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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

APR 14 1994
OHP

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name PORTER-FRENCH HOUSE
other names/site number Same

2. Location

street & number 248 S. Batavia Street not for publication
city, town Orange vicinity
state California code CA county Orange code 059 zip code 92668

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
	_____ sites
	_____ structures
	_____ objects
	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official [Signature] Date June 29 1994
California Office of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

[Signature] 8/5/94

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Porter-French House Orange County, CA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

~~Domestic: single dwelling~~

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

~~Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals:~~
~~Spanish Colonial~~

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls stucco

roof terra cotta

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Porter-French House is a good example of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture and the only remaining grove house in the city of Orange designed in that style. 4500 square feet in size, it achieved its present physical appearance in 1917. During that year, John Porter, a prominent banker, developer, and rancher, completely remodeled his Queen Anne home into a Spanish Colonial Revival home that he felt was suitable for his increased wealth and community position. The house sits on a large estate-sized lot (102.13' by 245') and is shaded by several mature trees. The land is the remaining portion of the 120 acre ranch owned by the Porters and Frenches. It also contains a 1917 garage with an apartment above, and a 1910 caretaker's cottage, originally built to store walnuts grown on the property. Several orange and avocado trees, representational of the former grove, still exist behind the garage and cottage.

Roofscape:

The main roof of the house features a large, flat, truncated center section with a shed-style red-clay-tile-clad hood extending downward on all four sides. The edges are all neatly trimmed with red clay tile borders. A matching single-storied porch roof extends from the front facade. The roof that tops the single-storied rear section is flat and bordered with a solid stucco-clad rail. The roof capping the 1941 rear bedroom addition is modified shed style.

Front Facade:

The red-clay-tile-clad roof that crowns the house compliments the smooth stucco cladding of the building. Paired double-hung windows, set flush with the stucco, flank a pair of narrow french doors which lead out onto a ~~balcony~~ on top of the offset front porch. Large square pillars support the porch roof. Low stucco-clad walls extend from each pillar to form an open porch on each side of the covered porch. Square piers accent the outside corners of the open porches. The walls, piers, porch floor, and steps are topped with red brick. The massive front door and sidelights are stained and varnished, as they were originally. A stained glass window has been added in the space in the center of the door. The sidelights are multi-paned. A plate glass window occupies the section of the first floor to the south of the porch. It is topped with a multi-paned transom. A small stained glass window, which reflects the location of the interior stairway, is original to the 1890's original construction. The longer portion of the pergola to the north of the open porch, is visible from the front and adds character and interest to the view of the house from the street.

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
_____ Agriculture _____	_____ 1917 _____	_____ 1917 _____
_____ Architecture _____	_____ _____	_____ _____
_____ _____	Cultural Affiliation	
_____ _____	_____ N/A _____	
_____ _____		
Significant Person	Architect/Builder	
_____ _____	_____ Unknown _____	

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Porter-French House is significant under Criterion A and C. It is the best example of a grove house of this style still surviving in the City of Orange, and retains its original yard and setting. Because of its feeling and associations with the grove house representation, the house and grounds are significant in the context of the citrus industry, Orange's most important economic element from 1905 to 1930. The house was remodeled in 1917, in the midst of the most prosperous period for the citrus industry, 1915-1930. The house retains its integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association to its 1917 appearance.

Historic Context:

The significance of the Porter-French House dates from 1917, when the house received its present Spanish Colonial Revival appearance. A good example of the grove houses that dotted the walnut (earlier 1890's--1905) and orange groves which stretched for miles around Orange, the house is representative of the success of that industry during the 1910's and 20's. During those years Orange County's main industry was agriculture. The lands around Orange, Anaheim, Santa Ana, Tustin, Placentia, and Fullerton were lush with citrus trees. The lands south of Santa Ana and toward the ocean were in use for vegetable crops instead of citrus. In contrast to the farms of the Midwest and East, the orange grower could make a good living from twenty acres of orange groves and did not require a couple of hundred acres in order to support his family.

Orange, as with most other Orange County cities, is now covered border to border with houses and buildings. It is no longer possible to discern where one city leaves off and another begins. During the 1950's, 60's and 70's, most of the grove houses were removed to build the miles of tract houses which now surround the once-small town of Orange. Why so few of the grove houses were left in place, only the developer knows. The Porter-French House has lost its 20 acres of orange groves, but still retains the surrounding yard, with mature plantings, and outbuildings. Several of the orange trees and an avocado still produce fruit and are located behind the garage and caretakers cottage.

There are several Spanish Colonial Revival

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Armor, Samuel: History of Orange County, California 1921
Deeds and records of the Orange County Recorders Office
Records of the Orange County Assessors Office
Interview with Jan and Myron Chomyn, present owners
Orange County Register: March 3, 1958
Los Angeles Times February 10, 1977
City of Orange building permit
Santa Ana Daily Register September 1937
City of Orange Historic Resources Survey sheet
City Directories: 1901-1942

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

City of Orange
Historic Resources Survey

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property .93 of one acre

UTM References

A 11 4210240 37384710
Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
Zone Easting Northing

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Starting from the corner of Almond and Batavia, go 371.07' south to the northeast corner of the Porter-French property. Continue south, across the front, for 102.13 feet; turn west and proceed for 245.76 feet; turn north and proceed for 102.13 feet; turn east and proceed for 241.24 feet, returnig to the starting point. (There is a difference of 4.52' in the length of the north and south boundaries.) See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the application are the present boundaries of the Porter-French property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Diann Marsh
organization _____ date July 1993
street & number 321 East Eighth St. telephone 714/541-2441
city or town Santa Ana state California zip code 92701

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServicePorter-French House
Orange County, CANational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2

North Facade:

A pleasant porch and pergola arrangement forms the sheltered garden on the north side of the house. The facade features a rectangular wing at the west end (at rear) and a slight projection on the east end. Double-hung windows are scattered throughout the second floor. The open side porch is topped with a pergola and is reached by wide steps located between two square piers topped with the round columns that support the pergola structure. The floor, stepped piers, and stairs are topped with red brick. Additional steps lead into the house via a pair of french doors. A second pergola, located about a foot lower than the one over the porch, extends fifteen feet from the north facade and is supported by matching round columns, resting on square piers and topped with red brick caps. The ends of the beams that top the pergolas are carved in a typical Craftsman design.

South Facade:

Little of the south facade is visible from the street because of the high wall on that side of the property and the trees in the center of the side yard. A two-story-high stucco-clad chimney, flanked by pairs of double-hung windows on the second floor and unusually wide double-hung windows on the first floor, dominates the south side. The single-storied stucco-clad addition at the rear (southwest) corner was constructed in 1941. Small windows at the east and south side of the addition provide the fenestration for the addition.

West (Rear) Facade:

The two-story-high section of the house, visible above the first floor kitchen wing, contains double-hung windows, a small stained glass window, and a pair of french doors. A balcony on top of the kitchen wing is bordered by an unbroken stucco-clad railing topped with a narrow border. A wide cornice runs along the wing, approximately 40 inches below the top of the rail. A metal-framed multi-paned window on the north side of the kitchen wing was added in 1941. Wood-framed windows were used to enclose the original back porch. The newer addition, which forms the master bedroom, is offset to the south of the kitchen wing. It was built in 1941 and features a pair of stained glass windows in the west facade, installed by the present owner.

Construction History:

The house conceals an interesting secret under its 1917 Spanish Colonial Revival appearance. John Porter completely redesigned his 1895 Victorian house in 1917, after his wealth and social position had increased and he needed a larger entertaining space. The entire exterior was changed at that time. The red tiles were added to the roof and a rectangular portico replaced the Victorian porch. The open porches and pergolas were built and the exterior stuccoed. The changes reflected a change in philosophy from the staid and formal Victorian era to the Craftsman style of architecture. Three sets of windows, including the stained glass window

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Porter-French House
Orange County, CA

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

to the north of the front door, are all that remain visible of the old exterior. The single-storied kitchen wing in the rear was topped with a balcony, reached from the second floor by a pair of french doors installed in 1917. The interior's basic room plan was not changed except for the combining of the spacious front and back parlors into a large living room with beamed ceiling. The house possesses the integrity of the 1917 Spanish Colonial building except for the 50-year-old bedroom wing on the back of the first floor.

Interior:

A spacious entry hall, featuring a high ceiling with a domed recess and ornate chandelier, is bordered on the north side by the original staircase. Very large pocket doors between the entry hall and living room are original. The 15½ by 26' living room is Spanish Colonial in character, with boxed beams and brackets ornamenting the ceiling and a brick and wood fireplace. The dining room has, as its centerpiece, a tall brick fireplace, flanked by bookcases with muntined glass doors.

The kitchen is located to the west (rear) of the dining room and contains the 1917 cabinets. A multi-paned metal-framed window and a window seat were added on the north wall in the 1940's. The original red brick kitchen chimney is still in place in the northeast corner of the room. The laundry room and service porch were once enclosed with screen, but were enclosed with wood-framed windows in 1941.

The second floor contains a wide hall, three bedrooms, a library and a bath. The owners are planning to operate a bed-and-breakfast inn, but will continue to live in the house. The house is in excellent condition and the decoration reflects the 1917 period of the house.

Setting:

The Porter-French House, located on a parcel of land 120' by 245', retains its original setting and feeling and associations with a typical grove house. This is the remaining parcel from the 20 acre grove of walnuts and oranges owned by the Porters and the Frenches. Mature trees, palms, plantings, and bushes add a feeling of age to the grounds. There have been few changes to the yards and some of the orange trees and an avocado are still in place in the rear. The house and grounds convey the feeling and associations with an established Orange County grove home.

Outbuildings:

A two-story stucco-clad garage, constructed in 1917, matches the house in design and materials. Servant's quarters are located on the second floor, while the first floor contains a two-car garage and workshop. The garage is attached to a 1910 era wooden garage and workshops. A pair of plate glass windows, sheltered by newer slat-style awnings, is located in the front facade of the second floor. Double-hung windows are used on the north and south facades of the second floor. An open stairway runs up the north wall of the garage.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Porter-French House
Orange County, CA

Section number 7 Page 4

A small caretakers cottage, clad in vertically-placed board-and-batten siding, is capped with a front-facing gabled roof. A louvered vent, centered in the gable face, and exposed rafter tails, decorate the front and sides. A pair of three-light wood-framed windows flank the centered front door. The door is accented with a large window in the top half and sheltered by a newer open latticework porch. Casement windows are used throughout the rest of the house. A small lean-to on the north side contains a water heater and is of recent vintage. The owners have been told that the building was originally used to store walnuts and was converted to a caretakers cottage in the early 1940's.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServicePorter-French House
Orange County, CANational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2

homes in Orange. Most are small and scattered among the older residences in Old Towne. A handful of large Spanish Colonial style homes still survive along Chapman Avenue, Orange's main east-west street. However, these houses are urban in character. The Porter-French House is the only estate-sized Spanish Colonial Revival grove house, in its original setting, in Orange.

Owners:

John R. Porter

John Robert Porter, who was prominent in the Orange County banking industry for approximately fifty years, was involved with several banks in the city of Orange, as well as in central Orange County, since his arrival here in 1886. At that time he joined the Commercial Bank in Santa Ana. A year later he helped found the Bank of Orange. In 1889 he served on the commission set up to work out the mechanics of separating Orange County from Los Angeles County. In 1891 he was elected the county's second tax collector. During the 1890's he held various posts in the First National Bank of Santa Ana. He was elected President of the Bank of Orange when it changed its name to the National Bank of Orange in 1910. He continued as a director of that bank for several years, even after becoming Vice-president of the Orange Savings Bank in 1914.

Mr. Porter owned property in several Orange County cities, and was president of the Santora Land Company in the 1920's. In 1934, the year he died, John Porter is listed as being President of the Orange County Insurance Agency, Vice-president of the Orange Savings Bank, and Chairman of the Board of the First National Bank. John and his first wife, Carolyn, and his second wife, Ora, entertained in the house frequently. He was very active in local civic and volunteer organizations. Among those groups were the Orange Grove Lodge of the F. and A.M., York and Scottish Rites, the Al Maliakah Temple, the Santa Ana Lodge of the B.P.O.E., the Sunset Club of Santa Ana and the Santa Ana Country Club. In the 1921 History of Orange County, California, Samuel Armor, is printed the following quote:

"He has long been greatly interested in local civic affairs and has never been found lacking in his support of all movements the object of which has been the benefit of the town or county along material and moral lines. Because of his sterling personal qualities, his business abilities, and his straightforward and kindly relations with his fellowmen, he is held in the highest measure of regard."

John and Carolyn Porter purchased the property on January 3, 1902 from James Gregg, a prominent local rancher. The grove was planted in walnuts, but as with other local rances, the walnut grove was removed and orange trees planted in the first few years after the Porters purchased the property. In 1910 their tax assessment listed the land as being worth \$1440 and the buildings worth \$750. The Porters lived in the existing 1890's farm house until they remodeled it completely in 1917. The grand new house allowed them to entertain well and the pergola on the north side provided a sheltered outdoor entertainment area. Today, the house retains the integrity of the 1917 appearance and character. After Carolyn

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPorter-French House
Orange County, CASection number 8 Page 3

died in 1919, John married Ora Lee West (1923) and they lived in the house until John died in 1934.

David and Virginia Flippen French:

Admitted to the California bar in 1929, David Dye French was in private practice in Santa Barbara until he moved to Orange County in 1937. That same year he married Virginia Flippen and they purchased this house. While living in the house he served as Orange City Attorney, a Trustee of the Orange Unified School District, Secretary of the Orange County Municipal Water District, Municipal Court Judge, and Superior Court Judge. His record of civic leadership includes the Orange Chapter of the American Red Cross, Orange Rotary Club, Orange Chamber of Commerce, Y.M.C.A, the Orange Council of Churches, the Masons, the Elks, and the American Legion. He died in early 1977 at the age of 76. Miron Chomyn purchased the house in 1975, after Judge French went to a convalescent home. He and his wife, Jan, continue to live there.

Virginia Flippen French, a member of a prominent Orange pioneer family, is known for her civic and volunteer activities. She amassed a large collection of Orange historical materials and memorabilia. She donated them to the Orange Community Historical Society in honor of her mother, Florence Flippen Smiley. The collection became the basis of the archives of that organization and were later donated to the public library. It is still called the Florence Flippen Smiley Collection, and is now accessible for public use. Virginia was a well-known local hostess and participated in several women's organizations.

Typical of the home of prominent Orange County citizens, the Porter and French families used this house to entertain local dignitaries and civic groups. The large living room, spacious entry hall, and generously-sized dining room were used for entertaining often. The grounds were used in good weather, and the pergola provided a cool spot for outdoor dining.

The Porter-French House, with its surrounding gardens, are representative of a by-gone era when orange groves, centered with stately homes, dominated the central and north Orange County landscape. Everyone knew everyone else in those days, and belonging to several civic organizations was the duty of every responsible and successful citizen. This social system existed in Orange County B.D. (Before Disneyland), and was the background of a prominent family's social life.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Porter-French House
248 S. Batavia St.
Orange, CA 92668
Orange County

Section number _____ Page 1 Photographs

Photographer: Diann Marsh

Taken: May 1993

Negatives: Jan Chomyn

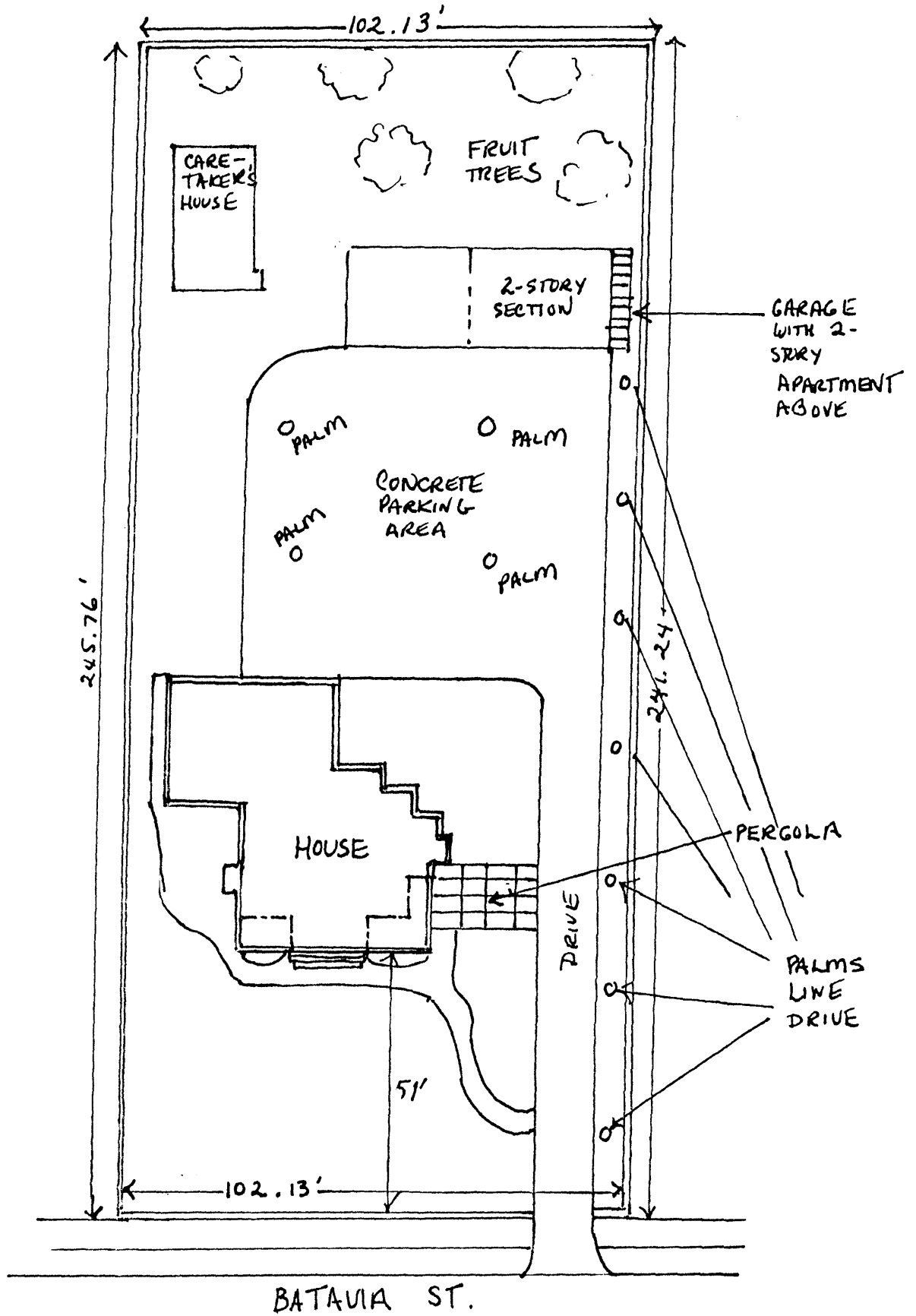
248 S. Batavia St.

Orange, CA 92668

1. Front Facade, From Street: Taken from east. View of house from street shows the house, the pergola (on right), mature trees, and wall along the front walk.
2. Front Facade: Taken from east. All features are original to the 1917 appearance.
3. Front Facade: Taken from the southeast. Brick edging on the open porches and the porch floor and steps is original.
4. Front and North Facade: Taken from the northeast. View of pergola from the corner. The pergola is features two levels, with the taller one being closest to the house. A stained glass window, on the left, is one of the few features retained from the earlier house. The french doors lead to the dining room and the fireplace and flanking casement windows are located on the north wall of the dining room.
5. Front Facade: Taken from the east. The front wall of the open porch, in the foreground, is topped with a row of bricks. The pergola, featuring round columns, is behind and to the north of the open porch.
6. North Facade: Taken from northeast. Stepped porch piers and round column support southwest corner of the pergola. French doors lead to dining room.
7. West (Rear) Facade: Taken from west. The single-storied section in the center was part of the original house and has been remodeled. The solid stucco-clad rail on the second floor is part of the 1917 design. The section to the right is the laundry room and also was remodeled in the 1940's.
8. South Facade: Taken from the southeast. Addition is on left; fireplace and living room windows are on right. Addition is not particularly visible from the front.
9. Garage: Taken from the southeast. The two-story garage has an apartment upstairs, and was built in 1917.
10. Caretaker's cottage: From east. The caretaker's cottage was originally built for the storage of walnuts. The waterheater shed on the right is recent, as is the small portico over the front door.
11. The French Family in the living room of the home in 1941. Judge French is third from left and Mrs. French is fourth from right.

PORTER - FRENCH
HOUSE

ORANGE, CALIFORNIA
ORANGE COUNTY

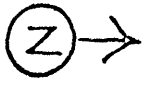


GARAGE WITH 2-STORY APARTMENT ABOVE

PERGOLA

PALMS LINE DRIVE

BATAVIA ST.



1" = 30' SCALE