

SITE NAME Shangri-La, 27750 Old 41 Road

## A. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Built by the Heitman Estate in the early 1920s, the Shangri-La is located on the southwest corner of Old 41 Road and Kentucky Street in Township 47 South, Range 25 East, Section 35 (Bonita Springs USGS Quadrangle 1987) in Bonita Springs, Lee County, Florida. This resource is located on the north side of Oak Creek. The irregular, two-story building has a masonry structural system. The Shangri-La is clad in stucco and topped by a hipped roof covered with composition shingles. The fenestration consists of one-over-one double-hung wood sash windows. One-story enclosed porches are located on the north and south facades. These enclosed porches feature flat roofs hidden behind Mission-shaped parapets. A one-story enclosed porch, which now serves as the entrance hall, is found at the center of the symmetrical east façade. This entrance hall features an arcade composed of five arches. A large canvas awning, serving as a port-cochere, leads to the central arch. A Mission-shaped parapet, topped with finials, conceals the roof of the entrance hall. Exterior ornamentation includes concrete window sills, coping, and finials. A masonry wall surrounds this property. The Shangri-La, which underwent extensive renovations in the 1990s, is currently vacant.

## B. DISCUSSION OF SIGNIFICANCE

In the 1920s, the Heitman Estate developed Bonita Springs west of Heitman Avenue, which later became Tamiami Trail. Unlike the Bonita Land Company, which named its streets after its members, the Heitman Estate named its streets after states. The Heitman Hotel was constructed as a temporary residence for new property owners overseeing the construction of their houses. This hotel has since been known as Bonita Hotel, while owned by Betty Ossenkop, and Villa Bonita, under the ownership of the Mack family. It became the Shangri-La, a health resort and spa, when it was purchased in 1964 by R.J. Cheatham. Cheatham established the National Hygiene Institute at the Shangri-La. The spring for which the town is named is located on the grounds of the Shangri-La. This spring empties into Oak Creek, which runs through the Shangri-La property.

This building is an example of the Mission architectural style and represents the architectural trends of the Boom Times era. Its location on the north bank of Oak Creek, just west of Old 41 Road, places it at the heart of historic Bonita Springs. This historic resource retains its historic physical integrity and its historical associations with tourism and the settlement, growth, and development of Bonita Springs. The Shangri-La is located within the concentration of resources that compose the proposed Old 41 Commercial Historic District. Therefore, this building could contribute to a potential local and NRHP historic district comprised of the historic buildings along Old 41 Road. This building is considered potentially eligible for individual listing in the *NRHP* and for designation by the Bonita Springs Historic Preservation Board.

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C. HISTORY AND REFERENCES CITED OF PAST WORK AT SITE

Gillis, Chad

2001 "Spa is part of Bonita's history," *Bonita Banner*, 25 August 2001.

Jones, Tracy

2002 "Lost Horizon: the legacy of the Shangri-La Spa," *N Magazine*, October 2002.

Nutting, E.P.

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