

Architectural Analysis of 213, Donaldson Avenue

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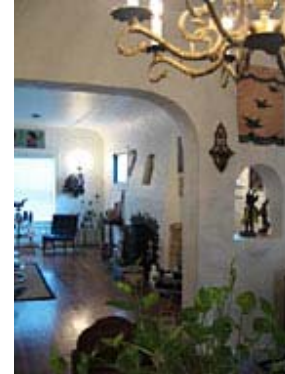
The neighborhood around the renowned Jefferson High School near Woodlawn Lake is filled with charming bungalows and stately mansions from the 1920s and 30s. Driving around you can see English Tudor Revivals, Arts and Crafts-inspired bungalows, crazy-brick cottages, stuccoed bungalows with sculpted medieval turrets, and a number of Alamo-inspired renditions. The Spanish Hacienda character of the house at 213 Donaldson is quintessentially “San Antonio”.

The bright white stuccoed walls, contrasting dark chocolate trim and window frames, and arched front porch are hallmark details of a Spanish Hacienda Revival---as well as the barrel-vaulted ceiling of the living room on the interior. To enhance the Spanish rustic look, the present owners have added



Sausalito tile to the front porch and blocks of wood at the roofline to indicate the idea of *vigas*, roof rafters that appear to extend through the wall to the exterior.

The owners showed me photographs of the house from when they first purchased it, and I can attest that they have done a marvelous job restoring it. The house is built on a pier and beam foundation and solid, stable ground. There are no telltale signs of shifting---the house is rock solid. Built in 1935 with old-growth pine, balloon-frame construction and plaster, the owners were careful to preserve the home’s valuable materials and most hand-crafted architectural details from the period. And yet, the modern touches



they have added warrant the house’s debut in a design trade journal. The front entry has a clean modern feel to it, almost something from Dwell magazine or West Elm, as well as the back porch and outside storage shed, designed by the owner who is a carpenter and artist.

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The backyard has been transformed with great love into a paradise with fruit trees such as orange and peach, stone paths that cut through the grass and leading you to a flagstone seating area in one part, or around the house to a shaded grotto replete with bubbling fountain. The path continues to wander around to a side porch and desert cactus garden.



Last but not least is the jewel inside, the house's interior. The stuccoed living room interior is shaped by a long, transverse barrel vault which ends in a wall with a grand arch and smaller arched cut-out windows, giving you a clear view into the dining room. Solid oak floors also connect the rooms visually. The fireplace reminds me of a sculpted outdoor baking oven, the kind you would see in Mexico, with dark bricks of varying sizes outlining the opening in a creative pattern. The house's wood panel doors and crystal door knobs are nicely restored, and the kitchen cabinetry has been renovated in keeping with the simplicity of earlier renditions of 1930s kitchens I have seen. Also in an appropriate vein to the period, the large and sunny eat-in kitchen has been newly covered with black and white checkered linoleum tile, which has also been introduced into the truly lovely mint green bathroom. Don't miss the awesome cubbyhole storage unit in the children's bedroom.

