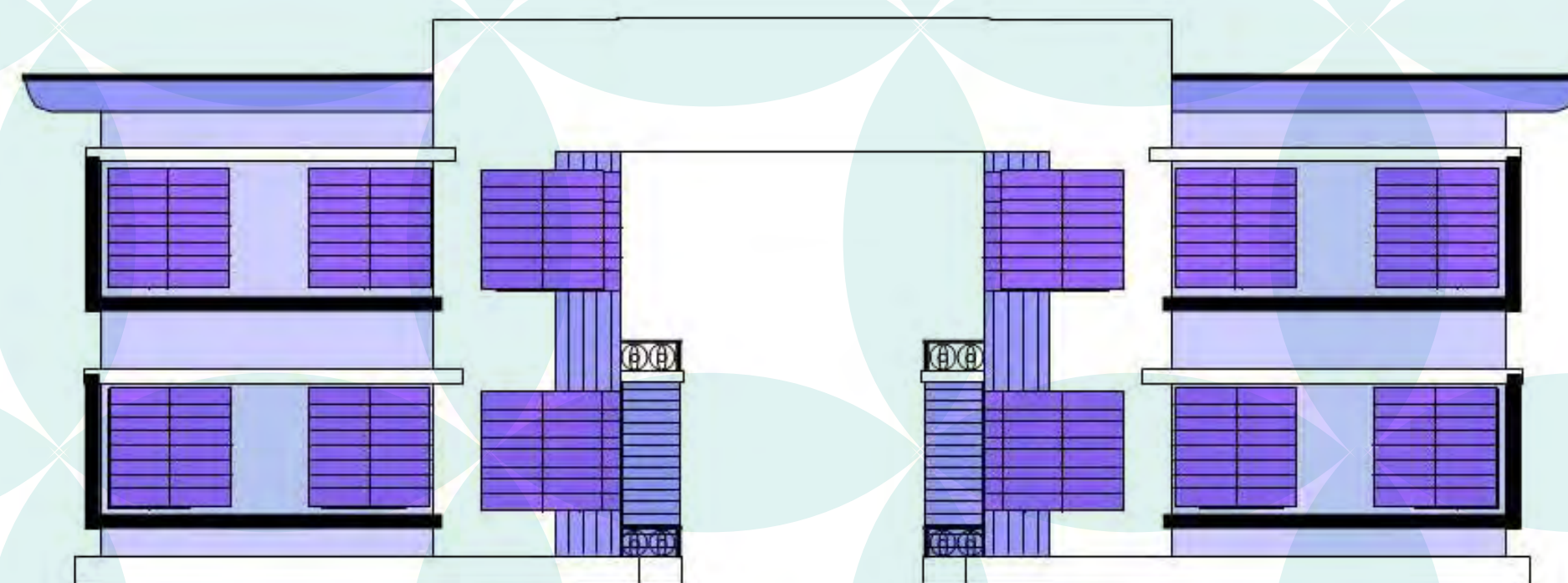
Its porch and pedestal comprise a clear base. The building is symmetric, and most have a strong vertical element to emphasize the axis of symmetry. The interior circulation is also symmetric and axial. It consists of a double loaded corridor, in other words, a central hallway with rooms on both sides. Concrete "eyebrows" projecting above the windows provide shade from the tropical sun. Art Deco architecture is very playful, but it is firmly anchored by its strong central axis.



STREAMLINE (MID 1930S TO EARLY 1940S)

As time goes on architects begin to get more playful with the vocabulary of Art Deco architecture. Eyebrows become a stronger horizontal element by uniting across the façade and racing around the corner to the side facades. Windows move to the outer edges of the façade and even wrap around the corners, flaunting new structural systems that eliminated the need for corner supports.

The axis of the building often begins to shift away from the center, stretching every other element on the façade. It often reaches the corner where it becomes a vertical beacon emphasizing street intersections. The architecture is all about motion and speed. Nautical themes recalling great oceanliners are also common.



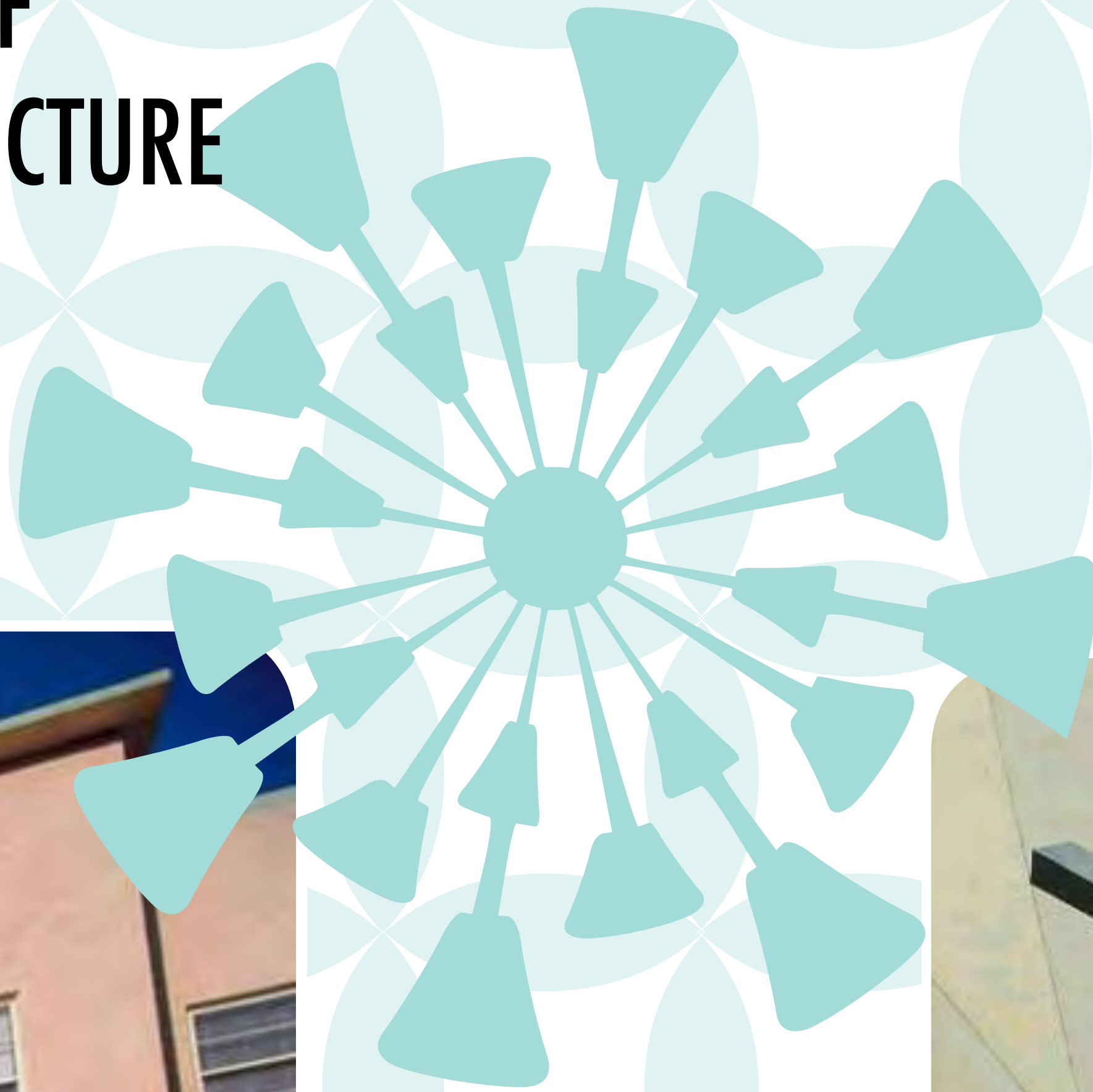
MIMO (LATE 1940S TO MID 1960S)

After World War II, architects, influenced by the international modern movement, began to play with form and geometry. Horizontal proportions became even more pronounced, often exhibiting a flat roof with broad overhanging eaves, echoed by the horizontal projections of the catwalks or balconies and anchored to the ground with long low planter boxes. Eyebrows evolved into window boxes and windows were grouped together with bands of contrasting texture and color to create bold patterns. The axis of symmetry often shifted to the outside of the building where two identical buildings form a mirror image of one another facing a central courtyard.

Like their Art Deco predecessors, the earliest post-war modern buildings were built with interior circulation. Entrance to apartments is gained through interior corridors and staircases. Later MiMo buildings incorporated exterior circulation with entry via outdoor corridors and open-air staircases. These exterior staircases are often symmetrical and are significant design features.



REFLECTIONS OF ART IN ARCHITECTURE



Miami Modern Architecture was a popular response to the various modernist and post world war art and architectural movements that were taking place in other parts of the world, adding glamour, fun, and material excess to otherwise stark, minimalist, and efficient styles.



Late Modern painters were willing to explore pure geometry with paint and color. This abstract artistic style, which expressed a new utopian ideal of spiritual harmony and order, is reflected in the forms and geometry of MiMo architecture. Artists, such as Piet Mondrian, advocated pure abstraction and universality by a reduction to the essentials of form and color; they simplified visual compositions to the vertical and horizontal directions, and used primary colors along with black and white.



Influenced by these modern artistic movements, architects designed MiMo buildings with an emphasis of horizontal and vertical lines and often created ornament using the structure and theme of the building, such as the projecting eaves and bean pole columns.

SOCIAL/POPULAR CULTURE



Miami Beach played a significant role as a training site and redistribution center for the U.S. Army-Air Forces during World War II. After the war, many veterans who had trained as recruits in Miami Beach returned here to vacation or to make their home, often with their brides. Unprecedented development followed the American success in WWII when major new resort hotels and residential resort architecture were contemplated. Development during this time was on a scale never before seen in South Florida.

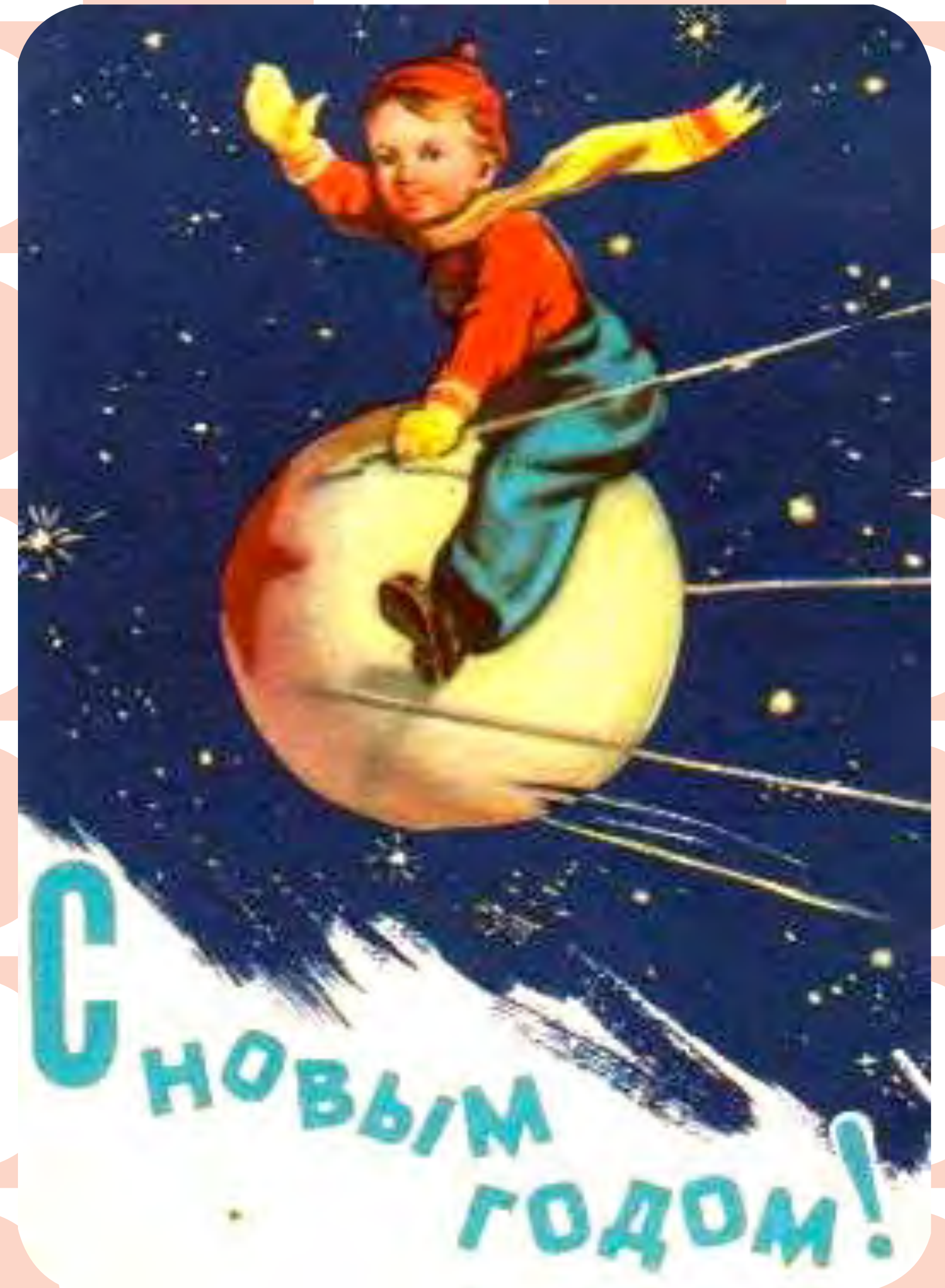
ENTERTAINERS OF THE ERA

- Lucille Ball
- Jack Benny
- Marlon Brando
- Montgomery Clift
- Clay Cole
- Tony Curtis
- Peter Cushing
- Dorothy Dandridge
- James Dean
- Sandra Dee
- Troy Donahue
- Diana Dors
- Kirk Douglas
- William Frawley
- Ava Gardner
- John Gregson
- Tony Hancock
- Audrey Hepburn
- Charlton Heston
- William Holden
- Bob Hope
- Rock Hudson
- Van Johnson
- Grace Kelly
- Jerry Lewis
- Sophia Loren
- Jayne Mansfield
- Dean Martin
- Jerry Mathers
- Sal Mineo
- Marilyn Monroe
- Hayley Mills
- Paul Newman
- Kim Novak
- Gregory Peck
- Jon Provost
- Debbie Reynolds
- George Reeves
- Steve Reeves
- Vivian Vance
- Jack Webb
- Yul Brynner
- Johnny Carson

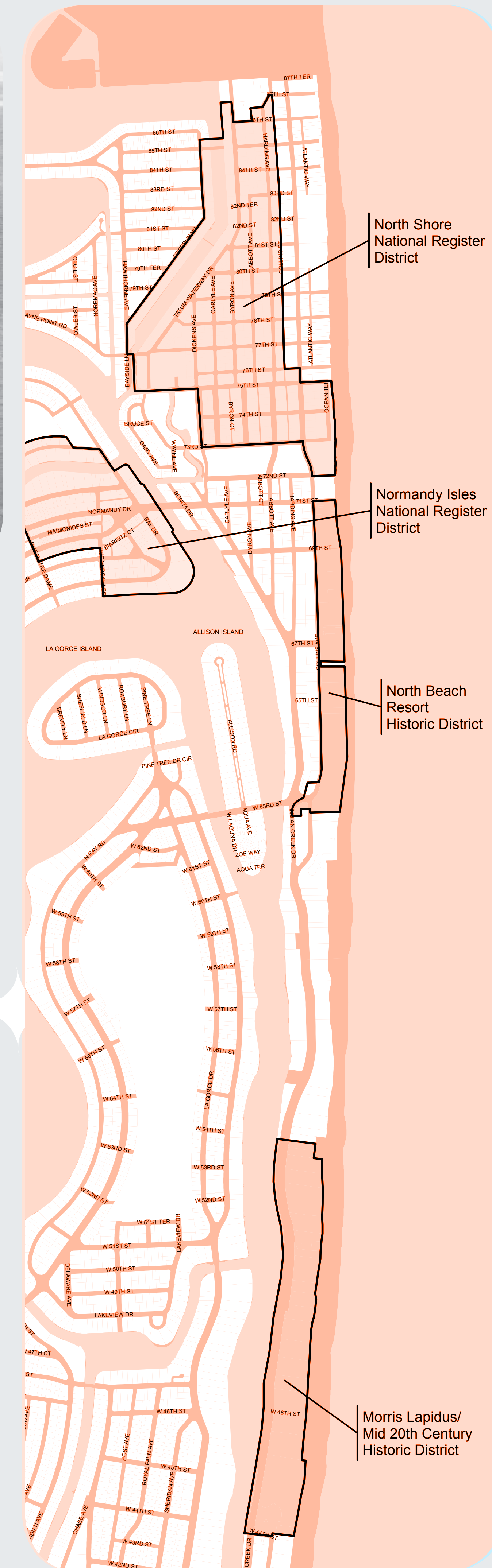




The first Sputnik was launched in 1957. Rivalry with the U.S.S.R. led to the space race. Futuristic, flamboyant, fun design elements showed up in cars, furniture, and buildings. Automobiles sprouted wings and depicted rocket motifs. The small globe with protruding antennae reminiscent of the Sputnik became a common design detail. Cheese holes, woggles and boomerangs began to appear in Miami Beach's architecture. Perhaps, nowhere else in the City is the influence of the 'Space Age' more highly developed than within the stretch of Collins Avenue between 44th Street and 73rd Street, where complete buildings are rounded and radically cantilevered balconies are scientifically engineered.



MiMo ON THE BEACH DISTRICTS



NORTH SHORE AND NORMANDY ISLES NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICTS

Miami Beach's northern neighborhood, known as North Beach, has one of the largest and most cohesive concentrations of MiMo buildings in South Florida. The two districts that were recently honored with listing on the National Register of Historic Places are made up of over 800 small apartment buildings, hotels and neighborhood commercial buildings. Unlike the luxury oceanfront hotels located nearby, the North Shore and Normandy Isles districts developed out of a need for modest housing for the burgeoning postwar population and affordable tourist lodgings for seasonal visitors.

THE NORTH BEACH RESORT HISTORIC DISTRICT

The North Beach Resort Historic District is located along Collins Avenue between approximately 63 and 71 Streets. After World War II, this area developed into a major tourist and entertainment attraction with large, luxurious resort hotels fronting the Atlantic Ocean. These resort hotels usually featured grand lobbies, cocktail lounges, supper clubs, a variety of thematic restaurants, ballrooms, banquet halls, meeting rooms, retail shops, enormous swimming pools, extensive sundecks, solariums, and a sweeping array of highly popular private beach cabanas. These grand hotels, which include the Deauville, Carillon, Casablanca, Sherry Frontenac, and the former Monte Carlo, define the special character of this unique mid-century historic district.

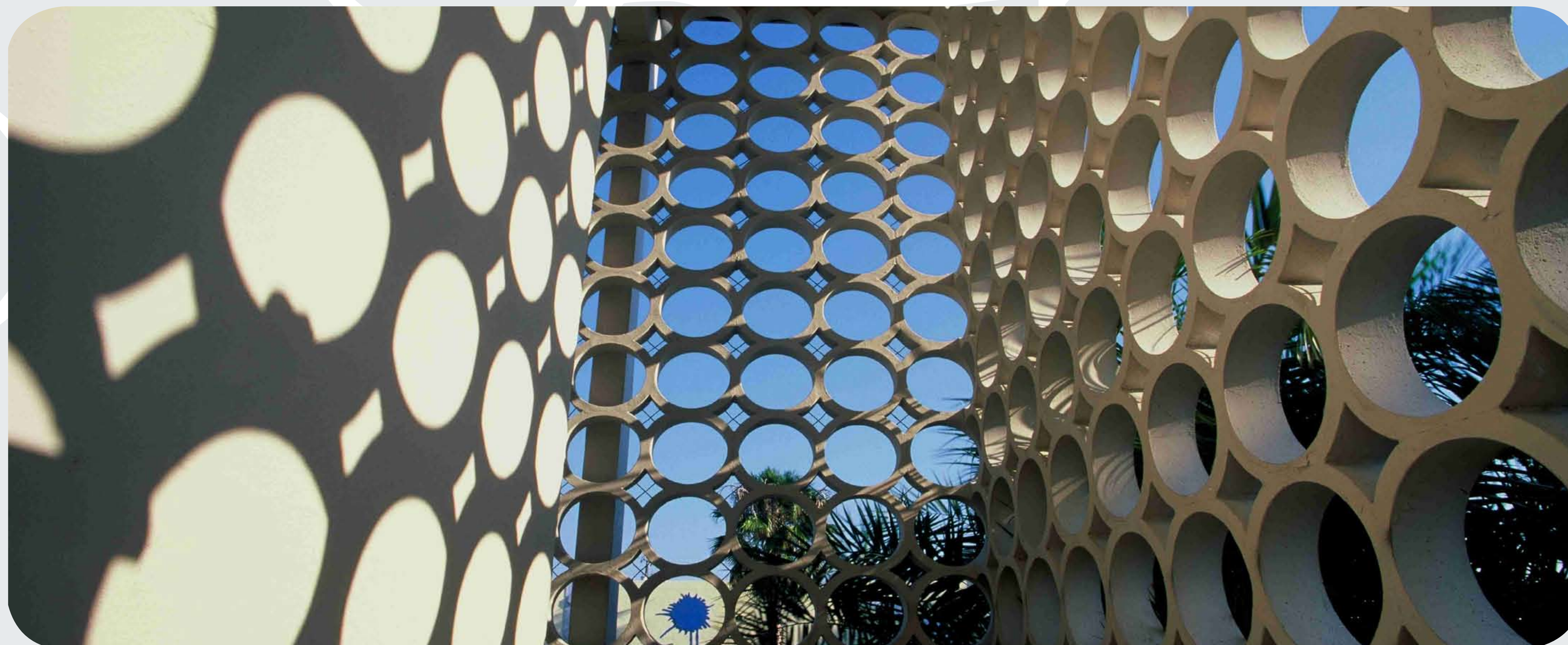
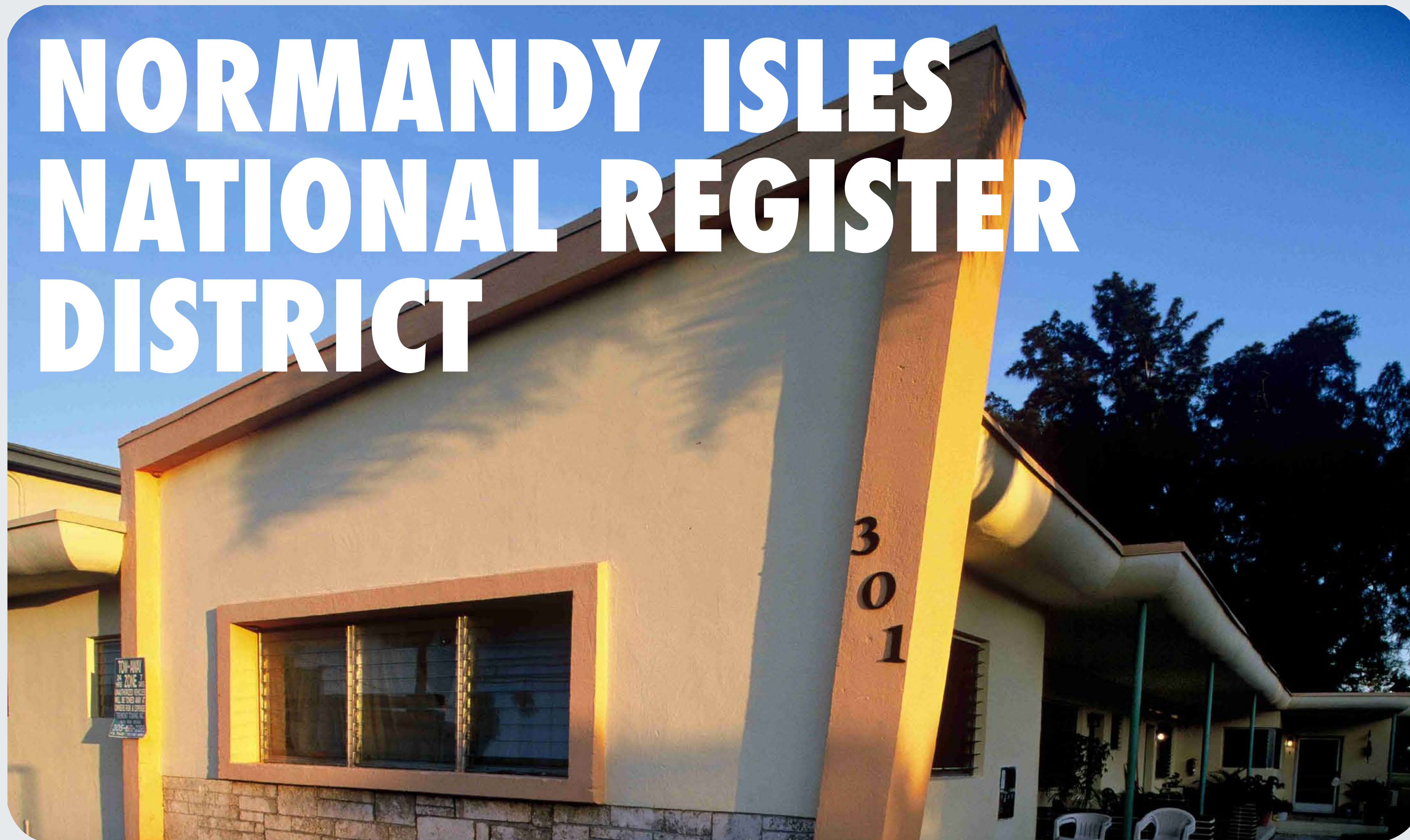
THE MORRIS LAPIDUS/MID 20TH CENTURY HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Morris Lapidus / Mid 20th Century Historic District is situated within a one-mile long stretch of Collins Avenue between 44 Street and the 5300 block. Twelve of the fourteen properties located here contain architecturally significant mid-20th century structures, all built between 1954 and 1966. A remarkable five of these are among the most distinctive, grand, and architecturally dramatic mid-century structures designed by internationally acclaimed Miami Beach architect, Morris Lapidus. This extraordinary collection of Lapidus masterpieces, together with seven mid-century structures designed by other highly respected and successful South Florida architects, embodies the full aesthetic, social, economic and historic impact that this one single mile stretch would have on the evolution of "Miami Modern" design, and indeed the future of post war modern leisure and apartment living in South Florida and beyond.

NORTH SHORE NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT



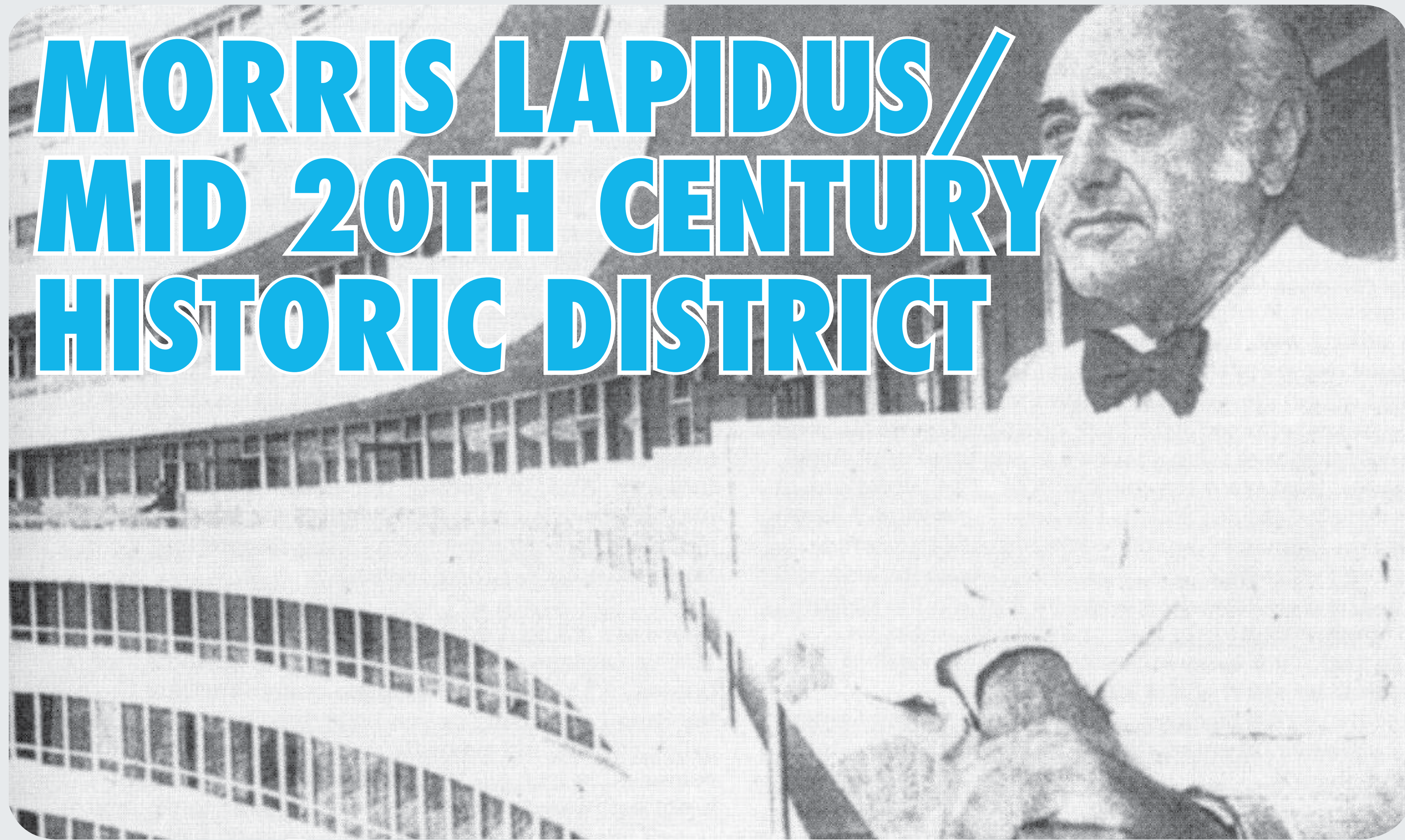
NORMANDY ISLES NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT



THE NORTH BEACH RESORT HISTORIC DISTRICT



MORRIS LAPIDUS / MID 20TH CENTURY HISTORIC DISTRICT





Landmark MiMo Buildings of Greater Miami

Bacardi Building (Enrique Gutierrez, 1963) - 2100 Biscayne Boulevard

Carillon Hotel (Norman Giller, 1957) - 6801 Collins Avenue

Crystal House (Morris Lapidus, 1960) - 5055 Collins Avenue

Deauville Hotel (Melvin Grossman, 1958) - 6701 Collins Avenue

Eden Roc Hotel (Morris Lapidus, 1955) - 4525 Collins Avenue

Fontainebleau Hotel (Morris Lapidus, 1954) - 4441 Collins Avenue

International Inn (Melvin Grossman, 1956) - 2301 Normandy Drive

Jackie Gleason House (Lester Avery, 1959) - 2232 Alton Road

Lido Spa Hotel (Morris Lapidus, 1953) - 40 Island Avenue

Lincoln Road Mall (Morris Lapidus, 1960)

Miami Herald (Naess & Murphy, 1960) - One Herald Plaza

Miami Marine Stadium (Hilario Candela, 1964) - 3501 Rickenbacker Cswy

Pepsi-Cola Bottling Pavilion (Daverman & As., 1965) - 7777 NW 41st Street

Shalimar Motel (Edwin Reeder, 1950) - 6200 Biscayne Boulevard

Sherry Frontenac Hotel (Henry Hohausser, 1947) - 6565 Collins Avenue

Simbad Motel (1953) - 6150 Biscayne Boulevard

South Pacific Motel (1953) - 6300 Biscayne Boulevard

Regions Bank (Francis Hoffman, 1958) - 1133 Normandy Drive

Vagabond Motel (Robert Swartburg, 1953) - 7301 Biscayne Boulevard

DETAILS OF MiMo ARCHITECTURE



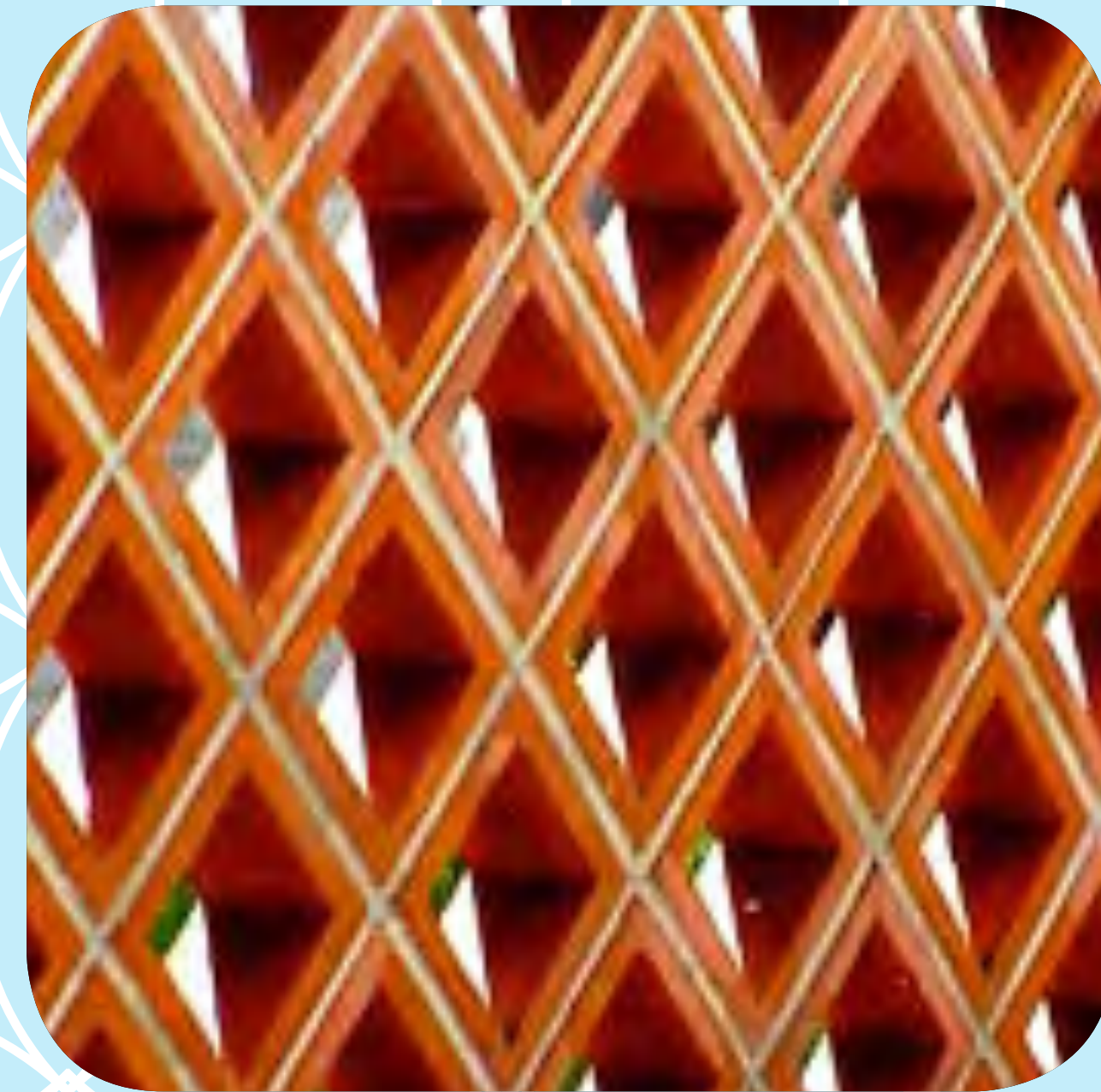
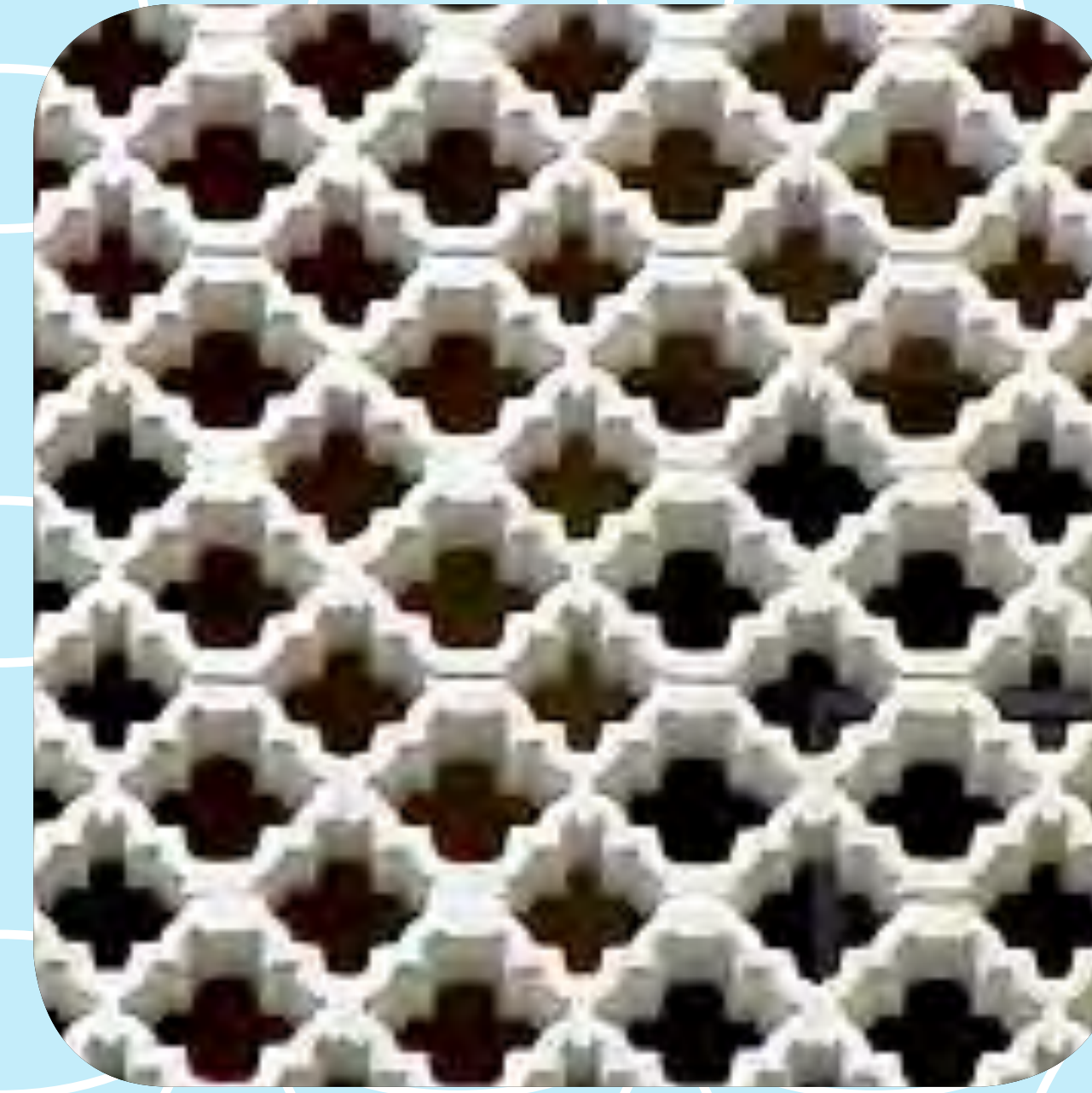
PROSCENIUMS

Prosceniums are a design feature that visually connects two small structures so they read and function as a single, grander structure with an enclosed garden/courtyard. Many prosceniums employ open grillwork known as brie solei, block work or open gables.

DECORATIVE BLOCK WALLS

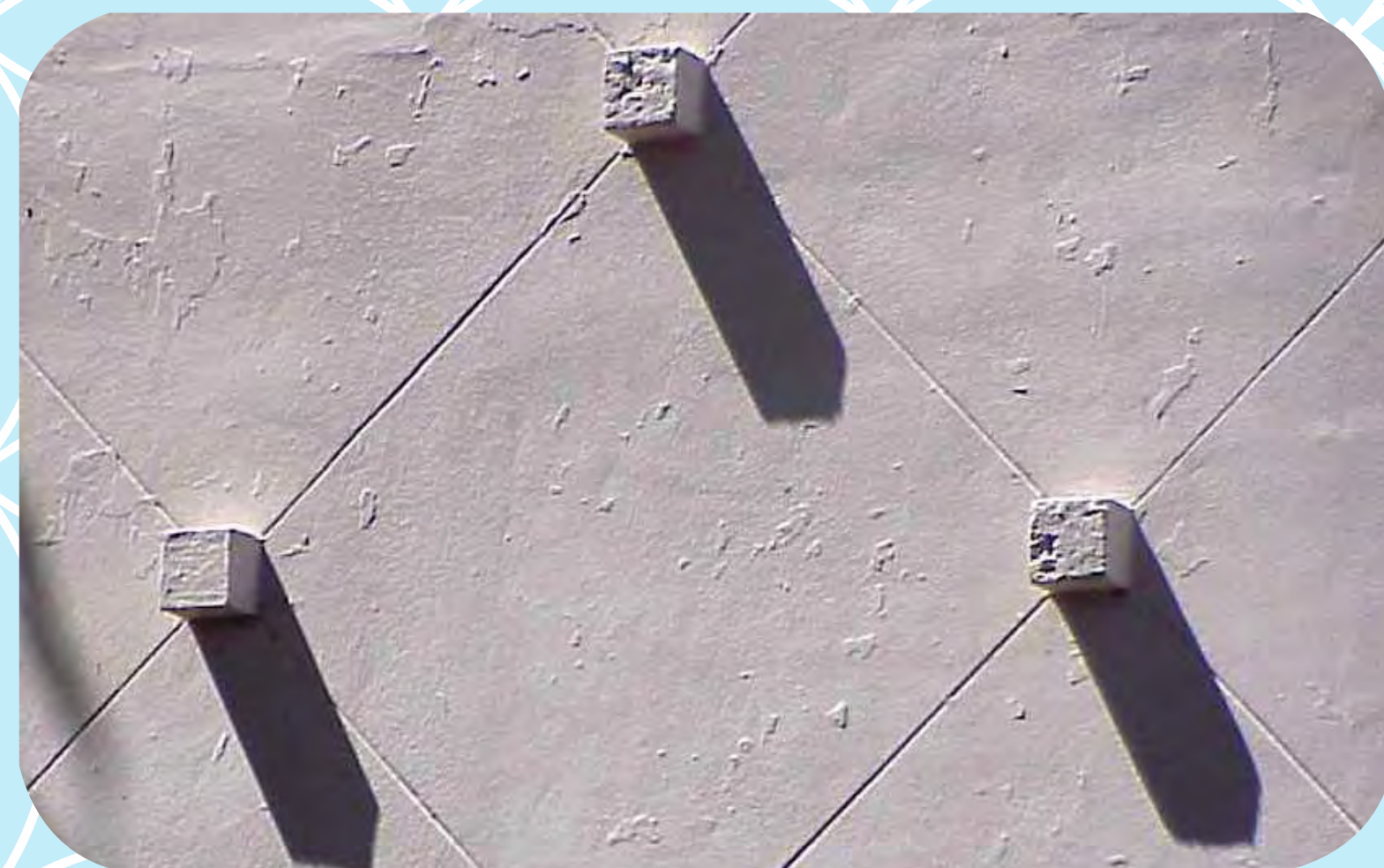
Decorative concrete blocks serve many purposes.

They are structurally sound and let light and air pass through. They are used as walls, railings, fences and many decorative architectural features. The common name is breeze block.



EXTERIOR SURFACE MATERIALS

MiMo buildings generally combine stucco walls with a contrasting material



Stucco patterns



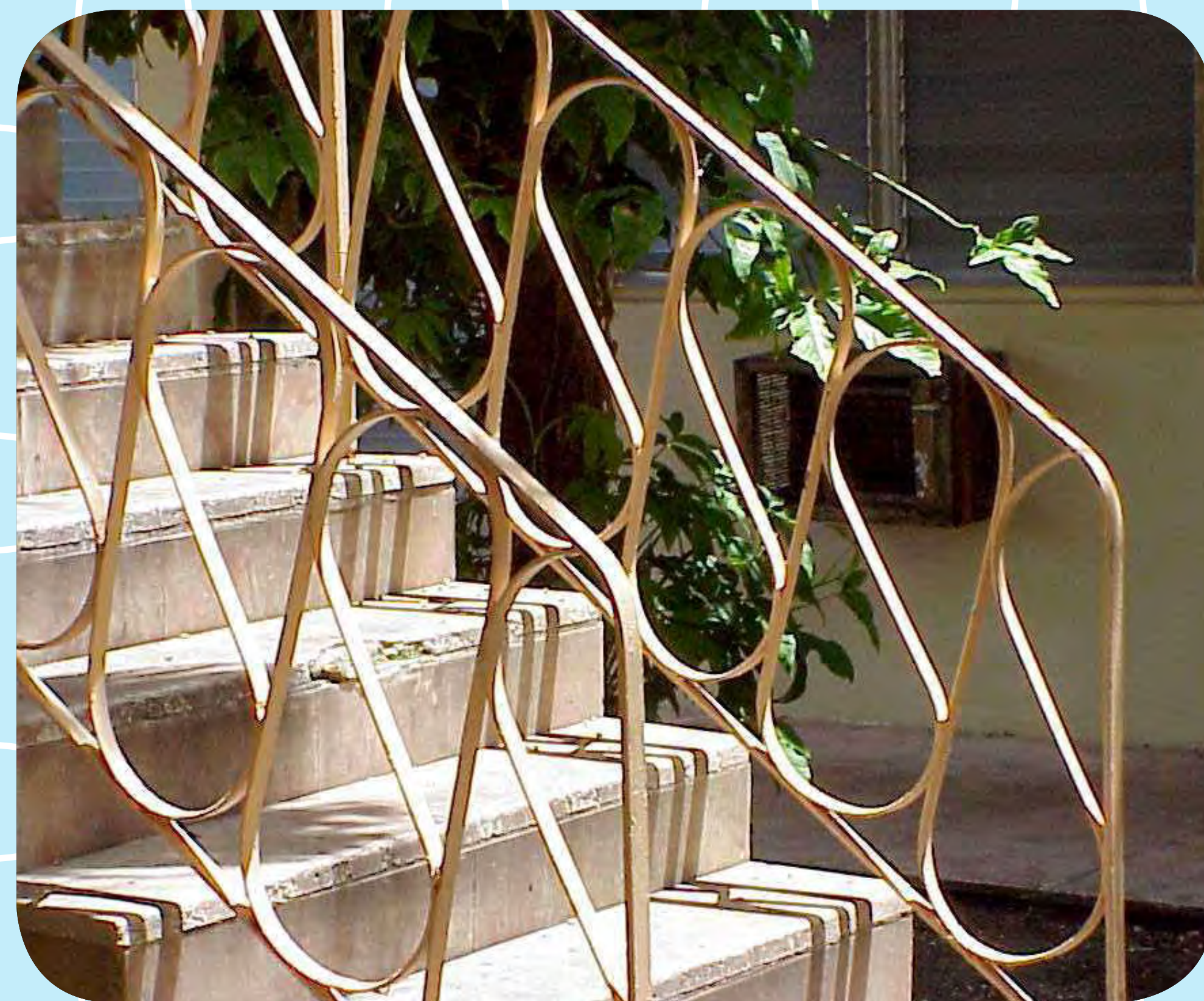
Brick and slumped brick



Natural stone



Mosaic tile

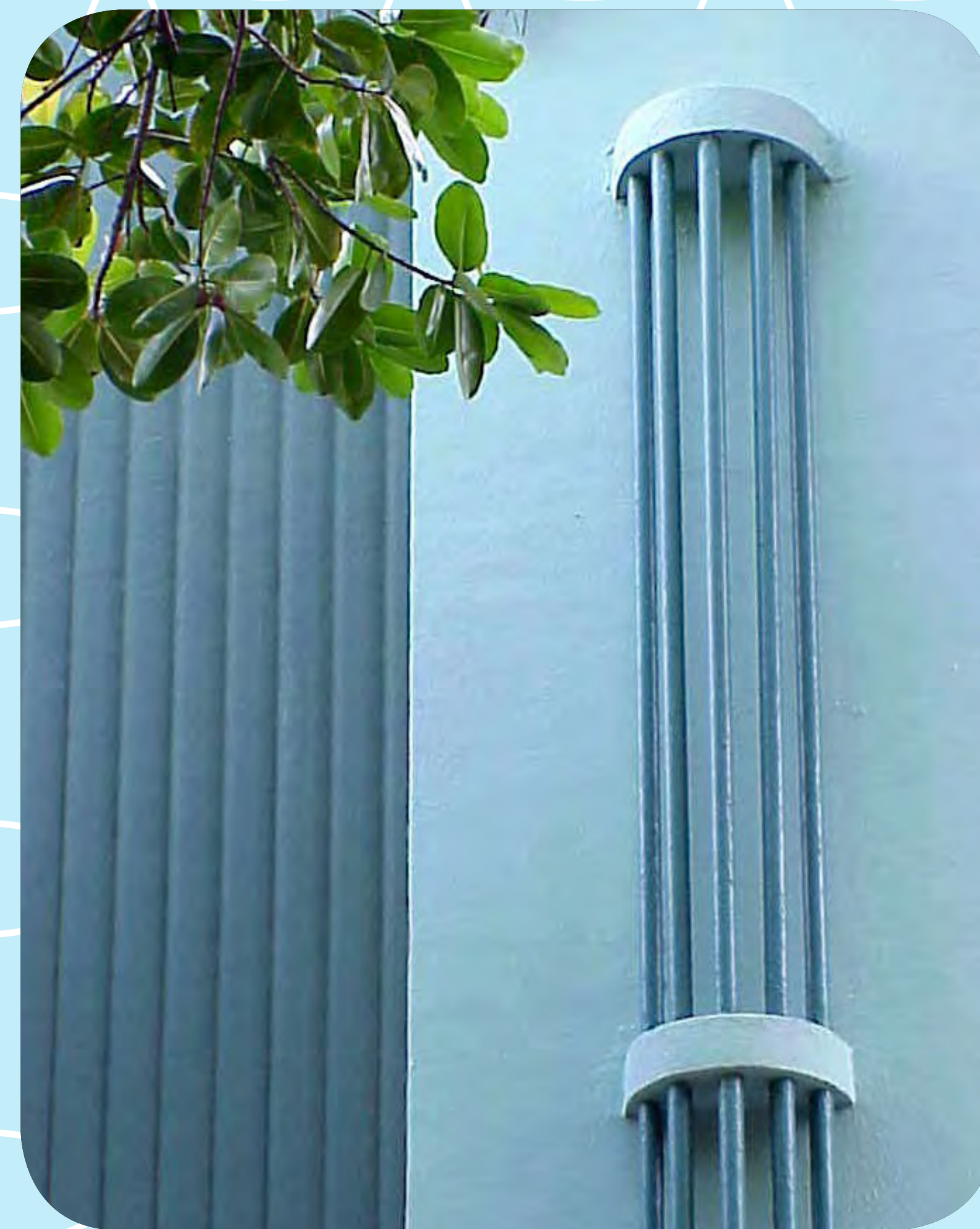


IRONWORK MiMo buildings, with their exterior circulation, have a vast variety of ironwork styles. Most railings at that time were selected from catalogs by the architect or building owner. Iron and aluminum craftsman designed many of the styles. Railings help to generate the character of a building. In some cases the railings are the most important surviving architectural feature of interest.



STEEL PIPE COLUMNS

Morris Lapidus called them "Beanpoles." The use of steel pipe columns reflected a renewed sense of honesty in architecture, perhaps a sense of humor as well. These futuristic steel pole groups varied. Funnel configurations, angled, and vertical groupings are commonly seen.





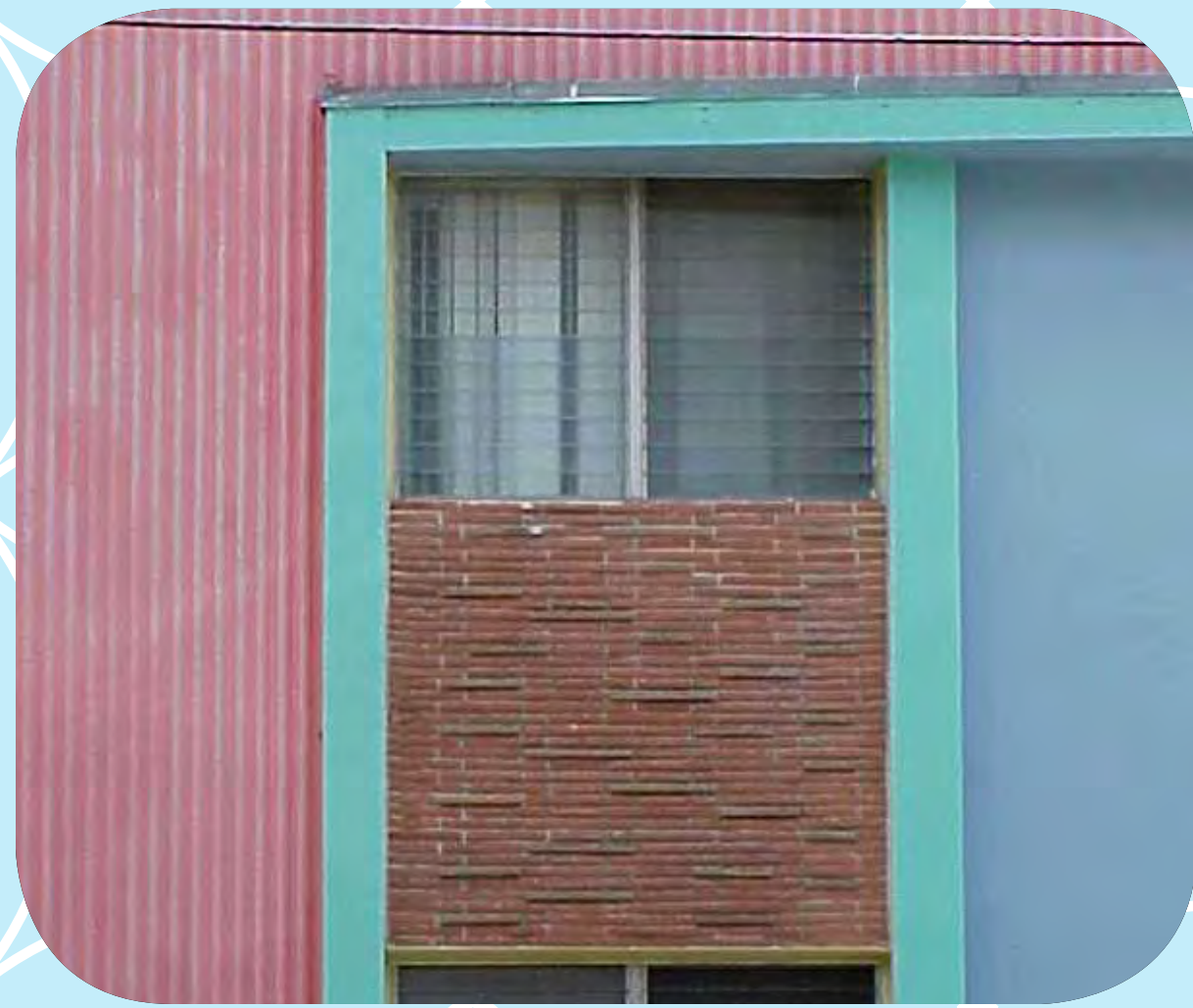
EAVES

MiMo buildings often had flat roofs with projecting eaves. The distinctive curved underside of many eaves are locally known as “soft” eaves. Shallow hip or gable tile roofs were also used. They had projecting eaves as well.

COURTYARDS

MiMo apartment buildings were built in a variety of simple, rectangular shapes. The most common are single and double-bar buildings, but some buildings are designed in more elaborate shapes. A very strong pattern developed. The street façade often has no entrance, but is highly decorated. A courtyard is formed where the “main” facades of two buildings face each other. A service court is formed where the “back” facades face each other.





PROJECTED MASONRY WINDOW FRAMES

Art deco eyebrows evolved into projected masonry window frames. These frames often were filled with stone, brick, or ribbed relief work.

FUN

MiMo buildings were often designed in a playful and futuristic manner. This playful use of angles and lines embody the optimism of post-war America. Buildings were designed with vertical and horizontal projections, fins, boomerangs, wobbles and cheese holes. Eccentric themes were sometimes added to this post-war modern architectural vocabulary. Applied masonry elements often had marine or nautical themes.

