

SITE NAME Imperial River Court/Liles Hotel, 27300 Old 41 Road

## A. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Built by J. Wallace Liles in 1926-1927, the Imperial River Court/Liles Hotel is located on the west side Old 41 Road between Goodwin Street and Wilson Street in Township 47 South, Range 25 East, Section 35 (Bonita Springs USGS Quadrangle 1987) in Bonita Springs, Lee County, Florida. Along with the Imperial River Cottages (8LL1011), this resource is located within present-day Riverside Park, on the south side of the Imperial River. This building was the first resource in the Imperial River Court tourist camp. The rectangular, two-story building has a masonry structural system. There are three bays along the south façade. The central bay on the first story contains the main entrance, which consists of two doorways. The outer bays contain paired windows. Plywood covers the windows on the first story. Second-story fenestration consists of both one-over-one double-hung wood sash and one-over-one single-hung aluminum sash windows. A low parapet roof conceals the flat roof. The porch at the main entrance features a front-gabled roof, with drop siding in the gable end, supported by wrought iron posts. Exterior ornamentation includes concrete window sills, scuppers at the main roofline, and exposed rafter tails on the front porch roof. The Imperial River Court/Liles Hotel is currently undergoing rehabilitation as part of the City of Bonita Springs Park and Office Facility Master Plan for Riverside Park.

## B. DISCUSSION OF SIGNIFICANCE

The original Imperial River Court/Liles Hotel is significant in the history of tourism and community planning in Bonita Springs. This building was constructed in 1926-1927 by J. Wallace Liles, one of the four Liles brothers who moved to the community from Ozark, Alabama. The Liles brothers were prominent players in the early development of Bonita Springs. The hotel was constructed to accommodate the large number of tourists who flocked to the area for hunting and fishing. The tourist camp was expanded in the 1940s and 1960s to include the Imperial River Cottages (8LL1011) and parking spaces for trailers and mobile homes (Nutting 1986: 28-30). The earliest known hotel in Bonita Springs built as part of a tourist court, the Eagle Hotel, is no longer extant. This leaves the Imperial River Court/Liles Hotel as the oldest example of a tourist court in Bonita Springs. This building is a simple example of the Masonry Vernacular architectural style and represents the architectural trends of the Boom Time era. Its location on the south bank of the Imperial River, just west of Old 41 Road, places it at the heart of historic Bonita Springs. This resource retains its historical associations with the settlement, growth, development, and tourism of Bonita Springs. It is located within the concentration of resources that compose the proposed Old 41 Commercial Historic District. Therefore, the Imperial River Court/Liles Hotel could contribute to a potential local and *NRHP* historic district comprised of the historic buildings along Old 41 Road. This resource is eligible on an individual basis for designation by the Bonita Springs Historic Preservation Board. However, this building does not presently appear to be individually eligible for listing in the *NRHP*.

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C. HISTORY AND REFERENCES CITED OF PAST WORK AT SITE

Nutting, E.P.

1986 *The Beginnings of Bonita Springs Florida*. The Friends of the Library, Bonita Springs, Florida.