
The Bacardi Buildings

2100 Biscayne Boulevard

Designation Report



Tower – 1963



Annex – 1973

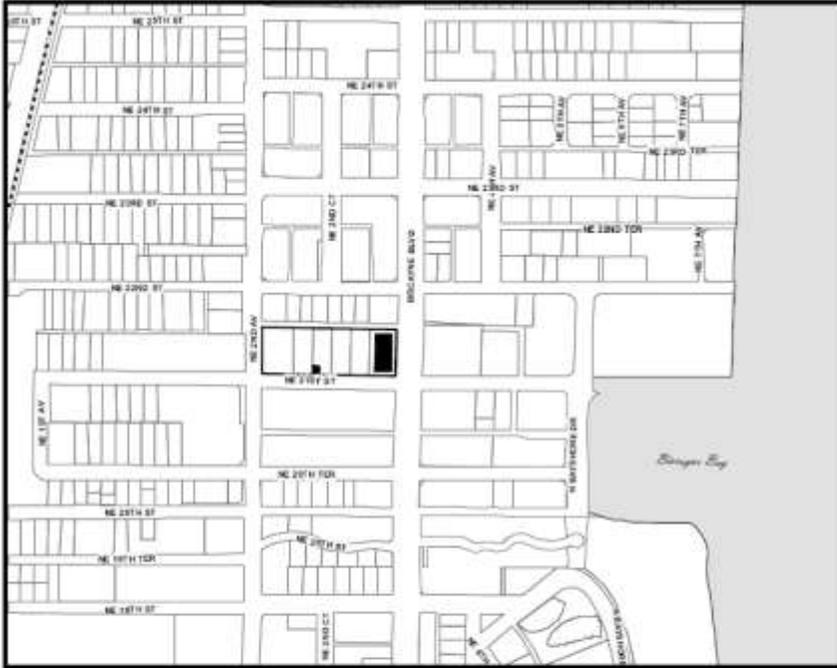
October 6, 2009

Historic and Environmental Preservation Board



City of Miami

Bacardi Buildings, 2100 Biscayne Boulevard




Location




Site Plan

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I. General Information

Historic and Current Name:

Bacardi Imports USA, Inc.

Dates of Construction:

Tower 1963

The Annex 1973

Architect - Tower Building, 1963

Enrique Gutiérrez, SACMAG International (Puerto Rico)

Tile Design (Tower)

Francisco Brennand (Recife, Brazil)

Builder (Tower)

Frank J. Rooney, Inc. (Miami, FL)

Architect - Annex Building, 1973

Ignacio Carrera-Justiz (Coral Gables, FL)

Stained Glass (Annex)

Manufactured by Gabriel and Jacques Loire (Chartres, France) after a painting by German artist Johannes Dietz

Builder (Annex)

Unknown

Location:

2100 Biscayne Boulevard

Miami, Florida

Present Owner:

Bacardi Imports, Inc.

2100 Biscayne Boulevard

Miami, Florida 33137

Present Use:

Office

General Boundary

All of the lots comprising Block 1 of the Bayonne Subdivision (Plat Book 2, Page 35) generally described as NE 21st Street on the south; Alley separating the Edgewater subdivision from the Bayonne Subdivision(essentially mid block) on the north; Biscayne Boulevard on the east, and NE 2nd Avenue on the west.

Folio Nos.

01-3230-031-0040
01-3230-031-0050
01-3230-031-0060
01-3230-031-0070
01-3230-031-0080
01-3230-031-0090

Legal Description (includes six folios, reading east to west)

Folio # 01-3230-031-00040

The west 30 feet of Lot 7 and Lot 8, Block 1; Lot 9 block 1 and property interior in and to common elements not dedicated to public lot size 184.000 x 100;

Folio # 01-3230-031-00050

Lot 9 Block 1 and prop interior in and to common elements not dedicated to public lot size 12880 square feet;

Folio #01-3230-031-00060

Lot10 Block 1 and property interior in and to common elements not dedicated to public lot size 12880 square feet;

Folio #01-3230-031-00070

Lot 11 Block 1 and property interior in and to common elements not dedicated to public lot size 70.000 x 184;

Folio #01-3230-031-00080

Lot 12 & east 30 feet Lot 13 block 1 and property interior in and to common elements not dedicated to public lot size 100.000 x 184;

Folio #01-3230-031-00090

Lot 14 & west 40 feet Lot 13 block 1 and property interior in and to common elements not dedicated to public lot size in the Bayonne Subdivision, and property interest and to common elements not dedicated to the public Lot size, 184.000 x 100 as recorded in Plat Book 2 at Page 35 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Setting

The buildings are located on the west side of Biscayne Boulevard, at the northwest corner of Biscayne Boulevard and NE 21st Street.

Integrity

The exterior of the buildings possess a high degree of integrity; minor alterations (such as the addition of shutters on the glass pedestal) are easily removable.

II. Significance

Statement of Significance

Although relatively young to the cityscape of South Florida, the Bacardi Building Complex's presence along Biscayne Boulevard has become a *de facto* landmark and a must-see part of many a visitor's itinerary. The structures are outstanding examples of International Style modernist architecture, and relate to Latin American modernist architecture in their use of materials and in their stylistic considerations.



The Bacardi Corporation has long understood the relationship between architecture and corporate image building, and has established a reputation for commissioning buildings expressing contemporary values. The company employed internationally-renowned architects such as Ludwig Mies van der Rohe¹ and Felix Candela² to design structures in locations such as Cuba and Mexico. The company also commissioned the work of Cuban architects. The firm of Saenz, Cancio, Martin, Gutierrez (SACMAG) was part of the architectural team for many of Bacardi's buildings as structural engineers, and as designers. Patronage of the arts was also part of the Bacardi tradition. Leaders of the company understood the concept of "synthesis of the arts" whereby architecture would be designed with visual art and interior design components in mind, creating a unified design ideal. The Bacardi building in Miami is an outstanding example of this concept, popular in Latin American modernism, put into practice.

The Bacardi Building Complex is not only a testament to the creativity of the architect and designers; it also represents a pivotal chapter in the rise of a multi-national corporation with significant ties to the City of Miami's history. When the Castro³ government seized the assets (estimated to be worth over \$76 million) of *Bacardi y Compañía, S.A.* (Santiago de Cuba) in October of 1960, the company was able to reposition itself as a multi-national corporation by strengthening its production in Latin America and the Caribbean. The relocation of the sales and marketing corporation, Bacardi Imports, from New York to Miami in 1964 was a symbolic move that further internationalized the brand. More importantly, the move also sent a strong political message to the exiled community of Miami, and the international community at-large, of the corporations' triumph over adversity.

¹ Mies Van der Rohe (1886-1969) along with Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier is considered a pioneer of contemporary architecture. Mies was the Director of architecture for the Bauhaus School, before he immigrated to Chicago. Some of Mies' most important buildings include the 1951 Farnsworth House (a one room steel and glass house just outside Chicago), and the 1958 Seagram Building in New York, New York.

² Felix Candela was a Spanish-born architect and structural engineer. He emigrated to Mexico in 1949 and was a highly influential figure in modernist architecture. He pioneered many techniques using thin-shell reinforced concrete creating structures considered feats of engineering in their elasticity.

³ Fidel Castro (a.k.a. Fidel Castro Ruz) spearheaded the Cuban Revolution when he led a group of armed rebels implemented a series of guerrilla tactics within the Sierra Maestra mountains as part of the M-26-7 (*Movimiento 26 de Julio*) to overthrow Cuban president Fulgencio Batista. On January 1, 1959, Castro was officially declared president and installed a socialist dictatorship in Cuba that continues today. Castro officially resigned as president of Cuba February 2008 and currently his brother Raul Castro serves as the acting president.

III. Historical Information

The Founding of a Dynasty: The Bacardi Corporation History

The Bacardi story is one of resilience and steadfast dedication. The company and the Bacardi name survived wars of independence, alcohol prohibition, and revolution. Miami's tower building, commissioned in 1962 for the new headquarters of Bacardi Imports, the year of the company's 100th anniversary, is evidence of the tenacity of its founders.



The story of one of the largest privately held international corporations in the world had its humble beginnings in Santiago de Cuba⁴ when in 1862 Don Facundo Bacardi Masso purchased a distillery for 3,500 pesos. The fruit bats which filled the rafters of the distillery became the distinctive logo of the Bacardi Company, known the world over. Don Facundo perfected the formula for rum with an innovative charcoal-mellowing filtration technique and an aging technique for rum utilizing used bourbon barrels from the United States. After retiring, he left the company to his sons Emilio, Jose, and Facundo.

The popularity of Bacardi rum and the new *Cuba Libre*⁵ cocktail ushered in an era of popularity and success for the corporation. Emilio Bacardi Moreau expanded the company to the United States and Spain. In 1915, the company opened a bottling company at 267 W. Broadway in New York and built a distillery in Santiago to replace the original which was completed in 1922. The inauguration of the distillery would be his last official act as president of the corporation. Emilio Bacardi died a few months later at age 78.

This end of Bacardi's meteoric growth seemed certain when in 1919 Congress passed the Volstead Act, ushering in prohibition of alcohol consumption and production in the United States, which took effect in 1920. The Bacardi Corporation prepared for the worst. After Emilio Bacardi's death, Vice-president Enrique Schueg closed the new plant in New York and issued "wet stock" in the company—one share of stock was worth one case of rum.

⁴ Santiago de Cuba, the nation's second largest city, is located on the south-eastern coast of the island of Cuba, some 450 miles from the capital city of Havana. The city was founded by the Spanish in 1514.

⁵ Many of the famous rum cocktails still popular today are illustrative of the relationship between the US and the island of Cuba. It was during the American occupation of Cuba following the Spanish-American war in 1898 that two of the most popular cocktails were created. The *Cuba Libre* (Bacardi Rum and Cola) is credited to a group American soldiers who named the beverage concoction in honor of the Cuban independence from Spain; and the Daiquiri, credited to an American mining engineer working in the small town of Daiquiri.

Prohibition, the “Roaring Twenties,” and the Rise of the Modern Tourist Class

The “Roaring Twenties” in America referred to the unbridled optimism and new freedoms experienced by America following World War I. Under President Calvin Coolidge’s administration, Americans had more expendable income than ever before. Henry Ford’s Model “T” made transportation affordable to the middle class, and with the construction of more and more highways by the federal government, a new tourist class took every advantage of their new mobility. Advances in aeronautics made leisure flying a possibility for American tourists and this era signals the birth of the commercial aviation.

Contrary to original expectations, Bacardi thrived during Prohibition. American tourists flocked to Havana on holiday to enjoy world-class amenities, a tropical climate, casinos, and unlimited alcohol. The Bacardi Corporation launched a substantial marketing campaign taking full advantage of the proximity of Cuba to the United States via Miami. One popular brochure (designed in the Art Deco style) stated, “Bacardi the Best of Havana.” Another Bacardi advertisement captioned “Flying in From the Desert” featured a whimsical rendering of Uncle Sam flown from the US (the “desert”) to Havana by the Bacardi Bat. When landing at the Havana airport, Bacardi representatives greeted tourists with sample cocktails.

In 1924, *Bacardi y Compañía, S.A.* began construction of a Havana office building designed in the Art Deco style. The building became a tourist destination and a landmark for the city, as Bacardi libations were served in the famous mezzanine bar. Bacardi also benefited from being *the* rum served at Havana’s nightclubs and casinos.

Pan American Airways commenced mail service to Cuba from Key West on October 19, 1927. By 1928, Pan Am was flying from a seaplane base at Miami’s Dinner Key direct to Havana. Pan American ticket offices had advertisements that read, “Fly to Cuba and bathe in Bacardi rum.”⁶ In 1933, seaplane flights departed from a newly constructed Streamline Moderne Seaplane Base in Dinner Key, Miami.⁷ From this decade on, Miami is referred to as “The Gateway to the Americas.”

Internationalization of a Cuban symbol

The tenure of Enrique Schueg as President of Bacardi marked the beginning of the international expansion of the Bacardi brand. Because of several efforts to levy substantial taxes on the corporation by the Cuban government, Schueg decided to open a plant in Mexico in the mid 1930s, and hired his son-in-law Jose “Pepin” Bosch⁸ to head up the corporation. Bosch was able to turn around sales for the corporation in Mexico after many considered the endeavor a lost cause.

⁶ Several publications make reference to this advertisement, such as *On Becoming Cuban* by Luis Perez, Jr.

⁷ The Pan Am Seaplane Base was later rehabilitated and is currently used as Miami’s City Hall.

⁸ The members of Bacardi have long been involved in the politics of Cuba. As ardent freedom fighters they fought for Cuba’s independence from Spain as well as from dictatorships. Bosch was no exception. On

During Bosch's tenure in Mexico, the United States repealed prohibition and Bosch was given the task of re-energizing marketing efforts.⁹ Bacardi re-established a corporate office in New York's famous Chrysler Building. In 1936, the Bacardi Corporation built facilities in Puerto Rico to produce rum on the island and import to the U.S.

In 1949, Bosch was officially elected as president by the Board of Directors. His presidency is a continuation of Schueg's work, significantly increasing efforts towards internationalization and marketing. In 1944 Bacardi Corporation, established Bacardi Imports: a sales, distribution, and marketing entity for the corporation. The first CEO of Bacardi Imports was H.B. Estrada. The advertising of this era began to reflect a shift towards re-positioning the company and its product as international rather than as Cuban. An example of this is the "all nations can agree" campaign of the late 1940s.

Post World War II Cuba was an era of prosperity thanks to booming sugar production and the resurgence of tourism. Havana once again became a key tourist destination. Fifty years after gaining independence from Spain, the country had a rising middle class and a sense of optimism. This era was also characterized as one of rampant corruption. President Fulgencio Batista staged a coup d'état in 1952 ousting the president and establishing an administration riddled with special interests and strong ties to the American mafia. As a cautionary move out of fear of corporate intervention by the Batista regime, Bosch incorporated Bacardi and Co. Limited in Nassau, Bahamas in order to protect the labels and trademarks of Bacardi.¹⁰

Taking full advantage of prosperity, the corporation continued to expand. In 1956, Bosch commissioned modernist architect Felix Candela to design a distillery Izucar Mexico, and a new distillery opened in Puerto Rico (1958). Bosch was also exploring the possibilities for building a distillery in Recife, Brazil.

Revolution and Rum

The Castro regime, brought to power by the M-26-7 movement and Castro's guerrilla warfare tactics, seemingly ushered in an age of democracy. The Bacardi family, including Bosch, at first defended the regime as democratic. It would not be long after Castro took power on January 1, 1959, that the regime would begin to show its true colors. Bosch's perception of Castro would change after a fateful exchange of words between him and the new president while on a plane en route to Washington D.C. for a diplomatic mission. As his suspicion of

January 1, 1950, Bosch took the job of finance minister of Cuba under the administration of Carlos Prío Socarras (1948 – 1952). He was charged with levying taxes in order correct an \$18 million dollar deficit. In 14 months, Bosch was able to create a surplus of \$15 million.

⁹ Bosch introduced the marketing practice of traveling bars and began training bartenders to make the signature drinks that Americans had grown to love and associate with the brand—a marketing tactic that has been a signature of Bacardi's for fundraisers and arts events in Miami since Bacardi Imports moved to the city in 1964.

¹⁰ Dawson, Mari Aixala and Pepin R. Argamasilla. *Bacardi: A Tale of Merchants, Family, and Company*. Miami: Facundo and Amalia Bacardi Foundation, Inc., 2006.

Castro grew, in 1957 Bosch mailed the Bacardi trademark certificates for all Bacardi trademarks to the New York office. He mailed them one-by-one, so as not to arouse suspicion.

In 1960, the Castro regime nationalized \$850 million of U.S. oil company assets, including an oil exploration company Bosch had co-founded. Castro sent a soldier to the Bacardi offices requesting that \$18 million dollars worth of company assets in New York banks be signed over to the regime. Bosch refused to sign the check stating that, per company bylaws, he needed to consult his shareholders.¹¹ The soldier left empty-handed that day, but Bosch knew it would be a matter of time before the government would find other means of persuasion. Shortly thereafter, Bosch was on a plane to Miami with his family, joining an ever-growing community of political exiles.¹²

Exile

"Compañia ron Bacardi has been confiscated. But only in Cuba ... We are not finished elsewhere. We are still alive"

- Communication to distributors by President Jose "Pepin" Bosch

The Bacardi building in Miami was constructed in 1963, three years after the corporation was forced into exile from Cuba after the nationalization of their property and forfeiture of the assets on October 14, 1960 by Cuba's newly-installed communist regime. The Bacardi Company suffered a severe blow, but their internationalization efforts proved to be the corporation's saving grace. An even greater effort was now underway, as Bacardi refashioned itself with its new facilities commissioning world-renowned modernist works of architecture. New corporate offices were built in Mexico by Mies van der Rohe (ca. 1960); a distillery in Tultitlan, Mexico (1960); a new bottling plant was designed by Felix Candela employing his signature vaulted roofing made of thin shell concrete (1960); Canada (1972); corporate offices in Bermuda designed by Mies van der Rohe(1972); and Spain (1974). The loss of their Cuban assets reiterated in Bosch and the shareholders the necessity for internationalization.

In light of all the expansion into Latin America, the company that was no longer solely Cuban, adopted a Latin American corporate identity and established their marketing and sales offices in Miami, "The Gateway of the Americas." H.B. Estrada, then CEO of Bacardi Imports commented in a *Miami Herald* article regarding the move in 1962, "Our decision to move our offices to Miami is based on our belief that a company such as ours, with a Latin American orientation, can operate more efficiently in the United States from a Florida headquarters."

The move was also symbolic, as the Miami building represented a show of solidarity with the growing exile population. Through its architecture, Bacardi

¹¹ Gjelten, Tom. *Bacardi and the Long Fight for Cuba: The Biography of a Cause*. New York: Penguin Books, 2008.

¹² From 1962 – 1974, an estimated 450,000 Cuban exiles would arrive in Miami and were processed at the Freedom Tower "El Refugio" (The refuge) from chartered flights, dubbed the "Freedom Flights" leaving Varadero Beach in Cuba for Miami.

Corporation portrayed a vision of a bright future in light of adversity. Architectural historian Gray Read states, "The Bacardi building in Miami was one of a succession of buildings built by company in the 1950s and 60s, which can be read as pointed architectural assertions of corporate identity in the face of political upheaval."¹³

Bacardi and its president became leaders in the Cuban exile community. They assisted their workers who arrived as exiles with job placement, temporary housing, and salaries. The corporation, and its president, became a key player in the battle against the Castro regime. Bosch devoted his time and finance to the counter-revolutionary cause. He and other members of the Bacardi family enlisted in aiding the CIA against the regime. Bosch established the "Citizens Committee for a Free Cuba" in Washington DC to educate members of Congress as to the true dictatorship and its continual human rights abuses. He also assembled sixty exile leaders at the Bacardi Imports Miami corporate offices with the aim of selecting a final team of five that would become the "*Representacion Cubana del Exilio*" (RECE). One of these men was Jorge Mas Canosa.¹⁴

Bosch was forced to retire as president of Bacardi in 1976. By that time, the corporation that started as one company founded in Santiago de Cuba in 1892, had grown into a complex corporate structure comprised of five corporations: Bacardi and Co. Limited (BIL) in the Bahamas; Bacardi Corporation (Puerto Rico); Bacardi Imports (USA); *Bacardi y Compañía, S.A. de C.V.* (Mexico); and Bacardi International Limited (Bermuda), the headquarters of the parent company. Bacardi was distilled in five plants, located in four different countries. In the 1960s and 70s, Bacardi reported more growth than any other liquor company. In 1979, Bacardi rum outsold every other brand of liquor in the United States market.

IV. Architectural Information

"The Architecture of Modernism"

Description

Site

The Bacardi "complex" is located on Biscayne Boulevard on an elevated platform, or plaza, raised for the parking garage below. The first building, the Bacardi Tower, was designed by Enrique Gutierrez of SACMAG (Saenz, Cancio, Martin, Gutierrez) International. Ground was broken for the building on January 3, 1963, and the building was formally dedicated January 25, 1964. The second building, The Annex, designed by Ignacio Carrera-Justiz of Coral Gables, Florida, was completed in 1973.



¹³ Read, Gray. "The Bacardi Building in Miami: Crafting an Identity." Unpublished essay.

¹⁴ For over three decades, Mas Canosa was a dominating figure in the right-wing Cuban exile community and undoubtedly was instrumental in shaping the political landscape in Miami. In 1981, urged by officials in the Reagan administration, Mas Canosa formed the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF).

The two buildings are situated within an elevated corporate plaza space surfaced with permeable concrete pavers. Between the two, on the floor of the plaza, is a large-scale painted version of the Bacardi logo which is lit at night and meant to be seen from airplanes flying overhead to and from the Miami International Airport. The floor of the plaza, or roof of the underground garage, is supported by a series of twelve inch columns and was designed with a cast-in-place concrete joist system. Both structures are accessible by elevator from an underground garage, a site design that is decidedly void of surface parking lots and cars. The 40-car parking garage below was constructed as a “reverse swimming pool” in order to prevent water infiltration (given Miami’s high water table) and is only slightly below grade.

Tower

The first building on the site, commonly known as the Tower, is located on the eastern-most side of the plaza facing towards Biscayne Boulevard. The tower was commissioned by former Bacardi president Jose “Pepin” Bosch, who had a strong interest in contemporary architecture and commissioned several architects to design modernist buildings for the family corporations during his tenure.

The architectural vision for design most aligned with that of Bosch was that of the Bauhaus School, particularly Mies van der Rohe. Bosch had visited Mies at the ITT campus in Chicago and wanted to model the company’s headquarters in Santiago de Cuba after the Crown Hall building at ITT—Bosch wanted an ideal office setting free of walls, where all employees could see one another. Mies enthusiastically accepted the commission in 1958—just one year before events would drastically change for Cuba. Plans were suspended indefinitely after Cuba’s nationalization of Bacardi’s assets in Cuba in October of 1960 and the offices were never constructed. The office building nevertheless became part of his body of work.

Bosch then set out to commission a headquarters in Bermuda and sales headquarters in Miami. For the Miami Bacardi Imports headquarters, Bosch retained the firm SACMAG and commissioned the work of Enrique Gutierrez,¹⁵ a Cuban architect and principal in the firm who had previously worked as Mies’ local contact throughout the planning of the Bacardi headquarters in Santiago de Cuba. Gutierrez also collaborated with Mies and Candela for the corporate office and bottling plant buildings in Tultitlán, Mexico.

¹⁵ Enrique Gutierrez graduated from the University of Havana, School of Architecture in 1955. He practiced in Cuba as a partner in the firm SACMAG. Mr. Gutierrez relates that the firm had a long-standing relationship with the Bacardi Corporation and were involved in the design of several of the Bacardi buildings during the tenure of Bacardi president Jose M. Bosch (interview with Mr. Gutierrez). SACMAG in Havana was founded in 1948. At first solely concentrated on structural engineering, the firm quickly expanded to include architectural design, soil mechanics, topography—but mainly focusing on engineering and architecture. While headquartered in Cuba, the firm primarily worked on bridges and structural engineering for modernist buildings. Prior to working with SACMAG, Gutierrez worked with the Arquitectos Unidos Group under the leadership of Humberto Alonso and designed several interesting projects, the most notable being the College of Architects Office Rental Building in Havana, a commission the Arquitectos Unidos received as a result of a competition.

Bosch wanted an iconic building, one that would represent the company's vision of the future, its corporate ideals, and a sense of permanence and stability. As part of the design requirements, the building was to be tall in order to gain visual presence the busy thoroughfare of Biscayne Boulevard and also comfortably accommodating no more than 50 employees. The result was a unique structure that spoke to the artistic milieu of the late 1940s and 50s in Cuba, and to the architect's personal design aesthetic.

The Tower building houses the Bacardi Museum, office space, and the highest floor accommodates a dining room and corporate bar. The tower is exemplary of the International Style of architecture in its reductionist logic, emphasis on geometry, and its feats of structural engineering. It is comprised of a rectangular seven-floor tower (measuring eighty-one by thirty-two feet) which appears to cantilever over a bottom glass square pedestal at the plaza level, giving the illusion of floating weightlessly. In an article dated from 1987, Gutierrez points out that the Bacardi Tower's glass "gallery" (pedestal) "called for creative overall structural design."¹⁶

Gutierrez solves the design problem of creating weightless elegance through a feat of engineering. Skyscrapers must support static loads (weight of the structure, floors, equipment, etc.) and live loads (winds, seismic pressures). To address these considerations, the building has three structural components: four reinforced concrete columns, a set of two flat trusses, and two end walls (north and south).

The glass pedestal carries none of the weight of the structure. The structure is supported by four reinforced concrete vertical columns faced in white-veined marble—one pair on the west façade and one pair on the east—all anchored into the bedrock, each measuring 30" x 14" x 118.' The four vertical columns, in turn, support twin longitudinal (flat) concrete trusses which cantilever out twenty-four feet from the columns in both directions, like outstretched arms.



Details, Tower Building



¹⁶ [Miami Herald](#). "Artistic office building promotes Art with Gallery." August 23, 1987.

From each end of the two reinforced concrete trusses run a series of cables that hold up the north and south end walls. These end walls are made of six inch thick, cast-in-place concrete panels that are post-tensioned¹⁷, meaning that cables run down the sides of the panels and also to connect each floor of the building to the truss holding them all up. The end walls hold about a third of the static load (weight of the floors, equipment, etc.) that pushes downward. This is counter-acted by the cables that run through them and create upward tension. This system prevents the concrete panels from cracking, and eliminates water penetration and salinization—which causes reinforced concrete spalling, a persistent problem in South Florida and a particular problem with this site, two blocks from the ocean. The post-tensioning of the concrete end walls creates surfaces that will not buckle or crack—a design requirement of Mr. Bosch's. A corporate brochure describing the building states that it is almost as if swinging in the air; the bottom pedestal can be demolished and the building would remain standing, unchanged. This glass pedestal served as a public reception and often an art gallery, as a service to the community.¹⁸

The service core tower, which houses the elevators and the service rooms, connects all the floors of the tower with the underground garage. The service tower is a cast-in-place concrete box with eight inch thick walls that connect via a passage to each floor, in this way the service tower is designed to resist hurricane force winds by absorbing some of the lateral loads. Having the service core (elevators) on the exterior of the structure is a unique design and differs from the usual placement of this core running through the center of structures.

The trusses are situated on the structure's flat roof. This flat roof—a hallmark of the International Style—functions somewhat like an eighth floor. It was purposely left open because of this design and also to conceal noisy mechanical equipment.

The main façade (east) faces Biscayne Boulevard composed of a glass curtain wall¹⁹ (tinted glass) which provides panoramic views of the bay. The east glass curtain wall appears to be divided into three bays. This is achieved, in part, by the location of the support columns, faced in veined, white marble. The west façade is a glass curtain wall as well, the center of which is attached to the exterior service tower.

Another interesting design element is the two flights of floating exit stairs on either side of the glass pedestal. The stairs add a focal point to the ground floor and

¹⁷ For a more detailed explanation on post-tensioned concrete, visit the Portland Cement Association's website at http://www.cement.org/buildings/post_tensioned_splash.asp

¹⁸ *Miami Herald*. "Artistic office building promotes Art with Gallery." November 18, 2002.

¹⁹ A curtain wall is defined as thin, usually aluminum-framed wall, containing in-fills of glass, metal panels, or thin stone. The framing is attached to the building structure and does not carry the floor or roof loads of the building. The wind and gravity loads of the curtain wall are transferred to the building structure, typically at the floor line. Aluminum framed wall systems date back to the 1930's, and developed rapidly after World War II when the supply of aluminum became available for non-military use. Source: National Institute of Building Science, Whole Building Design Guide, http://www.wbdg.org/design/env_fenestration_cw.php

visually draw the eye up to the tower and also contributing to the visual weightlessness of the structure. This was the architect's solution for demonstrating that the stairs are not structural supports in any way.

An Allegory of the Tropics

In contrast to the clean, uniform glass surfaces of the east and west facades created by the glass curtain walls, the north and south end walls are panels of ribbed pre-cast concrete with a stylized painted tile mural. A contemporary *azulejo*²⁰ mural with sinuous designs of tropical plants and animals is painted on white tiles with various tonalities of blue. Bosch hired Brazilian artist Francisco Brennand to design and paint the *azulejo* tile murals for the North and South Facades of the building. Bosch had met Brennand in Recife, Brazil—a sugarcane producing region—when opening a Bacardi plant there in 1961. The commission would be one of the first major commissions for Brennand upon returning to Brazil from Paris.

There are over 28,000 6" x 6" tiles creating two surfaces that address the north and south of Miami and are meant to be viewed from a distance. The tiles were fired in Brazil and installed as a giant puzzle, each tile hand-numbered by Brennand. The *azulejo* murals should not be simply decorative. Brennand considered them an "overlay," resulting in a seamless integration of visual arts with architecture. His stylistic influences are Pablo Picasso, Joan Miro, Gaudi, and his friend artist Fernand Leger.²¹ His style is best described as primitivist, or that of a trained modern western artist purposely choosing to create art that resembles that of primitive cultures, or self-taught artists. The work evokes images of tropical Brazil and its exuberant flora. Describing the work, Brazilian curator Sergio Millet commented,

In Francisco Brennand, the clean, decided stroke is also sensual and very Brazilian. If it sometimes seems decorative, it is because of its sweetness which tames the tropical, lushness of form and places it in the measure of man ...There is in his drawing, as in the drawing of Matisse or Leger, a voluntary purification, but it never lapses into schematism. I like his floral patterns, which are reminiscent of ceramics, and which express so well his refined but healthy sensitivity.²²

Annex—a Jewel Box on a Pedestal

As the company grew, it outgrew the Tower and needed more office space. The lots behind the Tower, which previously had large estates, were purchased in order to expand the corporate plaza and construct an Annex structure. Much like its predecessor, the Annex is also an outstanding example of modern design and engineering; it is exemplary of cantilever construction. This square building is

²⁰ The use of *azulejos* (white Majolica tiles painted with oxides, usually blue indigo) as applied decoration for architecture dates back to medieval Spanish-Moorish and Portuguese traditions—an artistic tradition which endured in their colonies such as Brazil and Cuba. These murals range from strict applied decoration of compositions of single-fired designed tiles, to painted murals comprised of various tiles that are allegorical in nature.

²¹ New York Times. "In Brazil, Iconoclast Is Bearded In His Den; A Controversial Sculptor Revels in His Menagerie," April 22, 2004.

²² Miami Herald. "Tiles Tell Sensual Tale of the Tropics." February 2, 1964.

raised forty-seven feet off the ground by a pedestal. This two story office space, cantilevers out twenty-four feet from its central core on all sides as each floor is hung from 28 foot tensor rods from a reinforced roof. In contrast to its predecessor's design, the structure supported its central reinforced core. This permits non load-bearing outer walls are covered in thick hammered stained glass "tapestries," which were designed and manufactured in France by S.E.A.R. under the direction of Gabriel and Jacques Loire of Chartres, France.

The stained glass walls are based on an abstract painting by German artist Johannes Dietz.²³ These surfaces tell another story—an allegory of how Rum is made from sugar cane. Originally, Bosch envisioned the overall effect of this "jewel box" to read like a billboard, once illuminated at night.

The International Style of Architecture

"International Style" is a term used to describe modern architecture built since 1922. The term was coined at the first exhibition of architecture at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA) in 1932. The exhibition entitled *The International Style: Architecture since 1922* by historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock, and the first Director of Architecture at MoMA, architect Phillip Johnson. The style emerges particularly with the work of these architects: Walter Gropius in Germany, Oud in Holland, Le Corbusier in France, and Mies van der Rohe in Germany.

Hitchcock and Johnson explained that there were three guiding principles for the new style: architecture as volume rather than mass; regularity, rather than symmetry, as the means by which to structure design; and avoidance of applied decoration. Buildings expressed volume rather than massing because exterior load-bearing walls that previously created 'massing' were replaced by a non-load bearing skin—comprised of smooth walls or large expanses of glass. The expression of volume would reach its maximum in Mies van der Rohe's design for glass curtain wall.

The style was characterized as devoid of any reference to place or antecedents. The building was reduced to simple form that followed a rational design best expressed by Le Courbusier when he stated that the house is a "machine for living." This concept implies a rational ordering of the interior space. The style emphasized a new design paradigm—minimalism—as its core aesthetic. It is the building material itself that has supremacy; the building materials are allowed to remain in the purest state possible. Roofs were left flat, geometric shapes prevailed, and surfaces were clean and devoid of any applied ornamentation.

²³ Although this is stated in numerous articles, an exhaustive search did not produce any further information on the artist by the name of Johannes Dietz, or any information with regards to the provenance of the painting.

Latin American Modern Architecture

When Bacardi archivist Pepin Argamasilla speaks of the Tower building, he states it was “the first Cuban-Inspired architecture in Miami.” The first building would reflect the international style that dominated Cuban architecture in the 50s, an affluent time for the entrepreneurial and professional classes which led the exile from Castro's government²⁴

From the 1930s – 1960s, Latin American architects in Brazil, Venezuela, Mexico, Colombia, and Cuba created not just a few examples, but massive projects that promoted an image of a progressive nation-state and optimism for the future.²⁵ During this 1940s and 1950s, Cuba was on par with other Latin American modernist capitals with respect to architecture. Architects like Gutierrez were highly influenced by the work of Walter Gropius, founder of the Bauhaus, who lectured in Cuba during this period. It became essential for architects to travel mostly to the United States, but also to Latin America and Europe.²⁶ Cuban architects were also influenced by Richard Neutra, Igor Polevitzky, and Phillip Johnson who all designed projects in Cuba. Highly influential was the work of Felix Candela who pushed the “building envelope” with creative designs that seemed to defy gravity. Gutierrez had the opportunity to work with each of these architects on projects before leaving Cuba.

Architectural critic Valerie Frazer argues that Latin American modernism is not simply an uncritical re-working of European modernism, but ‘constitutes an alternative modernism’:

Critics like Hitchcock watched with fascination as a group of Latin American architects appropriated European modernism with its ‘style-less style’ and then proceeded, with great dexterity, to translate it into a Latin American product.

According to Henry-Russel Hitchcock²⁷, tiled surfaces became one of the key character-defining elements of the international style in Latin America. Examples are found in the work of Brazilian Architect Oscar Niemeyer and in such iconic structures as the *Habana Hilton* (today the *Habana Libre*) with its tiled surface mural decorated with a painting by Cuban artist Amelia Peláez. Cuban architect and architectural critic Eduardo Luis Rodriguez²⁸ claims that Cuba reached its ultimate modernist expression in architecture through the integration of tradition and modernity. In Latin American modernist architecture, Colonial (in some instances pre-colonial) elements found subtle integrations into

²⁴ [Miami Herald](#). “Spirited Design Bacardi's Buildings have helped define Miami.” January 22, 2005.

²⁵ Frazer, Valerie. *Building the New World: Studies in the Modern Architecture of Latin America 1930 – 1960*. New York: Verso Publishing, 2000.

²⁶ Rodriguez, Eduardo Luis. *The Havana Guide: Modern Architecture 1925 - 1965*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000.

²⁷ H.R. Hitchcock was an architectural historian and the first director of the architecture department of the Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA). He was a highly influential figure and through his contemporary analyses, he helped shape perceptions and the development of modern architecture. Along with architect Phillip Johnson, Hitchcock would coin the term “International Style” and define a movement in architecture. Hitchcock, H.R. *Latin American Architecture Since 1925*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1955.

²⁸ Eduardo Luis Rodriguez is an architect, art historian, and editor of “*Arquitectura*” magazine in Cuba. He is a noted scholar on Cuban architecture.

modernist structures to create a distinguishable variation of the International Style.

The concept of "synthesis of the arts" is a current that runs through modern Latin American architecture. Tiled surfaces, murals both painted and tiled, glass mosaics, outdoor and indoor sculpture, all found meaningful integration into the overall design of architecture. Both buildings are perhaps the only structures in Miami that relate to Latin American modernism and are illustrative of the concept of "synthesis of the arts."²⁹

This concept and the term coined by the historian Sigfried Giedion, the artist Fernand Léger, and the architect José Luis Sert, outlined "Nine Points on Monumentality," in 1938 when they expounded how modern architecture could be monumental. One of the key vehicles for monumentality would be through the collaboration of architects, planners, artists, and landscape architects to create works that could be viewed at a great distance, even from an airplane.³⁰ Even before concept of synthesis of the arts became formalized, it was already an ideal of the Bauhaus³¹ expressed in the utopian definition: "The building of the future" was to combine all the arts in ideal unity.

This concept of the synthesis of the arts is an important aspect of Gutierrez's work. Before his exile, Gutierrez worked with the Department of Public Works in Cuba. Gutierrez established the Visual Arts Division of this department and implemented guidelines stipulating that 2 – 3% of the total budget allocated for new construction was to be allocated for providing a public art component integrated into works of architecture.³²

²⁹ DOCOMOMO-US. "The Bacardi Building: Miami" by Enrique Madia and Jean Francios Lejeune. Spring 2009 edition.

³⁰"Monument, Memory, and Modernism." Essay by Anthony Vidler, Dean of the Cooper Union School of Architecture. http://archweb.cooper.edu/exhibitions/kahn/essays_02.html

³¹ Founded by Walter Gropius in 1919, the Bauhaus would have the greatest influence on the International Style.

³² Phone conversation with Gutierrez and Laura Lavernia dated Monday, August 17, 2009.

Relationship to Criteria for Designation

(3) Exemplify the historical, cultural, political, economical, or social trends of the community.

The Bacardi Corporation has ties with Miami that flourished during the tourist boom of the 1920s. Pan American seaplanes flew American tourists from Miami to the city of Havana for vacations, advertising sunny beaches and an ample supply of Bacardi rum.

The Bacardi Complex relates to a period of internationalization for the Bacardi. It was under the leadership of president Jose M. "Pepin" Bosch that the company took decisive turn from positioning itself as a Cuban company, to incorporating a series of international companies, distilleries and bottling plants which made it possible to sell the product on an international level. In contemporary history, the Bacardi family has established itself as a pillar of the Cuban exile community in Miami through their involvement in politics, and as patrons of the arts. The corporation is one of the most successful Hispanic businesses in the world and is a source of pride for Miami's community.

(5) Embody those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or method of construction.

The Bacardi complex, comprised of the Tower building and Annex, are outstanding examples of the International Style of architecture. The building reflects the development of the international style in key cities in Latin America, particularly the development of mid century modern architecture in Havana, Cuba. Both form part of a corporate complex illustrative of the "synthesis of the arts" movement, prevalent in Latin America.

The buildings are examples an era where feats of engineering in architecture were prevalent. The Bacardi tower is unique in the combination of its structural support components in order to create an overall sense of floating and weightlessness with the use fragile glass pedestal on the ground floor masterfully designed by the architect Enrique Gutierrez and engineered by the firm SACMAG. The Annex is an outstanding example of cantilevered construction and is also a fine complement to the tower building.

Criteria Exceptions

Ordinarily, properties must have achieved a fifty-year benchmark in order to be considered for historic designation. Section 23-4 (b) of the City Code states in part:

Ordinarily...properties that have achieved significance within the past fifty (50) years shall not be considered eligible for listing in the Miami Register of Historic Places. However, such properties will be considered eligible for designation if... *it is exceptionally significant* (emphasis added).

The Bacardi Buildings are of exceptional significance for their design which incorporates elements of the International Style. The tower building is also a tour de force in its engineering. The buildings have come to symbolize the determination and abilities of the Cuban exile community. The buildings are also constructed at a pivotal time in the Bacardi Company's history as it becomes internationally known. The Bacardi Complex is perhaps the most popular of all of Miami's Modernist buildings.

V. Planning Context

Present Trends and Conditions

The Bacardi holdings include seven (7) lots on the block, which would allow area for expansion. The Bacardi Corporation is in the process of relocating its offices to Coral Gables. Should the corporation sell the buildings, any new owner could look at the possibilities of expansion as necessary.

Conservation Objectives

The exterior surfaces of the historic structures should continue to be preserved in their original state, and any new buildings planned for the site should be designed and sited in a manner sympathetic to the historic character of the property.

The local historic designation will establish a dialogue between the owner and the city should future plans for the site be forthcoming.

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Photos



The Bacardi Buildings
2100 Biscayne Boulevard
Designation Report



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