

August 4, 2024

Thomas Mooney  
Planning Director  
City of Miami Beach  
1700 Convention Center Drive  
Miami Beach, FL 33139

**Re: Letter of Intent for Application to the Historic Preservation Board for  
Certificate of Appropriateness – 1545 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, FL**

**File Number: HPB24-0623**

Dear Mr. Mooney:

This firm represents RP Hotel Holdings, LLC, the applicant (“Applicant”) and owner of the Royal Palm Hotel located at 1545 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, Florida (the “Property”). Please accept this correspondence as the Applicant's letter of intent in connection with the attached application package seeking review and approval by the Historic Preservation Board (“HPB”) of a Certificate of Appropriateness for partial renovation and minor demolition to allow certain improvements to the first and second floors on the Property as are described in more detail below and in accordance with the plans included with this application.

### **The Property**

The Property, which is approximately 81,125 square feet (1.86 acres), is located within the Miami Beach Architectural Historic District, the Oceanfront and Dune Preservation Overlay Districts, and the Convention Center Hotel Overlay District and has a zoning designation of Mixed-Use Entertainment District (MXE). The Property and Project were part of the Convention Center Hotel RFP issued in 1993.

The Property contains two buildings and the western portion of both buildings are each considered contributing. The reconstructed Royal Palm Hotel is contributing and is the primary namesake for the property and is the western portion of the larger northern building facing Collins Avenue. Similarly, to its south is the Shorecrest Hotel and the western portion of that building facing Collins Avenue is the renovated and original Shorecrest structure. The proposed project before the HPB is limited to the lower two public floors of the hotel, while there is a larger interior renovation of the upper floors containing the hotel rooms and suites. Together the two projects will renovate the entire hotel to elevate the guest experience.

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## Scope of Project

The scope of the project is largely driven by the Applicant's desire to create a cohesive guest experience through experiential design and to elevate the functionality of the spaces by creating connected rooms to better sightlines for guest entering the Property. To this end, the Applicant is proposing to proceed with the following scope of work:

- i. Enhancing the arrival experience of property by incorporating new landscaping and creating a better flow for guests to intuitively drive into property without entering the Property through the typical egress drive. This reconfiguration restores the entry drive to its original 1939 design. This includes the relocation of existing historic nonconforming pylon and signage on the street for better understanding of the intended traffic flow. The arrival experience will also feature a new landscape island which will include the relocated historic fountain, creating a memorable experience entering into the hotel property.
- ii. Providing new pedestrian paths to Property, encouraging guest to walk through main entrance.
- iii. Renovating the Compass Rose bar, to host a new café with communal tables and seating for guest. The face of the Compass Rose Bar is to remain, with new finishes surrounding it, enhancing the design.
- iv. Relocating the lobby reception desk closer to main entry of hotel in order for guests to more easily find the reception area.
- v. Adding a new lobby bar in current lobby lounge location, bringing together both interior and exterior spaces by way of flooring being elevated to match elevation of exterior breezeway. Steps will be created from the lobby to new lobby bar with ramps for accessibility.
- vi. Relocating the historic decorative metal on the interior circular windows, currently installed at the location of the new indoor/outdoor lobby bar, where they metalwork will be highlighted as artwork throughout the lobby, creating niches with LED lighting to commemorate the history of the property.
- vii. Slightly expanding the second story "Cookery" restaurant slab to meet the existing columns in order to create additional seating and better functionality for restaurant guests.
- viii. Removing the second story pool, located outside the "Cookery", and replacing it with a terrace for the restaurant and hotel.
- ix. Adding new landscaping, exterior seating, and fire pits for guest use in the breezeway.

- x. Renovating and redesigning the pool restaurant to bring new life and soul to the Property and accommodate food and beverage programming.
- xi. Extending the pool to create sun shelf for guest use.
- xii. Adding an interstitial deck between pool restaurant and pool for additional pool lounge seating. Removable cabanas will be added to enhance the guest experience at the Property.
- xiii. Adding new landscaping throughout pool area.

The project is designed to bring much needed connectivity to the Property while celebrating and preserving the contributing historic structures and features on site. Additionally, the Applicant has been mindful to incorporate the proposed renovations and reconfigurations within the bounds of the City's land development regulations and therefore the Applicant is **not** seeking any variances or waivers in connection with this application.

As part of its review, the Historic Preservation Board shall also consider how the project addresses the City's **Sea Level Rise and Resiliency Review Criteria** pursuant to **Section 133-50(a)**:

- 1) A recycling or salvage plan for partial or total demolition shall be provided.

*To the extent required, the Applicant will provide a recycling and salvage plan to the City prior to any partial demolition of any existing structure.*

- 2) Windows that are proposed to be replaced shall be hurricane proof impact windows.

*The Applicant will install hurricane proof impact resistant windows/doors within the renovated portions of the lobby.*

- 3) Where feasible and appropriate, passive cooling systems, such as operable windows, shall be provided.

*The project design incorporates sliding doors to incorporate an indoor/outdoor experience at the lobby bar which doors also allow provide a passive cooling system.*

- 4) Resilient landscaping (salt tolerant, highly water-absorbent, native, or Florida-friendly plants) shall be provided, in accordance with chapter 126 of the city Code.

*Landscaping shall comply with all code requirements.*

- 5) The project applicant shall consider the adopted sea level rise projections in the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Action Plan, as may be revised from time-to-time by the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact. The applicant shall also specifically study the land elevation of the subject property and the elevation of surrounding properties.

*The architect has studied the land elevation of the property and adjacent parcels, and has proposed a design that is compliant with the current Florida Building Code and addresses the need for improved resiliency to future sea level rise.*

- 6) The ground floor, driveways, and garage ramping for new construction shall be adaptable to the raising of public rights-of-way and adjacent land, and shall provide sufficient height and space to ensure that the entry ways and exits can be modified to accommodate a higher street height of up to three additional feet in height.

*The ground floor and yard elevations are adaptable to future raising of public rights-of way and adjacent land.*

- 7) As applicable to all new construction, all critical mechanical and electrical systems shall be located above base flood elevation. All redevelopment projects shall, whenever practicable and economically reasonable, include the relocation of all critical mechanical and electrical systems to a location above base flood elevation.

*All critical mechanical and electrical systems will be located above base flood elevation, as required.*

- 8) Existing buildings shall, wherever reasonably feasible and economically appropriate, be elevated up to base flood elevation, plus City of Miami Beach Freeboard.

*All habitable portions of the buildings are located above flood elevation.*

- 9) When habitable space is located below the base flood elevation plus City of Miami Beach Freeboard, wet or dry flood proofing systems will be provided in accordance with chapter 54 of the City Code.

*The Project will comply with Chapter 54 of the City Code, as applicable.*

- 10) As applicable to all new construction, stormwater retention systems shall be provided.

*Stormwater retention systems will be provided per civil engineer design at time of permitting.*

- 11) Cool pavement materials or porous pavement materials shall be utilized.

*Cool pavement or porous pavement materials will be utilized where possible and most effective.*

- 12) The design of each project shall minimize the potential for heat island effects on-site.

*The architect is utilizing materials that minimize the heat island effect.*

The proposed renovations are consistent with the character of the surrounding neighborhood and will complement the architectural and historic identity of the Property. In addition the project renovations are part of a Property wide program to elevate the guest

experience. Moreover, the Application is not seeking any waivers or variances to proceed with the project. Based on the foregoing, the Applicant respectfully requests that the HPB approved this application

Sincerely,

*Carter N. McDowell*

Carter N. McDowell

CNM:NN