

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received **JUL 22 1986**
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Robert L. McKenzie House

and/or common Belle Booth House

2. Location

street & number 17 East Third Court

N/A not for publication

city, town Panama City

N/A vicinity of

state Florida

code 012

county Bay

code 005

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 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 type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Anne McKenzie Morton & Ellen McKenzie Tutte

street & number 9 Sennet Drive

city, town Greenville

N/A vicinity of

state South Carolina

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bay County Courthouse

street & number 300 East Fourth Street

city, town Panama City

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

The Robert L. McKenzie House at 17 East Third Court is a one and one-half story, wood frame vernacular residence with an irregular plan, occupying a 160' X 95' lot in the old section of Panama City, Florida. The house rests on a brick pier foundation and is surmounted by a gable roof with shed dormers on both the front and rear. A screened porch extends the width of the main (southwest) facade, and there is a smaller screened porch located at the northwest corner of the rear of the house. A small porte-cochere, which now serves as a potio, is found on the northwest elevation. All of the major windows are 1/1 double hung sashes.

The McKenzie House is located approximately three blocks northwest of St. Andrews Bay in downtown Panama City, a community of 34,000 persons, found on the Gulf coast of Florida about halfway between Tallahassee and Pensacola. The residence is one of the oldest buildings in the area and stands in close proximity to governmental buildings (county courthouse, city hall, main post office, police department) and the commercial district associated with the historical center of the city. Built just one year after the incorporation of Panama City, the McKenzie House dates from a time when residential building were erected within the downtown area because of the smallness of the population.

The house stands at the front of the lot, close to the sidewalk, at the intersection of Third Court and Park Street (shown as Park Avenue on the map). It overlooks McKenzie Park and is the only building occupying the triangular city block bounded by Third Court, Luvern Avenue, and Park Street. The grounds of the house are landscaped with trees (magnolia, oak, and hickory), ornamental shrubs, and flower beds. The property is bounded by a wood picket fence.

The exterior of the house is simple and reflects the influence of no particular style. The three-bay screened porch on the main facade has boxed columns surmounted by a plain entablature which supports a roof deck surrounded by a balustrade. The square balusters and rails connect chamfered posts set along the edge of the deck.

The main facade wall is also divided into three bays, each containing glass paneled French doors that provide access between the porch and the interior of the house. A one-story bay extends out from the main block of the house on the _____ elevation and runs the length of the house. This was added in 1925 to enlarge the living room and allow for the construction of a "sun room."

The present front porch was also constructed in 1925 to replace a somewhat shallower one when the upstairs living area was enlarged. The house had two gable dormers which was replaced by a large shed dormer with a central doorway leading out onto the deck. The earlier porch was supported by thin Tuscan columns.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

DESCRIPTION

Only the front half of the house contains two floors. The rear section--containing the sun room, a bathroom, nursery, and short hall running between the sun room and kitchen--is covered with a gable roof that is oriented perpendicular to the main roof. Another gable covering the kitchen, breakfast room, and rear porch intersects one just mentioned at a right angle on the northwest side of the house.

The first floor of the main block of the house contains only three rooms: living room, library/office, and dining room. There is also a small foyer containing the stairs to the second floor. The house has no central hallway. The living room is considerably larger than the other two rooms and has the only fireplace in the house.

The second floor contains two bedrooms, a bathroom, a large stair landing, and a storage area. The master bedroom occupies the northeast one-third of the floor. The second bedroom is located at the front of the house and is irregular in shape. The bathroom is located at the rear of the house and is expressed on the exterior--as is the master bedroom--by a continuous shed dormer.

The house stands today approximately as it was enlarged in 1925. The upstairs was enlarged to provide additional living space, and on the first floor the living room and sun room were added. The only other structures on the property are the original garage and a lattice sided building immediately next to it located at the rear of the lot. The lattice building was used as a family laundry facility and had a hand water pump and a laundry tub. The structure is now used as a wood shed. The garage is used for storage. Immediately to the rear of the house, surrounded by flower beds is an original rubble stone sundial.

Other Properties: Other contributing structures found on the lot are a one-story wood frame garage and a one-story lattice sided wood shed. The garage is rectangular in plan, has a hip roof, and drop siding. The entrance has been enclosed with plywood. The wood shed has a shed roof supported by posts and is sided with lattice strips.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates +1909 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The McKenzie House is significant primarily for its association with Robert L. McKenzie, who was one of the founders and developers of Panama City, Florida, and Bay County. He is further connected with the area's early industry and economic growth by direct association with the production of turpentine and pine rosin products and by furthering the building of a railroad and highway network in the county. He also played an important role in local and state politics, serving two terms as both mayor of Panama City and state representative from Washington County. The house is further significant as one of the first residential structures erected in the newly incorporated city of Panama City. The house was McKenzie's residence and place of business for forty-four years.

Robert Lee McKenzie was born on his father's farm near Oglethorpe, Georgia, in Macon County on October 16, 1870. He was the third of seven children born to William Newton and Mary (Southwell) McKenzie.¹ He was educated in the county schools and as a youth worked on his father's farm. In his early twenties Robert L. McKenzie engaged in the general merchandise business, first in Arabi and later in Cordele, Georgia. About 1897, he decided to try his hand at the manufacture of naval stores--turpentine and pine rosin products--in nearby Oakfield.²

About 1900, McKenzie moved to Taylor County, Florida, to continue in the naval stores business, but moved to Washington County in the western panhandle of the state two years later to operate a plant owned by A.J. Gay, which had been founded in 1898. The mill was located near Harrison, a small village located approximately two miles southeast of the town of St. Andrews, at that time the largest community in the area with about 2,000 inhabitants. Harrison had been founded during a brief north Florida land boom and named Park Resort, but the name was changed in 1889 to honor newly inaugurated President of the United States William Henry Harrison, who awarded the new settlement its first post office. The land boom was short-lived, and the village was left largely abandoned once the real estate in the area declined in value.³

McKenzie and partners named Vickers acquired ownership of the Gay plant in 1905, and he began to take an interest in reviving Harrison as a town site. Along with three other men, he founded the Gulf Coast Development Company to promote the sale of residential and commercial within the renovated town plat. The officers of the company were W.J. Jackson, president; R.L. McKenzie, vice president; and G.M. West, secretary. A fourth man, named A.B. Steele, from Atlanta received a fourth share in the company to help finance the building of a railroad link between the community and Dothan, Alabama. The new line was named the Atlanta and St. Andrews Bay Railroad. McKenzie served for a time as one of the officers of the eighty-five mile long line. He was also one of the stockholders and directors of the Birmingham, Columbus & St. Andrews Bay Railroad, a thirty-eight mile line running between Chipley and South Port in Washington, County.⁴

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name Panama City

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	7	6	2	9	0	1	0	1	0	3	3	3	6	4	6	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

Gulf Coast Development Company Plat, Block 8, Lots 10, 11, and east 1/2 of 9.

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 William Carl Shiver, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Division of Historical Resources

date July 2, 1986

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. Ruff*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date July 2, 1986

For NPS use only

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

*Entered in the
National Register*

date 8-21-86

Allover Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

SIGNIFICANCE

Harrison was renamed Panama City to honor the Panama Canal, then under construction. The town was incorporated under its new name in 1908, and in February, 1909, McKenzie was unanimously elected mayor by the town's thirty-four qualified voters. He was again elected without opposition in 1911. During the same period he served two terms in the state legislature as a representative from Washington County. Much of his energy during this time was spent laying the groundwork for the creation of a new county, of which Panama City was to be the County Seat.⁵ By 1913, Panama City and the surrounding area had gained sufficient population to consider the forming of a new county. A five man committee, chaired by McKenzie, was selected by the Panama City Chamber of Commerce to decide upon a new name for it. "Canal" and "Bay" were the only two names considered, the latter winning three votes to two.⁶

On July 1, 1913, Bay County was created from portions of Washington and Calhoun counties by an act of the state legislature. McKenzie had done much of the groundwork among his fellow representatives and influenced leaders from various parts of the state to support the new county division. To honor him for his tireless efforts toward that end, McKenzie and his wife were invited to the official signing of the bill. The governor used a gold-pointed tortoise shell pen which McKenzie had purchased on his recent honeymoon in Havana,⁷ Cuba. The pen is still on display in the office/library of the McKenzie House.

Robert L. McKenzie married Belle Booth, a widow, in 1912. She had come to the region from Escanaba, Michigan, with her husband, Charles E. Booth, about a decade earlier. They had settled in the community of Lynn Haven, and after her husband's death in 1908,⁸ Belle Booth moved to nearby Panama City, where she became the postmistress. In 1909, she acquired a parcel of land from the Gulf Coast Development Company and built a house on it.⁹ It became the family home after she married McKenzie. McKenzie remained in the house after Belle died in 1918. On August 5, 1920, he married Blandford Dixon, a school teacher whose family had moved to Panama City in 1912.⁹ They had two daughters, Anne and Ellen, who are the current owners of the house.

By 1920, Bay County had a population of 11,000 of which 2,000 persons lived in Panama City. Five years later the number of persons living within the incorporated area of the city had been increased to nearly 5,000 by the annexation of the nearby communities of St. Andrews and Millville.¹⁰ Growth brought the need for the construction of new highways, and the Gulf Coast Highway Association was formed to improve the link between Panama City and Pensacola. The president of the association was Alfred I. DuPont and the treasurer was R.L. McKenzie. The efforts of the association resulted not only in the construction of an improved roadway, but also in the building of two bridges in the Panama City area, thus eliminating the use of ferries.¹¹

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 3

SIGNIFICANCE

McKenzie was instrumental in the location of Bob Jones College near Lynn Haven, the first institution of higher learning in Bay County. When prominent evangelist Bob Jones decided to found a college, McKenzie influenced him to build in the area. The charter for the institution was signed in the office of the McKenzie House and the school opened on September 4, 1927. McKenzie served on the executive board of the school through its growth into a university, even after its moves to Cleveland, Tennessee, and finally to Greenville, South Carolina. In 1951, McKenzie was given an honorary degree of laws from the university.¹²

Of vital importance to Panama City during the Great Depression was the location of the International Paper Company mill in the city. A group of businessmen, led by McKenzie, had learned that the company wished to expand and convinced company officials to choose Panama City as the site of their mill. Construction began in 1929 on what was billed as "the world's largest Kraft paper mill." The plant began operations in 1931 and while other cities were suffering from the closing of business and industry, Panama City continued to grow and prosper.¹³

McKenzie was also deeply involved in the construction of the "Drummond Cut" canal, an intracoastal waterway facility completed in 1938.¹⁴ During World War II he was chairman of the Bay County chapter of the American Red Cross and served as a member of the Selective Service Board.¹⁵ McKenzie died in 1956, and in 1964 the name of the public park which the McKenzie House overlooks was changed from "City Park" to "McKenzie Park."

Footnotes

¹Louise Frederick Hays, History of Macon County, Georgia (Atlanta: Stein Printing Co., 1933), pp. 588-589.

²Panama City Pilot (?) 1909.

³Panama City Pilot 3 October 1907.

⁴Ibid.; see also R.L. McKenzie, Letter to the Editor, Panama City News-Herald 15 May 1951.

⁵R.L. McKenzie, "Notes for a Speech on the History of Panama City," undated manuscript.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 4

SIGNIFICANCE (Footnotes)

⁶Ibid.

⁷Panama City News-Herald (?) 1943.

⁸Harold E. Bell, Glimpses of the Panhandle (Chicago: Adam Press, 1961),
p. 87.

⁹Bay County Public Records, Deed Books, Book 20, Page 432; Book 33,
Page 15.

¹⁰Elsie Lillian Surber, "A Study of the History and Folklore of the St.
Andrews Bay Region" (M.A. Thesis, University of Florida, Gainesville, 1950),
pp. 88-89.

¹¹Panama City Pilot 21 May 1927

¹²Panama City News-Herald 30 April 1950.

¹³The Railroad Journal, Vol 10. No. 7, March, 1946.

¹⁴Panama City News-Herald (?) 1938.

¹⁵Panama City News-Herald (?) 1950.

¹⁶Panama City Commission, "A Resolution Establishing McKenzie Park," 8
November 1964.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

9

Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bell, Harold E. Glimpses of the Panhandle. Chicago: Adam Press, 1961.

Bay County, Public Records, Bay County Courthouse, Panama City, Florida.

Hays, Louise Frederick. History of Macon County, Georgia. Atlanta: Stein Printing Co., 1933.

McKenzie, R.L. Letter to the Editor, Panama City News-Herald 15 May 1951.

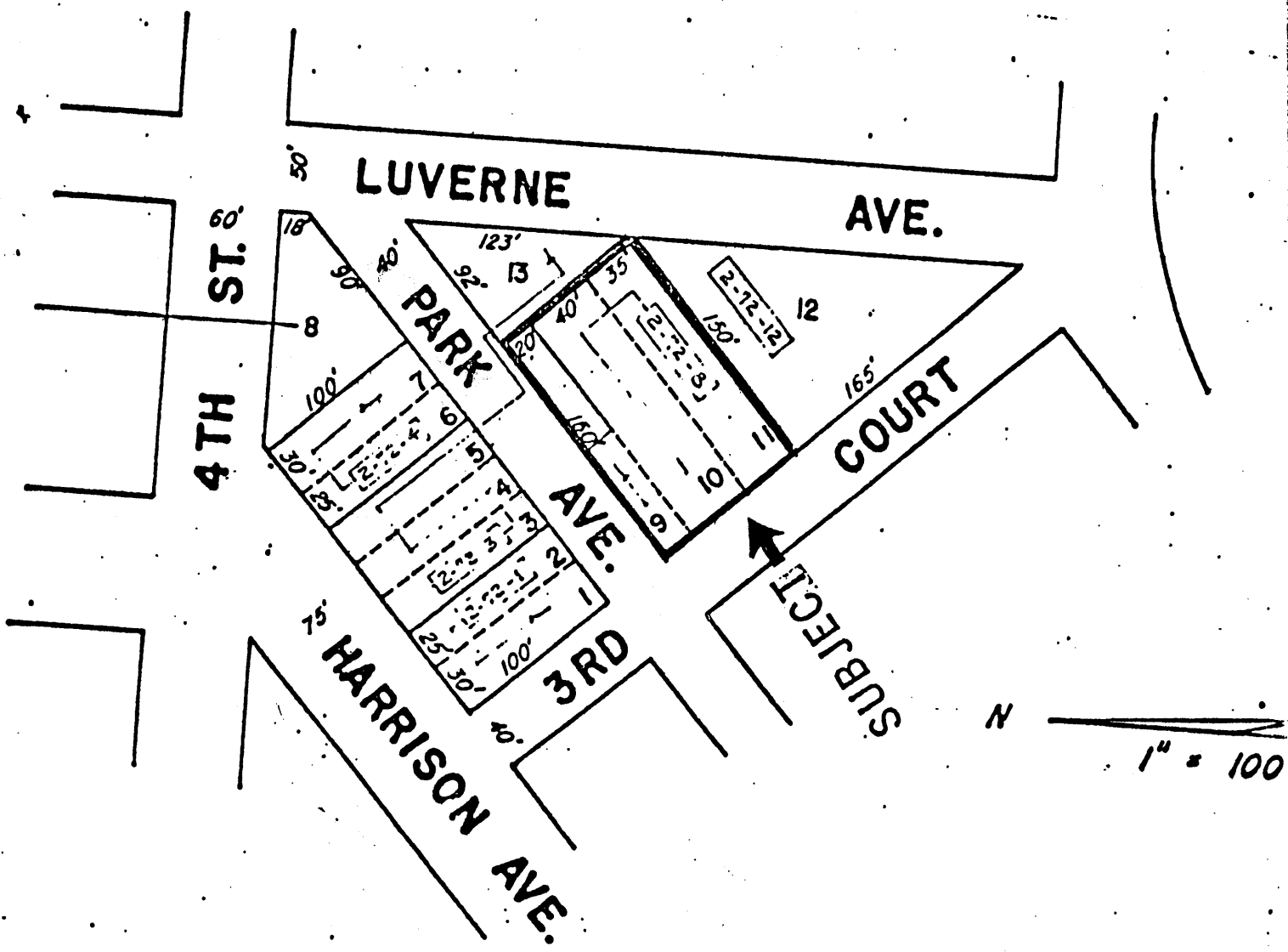
_____ "Notes for a Speech on the History of Panama City," undated manuscript.

Panama City Commission. "A Resolution Establishing McKenzie Park" 8 November 1964.

Panama City Pilot, 1907-1927.

Panama City News-Herald, 1943-1951.

Surber, Elsie Lillian. "A Study of the History and Folklore of the St. Andrews Bay Region," M.A. Thesis, University of Florida, 1950.



LUVERNE

AVE.

4TH ST. 60'

PARK

AVE.

COURT

HARRISON AVE.

3RD

SUBJECT

N

1" = 100'

58'

60'

18'

90'

70'

123'

92'

13'

35'

150'

12

165'

100'

8

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

75'

100'

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

75'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

75'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

100'

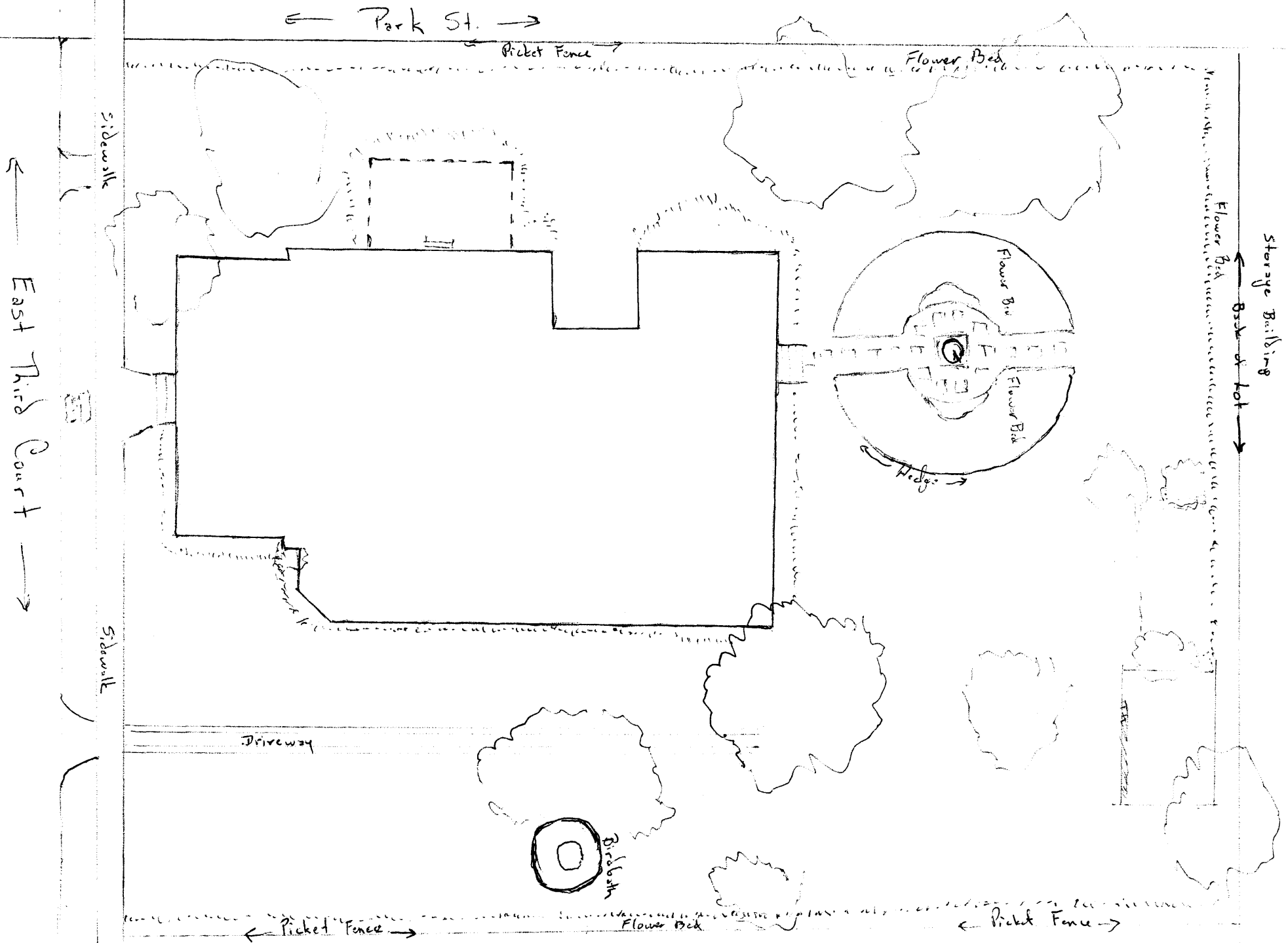
100'

100'

100'

100'

100'



← Park St. →

Picket Fence →

Flower Bed

Sidewalk

← East Third Court →

Storage Building

Flower Bed

Bed of Hot

Flower Bin

Flower Bed

Hedge

Sidewalk

Driveway

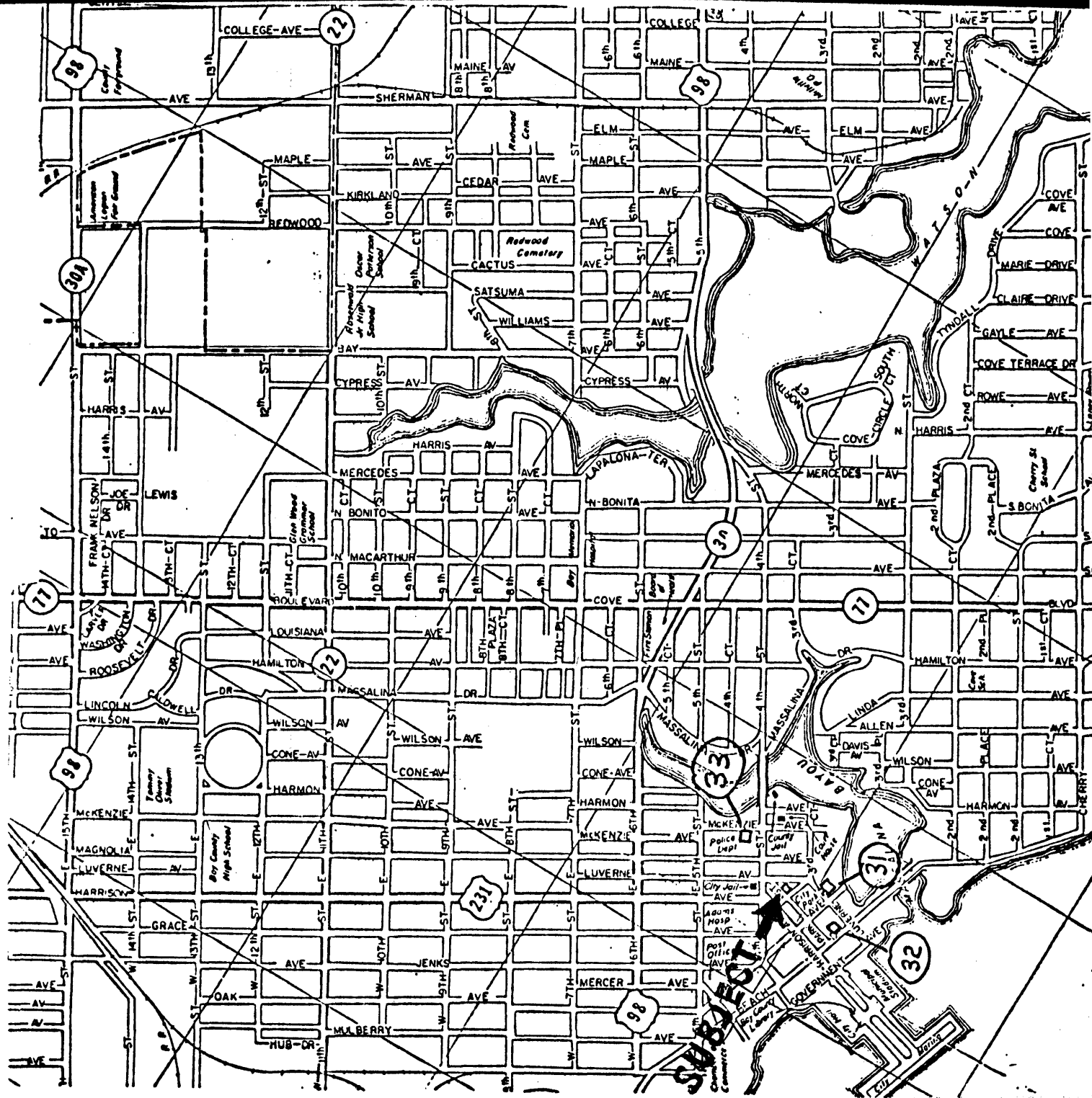
Bicycle

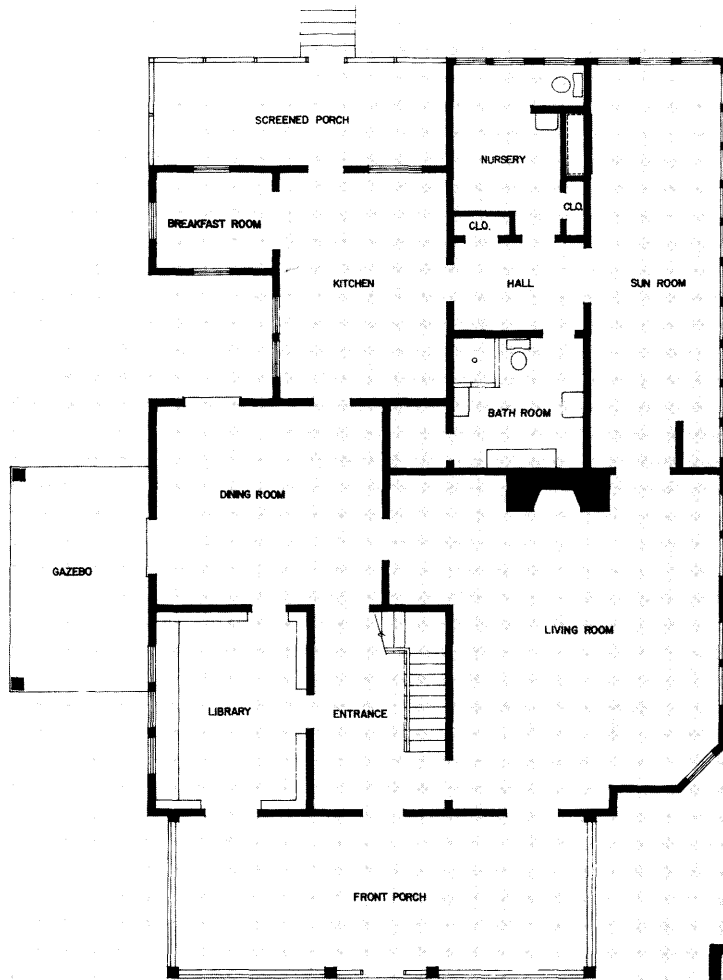
← Picket Fence →

Flower Bed

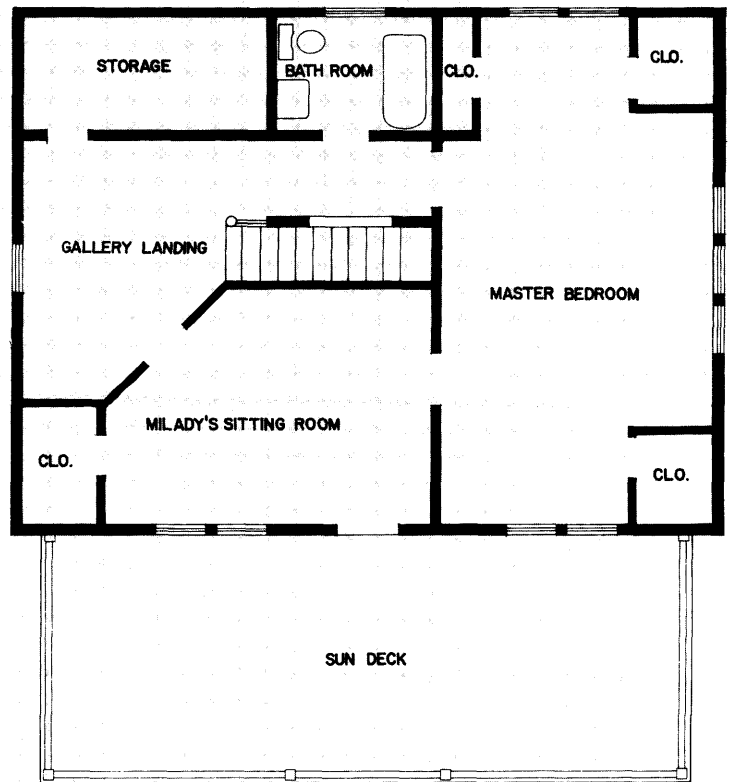
← Picket Fence →

Parking Lot for TV Personnel





FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

Floor Plans

Dennis Evans, Architect, A.I.A.