

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

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NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Punta Gorda Multiple Property Group

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Exploration, Settlement and Early Development of Punta Gorda 1884-1930

C. Geographical Data

Corporate limits of the City of Punta Gorda, Charlotte County, Florida.

See continuation sheet

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

Suzanne P. Walker (deputy)
Signature of certifying official State Historic Preservation Officer
Florida Department of State-Bureau of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

10/17/90
Date

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Amy Federman
Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

12/12/90
Date

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

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Punta Gorda Multiple Property Group

HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Punta Gorda, broad point in Spanish, describes the broad plain of land on the Peace River today known as the City of Punta Gorda. Four major events shaped the future industry and development of Punta Gorda and Charlotte Harbor: the arrival of the Florida Southern Railroad; the construction of a large ice plant in Punta Gorda; the discovery of phosphate along the banks of the Peace River; and the "discovery" of the Charlotte Harbor waters for sports fishing.

Punta Gorda was founded in the late 1870s when Isaac H. Trabue, an attorney from Louisville, Kentucky, purchased a 30 acre tract of land on the south side of Charlotte Harbor from Florida Southern Railroad. Trabue then leased the land to his cousin, John Trabue, who planned to develop the land for agricultural purposes. As part of the lease, Issac Trabue instructed his cousin to lay out a town with a waterfront park and streets that followed the bay shoreline. The town was to be named "Trabue". Kelly B. Harvey surveyed and platted the land and lots were soon available for purchase.

Disappointed in the slow land sales, Trabue convinced the board of the Florida Southern Railroad to extend service from Liverpool, Florida, south, to his settlement. When the railroad arrived in 1886, a hotel was built by a Florida Southern Railroad subsidiary, the Florida Commercial Company. The new hotel was named the Punta Gorda Hotel, reflecting the historic name for the area. The hotel predated the famous Plant Hotel in Tampa and was, at the time, one of the largest hotels in Florida.

The same year the railroad arrived, the citizens of the community voted to incorporate the town. Surveyor Harvey was among a group of men who met at Tom Hector's billiard hall above a drug store on Taylor Street. Thirty-four men attended the meeting and a two-thirds vote confirmed the incorporation of the town under the historic name, Punta Gorda. While Trabue was present at the meeting, he was unable to convince the group to maintain the name of Trabue. Threatening to revoke the deed of public waterfront parks, Trabue eventually returned to Kentucky with his wife, still bitter over the name change.

The arrival of the railroad in 1886 boosted the development of the town as well as commercial and recreational fishing industries in Punta Gorda. Instead of constructing a single line, the Punta Gorda track forked at King Street, with one line curving north along King Street to a newly constructed ice plant,

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while the other branch line ran west to the Long Dock. The ice plant was the first such plant south of Tampa. The plant modernized the method of harvesting fish from Charlotte Harbor, and changed the industry in southwest Florida. The railroad depot was centrally located in the triangle formed by the split of the tracks.

The Long Dock was the deep water shipping connection for the railroad and the center of Punta Gorda's commercial fishing industry. The Long Dock extended 4200 feet into Charlotte Harbor providing access to twelve foot deep water. Several major seafood dealers' fish houses lined the wharf. A.K. Demere, Carnes and Monk, Bill Lewis and others operated an extensive system of icing and procuring fresh fish from as far south as Estero Bay. The fisheries operated a system of boats that ran to a string of stilt houses built throughout Charlotte Harbor, Bull Bay and Pine Island Sound. The ice boats would make rounds delivering ice to the remote houses and pick up fish that would be packed upon trains and shipped to northern destinations.

The commercial fishing industry in Punta Gorda was among the largest in Florida. In 1897, at least 230 person worked the offshore fisheries and another 25 were employed full time onshore with one hundred and forty vessels operating during season. Gill netting for mullet formed the vast majority of the fishing industry in Punta Gorda. Spanish mackerel, oysters and channel bass were also major catches. The ice plant was the core of the fishing industry. Originally powered by steam boilers, the plant was converted to electricity in 1913.

One of the large fish companies in Punta Gorda was the West Coast Fish Company. All of the company skiffs, run-boats, fishhouses and land based buildings were painted yellow. Joe Goulding and J.T. Rose were captains. Captains owned their boats and furnished the gasoline. They ordered groceries for the crews of ten to twelve men who caught the fish in the harbor. The fish would be taken to the ice houses scattered throughout the harbor where they would be weighed and separated. Mullet, trout, pompano and bottom fish were harvested. The ice house keeper would give the captain a receipt or fish ticket for the fish caught. When the men settled at the fishhouse, the money due the fishermen was divided equally among them. The captains got a

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full share plus one third of each man's share. The fishermen's wives picked up a sum each week from the fishhouse regardless of whether the fisherman had used up his allotment while fishing in the harbor.

Byron Rhode recalls the loading of the fish on the Railroad Dock. The run boats would each bring in twenty to sixty thousand pounds of fish. "The refrigerated cars had ice compartments at each end, but the fish were also packed in layers of ice. With big scoops like ice shovels, they would shovel in a layer of ice, a layer of fish, another layer of ice, etc. until there was forty or fifty thousand pounds of fish in each car. S.C. McCollough, who was the freight agent for the railroad then noted the biggest shipment he ever saw go out in one day was December 17, 1917, when 17 cars of fish were shipped. That was the last day of the season that year.

During the 1890s, the Long Dock also accommodated the shipment of thousands of tons of pebble phosphate carried by rail cars from points north on the Peace River to the Punta Gorda dock for transshipment. Vigorous efforts by the phosphate companies to improve the channels into Punta Gorda were never satisfactorily met. Several companies selected Boca Grande on Gasparilla Island at the mouth of Charlotte Harbor as the new point of shipment as it had a sixty foot deep harbor with direct access to the Gulf of Mexico. After the Charlotte Harbor and Northern Railroad was built to the island, phosphate ceased to be a major export from Punta Gorda.

The town grew slowly after arrival of the railroad. Punta Gorda prospered as the fishing and phosphate industries brought more and more families to the area. During the late 1880s and early 1890s, numerous residential, commercial, institutional and industrial buildings were constructed. The post office was established in 1886 with Trabue serving as first postmaster. The first newspaper was the Charlotte Harbor Beacon, founded in 1885. The Herald News, precursor to the Punta Gorda Herald, was established in 1892. In 1888, the Methodist Church was established, to be followed by the Baptist Church and the Episcopal Church. A grocery store was opened in 1885 by Jacob Wotitzky, an immigrant from Czechoslovakia. The Stetsons opened a general store in 1886. The first school in Punta Gorda was constructed prior to 1887. In 1896, Miss Norma Pepper opened a private school for grades 1-12; Ms. Pepper later taught in both private and public schools in the area.

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A public junior high school was established in the 1890s on Goldstein Street. Originally, the building was a one story wood frame building parallel to the street. In 1902, a two story extension was added to the rear so high school classes could be taught on the second floor. An early high school located on Sullivan Street was built prior to 1906 and served for several years until it was abandoned for a new school on Taylor Street. The building was taken over by Dr. Eugene Whitten who opened a sanitarium. This was Punta Gorda's first hospital.

The Methodist Church on Marion Avenue was built over a span of three years beginning around 1913. The red brick structure was constructed from brick that was salvaged from an unfinished and abandoned ice plant. Forty thousand bricks were salvaged for use in the church, which was designed by Maxwell Charles Price. A rendering of the church appeared in the Punta Gorda Herald in 1913.

The post World War I era brought a new prosperity to Florida when a healthy economy transformed sleepy towns of Florida with speculative land purchases, platting, subdividing and rampant building construction. Punta Gorda came into its own in 1921 with the division of Desoto County into five smaller counties with Punta Gorda as the county seat of Charlotte County. The other counties created were Desoto, Hardee, Glades and Highlands.

The County Commissioners, without a courthouse, rented space from the Johnson Building at Marion and Sullivan. Circuit Court was held in the old concrete City Hall building, later demolished. A 1926 bond issue of \$200,000 approved construction of the Charlotte County Courthouse on land purchased from black entrepreneur George Brown for \$25,000. The building was completed in 1928.

The Masonic Lodge, to the east of the courthouse, was the home of Punta Gorda Lodge #115 of Free and Accepted Masons. The Punta Gorda Lodge was organized in the 1890s and the first lodge was built on Sullivan Street. The lodge served all of the other secret societies of Punta Gorda, as well as the Masons. The Punta Gorda Lodge was an active one, and in 1911, Albert Gilchrist, a member of the lodge and Governor of Florida, held the honorable position of Grand Master of Masons in Florida.

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The Peace River was finally bridged from the town of Charlotte Harbor to Punta Gorda in 1921, with the Charlotte Harbor Bridge. Begun in 1916 and locally financed, the bridge provided a vital link to Tamiami Trail, the first highway extending down the west coast of Florida. The opening of the concrete and steel bridge was a triumph said the Punta Gorda Herald, "completing one of the greatest and most important construction projects ever attempted and carried out in South Florida." The coastal route opened traffic north to Tampa and south to Fort Myers with plans to eventually complete the route across the Everglades to Miami.

In 1925 Barron Collier and Cornelius Vanderbilt purchased the Charlotte Harbor Hotel and began improvements to return it to its former finery. Plans were underway for a grand opening in January of 1926. A small film community flourished in Punta Gorda, the location for a film on Florida history by Nave and Boeger on the days of Ponce de Leon.

Land transactions and building increased daily during the early years of the 1920s. By 1926, as throughout Florida, the Boom had reached its peak. The January 1, 1926, Punta Gorda Herald headlined with "Punta Gorda Experiences Era of Startling Growth...So-called Florida Boom Transforms City from Quiet Fishing Village to Small Metropolis Full of Activity." Along with fishing and tourism, agriculture was cited for its importance in the cultivation of pineapples, citrus, cucumbers, peppers, eggplants and tomatoes. A large packing house was located next to the railroad near the lumber yard.

The Woman's Club was created in 1926 through the consolidation of the Fortnightly Club, the Married Ladies Social Club and the Womans Civic Association. A masonry building on Sullivan Street was constructed in 1926. The building had an assembly hall and replaced the school as the community meeting place of Punta Gorda.

The commercial core of the city remained in the same location as it had during the turn of the century period. Early wood frame buildings were replaced by brick and concrete buildings. The boom period brought more building to the downtown, often in the popular Mediterranean Revival style. The chief commercial blocks were located along Marion Avenue between Cross Street and Nesbitt Street. The commercial area evolved in

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this area due to the location of the Punta Gorda Hotel and the railroad.

A 1200 seat theater was built at Marion and Sullivan Street. The building was of fireproof steel and hollow clay tile. Marion Avenue from King Street to Harvey Street continued to be the central commercial core. The Punta Gorda State Bank was on the corner of King and Marion Avenue. The Merchants Bank of Punta Gorda was located at 125 W. Marion Avenue. The bank building was a Neo-classical Revival brick building with four large Tuscan columns supporting a classical pediment. The second bank in Punta Gorda, the Merchants's Bank opened in 1912. It soon converted from a state to a federal charter and became the First National Bank of Punta Gorda. By 1927 it was the city's largest bank, but experienced the same problems as its rival in 1929, when all three local banks were forced to close.

In 1925 C. Potter Lucas built a building next to the bank. The first tenant was a bar selling soft drinks and near beer. The building was taken over by McCrory's Five and Dime. McCrory's Five and Ten was an important 1925 addition to the block. Completing this block was James F. Corbett's hardware store. Next was J.K. McClellan's Drug and Sundry Store, then A.S. Burnham's grocery store and then a restaurant. Across the alley was R.C. Blount's men's clothing store. Next door was J.S. Goff with grocery and hardware stores.

The commercial area expanded east of King Street (railroad right of way) with the construction of the H. W. Baker Smith Arcade on East Marion at Nesbitt. Originally known as the Post Office Arcade, the Mediterranean Revival building housed a hotel, bakery, post office and sixteen small shops, including Harry L. Rich Radios, Cabin Kodak Shop, Arcade Shoe Shop, Arcade Tackle Store, Arcade Beauty Shop, May Durrance Realtor, Dr. J.A. Steely and Dr. W.B. Clement, and the United States Post Office. Several offices were to the east of the arcade, including the law offices of S.F. Trabue. A Texaco gas station was on the corner of Nesbitt and East Marion Avenue.

Industrial development continued to be aligned with the railroad tracks. The City annexed portions of its perimeters, thus expanding. One of these areas included an area to become the subdivision of La Punta Park, a typical platted subdivision of the era, which was based upon the Spanish or Mediterranean theme. Most of the residential construction taking place in

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Punta Gorda during the boom was limited to upgrading plumbing and kitchens of existing houses and buildings from the earlier period. Several houses were built in the popular Mediterranean Revival mode and thus reflect this era.

The construction of City Hall was a major project completed in 1926. The building was designed by H.R. Stamm, designer of many Collier buildings as well as residences in Punta Gorda. The City undertook many other improvements during this period. Six blocks of waterfront streets were paved and many other improvements were installed. A landing field was cleared south of town for an airstrip. The Charlotte High School on Cooper Street was constructed in 1926 for grades 4-12. In 1926, by referendum, the citizens of Punta Gorda elected to sell their electric power distribution system to the Southern Utilities Company. The Florida Power and Light Company soon acquired Southern Utilities and began construction of a new power plant.

In 1927, work began on the "new" Barron Collier bridge which necessitated the demolition of the Railroad Dock and the relocation of the train depot to a point at Taylor Road and King Street. The fishing industry shifted back to the Long Dock which had been abandoned in 1897. A small section of track was routed parallel to King Street to serve the Ice Plant and power company. The bridge was finally opened in 1931. The fishdock was also moved to the municipal docks at Maude Street, where Fishermans Village now stands.

A new depot site was selected one block south of the main line, on the Fort Myers spur. Completed in 1928, the Atlantic Coastline Railroad Depot was a grand Mediterranean Revival building, built on the same plans as the Bradenton depot. In 1928 the ACL provided through Pullman service, six trains daily, and both passenger and freight service.

Before the collapse of the great Florida real estate boom an exuberant writer for Field and Stream described Punta Gorda during this period as having the "finest land-locked shipping harbor and yacht basin in America, the best tarpon fishing in the world, and the largest banyan tree...Florida in the superlative."

The crash in Florida preceded the nation wide collapse of the Great Depression by three years. Tourism tended to soften the impact as northern visitors came to spend the winters in Punta Gorda. The Punta Gorda Municipal Trailer Park accommodated

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some of these visitors who arrived in house trailers or with tents. In 1933 federal funds were used to build a log community center at the park. A Public Works Administration project that impacted the city was the installation of a new water system and the construction of a new water filtration system.

The fish dock at Maude Street was destroyed by fire in 1939 leaving only one fish company in operation. That company closed in 1957. The Punta Gorda Army Air Base somewhat revived the economy after this community-wide disaster, with the opening of the base in 1942 and arrival of soldiers in 1943. By 1944 the base housed 930 officers and 4,162 enlisted men.

After World War II the population of Punta Gorda and Charlotte County burgeoned with the influx of young families seeking new homes and opportunities in sunny Florida. Large subdivisions were platted and cleared where tract homes were built. The core of Punta Gorda, the historic center of the community remained relatively intact, as new development spread around its perimeters. A major loss occurred in 1959 with the burning of the Charlotte Harbor Hotel.

F. Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Type Buildings of Punta Gorda 1884-1930

II. Description

III. Significance

IV. Registration Requirements

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet for additional property types

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

See continuation sheet

H. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- State historic preservation office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency

- Local government
 University
 Other

Specify repository: Bureau of Historic Preservation

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F.I. BUILDINGS OF PUNTA GORDA - 1884-1930

F.II. DESCRIPTION

The Buildings of Punta Gorda 1884-1930 Multiple Property Group include commercial, institutional and residential buildings that are associated with the city's settlement and development between 1884 and 1930. It includes two districts containing a concentration of Punta Gorda's historic commercial and residential buildings and individual dwellings located in several areas of the community.

A. RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

Residences are the most numerous type of historic buildings located within the corporate limits of Punta Gorda. The most prominent historic residences front on Retta Esplanade, which parallels the south bank of the Peace River. They and other historic residences in Punta Gorda embody both vernacular and high styled architecture. Residential architecture in Punta Gorda is largely dominated by the Frame Vernacular, Queen Anne, Bungalow, Mediterranean Revival, Mission, and Neo-Classical Revival styles popular in Florida and other areas of the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Residential architecture generally emulates models found in other regions of the State and Country. Spanish influenced architecture, prevalent in Florida during the 1920s, combines with the earlier Frame Vernacular and Queen Anne styled residences to exhibit continuity of development, while examples of Craftsman, Bungalow, Colonial Revival and Neo-Classical Revival styled residences add variety to the historic character of residential neighborhoods. Buildings generally range in height from one, to two and one half stories. They are generally set back from the street with modest front and back yards, in some instances as little as ten feet from the sidewalks.

The residential buildings included in the multiple property group generally retain their integrity of location, setting, design, materials and workmanship. Despite the widespread application of asbestos shingles over original siding and the installation of aluminum awning windows in place of original sash, they continue to reflect their historic feeling and association.

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B. COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURE

The historic commercial buildings within the multiple resource area were constructed between 1884 and 1930. They are generally one and two story, attached and detached, masonry vernacular buildings. The first floors are designed for use as public spaces such as banking rooms, insurance offices, lobbies, and retail storefronts while. Offices, entertainment, and meeting spaces are located on the upper floors.

The historic commercial buildings are located in an area bounded by Retta Esplanade to the north, Olympia Avenue to the south, Cross Street to the west, and Nesbit Street to the east. The street facade architecture of these buildings contain typical storefront features such as large display windows and a formal entry, while the upper stories contain the signage and the decorative elements of the building. Decoration is minimal and frequently limited to decorative brick or stonework at the main facade. Shop windows are often flanked by pilasters providing a frame for the displaying of retail merchandise. The main entrance is frequently centered and recessed to avoid competition with the display area. "Kick" panels located at ground level below the display windows are constructed of a variety of materials, most commonly wood. Metal or wood canopies or canvas awnings are used above the storefronts and serve as shelter for shoppers and as an extension of the display surface of the building.

The extant historic commercial buildings in Punta Gorda are generally rectangular in plan and constructed of red brick or stucco with flat roofs and parapets. In some instances, the original brick finish has been obscured through painting or the application of stucco. Decorative features include corbelling, dentils, belt courses and name and date panels.

C. INDUSTRIAL ARCHITECTURE

Industrial property types found in Punta Gorda relate to the major industries of the area, namely fishing and tourism. This includes the Punta Gorda Ice Plant, which produced tons of ice for the preservation of fresh fish shipped to other markets. Closely related to this property type is the train depot, which was vital for shipping the fish over land. The railroad also played a significant role in the tourists industry in the area.

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Properties may include any structures, objects or appurtenances related to the function of these industrial purposes. Piers, docks, or any remaining resources related to these industries would constitute an industrial property type. Because of numerous waterfront fires, no remains have been found to date that relate to the industrial property type.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES**Queen Anne**

The Queen Anne was popular in Punta Gorda from approximately 1885 until 1910. A Queen Anne house is generally two story, distinguished by asymmetrical massing and an elaborate use of shapes and textures intent on producing a highly picturesque or effect. Vertical elements are separated by horizontal bands using stone, brick, weatherboard, and shingles. Steep gables, towers, dormers, balconies, and verandas enrich the building.

Punta Gorda has several good examples of the Queen Anne, among them 301 West Retta Esplanade. The Harvey House at 565 West Retta Esplanade features what has become a trademark of the style, the conical tower. Other identifying features of the style are the wrap-around porch, the irregular massing, the variety of exterior materials, and the jig-saw decorative work.

Wood and Masonry Vernacular Structures

The early residences in Punta Gorda consist of wood frame buildings built for their owner occupants. These buildings are the houses of the first settlers, whose concerns were utilitarian and whose dwellings are best described as Frame Vernacular. Most of the Frame Vernacular buildings in the survey area have a gable roof, although hip roofs are occasionally used. In general, the roof is covered with wood shingles which in many instances have been replaced with composition material. Buildings are one and two stories high and rest on low concrete block or brick piers. Exterior sheathing varies with drop siding, weatherboard, and wood shingles. Fenestration is regular, but not always symmetrical, with wood, double hung sash and doors of panelled wood. Doorways are unadorned. The plan of these houses is

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generally rectangular, in the hall and parlor, or sidehall plan. "L" or "T"-shaped plans are used to maximize cross-ventilation. The interior finish of these vernacular buildings is usually as utilitarian as the exterior.

It is probable that many of the structures classified today as Frame Vernacular were actually Folk Victorian houses that would have been classified as Queen Anne during their historic period. However, due to extensive loss of decorative elements, and their simple plan, they no longer contain enough of their original ornamentation to properly be labeled Queen Anne.

The masonry vernacular structures of Punta Gorda are most often two to three stories with flat roofs and parapets or false fronts. The main building material is brick, with examples of concrete block and hollow clay tile also in evidence. Fenestration is most often regular, double hung sash at the upper stories, and storefront display windows at the first story. Decorative detailing is limited to the cornice and dentils. There are several stuccoed structures with parapets that vaguely reflect the Mediterranean Revival and Mission styles.

Bungalow Style

The bungalow style is predominant in the historic residential architecture of Punta Gorda. The bungalows generally contain a rectangular ground plan with the short side of the building facing the street. Other identifying features include a gable over gable roof line, exposed rafter tails, decorative beams or braces under gables, tapered chimneys, and battered porch columns.

Colonial Revival

Punta Gorda has several examples of the Colonial Revival style. The exterior of the houses are based mainly on Georgian and Adam precedents but lack the extensive and distinctive articulation of form typical of the higher styled examples. The houses in the survey area are generally two stories in height and have a hipped or pyramidal roof and a large hipped dormer facing the street. The overall boxy appearance of the building may be relieved by a hipped porch or veranda supported by columns. The Colonial Revival styling is expressed through such features as massing, fenestration, door and window types and placements, balustrades, entrances, and porches.

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Mission Style

There are several examples of the Mission style in Punta Gorda, represented in both residential and commercial buildings. The identifying features of the Mission style are the curvilinear dormer or roof parapet, smooth stucco wall surfaces, arched window and door openings, and tile roof surfaces. In commercial buildings designed in the style, roofs are usually flat while in residential buildings they are often hipped or gabled. One of the best examples of the Mission style in Punta Gorda is the Woman's Club at 118 Sullivan Street.

Mediterranean Revival Style

Architecture reflecting a Mediterranean or Spanish influence is also prevalent in Punta Gorda. Mediterranean Revival styled structures are numerous in residential areas, but rarer in the commercial structures. They are distinguished by low pitched hipped or gable roofs; arches at the entrances, fenestration and porches; stucco exterior walls; clay barrel tile roofing; elaborate doors emphasized by adjacent spiral columns; pilasters; carved stonework, or patterned tiles; caste-iron grill work; balustrades, balconies, and balconettes; clay barrel or s-shaped tile chimney tops; canales; scuppers; round or square towers; and loggias.

Neo-Classical Revival

The Neo-Classical Revival style of architecture is apparent in the commercial structures of Punta Gorda, most notably the Punta Gorda City Hall. The style is dominated by a portico on the facade of the structure. In addition, the style makes use of full cornices, regular fenestration, corinthian or ionic columns, dentils, modillions, and pedimented gables. Most often, the main block contains a hip or flat roof with parapet.

The City Hall embodies the classical tradition in city hall/courthouse design. Its proportions are symmetrical and monumental with a smooth masonry surface. Its facade is taken from the Doric Order. Features associated with the Doric Order include a colossal portico, an enriched frieze featuring triglyphs and metopes, and a pedimented roof with modillions beneath the cornices.

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F.III. SIGNIFICANCE

BUILDINGS OF PUNTA GORDA, FLORIDA - 1884-1930

The historic development of Punta Gorda spans the years from 1884, when Trabue settled the town, until approximately 1927 when the collapse of the Florida Land Boom greatly curtailed development. The collapse precipitated the close of a significant period of growth for communities throughout the state. The collapse of the stock market in late 1929 exacerbated the economic problems of Florida communities and confined Punta Gorda's period of significant historic development to the early months of 1930.

The Associated Property Types: Buildings of Punta Gorda 1884-1930 embody the significant development of the town its initial settlement through the end of the Florida Land Boom in 1930. They are associated with individuals, themes, and events which shaped the history of Punta Gorda and reflect its significant architecture. The structures are of local significance and retain their architectural integrity to a large degree.

Historic areas of Punta Gorda embody the physical development of the city during the aforementioned period. Two distinct areas can be defined: commercial and residential. Because of the relatively small size of the community in comparison to today's standards, these areas are in close proximity to each other. The commercial area consists mainly of the downtown commercial sector where masonry vernacular buildings predominate. Few structures that predate the 1895 fire have survived without substantial alteration. To the south and north of this central commercial core are historic residential areas containing numerous historic residences. Areas to the east of the commercial sector reflect mixed use associated with the arrival of the railroad in the 1880s and contain boarding houses, large houses and commercial structures.

The majority of commercial buildings in Punta Gorda are masonry vernacular with elements of Neo-Classical Revival, Mission and Mediterranean Revival styled influencing. However,

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Punta Gorda does contain several historic structures that distinctly embody the Neo-Classical Revival style, reflecting the dedication of early Punta Gorda residents to build a "cosmopolitan" county seat.

Residential architecture in Punta Gorda is largely dominated by Colonial Revival, Queen Anne, Frame Vernacular, Bungalow and Spanish-influenced styles. The extant residential buildings date from the 1880s through the 1920s. The variety of styles in the houses reflect the influence of northern markets on the small town as well as the distinction of being the county seat. Punta Gorda contains a large number of residences in a confined area that give the town a distinctive setting and sense of place.

F.IV. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

The properties identified in the 1987 Survey of Punta Gorda contribute to the settlement and growth of the City of Punta Gorda from its inception in 1884 to the end of its initial period of growth in 1930 through integrity of location, design, setting, feeling and association.

To be eligible for inclusion under the Punta Gorda Multiple Property Group, all structures and sites must fall within the limits of the City of Punta Gorda. They must have been constructed between the years 1884 to 1930. Individual structures should conform to the architectural styles described in this property type and retain their architectural and site integrity to a large degree and may relate to significant events that shaped the history of Punta Gorda.

Structures within historic districts need not retain their architectural and site integrity to such a degree as individual sites, but must reflect the historic period enough to contribute to the district to be included as contributing historic structures. This is to include those structures of modest or vernacular architectural styles that would not qualify individually for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as well as structures that have withstood minor alterations, yet contribute to the district.

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G. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

The multiple property listing for Punta Gorda was developed as a result of a comprehensive historic and architectural survey conducted in the summer and fall of 1987. The survey involved an extensive analysis of historical documentation and field inventory to locate, record and evaluate those standing structures that are significant to the cultural development of Punta Gorda. Findings of the survey are incorporated into the Punta Gorda Historic Preservation Plan, which is an element of the Punta Gorda Comprehensive Plan.

The Punta Gorda Historic Survey involved over 250 buildings. Two potential National Register of Historic Places historic districts were identified and four buildings were identified as individually eligible for listing. The survey identified a wide range of buildings dating from 1893 through the 1930s. Many were examples of a significant style reflecting the historical development patterns of the community.

The overall nature of the resources is that of the interspersion of buildings from many different dates. As such very old buildings are in physical association with buildings from the 1920s through the 1950s.

Historical research involved the examination of primary and secondary resources related to the development of Punta Gorda. The research intent is to identify and record the history of the development of the built environment of Punta Gorda and is not construed to be a comprehensive "history" of Punta Gorda and its people. Primary sources include early maps, tax rolls, plats, photographs, federal and local government documents and ephemera found at Punta Gorda and in the P.K. Yonge Library Florida Collection, the Desoto County Courthouse and among private collections. Secondary sources include early newspapers, books and articles written about Punta Gorda. Personal interviews with early residents of Punta Gorda yielded invaluable information about personal recollections of lifestyles, town layout and local history.

Field research involved a comprehensive examination street by street to locate buildings or objects related to a designated period of historical examination. For purposes of field inventory, a 1936 building map was used to record any structures that are on the map and still standing today. A systematic

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physical identification of structures in the field revealed in most cases those that derive from the pre-1936 period. Buildings so located were mapped, photographed and architectural data was recorded for entry to the Florida Master Site File, a uniform historical, architectural and archeological data base. Changes and alterations were noted on plot and plan layouts.

Survey Criteria

The recording of architectural resources as identified in the field followed a standard procedure of adjudging each building as meeting as set of general survey criteria. The survey criteria utilized in the field survey are necessarily general in nature and were modeled after the established criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. A cut-off date of 1936 was generally used along with the criteria, but often a post-1936 building will have architectural or historical merits which outweigh the age limit and it would be recorded. The survey criteria employed in the Punta Gorda survey were:

The quality of significance in history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association and:

- A. that are associated with events that have made significant contributions to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. that have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history.

Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, or graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties

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primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years shall not be considered eligible for the National Register but may be considered significant on a local level. However, such properties that do meet the following criteria or if they fall within the following categories:

A. a religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or

B. a building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure associated with a historic person or event;

C. a birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no other appropriate building directly associated with the historic person or event; or

D. a cemetery that derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or

E. a reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure of the same association has survived; or

F. a property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historical significance; or

G. a property achieving significance within the past 50 years, if it is of exceptional importance.

Individual properties and two potential districts were presented to the Florida National Register Review Board and were subsequently approved by that board under a Multiple Property Nomination Cover Form. Individual sites and districts are submitted for listing in the National Register after careful scrutiny for accuracy. The individual (including two districts) nominations submitted under the cover: Buildings of Punta Gorda

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1884-1930 is relatively comprehensive, although, and in all probability, there will be additional individual sites and possible districts submitted at a later date.

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