

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Muckenthaler House

and/or common Muckenthaler Cultural Center

**2. Location**

street & number 1201 West Malvern Ave. \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Fullerton \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district 39

state California code 06 county Orange code 059

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Cultural

**4. Owner of Property**

name City of Fullerton

street & number 303 West Commonwealth Avenue

city, town Fullerton \_\_\_ vicinity of state California 92632

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Orange County Recorder's Office

street & number 630 North Broadway

city, town Santa Ana state California

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Fullerton Historical Building Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date March, 1979 \_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county  local

depository for survey records City of Fullerton

city, town Fullerton state California

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

### ORIGINAL BUILDING

The Muckenthaler House is situated on a hill at the southeast corner of the 8-1/2 acre remainder of a former 80-acre lemon and avocado grove above Malvern Avenue one block west of Euclid Street. The basic construction is stucco on tile. The house consists of a two-story main building oriented east/west parallel to Malvern with a one-story wing on each end oriented north/south. Along the north side, completing the square shape of the complex are the original one-story garage and chauffeur's quarters. Although the main visual entry is in the south elevation, the circular drive from the east led to a secondary entrance in the east wing. The two-story portion is an outstanding example of the Mediterranean influence in 1920's period revival architecture, emphasized by the low-pitched tile roof, iron grill work, octagonal solarium at the southeast corner, elaborate relief decoration around the main entry, and second floor balconies. This portion of the house also has a fill basement. The one-story, flat roof wings and garage have Mission Revival touches in the parapets with raised corners and with the suggestion of exposed rafter ends. There is none of the detail and decoration of the two-story portion in these wings and there is no basement. These four building elements surrounded a 25' x 37' interior court that was planted with various trees and shrubs. Interior corridors opened from the three main wings onto this atrium through arched double French doors. This interior courtyard was roofed over in 1948 to create additional interior space. Completing the original complex was a stone gazebo with tile roof southeast of the house and a wood arbor on the west side.

On the interior, the two-story section included a main entry hall with imported Italian open curved stair to the second floor with wrought iron railing; a basement game/meeting/entertainment area with fireplace served by a curving enclosed staircase from the main entry hall and a dumbwaiter from the kitchen; a first floor containing the solarium to the right of the main entry containing floor to second story small panel, arched windows, living room to the left of main entry with floor-to-ceiling tile fireplace, and a den with smaller tile fireplace. The second floor contained the master bedroom suite with child's bedroom and bathroom. A balcony on the north side overlooked the atrium, while a balcony from the child's room was incorporated over the highly decorated entry and a simple balcony extended from the master bedroom. The west wing included kitchen, dining room (with built-in buffet with curved, bevelled glass), storage and maid's room. The east wing contained a bedroom and office. The garage and chauffeur's quarters completed the complex.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	APR 28 1980
DATE ENTERED	MAY 31 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

ALTERATIONS

Prior to the Muckenthaler family donating the property to the City for use as a cultural center the following major changes were made:

1. Covering of the atrium area with skylights in 1948 with new tile floor to create interior room.
2. Addition and enlargement of a separate garage/storage area in 1960.
3. Conversion of the office in the east wing into a bedroom and bath in 1956 when the elder Muckenthaler became too ill to climb the stairs to the second floor.

Subsequent to the City receiving the building and grounds in 1965 several additional alterations were made:

1. The basic use of the building changed from a residence to a cultural center for a variety of activities, including art exhibits, craft classes, performing arts, craft sales, and offices for the Muckenthaler Cultural Center Foundation.
2. An area north of the building was paved for parking, and a small art studio was added adjacent to the parking lot.
3. The office which had been converted to a bedroom was converted to a craft sales area.
4. The kitchen was updated, dropped ceilings were added, and the solarium ceiling was restored when the house was featured as the 1971 Design House.
5. The skylight over the atrium was covered from below with a false ceiling and covered from above with layers of plastic.
6. The coved living room ceiling was covered by a lower ceiling.
7. The living room fireplace was covered with false walls to provide additional art exhibit space.
8. The interior of the living room and atrium is changed periodically with construction of various temporary walls to provide exhibit space.
9. The exterior continues to deteriorate and recently the balcony off the master bedroom has had to be removed because part of it fell off. The decorative trim around the main entry is in imminent danger of disintegration and has been patched and sealed as new cracks develop.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates**

**Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Muckenthaler House is an excellent representative of its type and period. It is the finest remaining residential example of the popular 1920's Mediterranean styling in Fullerton, and is the work of an important local architect. With its impressive grounds, it survives as the last remnant of a larger avocado and lemon growing estate, dating from a period when agriculture was the area's economic mainstay.

**AGRICULTURE**

The Muckenthaler estate originally included some 80 acres and extended from its current location to the south to Commonwealth Avenue, a distance of about 1/2 mile. The land was devoted to raising walnuts, lemons, and avocados and represented a significant contribution to a primarily orange-oriented area.

**ARCHITECTURE**

The house is one of the most significant Orange County examples of Mediterranean residential architecture. The detailing of the two-story portion is exceptional and reflects Italian influences as a result of frequent trips taken by the family to Europe, from where the impressive main staircase was imported. The architect was Frank Benchley, who designed many of the significant structures in Fullerton including the California Hotel, the Farmers and Merchants Bank, the Masonic Temple, a well-preserved bungalow court, and the Benchley home. The contractor, E. J. Herbert also built the Santa Fe depot. Cost of construction was \$4.75 per square foot with 7,600 square feet in the house for a grand total of \$34,000, not including landscaping or furnishings. The architectural detail carried over into the interior with the tiled window seats in the octagonal solarium, the tiled bathrooms, the handmade cabinetry and doors by a Victoria, British Columbia cabinetmaker, the double French doors opening under the corridor arches onto the atrium, and the tiled fireplaces with scenes of Conestoga wagons on the trail and circled for the night. The original plans show details of construction of the building, including the one-foot thick tile walls of the two-story section, the pier and girder construction of the one-story wings, the various flooring materials (primarily oak), and all dimensions.

**EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT**

Walter Muckenthaler was born in Kansas around 1898 and moved to Anaheim in 1909 with his family, which was involved in farming activities. In 1916 he enrolled at U. C. Berkeley in architecture; in 1917 he enlisted in the Navy but was soon discharged because of a physical disability and then worked for the Santa Fe Railroad as an engineer in 1918. That same year, he married

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Terry, Keith C., Walter M. Muckenthaler. Fullerton: California State University, Fullerton, Oral History Program, 1974.  
 Gebhard, David and Winter, Robert. A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California, Santa Barbara, Perigrine Smith, Inc., 1977.

# 10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property 8.5  
 La Habra, CA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	1
---	---

4	1	2	7	7	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	7	4	8	5	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

  
 Zone Easting Northing

B 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

  
 Zone Easting Northing

C 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

E 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

F 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

G 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

H 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The 8.5 Acres bounded by Malvern Avenue, Wesley Drive, and Buena Vista Drive in the City of Fullerton, California

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sue Tsuda, Mayor Pro Tem and Terry Galvin, Senior Planner

organization City of Fullerton date June 1, 1979

street & number 303 West Commonwealth Avenue telephone (714) 525-7171-738-6300

city or town Fullerton state California 92632

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Thomas M. Ellison*

title \_\_\_\_\_ date April 18, 1980

**For HCRS use only**  
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*Sally G. Olden* date 5/31/80  
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: *[Signature]* date 5-14-80  
 Chief of Staff

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

<b>FOR NPS USE ONLY</b>	
RECEIVED	APR 28 1980
DATE ENTERED	MAY 31 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

Adella Kraemer, a daughter of the Kraemer family of Placentia and an owner of a significant number of orange grove acres. She was also the great-granddaughter of Bernardo Yorba, the holder of one of the original Spanish Land Grants in the Orange County area.

In 1920, Walter and Adella moved to Fullerton where he worked for the City in the engineering department. Oil was discovered on the Kraemer properties, and shortly thereafter, in about 1921, Walter purchased the original 80 acre parcel from the Carharts. The couple had one child, Harold, who donated the house and grounds to the City. Among Walter's accomplishments in later years were his election to the City Council in 1936 and 1940; service on the Planning Commission from 1944-1953; and member of the Walnut Growers Association (director and president), the Chamber of Commerce (director), the Advisory Board of the Bank of America, the Ventura Coastal Lemon Co. Board of Directors, and the Ventura Processors Co. Board of Directors.

Many meetings of these various organizations were held in the basement of the home, including meetings of the Council members to iron out problems before going to City Hall to hold the Council meetings.

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE**

The grounds around the home were carefully designed and landscaped by Mr. Muckenthaler himself over a four-year period and by Clark B. Lutschg, owner of the Sequoia Nursery in Fullerton, which is still in business today and still owned by Mr. Lutschg. Included were peristyle gardens, a fountain, goldfish pond, palm trees, a variety of other trees and rare plants, the stone and tile gazebo, an arbor, and flagstone walks. Many of these items still exist much as they were, along with remnants of the lemon and avocado groves.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

<b>FOR NPS USE ONLY</b>	
RECEIVED	APR 28 1980 MAY 31 1980
DATE ENTERED	

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 1

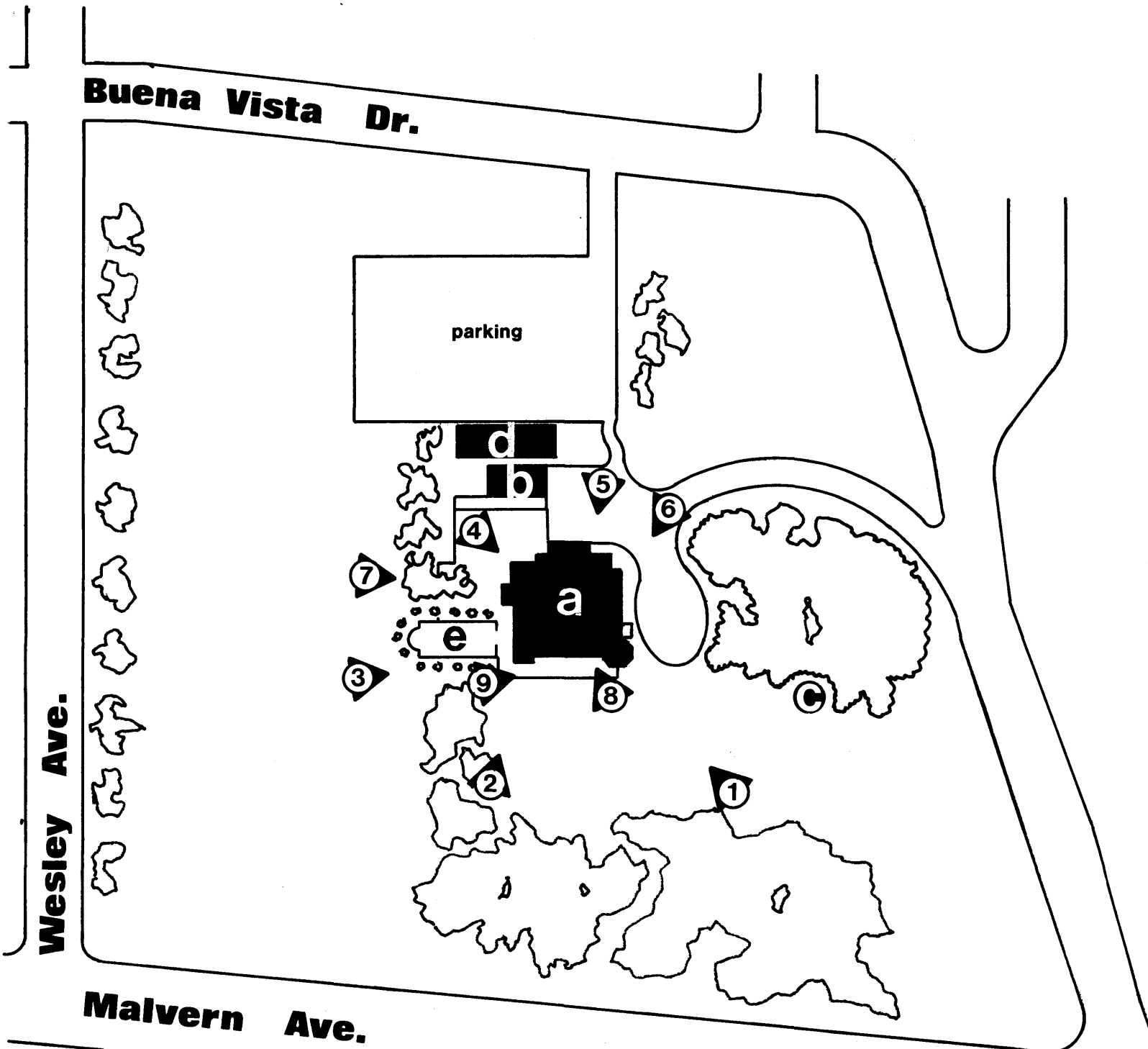
---

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

City of Fullerton Historical Building Survey, Fullerton, California, 1979.

# MUCKENTHALER CULTURAL CENTER

PHOTO LOCATIONS



- a. MAIN HOUSE
- b. GARAGE
- c. GAZEBO
- d. ART STUDIO
- e. PALM COURT

Muckenthaler Cultural Center  
Fullerton, Orange county, California



MAY 31 1980