

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received AUG 31 1983
date entered

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

1. Name

historic (John) Edmunds Apartment House (1927-1930)

and/or common (Mirador)

2. Location

street & number 2007 East Gadsden Street N/A not for publication

city, town Pensacola N/A vicinity of

state Florida code 12 county Escambia code 033

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Rudder, George

street & number 2007 E. Gadsden Street

city, town Pensacola N/A vicinity of state Florida

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Escambia County Courthouse

street & number 223 Palafox Place

city, town Pensacola 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

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Mirador is a three story apartment building located on the west bank of Bayou Texar in Pensacola, Florida. Designed by Walker Dorr Willis, in the Mediterranean style, it is of wood frame construction with a smooth cast stucco exterior finish. It is in a good state of repair and is currently undergoing rehabilitation. With the exception of roof replacement and changes to landscape elements, the Mirador is largely unaltered.

The Mirador is located prominently on the west bank of Bayou Texar near the mouth, close to the entrance to Pensacola Bay. The neighborhood traditionally has been upper middle income residential, developing between 1890 and 1940. Just across the bayou is East Pensacola Heights. When the apartment was constructed in 1927, the main bridge across the bayou was located on Gadsden Street, which runs just north of the building.

The L-shaped apartment building is sited so that all apartments have a water view. Originally constructed with twenty-four units, the building is being remodeled and converted to twenty-two condominiums. Although considerable work has been done inside the apartments, little has been done in the stairwells or other public spaces. The original metal bannisters and light fixtures have been retained.

The building is three stories high, of wood frame construction on a massive concrete basement. The walls are covered with smooth cast stucco and are painted white. The roof of the building, which is generally hipped, consists of composition shingles, though it was originally covered with ceramic tiles. Two low towers break the roof line of the east wing. The roof line of the north facade of the north wing is also interrupted by a rectangular, hip roofed tower.

Windows are irregularly placed on all facades of the Mirador. Most are double hung sash, either one-over-one or two-over-two. During the recent renovation of the building, contractors replaced the original wood frame windows with bronzed metal frame windows. Simple pairs of round arched doors provide access to the five cast iron balconies on the third floor. Two additional balconies were created by linking the two east wing towers with a second floor arcade, three bays wide.

Two of the building's entranceways, both on the north wing, are more ornate than the others. These entranceways are flat arched, and flanked by two simple round columns. Above the doorways are medallions. The windows flanking these entranceways are covered by decorative cast iron grills.

The original acreage of the building grounds has been reduced, but the building retains much of its water front vista. The waterfront promenade balustrade is still in place. The neighborhood continues to be an upper middle income residential area.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input 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 checked="" 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** Jacob Vander Sys and Sons (Mobile, AL)
 Willis, Walker D. (Pensacola, FL)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

This 1927 property is significant architecturally as a fine example of the Mediterranean Revival style. It was designed by Walker Willis and was the most popular apartment building in Pensacola for 30 years. It is significant historically for the role it played in the development of rental housing in Pensacola and for its association with locally prominent families.

Pensacola in the 1920s was facing a new era of prosperity. The population increased from 23,000 in 1910 to 31,000 by 1930. Following the financial setbacks to the lumber-based economy in the early teens, Pensacola was rebounding and growing again by the mid-1920s. The city seemed on the verge of economic prosperity, and leaders had high hopes for the growth and expansion of the local economy. The U.S. Navy, especially had an impact on the economy, almost doubling its expenditures locally between 1927 and 1930 and significantly expanding the aviation training program. As more naval trainees and others involved in new businesses came to Pensacola, more housing was needed.¹ The authors of an economic and industrial survey in 1927 commented on the scarcity of rental properties - houses or apartments - and the need for modern units. Housing was especially scarce for newly-weds and short term residents. Most apartments consisted of large old houses that had been converted ". . . such as would appeal to the working class only."²

In 1927, the Parsons, Klapp study noted the construction of a twenty-four apartment house on the banks of Bayou Texar at the East Pensacola Bridge.³ Originally called the John Edmunds Apartment, but soon renamed, The Mirador was "expected to prove a big success since the need of modern apartments here, especially in such a desirable location, has long been seen."⁴ The John E. Edmunds Co. of Chicago, Illinois, contracted with Walker D. Willis, a Pensacola architect, to design the apartment house and with Jacob Vander Sys and Sons of Mobile, Alabama, to construct it. Designed in the Mediterranean Revival style, the Mirador was one of the few substantial buildings in Pensacola designed in this style. The Wilson Bear Realty Co., whose principals were A.C. Wilson and Max L. Bear, financed construction of the building with bonds valued at \$110,000. In 1927 the Shell Company of J.E. Edmunds collapsed, owing money to numerous contractors that had worked on the project, including Peake-McMorris Company, Pensacola Sheet Metal Works, Dagostin and Angleing Brothers, Braun Tile Company and Pyritz and McWhinnie.⁵ In 1928 Mirador Court Inc. whose principle stockholder was Max L. Bear, acquired title to the building, settled outstanding claims against the project, and completed construction of the building. The Bear family, through Mirador Court Inc., maintained ownership until 1956 when they sold to Charles and Catherine Fox. The Foxes managed the apartment until 1967 when they sold the property to Robert Walker. The Walkers operated the apartments until 1981 when the George Rudder Construction Company began conversion of the 24 apartments to 22 condominiums⁶ (see attached floor plans).

Until 1956 The Mirador was the only major apartment complex in Pensacola. In the late 1940s, the city constructed, with federal assistance, several low-cost housing complexes utilizing duplexes or tri-plexes (Moreno Court, Attucks Court, Gonzalez Court) which provided low-income housing for civilians and enlisted military personnel. Apartments did not prove popular until the mid 1960s (as one local financier explained -- from the 1920s to 1950s anyone who was anyone owned their own home, they didn't rent) and then a boom in

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name Pensacola

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	6	4	8	1	7	6	0	3	3	6	5	7	6	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

N 1/2 Blk. 96 New City Tract except W 98 Ft. 5 in. thereof and S 1/2 Blk. 96 New City Tract, except W 80 Ft. and except S 107 Ft. 6 in. of the East 103 Ft., property fronting north on Gadsden Street and south on Jackson Street. Boundary includes all significant property features.

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 Linda Ellsworth/Larry S. Paarlberg, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Division of Archives, History & Rec. Mgmt. date August 16, 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 George W. Percy

title George W. Percy, State Historic Preservation Officer date 8/22/83

For NPS use only

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

Alma Byers Entered in the National Register date 9/29/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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apartment construction paralleled the population expansion.

Several prominent Pensacolians are associated with this project. Walker Dorr Willis, the architect, was a member of the locally-prominent Dorr family and designed numerous structures in Pensacola. Many of his projects were in North Hill, including the Mozart A. Lischkoff house and the Alexander C. Blount house, as well as the P.K. Yonge School and the State Board of Health Laboratory. He also served as the resident architect for the Hotel San Carlos, the supervising architect for the state hotel commission, and the architect for the Escambia County Board of Public Instruction.⁷ Max L. Bear, owner of The Mirador for more than two decades, was an executive with the Lewis Bear Company, Inc., a wholesale grocery firm. Mr. Bear was active in civic, religious, and social groups throughout his life. He was mayor of Pensacola in 1936, mayor pro tem in 1934 and 1935, and a member of the city council for eight years.⁸

FOOTNOTES

¹McGovern, James R., Emergence of a City in the New South (Pensacola: privately printed, 1976), pp. 88-95.

²Parsons, Klapp, Brinkerhoff and Douglas, Economic and Industrial Survey of the City of Pensacola and Escambia County, pp. 5, 32.

³Ibid., p. 32.

⁴Pensacola Journal, May 15, 1927.

⁵Escambia County Circuit Court, Dockets 22138 and 22634.

⁶Escambia County Deed Books 129, p. 573; 110, p. 492; 131, p. 324; 133, p. 54, 61; 453, p. 623; Official Record Book 329, p. 560; 329, p. 562.

⁷Southeastern Hotel Journal, June 25, 1927.

⁸J.E. Dovell Florida Historic - Dramatic - Contemporary, V. IV Family and Personal History (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1952), pp. 945-46.

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Ellsworth, Lucius F. and Linda V. Pensacola: The Deep Water City. Tulsa: Continental Heritage Press, 1982.

Escambia County Circuit Court Docket 22138, 23712, 22634.

Escambia County Deed Books 31, 63, 75, 90, 113, 107, 116, 120, 123, 125, 129, 130, 110, 133, 453; Official Record Books 329, 398, 404, 496.

Escambia County Tax Rolls 1925-28.

J.E. Dovell. Florida: Historic - Dramatic - Contemporary. V. IV, Family and Personal History. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co. 1952.

McGovern, James R. Emergence of a City in the Modern South, Pensacola: 1900-1945. Pensacola: privately printed, 1976.

Parsons, Klapp, Brinkerhoff, and Douglas. Economic and Industrial Survey of the City of Pensacola and Escambia County. 1927.

Pensacola City Directories, 1927 - Present.

Pensacola Journal, 1927.

The Picture Book of Pensacola Florida, n. p. 1937.

Southeastern Hotel Journal, June 25, 1927.