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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name WORTH'S BLOCK

other names/site number Gator Club

2. Location

street & number 1490 Main Street N/A not for publication

city or town Sarasota N/A vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Sarasota code 115 zip code 34236

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
[Signature] 4/27/98
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register See continuation sheet
 determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain) _____

[Signature] 6.3.98
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
Edson H. Beall

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

Name of related multiple property listings
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/Grocery Store

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

COMMERCE/TRADE/Professional Office

COMMERCE/TRADE/Cocktail Lounge

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/Cocktail Lounge

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE/Masonry Vernacular

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Tar & Gravel

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1912-1948

Significant Dates

1912

1928

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Arch: Unknown

Blder: Westbrook, W.B.

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of Repository

#

WORTH'S BLOCK
Name of Property

Sarasota Co., FL
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	3	4	7	5	6	0	3	0	2	4	4	2	0
Zone	Easting			Northing											
2															

3															
Zone	Easting			Northing											
4															

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mikki Hartig, Historical & Architectural Research Services/Carl Shiver, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date _____

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (850) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Gator Club Corporation, c/o Ernest Ritz, President

street & number 1490 Main Street telephone (941) 366-5969

city or town Sarasota state Florida zip code 34236

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section number 7 Page 1

WORTH'S BLOCK
SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

Worth's Block, located at 1490 Main Street in Sarasota, Florida, is a two-story, masonry vernacular, commercial building. Rectangular in plan, the 25' X 100' brick building adjoins the public right-of-way on three sides, while the western elevation abuts a neighboring commercial structure. Constructed in 1912, Worth's Block was designed for use as a "shop-house," with the ground floor being used for commercial purposes and the second floor being used as a residence. Both the exterior and interior of the building have undergone a number of alterations since 1912, the first major changes taking place around 1928. The present appearance of the original exterior brick walls reflects the removal in 1988 and 1997 of stucco that was applied about 1960. The main (north) facade has been restored to its c. 1912 appearance, featuring a street level storefront and two sets of paired windows set in segmental arch brick surrounds on the second story. The door and window bays of the east elevation have been relocated a number of times over the 86 years since Worth's Block was first put into service. The exterior of the building is in good shape and retains many aspects of its original appearance.

SETTING

Sarasota is a city with a population of approximately 51,000 persons located in western Florida about 55 miles south of Tampa. The city is situated on Sarasota Bay, an inlet to the Gulf of Mexico. Worth's Block is found on the corner of Main Street and Lemon Avenue in downtown Sarasota. Presently, downtown Sarasota has a number of large office complexes, fine dining establishments, and retail stores. Although a number of historic commercial buildings are still found in the downtown area, particularly along Main Street, the majority of the structures are of a later date, most of them having been constructed in the last thirty years. Also, many of the historic buildings have facades that have been altered or covered. In the past decade, a combination of public and private ventures have been undertaken to revitalize Sarasota's original commercial district by focusing on renovating historic buildings.

PRESENT APPEARANCE

Exterior

Today, Worth's Block still remains a two-story, rectangular, vernacular, brick commercial building. The street level storefront overlooking Main Street is symmetrically divided into three

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bays (photos 1-4). The main (north) entrance, located in the central bay has recessed paired glass doors. The entranceway is flanked by two plate glass display windows set in a reconstructed wooden storefront, with 5-light transom windows in each of the three bays, a denticulated cornice frieze at the top, and wood kickplates beneath the display windows. Reproduction period lighting fixtures are found in the brick pilasters flanking the storefront. On the second floor of the main facade are replacement 1/1 light, double hung sash windows set in openings with segmental arches. Identical replacement windows also fill all of the other second story window openings in the building (photos 1 & 3). A label panel is found in the middle of the main facade above the second story windows. The flat roof of the building is surrounded by a low, corbelled parapet that is stepped downward toward the rear of the structure. Five fixed glass windows have been placed on the first story of the eastern elevation. A freight entrance, once located near the southeastern corner of the elevation has been relocated farther north, now being located between the second and third window bays (moving from north to south). The south elevation has no window or door bays and is covered with stucco.

Interior

Originally containing retail spaces, the first floor of the building presently contains a cocktail lounge. The second floor was originally divided into rooms for residential use, but was altered in later years. All of the existing interior partitions were installed in 1989 when the second floor space was divided into a bar, billiard room, lounge, office, storeroom, and restrooms.

Alterations

Worth's Block underwent many alterations over the years to meet the changing needs of its tenants. The first documented alteration occurred around 1928, when another storefront was added to the east elevation of the building to accommodate a second business operation. About 1960, stucco was applied to the exterior walls of the building. At that time the Main Street storefront was partly obscured. In 1988, the building underwent a major rehabilitation. The stucco was removed from the main facade and the east elevation to reveal the original brick (photos 1 & 2). The exposed brick, which had been painted at one time, was cleaned by hand. On the second story of the east facade, and on the entire south elevation, the stucco had been applied directly to the brick; however, on the first story of the east elevation, and on all of the main facade, the stucco had been attached to metal strips. The stucco was removed only from the main facade and the first story of the east elevation in 1989. The remaining stucco on the east elevation was removed in 1997.

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SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

During the rehabilitation the Main Street storefront was reconstructed to appear as it had in 1912. All of the original window openings had been covered during the 1960s. During the 1989 rehabilitation, all of the second story window spaces were reopened and fitted with 10/10 light windows flanked by decorative louvered shutters. These windows were replaced with 1/1 light, wood sash windows during the 1997 renovation, and the louvered shutters were removed. The segmental arches of the windows were restored, and wooden templates were installed between the arches and the tops of the windows.

When the stucco was removed from the first story of the east elevation in 1989, a partially intact, circa 1928 storefront was found. The storefront was removed and replaced with a large fixed glass window. Sometime during the 1960s, two additional window openings had been cut into the first story of this elevation. Three additional fixed glass windows were added to this elevation, and the near-center single door opening was moved north and enlarged to accommodate recessed double glass doors, matching the reproduction, main entry doors in the Main Street storefront. One original door opening on the east elevation still remains. Located near the rear of the building, this doorway gives access to stairs leading to the second floor. The main street facade once featured a metal awning supported by two metal posts.

The 1989 and 1997 rehabilitation work was undertaken with the intent to restore the exterior of the building as close as possible to its original appearance. The main (north) facade now approximates the building's 1912 appearance, but a certain latitude in renovating the east facade was necessary for the adaptive use of the building as a bar and nightclub. The building has continually maintained its integrity of location and association and has regained some of its integrity of design, materials, and feeling as a result of the 1989 and 1997 rehabilitation work. The most recent renovations of the building were undertaken as part of a certified rehabilitation following the Secretary of the Interior's guidelines for the rehabilitation of a historic structure (See enclosed copy of the Historic Preservation Certification Application; Request for Certification of Completed Work).

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WORTH'S BLOCK
SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

Worth's Block is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Commerce for its association with the early commercial development of downtown Sarasota. The building has been continuously associated with the development of downtown Sarasota and has been used for a wide variety of commercial uses in its 86 years of existence. Its many uses reflect the changing economic conditions of downtown Sarasota over its period of historic development. Worth's Block was constructed during the city's second period of development—1900-1913—and is a good example of the kind of pre-Florida Boom vernacular commercial architecture that comprised much of downtown Sarasota before the 1920s. Worth's Block was the second brick building erected in the downtown area and is presently the oldest brick building retaining much of its original design character.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The city of Sarasota had its beginnings with the establishment of a post office in 1878. In 1884, land in what is now the downtown Sarasota area was purchased by the Florida Mortgage and Investment Company, a British corporation that surveyed and platted acreage for sale to settlers. Late in 1885, a group of immigrants from Great Britain arrived at the newly platted, but as yet undeveloped, village of Sarasota. The little settlement developed rapidly, with the construction of residences, business buildings, hotels, and other improvements. Also in 1885, the area was linked with the outside world by the steamship Mistletoe, which made daily trips between Sarasota and Tampa. In Tampa, Henry Plant's railroad provided a transportation link to points farther north.

In 1902, the Town of Sarasota was established as the area's first form of local government. Beginning in 1903, the Florida West Shore Railway began to bring visitors and permanent residents to the growing community. This railroad was purchased by the Seaboard Air Line Railway in 1909.¹ Rail transportation also brought a large variety of manufactured goods and building materials not previously available.² Markets for Sarasota's fishing, citrus, and agricultural industries were expanded, and commerce began to increase. Tourists and settlers were attracted to the area, and the permanent population grew steadily, prompting small infrastructure improvements, such as the installation of wooden sidewalks along Main Street.³

¹ Elmer G. Sulzer, Ghost Railroads of Sarasota County (Sarasota Historical Society, 1971), 31.

² Kira Zender, Historic Summary for the Preservation Element, March 29, 1991, p. 3

³ Karl Grismer, The Story of Sarasota (Tampa, Florida: The Florida Growers Press, 1949), 149.

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In the first years of the 20th century, influential citizens began to come to Sarasota, adding political and economic strength to the community and fostering the potential for growth. One prominent early settler was Owen Burns who had acquired the remaining unsold holdings of the Florida Mortgage and Investment Company, roughly two-thirds of downtown Sarasota. Burns formed the Burn's Dock and Commercial Company that led the way for the development of downtown Sarasota by constructing sea walls along the bay and paving sidewalks.⁴

By 1907, taxes were being levied on real estate, and in 1908 the town of Sarasota began issuing bonds to raise the funds needed to provide the conveniences of a modern city.⁵ The population of Sarasota had grown by 1910 to 840 men, women, and children. In 1911, a bond issue was passed to pay for a new municipal waterworks and a sewer system. A well was drilled near the intersection of Lemon Avenue and Main Street, and in 1912 a reservoir was built on the same site. Electricity for lighting at night became available in 1910, but it was not available during the day until 1916. By 1913, Sarasota had two banks, telephone service, and electricity. Other amenities found in the community for the benefit of local residents were a brass band to entertain the growing population, an 18-hole golf course, a baseball field, and excellent areas for recreational fishing. The city also acquired the Sarasota Yacht Club (1913), an ice plant, a cemetery, and a theater (1912). All of these improvements generated residential and commercial construction and brought new growth to Sarasota. Buildings began to spring up in the downtown area to serve the growing population that had swollen to an estimated 1276 people by early 1912.⁶

With the completion of the railroad in 1903, Sarasota marked the end of its pioneer era and what appeared to be an unchecked period of increasing physical and economic growth. The wave of prosperity crested in 1905, and real estate sales fell off and then slumped in the following year. It was not until the nationwide financial crisis of 1907 that the citizens of Sarasota took stock of the city and began to make improvements that would bring about Sarasota's second stage of development.⁷

⁴ Lillian Burns, "John Hamilton Gillespie," Sarasota Origins, Sarasota County Historical Society, Vol. 1 (Summer 1988), 20.

⁵ Grismer, p. 150.

⁶ Grismer, pp. 163, 170.

⁷ Grismer, p. 149.

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WORTH'S BLOCK
SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA
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HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

William Worth, originally from Douglas, Georgia, arrived in Sarasota with his family in 1903. In the previous year he had served as postmaster of Englewood, Florida.⁸ Upon arriving in Sarasota, Worth purchased land at the intersection of Main Street and Lemon Avenue on which he constructed a wood frame building to house his new mercantile business.⁹ Worth became a respected member of the community, as attested to by the fact that he was chosen to serve as tax collector for the Town of Sarasota in 1909. In December, 1913, following Sarasota's incorporation as a city, Worth was one of two candidates for mayor, losing the election to A.B. Edwards by a vote of 108 to 63.¹⁰

In July 1912, Worth's son, William "David" Worth, purchased his father's mercantile business and hired his uncle, Enoch E. Worth, to help him run the business.¹¹ The twenty-two year old Worth—with his father's financial backing—decided to erect a more substantial building to house his newly acquired business. He hired builder H.B. Westbrook to construct a new brick building on the site of the original store. In an article in the Sarasota Times dated August 1, 1912, the proposed building was referred to as "Worth's Block" and was to be a "brick building on the corner of Main and Lemon, two stories in height, 100 feet in depth, with the first story planned as a store room, and the second story, a dwelling." The foundation was laid in August of 1912 and by September was up to the second floor. By November, the structure neared completion.¹² A sidewalk was included in the construction, because on February 7, 1912, the city had passed an ordinance requiring property owners in the downtown area to put sidewalks in front of their buildings.¹³ Worth's Block was one of the first brick commercial buildings erected in Sarasota. The honor of being the first went to Highsmith & Prime Co.'s building, also on Main Street, which was completed six months prior to Worth's Block.¹⁴ Although the earlier building still exists, its brick construction and style features are covered with stucco.

⁸ Josephine, Cortes, The History of Earl Englewood (Punta Gorda, FL: Funcoast Publishing Company, 1976), 19.

⁹ Sarasota Herald-Tribune, June 27, 1988.

¹⁰ Grismer, ., 175.

¹¹ Sarasota Herald-Tribune, July 4, 1912; December 15, 1944.

¹² Sarasota Times, August 1, 1912; September 19, 1912; November 7, 1912.

¹³ Grismer, p. 170.

¹⁴ Sarasota Times, June 13, 1912.

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WORTH'S BLOCK
SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

Worth's Block was completed in early December of 1912, and W.D. Worth, his wife Ada, and his parents moved into their new home on the second floor of the building.¹⁵ The first floor was occupied by their grocery store, the Spot Cash Grocery, with N.A. Braddock as the manager.¹⁶ The store sold fresh meat and "fancy groceries," and made deliveries anywhere in the city.¹⁷ Within a few years, the business had put a gasoline pump in front of the building so owners of automobiles could purchase fuel, as well as other necessities. In addition to the grocery store, W.D. Worth also operated a wholesale feed and grain business from the building.¹⁸

In 1914, W.D. Worth sold his interest in the grocery business to Henry M. Taylor, but retained his ownership of the building and continued to operate his feed and grain business from the location. W.D.'s father, mother, and sisters moved to Plant City in 1915, where the senior Worth opened another grocery store.¹⁹ Taylor operated the Spot Cash Grocery under its original name.²⁰ The combined grocery and feed and grain businesses were a large operation, employing seven clerks.²¹ The enterprise had a horse-drawn delivery wagon and a truck for transporting large and bulky goods, and three bicycles for delivering small purchases to the homes of its customers.²² Henry Taylor operated the Spot Cash Grocery until 1921, when W.D. Worth once again took over control of the grocery business. The Sarasota City Directory for the years 1921 and 1922 lists the building as the Enterprise Grocery Company, with Worth and his immediate family still living upstairs.

Ivey C. Taylor (no relation to Henry Taylor) purchased the grocery business and the Worth's Block building from W.D. Worth in June, 1923, changing the name of the grocery business to the Taylor Grocery Company.²³ Worth and his family moved to a house in a nearby residential section of Sarasota, and Taylor's wife, Georgia, operated the second floor as a rooming house.²⁴ As part of the purchase agreement with Taylor, W.D. Worth continued to sell feed, grain, and fertilizer wholesale from the building. Taylor's association with Worth's Block lasted only until the latter part of 1925, when he sold the building to realtors Clifford R. Parlman

¹⁵ R.L. Polk, Sarasota City Directory, 1916-1921.

¹⁶ Sarasota Times, January 9, 1913; March 20, 1913.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., April 3, 1913.

¹⁹ Sarasota Times, December 16, 1915.

²⁰ Helen J.T. Pridgen, Telephone interview with Mikki Hartig, January 19, 1993; January 25, 1993, Sarasota.

²¹ Polk, Sarasota City Directory, 1916.

²² Sarasota Times, May 4, 1916.

²³ Sarasota County, Public Records, Deed Records.

²⁴ Pridgen.

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WORTH'S BLOCK
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SIGNIFICANCE

and Ernest Randall who opened offices on the second floor. Worth continued for a time to use the first floor of the building for his feed and fertilizer business.²⁵ By the end of 1926, Worth's association with the building he had erected in 1912 ended, and he had become part owner and general manager of the Lily White Laundry and Worth Linen Supply Company.²⁶ He also invested heavily in the development of a large tract of land on the former "city garbage dump" on 9th Street (now Fruitville Road) and was a financial backer for a large commercial building erected on that street.²⁷ Around 1930, Worth sold all his Sarasota interests and moved to San Diego, California, where he purchased and operated a large tourist camp. He retired to Parrish, Florida in 1945.²⁸

By the 1920s, Sarasota was changing its image from a small agricultural community to that of a developing tourist resort. The first years of the decade brought unparalleled growth to both Florida and Sarasota. Sarasota's real estate prices soared. Many new buildings, executed in the Mediterranean Revival style that became the hallmark of the "Florida Boom" era, were erected in Sarasota, and older buildings were renovated to reflect the newly popular trend. Many new real estate offices, sprang up in response to the booming real estate market. Realtors Clifford R. Parlman and Ernest Randall, who had purchased Worth's Block in 1925, renamed it the Parlman-Randall Building and installed in it the offices of their real estate company, the Parlman-Randall Co.²⁹ The firm was briefly successful and was called one of Sarasota's "most prominent realty firms."³⁰ The company served as the marketing agent for the development of the suburban Sorrento Shores in Sarasota, with Parlman acting as vice president and managing director of the firm developing the subdivision. With the collapse of the real estate market after 1926, however, the firm faced severe financial difficulties and closed its doors in 1928.

Later that same year, prominent local businessman J.D. Harmon purchased the building and opened a cigar store on the first floor. The concern was originally called Harmon and LeValley Cigars and Tobacco, but shortly thereafter was renamed the Corner Cigar Store. The business sold cigars and other tobacco products, newspapers, magazines, and soft drinks. Harmon subdivided the ground floor of the building to install another storefront on Lemon Avenue near the rear of the building. The new store housed a soda fountain that became popular

²⁵ R.L. Polk, Sarasota City Directory, 1924.

²⁶ Sarasota Herald-Tribune, May 28, 1946.

²⁷ Ibid., October 5, 1925.

²⁸ Ibid.,

²⁹ Ibid., October 5, 1925.

³⁰ Ibid., December 27, 1925.

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WORTH'S BLOCK
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with high school students.³¹ The cigar store and soda fountain continued under various names over the next few years. The second floor of the building was used for storage and the manager's office.³² Harmon installed a ticker tape and scoreboard in the cigar store to keep track of current sports' scores.³³ Before baseball world series games were broadcast on radio, crowds would gather outside the cigar store to hear reports of the action as it came over the telegraph "wire," often tying up traffic for hours.³⁴ According to his brother, W.M. "Mac" Harmon, the store:

...wasn't just the gathering place for them (high school students). Anyone who wanted to know anything about sports in Sarasota, they'd call the Corner Cigar Store. There was also a radio speaker out front where people could gather at night to listen to shows (during the 1930s) like Amos and Andy and at night when nothing was going on, the fellows who weren't dating would either sit around and play checkers or arm wrestle.³⁵

By the mid-1930s, the soda fountain business had waned, and Harmon gave it up in 1936. When Prohibition ended in 1933, Harmon converted the former soda fountain on Lemon Avenue into the Gator Bar & Grille. The Main Street store was renamed the Gator Cigar Store.³⁶ The bar began to build a clientele of circus performers from the Ringling Brothers Circus, especially the animal handlers and blacksmiths, who frequented the bar for many years.³⁷ In addition to food and alcoholic beverages, the installation of slot machines helped attract customers to the bar. In

³¹ R.L. Polk, Sarasota City Directory, 1930.

³² Patricia Dean Anderson, Telephone interview with Mikki Hartig, January 21, 1993, Sarasota.

³³ Sarasota Herald-Tribune, June 27, 1988.

³⁴ Jeff LaHurd, Sarasota Now and Then (Sarasota: Alliance for Historic Preservation, 1994), photo and caption, p.

38.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ R.L. Polk, Sarasota City Directory, 1936.

³⁷ Joe McKennon, circus historian, Interview with Mikki Hartig, n.d.

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1939, the entire ground floor became J.D. Harmon Liquors. The year 1940 brought about another name change: the Gator Bar.

In the late 1950s, an attempt was made to modernize the building by covering it with pressed metal sheathing. Wall paneling, linoleum flooring, and a dropped acoustic ceiling were added to the interior of the first floor. Over the next forty years, both the exterior and interior of the building were remodeled, so it was no longer recognizable as the structure that had been erected in 1912. In 1988, the building was leased by businessman Jay Foley, with the intention of totally renovating it and reopening the establishment under a new format and name: the Gator Club. Extensive exterior and interior rehabilitation was undertaken to return the exterior of building to its original appearance and give the interior a "turn of the century" flavor.³⁸ The club is currently a successful enterprise helping to revitalize downtown Sarasota by bringing people into the area both day and night. The present name, the Gator Club, reflects the building's continued use as a cocktail lounge for over fifty years, and has been constantly referred to as "The Gator."

³⁸ Sarasota Herald-Tribune, June 27, 1988.

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WORTH'S BLOCK
SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

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WORTH'S BLOCK
SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The entire parcel of the east 1/2 of Lot 19, Block 6, Plat of Sarasota,
Parcel #202-703.0055

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all historic resources associated with the building known
as Worth's Block.

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WORTH'S BLOCK
SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA
PHOTOGRAPHS

List of Photographs

1. Worth's Block
2. 1490 Main Street, Sarasota (Sarasota County), Florida
3. Mikki Hartig
4. August 1997
5. Historical and Architectural Research Services
6. Main (North Facade), Looking South
7. Photo 1 of 14

Sections 1-5 for all remaining photos are the same except photo 14.

6. North (Main) Facade and East Elevation, Looking Southwest
7. Photo 2 of 14

6. East Elevation, Looking Southwest
7. Photo 3 of 14

6. East and South (Rear) Elevations, Looking Northwest
7. Photo 4 of 14

6. Interior, First Floor, Looking North
7. Photo 5 of 14

6. Interior, First Floor Stairs, Looking Northwest
7. Photo 6 of 14

6. Interior, First Floor, Looking South
7. Photo 7 of 14

6. Interior, First Floor, Looking West
7. Photo 8 of 14

6. Interior, First Floor, View of Main Entrance, Looking North
7. Photo 9 of 14

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WORTH'S BLOCK
SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA
PHOTOGRAPHS

- 6. Interior, Second Floor, Looking Northeast
- 7. Photo 10 of 14

- 6. Interior, Second Floor, Looking South
- 7. Photo 11 of 14

- 6. Interior, Second Floor Billiard Room, Looking Southeast
- 7. Photo 12 of 14

- 6. Interior, Second Floor Bar, Looking Southeast
- 7. Photo 13 of 14

- 1. Worth's Block
- 2. 1490 Main Street, Sarasota (Sarasota County), Florida
- 3. Unknown
- 4. 1913
- 5. Historical and Architectural Research Services
- 6. Main (North) Facade and East Elevation, Looking Southwest
- 7. Photo 14 of 14

WORTH'S BLOCK
SARASOTA (SARASOTA COUNTY), FLORIDA

