

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received DEC 28 1983  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Hotel Venice

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 200 North Nassau Street N/A— not for publication

city, town Venice N/A vicinity of

state Florida code 12 county Sarasota code 115

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Hotel

4. Owner of Property

name Far South Developers

street & number Post Office Box 191

city, town Venice N/A vicinity of state Florida

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Sarasota County Courthouse

street & number 2000 Main Street

city, town Sarasota state Florida

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date N/A  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

# 7. Description

## Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

## Check one

unaltered  
 altered

## Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Constructed in 1927, the Hotel Venice is a three story, U-shaped building designed in the Renaissance Revival style. The building is of frame and stucco construction and displays the typical classically derived details associated with the style, including a modillioned cornice, corner quoining and belt coursing. The principal (west) facade of the building is dominated by a rectangular courtyard flanked by a pair of pyramidal roofed four-story towers. Fenestration is generally 8 over 8 or 10 over 10 casement. The building is covered by a low barrel tile hipped roof.

The central facade of the hotel is distinguished by a pair of four-story towers whose eaves are level with the ridge of central mass of the building. Each tower has three circular-headed windows at its fourth story. Closely spaced broad casement windows appear on the second and third stories above the main entrance to the building. At the first story, nine circular headed transoms form an arcade across the inside face of the courtyard. The outer shoulders of the east and west arches rest on square Tuscan plinths as opposed to the columns which support the balance of the arcade. The vertical rise of the building is controlled by a heavy modillioned cornice and belt courses below each level of the window openings.

The north and south wings of the building are nine bays wide on their courtyard elevation and three on their west elevation. The wings are joined visually by a shouldered wall which is broken at its center by gate post and an iron fence. The gate posts replicate the square Tuscan columns found throughout the building and are surmounted by spheres which rest on shallow tapered plinths. The courtyard is laid in a pattern of concrete tiled walks with a neo-Baroque fountain at its center.

The west elevations of the projecting wings continue the casement window treatment in three bay configurations: plain at the third story; within circular blind arches at second story and within circular blind arches centered on double entrance doors at ground level. The ground level doors have correct late Renaissance architraves comprising over-door lintels supported by corbels, which in turn compliment the Tuscan pilasters from which the blind arches of the first floor window-surrounds spring.

The north elevation of the building is a simplification of the west. The quoins which bind the corners of the building are present, as is the third story belt course. Below the third story, walls are rough cast stucco with no ornamentation. All windows are casements, eight over eight at the third story, ten over ten at the second story and ten over ten below a single light transom at the ground level.

The east elevation terminates in a pair of four bay projections at its north and south ends. The cornice repeats that of the rest of the building, as does the glazing pattern. The elevation is given added visual interest by a slender brick and stucco chimney which rises from the ground level fireplace to a point above the central ridge of the building. The chimney terminates in a corbelled cap with a tile roof. The base of the chimney is concealed by a hip roofed porch. The porch shelters two glazed doors with circular headed transoms which lead from the lobby to the rear garden of the hotel.

The south elevation of the hotel repeats the detailing of the north elevation. Originally, a one-story boiler room and a laundry facility was located immediately adjacent to the southeast corner of the hotel. This building and its massive smoke stack were removed in the early 1970s. The former connection of this structure to the hotel is evidenced by a large scar. A walled courtyard extends to the south from this point to form a walled garden with a central fountain identical to that of the main courtyard. Tuscan columns, now without their spheres and tapered plinths, support a simple iron gate which separates the garden from the street.

(See Continuation Sheet)

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1927

**Builder/Architect** Leon Gillette of Walker and Gillette

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Constructed in 1927, the Hotel Venice is significant in the areas of architecture and community planning. The building was the central focus of the planned community of Venice and as such contributed significantly to the community's growth and promotion. The building was designed by nationally prominent architect Leon Gillette of the firm Walker and Gillette and is an academically correct expression of the Renaissance Revival style. The building has undergone a minimum of exterior alterations and is one of the finest designed Florida hotels of its period.

The Hotel Venice served as the central focus of the planned community of the same name.<sup>1</sup> Atypical of most Florida communities developed during the boom of the 1920s, Venice was owned, planned, developed and marketed by a single agency: the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.<sup>2</sup> The union commissioned the New York firm of Walker and Gillette to develop a plan for their Florida city.<sup>3</sup> To ensure architectural unity within the city, an Architectural Department was established to review the design of all proposed buildings. The supervision extended to scale, texture, materials, color and landscaping as the city sought to create a Mediterranean-like image that would reflect its namesake.<sup>4</sup>

A key individual in the development of Venice was Leon Narcisse Gillette (1877-1945) of the partnership of Gillette and Walker of New York. Gillette was a 1899 graduate in architecture of the University of Pennsylvania and a 1903 diplomat of the Ecole des Beaux Arts. He apprenticed with the New York firm of Warren and Wetmore between 1903 and 1906 before establishing his partnership with A. Stewart Walker in 1906.<sup>5</sup> Some of Gillette's New York commissions included the New York Historical Society Building, the City Bank of New York and the Chemical Bank and Trust Company.<sup>6</sup> The firm received a gold medal from the Architectural League of New York in 1922 for excellence in residence work and another from the American Institute of Architects in 1925 for excellence in domestic architecture.<sup>7</sup> The Gillette and Walker partnership lasted until Gillette's death in 1945.<sup>8</sup>

The Hotel Venice was the largest of several Brotherhood buildings in Venice. These included the Seaboard Railway Station, the Venice Golf and Country Club, the Worthington Apartments, the Albee Sanitarium, the Park View and San Marco Hotels and the elementary school. Apart from the other Brotherhood buildings constructed in Venice, the Hotel Venice is individually significant because Gillette avoided many of the Mediterranean design cliches prevalent in Florida boom time architecture to provide an academically correct representation of the Renaissance Revival style. The building displays the sophisticated composition, restrained ornamentation and fine proportioning usually associated with the style. Exterior detailing includes a modillioned cornice, corner quoins and belt coursing.

The hotel was sold by the Brotherhood to the Kentucky Military Institute in the 1940s and served as their winter school for 20 years. It was purchased by its present owners, Far South Developers, in 1981 to be rehabilitated into a congregate living facility under provisions of the ERTA and TEFRA programs.

### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Venice News, Vol. 1, #31, pp. 35, 38.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1

Quadrangle name Venice

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	7	3	5	5	9	6	0	2	9	9	8	2	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 3 thru 10 and part of lots 2, 11 and 12, Block 52, Gulf View Section of Venice, being that block in the subdivision bounded by Tampa Avenue, Sarasota Street, Norman Avenue and St. Augustine Street. This area includes all significant properties.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bruce T. Sherwood/Michael F. Zimny, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Division of Archives

date December 12, 1983

street & number The Capitol

telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee

state Florida

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title George W. Percy, State Historic Preservation Officer

date 12/14/83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date 2/6/84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The public interiors of the Hotel Venice are spacious and simple. The lobby of the hotel is divided by two ranks of square columns with simple Tuscan capitals. These support principal rafters of massive dimension between which there are rows of secondary rafters below the plastered ceiling. The lobby also includes two massive hooded fireplaces of caen stone. The volume of the lobby space is effectively relieved by a rank of nine glazed doors with circular headed transoms which lead to the center courtyard. These arched forms are repeated to the right as one looks through to the staircase and dining room, to the left through a similar arch to the desks of hotel cashier and clerk and again from that vantage point down a long corridor to the former game room which occupies the entire ground floor of the north wing of the building. A massive kitchen space occupies the rear of the south wing immediately adjacent to the former boiler room. To the rear of the north wing are a series of bathrooms and store rooms and a fireproof vault. An elevator occupies the center of the lobby's south wing hall.

The hotel rooms themselves each include a private bath and closet. Door and window trim is simple as are all of the plaster finishes. The rooms across the front of the second floor are larger than those in the remainder of the two floors as they lead to the terrace roof of the arcade below. These rooms were occasionally used as offices and conference rooms.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp. 12, 38.

<sup>5</sup> National Cyclopaedia of American Bibliography, (Boston: James T. White and Company, 1966), pp. 582-583.

<sup>6</sup> Henry A. and Elise Rathbun Witheg. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects, (Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Company, 1956), p. 235.

<sup>7</sup> National Cyclopaedia, p. 582.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

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BOOKS

National Cyclopaedia of American Biography. Boston: James T. Shite & Co., 1966.

Withey, Henry A. & Elsie Rathbun. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects -  
Deceased. Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Co., 1956.

Newspapers

The Venice News. Venice, Florida. Vol. I, #31, April 1927.