

= Hurricane Katrina (1981) =

Hurricane Katrina was a late @-@ forming tropical cyclone that impacted portions of the Greater Antilles and Bahamas in November 1981 . The twenty @-@ first tropical cyclone , eleventh named storm , and seventh hurricane of the 1981 Atlantic hurricane season , Katrina developed from an area of cloudiness in the western Caribbean Sea early on November 3 . The initial tropical depression deepened slowly , and was upgraded to Tropical Storm Katrina on November 5 . About six hours later , Katrina peaked with sustained winds of 85 mph (140 km / h) . The storm made landfall along the south coast of Camagüey Province in Cuba early on November 6 . Katrina quickly weakened to a tropical storm , before emerging into the Atlantic Ocean hours later . The system then accelerated northeastward and crossed the Bahamas late on November 6 . Katrina dissipated late on November 7 , shortly before merging with a frontal system .

On Grand Cayman , a waterspout ripped out a grape tree and slammed it into the Brac Reef Hotel 's bar . Heavy rainfall was observed on Cuba , peaking at 15 @.@ 74 inches (400 mm) . As a result , Cuba experienced flash flooding in mountainous areas as Katrina moved across the country . In southern Camagüey Province , several bridges and railroads were reportedly washed out . Two sugar mills suffered damage . An estimated 4 @,@ 641 homes suffered impact , 39 of which were destroyed . In addition , approximately 80 % of sugar cane crops were damaged . Two people drowned in Cuba while attempting to cross a swollen river in Camagüey Province . The Bahamas received up to 14 in (360 mm) of rain , causing flood damage to watermelon , tomato and corn crops , particularly on Long Island .

= = Meteorological history = =

On November 1 , an area of disturbed weather ? a mass of cloudiness and thunderstorms ? developed over the western Caribbean Sea . Subsequently , a low pressure area began to form . The system was designated a tropical depression early on November 3 , while located about 150 miles (240 km) to the south of the Cayman Islands . Operationally , the National Hurricane Center began issuing advisories on the tropical depression at 2200 UTC on November 3 . In the initial advisory , it was noted that the depression would slowly strengthen , but reach tropical storm status within 24 hours due to " strong " convection . The depression remained disorganized through early on November 4 , with satellite imagery and weather stations in the Caribbean Sea region indicating no intensification . However , only a few hours later , the depression strengthened into Tropical Storm Katrina , while drifting northward .

Continuing to strengthen , Katrina slowly recurved north @-@ northeastward and eventually to the northeast . The National Hurricane Center operationally classified Katrina as a tropical depression until 1600 UTC on November 4 , after a reconnaissance aircraft flight reported tropical storm force winds . At 0600 UTC on November 5 , the storm strengthened into a Category 1 hurricane on the Saffir ? Simpson hurricane wind scale . Later that same day , Katrina attained its peak intensity after another reconnaissance aircraft flight reported a minimum barometric pressure of 980 mbar (29 inHg) , and observed maximum sustained winds of about 85 mph (140 km / h) on the surface . However , Katrina weakened slightly while approaching Cuba . Early on November 6 , the storm made landfall in Camagüey Province with winds of 75 mph (120 km / h) . Shortly after moving inland , the system weakened to a tropical storm . A deepening trough offshore the East Coast of the United States caused Katrina to accelerate east @-@ northeastward . By 1330 UTC on November 6 , the storm emerged into the Atlantic Ocean . Katrina slowly weakened while crossing through the central Bahamas later that day . After a reconnaissance aircraft flight failed to locate a closed circulation , the system dissipated late on November 7 , while located about 380 miles (610 km) south @-@ southeast of Bermuda .

= = Preparations and impact = =

In anticipation of Katrina , 150 @,@ 000 people and 120 @,@ 000 head of cattle in central Cuba

were evacuated , according to a broadcast by Havana radio . As a result , Cuban Civil Defense officers issued a storm alert for five provinces . A hurricane watch was declared for the central and eastern Bahamas . Along the southeast coast of Florida , small craft were advised to remain close to port . However , the storm was not expected to , and did not , pose a threat to the United States .

Throughout the Cayman Islands , Katrina dropped up to 12 inches (300 mm) of precipitation . In Grand Cayman , a waterspout ripped out a grape tree and slammed it into the Brac Reef Hotel 's Bar . The highest observed 24 @-@ hour precipitation total in Cuba was 13 @.@ 03 inches (331 mm) , while rainfall in the nation peaked at 15 @.@ 74 inches (400 mm) . As a result , Cuba experienced flash flooding in mountainous areas as Katrina moved across the country . In southern Camagüey Province , a number of bridges and railroads were washed out . Two sugar mills suffered damage . About 4 @, @ 641 homes suffered impact , 39 of which were destroyed . In addition , an estimated 80 % of sugar cane crops were damaged . Two people drowned in Cuba while attempting to cross a swollen river in Camagüey Province . The Bahamas received up to 14 in (360 mm) of rain . Although no deaths or injuries were reported there , heavy rains in the central islands caused flood damage to watermelon , tomato and corn crops on Long Island . Bad weather from Hurricane Katrina caused the cancellation of the 15th running of the Benson and Hedges Gold Cup Race .

= ?irm?nai =

?irm?nai (pronounced : [?ir?mu?n?i] ; Polish : ?yrmuny ; Russian : ????? ? ???) is the most populous administrative division (elderate) in Vilnius . It is also a neighbourhood in the Lithuanian capital city Vilnius , encompassing the city district of the same name , built in the 1960s .

?irm?nai 's history has been traced to the late 14th century , when a Lithuanian fishing village was founded across the River Neris from Vilnius ' Old Town . Several historic sites in ?irm?nai are internationally significant ; it is the home of Lithuania 's largest Jewish cemetery , as well as the location of mass graves of soldiers belonging to Napoleon 's Grande Armée and victims of the NKGB 's and MGB 's executions after World War II . Tuskul?nai Manor , built in 1825 , and the surrounding Peace Park are important historical and cultural attractions in Vilnius .

The area was given the name ?irm?nai during the early 1960s , when it became the site of an award @-@ winning residential construction project ; it was the first city district in the Lithuanian SSR to be constructed applying urban planning concepts established in the USSR at the time . The massive Palace of Concerts and Sports and ?algiris Stadium are other relics of ?irm?nai 's Soviet history . ?irm?nai was important to the industrial sector in the USSR ; since that time , this function has been replaced or supplanted by newer businesses , including some of Lithuania 's leading companies .

?irm?nai has undergone major renovation and development in the 21st century . ?iaur?s miestelis (" North Town ") is an area of ?irm?nai that has rapidly evolved into one of the key business and residential districts of the city . This quarter was used by a number of regimes as a military garrison , and internationally significant historical findings have been made in the area .

= = Geography = =

The ?irm?nai elderate occupies 5 @.@ 7 km ² or 1 @.@ 4 % of the total area of the municipality of Vilnius according to data used for the 2001 census . ?irm?nai is located north of central Vilnius , along the western bank of the River Neris , on a flat plain which rises to the north . The elderate extends for about 4 @.@ 4 kilometres from north to south , and is about 1 @.@ 5 kilometres across at its widest point . The southernmost point of the ?irm?nai elderate is only some 450 metres from Vilnius ' Cathedral Square , in the centre of the city . ?irm?nai is bordered by the elderates of Verkiai in the north and ?nipi?k?s in the west , and is separated from Vilnius ' Old Town and Antakalnis by the Neris . ?irm?nai 's western boundary is defined by the following streets (from north to south) : Verki? , ?valg? , Kalvarij? , ?algirio , and Rinktin?s . The River Neris serves as ?irm?nai 's northern , eastern and southern boundary . ?irm?n? Street is the district 's main artery .

Despite the proximity of the city centre , the Žirmūnai bank of the River Neris is covered with a strip of dense deciduous forest that begins at the Žirmūnai Bridge and continues upstream (northeasterly) . The forested strip is largely uninterrupted , with gaps near bridges . At the approximate centrepont of the Žirmūnai shoreline , the forest surrounds a backwater , which had been used to park disused passenger ferries . The forest 's northernmost section is part of a botanical nature reserve within Verkiai Regional Park .

The Žirmūnai bank of the River Neris , from a point near Žirmūnai Bridge and continuing downstream , was stabilised during the 1980s with a steeply @-@ sloped concrete net @-@ like structure which includes patches of grass between the " webbing " of the net ; the lower part of the fortification is a concrete tiled walkway , ending just over 4 kilometres downstream , beyond Liubartas Bridge in Vėžinytas . The walkway is used extensively by walkers , joggers , and cyclists , as well as providing seating for anglers . Construction vehicles sometimes use it to reach work areas . The walkway is submerged during the river floods , mostly in springtime .

= = Demographics = =

= = = Ethnicity = = =

As of the census taken in April 2001 , the ethnic makeup of Žirmūnai was 59 @.@ 2 % Lithuanian , 16 @.@ 8 % Russian (the third highest percentage among Vilnius ' elderates , behind Naujoji Vilnia and Naujininkai) , 14 @.@ 4 % Poles , 3 @.@ 8 % Belarusian , 1 @.@ 7 % Ukrainian , 0 @.@ 8 % Jewish , 0 @.@ 2 % Tatar , 0 @.@ 1 % Latvian , 0 @.@ 1 % Armenian , and 2 @.@ 9 % other or unspecified ethnicity .

= = = Population = = =

According to the 2001 census , Žirmūnai was the most populous elderate in Vilnius (47 @.@ 410 residents , comprising 8 @.@ 7 % of Vilnius ' total population) and the third most populous in Lithuania after Šilainiai and Dainava , Kaunas . The population density was 8 @.@ 317 @.@ 5 / km² . According to the census , there were 21 @.@ 363 private households in the Žirmūnai elderate , making for an average household size of about 2 @.@ 2 persons . The population of Žirmūnai has been rapidly increasing , largely due to construction of residential buildings in the ūriaur's miestelis section of the elderate . A former elder of Žirmūnai estimated its 2002 population to be about 60 @.@ 000 residents ? an increase of about 13 @.@ 000 over the 2001 census figure . This rapid growth has placed a strain on city services .

= = = Age cohorts = = =

Žirmūnai is occasionally described as a " borough of elderly people " or even a " borough of elderly women " . There is a certain statistical basis to the claim : according to the data of the April 2001 census , only about 43 @.@ 5 % of Žirmūnai 's population were male , the second lowest percentage in Vilnius , after Vėžinytas (43 @.@ 1 %) ; 27 @.@ 4 % of the population (33 @.@ 2 % of women and 19 @.@ 9 % of men) were of legal retirement age , which was 57 @.@ 5 years for women and 61 @.@ 5 years for men at the time . This is the highest percentage in Vilnius ; accordingly , Žirmūnai had the lowest percentage of residents that were statistically of working age (defined as over age 15 and up to the retirement age) in Vilnius , only 56 @.@ 4 % in total : 52 @.@ 8 % of women and 61 @.@ 1 % of men .

The heavy proportion of elderly persons in the district may be attributed to the settled way of life of those residents who arrived during the building boom of the 1960s : the children of these residents moved elsewhere to live , leaving their parents in the old dwelling . The skewed male ? female ratio is probably an artifact of the differential between male and female lifespans in Lithuania (male average lifespan in Lithuania was 66 years in 2004 , as against 78 for females) , according to the

World Health Organization .

At the time of the 2001 census , persons aged between 0 and 15 years comprised 16 % of Širvintų's population , the second lowest percentage among Vilnius ' elderates , slightly higher than Viršuliškės at 15 % . However , it is likely that the average age of Širvintų's residents has decreased since the last census , and will continue to decrease , as a result of the active construction of new dwellings , which are acquired primarily by younger people . As housing prices rise , retirees are motivated to sell their apartments with the goal of acquiring cheaper housing elsewhere with funds to spare .

== Crime statistics ==

In 2005 , 2 317 crimes were registered in the Širvintų elderate . This is the third highest figure among Vilnius ' elderates , behind the Old Town and Naujamiestis . Using the population data of the latest available census (2001) , this would amount to about 48 crimes per 1 000 residents per year (only the eighth highest figure , due to the elderate 's large population ; Vilnius ' total crime rate , using the same population data , would be about 51 crimes per 1 000 residents) . In terms of crime density , 406 crimes per 1 square kilometre were registered (the fourth highest figure , behind the Old Town , Naujamiestis and Žnipių ; Vilnius ' total crime density , using the same population data , would be about 70 crimes per 1 square kilometre) .

However , thanks largely to the crime prevention programme Saugus miestas (" Safe City ") , crime rates in Širvintų , as in all other elderates of Vilnius , are declining . For instance , 886 crimes were registered in Širvintų during the first four months of 2005 , versus 672 during the same period of 2006 , a decline of about 24 % . If this trend continues , Širvintų's crime rate for 2006 would decrease to about 37 crimes per 1 000 residents .

The most frequently registered crimes during the first four months of 2006 were : theft (335 instances , including 19 car thefts , constituting about 50 % of the total number of crimes) ; rape (259 instances or about 38 % of the total) ; robbery (44 instances or about 6 %) ; and bodily injury (20 instances or about 3 %) . Percentage data may overlap as one criminal act may have several features , which are registered separately , but the total number of crimes is calculated per incident .

== History ==

The elderate of Širvintų embraces three historical suburbs of Vilnius : Žvejai , Tuskulėnai and Žiaurės miestelis . Fishing village Žvejai dating to the 14th century included the only glass factory in the 16th century Lithuania , as well as the largest Jewish cemetery . It became an integral part of Vilnius in the 16th century . The area south of Žvejai became known after the name of the Tusculanum Manor . Manor itself was a property of noble families and officials , and is the oldest building in Širvintų . In the 19th century , a military garrison was established in the present-day Žiaurės miestelis , which was used by Russian , French and Polish armies . These territories were consolidated into Vilnius city during the period of rapid growth that occurred in the 1950s and 1960s . The Tuskulėnai Manor was used as the KGB officers ' apartments back then . In the last years , a housing renovation program was launched in Širvintų . Military structures in Žiaurės miestelis of a historical value have been preserved and restored . Žiaurės miestelis became one of the most sought-after residential and commercial areas of Vilnius .

== 14th - 19th centuries ==

Širvintų's southernmost section , which lies on the bank of the River Neris opposite the Vilnius Castle Complex , was part of the settlement known as Žvejai ; another part of that settlement is now located within the elderate of Žnipių . According to archaeological surveys from 2005 , a fishing village may have been located here as early as the late 14th century , giving the area its name , literally , Fishermen ; it was later settled by craftsmen and housed the Orthodox Church of St

Barbara . During the 16th century , the only glass factory in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was located in the suburb of ?vejai . In 1563 , after the construction of the first bridge over the River Neris (at the approximate location of today 's Mindaugas Bridge) , the suburb of ?vejai became an integral part of the city of Vilnius . During Tsarist rule in the 19th century , the name of ?vejai was superseded by that of Piramont , originating from the small estate of Piramont in the area (now Kalvarij? 1) . Piramontskij Alley can be seen in a 1904 map of Vilnius where today 's A. Juozapavi?iaus Street in the elderate of ?nipi?k?s is located , close to the boundary of ?irm?nai . The usage of Piramont as a placename gradually became limited to the southern part of ?vejai .

The heritage of ?vejai was retained in the name of ?vej? (" Fishermen 's ") Street , which runs alongside the River Neris in southern ?nipi?k?s and ?irm?nai . However , the ?irm?nai section of this street was renamed Olimpie?i? (" Olympians ") in 2000 to commemorate the achievements of Lithuanian Olympic athletes in the Sydney Olympics .

The largest and oldest Jewish cemetery in Lithuania , first mentioned in 1592 , was also located in ?vejai . It was known in the local Jewish community as Shnipishok . The Yiddish placename later became associated with the whole borough of ?nipi?k?s , now bordering ?irm?nai on the west . Although the cemetery was officially closed in 1830 and was subject to gradual deterioration , there were further interments . Vilna Gaon , as well as other famous Vilnian Jews , were interred in the cemetery .

During the years of the Polish @-@ Lithuanian Commonwealth , in the area on the right bank of the River Neris opposite the St. Peter and St. Paul 's Church in Antakalnis , a Royal Manor called Derevnictva (Polish : Derewnictwo) , was established in the mid @-@ 16th century by King Sigismund Augustus as an outpost of the Vilnius Castles . The manor was held by the kings Sigismund III Vasa and W?adys?aw IV Vasa , nobleman M. Pieg?owski , the Wo?owicz family , the Grand Hetman of Lithuania Micha? Kazimierz Pac , as well by the Tyzenhaus family after 1741 . In the mid @-@ 18th century , Lateran monks acquired the manor and named it Tusculanum , after the resort outside the ancient Roman city of Tusculum . (see also : Villa Rufinella) The surrounding forests were used as a game reserve and for sport fishing . Towards the end of the century , the manor was separated into the folwarks of Tuskul?nai , based on the core of the old royal manor , and Derevnictva .

Under the rule of the Russian Empire in the 19th century , the Tuskul?nai Manor was held by various noble families and high @-@ ranking state officials , including Governor General of Lithuanian ? Vilna Governorate , Alexander Rimsky @-@ Korsakov . In the mid @-@ 19th century the main palace was transformed into a guesthouse that became a cultural center in Vilnius , often visited by Stanislaw Moniuszko and J?zef Ignacy Kraszewski . The manor passed into the possession of Julija Safranovich after 1886 , and then was held by Olga Melentjeva and her noble family until World War II .

The area surrounding Tuskul?nai Manor was referred to as Tuskul?nai (Russian : Tuskuljany ; Polish : Tuskulanum) until World War II . This area was also known as Losiovka or Losiuvka , colloquially named after A. Losev , colonel of Special Corps of Gendarmes and later general of the Russian Empire , who owned the folwark of Tuskul?nai in 1869 . The placenames are associated primarily with individual wooden houses , built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries , some of which are still scattered among the apartment buildings .

A military garrison was built in the approximate location of the modern ?iaur?s miestelis (" North Town " , that is , north of Old Vilnius) section of ?irm?nai by the Russian Empire during the 19th century . This area went on to be used as a garrison by a number of armies : Napoleon 's Grande Arm?e in 1812 , Tsarist for the rest of the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century (see : the 27th infantry division 's camp in the map of 1904) , the Bolsheviks during World War I , the Polish army in the inter @-@ war period , and the Red Army from the 1950s to 1992 .

= = = 20th century = = =

During the interwar period , when Vilnius was under Polish control , the southern part of ?vejai was known as Pi?romont ; the entire ?vejai area was referred to as Rybaki (Polish for " Fishermen ") ;

modern ?iaur?s miestelis had been called Plac broni (Polish for the " Military training ground ") ; and the old placename of Derewnictwo , dating back to the times of the Polish @-@ Lithuanian Commonwealth , applied to the area north of Tuskul?nai Manor .

A map of Vilnius published in 1942 , while the city was under Nazi rule , shows the northern part of ?irm?nai as Paneri?k?s , the middle section as Kareivi?k?s (" place of soldiers ") and the southern part , close to the Tuskul?nai Manor , as Manti?k?s (" a place named in honour of Mantas ") . One of the streets in the area , Enriko Manto Street , referred to Herkus Mantas (Herkus Monte) , a hero of the Great Prussian Uprising ; today H. Manto Street is a short street in the ?nipi?k?s elderate ending at the boundary of ?irm?nai .

A Soviet military base was established in the current ?iaur?s miestelis section of ?irm?nai during the 1950s . The heavily wooded northernmost part of the elderate was thinly populated until the 1960s .

During the 1960s , ?irm?nai attracted the attention of urban planners ; it became the first city district in the Lithuanian SSR to be constructed applying urban planning concepts established in the USSR at that time . Designed in 1962 , the district consisted of three microdistricts - residential and industrial sections centred around public facilities and had been the largest residential area in the city .

The first microdistrict , or " ?irm?nai I " , which is district 's middle section , was built in 1962 ? 67 in accordance with a project by architect Birut? Kasperavi?ien? , who was awarded the USSR State Prize in 1968 , together with architect Bronislovas Kr?minis and engineers ?muelis Liubeckis and Vaclovas Zubras ; it was the first time this award had been presented to the designers of a large @-@ scale residential construction . The second microdistrict , " ?irm?nai II " , which is the southernmost of the three , was built in 1964 ? 68 , its architect being Nijol? Chlomauskien? . And the third , the northernmost microdistrict , " ?irm?nai III " designed by architect Laima Burneikien? was built in 1964 ? 69 in the site of the former village of Paneri?k?s . The city district was then named after the formerly Lithuanian village of ?irm?nai (Russian : Zhirmuny) , now situated 16 kilometres from the Lithuania ? Belarus border in the Voranauski District , Hrodna Province of Belarus . This village is where Karol Podczaszy?ski , an architect and designer of Tuskul?nai Manor , was born . Hence the future district 's major street ?irm?n? was named after the village as it is seen in the map of 1942 and gave its name to the entire district .

The new residential housing in the microdistrict consisted almost exclusively of five @-@ story prefabricated concrete block apartment buildings popularly known as khrushchyovkas . Three nine @-@ story high @-@ rise apartment buildings were built in 1969 , and several more were constructed later , as well as seven brick @-@ built twelve @-@ storeys . The apartment buildings were meant primarily to accommodate industrial workers who came to Vilnius from other regions of the Lithuanian SSR and from other Soviet Republics . They typify the Brutalist architecture of the era . The principles governing the design of the microdistrict were set forth in books by the University of Moscow planners , for instance in New Element of Populating . En Route to the New City published in the USSR in 1966 (although the concept of the " new element " has been dated to 1959) ; the book was later published as The Ideal Communist City in the United States , United Kingdom and Italy . According to the book , the optimal apartment size was about 600 square feet (56 square metres) , with one bathroom and two bedrooms . Single @-@ family homes were considered " too autonomous " .

The ancient Jewish cemetery in ?vejai stood in the way of the expansion . Many tombstones were destroyed in 1950 during the construction of ?algiris Stadium ; the cemetery was completely demolished in 1955 in accordance with a decree issued by local authorities in 1948 . The bodies of Vilna Gaon and several members of his immediate family were relocated , after receiving special permission from the Soviet authorities ; this relocation has been the subject of historical controversy . The cemetery was the subject of an archaeological survey in the late 1990s . A memorial stone was placed in the southeastern portion of the former cemetery with an inscription in Yiddish and Lithuanian , stating that the cemetery was established there in 1478 (this dating is disputed) .

An incident in ?irm?nai 's history that has been difficult to reconstruct occurred in 1975 , when a pontoon bridge across the River Neris , that was customarily set up from spring to autumn ,

collapsed due to the weight of a crowd returning from a concert in the Palace of Concerts and Sports . It was rumoured that the bridge supports were not fully connected at the time . There were witnessed fatalities involving drownings and crushing by the bridge structures . Public discussion of the disaster was restricted and the number of casualties remains unknown . The pontoon bridge was never re-erected at the site ; the Mindaugas Bridge now serves this need .

Tuskuln?nai Manor had been nationalised in 1940 and was later used as KGB officers ' apartments and as a kindergarten . During excavations that took place between 1994 and 1996 in its territory , the remains of 706 bodies were found ; 40 were identified . The area had been used to hide the bodies of Lithuanian residents ? mostly resistance fighters against the Soviet occupation and Nazi collaborators ? who had been executed by the NKGB and MGB in the Vilnius ' KGB Palace between 1944 and 1947 but also those who died fighting Polish Armia Krajowa soldiers . The remains from the mass grave were placed in a columbarium built underground , beneath an artificial hill , and consecrated in 2004 .

In 2001 , workers laying telephone line in ?iaur?s miestelis , near the former garrison , discovered a mass grave that was found to contain the bodies of about 2 000 soldiers ? the remnants of Napoleon 's Grande Arm?e as it retreated from Moscow . In December 1812 , temperatures in Vilnius had sunk to ? 30 ° C , and the frozen ground made proper burials impossible . The Grande Arm?e at that time comprised French , Portuguese , Italians , Germans , Austrians , Spaniards , and Croats , as well as Lithuanians and Poles . The bones have been intensively studied by forensic pathologists ; DNA evidence showed that many of the deaths were caused by typhus . Most of the remains were re-interred in Antakalnis Cemetery . Other findings included buttons stamped with Napoleon 's image , crucifixes , wedding rings , belt buckles , boots and pieces of French uniforms . Footage from the location has been used in the TV series Moments in Time produced by Discovery Channel and Meet the Ancestors by BBC . The archaeological surveys were partially sponsored by the producers .

The Red Army military base in ?irm?nai was abandoned in 1992 , a few years after Lithuania 's independence from the Soviet Union ; a grace period was granted in order to ensure the orderly resettlement of the soldiers and their families .

= = = 21st century = = =

Due to the Soviet principles of urban planning , ?irm?nai , according to the 2001 census data , was among the three Vilnius elderates (the other two being Karolini?k?s and Vir?uli?k?s) with the lowest percentage of single @-@ family housing in the city (0 @.@ 1 %) . Of the remaining residents , 0 @.@ 4 % owned a share of individual housing , 0 @.@ 7 % lived in hostels , and almost 99 % lived in apartments . The scarcity of lots means that the number of single @-@ family dwellings is not likely to increase ; a reverse process is taking place : old wooden houses are being demolished , making room for new residential and commercial constructions . As of 2007 , there were only a few modern single @-@ family houses in ?irm?nai .

?irm?nai 's housing , especially in its central sections , is in need of extensive renovation , due to wear and tear of its low or medium @-@ quality construction . A program to renew old apartment buildings (including the installation of better insulation) is ongoing in Vilnius , partially assisted by the Vilnius City Municipality ; the first finished renovation project ? a completely renewed 60 @-@ apartment building built in 1965 ? is located in ?irm?nai . The area is , in some ways , analogous to public housing districts in Chicago and London ; although much of the housing was quickly and inexpensively erected in the 1960s , its proximity to downtown Vilnius , its transportation infrastructure , and its access to the River Neris account for its popularity . The principles of Soviet urban planning that led to its growth have converged with the modern concept of " Smart growth " .

The ?iaur?s miestelis section of ?irm?nai is growing rapidly and in 2007 was one of Vilnius ' most sought @-@ after residential and commercial areas .

Many of the military structures that were built in the late 19th century in ?iaur?s miestelis have been preserved and restored . Meanwhile , much of the construction that was not deemed to be of permanent value , erected during the Soviet times , has been demolished , leaving room for new

streets and housing . The combination of military heritage sites and newer construction is a distinctive feature of ?iaur?s miestelis .

Reflecting its military history , numerous street names in and around ?iaur?s miestelis allude to military concepts , including Kareivi? (" Soldiers ") , Lak?n? (" Pilots ") , ?ygio (" March ") , Apkas? (" Trenches ") , Ulon? (" Light Cavalry ") . The new streets built in ?iaur?s miestelis during the beginning of the 21st century were named for prominent figures in Lithuanian military history : Povilas Luk?ys , Lithuanian army volunteer , the first to perish in the Independence Wars in 1919 with the Bolshevik forces , as well as Kazys Ladyga , Silvestras ?ukauskas , Jonas Galvydis @-@ Bikauskas , Vladas Nagevi?ius , and Jurgis Kubilius , prominent officers of the inter @-@ war Lithuanian Army , whose histories are not directly related to the area . On the contrary , these personalities distinguished themselves by opposing the Bolshevik and Polish armies that were historically garrisoned in ?iaur?s miestelis . The naming was suggested by the Ministry of Defence . There are more streets not far from ?iaur?s miestelis that bear military @-@ themed names : Raitinink? (" Cavalrymen ") , ?valg? (" Scouts ") and Rinktin?s (" Platoon ") .

An international dispute arose in the 2000s over construction near the Jewish cemetery , with organizations expressing concerns that gravesites could be disturbed .

= = Education = =

The educational institutions in ?irm?nai include three secondary schools , all Lithuanian @-@ language . Tuskul?nai Secondary School (Lithuanian : Tuskul?n? vidurin? mokykla , formerly Vilnius ' Secondary School No. 31) had 1 @, @ 463 students in 2006 , which made it the fifth largest school in Vilnius . The school features advanced classes in the visual arts . St. Christopher 's Gymnasium (Lithuanian : ?v . Kristoforo gimnazija , formerly Vilnius ' Secondary School No. 9) was the eighth largest in Vilnius with 1 @, @ 391 students in 2006 . ?irm?nai Gymnasium (Lithuanian : ?irm?n? gimnazija , formerly Vilnius Secondary School No. 7) had 800 students in 2006 . The school was granted the title Gymnasium in 2000 ; it is home to the acclaimed brass band Septima , established in 1966 .

There are three elementary schools located in ?irm?nai : Antoni Wiwulski , Emilia Plater , and St. Christopher . ?ar?nas Mar?iulionis Basketball School and Vilnius Sports School offer physical education . The Vilnius School of Radioelectronics and Precision Mechanics (Lithuanian : Vilniaus radioelektronikos ir tiksliosios mechanikos mokykla) was established in 1965 to prepare workers for Vilma , a manufacturer of electrical products still operating in ?irm?nai . The Vilnius School of Tourism and Commerce (Lithuanian : Vilniaus turizmo ir prekybos verslo mokykla) offers certificates in retailing , basic bookkeeping , hotel and restaurant services , and other business areas . Vilnius Gija Youth School serves those students who have special needs and do not succeed in traditional classroom settings . ?irm?nai also has one of the three Children 's Foster Homes in Vilnius .

As of the census taken in April 2001 , 26 @. @ 2 % of ?irm?nai 's residents aged 10 or older possessed a bachelor 's or higher degree .

= = Facilities = =

= = = Parks and museums = = =

Tuskul?nai Manor is ?irm?nai 's oldest extant architectural structure . The manor was built in 1825 , following a design by Karol Podczaszy?ski in the neoclassical style . It consists of the principal building (the palace) , an officina (storage house) , and several adjacent buildings , including a small eclectic chapel of St. Theresa located about 100 metres south of the principal building . The " Little White Manor " , also known as the villa of Franciszek Walicki , was built in 1866 further south from the manor , acquired by Walicki in 1928 , and reconstructed to serve as a summer residence . All of these structures have been restored by 2009 , and are a part of the 7 @. @ 5 @-@ hectare

Peace Park (Rimties parkas) that includes the Tuskulėnai Manor , hosting a museum of martyrology in Lithuania in the second half of the 20th century (a branch of the Lithuanian Museum of Genocide Victims) , restored landscaping , as well as the columbarium .

A Museum of Computing was opened in 2001 in Žirmūnai by the Lithuanian software company Sintagma , showcasing the history of Lithuanian computing science and hardware production . It was based on a museum opened in 1985 by Sigma , one of the leading computer manufacturers in the former Soviet Union . The museum 's exhibits include EV @-@ 80 , the first Soviet vacuum tube computing machine manufactured by Sigma , and a copy of the IBM 604 .

Three of the 19 brick chapels of the Vilnius Stations of the Cross (Vilniaus Kalvarijos) , part of Verkiai Regional Park , are located at the extreme northwestern corner of Žirmūnai , just within the elderate 's border . Once destroyed in 1963 and completely rebuilt , the three chapels , symbolizing the Mount of Olives and the Gardens of Gethsemane , are found only 20 meters away from the relatively busy Verkių Street , and about a hundred meters downhill from a group of Soviet multi @-@ storey apartment buildings .

The forested area along the banks of the River Neris in Žirmūnai and its walkways are a popular recreational destination for many Vilnians .

= = = Governmental offices = = =

As a primarily residential area , Žirmūnai hosted only 7 @.@ 4 % of Vilnius ' public offices in 2003 . Žirmūnai is the location of the Personal Identity Documents Centre of Lithuania 's Ministry of the Interior which produces all of Lithuania 's identity cards , passports , and driver 's licenses , as well as residency permits . Issuance of residence permits is controlled by Vilnius City Migration Service , which is housed in Žirmūnai too . The State Tax Inspectorate has an office in Žiaurųs Miestelis , providing services to private as well as legal persons . There are also several medicine @-@ related institutions , such as the Ministry of Health 's State Public Health Service , the Vilnius city morgue . The Institute of Forensic Medicine of the Mykolas Romeris University was headquartered in Žiaurųs Miestelis as well . The Lithuanian National Olympic Committee , the Vilnius Department of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour , the Honorary Vice @-@ Consulate of the Kingdom of Spain , and the National Examination Center , established by the Ministry of Education to organize centralized nationwide examinations of high school graduates , all have headquarters in Žirmūnai .

= = = Sports and entertainment venues = = =

Several notable sports facilities are located in Žirmūnai , including Žalgiris Stadium , Lithuania 's largest stadium , and Impuls Plus fitness club . Rowing practices take place on the River Neris ; there is a base of operation , as well as several piers , on the Žirmūnai bank of the river . One of Lithuania 's largest indoor public swimming pools was situated in Žirmūnai until the 1990s . Part of the annual international Vilnius Marathon course runs along the Žirmūnai bank of the River Neris .

The Vilnius Palace of Concerts and Sports (Koncertų ir sporto rūmai) , built in 1971 in the southernmost part of Žirmūnai in the middle of the former cemetery , is an example of Soviet Constructivism and Brutalist architecture , remarkable for its vessel @-@ like exterior . The Palace , once one of the architectonic icons of Soviet Vilnius , was , until the 1990s , a major venue for sporting events , especially local and international basketball matches , as well as concerts and shows . Its seating capacity is about 4 @, @ 400 . On 22 ? 23 October 1988 the building hosted the statutory meeting of Sąjūdis , the Lithuanian political organization that led the struggle for Lithuanian independence ; on 14 ? 15 January 1991 , a public funeral for the victims of the January Events took place at the Palace . Later in the 1990s , the building was used as a temporary shopping mall where space was leased to small entrepreneurs for business exhibitions and fairs . In the 2000s developers announced plans to build multifunctional complexes , incorporating sports , business and residential structures , that would replace Žalgiris Stadium and the Palace of Concerts and Sports ; the projects have been stalled due to the inclusion of the Palace into the list " Registry of Cultural

Values " in July 2006 , and related litigation .

The Vilnius Palace of Culture , Entertainment and Sports (an example of Soviet functionalism built in 1980 as the Palace of Culture and Sports of the Ministry of Interior) , hosts several amateur art clubs (choirs in particular) , and is also used for indoor sports (wrestling , martial arts , artistic gymnastics , volleyball , basketball) , as well as lawn tennis , including two clay courts .

Oskaras Koršunovas Theatre has occupied the former Lietuvos Rytas Arena which was the home of Lithuania 's starring basketball team Lietuvos Rytas until the 2004 season , and was also used by the former women 's basketball team BC Teo . Along with the Vilnius Palace of Culture , Entertainment and Sports , it was used in 2006 as part of the set for 9 / 11 : The Twin Towers , a docudrama about the September 11 , 2001 attacks in New York City , a Dangerous Films production for BBC and Discovery Channel . ?kio banko teatro arena (" ?kio Bankas Theater Arena ") is now the venue of performances of Eimuntas Nekrošius of Meno Fortas and An?elika Cholina Dance Theatre .

Southern ?irm?nai 's sporting connections are reflected in the names of the streets along the ?irm?nai side of the River Neris : Sporto (" Sports ") and Olimpie?i? (" Olympians ") . The Palace of Students ' Technical Creative Work of the Republic is Lithuania 's largest facility for high school students ' after @-@ school activities of a technical nature , such as model building and go @-@ kart racing . The Grand Theater of Vilnius (Didysis Vilniaus teatras) is a small theater (its misnomer is intentional) that is formally based in ?iaur?s miestelis ; it has no venue of its own and holds performances in other theaters .

A building close to the western border of the ?irm?nai elderate , an example of Socialist historicism built soon after the end of World War II , was the home of the T?vyn? (" Motherland ") Cinema until the early 1990s ; it has been hosting the New York musical theatre and club since 2004 . It is unclear whether this building will be demolished to make way for underground parking lots or saved by virtue of its inclusion into the Registry of Cultural Values .

= = Commercial and industrial facilities = = =

1 @, @ 414 businesses , comprising 8 @. @ 7 % of all Vilnius ' businesses , were headquartered in the ?irm?nai elderate in 2003 . Lithuania 's largest electricity distribution network operator , Ryt? skirstomieji tinklai , operates from ?irm?nai , as well as TELE2 , one of Lithuania 's three mobile communications operators ; Ogmios , one of Lithuania 's largest retailers and wholesalers of home appliances ; and Vilpra , Lithuania 's largest dealer of heating equipment .

In 1992 , the former prominent Lithuanian basketball player ?ar?nas Mar?iulionis and his business partners opened the ?ar?nas Hotel in ?irm?nai .

The Banginis and Rimi Hypermarket , located in ?iaur?s miestelis , are among Lithuania 's largest shopping centers . Vilniaus duona (" The Bread of Vilnius ") , Lithuania 's largest baking company , operates one of its bakeries in ?irm?nai .

An abundance of automotive service facilities and car dealerships are located in the elderate , including some of the Lithuania 's largest Opel , SAAB , Chevrolet (?aibo ratas) , and Nissan (Raitas) dealerships .

The northern part of ?irm?nai was an important part of the Lithuanian SSR 's industrial sector during the 1960s , 1970s , and 1980s . The Kuro aparat?ros gamykla (Fuel Equipment Factory) is now bankrupt ; Sigma , formerly one of the leading manufacturers of electronics and computer components in the Soviet Union , which contributed to the description of the Lithuanian SSR as " The Soviet Silicon Valley " , continues to operate at a minimum level ; and Vilma remains Lithuania 's largest manufacturer of electrical products .

= = Transport = =

?irm?nai is well @-@ served by Vilnius ' bus and trolleybus transportation network . One of Vilnius ' trolleybus hubs is located in the northernmost part of ?irm?nai elderate , and Vilniaus Autobusai , Vilnius ' main bus operator , is headquartered and has its main depot in ?irm?nai . ?irm?nai suffers

from rush hour traffic jams . The street network in the district was primarily designed in the Soviet era for a much lower vehicle traffic .

Žirmūnai is linked to the elderate of Antakalnis by three bridges over the River Neris : Valakampiai Bridge , the longest bridge in Vilnius , built in 1972 ; the Žilas Bridge , built in 1999 , and Žirmūnai Bridge , built in 1965 . The Mindaugas Bridge was built in 2003 to link Žirmūnai with Vilnius ' Old Town . Passenger ferry transport on the Neris was active until the 1990s , but is now limited to occasional chartered sightseeing tours from the Mindaugas Bridge to Valakampiai in summer .

For some time in the first half of the 20th century , a narrow @-@ gauge railway traversed Žirmūnai following the approximate course of the modern Minties Street ; it crossed over the River Neris on a bridge located near the modern Žilas Bridge , as can be seen in the 1942 map of Vilnius .