### **FULLERTON THROUGH THE YEARS**



A Survey of Architectural, Cultural & Environmental Heritage

# FULLERTON THROUGH THE YEARS A Survey of Architectural, Cultural & Environmental Heritage

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

#### **FULLERTON CITY COUNCIL, YEAR 2001-2002**

F. RICHARD JONES, M.D., MAYOR DON BANKHEAD, MAYOR PRO-TEM MIKE CLESCERI JAN FLORY CHRIS NORBY

#### DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

PAUL DUDLEY, DIRECTOR JOEL ROSEN, CHIEF PLANNER BOB LINNELL, PROGRAM PLANNER

#### **SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

CATHY THOMAS, LIBRARIAN, LAUNER ROOM at FULLERTON MAIN LIBRARY FULLERTON HERITAGE

# FULLERTON THROUGH THE YEARS A Survey of Architectural, Cultural & Environmental Heritage

#### TABLE OF CONTENTS

| INTRODUCTION                              | i     |
|---|-------|
| OVERVIEW OF THE CITY'S DEVELOPMENT        | ii    |
| HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN FULLERTON        | iv    |
| SECTION ONE: SIGNIFICANT PROPERTIES       | 1     |
| PERIOD 1: PRE - 1900                      |       |
| RESIDENTIAL & NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT | 2-9   |
| PERIOD 2: 1900 - 1917                     |       |
| RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT                   |       |
| NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT               | 32-40 |
| PERIOD 3: 1918 - 1925                     |       |
| RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT                   | 41-54 |
| NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT               | 55-75 |
| PERIOD 4: 1926 - 1930                     |       |

| RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT                   | 76-93   |
|---|---------|
| NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT               | 94-106  |
| PERIOD 5: 1931 - 1946                     |         |
| RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT                   | 107-110 |
| NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT               | 111-121 |
| PERIOD 6: POST WORLD WAR II               | 122     |
| SECTION TWO: POTENTIAL LANDMARK DISTRICTS | 123     |
| BARRANCA                                  | 125     |
| BROOKDALE HEIGHTS                         | 126-    |
|   | 127     |
| BUENA VISTA / ROSE DRIVE                  |         |
|   | 128     |
| COLLEGE PARK                              | 129-130 |
| EAST VALENCIA DRIVE                       | 131     |
| EAST WHITING AVENUE                       |         |
|   | 132     |
| JACARANDA / MALVERN / BROOKDALE           | 133-    |
|   | 134     |
| LOWER GOLDEN HILL                         | 135-136 |
| ROSSLYNN PARK                             | 137-138 |
| SKYLINE PARK                              | 139-140 |
| TOWNSITE, EAST                            | 141-142 |
| TOWNSITE, WEST                            | 143-144 |
| UPPER GOLDEN HILL                         | 145-146 |
| WEST WHITING AVENUE                       | 147     |

| WEST WILSHIRE AVENUE                           | 148     |
|--|---------|
| WICKETT SQUARE                                 | 149-150 |
| SECTION THREE: POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANT PROPERTIES | 151     |
| RESIDENTIAL & NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT      | 152-157 |
| STREETSCAPE FEATURES OF CULTURAL IMPORTANCE    | 158     |
| INDEX OF PROPERTIES                            |         |
| LISTED BY HISTORICAL AND COMMON NAMES          | 159-160 |
| LISTED BY ADDRESS                              | 161-163 |

ON THE COVER: CHARLES C. CHAPMAN HOUSE, circa 1925. See page 14 for the former location of this destroyed residence.

#### INTRODUCTION

This survey describes the City of Fullerton's official list of Historic and Cultural Resources as identified in the Resource Management Element of the General Plan. This list of composed of 1) "Significant Properties" – individual buildings, sites or features conveying historical and/or architectural distinction and 2) potential Landmark Districts – a block or a group of blocks of pre-1940s housing that is primarily intact and retains an integrity to its original pattern of development.

This document also identifies several additional properties that could be placed on the city's official list at some future date.

#### **ORGANIZATION OF THE SURVEY**

The survey is composed of three sections. The first section describes the 125+ "Significant Properties." They are presented within groups, based on periods of the city's growth and type of development. As of the date of this publication, 72 "Significant Properties" have been designated a local Historical Landmark by the City of Fullerton. The owners of these properties requested this official designation, and each is identified with the city seal.

Eleven of the "Significant Properties" have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places — the nation's official registry of cultural resources worthy of preservation, primarily based on its

significance to the local community. Each is identified with a special logo.

The survey's second section identifies 16 potential Landmark Districts. All of these districts consist of residential development; each is defined in area, and examples of representative housing in this area are pictured.

A third section identifies a number of potential "Significant Properties" – buildings that qualify as a local Historical Landmark, but to date the property owner has requested that the property not be so listed. These properties are not protected under the city's adopted Historical Landmarks Ordinance.

## OVERVIEW OF THE CITY'S DEVELOPMENT

While the settlement of the Fullerton area by pioneer families started in the 1860s, the actual founding of the Fullerton townsite by the Amerige Brothers was not until 1887, at what is now the corner of Harbor Boulevard (Spadra Road) and Commonwealth Avenue. Most of the very earliest commercial buildings, especially the wooden structures from the start of the community in the late 1880s until the early 1900s, have been replaced. However, an extensive amount of construction from incorporation to the 1940s is largely intact, well maintained, and a source of pride to the community.

The range of architectural styles in Fullerton reflects the city's development. This variety is apparent in both the quality and the quantity of monuments in various forms. Pre-1900 Fullerton is represented by only a small number of Colonial Revival and late Victorian houses. While some of these are certainly of high quality, none of them is particularly large or flamboyant. There is also a very small group of houses of this time, which are in what could be most aptly termed a vernacular, undistinguished style.

A second group of buildings constructed between the turn of the century and the end of World War I is more impressive and includes some of the most imaginative architectural projects undertaken in Fullerton. The Mission Revival style is used both for public buildings and for private homes, nearly always in a particularly noteworthy manner. Contemporaneous are the few Craftsman style houses, which are attractive but lack the devotion to detail so apparent in the best of the type.

The 1920s "boom" in growth and prosperity is well reflected in the city's historic properties. The design of non-residential structures was greatly influenced by the unofficial but applied city policy, established in 1920, of encouraging a Spanish Colonial Revival architecture for all public and semi-public buildings. The many institutional buildings constructed from the 1920s to the 1950s evidence adherence to this policy.

The rapid expansion of the City in two spurts during the 1920s can be seen in houses built for lower income groups as well as for the more affluent families of the population. The first phase, from 1918 to 1925, is typified by the California bungalow; a broad range of this style appears during this time. The few surviving large homes of this period are in the Spanish Colonial Revival mode. Fullerton's only outstanding commercial structure — the Chapman Building — was built at this time, reflecting an architectural style used for major buildings in business districts of larger cities.

The second period of development was from 1926 through 1930, and it is represented by more varied architectural styles that, nevertheless, remain much less fanciful in practice here than is often the case in Los Angeles. Primarily evident are variations on the Spanish Colonial style and the Cottage style in residential construction. These houses tend to be somewhat more ambitious than the bungalows.

Two other trends may be noted: in this period the first exclusive neighborhoods are developed and most of the characteristic brick commercial structures are constructed.

In the decade after the onset of the Depression starting in 1930, building activity was greatly reduced. Only in the late 1930s were houses constructed again in any quantity, and by this time the California ranch house had been introduced. A few outstanding Streamline Moderne buildings and one Zigzag Moderne façade were constructed in Fullerton. Additionally, the 1930s provided a significant group of structures by the Works Project Administration (WPA). Most were designed with a Spanish Colonial architecture, which seems to have been the preferred style for public buildings.

Fullerton grew at a fast pace after World War II, both with development of many residential tracts and the construction of an array of commercial and industrial buildings. As these properties reach 50 years of age — a normal threshold for consideration as an historic resource — some are likely to become nominees for listing as a "Significant Property."

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN FULLERTON

Prior to the 1970s, activities directed at promoting and preserving the heritage of the community were virtually non-existent. Events in the 1970s brought more awareness of the city's past and the real threat of losing landmark properties, particularly within the blocks of the original townsite. In 1977, the City Council adopted a Historical Landmarks Ordinance to establish the criteria for property being eligible as a local landmark and to specify a review procedure and restrictions for proposals affecting designated local landmarks.

#### 1979 HISTORICAL BUILDING SURVEY

A major survey to inventory and assess the city's past development — its buildings, sites and significant features as well as distinct neighborhoods — was undertaken in 1979. The survey was conducted under contract with the State Office of Historic Preservation, and the results of that effort were documented with the <u>City of Fullerton 1979</u> Historical Building Survey.

This Survey identified over 90 individual buildings or features and a dozen distinctive neighborhoods, which met criteria for designation as either a local landmark or a landmark district. As a result of these findings, in 1980, the City revised its Historical Landmarks Ordinance to recognize these identified

buildings, sites and features as "Significant Properties," which would be subject to adopted review procedures and restrictions to help ensure their preservation.

#### TWENTY YEARS OF PROGRESS

With the completion of the 1979 Historical Building Survey — an effort that was conducted largely by volunteers from the community — interest in preservation issues became much more evident. The Survey laid a solid foundation on which both private and public actions have constructed an impressive record of historic preservation. Within the last twenty years the preservation movement has grown, aided by the following:

- The City of Fullerton made a conscious policy decision to revitalize its downtown by emphasizing a conservation of historic, in-place buildings rather than planning a complete reconstruction of the area. At the same time, millions of dollars were invested to upgrade public facilities to assure private property owners that the area would continue to be the commercial and social center of the community.
- The Fullerton Redevelopment Agency established a program to assist financially an owner of a downtown commercial property who proposes to rehabilitate and restore the building in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. This program has been used extensively, and most owners of the many "Significant Properties" in the original townsite have taken advantage of this type of assistance.

- A number of residents formed a non-profit organization called Fullerton Heritage with the goal to promote an awareness of the city's past as well as to help protect and preserve historic buildings and districts.
- At the request of Fullerton Heritage, the City Council adopted several residential preservation zones as part of the Zoning Ordinance and approved a set of design guidelines for these zones. Subsequently, residential preservation zones were applied to a number of the city's older neighborhoods.
- Fullerton, A Pictorial History by Bob Ziebell was published, presenting a very readable and most complete historical account of the city's development. This 165-page book contains numerous photos and maps showing the progression of the community, and this documentation has brought increased interest in preserving the important buildings and features that are part of the City's heritage.

### UPDATE TO THE HISTORICAL BUILDING SURVEY

The initial survey, completed in 1979, was never considered a comprehensive inventory of the City's buildings and historic resources; time and manpower limitations had prevented a thorough assessment of all properties. In 1996-97, the City worked with Fullerton Heritage, a local preservation group, to establish a process that would recommend revisions and additions to the official list of potential historical properties and districts. The culmination

of that process is the publication of this document, identifying more than 125 "Significant Properties," 15 potential landmark districts, and 11 potential "Significant Properties," all of which are eligible for official designation as either a local Historical Landmark or a Landmark District.

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."—George Santayana