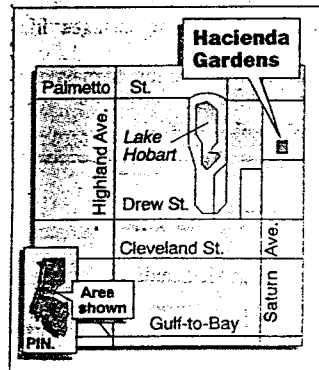


# north pinellas times

NORTH PINELLAS EDITION — St. Petersburg, Fla.

MONDAY, APRIL 20, 1992

## Scientologists cited for crowded apartments



Times art

■ The church says it will move some residents of Hacienda Gardens to satisfy the Clearwater building code.

By CURTIS KRUEGER  
Times Staff Writer

CLEARWATER — The Church of Scientology has been cited by city building officials for overcrowding in apartments.

In recent inspections, city officials determined that 34 apartments were overcrowded at Hacienda Gardens, a complex at 551 N Saturn Ave. used mostly for church staff.

James Bond, the church's director of renovations, said some of the residents would be moved to different apartments, so that no apartments would have more occupants than the city code allows.

Scientology spokesman Richard Haworth said Friday that the church was in the

midst of renovating Hacienda Gardens and that people were being moved during the work.

"We have and always will work closely with city officials on all of our renovations work," Haworth wrote in a statement.

The city requires apartments to have at least 150 square feet of floor space for the first occupant and 100 additional square feet for each additional occupant.

At several of the Scientology-owned apartments, more people appeared to be living in the apartments than should have been allowed, according to city documents. Housing inspectors said they found as many as 10 beds in an apartment, and said beds often were set up not only in the bedrooms but in the living and dining rooms of the apartments.

The Scientologists seemed cooperative and willing to solve the problems, said Building Inspector Bill Phillips.

Hacienda Gardens houses church staff

Please see **CITED** Page 2



Times photo — JOAN KADEL FENTON

The Church of Scientology owns Hacienda Gardens, a complex at 551 N Saturn Ave. City inspections found overcrowding in 34 apartments.

### Cited from Page 1

members, many of them members of a Scientology group called the "Sea Org," short for Sea Organization. Sea Org members sign billion-year contracts and wear the Navy-style uniforms that are a familiar sight in downtown Clearwater.

Clearwater is the international

spiritual headquarters of Scientology. While some people say Scientology is a bona fide religion, others call it a money-making outfit or a cult.

The city's inspection last month was not the first indication of overcrowding at Hacienda Gardens. After a 1986 fire at Hacienda Gardens, firefighters found 10 beds in the apartment. Haworth later said only seven people actual-

ly lived in the two-bedroom apartment, and he added, "We're interested in efficient utilization of space."

A police officer said in a 1988 report that 12 people were living in one Hacienda Gardens apartment that he visited.

— Staff writers Laura Griffin and Rhonda Holifield contributed to this report.