



56-957

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 SANTA ROSA HOTEL

other names/site number FMSF# HG00211

2. Location

street & number 209 N. RIDGEWOOD DR. not for publication

city or town Sebring vicinity

state Florida code FL county Highlands code 055 zip code 33870

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.)

Glissa Stader Lotane 2/23/17
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation
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) _____

James Talbot
Signature of the Keeper

5-8-2017
Date of Action

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)

DOMESTIC/Hotel

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MASONRY VERNACULAR

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Tar and 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)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1923-1967

Significant Dates

1923

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Arch: Unknown

Blder: Withers, Aaron

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

#

SANTA ROSA HOTEL
Name of Property

Highlands Co., FL
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	4	5	6	5	2	6	3	0	4	1	9	1	1
	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 Anthony L. Collins; W. Carl Shiver, Historic Preservationist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date January 2017

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6333

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 SANROSA HOLDINGS LLC

street & number 8437 TUTTLE AV STE 346 telephone _____

city or town Sarasota state Florida zip code 34243

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
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

SANTA ROSA HOTEL
SEBRING, HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

The Santa Rosa Hotel (to be renamed the Santa Rosa Apartments) at 509 North Ridgewood Drive in Sebring was constructed as a two-story hotel in 1923 and had a third story added in 1926. The three-story Masonry Vernacular style has some minor features of the Mediterranean Revival style in the primary and secondary roof areas. The 30-room tourist hotel cost \$75,000 to build and featured a private bath in each guest room. The building is located on a rectangular lot bounded by North Orange Street on the south, North Ridgewood Drive on the East, Pomegranate Avenue on the west, and a commercial property on the north side of the school. The Santa Rosa was one of nine hotels catering to Sebring visitors during the Florida Land Boom of the mid-1920s.¹ The hotel, opened in 1924, and featured “about 14,000 square feet of space and was just a block from the former Atlantic Coastline Railroad depot,”² which once stood near to where the Sebring Parkway now crosses North Ridgewood. The hotel catered to traveling businessmen and vacationers looking for downtown lodging.³ The proximity to the depot was an advantage. Sometime later, the hotel was converted into “a 19-room, five-suite bed and breakfast, with a restaurant” until it closed in the mid-1980s.

SETTING

The city of Sebring is located in south central Florida, approximately 90 miles south of Orlando and 90 miles east of Sarasota. It is situated on the central ridge of Florida approximately 160 feet above sea level. The topography of the area consists of rolling hills mixed with numerous lakes. The southern limestone soil supports pines and oaks in some areas, but grasses, along with palmetto and sabal palms predominate. The city is situated near the northern edge of the tropical zone with an annual rainfall of 61 inches. The corporate limits of Sebring cover nine square miles and encircle Lake Jackson, an expansive body of water covering approximately 3,000 acres.

Sebring is a city in Highlands County, Florida nicknamed “The City on the Circle”, in reference to Circle Drive, the center of the Sebring Downtown Historic District, founded in 1912 by Ohio industrialist George Sebring. This pioneer designed a circular plan as a focal point for the entire lakeside community. Archival records indicate that George Sebring’s “Circle Plan” for the downtown area was based on the design of Heliopolis, an ancient Egyptian city. George’s idea was that all roads should radiate from the center of the community. Despite many modern improvements, his essential design remains today.⁴ In 2010, the United States Census Bureau reported a population of 10,491. It is the county seat of Highlands County, and is the principal city of the Sebring Metropolitan Statistical Area. Sebring is the home of the Sebring International Raceway, created on a

¹ *Sebring White Way, July 20, 1923*, “Sebring, Florida: Its Hotels,” pamphlet, Sebring Chamber of Commerce, 1927.

² Now the Seaboard Air Line Depot (NR 5/16/1990) served by Amtrak.

³ *Discovering Highlands County*, http://www.floridacountiesmap.com/hicostories/media/historic_places.shtml.

⁴ “History of Sebring,” <http://sebring.org/history-sebring>.

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SANTA ROSA HOTEL
SEBRING, HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

former airbase, first used in 1950. Sebring was chartered by the state of Florida in 1913 and was selected as the county seat of Highlands County when the county was created in 1921. The Downtown Sebring Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on March 16, 1990.

The historic area of Sebring includes commercial, governmental, transportation, and residential buildings that are associated with the city's settlement and subsequent development between 1911 and 1927. The historic commercial buildings in Sebring are basically rectangular in plan and constructed of red or buff brick with flat roofs and parapets. In some instances, the original brick finish has been obscured through repeated painting or the application of stucco during the historic period. Decorative features include corbelling, dentils, belt courses and name and date panels. A good example is the Nan-ces-o-wee Hotel at 133-145 North Ridgewood Drive.

DESCRIPTION

Exterior

The Santa Rosa Hotel is constructed of rough red brick and set on a large lot shaded by mature oak trees. These trees will be removed to provide additional parking for the apartment inhabitants as part of the historic rehabilitation. Originally constructed as a two-story hotel in 1923, a third story was added in 1926, giving the hotel its complement of 30 rooms. It has a flat roof surfaced with tar and gravel with a pent border surfaced with French tile. Its pent roof overhangs down between the risers of a parapet wall wrapping around three sides of the building, while the main facade is distinguished by a central two-story entrance pavilion (Photos 1-3). It has triple 6-light casement windows topped by rectangular transoms. The first story of the pavilion features a brick stoop leading to a central entranceway consisting of wood and glass double doors flanked by sidelights and topped by a three-panel transom. The side elevations of the pavilion have the same fenestration as the facade. The metal framework that was originally covered by a cloth canopy still exists. The first floor facade exhibits large flanking pairs of fixed glass windows.

The north elevation exhibits the three-story main block of the hotel and the rear one-story addition which was also constructed in 1926 (Photo 4). The north side of the three-story block (Photo 5) has paired and single 1/1-light double-hung wood sash windows. The small windows illuminated the separate bathrooms for the main guest rooms. There are metal fire escapes (Photo 6) one the north and south elevations of the three-story section of the building. These will remain in place but will be repaired and repainted. There is a "breezeway" (Photos 7-9) at the juncture of the three-story and one-story sections of the building, which is entered from the north elevation via a concrete handicap ramp. The ramp leads to a recessed door opening onto a corridor that runs south and connects to another hallway which runs to the west and terminates in a secondary exit at the rear of the building. In the rear, connected to the main hotel building is a one-story ell that housed a public dining room, kitchen and work room, office space, and living quarters for owners and staff. The west end of the north

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SANTA ROSA HOTEL
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DESCRIPTION

elevation (Photo 10) of the one-story addition features a continuing brick wall with 1/1-light double-hung wood sash windows.

The rear (west) elevation of the building is a small shed-roofed stucco covered concrete block addition constructed c. 1987 (Photos 11-12). This concrete addition abuts the rear of the 1926 addition whose south wall, like the north wall exhibits 1/1-light window, except for a large plate glass window which illuminates a storeroom (Photo 13). The juncture of the south elevations of the one-story and three-story sections of the building have two enclosed windows (Photo 14) that will provide a stoop and doorway to an electrical maintenance closet. The southwest elevation of the three-story block also has paired and single 1/1-light windows (Photo 15). On the south wing of the three-story block of the hotel is a one-story entrance porch (Photo 16) which may once have served as a viewing area for patrons of the hotel restaurant. The south end of the main (east) facade, which abuts to the two-story pavilion also repeats the pattern of paired and single 1/1-light windows.

The two-story main block of the hotel features paired and single examples of 1/1-light double-hung wood sash windows. Smaller windows are flanked by the full-size paired and single examples. The eaves of the main roof exhibit exposed rafter ends, while the roof of the pavilion has a boxed cornice. The use of 1/1-light windows continues around the other elevations of the main block of the building. The exterior brick walls are laid in running bond. The main three-story block of the building and the rear one-story addition which originally contained the restaurant are separated by a transverse hallway which is accessed by a wood and glass doorway with a transom.

Interior

First Floor

On the first floor, the entrance led into a small lobby, which still has the original fireplace (Photo 18). The fireplace will be a non-functioning decorative element in the restoration. The original wooden staircase (Photos 19-21) still leads upward from the lobby to the upper two floors of the hotel. The south porch (Photos 22-23), scheduled to become a living room for one of the new apartments, has a door leading to the stoop and continuous windows on its three sides. A central corridor (Photo 24) runs west from the lobby to the breezeway; exposed clay block and brick walls separating the main and rear portions of the former hotel are visible along this corridor. The rear addition (Photo 25) shows its present in-progress state with the removed doors leaning against one another. Newly constructed studs begin to define the rear addition (Photo 26) which will also contain apartments. At the rear of the one-story section in the 1987 addition is the disheveled kitchen (Photo 27).

Second Floor

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SANTA ROSA HOTEL
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On the second floor all of the original partitions have been removed but new studs framing the new hallway have been constructed (Photos 28-29). The exposed brick of the outer walls awaits the new interior finish (Photo 30). The original stairs (Photos 31-32) remain in the place. The 2nd floor sunroom (Photo 33) at the front of the hotel features 6 X 6-light wood casement windows surmounted by 5-light inward opening hopper windows. The former sunroom will be an exercise room for the tenants.

Third Floor

The third floor, like the second floor, has had all of its original partition removed (Photos 34-36). Newly installed studs, however, line the new corridor (Photos 37-38). The wooden staircase which rises from the lobby to the third floor has ordinary wood steps and a molded hand rail and plain stick balusters. The original corridors are marked by the wooden studs that line them. Non-historic doorways are found at both ends of the hall.

Conversion into Apartments

In 2006, the Santa Rosa was sold to its fifth owners, Gaylen and Cheryl Gritzer, who intended to reopen it as a hotel or possibly prepare it for sale. The Great Recession ended those plans, and the Santa Rosa has stood vacant ever since. The renovation of the Santa Rosa Hotel has the full support of the Sebring City Council, the Sebring Community Redevelopment Agency, and the Historic Preservation Commission. The Sebring Community Redevelopment Agency has also agreed to find financial backing for the project in the form of \$750,000 to cover an equity gap, per resolution of the Sebring City Council on December 8, 2014. The city of Sebring has a need for more rental units of the kind that the owner proposes to development.⁵

Until 2004, the Santa Rosa had had just four owners during its entire life span, and had been in continuous use as a hotel, its original purpose, with minimal remodeling and little alteration to its floor plan. In the later summer of 2004, three hurricanes, Charley, Frances, and Jeanne, struck Sebring within an eight-week period, causing considerable damage to the city's historic buildings. In the case of the Santa Rosa, storm winds damaged the roof severely and the interior was flooded by rains. The original plaster walls were soaked and ruined by water damage, with mold and mildew inevitably following.

⁵ Sebring City Council, December 8, 2014.

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SANTA ROSA HOTEL
SEBRING, HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The Santa Rosa Hotel is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment and Recreation and Criterion C: Architecture with a period of significance of 1923-1967. It was one of the small tourist hotels constructed in the city of Sebring during the Florida Real Estate Boom of the mid-1920s that catered to the many vacationers seeking inexpensive temporary and convenient places to stay while they traveled around Florida. The Santa Rosa Hotel also had family-sized rooms with individual baths. The Santa Rosa was constructed 1923 by Aaron Withers, a prominent member of Sebring's founding generation. Originally a two-story building (Photos 39-40), it was enlarged to three stories in 1926 (Photo 41). Withers chose a location one block from the old Atlantic Coastline Railroad depot and within an easy walk of the center of the city. Originally housing workers on the railroad line extended to Sebring, the Santa Rosa later served businessmen making calls and meeting clients in downtown Sebring, as well as tourists making short visits to the city. The hotel continued to operate as until 2004 when three hurricanes struck Sebring in an eight-week period, seriously damaging the building. The building has remained vacant since then but is in the process of renovation.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Sebring, Florida is the product of George Sebring, a wealthy industrialist from Ohio who made his fortune in the pottery industry and who already possessed experience in constructing new communities following the establishment of Sebring, Ohio as a factory town for his company. Born in 1859, George Sebring was one of six sons raised by a hardware store owner in East Liverpool, Ohio. Sebring and his three other brothers made their fortune in the pottery industry, establishing a pottery factory in 1895.⁶ In 1898, the Sebrings began looking for a location to establish a new community in which their business might serve as a centerpiece. George visited several large farms in the southwest corner of Mahoning County, Ohio, before selecting a tract for which the Sebrings paid a "good price." The land was acquired and in 1899 the Sebrings laid out the town, and installed roads, sidewalks, and utility plants. A pottery was quickly built and in 1900 the town of Sebring, Ohio, was established.⁷ To facilitate development, the brothers set up a holding company for their properties. The Sebrings eventually divided the family industries and assets. Sebring, Ohio became a renowned center for the manufacture of china and pottery. George Sebring Jr., however, retired from the business and spent several years touring the United States, Europe, and the mid-East. He reputedly moved to Florida for health considerations.⁸

⁶ Thomas W. Sanderson, *Twentieth Century History of Youngstown and Mahoning County, Ohio and Representative Citizens* (Chicago: Biographical Publishing Company, 1907), 226

⁷ Sanderson, 226

⁸ Youngstown (Ohio) Vindicator, June 11, 1912

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George Sebring was acquainted with Florida prior to establishing residency here. He visited the state on hunting trips in the 1890s and often commented on its warm climate and natural beauty. In 1909, he built a large residence in Daytona Beach and in 1910 purchased a tract of land at Auburndale where he thought about establishing a community, but he soon sold it, feeling it did not fit his requirements. In 1911, an acquaintance from Wachula, Florida, A.G. Smith, introduced Sebring to the Lake Jackson area. Sebring purchased about 9,000 acres in the vicinity, most of it located on the south side of the lake.⁹ His interests turned to citrus production, and he envisaged another Sebring that would attract new residents to the largely unsettled south central Florida peninsula.

In 1911, Sebring platted out a new town on Lake Jackson, which would be developed by the Sebring Real Estate Company. The real estate company was one of the numerous companies he and his sons established through the years in managing their various enterprises. Those enterprises included land development, the construction and operation of hotels, provision of power and telephone service to the city and property management. The new town envisioned by Sebring featured a novel radial plan. The prominent feature is a circular park situated on the crest of a shallow hill. The park was encircled by a street from which six radiate. Two peripheral streets run in an outer semicircle, tying the three eastern spokes of the Circle Drive. The circular plan, in contrast with the more common grid pattern, resulted in a curvilinear street pattern in the blocks surrounding the Circle. The blocks extending from the Circle are often asymmetrical and polygonal. Toward the outer edges of the original plat, the blocks assume a more regular pattern in the form of triangles, squares, and rectangles.¹⁰

An application for municipal incorporation was filed March 15, 1912. It provided for an administration vested in a mayor, town clerk, treasurer, assessor, tax collector and five-member town council. Following approval from the state, the first meeting of the administration was held July 2, 1913. However, not until April 1914 was the first tax assessment roll published. In its first two years of existence, the town had little money for substantial municipal improvement. In 1916, the property valuation was assessed at \$600,000. The seven mill levy upon that assessment promised to yield only \$3,600 for the municipal budget, of which only \$250 was allocated to street repair. The most enduring legacy of the Board's early efforts was probably its leadership in the bitter and successful contest with Avon Park to secure the seat of newly created Highlands County in 1921. Until that time, Sebring was included in DeSoto County.

⁹ Sebring Historical Society. "Medley," 1974; also see the Florida Writer's Program, "Biographical Sketch of George E. Sebring, Jr." in the P.K. Yonge Library, based in part on interviews with Sebring's sons.

¹⁰ Multiple Resource Area of Sebring, Florida, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, July 3, 1989; Laurie Ratz Thomas, "An Examination of Compatible Design and Facade Rehabilitation on Circle Drive in Sebring, Florida, M.A. Thesis, University of Florida, 1985.

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SANTA ROSA HOTEL
SEBRING, HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

The population of Sebring quickly grew as more and more people came seeking their fortune. Between 1920 and 1926 the town's population grew from an estimated 900 to more than 7,000.¹¹ Sebring established and began promoting the new community at an opportune time, as within less than a decade of the town's founding, Florida entered a period of frenzied real estate speculation and population expansion known as the "Boom." However, the great Florida Land Boom quickly exhausted itself and the crash was devastating, precipitating the Great Depression of the 1930s.¹²

Investors, real estate entrepreneurs and bankers were intrigued by the layout of the community, seeing it as a potential economic bonanza. The development of cattle ranches and citrus groves were complemented by connections via Seboard Air Line Railroad's Orange Blossom Special¹³ to other cities throughout the nation. By the mid-1920s, the population had grown nearly fourfold, and much of the early development had reached its peak. The City on the Circle had developed into a business mecca and the demand for housing outpaced developers' ability to construct. Biltmore interests financed the \$30 million development of Harder Hall, a major resort complex complete with its own golf course and home sites.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Santa Rosa Hotel, built in 1923 in Sebring, Florida, is a rare surviving example of Florida vernacular hotel architecture of the Boom years, which has undergone very little exterior alteration or change in function during its 92-year history. As such, the hotel is locally significant under Criterion A: Entertainment and Recreation and Criterion C: Architecture. The Santa Rosa had served the city of Sebring as a hotel from the time it was built until 2004, when severe hurricane damage to the interior forced its closure. By virtue of its location along the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad line, the establishment of Sebring as the county seat of Highlands County a year after it was formed in 1921, and with the amplified growth of central Florida's ridge area, Sebring emerged as a novel tourist and golfing destination. The best known hotels were Kenilworth Lodge (Photo 42), constructed 1916, The Roanoke Hotel, constructed in 1920 (Photo 43), the Nan-Ces-O-Wee Hotel (Photo 44), constructed 1923, and the Santa Rosa Hotel (1923)

The Santa Rosa Hotel was built by Aaron Withers,¹⁴ a prominent member of Sebring's founding generation. Known as George Sebring's right-hand man, Withers had been a member of the original survey crew which came to the site picked out for a new town by George Sebring in 1911. He oversaw the clearing of the area that

¹¹ Sebring News-Sun, May 15, 2013.

¹² David Nolan, Fifty Feet in Paradise: the Booming of Florida (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1984), p. 244.

¹³ Sebring is still served by Amtrak's Silver Meteor and Silver Star trains, which stop at the preserved Seboard Air Line Station of 1924.

¹⁴ Anthony L. Collins, "Santa Rosa Narrative History, Manuscript, 2015, p. 2.

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SANTA ROSA HOTEL
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SIGNIFICANCE

was to become the Sebring Circle and supervised the construction of the first buildings in the town. He chose a location one block from the old Atlantic Coastline Railroad depot (no longer extant) and within easy reach of the center of the city. Originally housing workers for the railroads that extended to Sebring, the Santa Rosa also served businessmen making calls and meeting clients in downtown Sebring, as well as housing tourists visiting the city.

The Santa Rosa Hotel was the second major building constructed by Withers in Sebring. He erected the A.E. Withers Building on the Circle in 1913, and it was the second brick building to be built. Today it is a National Register property, and one of the oldest surviving commercial buildings in Sebring.¹⁵ After Withers died in 1935, the Santa Rosa hotel was purchased by Martin F. and Mary McGee. During the time he owned the Santa Rosa, Martin McGee also served as Sebring's mayor. After his death in 1948, his widow continued to operate the Santa Rosa until her death in 1987. Dan and Jan Bowden acquired the property, and subsequently sold it at auction in 2003 to a couple from Michigan, Phil and Joan Ropp, who operated it as a bed-and-breakfast until 2004 when three hurricanes, Charley, Frances, and Jeanne, struck Sebring within an eight-week period, causing considerable damage to the city's historic buildings including the Santa Rosa. In 2006, it was acquired by a new owner was going to reopen it again who planned to renovate the building and reopen it as apartments.¹⁶

The Santa Rosa Hotel catered to a new class of tourist that emerged in the 1920s. Due to the booming economy following WWI and the spread of the automobile, middle-class Americans were able to travel further for recreation. Tourist hotels with modest rooms located close to transportation hubs such as train stations and highways catered to these new travelers. These hotels contrasted with the larger resort hotels constructed across Florida in the late 19th and early 20th century by pioneering tycoons such as Henry B. Plant and Henry Flagler. The earlier hotels catered to higher class tourists that would visit for extended stays and demanded a higher level of services. The Santa Rosa was well positioned to cater to middle-class tourists. It provided affordable rooms with individual bathrooms (a luxury at the time) and convenient access to the railroad, nascent highway routes, Lake Jackson, and downtown Sebring. In the 1930s, the hotel would benefit from the establishment of Highlands Hammock State Park, among the earliest state parks in Florida. In addition to rooms, the hotel housed a restaurant, later known as the Rose Room.

Criterion C: Architecture

The Santa Rosa Hotel is a good example of the once-common tourist hotel constructed across Florida by speculators and businessmen during the boom years of the 1920s. Tourist hotels typically were masonry vernacular buildings with limited architectural ornament and featured small individual rooms in buildings that could range from two to six stories in height. They were located proximate to transportation such as railroads or highways, or could be located in downtown areas and may feature storefronts at street level.

¹⁵ "Aaron Withers Died Wednesday in Orlando." Highlands County News, June 20, 1935

¹⁶ Jay Meisel, Highlands Today, November 20, 2014.

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SANTA ROSA HOTEL
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SIGNIFICANCE

Originally constructed as a two-story structure, the three story Santa Rosa hotel featured thirty individual guest rooms with attached bathrooms. A rear ell housed the restaurant and dining room. The building lacked extensive architectural ornament, but featured Spanish-tile pent roofs along the parapets of the front façade and front pavilion. These element provides a modest Mediterranean feel to the building that ties it to similarly designed buildings of the period.

The Santa Rosa is one of five surviving historic hotels in or around Sebring, and best represents a tourist hotel catering to the new middle-class tourist of the 1920s. The other four historic hotels in Sebring are The Kenilworth Lodge, the Nan-ces-o-wee Hotel, the Roanoke Hotel, and Harder Hall. The Kenilworth Lodge, at 836 Lakeview Drive, a massive three-story Spanish Eclectic building built by George Sebring in 1916 that occupies an entire city block. It was designed by the well-known architectural firm of Bonfoey & Elliot and has been continuously in use since it opened. The property was listed in the National Register on June 15, 2006. The second hotel is the Nan-ces-o-wee, which, according to information at the Sebring Historical Society was built by George Sebring in 1923 after Sebring sold the Kenilworth Lodge. The hotel was supposedly named after a Seminole princess.¹⁷ It cost more than \$100,000 to build the hotel, including an elaborate sprinkler system, a lobby, a dining room, a kitchen and 60 hotel rooms. In 1925 Sebring sold the hotel to Vincent Hall, one of the developers of Harder Hall, a historic hotel and golf course located southwest of Sebring across lake Jackson. In 1926, the Nan-ces-o-wee was used to house 4,000 survivors of a hurricane near Moorehaven.¹⁸ The third historic hotel is the Roanoke Hotel, which was built in 1917 by the Sebring Development Company on the Circle. It is a two-story Masonry Vernacular building with a two-story full-width veranda on its street façade. The final hotel is Harder Hall, a large, Spanish Revival resort hotel, currently vacant, constructed in 1927 on the opposite shore of Lake Jackson from Sebring. It was listed on the National Register June 20, 1990.

Kenilworth Lodge, Nan-ces-o-wee, and Harder Hall catered to a different class of tourist compared to the Santa Rosa. These hotels followed the earlier pattern established by Plant and Flagler for large, ornate resort hotels. They feature high-style architecture and numerous amenities. Only the Roanoke Hotel is comparable to the Santa Rosa, but its location on the Circle and its more elaborate architectural design conforming to the curved street again speaks to a different class of clientele.

¹⁷ Anthony L. Collins, p. 1.

¹⁸ Jay Meisel, Highlands Today, November 20, 2014.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 1

SANTA ROSA HOTEL
SEBRING, HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RESOURCES

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 2

SANTA ROSA HOTEL
SEBRING, HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RESOURCES

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page 1

SANTA ROSA HOTEL
SEBRING, HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

TOWN OF SEBRING 1ST ADD
LOT 4 + S 1/2 OF LOT 3
BLK 26

Parcel S-29-34-29-070-0260-0040

Boundary Justification

The above boundary encompasses all of the historic resources associated with the Santa Rosa Hotel.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 1

SANTA ROSA HOTEL
SEBRING, HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

PHOTO LIST

1. Santa Rosa Hotel
2. 509 North Ridgewood Drive, Sebring, Florida
3. Anthony L. Collins
4. December 2014
5. 8437 Tuttle Avenue, Suite 346, Sarasota, FL
6. Main (East) Facade Entrance Porch, Looking Northwest
7. Photo 1 of 44

Numbers 1-5 are the same for the remaining photographs, except where indicated.

6. Main (East) Facade, Looking West
7. Photo 2 of 44

6. Main (East) Facade, Looking Southwest
7. Photo 3 of 44

6. North Elevation, Looking Southeast
7. Photo 4 of 44

6. North End of the Main Facade, Looking South
7. Photo 5 of 44

6. North Fire Escape, Looking East
7. Photo 6 of 44

6. North Entrance at the Breezeway, Looking South
7. Photo 7 of 44

6. North Entrance at the Breezeway, Looking South
7. Photo 8 of 44

6. View of Breezeway with Ramp, Looking Southeast
7. Photo 9 of 44

6. West End of the North Elevation on the One-Story Addition, Looking South
7. Photo 10 of 44

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 2

SANTA ROSA HOTEL
SEBRING, HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

6. Rear Elevation on One-Story Addition, Looking South

7. Photo 11 of 44

6. South Elevation of One-Story Rear Addition, Looking Southeast

7. Photo 12 of 44

6. South Elevation of One-Story Addition, Looking Northeast

7. Photo 13 of 44

6. South Elevation of One-Story Addition and West Elevation Two-Story Hotel, Looking Northeast

7. Photo 14 of 44

6. South and West Elevation of Three-Story Hotel, Looking East

7. Photo 15 of 44

6. Southeast Corner of Southeast Entrance Porch, Looking Northeast

7. Photo 16 of 44

6. South End of Main Facade, Looking Southwest

7. Photo 17 of 44

6. Interior, First Floor, Fire Place, Looking North

7. Photo 18 of 44

6. Interior, First Floor, Lobby Stairs, Looking South

7. Photo 19 of 44

6. Interior, First Floor, Lobby Stairs, View up the Stairs, Looking West

7. Photo 20 of 44

6. Interior, First Floor, Framed Walls, Looking North toward Lobby

7. Photo 21 of 44

6. Interior, First Floor, View of Door at South Porch, Looking East

7. Photo 22 of 44

6. Interior, First Floor, South Porch, Looking Southwest

7. Photo 23 of 44

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section number 8 Page 3

SANTA ROSA HOTEL
SEBRING, HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

- 6. Interior, First Floor, Breezeway, Looking Northwest
- 7. Photo 24 of 44

- 6. Interior, First Floor, View Looking West in 1926 Addition
- 7. Photo 25 of 44

- 6. Interior, First Floor, View Looking East in 1926 Addition
- 7. Photo 26 of 44

- 6. Interior, First Floor, Existing Kitchen, Looking North
- 7. Photo 27 of 44

- 6. Interior, Second Floor, Looking North Along Corridor
- 7. Photo 28 of 44

- 6. Interior, Second Floor, Looking North toward Rear Door
- 7. Photo 29 of 44

- 6. Interior, Second Floor, Looking Northwest
- 7. Photo 30 of 44

- 6. Interior, Second Floor, Looking South at Top of the Stairs
- 7. Photo 31 of 44

- 6. Interior, Second Floor, Looking Southeast at Stairs to First and Third Floors
- 7. Photo 32 of 44

- 6. Interior, Second Floor, East Porch Looking Northeast
- 7. Photo 33 of 44

- 6. Interior, Third Floor, Looking Southwest
- 7. Photo 34 of 44

- 6. Interior, Third Floor, Looking Northeast
- 7. Photo 35 of 44

- 6. Interior, Third Floor, Looking at Northwest Corner
- 7. Photo 36 of 44

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 4

SANTA ROSA HOTEL
SEBRING, HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

6. Interior, Third Floor Corridor, Looking North
7. Photo 37 of 44

6. Interior, Third Floor, Door at South End of Corridor
7. Photo 38 of 44

1. Santa Rosa Hotel
2. 509 North Ridgewood Drive, Sebring, Florida
3. Paula Davis
4. 1922
5. Sebring Florida Now and Then—Facebook
6. South Elevation, Looking Northwest
7. Photo 39 of 44

1. Santa Rosa Hotel
2. 509 North Ridgewood Drive, Sebring, Florida
3. W.A. Kugler
4. 192—
5. Florida Memory, State Library of Florida, Image No. PC3218
6. South and West Elevation, Looking Northeast
7. Photo 40 of 44

1. Santa Rosa Hotel
2. 509 North Ridgewood Drive, Sebring, Florida
3. Unknown
4. 1957?
5. Sebring Historical Society Photo Archives
6. Main (South) Facade, Looking North
7. Photo 41 of 44

1. Kenilworth Lodge
2. 1610 Lakeview Drive Sebring, Florida
3. Unknown
4. 2015
5. Street View Aerial
6. South and West Elevations, Looking Northeast
7. Photo 42 of 44

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 5

SANTA ROSA HOTEL
SEBRING, HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

1. Roanoke Hotel
2. 209-213 Circle Drive
3. Paula Davis
4. 2015
5. Sebring Florida Now and Then—Facebook
6. Southeast Facade and Southwest Elevation, Looking Northeast
7. Photo 43 of 44

1. Nan-ces-o-wee Hotel
2. 133-145 North Ridgewood Drive
3. Paula Davis
4. 1922
5. Sebring Florida Now and Then—Facebook
6. Southeast Facade, Looking Northwest
7. Photo 44 of 44

Santa Rosa Hotel

509 N. Ridgewood Drive
Sebring, Highlands County
Florida

UTM:
17R 456526 3041911

Lat/Long:
27.5000144 -81.440150

USGS Quad: Arcadia

Datum: WGS84

Legend

 Proposed National Register Site

Date: 1/24/2017

N

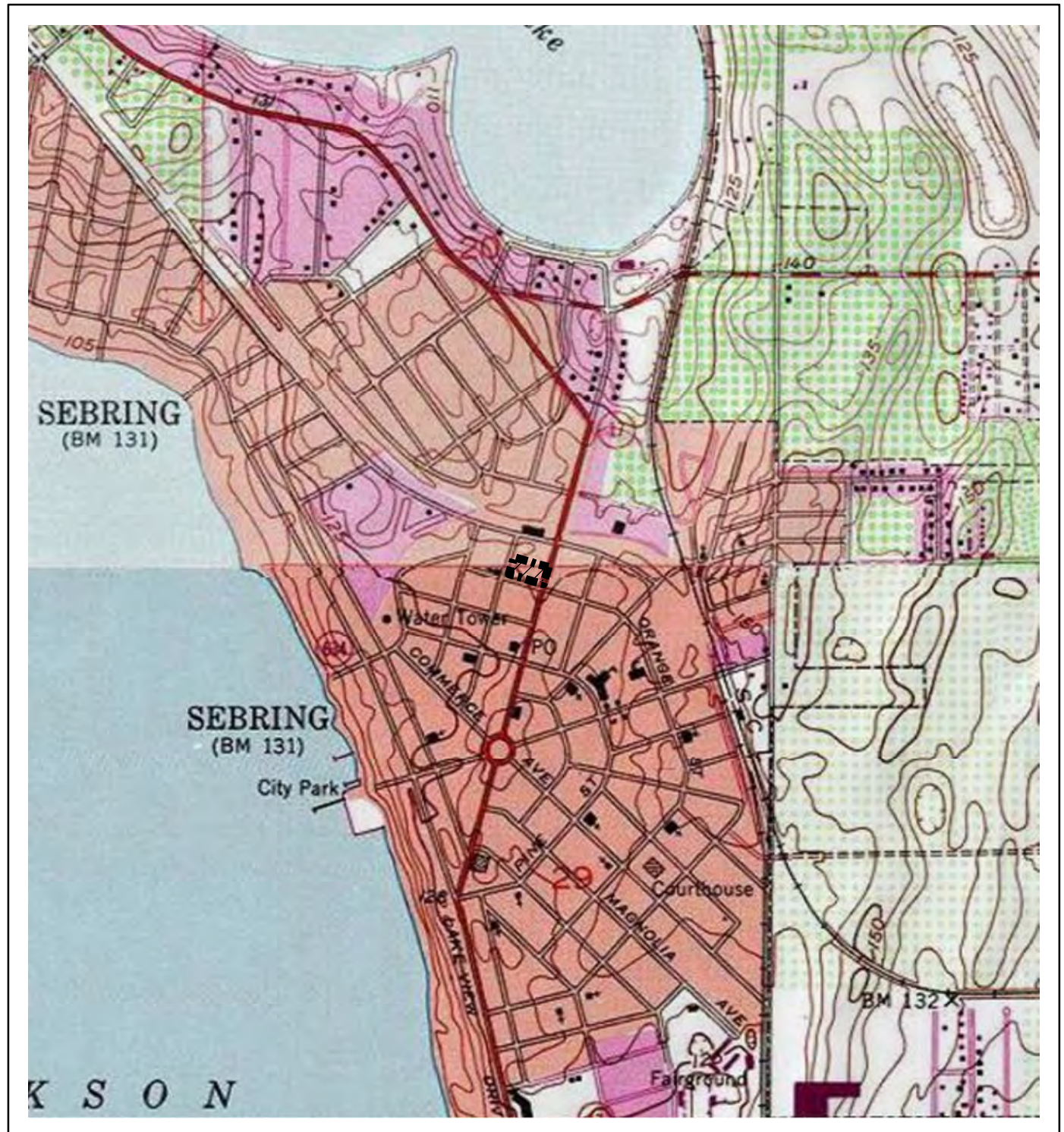


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Basemap Source: 2013 National
Geographic Society, i-cubed



Santa Rosa Hotel

509 N. Ridgewood Drive
Sebring, Highlands County
Florida

UTM:
17R 456526 3041911

Lat/Long:
27.500144, -81.440150

Datum: WGS84

Legend

 Proposed National Register Boundary

Date: 1/24/2017

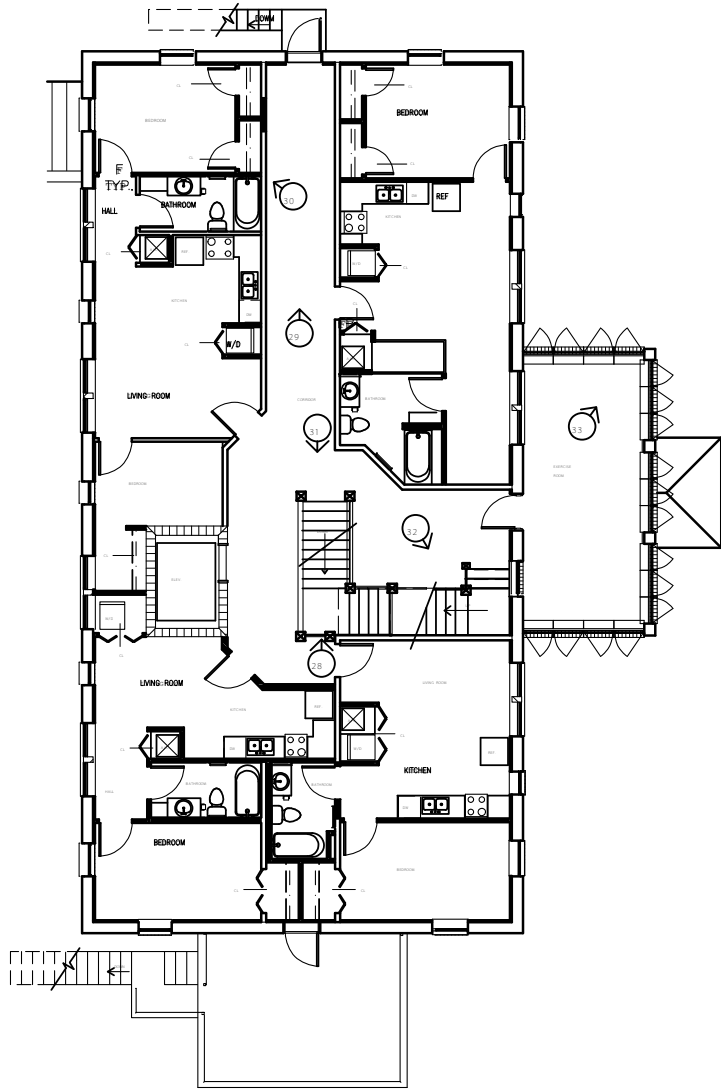
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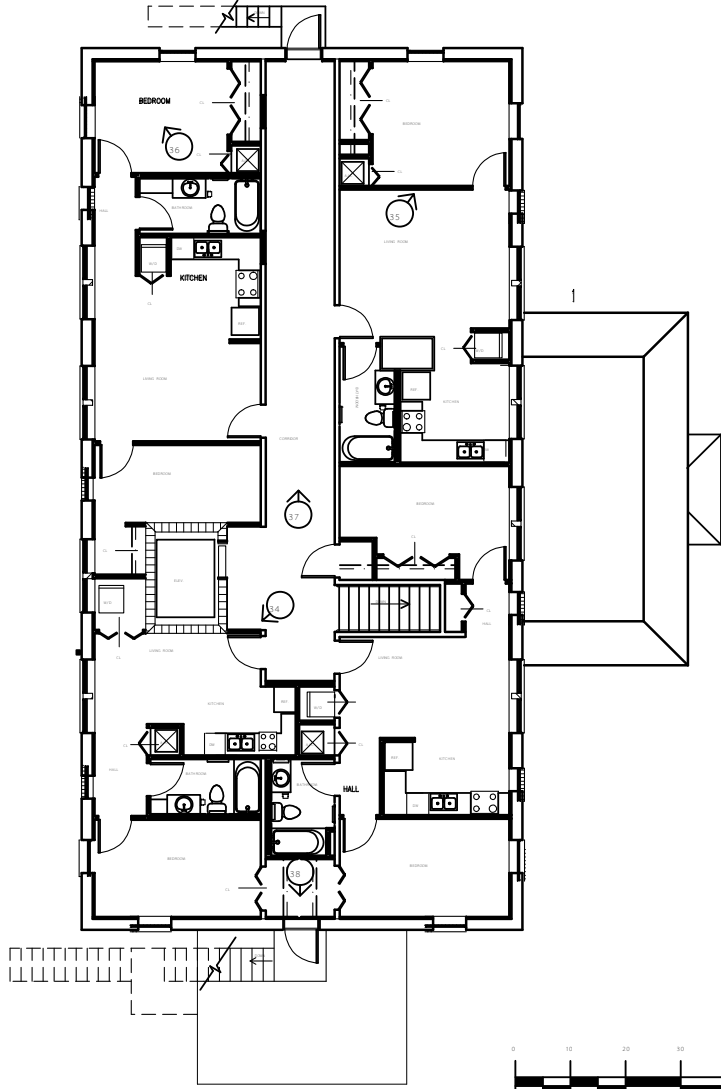
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Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo,
and the GIS User Community

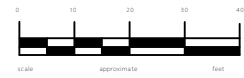




SECOND FLOOR
PLAN - BUILDING 'A'



THIRD FLOOR PLAN - BUILDING 'A'



ARCHITECTS

SCMH ARCHITECTS

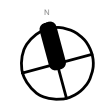
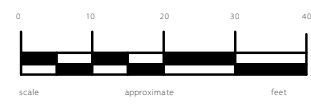
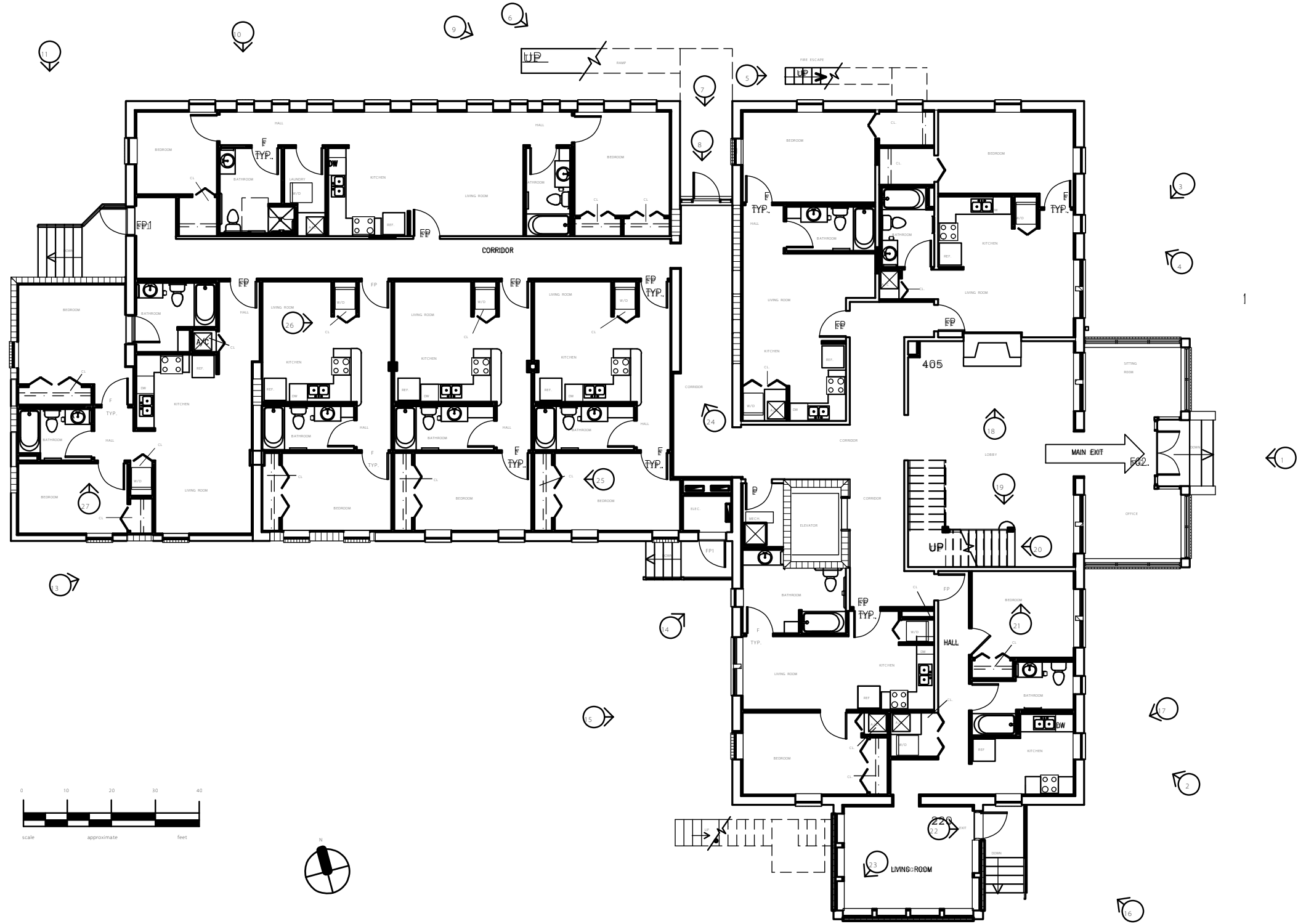
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SUNSHINE, FLORIDA 33411

TEL: (407) 487-4000
FAX: (407) 487-4001
WWW.SCMHARCHITECTS.COM

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FIRST FLOOR PLAN BUILDING 'A'

1

ARCHITECTS
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PROJECT:
 SHEET:
 DATE:
 DRAWN BY:
 CHECKED BY:
 APPROVED BY:
 A101b
 15007

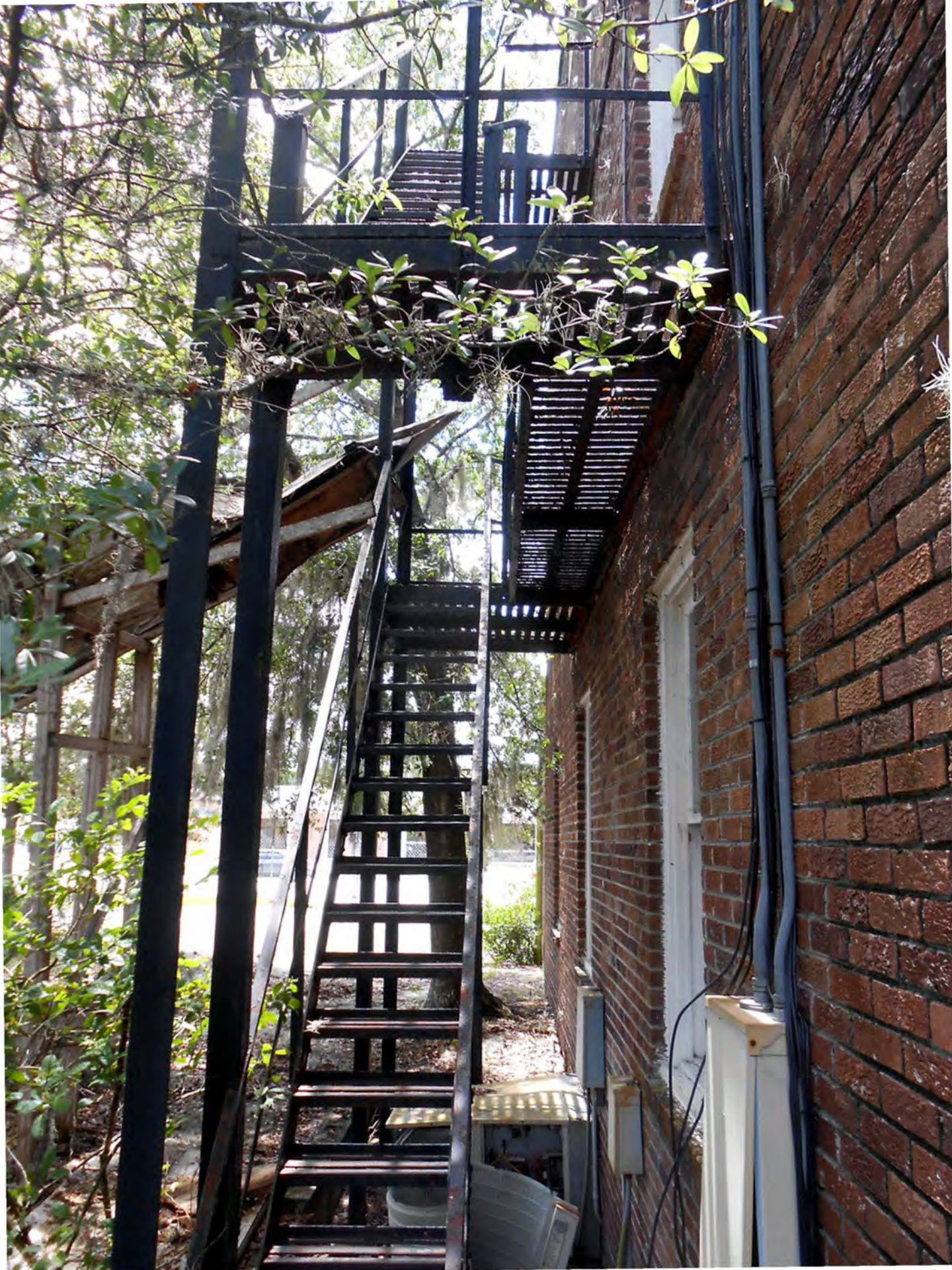


23/12/2014







































02/01/2015



























02/01/2015















SANTA ROSA
HOTEL

SANTA ROSA
HOTEL
BATES BROS. & CO. PROPRIETORS



SANTA ROSA HOTEL, SEBRING, FLA.







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



JOHN C. SHOOP, MAYOR

COUNCIL:

LENARD CARLISLE , PRESIDENT
MARK STEWART, PRO-TEMPORE
CHARLIE LOWRANCE
SCOTT STANLEY
BUD WHITLOCK

368 SO. COMMERCE. AVE.
SEBRING, FL 33870
(863) 471-5100
(863) 471-5142(FAX)

KATHY HALEY, CMC
CITY CLERK/TREASURER

SCOTT NOETHLICH
CITY ADMINISTRATOR

PENNY ROBINSON, CGFO
FINANCE DIRECTOR

February 28, 2017

National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C. Street, NW 2280
Washington DC 20240



RE: Santa Rosa Hotel, 509 N. Ridgewood Drive, Sebring FL, Highlands County

Dear Keeper of the National Register:

It is my understanding that the Florida National Register Review Board has recommended the above referenced property for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. This property is a significant part of our City's history and on behalf of the Sebring City Council, please consider this a letter of support. We respectfully request that your office accept the nomination.

Should you have any questions or if I can be of assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

John C. Shoop
Mayor

JCS:rp

cc: City Council
City Clerk
CRA Executive Director



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

RICK SCOTT
Governor

KEN DETZNER
Secretary of State

March 15, 2017

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief,
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs
Department of the Interior
1201 Eye Street, N.W., 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **Santa Rosa Hotel (FMSF#: 8HG00211)**, in **Highlands County**, to the National Register of Historic Places. The related materials (digital images, maps, and site plan) are included.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (850) 245-6364 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Ruben A. Acosta
Supervisor, Survey & Registration
Bureau of Historic Preservation

RAA/raa

Enclosures