

## Architectural Analysis of 1811, West Mulberry Street

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The neighborhoods just north and south of San Antonio's downtown center are home to numerous turn-of-the-century Victorian homes. This house on West Mulberry, built around 1900, is a humble variant of the Folk Victorian. This is a Texas variant of the American Foursquare, which was usually one-story, square in plan with a pyramidal roof. Some Folk Victorians have front or side gables; others simply have dormers to

ornament the roofline. This style of house can easily be recognized by the steeply pitched roof and requisite covered front porch.

Yet, I had to wonder at first what this turn-of-the-century folk Victorian was doing in this particular neighborhood, a development begun in the 1920s as a suburb for



the wealthy connected to Woodlawn Lake. Earlier the lake was considered to be a recreation area that



afforded families the opportunity to get out into the countryside on the weekend. The house on Mulberry was likely part of the old Dairy Farm, whose property was purchased later for the new suburb. In fact, this is not the only structure in the area dating from this period. The house across the street with a similar pyramidal shape roof is reputedly the first built in the area.

This house does not have the spindles or gingerbread scrollwork seen on some Folk Victorians to the south of downtown. Instead, its design is more reserved and stately. Other potential period details can be seen at the front entrance: the bronze mailbox, front door knocker, and a galloping horse designed to display the



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house address at one time. The house is enveloped in cement fiberboard shingles, however these were probably added mid-century to protect the original clapboard wood siding, which may still exist underneath. The sculpted concrete birdbath must be fairly new.

The owner's mother moved here in the 1960s and planted as a seedling the beautiful Persimmon tree in the backyard. She loved and cared for this tree, which gave a little shade to the fruit and vegetable garden you can still see remnants of amongst the grass and summer flowers. The tree is a male Persimmon, meaning it does not bear fruit and therefore leaves no mess underneath it. Although Bexar County Records do not record a date for the barn/garage in the back, I am fairly sure it is of the same era of the house.



The interior of the house has not been much transformed from its original design, indicators being the high ceilings, tall and narrow windows, and original panel doors and wood molded frames. Just inside the front door, there is a charming period telephone shelf. A house from this period would not have had closets, so those in the bedrooms are modern additions, as well as the kitchen cabinetry and bathroom at the back of the house.

