Proposed Lower de la Vina Historic District

The Historic District has been added to City's List Of Potential Historic Resouces but has not been designated by the Historic Landmark Commission or City Council.

The Proposed Lower de la Vina Historic District is located along De la Vina Street, between West De la Guerra Street and West Cota Street.

INTRODUTION

The proposed Lower de la Vina Historic District is a residential district that was developed by merchants, bankers, businessmen, and capitalists from 1870-1910. The district has an important collection of Folk Victorian residences, but homes constructed in the Craftsman, Queen Anne, Stick, Italianate, and Spanish Colonial Revival styles are also represented. Originally, the majority of the properties were single-family residences, but many have now been converted to apartments, duplexes, or properties with multiple residential dwellings. Mature trees lining the streets, sandstone curbing, hitching posts, sandstone retaining walls, and sandstone landscape curbing contribute to the character of the district.

Above: A Queen Anne Free Classic with a front bay windows residence in the Proposed Lower De La Vina Historic District.

HISTORY

Period of significance: 1870-1910

This area developed as the result of the many people from the East Coast moving west following the induction of California into the United States. The City Common Council established the center of town just north of Ortega Street, between Santa Barbara and Chapala Streets, encompassing most of the existing Spanish core. As a result, new business development expanded along State Street south of Ortega Street, and residential streets rose on both the east and west sides of Santa Barbara and Chapala Streets. The area west of Chapala Street was well developed with residential properties by the turn of the century. De la Vina Street was popular for its proximity to lower State Street shops and the electric street railway. Homes were constructed in architectural styles that were popular throughout the Eastern United States. The first dwellings constructed, such as the Austin house at 707 De la Vina Street and the Roeder house at 719 De la Vina Street, belonged to merchant professionals. Eleven Folk Victorian style homes were constructed on the 600 and 700 blocks of De la Vina Street in the 1890s. These modest houses were likely home to middle-class workers holding clerical and government jobs. In 1893, these positions were paying an annual average wage of $900–$1,100, compared to other workers who received an annual average income of $420–$563 (Bureau of the Census 1965:91–92).

The Lower De la Vina Street Historic District is an area reflective of the architectural movements of the mid-to-late nineteenth century. This area was not created as part of a planned development but was the result of organic growth directly related to the commercial development of the businesses on State Street. Some of the properties still have sandstone hitching posts at the street, and sandstone curbing exists along many of the blocks.

Above and Below are two examples of Folk Victorian Residences in the proposed district.