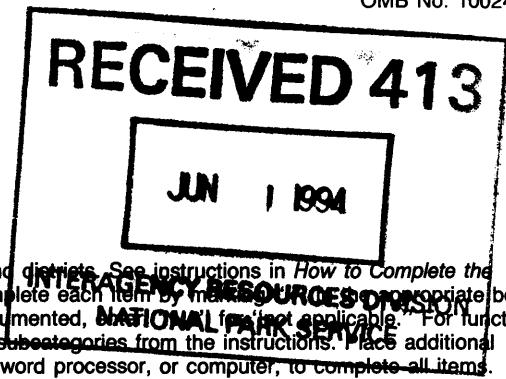


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, mark "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 THOMS HOUSE

other names/site number Site #S0620

2. Location

street & number 5030 Bay Shore Road  Act for publication

city or town Sarasota  vicinity

state Florida code FL county Sarasota code 115 zip code 34234

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.)  
Suzanne P. Walker/Deputy SHPO 5/26/94  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
**Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources**  
State of 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.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain:)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 7-1-94  
Entered in the National Register

**THOMS HOUSE**  
Name of Property

**SARASOTA CO., FL.**  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	0	objects
3	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(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)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling  
secondary structure

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ Single Dwelling  
secondary structure

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals/  
Mission/Spanish Colonial

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls stucco

roof terra cotta

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 67) 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)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1926-1944

Significant Dates

1926

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Arch: Fred J. Orr

Blder: Leadley Ogden

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

THOMS HOUSE

SARASOTA CO., FL.

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 2 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

UTM grid for reference 1: Zone 17, Easting 345720, Northing 3029010

UTM grid for reference 3 and 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 J. Whitcomb Rylee, Lorrie Muldowney / Sherry Piland, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau Of Historic Preservation date May 1994

street & number R.A. Gray Bldg., 500 S. Bronough St. telephone (904) 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

street & number telephone

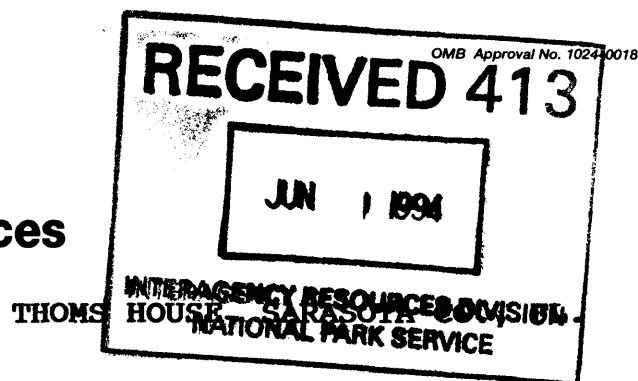
city or town state zip code

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 to amend existing 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 Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet



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### SUMMARY

The Burton and Ella Thoms House is a large single family residence located at 5030 Bay Shore Road, in Sarasota, Florida. The Mediterranean Revival style house was built in 1926. The hollow clay tile walls, covered with stucco, rest on a concrete foundation. The house has an asymmetrical plan, with a two-story central block flanked by one-story sections. The house has a variety of roof shapes, all surfaced with barrel tile. Included on the property are a contributing two-story garage/servants' quarters building and a contributing metal fountain placed in a quatrefoil reflecting pool. These historical resources are in excellent condition and have had few alterations since their construction. The Thoms House has been a visual landmark for many years due to its large size, extensive street frontage, and distinctive architecture.

### SETTING

The Thoms House is located in northern Sarasota in the Sapphire Shores subdivision. The well landscaped neighborhood is situated in a pine tree hammock with views to Sarasota Bay, approximately one-third mile to the west. During the Florida Real Estate Boom nineteen homes in the Spanish Colonial Revival Style were built in Sapphires Shores. The Thoms House is one of the largest constructed during that period. It occupies approximately two acres and is located on a irregular parcel that extends the depth of the lot from Bay Shore Road to Brywill Circle. The building is set back approximately one hundred feet from Bay Shore Road creating an imposing and memorable visual image.

This portion of the City contains many of the city's arts and cultural resources including the John Ringling Estate, Caples residence, New College and Sarasota's Performing Arts Center. After the Florida Land Crash in the mid-1920s, the area experienced little growth until the 1940s and 1950s.

### EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The Thoms House has an irregular plan. Centrally located in the building is a two-story rectangular block, which can be approached from either Bay Shore Road or Brywill Circle. The east and west elevations contain most of the decorative elements.

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THOMS HOUSE, SARASOTA CO., FL.

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The main facade of the Thoms House faces west onto Bay Shore Road (photo 1). A curved driveway extends across the property in front of the house, with entrances to Bay Shore Road from both the north and south ends of the property. The house is composed of a complex massing of distinct units. A two-story section dominates the central portion of the west facade. This section is fenestrated with casement windows. A masonry cartouche is placed over the central window on the first floor. North of the two-story section is an arched entrance porch, approached by a flight of three steps (photo 2). The porch has a ceramic tile floor. The main doors to the house are sheltered at the south end of this porch (photo 3). South of the two-story section is a projecting circular room featuring a low, conical roof. A series of wood casement windows is placed around this room. The windows are separated by engaged spiral columns and have fixed, semi-circular transoms and decorative surrounds (photo 4).

The east facade of the Thoms House faces onto Brywill Circle. A garden wall, approximately six feet tall, extends between an arched entry gate and a garage (photo 5). The wall visually joins the house and the concrete block garage, built ca. 1961. The garden wall is pierced with three, quatrefoil shaped openings with simple wrought iron insets. The shouldered entry arch features a decorative wrought iron gate and fan light (photo 6). This arched entry leads into a pecky cypress pergola with a ceramic tile floor. The pergola opens on one side to a walled garden area. The primary two-story block of the house, containing a secondary entrance, can be seen behind the garden wall and gate. Triple, wooden casement windows with multiple lights are visible on the second story of this elevation. A one-story section is located to the south of the arched entry and features a curvilinear parapet with a semi-circular opening at its highest point (photo 7).

The principal feature of the northern elevation of the building is a small vestibule which provides a service entry to the kitchen from the northern end of the building (photo 8). This entrance is also in close proximity to the garage. The south elevation is very close to the lot line which limits its visibility from the street.

Quatrefoil design elements occur throughout the house appearing as garden wall openings, accent windows, and a small fountain basin on the western side of the property. The quatrefoil shape and raised Mission roof parapet demonstrate the

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Mission influences on the building's design. The use of stucco, decorative wrought iron, and pecky cypress are consistent with the Spanish Colonial Revival style of the house.

**INTERIOR DESCRIPTION**

The interior features of the Thoms House are consistent with the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The home has retained almost all of its original building material and ornamentation, including two fireplaces with original mantles and surrounds. The principal interior space is the "great room" which serves as the formal living room (photo 9). Engaged and full columns separate this living room from the Brywill Circle entry vestibule (photo 10). Visible from the living room is a quarter-turn oak stairway with painted metal spindles which ascends to the second floor stair hall. Also on the first floor are an office, baths and guest bedroom to the southeast, and dining room and kitchen to the north. The full bath on the first floor has porcelain tile with a decorative border on the tub and at the top of the tiled wall which matches the tiled floor.

The wall surfaces in the living room and stairwell have been recently resurfaced to provide a textured appearance. The walls in the master bath have been covered in a brown marble tile. Remaining walls throughout the house have retained their original plaster finishes and have recently been painted. Original building plans indicate that the floors throughout the ground level are oak.

The second floor contains the master bedroom and bath, with several dressing rooms and closets. The master bath and closet area have been renovated with changes including a stained glass window, and a replacement tub and shower enclosure. In the dressing area a built-in closet has been added.

**Thoms Servants' Quarters**

The Thoms Servants' Quarters predates the principal residence as documented by its appearance on construction plans for the principal residence drawn by Fred Orr in 1926. The structure is shown on the 1929 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map oriented to the south, facing the house. Prior to 1939 the structure was moved to the northern portion of the parcel and re-

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orientated to face Bay Shore Road. The 1954 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the Servants' Quarters in its new location.

Visual inspection of the Servants' Quarters indicates that it was moved intact and that its historic features were retained (photo 11). It is constructed of textured stucco over hollow clay tile. The building has an irregular plan. A two story tower is located centrally in the building. As in the main house, a variety of roof shapes are used and all but the flat roof areas are covered in barrel clay tile. Adjacent to the centrally placed entrance are paired, three light, metal awning windows. This entry leads into an enclosed porch. The porch remained open until at least 1954 as documented by Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. North of the entrance are the original, paired, pecky cypress garage doors and decorative wrought iron hinges.

The southern elevation of the building has two arched window openings with fixed glass replacement windows (photo 12). The eastern elevation of the building contains three, three light, aluminum awning windows on the first floor. Also visible on this elevation is a window sill indicating the location of a former window. The northern elevation is largely obscured by vegetation. It contains a first floor wooden deck addition and single door opening.

The interior has retained its tile floors, masonry columns, and the original quarter turn staircase. The rooms are small and intimate in keeping with the modest scale of the structure. The second floor is comprised of a single room in the building's tower. All of the original paired, 4/4 light, wooden casement windows remain in the tower.

#### **Fountain**

Decorating the west lawn of the Thoms House is a small quatrefoil shaped in-ground basin, approximately five feet long, constructed of poured concrete over brick (photo 13). The quatrefoil shape of the basin echoes the quatrefoil shaped insets in the garden wall and quatrefoil shaped decorative windows of the residence. A cast metal heron fountain is centrally located in the basin and shows evidence of having been painted numerous times, and having had repairs made to it. Both the basin and the fountain add to the impressive appearance of the other historic resources on the site and have been a visual landmark on Bay Shore Road for decades. It is not known when the basin and



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THOMS HOUSE, SARASOTA CO., FL.

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fountain were constructed; however, they appear to be of early construction based upon design and the materials used.

**Alterations**

Few alterations have been made to the Thoms House since its original date of construction in 1926. On the first floor a double window between the walled garden area and kitchen has been replaced by antique French doors to provide exterior access. This alteration is not visible from the road. Windows in the second floor master bathroom have been replaced with a fixed stained glass panel.

The servants' quarters was moved to the northern end of the property and reoriented to face Bay Shore Road circa 1940. The structure appears to have been moved intact. Its historic integrity was retained despite this move because of the minimal disturbance to the structure, the proximity of the new site to the original location, and the early date of the move. Alterations to the interior of the servants' quarters were undertaken to increase the livable space within the structure. Those changes consist primarily of the enclosure of a vestibule which had been open on one side, the enclosure of a porch with fixed glass and masonry, and the replacement, on a secondary elevation, of several original windows with metal awning windows.

**Non-Contributing Resources**

In 1938 a garage was constructed following designs of Thomas Reed Martin. This garage, connected to the main house by an arched wall, was destroyed by fire circa 1950. The present garage, also joined by a wall, was built c. 1961. The concrete block structure is immediately north of the house, in approximately the same location as the earlier garage. It has aluminum awning windows and a contemporary sixteen-panel garage door. The interior is unfinished.

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THOMS HOUSE, SARASOTA CO., FL.

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**SUMMARY**

The Thoms House fulfills National Register criteria C as an outstanding example of the Spanish Colonial style architecture found in Sarasota during the Florida Land Boom of the 1920s and as an important example of the work of architect Fred Orr of Athens, Georgia, and Sarasota contractor, Leadley Ogden.

**Historic Context**

This impressive residence was constructed for Mr. and Mrs. Burton Thoms. Thoms was the first general manager of the Sarasota Kennel Club, established in 1925. The Thoms purchased lots 3 and 25 of Sapphire Shores in September of 1925 and within a few weeks the Sarasota Sunday Times reported that local architect Thomas Reed Martin would be designing a home for Mrs. Ella Thoms. However, those plans, which called for a \$15,000 Spanish style bungalow, were never realized. Perhaps Martin became too busy to satisfy the Thoms' needs for the same article also noted that Martin had draftsmen working on about fifty residences throughout the city. Plans (in the possession of the current owner) reveal that the realized design is the work of Fred J. Orr, an architect from Athens, Georgia. The plans signed by Orr show an existing garage. It is possible that Martin may have designed the garage/servants' quarters and that the Thoms may have resided there while waiting for their residence to be constructed.

In the 1920s, as the Florida Land Boom reached feverish pitch, the entire Sarasota area underwent tremendous growth and a number of new subdivisions were platted. New and improved roads were built to serve these new areas which had formerly been agricultural. In 1894, circus manager Charles N. Thompson bought 154 acres in what today is the northern part of Sarasota. He later acquired an additional 30 acres. In 1897 he subdivided his property and recorded it as the Shell Beach subdivision. Thompson is credited with encouraging the Ringlings to acquire property in the Shell Beach subdivision. In 1925 several blocks in the subdivision, south of the Ringling Estates, were acquired by Walter Bryson and replatted as the Sapphire Shores subdivision. Bryson, owner of the Bryson Paving Company in Jacksonville, was acting for the Brywill Realty Company. Originally, deed restrictions for the Sapphire Shores subdivision

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required that all homes be Spanish, Italian, or Moorish in their design. The subdivision was marketed by the C. Roy Kindt Company, a real estate firm, and included a large promotional campaign for the subdivision in Kindt's home town of Chicago.

**Architectural Context**

An interest in Spanish Colonial architecture blossomed after the Panama-California Exposition held in San Diego in 1915. This, in turn, led to interest in related architectural forms from the general Mediterranean basin. What has become known more generally as the Mediterranean Revival style reached its apex during the 1920s and early 1930s. Sarasota has many examples of Spanish Colonial or Mediterranean Revival style structures ranging from simple bungalows to larger villas as well as commercial buildings and hotels. Most of these were built during the Florida Land Boom and are representative of Florida's rapid growth, frenetic activity, prosperity, and sense of well being during the early 1920s. The style is characterized by numerous design elements arranged in a variety of combinations: multi-level barrel tile roofs, prominent arches, stucco wall surfaces, irregular plans, decorative vents, towers, wrought iron and ceramic tile.

**Fred J. Orr**

The Thoms House was designed by an architect from Athens, Georgia, Frederick (Fred) Josephus Orr. Orr was born in Athens in 1874. He received a Bachelor of Engineering degree from the University of Georgia in 1895 and did graduate work at Columbia University and the Drexel Institute in Philadelphia. Before opening an architecture office in Athens in 1912, he had taught mathematics at the University of Georgia. His practice was successful and Orr became the principal architect of the city. He designed houses in a full range of styles, including Colonial Revival, Craftsman, Neo-classical, and Tudor Revival. His best known structure in Athens is the Y.W.C.A. Building constructed in 1913 at the corner of Pulaski and West Hancock. As did numerous other architects from across the country, by 1926 Orr had opened an office in Florida, trying to capitalize on the building boom. The only architect listed in the 1924 Sarasota City Directory was Thomas Reed Martin. In 1926 eleven architects, including Fred

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Orr, were listed as practicing in Sarasota (this number dropped to three in the 1930 Directory, reflecting the impact of the bust of the real estate market). Fred Orr apparently was in Sarasota only a short time during the Boom period and not much is known of his work here. He is listed only in the 1926 Sarasota City Directory. The Thoms house is his only known commission in Sarasota County and apparently the only one which he designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Orr died in 1934 of heart failure while working on a government project in Gainesville, Florida.

Thomas Reed Martin

It seems possible that Thomas Reed Martin was the architect for the Thoms' Servants' Quarters. Martin was one of the most successful architects in Sarasota County in the first half of the twentieth century. A Wisconsin native, Martin studied architecture in Chicago where he established his first practice. He moved to Sarasota in 1910 for his first Florida commission, "The Oaks", which was the winter residence of Mrs. Potter Palmer. During his long career, Martin designed hundreds of buildings in Sarasota.

Leadley Ogden

The Thoms House was built by prominent Sarasota builder, Leadley Ogden. Ogden arrived in Sarasota around 1924 and quickly was able to take advantage of the building boom. By 1925 newspaper reports noted that Ogden employed 653 workmen and was starting two to three new structures daily. Ogden was instrumental in the formation of the Sarasota Builders' Exchange and served as the first president of this trade organization.

**Architectural Significance**

Orr's work in Sarasota and his contribution to Sarasota County's architecture have been previously undocumented. However his importance in Athens, Georgia is widely recognized. Orr's work in Sarasota represents a particular phase in his development whereby he ventured from Athens, Georgia to Sarasota, Florida and endeavored to express his architecture within the historical

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**THOMS HOUSE, SARASOTA CO., FL.**

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context of the Florida Land Boom. The Spanish Colonial Revival style Thoms House possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and association, revealed through its rich detailing.

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THOMS HOUSE, SARASOTA CO., FL.

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Grismer, Karl H. The Story of Sarasota. Sarasota: M.E. Russell, 1946.

Interview with Professor John Waters, University of Georgia, Athens Georgia. March 31, 1993 conducted by Whit Rylee.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide To American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.

Manatee County Deed Book 15, p. 254.

Manatee County Plat Book 1, p. 96.

Martin, Thomas Reed. Construction Plans for J.P. and Estelle Bennett Garage Alteration, 1938. In possession of current owner of property.

Matthews, Janet Snyder. Edge of Wilderness: A Settlement History of Manatee River and Sarasota Bay. Sarasota: Coastal Press, 1983.

Mayes, Mary. "Fred Orr's Designs Are Still Popular Today." Athens Journal, 16 April 1993.

Orr, Fred. Construction Plans for Ella Thoms Residence, 1926. In possession of current owner of property.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1925, 1929, 1954.

Sarasota City Directory. Ashville, North Carolina: Piedmont Publishing Company, 1924, 1926, 1928, 1947, and 1957.

Sarasota County Plat Book 1.

Unniver Abstract of Title, for lot 3, Block K, Sapphire Shores Subdivision.

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THOMS HOUSE, SARASOTA CO., FL.

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- 1) Thoms House, 5030 Bay Shore Road
- 2) Sarasota, Sarasota County, Florida
- 3) J. Whitcomb Rylee
- 4) October 1993
- 5) 1622 9th Street, Sarasota, Fl. 34236
- 6) Main (west) facade; view looking east
- 7) Photo 1 of 13

Items 1-5 are the same for the remaining photographs

- 6) Main (west) facade; view looking southeast
- 7) Photo 2 of 13
- 6) Detail, main entry doors; view looking north from inside house
- 7) Photo 3 of 13
- 6) Detail, main (west) facade; view looking southeast
- 7) Photo 4 of 13
- 6) East elevation; view looking southwest
- 7) Photo 5 of 13
- 6) Detail, garden wall and gate, east elevation; view looking west
- 7) Photo 6 of 13
- 6) East elevation, view looking west
- 7) Photo 7 of 13
- 6) North elevation, view looking south
- 7) Photo 8 of 13
- 6) Interior detail, living room; view looking southwest
- 7) Photo 9 of 13
- 6) Interior detail, living room; view looking south
- 7) Photo 10 of 13
- 6) Servants' Quarters, main (west) facade; view looking east
- 7) Photo 11 of 13
- 6) Servants' Quarters, south elevation; view looking north
- 7) Photo 12 of 13

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- 6) Fountain, west lawn, view looking southeast
- 7) Photo 13 of 13



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**THOMS HOUSE, SARASOTA CO., FL.**

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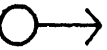
**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:**

Sapphire Shores, lots 2, 3, 25 and 26; Block K; Sarasota, Florida.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:**

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Thoms House.

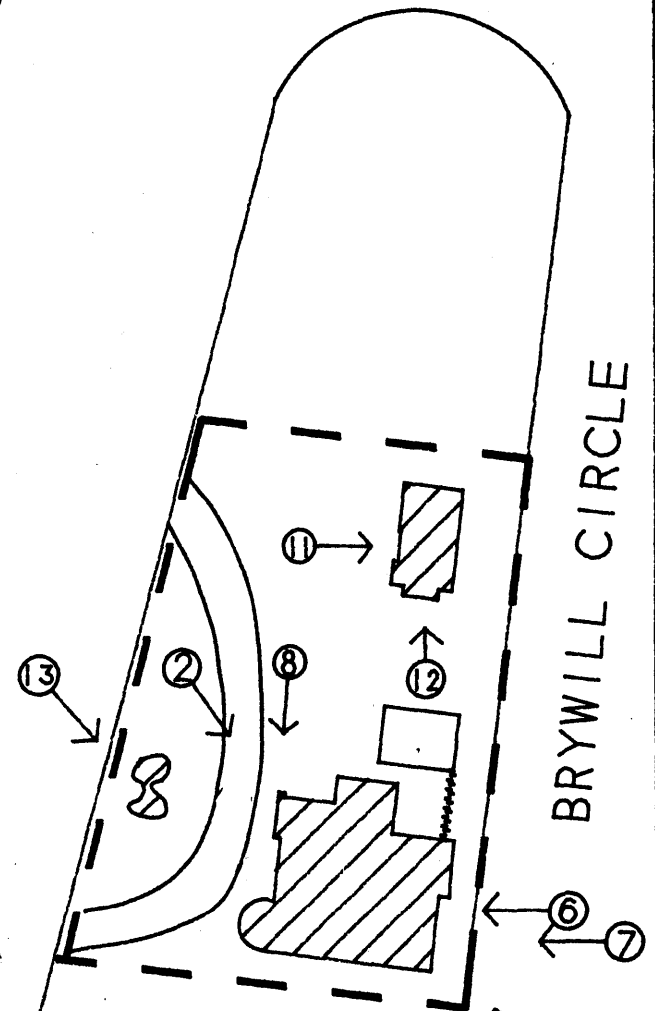
THOMS HOUSE Site Plan  
SARASOTA CO., FL.


Boundary — — —  
Approx. Scale: 0.5" = 30'  
Contributing Element   
Photo Direction 



BAY SHORE ROAD

BRYWILL CIRCLE



THOMS HOUSE  
First Floor Plan  
Sarasota Co., Fl.  
Photo Direction   
Approx. Scale: 1"=10'

