

Architectural Analysis of 109, Thorain Boulevard

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This charming bungalow on Thorain Boulevard was built in 1936, in the midst of a romantic revival of historical styles sweeping San Antonio. A bungalow in any of the neighborhoods off Hildebrand at the time might have details reminiscent of a Moorish palace, a medieval castle, the Spanish missions, or an American Prairie house by Frank Lloyd Wright. The romantic appeal of this eclectic menagerie of styles was partly due to the desire, during the Depression Era, to recreate imaginative imagery of a past time that seemed more secure; a search for comfort from daily stress in the familiar.

The entry façade of the bungalow mimics details of larger English Tudor Revival homes, a residential style popular in American neighborhoods between 1890 and 1940. The steeply-pitched roof with its prominent front gable and swooping roofline over the entry evokes the romantic image of a cottage on a 16th century English estate. The house lacks the typical decorative half-timbering, and tall, narrow windows with diamond-pane glazing, however this is hinted at with the decorative detail between the window and eave of the roof. Here, we see portrayed the symbols of a high-pitched vergeboard and three diamonds painted dark brown. The semi-circular arch of the entryway and a smaller echo within the entry porch punctuate the walls in a picturesque fashion.



Houses built during the Depression Era tended to have less ornament and a more clean, modern look to them. The living room in this bungalow is filled with the light of casement windows on both sides of the

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room and bordering a simple and elegant white brick fireplace. Both the living and dining room have their original faux crystal ceiling light fixtures as well as the modest wood molding and trim that frames every door window.

What I appreciate about this house is its excellent state of preservation. The original multi-panel doors entering the kitchen and bathroom have been conserved, as well as the quaint telephone niche in the hallway. The beadboard wainscot in the bathroom is a modern renovation, but is a historically accurate detail from the era of the house's construction. The kitchen is filled with light from glass panes of doors and windows. The original wood cabinetry has been preserved with its doily cut-outs over the sink and pull-out cutting board. Even the fold-out ironing board embedded in the wall is in excellent condition and can still be used.

