

Sans Souci Court

501 W. Whiting Avenue

1923

Spanish Colonial Revival

Status: Local Landmark



A Spanish Colonial architecture was used for this bungalow court, one of the few constructed in Fullerton in the 1920s. Single-story buildings on the east and west sides of a small central courtyard flank a two-story structure at the rear of the property. Distinguishing features include a decorative fascia supported by round columns that connects the two single story buildings; the small, enclosed porches for the units; and the use of shed roofs with tile over openings.

When the bungalow court opened in 1923, it originally contained six apartments within a “H”-shaped, two-story building at the rear of the property. The rear portion of the building closest to Chapman Avenue, which contained a five-stall garage and two units on the second floor, was demolished when Chapman Avenue was widened in 1967. At some point prior to 1990, the two units on the top of the remaining portion of the second-story building were converted into one larger unit with three bedrooms. The property currently consists of seven apartments.

The bungalow court was quickly constructed by local builder and contractor Jesse E. Ellis under the direction of property owner Julia Carpenter, who occupied the residential complex (most likely the two units atop the rear garages) with her husband and five children from 1923 to 1932. Julia Carpenter was an avid card player and a member of the short-lived Sans Souci Card Club, which may have inspired the initial name for the bungalow court (sans souci is French for “without worry”).

This bungalow court is one of five that remain in the city, all built in the 1920s. In the 1920s, these bungalow courts were a fresh, new building type that offered an attractive and different housing choice for residents. The creation of the bungalow courts in Fullerton, however, was a short-lived phenomenon. The 1929 Depression stopped the construction of multi-housing units throughout the city, and after World War II, developers turned to the construction of large apartment complexes, mostly built outside the city’s original townsite, which made more efficient and profitable use of land.

In 2021, the owner removed the stucco wall that spanned the front entry, along with its decorative, tiled-covered shed roof, because it showed signs of deterioration and a danger to residents. There are no plans to replace this original feature of the bungalow court.