

FULLERTON HERITAGE

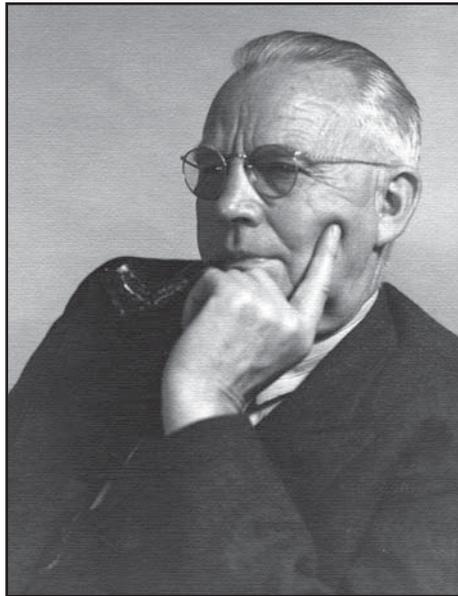
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Harry K. Vaughn: Fullerton's Depression-era Architect

by Debora Richey

Although other architects were awarded contracts for Fullerton public works projects during the Great Depression, notably Donald Beach Kirby for the Wilshire Junior High School (1936), the first Public Works Administration (PWA) building in Orange County, and G. Stanley Wilson for the Fullerton City Hall (1942), Harry K. Vaughn has become the architect most associated with the City's New Deal buildings. From 1933 to 1942, Vaughn designed all of the buildings on the new Fullerton Junior College campus, along with the Fullerton Public Library, now the Fullerton Museum Center, on Pomona Avenue.

Most of Vaughn's architectural career was overshadowed by the influential architects he worked with over the decades. Prior to his time in Fullerton as an independent architect, Vaughn had worked with some of Southern California's greatest architects—William Sterling Hebbard, Irving J. Gill, Carleton M. Winslow, and Octavius W. Morgan (Morgan and Walls)—and the buildings that he designed in Fullerton represented the only time he was able to



Harry K. Vaughn

stamp his personal vision on a collection of buildings.

Vaughn was born in Honey Creek, Wisconsin on January 8, 1882, but moved to San Diego in 1906. He received local athletic fame in his early twenties as the champion sculler of Southern California. As a member of the San Diego Rowing Club, he won the single-scutt championship (one and a half miles with a turn) for three years running, 1906-1908, and was later included in the San Diego Hall of Champions in Balboa Park. In 1906, at the age of twenty-three, Vaughn began working as a draftsman for the very influential San Diego architectural firm of Hebbard and Gill. In June 1907, after eleven successful years together, William S. Hebbard and Irving J.

Gill dissolved their partnership, and Vaughn remained with Hebbard. Vaughn, who was a gifted draftsman, prepared working drawings for many significant buildings in San Diego, including the remarkable Arts and Crafts Marston House in Balboa Park. Except for a brief period in 1910/1911, when Vaughn prepared working drawings for the notable architectural firm of Morgan and Walls, Vaughn remained with Hebbard until 1913, when he left to work with Carleton M. Winslow, Sr. in San Diego and later in Los Angeles. Winslow had been appointed Architect-in Residence for the influential Panama-California International Exposition (1915-1917) in San Diego, where he designed many of the temporary buildings and supervised the construction of permanent buildings designed by Bertram Goodhue. Vaughn prepared working drawings for a number of buildings for the Exposition, including the Administration Building, the first building completed for the fair. Winslow chose the Spanish Colonial Revival Style for the Exposition, an innovation which brought him widespread attention and increased his architectural business, which prompted him to move back to Los Angeles, taking Vaughn with him.

Shortly after arriving in Los Angeles, Vaughn, who had only three years of high school and the completion of thirty subjects from American School Correspondence, began taking engineering courses in the evening at the University of Southern California (USC). This coursework, which extended over four years, helped Vaughn to become a certified engineer with the American Association of Engineers in

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Save the Date

Annual Meeting

Fullerton Heritage will hold its annual meeting on Thursday, June 17 at 7 p.m. at the Fullerton Arboretum Pavilion. The guest speaker will be architect Richard Dodd, who will present a program on "The Bungalow Era in Orange County: The Embodiment of the Arts & Crafts Movement." Meeting details will be sent to members in the coming weeks.

Advocacy Issues

by Kate Dalton

Redevelopment Design Review Committee

On February 25, 2010 the RDRC considered a project to build a second dwelling unit on a property at 615 E. Commonwealth Ave. The property is in the College Park Potential Landmark District and adjacent to the College Park Preservation Zone, therefore requiring design consideration for cultural sensitivity. The existing home was built in 1924 in the Mission Revival style. The proposed unit was found by the RDRC to be incompatible with the existing style and was therefore continued, with direction to the applicant to redesign the project, particularly addressing the issues of roof design, window design and treatment and context with the original house. At the meeting of the RDRC on April 9, the committee agreed that the redesign was a good response to the comments of the committee from the previous meeting, but the RDRC members were concerned with the lack of architectural features for the south facing second story wall, easily visible from Commonwealth. The RDRC continued the project until April 22, requesting the applicant work with staff to address the need for detail on the south façade as well as detail for the window treatment including sill design and depth or relief for the windows themselves.

A remodel project at 110 N. Cornell Ave. in the College Park Preservation Zone was started without permit many months ago and was halted by the city to provide review of the work. The windows were all removed and replaced with ones that do not meet the Design Guidelines for Residential Preservation Zones. After much direction from city staff about what would be appropriate, the owner remained uncooperative, continuing to insist that the already installed windows remain. The Community Development Staff held firm on the requirements and finally the project is proceeding with removal of the inappropriate windows and the building of new frames and sill structures compatible with the original house. We applaud staff for their diligence in enforcing the Design Guidelines.

Somehow a project at 247 E. Valencia Ave. was started without the proper review required for a Significant Property, identified in the Historic Building Survey as the Burdorf House. Ordinarily this project should have gone to the RDRC for extensive review because of the significance of the original house and the need for compatibility with this cultural resource.

We are working to find out what happened in the system, in an effort to avoid future problems.

Historic Fullerton Signage Program

Fullerton Heritage is currently collaborating with many city departments on a new signage program that will identify Fullerton's historic downtown and surrounding historic neighborhoods. After several meetings with the Community Development, Engineering, Redevelopment and Maintenance Departments, we have agreed on a design for street sign toppers (see picture below) and have identified the location of most of the signs to be installed. Fullerton Heritage has met with the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Business Association and received their enthusiastic support of the program concept and the design of the signs. The next step will be to present the proposal to the City Council for approval. If approved, the project will likely not be implemented until specific funding sources can be identified, due to the severe budget deficit and resulting budget cuts to be adopted in June. Our preference would be to use the priority of downtown signage first, followed by the historic neighborhoods, as money becomes available. If the City Council approves the program, Fullerton Heritage has committed to actively pursuing possible sources of funding for the project, including using our prestige as a Preserve America City. We will keep you posted.

“Welcome Wagon” Letter

A committee of Fullerton Heritage headed by board member Bob Linnell, has completed the design of a welcome letter to the new owners of properties in Fullerton's Residential Preservation Zones. The letter, written on Fullerton Heritage letterhead and signed by President Tom Dalton, identifies the owner's property as part of one of the zones and introduces Fullerton Heritage and our many resources available to owners of historic properties. It briefly discusses the requirements and benefits of preservation zones and offers assistance in any way possible should the home owner wish to learn more. We have sent the letter to all new owners and will continue this on a regular basis in perpetuity. Our hope is that this will not only help the owners in the appreciation and maintenance of their historic property, but make the process of monitoring the building activity in the preservation zones easier for both the City and Fullerton Heritage.



President's Corner

by Tom Dalton

Fullerton Heritage, working with Fullerton College's Foundation Director, Chuck Allen, has established a scholarship that will initially award \$500 to a Fullerton College student of U. S. History who is interested in California or local history. That interest may be demonstrated by completing History 275 (History of California and the Pacific Coast) and/or membership and activities that reflect an interest in Southern California history. The student should display academic promise in the field of history and intend to study history, historic preservation, urban planning, landscape architecture, or another history-related field. At the time of the award, the recipient must be attending at least three-quarter time (3

courses) at Fullerton College, maintain a grade point average of at least 3.0 and plan to continue on to a four year college or university. The recipient will be determined by the Fullerton College History Department faculty and be introduced at our annual meeting in June.

The scholarship, which was conceived by Fullerton Heritage Board member Debora Richey, will be given annually and the amount of the award will be voted on by the Fullerton Heritage Board of Directors each year. It will be financed by dues, donations and the proceeds from our historic walking and trolley tours. We hope this scholarship will encourage more students to pursue U. S. History as a major and highlight Fullerton Heritage's commitment to education. Many thanks go to Deb for suggesting the scholarship and for serving as chairwoman of the scholarship committee.

Vaughn

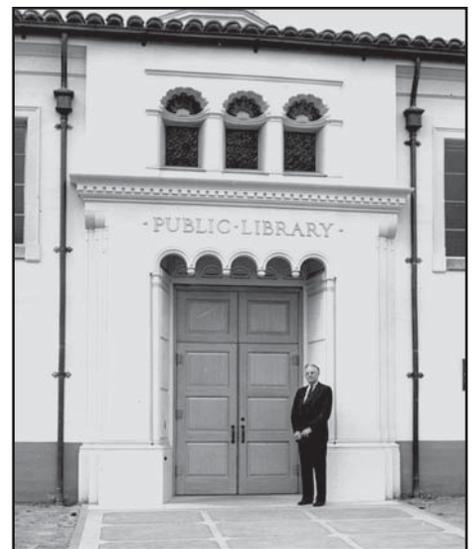
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1920 and a California certified architect in 1922. After his certifications, Vaughn listed himself in the Los Angeles City Directory as an architect with offices at various locations, but that was short-lived, and he continued to work mostly out of the offices of Winslow where he prepared working drawings and written specifications, although he was upgraded as a supervisor on architectural projects. He also continued to work with Irving Gill, who had moved to Los Angeles in 1913.

In 1919, the Fullerton Board of Trustees for the Fullerton Union High School and Fullerton Junior College hired Carleton Winslow as their architect. The town's high school in the 300 block of Commonwealth had burned down, and the campus was relocated to a new site on Chapman Avenue in 1910. A community college, Fullerton Junior College (now Fullerton College), was added to the campus in 1913, and the Trustees wanted to build a series of new buildings that would represent Fullerton's educational future. While developing his plans for the new campus, Winslow, who had become an advocate for the Spanish Colonial Revival style, gave a series of talks with color slides on the Spanish style of

architecture and recommended that Fullerton adopt the Spanish Colonial Revival type of architecture for buildings in the city. In July 1919, the Board of Trade (later the Chamber of Commerce), which included all influential organizations in the city, passed a resolution declaring the Spanish style as the "uniform style" of architecture for "all public buildings that may be constructed, and also any of the buildings that might be remodeled." Winslow went on to design gardens and Spanish Colonial Revival buildings for the campus, while Vaughn was placed in charge of the buildings' drawings and the construction work. Vaughn supervised the construction of all the major buildings on the campus: the Domestic Science and Arts Building (1922), the Administration and Library (1923), the Science Building (1923), the Arts and Crafts Building (1926), the Arcades (1926), and the Louis E. Plummer Auditorium (1930), listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Vaughn quickly became a familiar person on the campus, and it is highly likely that Superintendent Louis E. Plummer hired Vaughn to design his personal residence at 226 Helen Drive. Plummer's lovely Spanish-styled home was moved to 104 Parkview Drive in 1942/43 after Plummer moved to San Diego.

In 1933, the Fullerton Board of Trustees paid \$30,000 for 16 acres of land adjacent



Vaughn at the entrance of the Fullerton Public Library (now the Fullerton Museum Center)

to the campus for the sole occupation of the College. Vaughn was hired to replace Winslow as architect and to develop a general plan for the new campus, along with designs for specific new classrooms and buildings. Working with landscape architect Ralph D. Cornell (1908-1972), who would go on to become supervising landscape architect at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) from 1937 to 1972, Vaughn de-

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Vaughn

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veloped a general plan for the College campus in 1935. The general plan, which was featured in the November 1936 issue of California Arts and Architecture, was inspired by Thomas Jefferson's University of Virginia, and consisted of rectangular classrooms, administrative, and recreational buildings arranged in axial fashion around a central library. Using Public Works Administration, then Work Projects Administration (WPA) funds, Vaughn designed, then supervised, the construction of several campus buildings: the Commerce Building (\$148,777), the Social Science and Administration Building (\$163,633), the Technical Trades Building (\$224,321), and the Locker Room and Student Union Building (\$60,454). Vaughn also designed the walls for the sunken garden and additional landscaping features (\$47,793), which the WPA also funded.

Impressed with Vaughn's architectural designs, the efficiency with which he supervised building construction, and his ability to obtain federal relief funding, the Fullerton Library Trustees asked Vaughn to design the new WPA Library on North Pomona Avenue. While Vaughn's relationship with the Library Trustees was cordial, he had difficulty getting paid for the project. A former Library Trustee had also insisted on overseeing the project and frequently interfered, telling construction workers to do something incorrectly, forcing Vaughn to change it back to match the building plans. Vaughn fired off angry letters to the Library Trustees in late 1941, but the conflict was eventually resolved, and the 16,000-square-foot Fullerton Public Library opened to great applause in January 1942. The Library was Vaughn's last project in Fullerton.

Like Hebbard, Gill, and Winslow, Vaughn had been influenced by early mission architecture, then Spanish Colonial Revival architecture, and all of the Fullerton residential and civic buildings he designed were in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. His buildings, especially the Fullerton College Commerce Building and the Fullerton Public Library, were noted for their lavish Spanish-styled

details. Vaughn's preference for the Spanish Colonial style, coupled with the large number of civic buildings that he worked on over the years, has led to the incorrect belief that Vaughn also designed the Fullerton Post Office on Commonwealth Avenue, which was actually designed by staff within the Treasury Department's Office of the Supervising Architect.

Although newspaper articles and other sources identify Vaughn as a "Fullerton architect" or "local architect," Vaughn was actually a 57-year resident of San Diego. Vaughn and his wife Helen Allingham did move to Fullerton in 1935, with the architect working out of his rented rooms at the Dunphy Apartments (126 W. Whiting) and then the Dewella Apartments (324 E. Wilshire), and later an office on the fourth floor of the prestigious Chapman Building (112 E. Wilshire), but the couple permanently left Fullerton in 1942. Realizing that federal relief funds were drying up, Vaughn and his wife moved back to San Diego where he opened an architectural practice on Front Street. He also began work as a senior architect for the California Department of Public Works Division of Architecture. He formally retired in 1952, and passed away in San Diego on April 21, 1962.

In 1927/28, Louis E. Plummer (1883-1958), Superintendent of Fullerton Union High School and Fullerton College, hired architect Harry K. Vaughn (1882-1962) to design and then supervise the construction of a new residence for himself and his family at 226 Helen Drive. At the time, Vaughn, working under notable architect Carleton Winslow, was supervising the construction of all of the new buildings at the High School and College on Chapman, and he became a familiar figure



on the campus. Plummer had moved to Fullerton in 1909 to head the High School's Commerce Department and was appointed Superintendent in 1916, a position he held until his forced retirement in 1941. Plummer later moved to San Diego to take a position with the Ryan Aircraft Corporation in San Diego. This lovely Spanish Colonial Revival dwelling was moved to 104 Parkview Drive around 1942/43.

The photograph on the right shows Plummer's daughter Margaret in front of the residence on Helen Drive, and the picture above is a current view of the home now on Parkview Drive.



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