



# MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC # 011-2007

## LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor David Dermer and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager

DATE: January 12, 2007

SUBJECT: **LIFEGUARD STANDS**

As reported to members of the City Commission in previous LTC's regarding Hurricane related damage, the 2005 hurricane season caused massive damage to the City's inventory of elevated beach lifeguard towers. Eleven towers were destroyed outright, only one of which was an art deco or iconic tower, and several damaged to the point they could not be safely repaired and used for routine service.

In order to address the immediate public safety concerns of an inadequate number of beach lifeguard viewing platforms for heavily utilized beach areas, the City had two basic options that it could pursue. The City could have purchased on the open market pre-made lifeguard towers or undertaken to construct lifeguard towers using City personnel or contractors. The City opted to undertake construction as a result of a need for expediency, as well as to contain costs while providing a durable product. Purchased lifeguard stands would have cost approximately \$50,000 per stand as evidenced by acquisitions recently made by the City of Fort Lauderdale for similar structures. The more expensive purchased structures also did not offer any increase in hurricane survivability. The City's estimate of costs for constructing lifeguard stands internally with Property Management personnel was approximately \$25,000 per stand and was achievable through the creation of a standardized mass production line or process. Constructed stands would allow some customization of the stands to accommodate the user needs for height and viewing preferences on the beach.

Given the urgency of the public safety concern, the Property Management Division of the Public Works Department proceeded to build as expeditiously as possible, twenty two new ocean lifeguard towers to replace those damaged or in need of replacement due to wear and tear and deemed unusable. The principle concern was the rapid construction of sturdy and functional lifeguard towers and less so for the aesthetic considerations associated with the towers. Of the twenty two that were constructed, in spite of the mass production approach to quickly place sturdy and durable lifeguard towers on the ocean beaches, the Property Management Division was still able to do some minor customization to offer some aesthetic consideration. Different color schemes were utilized and other minor external changes were incorporated in order to provide some differentiation of the different lifeguard towers. The City has received a mixed review of comments on the lifeguard towers from terrific to terrible. Regardless of the varied public response to appearance, the Property Management Division did an excellent job in fulfilling the principal task of addressing public safety concerns expeditiously.

As the immediate public safety concern has been satisfied, the City now has the opportunity to address the community feedback about the aesthetics of the lifeguard towers. A number of persons expressed a desire to have a more art deco or iconic design than was used.

During subsequent discussion of lifeguard stand design, Bill Lane, one of the original architects of the lifeguard towers that the community regards as art deco or iconic offered his services for free to assist the City in creating new designs for the lifeguard stands.

The City is already pursuing the generous offer of Mr. Lane to undertake a process of constructing more lifeguard towers in a more iconic or art deco style than we were able to accomplish in the last year.

As a starting point, prior to the 2005 hurricane season, the City of Miami Beach had a total of twenty nine (29) lifeguard towers in its inventory, including the three(3) new lifeguard stands added in the 2005-2006 budget. Five (5) of the total number are regarded as unique or iconic in some nature. One of these iconic structures was destroyed in 2005 hurricane season and at this point in time four (4) are still in inventory and deployed in the community for use by the Ocean Rescue. Going forward, the City will be able to build approximately two (2) custom designed/iconic lifeguard towers in each three month period at a cost of approximately \$45,000 per stand in order to enhance this lifeguard tower inventory. The custom built art deco/iconic lifeguard stands are more time consuming to build than the mass produced stands, and as a result economies of scale achievable in mass production are not realized.

Attached are a series of pictures that illustrate the surviving art deco stands, other lifeguard stands before the 2005 storm season and several views of newly constructed lifeguard stands.

At the January 17, 2007 City Commission meeting there is a discussion item on the agenda relative to lifeguard towers in which the members of the City Commission may wish to focus upon the design process and which individuals or groups that might appropriately be involved in design development and review. Commission may also wish to refer this matter to the Neighborhoods/Community Affairs Committee for further and more detailed discussion.

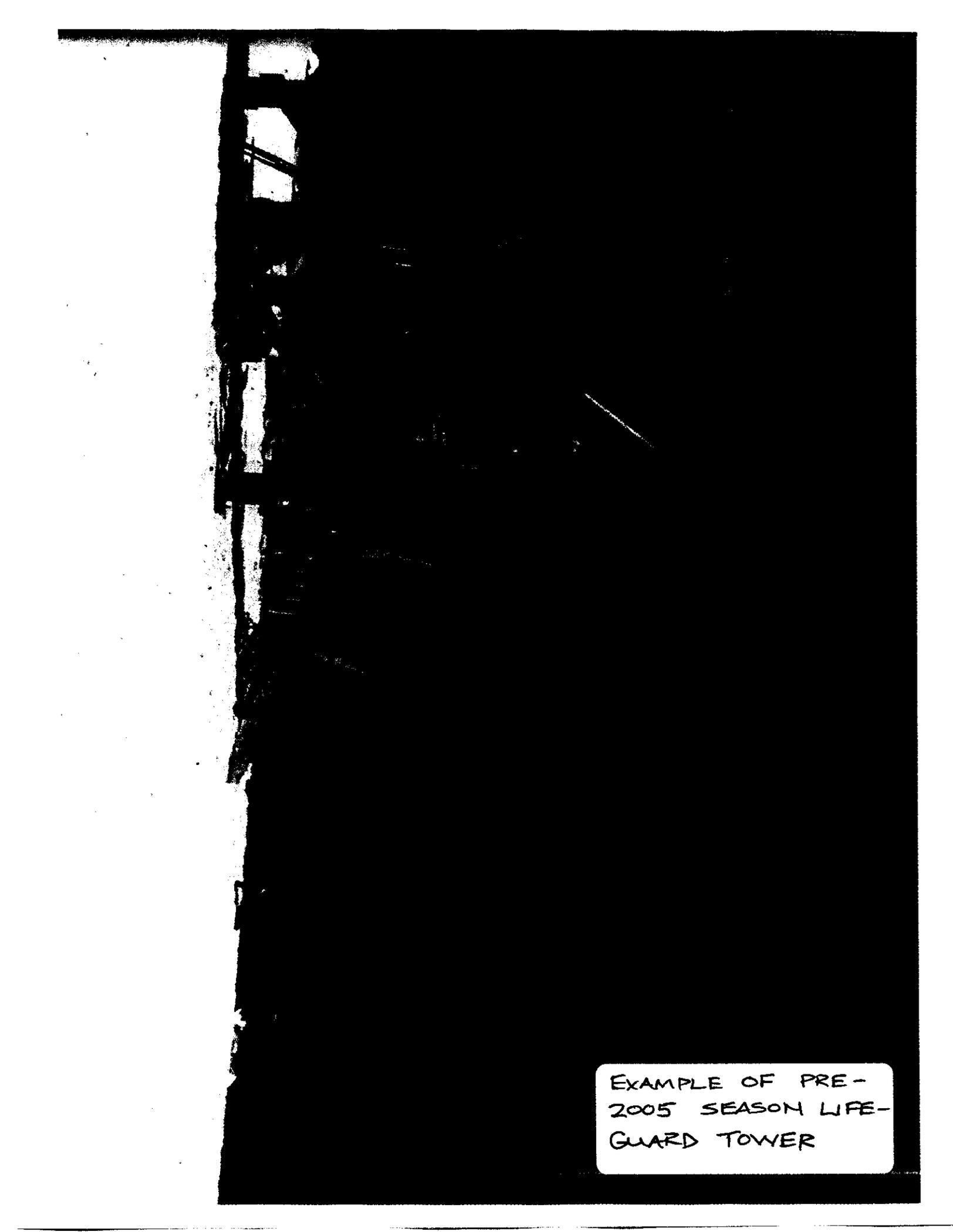
The issue for the members of the City Commission is not the willingness or ability of the City to create new and more design friendly ocean lifeguard towers, but the process under which the design will evolve and ultimately how many the City would like to have in its overall inventory. The Administration is ready to begin construction of additional newly designed lifeguard towers and would appreciate some process direction.

JMS/BOM/sam

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Attachments

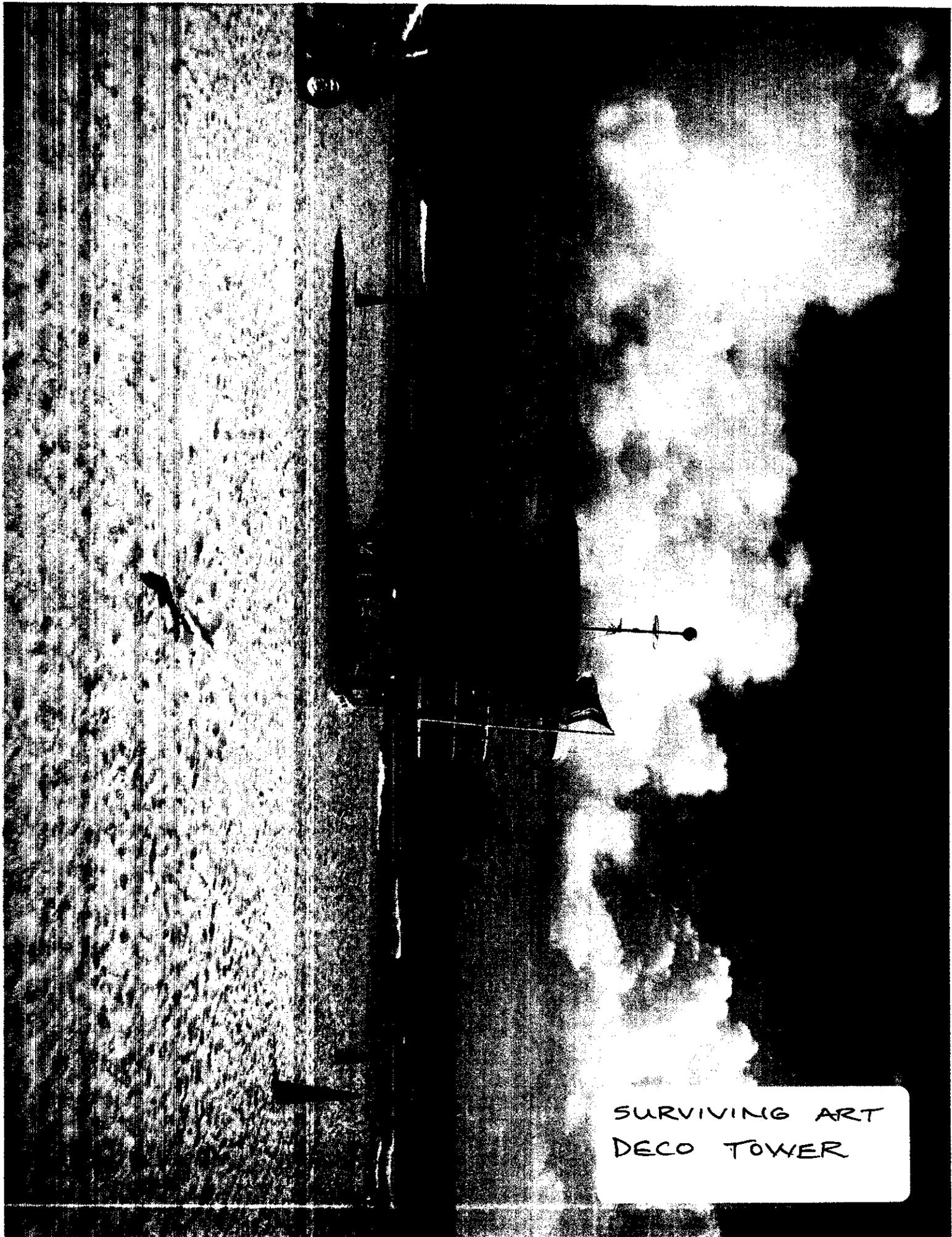
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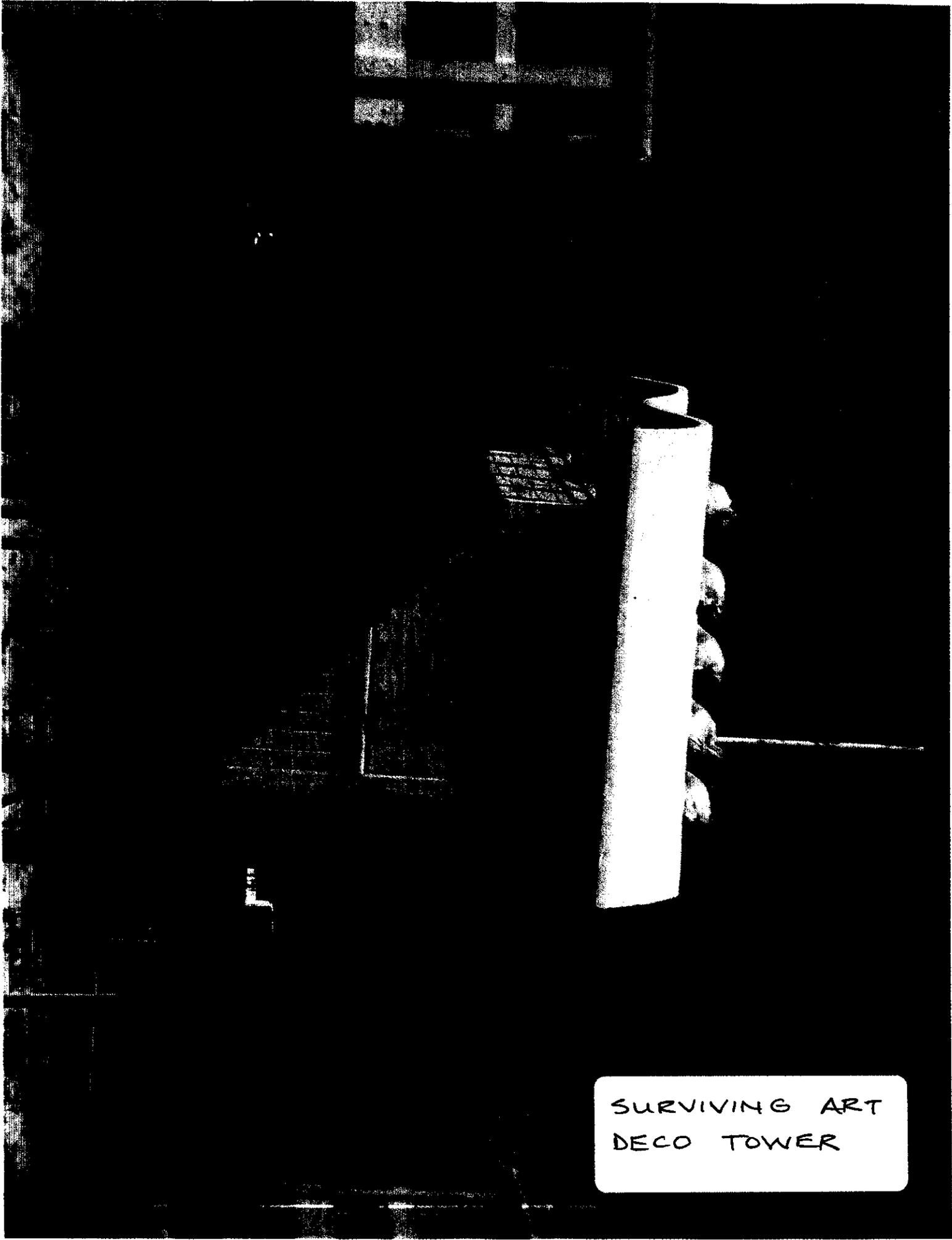
EXAMPLE OF PRE-  
2005 SEASON LIFE-  
GUARD TOWER



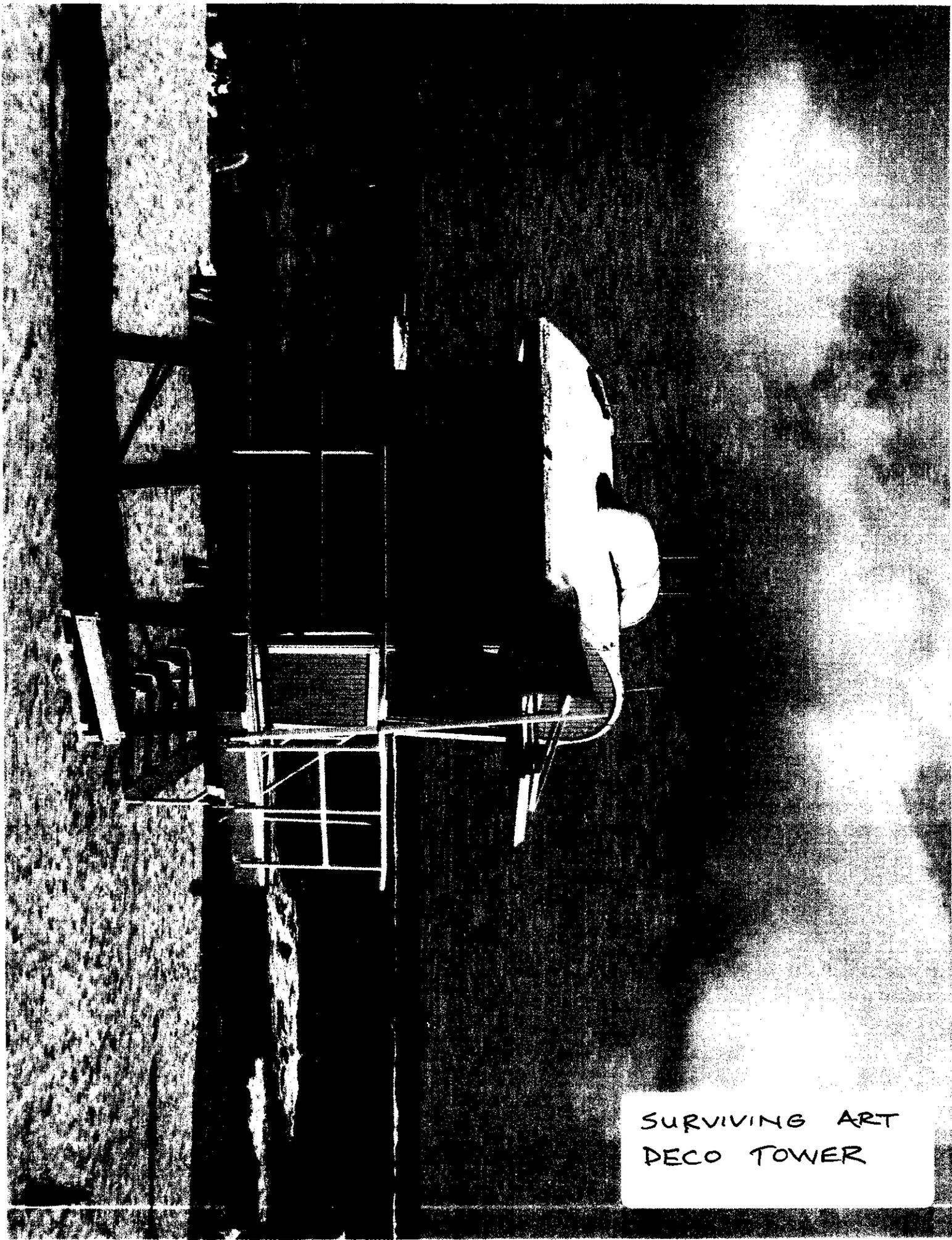
SURVIVING ART  
DECO TOWER



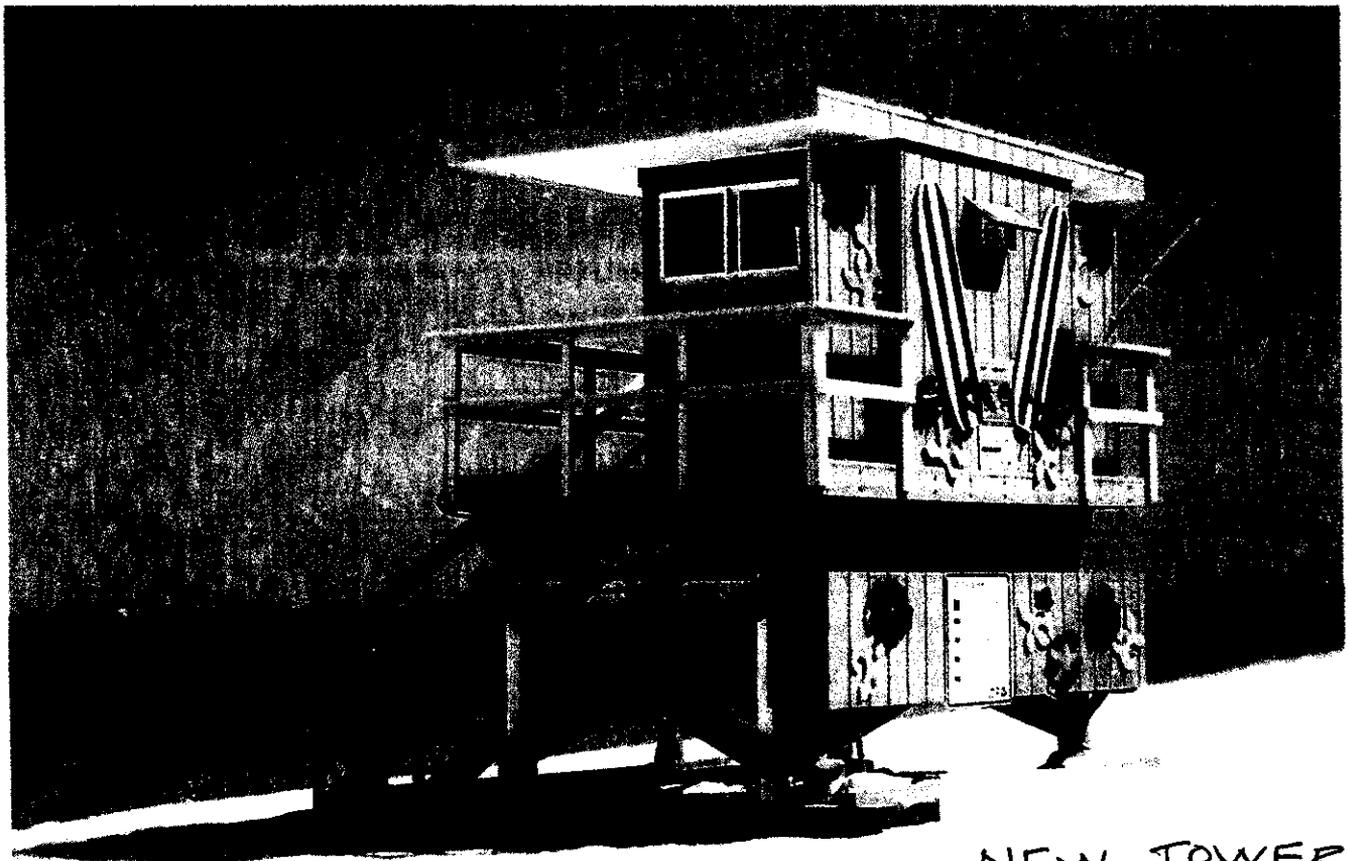
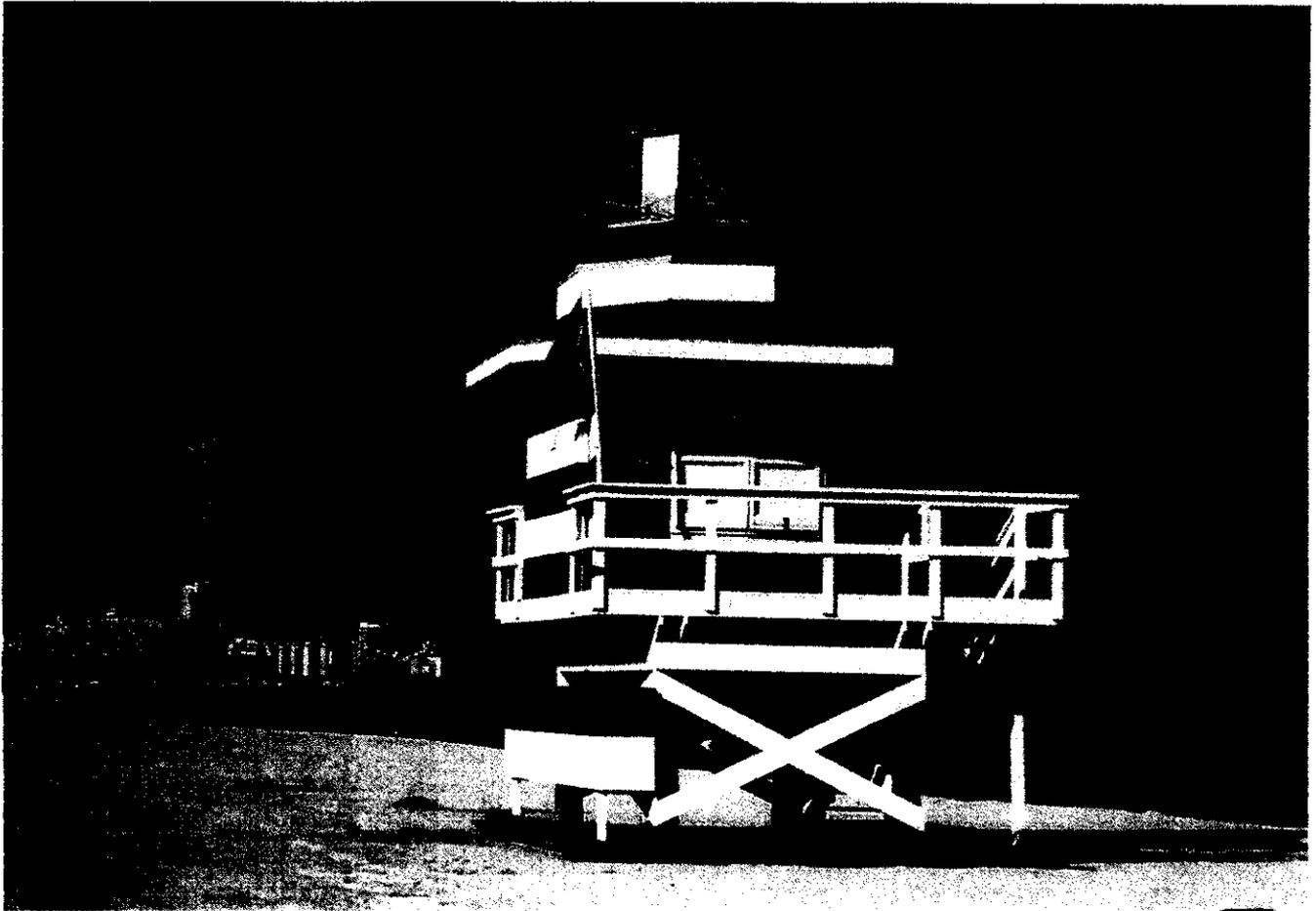
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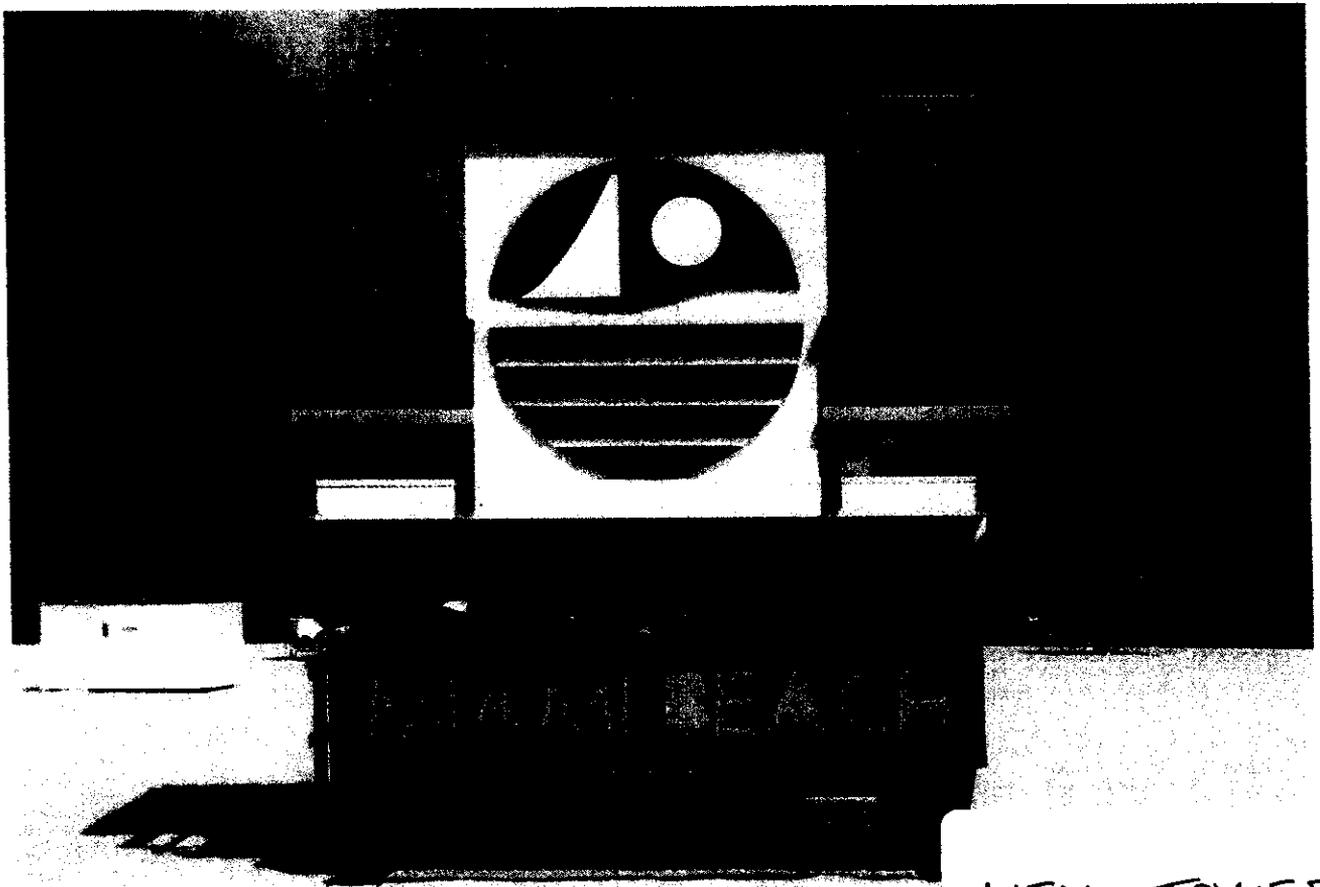
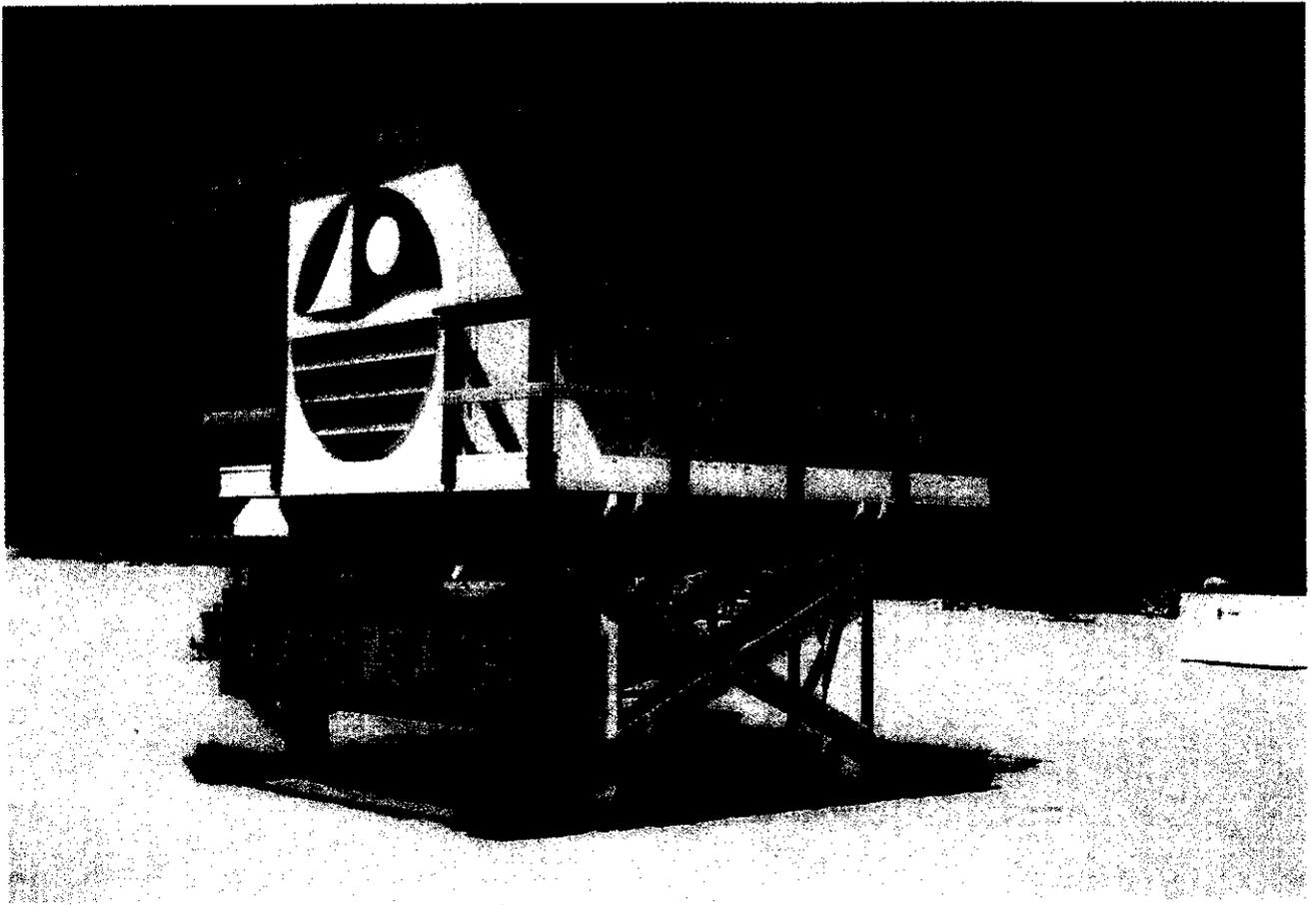
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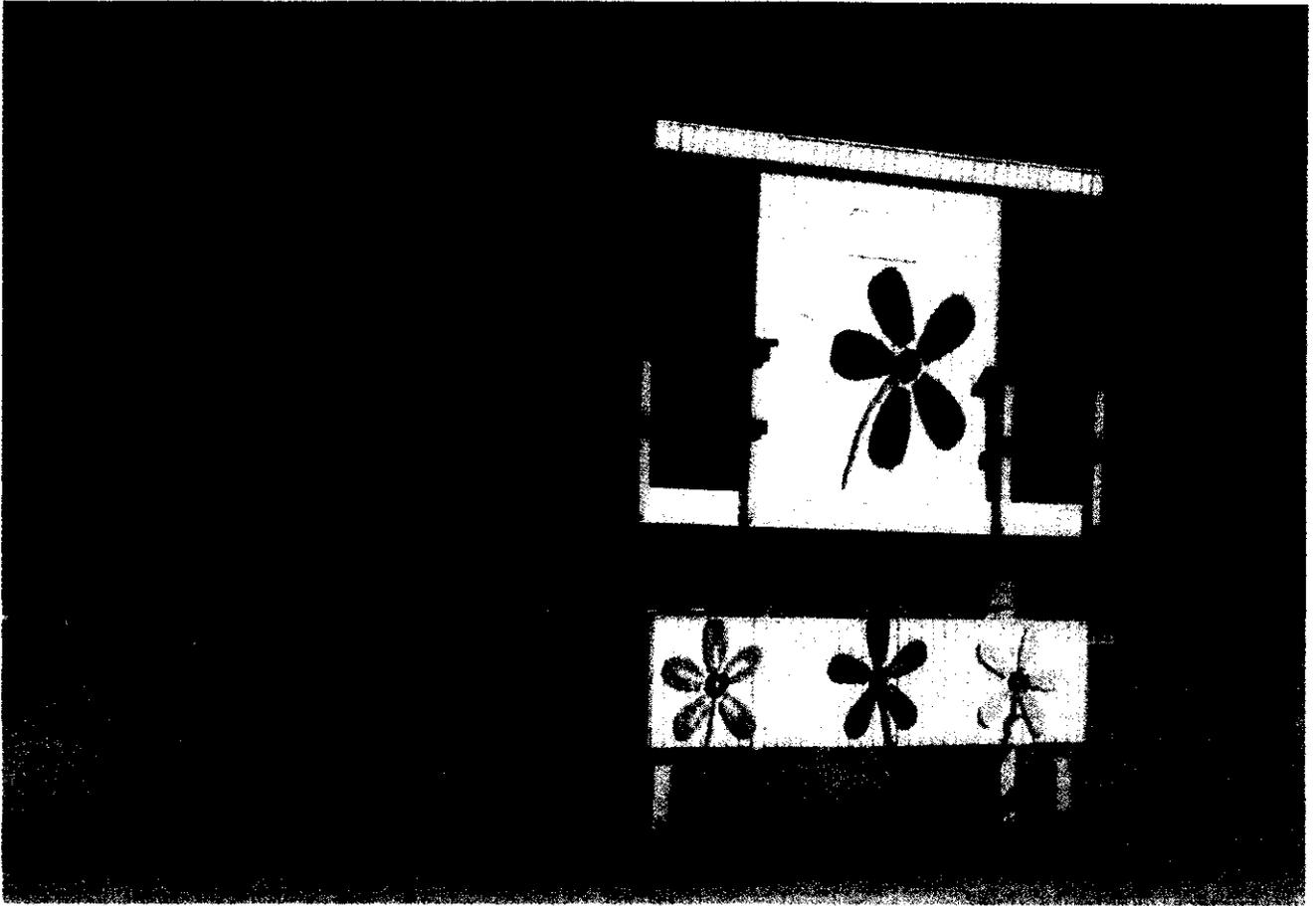
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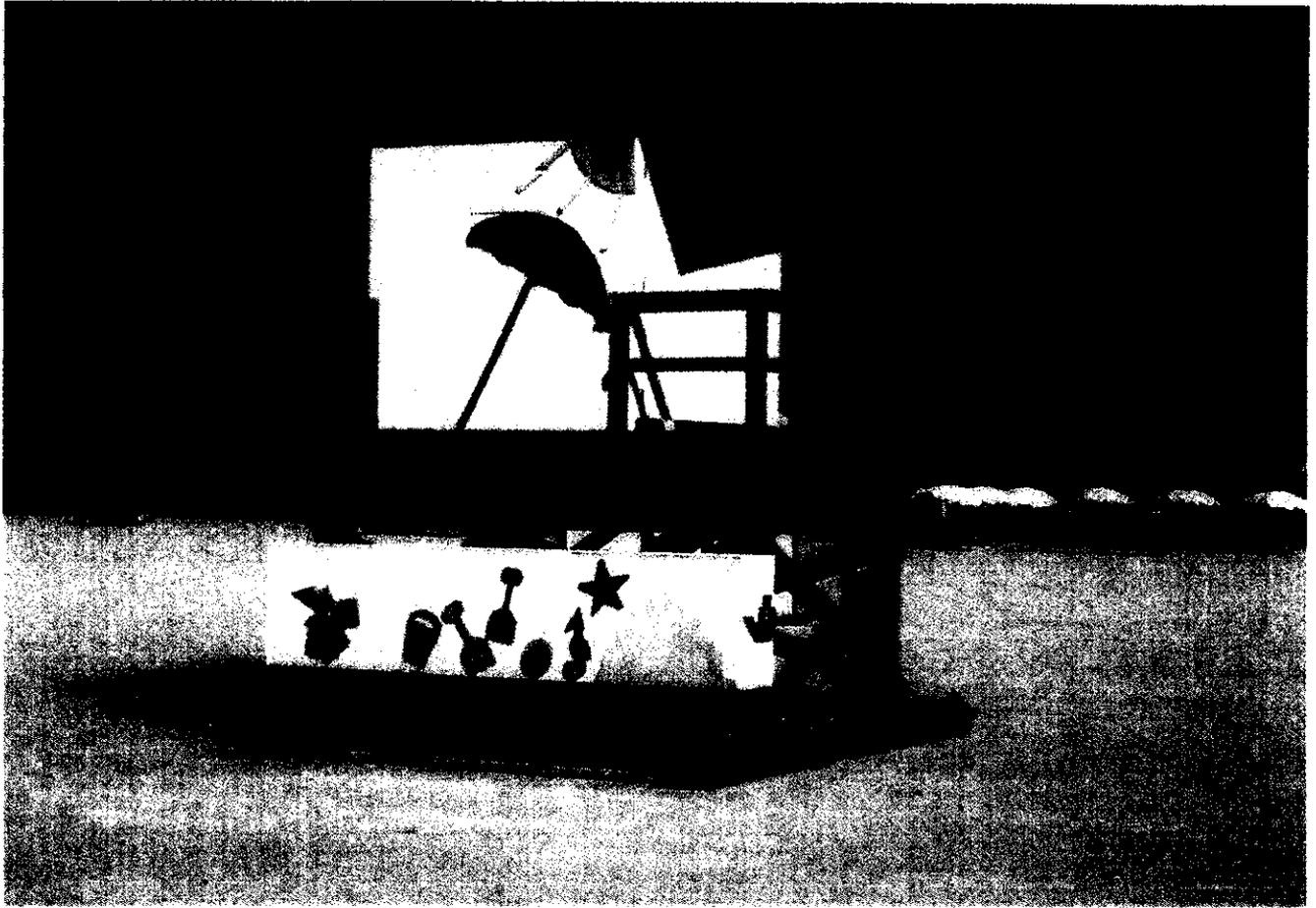
NEW TOWERS



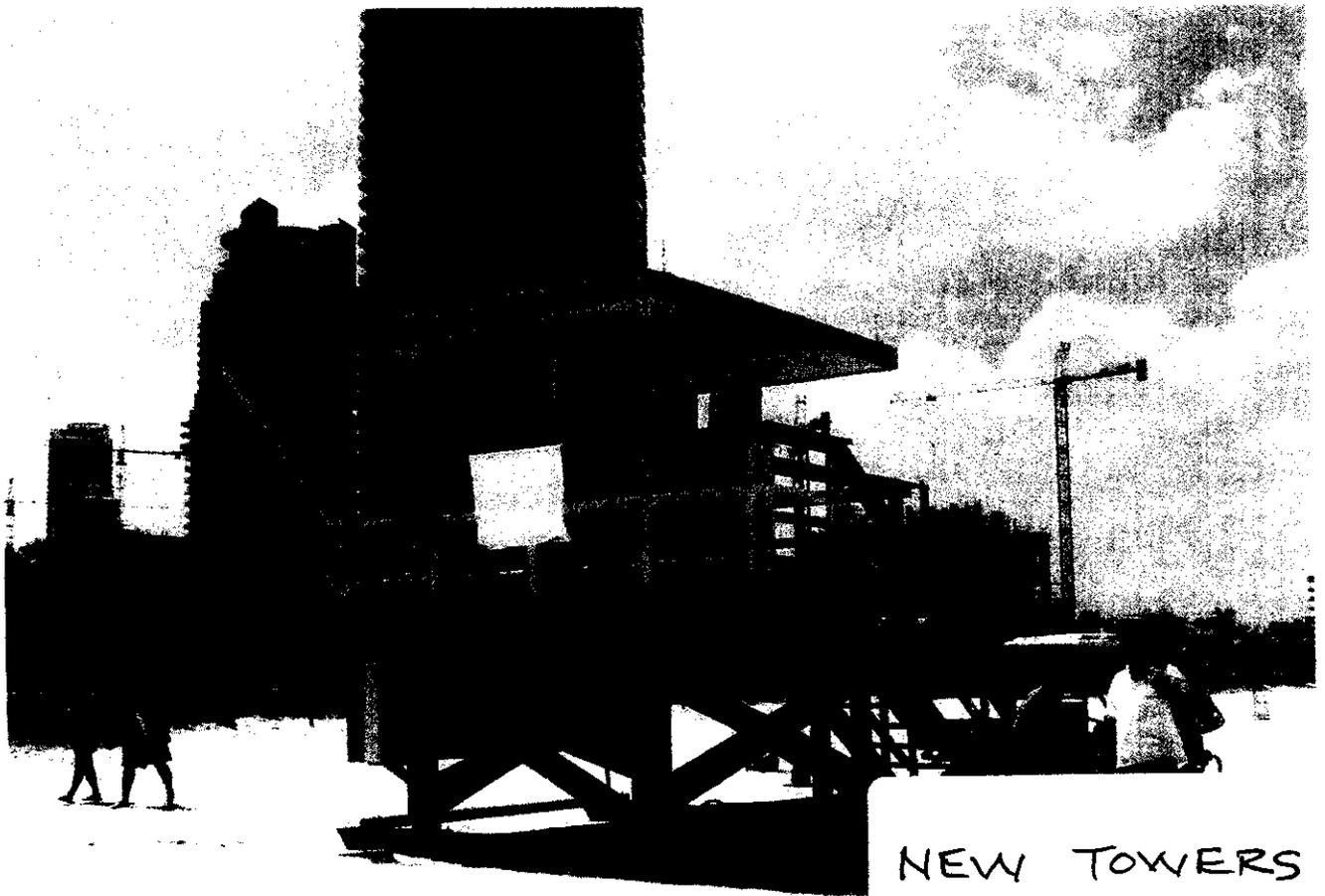
NEW TOWER



NEW TOWERS



NEW TOWERS



NEW TOWERS