

Shepardson House

155 Hillcrest Drive

1921

Mission Revival

Status: Local Landmark



Constructed in 1921 for \$5,000, this residence was built for widower and hardware store owner Oscar Pliny Shepardson and his daughter, Anita Shepardson. Anita Shepardson was an instructor and administrator at Fullerton College and Fullerton Union High School for over 33 years. The residence was one of the earliest built in the Hillcrest Drive subdivision, which had been laid out in 1914. The original building permit does not list a contractor or architect, but there is strong evidence to indicate that the home was designed and constructed by Frank K. Benchley, one of Fullerton's earliest architects. Known for his stately homes, Benchley had constructed a similarly styled home a year earlier for Mayor Richard S. Gregory at 130 Hillcrest Drive. The houses are so similar in size and detail that it is likely Benchley was responsible for both Mission Revival dwellings.

The Mission Revival architectural characteristics of this house include simple, smooth stucco walls, a tile-topped parapet, archways, columns, and restrained decorative elements. Exterior symmetry – a hallmark of the Mission Revival style – is visible in the front porch design, the matching French doors and windows on the front façade, and balconies, enclosed by low stucco walls which extend across the front and rear of the dwelling. Attached eave overhangs with exposed rafters and red tile (a common Benchley feature) are situated on both floors.

In 1945, the property was purchased by Ruth and Charles Froehlich, vice-president of Hunt Foods, Inc., and the family remained in the house until 1989. The initial low turnover in ownership has been a contributing factor in the preservation of the house's historic integrity; the exterior has only been slightly altered from its original construction and setting. The current owners have made a concerted effort to restore and rehabilitate the house, including restoration of the chimney and repair of the home's structural base.