

761 DOLORES STREET

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(9 DOLORES)



1913 ~ Shingle style

BUILDER: Ralph W. Follmer OWNERS: Terman ~ Craig ~ Whitcher

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When Lewis Madison Terman arrived at Stanford in September 1910 to take up his appointment as assistant professor of education, he and his family lived off campus for two years. In 1912, he chose lot 21 in the San Juan Subdivision Extension as the site for a new house. Rather than choosing an architect, he turned to Ralph W. Follmer, a Palo Alto contractor, to design a two-story house almost at the center of San Juan Hill.

Follmer's plans and specifications were filed with Santa Clara County on June 6. The filed documents includes a letter dated June 3 from Gustav Laumeister, a Palo Alto real estate agent, to Charles Lathrop, university business manager. It attests that Laumeister, at Lathrop's request, had examined the plans and specifications and that "all of the rules for a good building have been complied with, except, perhaps the underpinning should be 2 x 6 instead of 2 x 4. I call your attention to this because it has been the rule in the past, at the University, to have 2 x 6 underpinning in all two-story houses." The underpinnings presently visible in the basement are all 2-by-8s.

When first built, the house must have stood prominently in its open surroundings; now trees and houses close off much of the view. The many double-hung windows, seemingly placed at random, would have brought in sweeping vistas. Most of these windows have the upper half divided vertically, the lower half being undivided. The specifications also called for inward-opening casement windows, French doors, and sliding pocket doors.

The house's wood-shingle style and gently pitched roof are quite typical of the period, and much of the original design remains today. However, the considerable renovations over the years are difficult to track because records cannot be located. Today, the property remains a large and choice location, intriguingly enhanced with the extensive collection of antique farm equipment.

Original house plans show the entrance on

the side of the house, facing northeast, with a small entry porch. Off the entry hall are the living room, dining room, breakfast room, coat closet, and stairs to the second floor. The 16-by-23-foot living room to the left of the hall has a fireplace on the front (northeast) wall, with a small bay window on the opposite wall. At the far end of the room, French doors lead to a "living porch" on the southeast side of the house.

The 16-foot-square dining room (to the right of the entry hall) has a fireplace on the end (northwest) wall. The adjacent breakfast room, which has a three-windowed bay and a built-in cabinet with leaded-glass doors, leads to the kitchen. Off the kitchen on the southwest side of the house are a screen porch with an outside door, a half-bath, a wood house (function unclear), and a workshop. Directly adjacent to the kitchen is a storeroom. All downstairs ceilings are 9 feet high, while upstairs ones are 8 feet.

Upstairs are three bedrooms and a bath, and a 16- by 26-foot den over the living room with built-in shelves and glass-doored cabinets. A small dressing room and an attached sleeping porch are off this room. Both the den and a bedroom over the dining room have fireplaces. Off the back bedroom on the west corner of the house is a second sleeping porch. A 2-foot-square opening in a hall closet affords access to space under the roof, which is used for storage.

The partial basement has a 7-foot ceiling. A patio was laid out between the living room wing and the utility wing off the kitchen. A two-car garage, perhaps built in the early 1920s,

stands separate from the house on the upper Dolores side of the lot.

Specifications for the original house called for all timbers to be of Puget Sound pine and all floors of oak. Floor joists were to have cross-bridging between them. All interior baseboards and moldings were to be of redwood. The roof originally had redwood shingles, stained moss green. Exterior walls were sheathed diagonally, then covered with building paper and “cedar shingles laid 5 to the weather.” The walls were lath and plaster, but some now have gypsum board over the plaster. Details for the concrete foundation and proportions for mortar for the chimneys (“1 barrel of cement to 5 barrels of Santa Cruz lime, colored with Pecora mortar stain”) were also specified.

In 1929, Lewis Terman hired architect Charles Kaiser Sumner to design renovations to the house, and contractor William Short made the alterations, at a final cost of \$13,440. A 5 percent loan from the university covered the cost except for wallpaper (bid separately at \$289), the lawn sprinkling system (\$269), and linoleum (\$90). Note: The original plans do not show a circular staircase, but the Sumner plans do show it. It was supposed to have burned, but the fire must have happened some time after the renovation, rather than before. Traces of the fire still clearly exist in the attic timbers.

Sumner’s renovations include adding an outside entrance to the porch off the living room and converting the porch to a library. Stairs were also built from the library to a bedroom, which was converted from the dressing room and sleeping porch. The

workshop and wood house off the kitchen were converted to a maid’s room, and the storage room off the kitchen was converted to a laundry area and a passage to the patio at the back of the house. Next to the living room bay window, which the renovation converted to French doors, is a room for wood storage.

Over the maid’s room, the walls were pushed out to form a new bedroom with a deck. The old west bedroom was converted to a sitting room and bath, and a third bath was added off the upstairs landing. The original upstairs bathroom, entered from the hall, was connected to the bedroom on the north corner of the house. The patio was to be finished with tile on wood framing.

During the Witcher occupancy, the living room’s wood-storage structure was converted to a full bath, and the living room became a room for an invalid mother. The dining room became a sitting room, the breakfast area a dining room. The upstairs bedroom and sitting room on the southwest side of the house and the connecting bath have been turned into a two-bedroom suite with bath; an outside entrance and stair were probably built during the second owner’s residency.

After the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, the damaged fireplace in the upstairs north bedroom was sealed off. The fireplace in the living room has a marble surround and hearth and a painted wood mantel; the one in the dining (now sitting) room has rose tile on the surround and hearth.

Today, off the kitchen’s west wall is a small kitchenette, and off the south wall, a pantry and laundry area. A door from this area

leads to the outside brick patio and the garden. The roof, which has been replaced twice, is now made of composite shingles. The exterior is a combination of cedar and redwood shingles, stained dark brown.

THE OWNERS

Lewis Madison Terman. Terman, who was born in January 1877 on a farm in Johnson County, Indiana, received B.S., B.Pd., and A.B. degrees from Central Normal College in Danville, Indiana, in 1896, 1897, and 1899, respectively. After teaching for several years, he attended Indiana University, receiving an A.B. in 1902 and A.M. in 1903. He earned a Ph.D. from Clark University in 1905.

Suffering from tuberculosis and told to move to a milder climate, he spent a year as a high school principal in San Bernardino, California, and then became head of the Department of Child Study and Pedagogy at the Los Angeles State Normal School (later UCLA) until coming to Stanford, in 1910.

His first year at Stanford, he and his wife, Anna Belle Minton Terman, and their son and daughter lived in University Park, a residential area in downtown Palo Alto (where the Palo Alto Medical Foundation used to be, south of University Avenue) and then in Menlo Heights (now University Heights), an unincorporated section of San Mateo County near Stanford and bisected by Alameda de las Pulgas.

Terman's lasting fame rests on his revision of the Binet-Simon Intelligence Scale, the Stanford-Binet test, which he published in 1916; development of the Stanford Achievement Test; and most of all on his

longitudinal study of 1,500 intellectually gifted children, starting in 1920. He officially retired in 1942 but completed several follow-up studies of the gifted group.

Anna Belle Terman died in March 1956, and Lewis Terman died on December 21 of the same year.

William Gregory Craig. The house was then bought by Craig, who had just arrived at Stanford from Kansas State College to be dean of men and associate professor of education. Craig owned the house until June 1962, living there with his wife, Lois, and two children. In the summer of 1962, he left Stanford to work with Operation Crossroads Africa in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and later that fall went to the Agency for International Development in Ecuador.

Charles E. Whitcher. The third and current owner came to Stanford in 1961 as assistant professor of anesthesia with his first wife, Sylvia, and four children. Before buying the house, in 1963, they lived in Palo Alto and then on campus, at 860 Escondido Road. Whitcher and his second wife, Mary Lue Eiche, now own the house.

Dr. Whitcher, born in 1923 Santa Barbara, California, received his M.D. from the University of Buffalo in 1949 and interned in Elmira, New York. After a two-year stint in the U.S. Army, he took residencies in anesthesia at the University of North Carolina and Duke. His areas of special interest are physiologic monitoring and investigating trace gas pollution in the operating room. In his 29 years at Stanford, he saw great changes in the practice of anesthesiology, and indeed

medicine in general. He was one of the first investigators to examine the sound distortion produced by stethoscopes and spent many years investigating, with an interdisciplinary team of experts, trace gas pollution in the operating room. He was the first to show that heavy anesthetics don't settle to the floor, raising important questions about their effect on operating room personnel.

Whitcher was known as a superb teacher of residents, and in 1978 he received the first Anesthesia Residents Teacher of the Year Award. He retired in 1990. Since retirement he has been able to devote a large part of his time to his hobbies and collections of antique farm equipment. As well, he has served as a long-time board member of the Stanford Campus Residential Leaseholders.

Mary Lue Eiche was born in Detroit in 1936 and received her B.A. at the University of Michigan in 1957. Before coming to Stanford, she taught high school French in Alberta and in 1969 received an M.A. in French literature from the University of Calgary. In 1980 she came to Stanford and after 10 years in the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies, she became manager of graduate admissions, retiring in 2001.

Most distinctive on the property is a long, low barnlike structure with vertical wood siding and a low pitched roof; it parallels Mirada Avenue and is set back about 20 feet from it. The Whitchers built the 30- by 96-foot structure in 1978 to hold part of the large collection of antique farm machinery and other equipment that adds a distinctive touch to various parts of this large property. The horse-

drawn road grader currently visible from Dolores Street is said to have been used on Leland Stanford's horse farm. Other structures include a small metal shed just to the west of the barn and an old pitched-roof structure northeast of the house, which serves as a storage shed. This building, previously located adjacent to the old firehouse on Santa Teresa Street, was used as a dormitory for student firefighters.

In 1975, a fire in the house started when a chair was placed too near the grate of a floor furnace. It caused minimal structural damage, but the 1989 earthquake caused serious damage. Much of the interior plaster was cracked, though it could be patched and repainted. Three chimneys collapsed, two of which, in the living room and sitting room, are now repaired. These chimneys were repaired by extending a new flue pipe but without encasing it in brick. The third chimney, to a former fireplace in an upstairs bedroom, was removed above the roofline. A new roof of brown composition shingles was installed in 1987. The cement front steps were replaced with wood, and a wheelchair ramp, installed in the early '90s from the front porch to the semicircular driveway from and to Dolores, has been removed.

The grounds have minimal landscaping beyond the front and rear lawns. Most distinctive are 11 mature redwood trees forming a dense grove at the Dolores-Mirada corner of the property. For many years, a tree house built by the Craigs graced this cluster; it was taken down several years ago. Other prominent trees adorn the property between

the driveway and Dolores Street, particularly a magnificent deciduous valley oak and a tall Italian stone pine. Formerly, a dense hedge of tea trees (*Leptospermum*) grew along the Dolores border, which challenged children to climb all the way from one end of the driveway to the other without touching the ground. A freeze in the early 1970s killed off this extensive growth. Fruit trees on the property include orange, pomegranate, crabapple, plum, avocado, and persimmon.

SOURCES

Eiche, Mary Lue. Interview with Marian Adams (January 2006).

House plans for Sumner renovation (17 February 1929). Stanford University Maps and Records.

Memorial Resolution: Lewis M.

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Original house plans and specifications by R. W. Follmer. Stanford University Maps and Records.

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Whitcher, Charles [on-line bio]. Stanford School of Medicine: <http://med.stanford.edu/anesthesia/people/whitcher.html> (accessed April 2006).