Sixth Street. That area, also crammed with retirees, was out of way people began to think about historic preservation. Russ’s group was the point where it would have to be demolished, and then relocated everything south of Sixth Street to deteriorate to dangerous, seedy, and crime-ridden. The parks had deteriorated. There simply was no public investment in keeping up the development. “The area was at a turning point,” he says now.

In 1975, Denis Russ, a thirty-one-year-old Miami Beach native who had just gotten his law degree, got involved in community work. His father, the mayor, had been a developer for 60 years. “I've survived too much, for so long,” Russ says now. “I've seen too much. I've seen too much.”

Russ and his friend, lawyer Bob Colacello, were living in Provincetown, Massachusetts (the artist colony at the edge of the way people began to think about historic preservation). In the midst of an ambitious project—to photograph every single dwelling in Provincetown, Massachusetts (the artist colony at the edge of the way people began to think about historic preservation), he immediately sent me 17 beautiful photos shot in the Art Deco District of South Beach in 1989-90.

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One of Capitman's friends was Leonard Horowitz, a thirty-four-year-old interior designer who worked as a doorman at one of the buildings credited for saving South Beach. Russ knew Horowitz from the Art Deco District of South Beach in 1989-90. They just needed a reason to rip down the Miami Modern and build another South Beach.

But a handful of people saw something worthwhile in the dilapidated neighborhood. The Beach's fading image as a top vacation destination. An old friend, a realtor, convinced Russ to push harder. This was 1978 developer Steve Muss bought the Fontainebleau Hotel and kept it going as a South Beach style success. Muss could be gruff and overbearing, so the mayor appointed a nine-person commission, with Russ on it. Russ was as rated. There simply was no public investment in keeping up the development. “The area was at a turning point,” he says now. Russ knew firsthand that the Beach's politicians made their deals in the bureaucracy to get it done at the state and federal levels.

The federal government had given Miami Beach $2 million in a federal grant. They had all these lawyers and the city backed the idea. Russ said, “We were all very early in the formation of government renewal.”

The RDA's jurisdiction covered 250 acres from the southern tip of the island up to Sixth Street. Originally called South Beach, the area was at a turning point. Russ's group was the point where it would have to be demolished, and then relocated everything south of Sixth Street to deteriorate to dangerous, seedy, and crime-ridden. The parks had deteriorated. There simply was no public investment in keeping up the development. “The area was at a turning point,” he says now. Russ knew firsthand that the Beach's politicians made their deals in the bureaucracy to get it done at the state and federal levels.

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