

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED AUG 18 1980
DATE ENTERED

**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 FERDINAND BACKS HOUSE

AND/OR COMMON
SAME

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

225 North Claudina St.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN
Anaheim

VICINITY OF

39

STATE
California 92805

CODE
06

COUNTY
Orange

CODE
059

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
ANDREW L. DENEAU

STREET & NUMBER
225 North Claudina Street

CITY, TOWN
Anaheim

VICINITY OF

STATE
California 92805

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Orange County Hall of Records

STREET & NUMBER
630 North Broadway

CITY, TOWN
Santa Ana

STATE
California 92701

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California by David Gebhard

DATE

1977

and Robert Winter
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED (MINOR)

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This large two-story Colonial Revival home was built in 1902 - 1904 by prominent local businessman, Ferdinand Backs, and his wife, Louise Werder Backs. It is listed in Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California by David Gebhart and Robert Winter, where it is described as "a Gambrel-roof Colonial Revival dwelling with carriage house to the rear". The author remarks upon the "Thick columns which bulge in the middle in contrast with the delicacy of the thin clapboard siding". On page 694 of the same volume, a photograph of the north side of this house is shown as a good example of a Colonial Revival house. This house is *one of* the finest examples of turn-of-the-century Colonial Revival architecture in Old Anaheim. It is virtually unaltered state and setting on three lots with mature trees and landscaping adds much to its authenticity as the home of one of the town's leading and most prosperous businessmen and his socially prominent family. This was Ferdinand and Louisa Backs' dream home.

The exterior of this house is entirely of narrow clapboards, including a covering for the brick foundation. The roofline is dominated by intersecting gambrels, north-south and east-west, and two hip dormers at the east elevation. The lower pitch of the gambrel roofs and dormer hips are slightly concave, giving a subtle Oriental effect. The roof was originally wood shingle and is presently composition shingle.

A curved porch extends from the slanted bay at the southeast corner to another slanted bay in the middle of the north wall. This porch offers a striking view from both Claudina and Cypress Streets. The porch roof, with its carved exposed beams, is supported by columns which are bowed out in the middle and topped with Corinthian capitals.

The north and south gables are dominated by overhangs at the attic level, supported by heavy brackets. Ornamental vents consist of three arched shuttered windows on the north gable and seven square windows on the south gable. The east (front) gable is also supported by brackets and contains a similar three vent pattern. Bay windows, perhaps a remnant of the Queen Anne stylistic traditions, can be found at the formal parlor at the southeast, in the formal dining room on the north, and in the first-floor bedroom facing south.

A variety of window sizes and shapes is used in the home. With the exception of those in the dormer, the windows are trimmed with four-inch wide boards topped with one-inch caps. Each bay window has a large picture window in the center with a diamond paned transom over the top and double-hung windows in each slanted section. The remaining windows are double-hung with almost all having diamond panes in the upper portion. Two ornamental oval windows in the second story have curved diamond mullions and carved exterior trim. A balcony which crowns the bay window on the Cypress Street side above the dining room opens off the upstairs living room.

The front door, flanked by long, narrow side windows, has a large rectangular beveled glass panel and is trimmed with dentil trim. The side windows have arched muntins in the tops of the windows with a row of diamond panes at the bottom and dentil trim below the sill. The door and window arrangements are varnished as they were originally. The side door to Cypress Street is also varnished and contains a beveled glass window and dentil trim below the sill. The house is painted white with a grey porch floor.

A two-story carriage house with matching clapboard siding contains a loft with a large rectangular window for loading hay into the loft. The only alteration to this

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FERDINAND
CONTINUATION SHEET BACKS HOUSE ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

building is the garage door which has been replaced with an overhead door instead of the original sliding doors. It is also painted white.

This house is virtually unaltered except for the replacement of the screens with glass windows in the summer kitchen to the rear. Part of this area has been made into a bath and utility porch. When the windows and bath were added the exterior form and siding were unchanged. These changes were accomplished around 1912. The sleeping porch remains above. One piece of trim, a small railing situated between the dormers in front, had been removed before 1910.

Mature trees, including very old live oak trees, are an integral part of the charm of the house and gardens. A large sideyard contains fruit trees, a rose garden, and many assorted flowers. Several camellia bushes surround the house. The yard is always neatly kept.

INTERIOR

The interior of this home has long been considered the loveliest of any Colonial Revival in this city. Although the basic planning was accomplished by Louisa Werder Backs, the builder, Edward Neihaus of Berkeley, California, had considerable influence on the materials used and finer points of the design. The graceful wooden sawn work and spool and spindle decoration in the formal entry and stairway were milled in Berkeley in Mr. Neihaus' construction company facilities. The white cedar woodwork used throughout the house was also milled there to Mr. Neihaus' specifications. Anaheim was founded upon and still retained its German work ethnic and basic attitudes. Mrs. Backs is said to have been worried that her friends would consider her beautiful array of spools, spindles and swirls and curves of carved wood much too ostentatious. It was certainly different from anything else in Anaheim!

The entry way is decorated with this elaborate decorative work in both the archway between it and the formal parlour and the area above the stairway. A carved seat with molding trim sits beneath the stairway balustrade. Doric columns support the fancy work and screen into the parlour. Another archway leads to the family parlour on the opposite side. None of the woodwork has had to be refinished with the exception of the kitchen, and retains a rich patina. The oak flooring has never been refinished and is in excellent condition. A set of Axminster rugs made especially for the house is still in use in the parlour and entry.

The focal points of the formal parlour are the slanted bay windows forming the east wall and the fireplace of birdseye maple. Moss green tiles form the area between the wooden piece and the brass fireplace opening. Doric columns support a cornice and frame a beveled glass mirror.

The family parlour on the other side of the entry has a brick corner fireplace with large egg-and-dart trim on the bottom of the wooden mantle and cast egg-and-dart trim echoing the same pattern in place of the top row of bricks. It contains three large corner windows, forming a three-sided bay window and a side door with beveled glass.

An archway with pocket doors lead to the formal dining room. A slant bay window with a picture window and transom window in the center forms the north wall. An original Steuben light fixture hangs from the center of the coved ceiling. The shades are in tones of orange with iridescent gold, green and rose highlights. An unusually fine built-in buffet and china cabinet has drawers in the bottom half, doors with diamond panes in the top part, and a buffet surface supported by miniature doric columns and backed by a beveled

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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FERDINAND

CONTINUATION SHEET

BACKS HOUSE

ITEM NUMBER 7

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mirror, in the middle section. All doors in the house are five panel doors with oval brass keyplates and door handles trimmed in beadwork. The kitchen is a 15' X 20' room with an adjoining pantry.

A back stairway leads upstairs. The basement runs under the north half of the house and has brick walls. The downstairs bedroom has a bay window in the south wall, facing the garden. A large upstairs hall contains a glass fronted built-in china and linen closet which houses a collection of old books and art glass. A dormer forms an alcove which holds a desk. A door leads to the open sleeping porch to the rear of the house.

A double compartmented bath contains a beveled glass medicine cabinet, the original claw-foot tub and a pedestal sink. The upstairs living room contains the other dormer alcove and runs the entire length of the north side of the house. Three other bedrooms are located upstairs. The steeply sloping ceilings in these rooms gives one the feeling of being in a Swiss chalet.

The owner is making every effort to restore the home in an authentic manner. Wallpaper and paint constitute most of the changes to the house. The necessary plumbing, wiring and carpenter work that must be done to make the house livable is being accomplished so as to show no structural changes.

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 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 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" 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

BEGUN 1902, FINISHED 1904

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

BUILDER: EDWARD NEIHAUS

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Ferdinand Backs House is associated with one of Anaheim's oldest, most prominent families (See Appendix). The Ferdinand Backs House illustrates the style and quality of life as it was lived by a family in the upper social strata of Anaheim society soon after the turn of the century. It is a result of the fortune built by Herman Werder, who, along with Anaheim's first pioneers, exhibited great courage in coming to a new land and going into a business of which he had no previous experience. It is also the continuation of the foundation built by Ferdinand Backs who arrived in Anaheim with all his belongings in a suitcase and stayed to become the owner of the town's first undertaking and furniture business, and finally, one of the town's leading citizens.

The Ferdinand Backs House is the finest example of turn-of-the-century Colonial Revival architecture in Old Anaheim. It is significant for its fine craftsmanship and detailing as well as its graceful and unique design. It has retained its original character and fabric, including the grounds and garden. The owner has been very careful to retain as much of the original characteristics of the house as possible, and is doing a thoughtful and sensitive restoration.

The design is said to have been Louisa Backs', but the builder, Edward Neihaus, undoubtedly had a great deal of influence concerning even the minor details. Mr. Neihaus was a very prominent builder in Berkeley, California. The finest materials were used to build this beautiful and unique home for the Backs family.

This home represents a life that is very different from family life as we know it now. Our homes have changed, our family structure has changed and Anaheim has changed from a small town to a large city.

Many prominent people visited this home through the years that Louisa and Ferdinand were active in social and civic circles. Notables such as Madam Modjeska, the well-known Polish actress, Andrew Carnegie, Governor Hiram Johnson and President Warren Harding passed through its doors.

On June 19, 1957, twenty-two years after Mrs. Backs died, Francis Backs and Emma Backs Johnson held a party on the anniversary of their mother's one-hundredth birthday. Although she was no longer living, her daughters and the members of the community recognized the importance of her place in Anaheim's history and her contribution to their lives. Over 200 prominent citizens attended this lovely memorial party.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brass Plaque or Oblivion by Pat Morrison in Los Angeles Times, September, 1978.
 Interview by owner, Andrew Deneau. The following material is located in the Mother Colony Room of the Anaheim Public Library, 500 North Broadway, Anaheim, CA 92805:
 History and Geneology of Werder Family-notes by Louisa Werder Backs. Anaheim: The Mother Colony, a major book by Mildred Yorba MacArthur. The Story of a Parish, a book published by St. Boniface Catholic Church. Anaheim Gazettes April & May, 1885, and 7/6/22. Anaheim Bulletin Centennial Issue 1957, also September 9, 1951.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 155 feet by 120 feet (.43 acres)
 QUADRANGLE NAME Anaheim, California QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

10	41155410	37443210	B		
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			D		
E			F		
G			H		

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Commencing on the Southwest corner of Cypress and Claudina Streets, go 155 feet along Claudina Street heading South; 120 feet to the West toward the rear; 155 feet to the North; 120 feet to the East to starting point. This includes the lot under the house.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NONE			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
DIANN MARSH AND ANDREW DENEAU

ORGANIZATION
ANAHEIM HISTORICAL SOCIETY DATE _____

STREET & NUMBER
P. O. Box 247, Federal Station TELEPHONE
(714) 635-9249

CITY OR TOWN
Anaheim STATE
California 92805

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL X

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE Kerry Mellon

TITLE _____ DATE 8-13-80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Bruce McDaniel
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE 10/19/80

ATTEST: Patricia Andrews
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION DATE 10/4/80

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FERDINAND

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the original yards and the original garden with mature trees to the south.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Lots 1, 2 and the Northerly 40 feet of Lot 3, in Block D of Vineyard Lot D-3, as per map annexed to Deed made by Ole Bergson and others to John Fischer, Administrator of the Estate of Conrad Kuchel, deceased, recorded in Book 34, page 590, et sea, of Deeds being same as premises described in Deeds in Books 134 - 372 and 134 - 373 of Deeds records of Los Angeles County, California. Grant Deed 2/7/73.

FERDINAND AND LOUISA WERDER BACKS
(FAMILY HISTORY)
APPENDIX PAGE ONE

The roots of the Backs family are entwined in the earliest roots of Anaheim. Both branches of the original family tree show a typical German heritage, as did most Anaheim families in those early days. Mrs. Backs was part of the original group of fifty families who founded and settled the town in 1857. Ferdinand Backs was a penniless, but skilled, cabinetmaker who arrived in the bustling fledgling town of Anaheim in 1867 to open the first undertaking parlour and furniture store.

The Werders were born in Germany and in 1853 they arrived in San Francisco with a few pieces of luggage and nine dollars in their pockets. They were met by Theodore Schmidt, the brother of a friend. Four years later the Schmidt family would also become part of the group which would found Anaheim. Louisa Werder was born in San Francisco in 1857.

That same year Herman Werder was one of the people who helped from the Los Angeles Vineyard Society. They had encountered much sickness in San Francisco and felt that the life there was rather decadent and not well suited to raising a family. These fifty families hired George Hansen to come to Southern California to purchase some land and create a wine producing colony.

Parcels and streets were laid out, a canal irrigation system dug, a fence constructed around the perimeter of the town, and grape vines planted before the colonists arrived. The Werder family, including two-year-old Louisa, arrived in Anaheim on November 29, 1859. Their steamer arrived at the harbor at San Pedro where it was met by a smaller steamer. Rowboats took them the last three miles to be met by Indians who would carry them ashore on their shoulders. What an awesome adventure for a small child!

After travelling overland by wagon with their household goods, the families arrived in Anaheim, a dusty, deserty town. What a far cry from the lush valleys and picturesque villages of their native Germany. The Werders settled on the property bounded by West, Citron and South Streets, which they had drawn in the lottery. Their grapes did well and they established a successful winery business that was to help build the beautiful Colonial Revival home that was to become Ferdinand and Louisa's dream home, forty-three years later.

Ferdinand Backs was born in Germany and became a cabinetmaker. He sailed to America in 1865, landing in San Francisco. He was sent to Los Angeles to assist in building a hotel and heard about the young prospering community of Anaheim. He & his brother, Joseph, arrived here in 1867 and opened the first funeral parlour and furniture store. The business, called "Backs, Undertakers", was located on Los Angeles Street (now Anaheim Boulevard) near Chartres Street. The last remnant of the old buildings existed until 1978.

In January, 1875, he married Louisa Werder and he and his new bride set up housekeeping in his small home behind the furniture store. Anaheim was developing into the commercial center of the area. This original location of the Old Backs House was in the midst of Anaheim's small but thriving Chinatown. Fred Backs, Sr. was a friend to the Chinese community and was often called upon to write letters for the Chinese people. The Backs family received many gifts, ranging from Chinese jewelry to delicacies such as candied coconut, ginger and lichee nuts.

In 1885 the Backs moved their house to the corner of Claudina and Cypress Streets. The land had been purchased from the estate of another Anaheim pioneer, Conrad Kuechel (now Kuchel). The move caused much interest in town. Five weeks later an addition to the house was noted as being larger than the original house and "greatly improving its appearance". Note the enclosed picture of Emma Backs and her friends in front of the house when it was still on the corner of Cypress and Claudina.

FERDINAND AND LOUISA WERDER BACKS
(FAMILY HISTORY)
APPENDIX PAGE TWO

The original Backs brothers' partnership continued for many years. Eventually, the business was divided down the middle, along with the building on Los Angeles and Chartres Streets, and each brother went into business for himself. Many references to their well-rounded business activities may be found in old issues of the Anaheim Gazette. They not only provided undertaking services, but also made and sold furniture, did expert upholstering, ordered furniture for clients, laid linoleum and carpets, and made the mattresses for the Anaheim Hotel (1871). The business flourished and Ferdinand Backs became one of the most influential businessmen in the community.

He served on the City Council and was active in other civic affairs. According to the notes made by Anaheim's second mayor, Henry Kroeger, "in April of 1885, Mr. Backs presented a bill of the fire committee for \$18.81, but they had no money in the treasury, the trustees refused to pay".

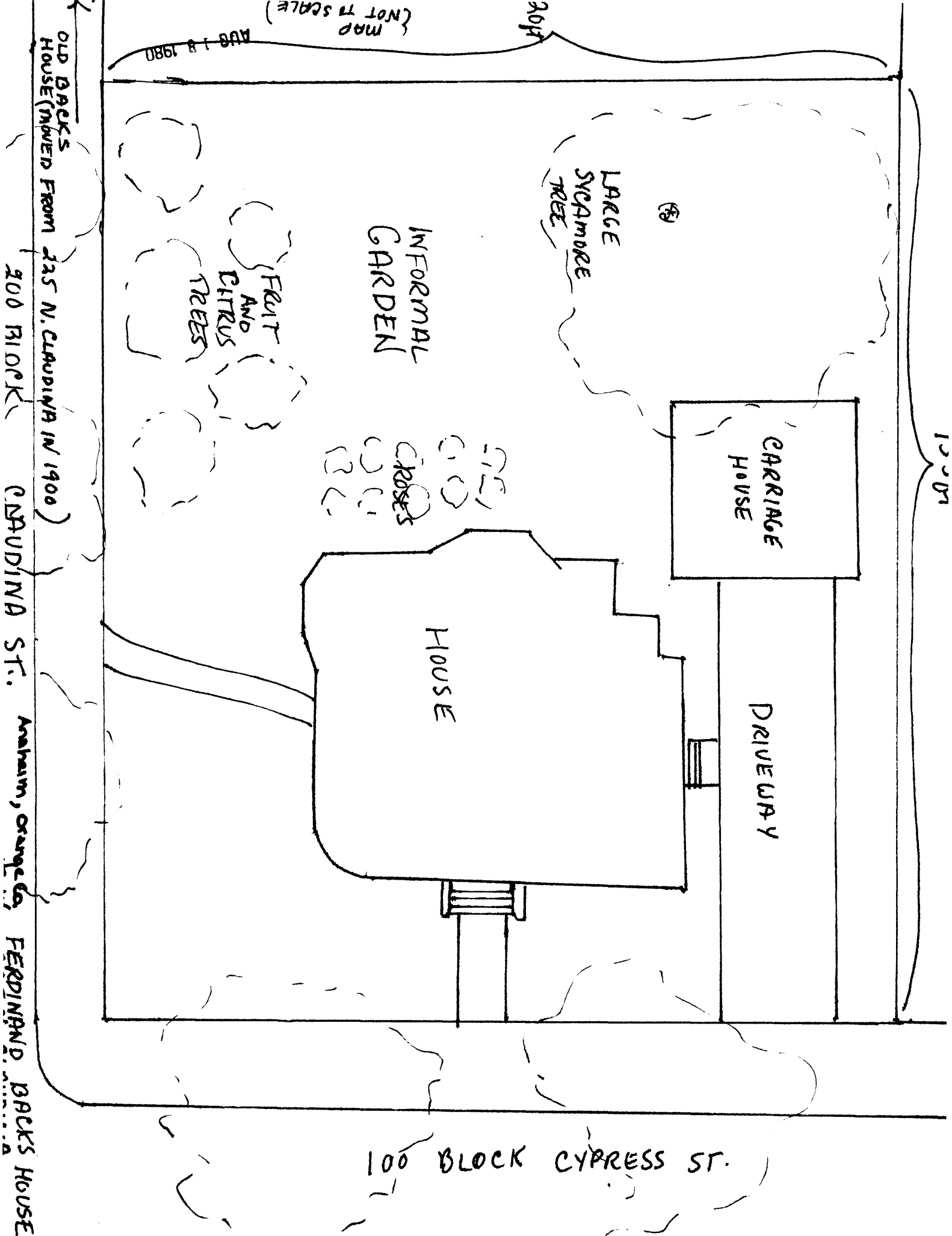
The entire family was active in the Catholic church and in musical circles. Mr. Backs belonged to the German Singing Society, one of the most exclusive groups in town.

Seven children were born in the Old Backs House. Five of them reached maturity and became influential members of the community. Fred Jr. (Ferdinand Jr.) took over the business and in 1912 purchased it. The Backs family continued to be a part of the business until 1922. It is still called the Backs-Kaulbars Mortuary, and is still located in Anaheim. Fred Jr. went into the building and loan business and continued to be active in the Elks, the Knights of Columbus, Chamber of Commerce, Library Board, City Council, Catholic Church and Kiwanis Club.

Herman Backs, the second son, founded a truck and transfer business which eventually became Anaheim Truck and Transfer, still operating in Anaheim today under a different ownership. Emilie married and moved to Santa Ana. Emma married and moved away, but in 1935 returned to the family home and went into the insurance business. Francis became a real estate agent and continued to operate out of the north-east corner room of the family home until the 1960's.

Ferdinand Backs' obituary (July 6, 1922) states that "ever since his arrival here Mr. Backs has been considered one of the leading citizens of the town. He was an upright, square-dealing man and enjoyed the esteem of all with whom he came in contact." Mrs. Backs died in the family home in 1935.

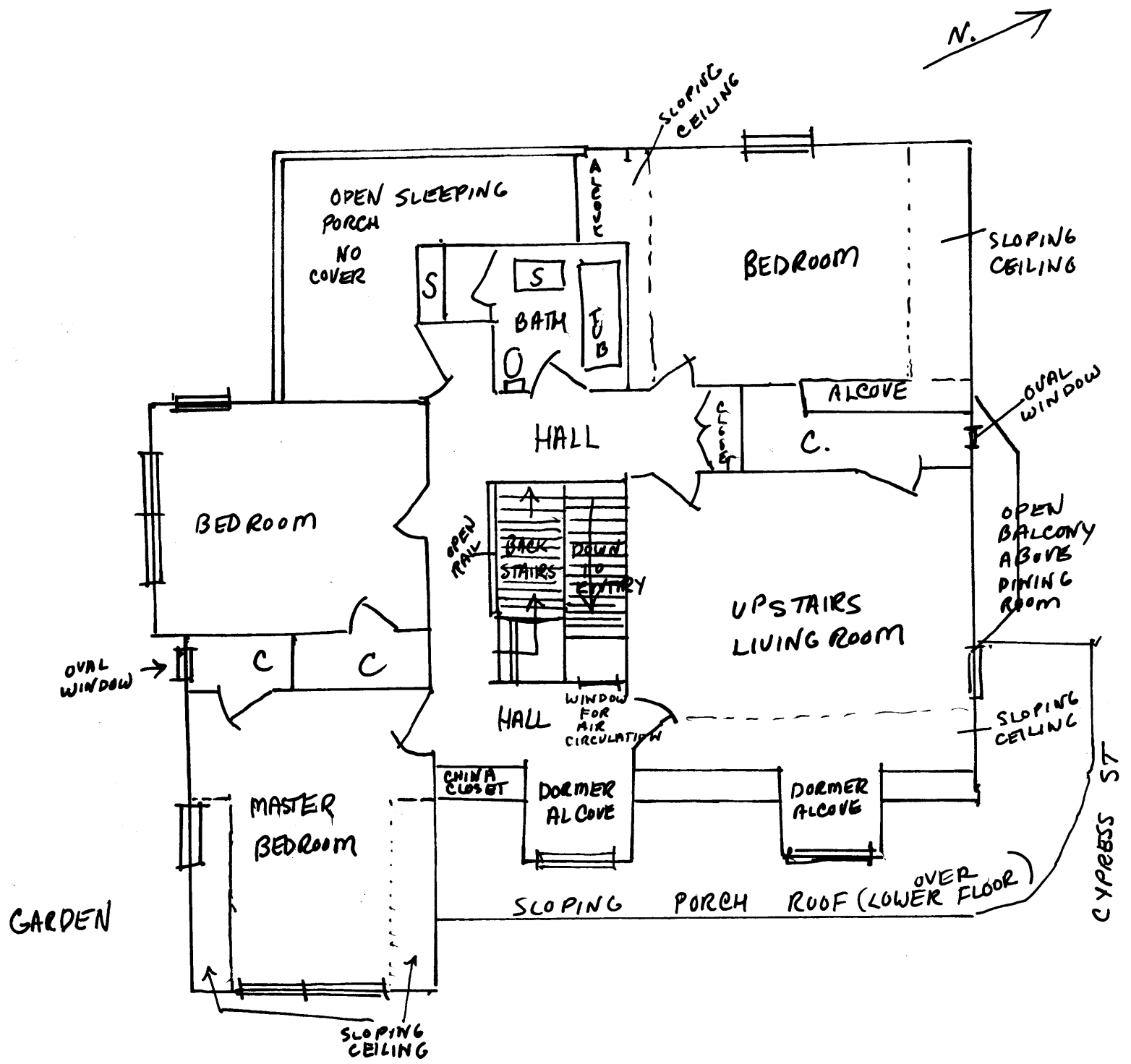
Emma Backs Jackson and Francis Backs lived in the home until 1974 when the present owner purchased it. Both have since died.



← OLD BACKS HOUSE (MOVED FROM 325 N. CLAUDINA IN 1900)
300 BLOCK

CLAUDINA ST. Anaheim, Orange Co, FERDINAND BACKS HOUSE

100 BLOCK CYPRESS ST.



UPPER FLOOR

FERDINAND BACKS HOUSE
 225 CLAUDINA ST.
 ANAHEIM, CAL.
 ORANGE CO.

MAP NOT TO SCALE

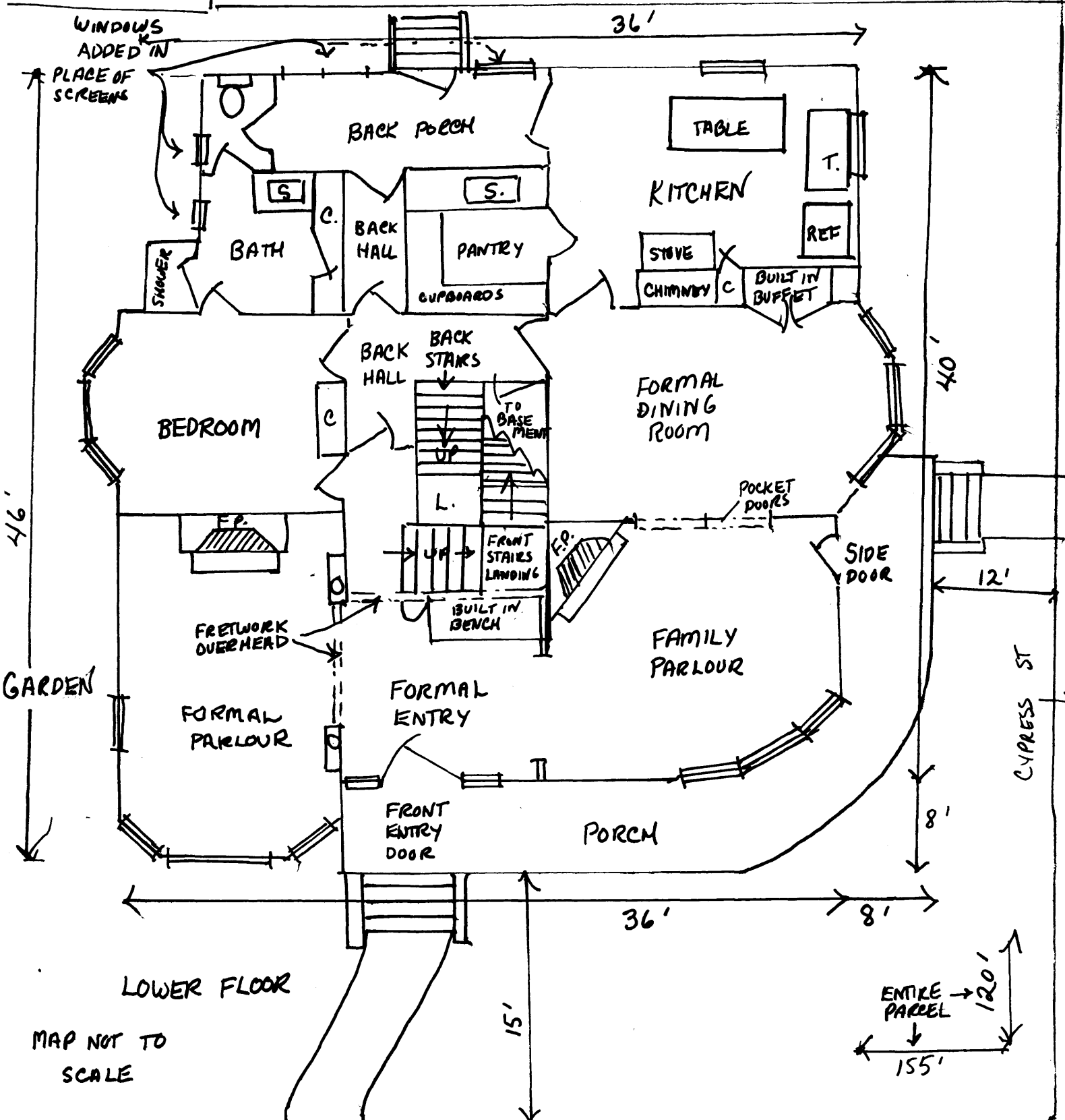
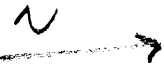
CLAUDINA ST

AUG 18 1980

CARRIAGE HOUSE
30x40

0861 81 90W

DRIVEWAY



FERDINAND BACKS HOUSE 225 N. CLAUDINA ANAHEIM, CAL.

CLAUDINA ST

ORANGE COUNTY