

Clarence Spencer House

1400 W. Orangethorpe Avenue

1915

Craftsman Bungalow

Status: Local Landmark



This house was built for Clarence Spencer, most likely by builder Edward Schenik, who would later construct the house at 1520 West Orangethorpe Avenue for Clarence's mother, Mary Spencer. Clarence Spencer was active in forming the short-lived community of Orangethorpe in the 1920s. He resided at this address until his death in 1976, at the age of 94.

This Craftsman bungalow is one of a series of former grove houses that dotted the land between the townsites of Fullerton and Anaheim early in the 20th century. As one of the better-preserved examples, the house has architectural interest in the use of stone, a practice promoted by the founders of the Craftsman movement but rarely seen in Fullerton. Typical exterior Craftsman elements include non-symmetrical elevations, exposed roof rafters, projecting end beams, grouped windows, wood slat vents, decorative (false) beams and braces under gables, and multiple roof planes. A band of windows in the upper story, which covers only the central portion of the house, denotes the link between the Craftsman and Prairie styles.

A few changes have been made to the residence over the years, but both the exterior and interior retain a high degree of historic integrity. Non-compatible ornamental and flood lights were added for safety purposes, and a white metal fence was added around the property.

To alleviate the heat, the Spencer family added a grape arbor on the east side of the dwelling, which eventually extended around the home, creating one of the building's defining features. The grape vines have been removed, as have the citrus trees that surrounded the house, but it is still easy to visualize the dwelling's original grove setting.