

Swearingen House

520 W. Valley View Drive

1929

Spanish Colonial Revival

Status: Local Landmark



Constructed in 1929, this one-and-a-half story Spanish Colonial Revival house has 1,410 sq. ft. of living space, excluding the basement. The wood-frame dwelling was constructed for Harry G. Maxwell, a significant early Fullerton developer, for \$4,500, and it was completed just a few weeks before the market crash in October, 1929. The first owners of the house, Jessie and Cleo Swearingen, resided here for ten years, between 1929 and 1940.

Harry Maxwell was the first Fullerton builder/developer to completely embrace the Spanish Colonial Revival style of architecture. Maxwell had joined the influential Fullerton Chamber of Commerce (then the Board of Trade) in 1906, and in July 1919, voted on the resolution making the “Spanish style” of architecture the preferred style for the city. Working with general contractor Mortimer Carroll, owner of Built-Right Homes, Maxwell constructed Spanish Colonial Revival homes in Fullerton from 1925 to 1929. The two men quickly developed a building pattern: Maxwell would purchase a vacant lot; Carroll would construct the residence; and Maxwell would then advertise and sell the home using his real estate brokers license.

While he used the Spanish Colonial Revival style time and again, Maxwell varied the elements so that each home had a different exterior. His early homes were one story, but over time the homes became slightly larger and more elaborate, although his homes were always intended for the middle class. This house is unusual for its one-and-a-half story design; the residence is one of the last (or possibly the last) home constructed by Maxwell.

In the 1930s, Maxwell was prominently involved in civic affairs. Maxwell was elected to the Fullerton City Council in 1934, serving as mayor from 1936 to 1938.