

Historic Resources Report
531 S. F Street
Oxnard, CA

21 September 2010

Prepared by:



Prepared for:

Gino Dean
790 Cedar Street, #100
Ventura, CA 93001

ATTACHMENT 3
PAGE 1 OF 17

Executive Summary

This report was prepared for the purpose of assisting the County of Ventura Cultural Heritage Board, acting as the City of Oxnard Cultural Heritage Board, in determining the eligibility of the property at 531 S. F Street as a City of Oxnard Landmark. The owner of the property, Gino Dean, is also interested in applying for a Mills Act Contract. [Figure 1]

This report assesses the historical and architectural significance of potentially significant historic properties in accordance with the City of Oxnard landmark criteria.

This report was prepared by San Buenaventura Research Associates of Santa Paula, California, Judy Triem, Historian; and Mitch Stone, Preservation Planner, for property owner Gino Dean, and is based on a field investigation and research conducted in September 2010. The conclusions contained herein represent the professional opinions of San Buenaventura Research Associates, and are based on the factual data available at the time of its preparation, the application of the appropriate local regulations, and best professional practices.

Summary of Findings

The property evaluated in this report was found to be eligible for designation as a City of Oxnard landmark under Criteria 1, 4 and 8.

Report Contents

1. Administrative Setting	1
City of Oxnard Landmarks Criteria	
2. Historical Setting	1
General Historical Context	
Site-Specific Context	
3. Potential Historic Resources	3
4. Eligibility of Historic Resources	3
Local Significance and Eligibility	
5. Selected Sources	5

MAP OF
EASTWOOD & LATHROP'S SUBDIVISION

BEING A PART OF SUBDIVISION 28

RANCHO EL RIO DE SANTA CLARA O LA COLONIA
OXNARD, VENTURA CO, CAL.

AUGUST 1925

SURVEYED BY *A.B. Bennett*
LICENSED SURVEYOR

SCALE 80 FT. TO 1 INCH

Note.
Extension boundary line
of subdivision indicated by
thin border line.

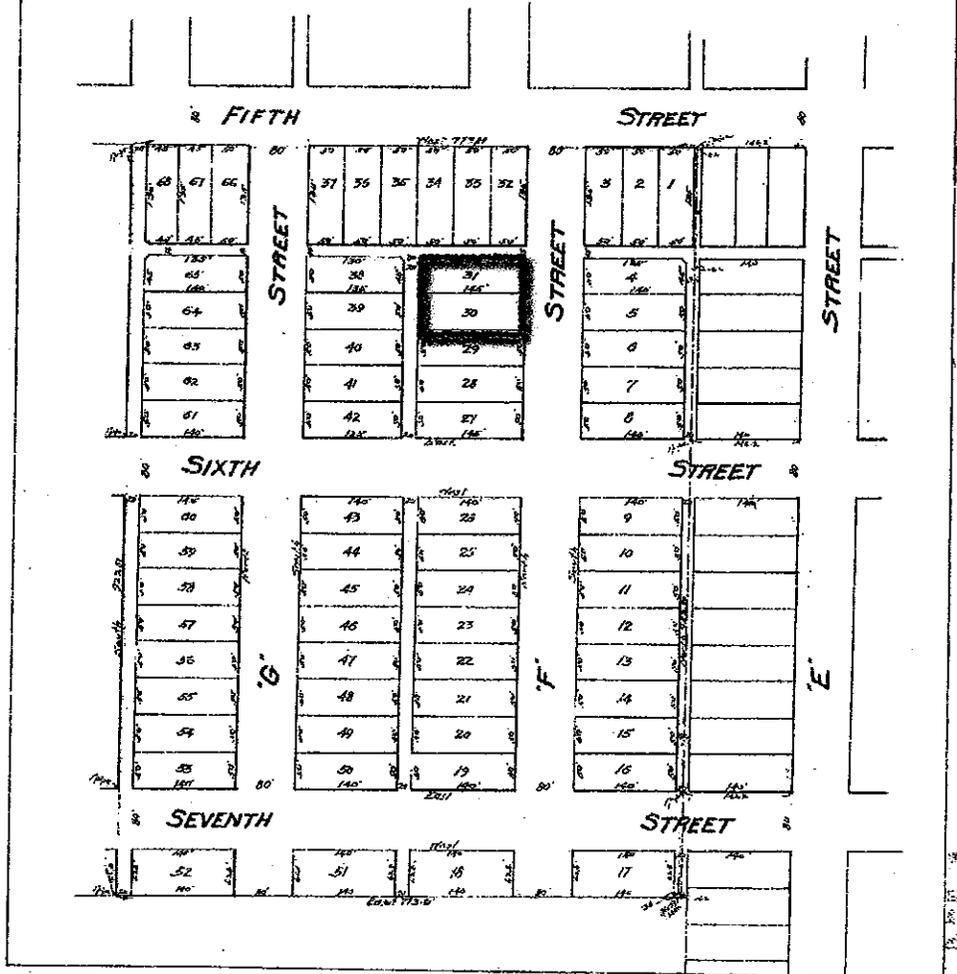


Figure 1. Property Location

[Source: Eastwood and Lathrop Subdivision, County of Ventura 14 MR 36]

1. Administrative Setting

City of Oxnard Landmarks Criteria

In April 1991, the City of Oxnard adopted the Ventura County Cultural Heritage ordinance (§§1360-1374, as amended) by resolution (City of Oxnard Resolution No. 10135), including eligibility criteria and procedures, substituting references in the ordinance to the County of Ventura with the City of Oxnard. Since that time, the Ventura County Cultural Heritage Board has acted as the city's cultural heritage board. The criteria for designating properties for listing are: (a landmark needs to only meet one of the following criteria)

1. It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the County's social, aesthetic, engineering, architectural or natural history;
2. It is identified with persons or events which are significant in national, state or local history;
3. It shows evidence of habitation, activity or the culture of prehistoric man;
4. It embodies elements of architectural design, details, materials or craftsmanship which represents a significant structural or architectural achievement or innovation;
5. It is representative of the work of a master builder, designer, architect or artist;
6. It is imbued with traditional or legendary lore;
7. It has a unique location or singular physical characteristics or is a view or vista representing an established and familiar feature associated with a neighborhood, community or the County of Ventura;
8. It is one of the few remaining examples in the County possessing distinguishing characteristics of an architectural or historical type or specimen.

Unlike the NRHP and CRHR, this ordinance does not provide for a minimum age for listing, or criteria for the level of integrity required for a property to be eligible for landmark designation. However, the ordinance does provide for designating a Point of Interest, which specifically includes altered properties which may not be eligible for landmark designation. A Point of Interest is defined as a property:

- A. That is the site of a building, structure or object that no longer exists but was associated with historic events, important persons or embodied a distinctive character or architectural style; or
- B. That has historic significance, but has been altered to the extent that the integrity of the original workmanship materials or style has been substantially compromised; or
- C. That is the site of a historic event which has no distinguishable characteristics other than that a historic event occurred at that site, and the site is not of sufficient historical significance to justify the establishment of a landmark.

Although the ordinance provides no specific analytical standards for determining the level of integrity required for the designation of local landmarks, read together, these two sets of designation criteria suggest that at least a general standard of design integrity should be applied to the designation of landmarks.

2. Historical Setting

General Historical Context

The Eastwood-Lathrop Subdivision was opened in 1925 on the former lands of the John G. and Aranetta Hill property just south and west of the boundaries of the Town of Oxnard. The boundaries of the subdivision are Fifth Street on the north, Seventh Street on the south, G Street on the west and E Street on the east. [Figure 1]

Located east of the subject property is the Hill Residence, built in the 1870s originally on a large ranch of 630 acres owned by John G. and Aranetta Hill. They came to the county in 1868 and purchased their land from Thomas Scott who then owned Rancho El Rio de Santa Clara. The land on which the subject property is located was the home place property belonging to the Hills and not subdivided until 1925. John G. Hill died in 1904. His wife Aranetta lived into the 1920s. The exact date of her death could not be determined, but apparently occurred in 1925.

The Town of Oxnard, laid out in 1898 on the lands of John and Aranetta Hill, was primarily a neighborhood of single family houses during the early years. However, by the 1920s during the housing boom, multifamily housing units began to make an appearance, primarily in the form of courtyard housing. Between 1920 and 1950 approximately fifteen such properties were developed throughout the city. Today, only about seven remain.

Site-Specific Context

The courtyard housing complex at 531 South F Street was completed in July of 1926 for Fred L. Bonn and his wife Lula M. Bonn and was called the Bon Ton Court. At the time it was built, it was said to have been the first courtyard housing project in Oxnard. However, research indicates that the Olive Courts at 401 W. Fourth Street were built in 1923, three years earlier. When the Eastwood-Lathrop Subdivision was recorded, three parcels in the tract were reserved for the John and Aranetta Hill residence, which remained. The Bon Ton Court was built on two parcels immediately adjacent to the north of the Hill residence.

Headlines in the *Oxnard Courier* for July 31, 1926 announced on the front page that the "Bon Ton Court, latest in Apartments, ready for Public Inspection Tomorrow." The article goes on to state,

The court is the latest word in modern construction of attractive small homes. There are four rooms to each apartment, including living room, dining room, which may also be converted into a bed room, kitchen and bedroom. There is also a bathroom, of course, and the kitchen is equipped so as to make it available for a breakfast room.

The apartments are planned to give individuality to each, not only in the color scheme but in arrangement also. The living rooms have barrel ceiling[s] and the dining rooms carry the dome effect, and the walls are finished in tiffany and panel.

The kitchens have built-in cabinets, laundry tray built in next to the sink, combination iron boards and breakfast tables.

Each apartment is wired for both the radio and telephone. Each apartment is furnished with a kitchen gas stove and a gas heater in the fireplace, otherwise it is unfurnished. Each apartment also has the use of a garage.

The enterprise represents an approximate investment of \$25,000, and is a credit to the city, being the first of this kind to be built here.

Lawrence and Overland are the contracting builders, and the painting was done by A.J. Lawley.

Fred Louis Bonn was born February 14, 1900 in Montana and attended Montana State University at Bozeman in 1920. It is unknown when he married Lula M. Bonn and when they moved to Oxnard. She was born on February 5, 1894 in Missouri. Fred Bonn purchased the property at 531 S. F Street from H. H. and Irma Eastwood

and Walter H. and Edna Lathrop on December 22, 1925, and built the court the following year. After it was completed, Fred and Lula Bonn became residents of the court. In 1930 the Bonns were living in the Bon Ton Court and Fred Bonn is listed as a dehydrator operator for the oil industry. According to the 1930 U.S. Census records, the property was valued at \$35,000. Fred and Lula Bonn moved to Ventura by 1937. Fred Bonn died on April 27, 1951 in Ventura, and Lula M. Bonn died May 30, 1965 in Ventura. It is uncertain when the Bonns sold the property. Subsequent owners have altered the property little from its original 1926 appearance.

The Bon Ton Courts have been home to a variety of working-class Oxnard residents over the years. Typical among these residents were Mary Katherine Robinson, who announced in the *Oxnard Courier* the commencement of her Spanish classes on January 10, 1927 at No. 5 of the Bon Ton Courts. On January 20, 1928, the *Oxnard Courier* announced that Miss Cora Brower, a new teacher at the Community Center, is now residing at Bon Ton Court.

3. Potential Historic Resources

The eight unit courtyard complex designed in the Spanish Revival style is arranged in a U-plan with a duplex and a single unit on one side facing a duplex and single unit on the other side. At the rear connecting the U-plan is a second duplex building. A long rectangular plan garage with eight bays faces onto the alley behind the courtyard. The residences feature flat roofs with raised, arched parapets. Each unit features a small gable-roofed entry porch with arched openings repeated on the sides features, covered with Spanish tiles. Windows are in pairs or feature segmented arches and are fixed or casement wood windows with multi-panes. The buildings feature a heavily troweled stucco finish. [Photos 1-3]

The interiors of the units have retained many of their original architectural features, including barrel-vaulted ceilings in the living rooms, coved ceilings in the dining rooms, tiled fireplaces, small arched telephone niches and light fixture in the dining rooms, wooden cabinets in kitchens and bath, plaster finish with decorative raised textures, door hardware, woodwork including windows, baseboards and picture mouldings. [Photos 4-6]

The courtyard complex has retained a great deal of its architectural integrity. One front fixed window was replaced by a multi-paned window within the original opening. Wrought iron bars have been added over some of the windows primarily at the rear of the units, along the alley.

Landscaping elements include a centered scored concrete walkway forming an ellipse with walkways to the front entry of each unit. In the center of the courtyard is a lawn with two light posts at each end. The tapered stucco light posts are missing their globes or lanterns. Low trimmed hedges and flowering plants create a rhythm around the buildings and at the entry to the courtyard.

4. Eligibility of Historic Resources

Local Significance and Eligibility

The Bon Ton Court reflects special elements of the county's architectural history under **Criterion 1** as a scarce example of a housing type that was built primarily during the 1920s through the 1940s to address the needs of multifamily housing. The boom of the 1920s brought an urgent need for housing especially in Southern California and Los Angeles in particular. This type of housing was built to accommodate both single renters and large families. Literally thousands of these housing types were built throughout Southern California and Oxnard was no exception. A cursory view of Sanborn Maps for this period shows approximately fifteen of these U-plan apartment courtyards in Oxnard, with perhaps half of these remaining today.

The courtyard provided the apartment owner with a public landscaped space with small porches fronting onto green areas. Courtyard apartments were generally built on a typical city lot measuring, in this case, 140 deep by 50 feet across. Two lots were combined to create the courtyard at 531 S. F Street.

The seven remaining courtyard apartment complexes in Oxnard include the subject property (1926), Olive Court at 401 W. Fourth Street (1923), Palm Court at 330 W. Palm Drive (ca. 1930), 380 W. Palm Drive (ca. 1950), 127 N. D Street (ca. 1945); 534 S. F Street (ca. 1950), and 529 First Street (ca. 1950). [Photos 7-12]

Under **Criterion 2**, the property at 531 S. F Street is not associated with the lives of persons or events who have made a significant contribution to the City of Oxnard. The original owner, Fred and Lula Bon were not found to have made any known significant contributions to the City of Oxnard.

Criterion 3 relates to archaeological resources and is not relevant to this evaluation.

Under **Criterion 4**, the Bon Ton Courts at 501 S. F Street embodies the architectural design, details and materials characteristics of the courtyard housing, a type of housing popular in the 1920s and is one of the earliest examples of this courtyard type designed in the Spanish Revival style. The characteristic features of the Bon Ton Court include the raised parapets with rounded arches, the heavily troweled stucco cladding, wood fixed and casement windows in pairs or with segmented arches, and gabled porches with tiled roof and arched openings. Landscape features include the courtyard with scored concrete sidewalks, hedges and lawn areas and two large standing light fixtures. Interior features include barrel vaulted living room ceilings and coved dining room ceilings, picture railings, tiled fireplaces with wood mantles, light fixtures and door hardware, wood baseboards, arched wall niches in dining rooms, cabinets in kitchens and bathrooms.

Under **Criterion 5**, the property does not represent the work of a master builder or designer. It was built by a local contractor and no architect was known to have been involved.

Under **Criterion 6**, the property does not meet the criteria for traditional or legendary lore.

Under **Criterion 7**, it does not have a unique location or single physical characteristic, or view representing an established feature associated with the City of Oxnard.

Under **Criterion 8**, the Bon Ton Courts is one of the two remaining examples in Oxnard of courtyard housing from the 1920s. The balance were built between 1930 and 1950.

The Bon Ton Courts has retained its integrity. The property is still in its original location. Its design in the Spanish Revival style has remained essentially intact, with only a few small change to a window within the original opening and the addition of bars on some of the windows at the rear of the buildings. The property's integrity of materials and workmanship are also intact. It is in good condition. In addition, many of the key interior architectural features remain, including barrel and coved ceilings, textured stucco walls, telephone niches, light fixtures, door hardware, woodwork on baseboards, windows, picture mouldings, and original cabinets in kitchens and bathrooms.

In conclusion, the property at 531 S. F Street appears to be individually eligible as a County Landmark under Criteria 1, 4 and 8. It is also eligible as part of a discontinuous district comprised of the remaining seven U-plan courtyard apartment complexes in Oxnard built between 1920 and 1950. Further research would need to be completed to establish the eligibility of this potential district.

5. Selected Sources

California Death Index.

Ventura County Directories, 1928, 1930, 1937, 1946, 1948-49, 1955.

Oxnard Courier, 12/9/1904. "Pioneer of County Gone. John G. Hill Passes Away at his Home in this City."

Oxnard Daily Courier, July 31, 1926, August 6, 1926, January 10, 1927, January 20, 1928.

Polyzoides, Stefanos, Sherwood, Roger & Tice, James. *Courtyard Housing in Los Angeles*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1982.

Sanborn Maps, 1929, 1929 updated to 1950.

U.S. Census, Oxnard, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1930; Montana, 1920.

Ventura County Assessor Property Information.

Ventura County Grant Deeds, 12/22/25, Fred and Lula Bonn received grant deed from H. H. and Irma Eastwood and Walter H. and Edna Lathrop.

Map of Eastwood and Lathrop's Subdivision, August 1925.



Photo 1. Subject property: 531 S. F Street, facing west. [9/15/2010]

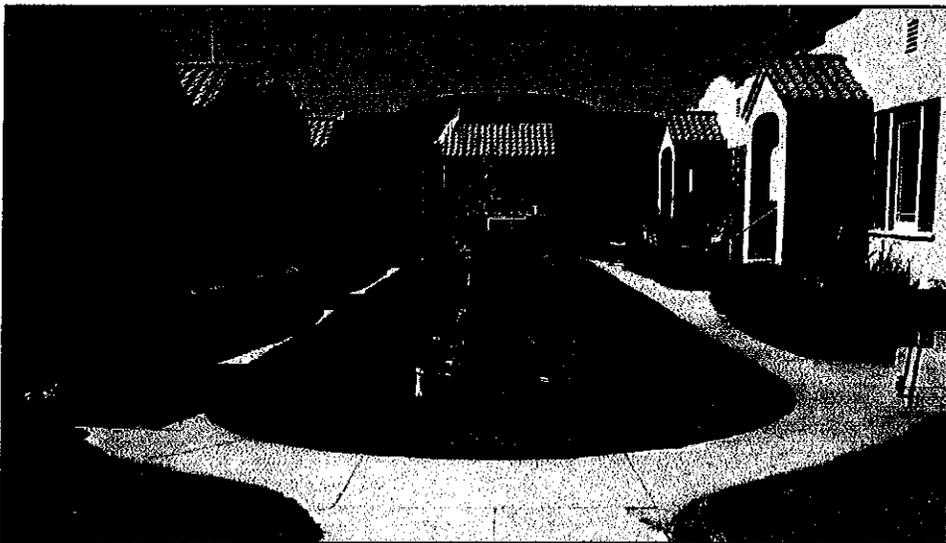


Photo 2. Close-up of 531 S. F Street showing landscape features. [9/15/2010]



Photo 3. Close-up of 531 S. F Street showing individual units. [9/15/2010]

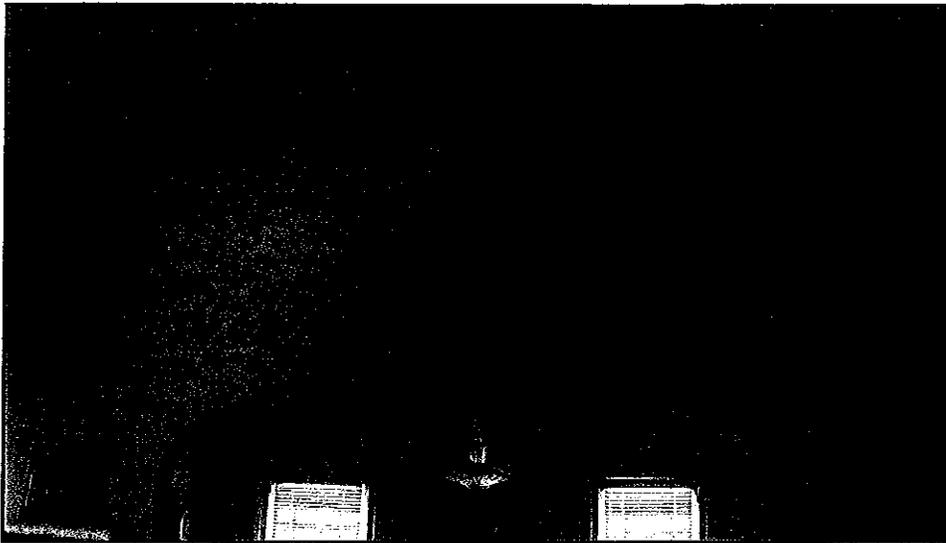


Photo 4. Living room showing barrel-vault ceiling. [9/15/2010]



Photo 5. Dining room showing covered ceiling, light fixtures, and picture railing. [9/15/2010]

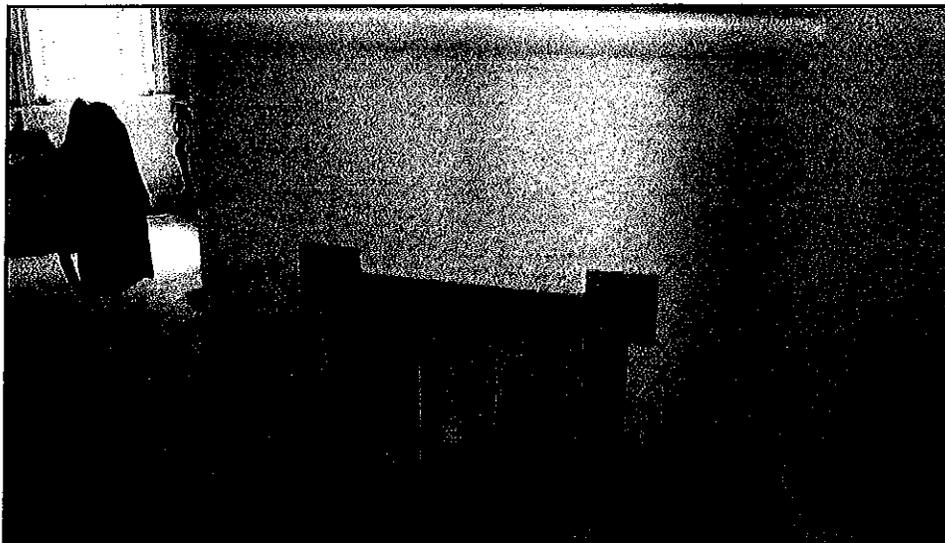


Photo 6. Fireplace and textured stucco [9/15/2010]

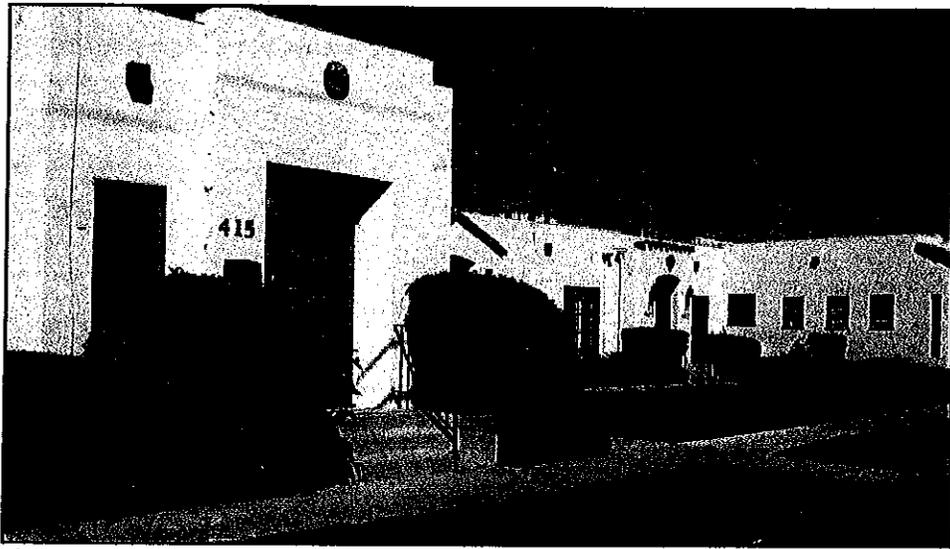


Photo 7. Olive Court, 401 W. Fourth Street, built 1923. [9/15/2010]



Photo 8. Palm Court, 330 W. Palm Drive, built ca. 1930. [9/15/2010]

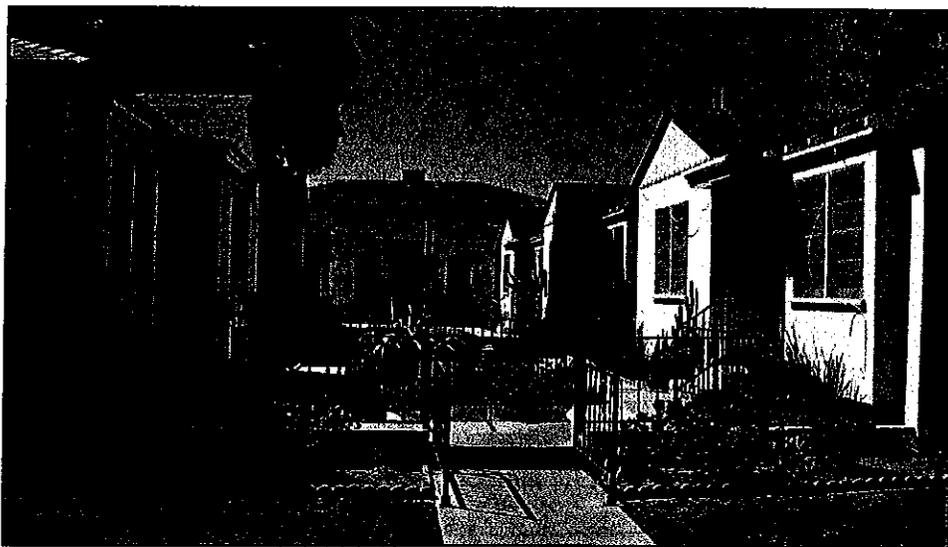


Photo 9. 127 N. D Street, built ca. 1945. [9/15/2010]



Photo 10. 534 S.F Street, built ca. 1950. [9/15/2010]



Photo 11. 529 First Street, built ca. 1950. [9/15/2010]



Photo 12. 380 W. Palm Drive, built ca. 1950. [9/15/2010]

Primary
 HRI
 Trinomial
 NRHP Status Code **552**

Other Listing
 Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 5 Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) 531 S. F Street

P1. Other Identifier:

P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted a. County Ventura
 and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

b. USGS 7.5' Quad _____ Date _____ ; R _____ 1/4 of _____ 1/4 of Sec _____ B.M. _____
 c. Address: 531 S. F Street City Oxnard Zip 93030
 d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/linear resources) _____ ; _____ mE/ _____ mN
 e. Other Locational Data (Enter Parcel #, legal description, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)

APN 2020122010

P3. Description (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The eight unit courtyard complex designed in the Spanish Revival style is arranged in a U-plan with a duplex and a single unit on one side facing a duplex and single unit on the other side. At the rear connecting the U-plan is a second duplex building. A long rectangular plan garage with eight bays faces onto the alley behind the courtyard. The residences feature flat roofs with raised, arched parapets. Each unit features a small gable-roofed entry porch with arched openings repeated on the sides features, covered with Spanish tiles. Windows are in pairs or feature segmented arches and are fixed or casement wood windows with multi-panes. The buildings feature a heavily troweled stucco finish.

The interiors of the units have retained many of their original architectural features, including barrel-vaulted ceilings in the living rooms, coved ceilings in the dining rooms, tiled fireplaces, small arched telephone niches and light fixture in the dining rooms,

P3b. Resource Attributes (List attributes and codes) HP3-Multiple Family Property

P4. Resources Present Building Structure Object Site District Other (isolates, etc.)

P5a. Photograph or Drawing (Photograph required for buildings, structures, and objects)



P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)
 View toward west, 9/15/2010

P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:
 Prehistoric Historic Both
 1926-F

P7. Owner and Address
 Gino Dean
 790 Cedar Street, #100
 Ventura, CA 93001

P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation and address)
 Judy Triem, San Buenaventura Research Associates, 1328 Woodland Drive, Santa Paula, CA 93060

P9. Date Recorded: 9/22/2010

P10. Survey Type: (Describe)
 Landmark application

P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none")

Attachments NONE Continuation Sheet District Record Rock Art Record Other (List)
 Location Map Building, Structure and Object Record Linear Feature Record Artifact Record
 Sketch Map Archaeological Record Milling Station Record Photograph Record

Page 2 of 5 Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) 531 S. F Street

Recorded by: San Buenaventura Research Associates

Date 9/22/2010

Continuation Update

P3. Description

wooden cabinets in kitchens and bath, plaster finish with decorative raised textures, door hardware, woodwork including windows, baseboards and picture mouldings.

The courtyard complex has retained a great deal of its architectural integrity. One front fixed window was replaced by a multi-paned window within the original opening. Wrought iron bars have been added over some of the windows primarily at the rear of the units, along the alley.

Landscaping elements include a centered scored concrete walkway forming an ellipse with walkways to the front entry of each unit. In the center of the courtyard is a lawn with two light posts at each end. The tapered stucco light posts are missing their globes or lanterns. Low trimmed hedges and flowering plants create a rhythm around the buildings and at the entry to the courtyard.

B12. References

Oxnard Daily Courier, July 31, 1926, August 6, 1926, January 10, 1927, January 20, 1928.

Polyzoides, Stefanos, Sherwood, Roger & Tice, James. *Courtyard Housing in Los Angeles*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1982.

Sanborn Maps, 1929, 1929 updated to 1950.

U.S. Census, Oxnard, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1930; Montana, 1920.

Ventura County Assessor Property Information.

Ventura County Grant Deeds, 12/22/25, Fred and Lula Bonn received grant deed from H. H. and Irma Eastwood and Walter H. and Edna Lathrop.

Map of Eastwood and Lathrop's Subdivision, August 1925.

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

HRI #

Primary #

Page 3 of 5

NRHP Status Code

Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) 531 S. F Street

- B1. Historic Name:** Bon Ton Court
B2. Common Name: Bon Ton Court
B3. Original Use: courtyard apartments
B4. Present Use: same
B5. Architectural Style: Spanish Revival
B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
1926-F

B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: Original Location:

B8. Related Features:
8 bay garage at rear of property

B9a. Architect: unknown

b. Builder: Lawrence & Overland

B10. Significance: Theme Residential development

Area: Oxnard

Period of Significance: 1926

Property Type: Courtyard housing

Applicable Criteria:

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period and geographical scope. Also address integrity.)

The Eastwood-Lathrop Subdivision was opened in 1925 on the former lands of the John G. and Aranetta Hill property just south and west of the boundaries of the Town of Oxnard. The boundaries of the subdivision are Fifth Street on the north, Seventh Street on the south, G Street on the west and E Street on the east.

Located east of the subject property is the Hill Residence, built in the 1870s originally on a large ranch of 630 acres owned by John G. and Aranetta Hill. They came to the county in 1868 and purchased their land from Thomas Scott who then owned Rancho El Rio de Santa Clara. The land on which the subject property is located was the home place property belonging to the Hills and not subdivided until 1925. John G. Hill died in 1904. His wife Aranetta lived into the 1920s. The exact date of her death could not be determined, but apparently occurred in 1925.

The Town of Oxnard, laid out in 1898 on the lands of John and Aranetta Hill, was primarily a neighborhood of single family houses during the early years. However, by the 1920s during the housing boom, multifamily housing units began to make an appearance, primarily in the form of courtyard housing. Between 1920 and 1950 approximately fifteen such properties were developed throughout the city. Today, only about seven remain. [continued]

B11. Additional Resource Attributes (List attributes and codes)

B12. References:

California Death Index.

Ventura County Directories, 1928, 1930, 1937, 1946, 1948-49, 1955.

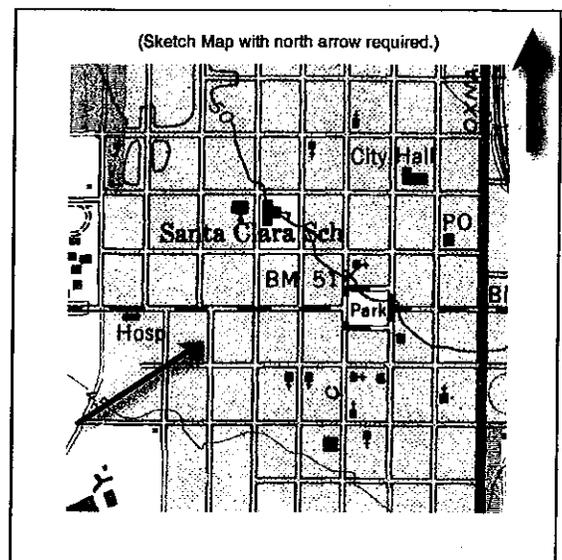
Oxnard Courier, 12/9/1904. "Pioneer of County Gone. John G. Hill Passes Away at his Home in this City." [Continued]

B13. Remarks:

B14. Evaluator: San Buenaventura Research Associates

Date of Evaluation: 9/22/2010

(This space reserved for official comments.)



Page 4 of 5 Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) 531 S. F Street

Recorded by: San Buenaventura Research Associates

Date 9/22/2010

Continuation Update

B10 Significance

Site-Specific Context

The courtyard housing complex at 531 South F Street was completed in July of 1926 for Fred L. Bonn and his wife Lula M. Bonn and was called the Bon Ton Court. At the time it was built, it was said to have been the first courtyard housing project in Oxnard. However, research indicates that the Olive Courts at 401 W. Fourth Street were built in 1923, three years earlier. When the Eastwood-Lathrop Subdivision was recorded, three parcels in the tract were reserved for the John and Aranetta Hill residence, which remained. The Bon Ton Court was built on two parcels immediately adjacent to the north of the Hill residence.

Headlines in the *Oxnard Courier* for July 31, 1926 announced on the front page that the "Bon Ton Court, latest in Apartments, ready for Public Inspection Tomorrow." The article goes on to state,

The court is the latest word in modern construction of attractive small homes. There are four rooms to each apartment, including living room, dining room, which may also be converted into a bed room, kitchen and bedroom. There is also a bathroom, of course, and the kitchen is equipped so as to make it available for a breakfast room. The apartments are planned to give individuality to each, not only in the color scheme but in arrangement also. The living rooms have barrel ceiling[s] and the dining rooms carry the dome effect, and the walls are finished in tiffany and panel. The kitchens have built-in cabinets, laundry tray built in next to the sink, combination iron boards and breakfast tables. Each apartment is wired for both the radio and telephone. Each apartment is furnished with a kitchen gas stove and a gas heater in the fireplace, otherwise it is unfurnished. Each apartment also has the use of a garage. The enterprise represents an approximate investment of \$25,000, and is a credit to the city, being the first of this kind to be built here. Lawrence and Overland are the contracting builders, and the painting was done by A.J. Lawley.

Fred Louis Bonn was born February 14, 1900 in Montana and attended Montana State University at Bozeman in 1920. It is unknown when he married Lula M. Bonn and when they moved to Oxnard. She was born on February 5, 1894 in Missouri. Fred Bonn purchased the property at 531 S. F Street from H. H. and Irma Eastwood and Walter H. and Edna Lathrop on December 22, 1925, and built the court the following year. After it was completed, Fred and Lula Bonn became residents of the court. In 1930 the Bonns were living in the Bon Ton Court and Fred Bonn is listed as a dehydrator operator for the oil industry. According to the 1930 U.S. Census records, the property was valued at \$35,000. Fred and Lula Bonn moved to Ventura by 1937. Fred Bonn died on April 27, 1951 in Ventura, and Lula M. Bonn died May 30, 1965 in Ventura. It is uncertain when the Bonns sold the property. Subsequent owners have altered the property little from its original 1926 appearance.

The Bon Ton Courts have been home to a variety of working-class Oxnard residents over the years. Typical among these residents were Mary Katherine Robinson, who announced in the *Oxnard Courier* the commencement of her Spanish classes on January 10, 1927 at No. 5 of the Bon Ton Courts. On January 20, 1928, the *Oxnard Courier* announced that Miss Cora Brower, a new teacher at the Community Center, is now residing at Bon Ton Court.

Local Significance and Eligibility

The Bon Ton Court reflects special elements of the county's architectural history under **Criterion 1** as a scarce example of a housing type that was built primarily during the 1920s through the 1940s to address the needs of multifamily housing. The boom of the 1920s brought an urgent need for housing especially in Southern California and Los Angeles in particular. This type of housing was built to accommodate both single renters and large families. Literally thousands of these housing types were built throughout Southern California and Oxnard was no exception. A cursory view of Sanborn Maps for this period shows approximately fifteen of these U-plan apartment courtyards in Oxnard, with perhaps half of these remaining today.

The courtyard provided the apartment owner with a public landscaped space with small porches fronting onto green areas. Courtyard apartments were generally built on a typical city lot measuring, in this case, 140 deep by 50 feet across. Two lots were combined to create the courtyard at 531 S. F Street.

Page 5 of 5 Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) 531 S. F Street

Recorded by: San Buenaventura Research Associates

Date 9/22/2010

Continuation Update

B10. Significance

The seven remaining courtyard apartment complexes in Oxnard include the subject property (1926), Olive Court at 401 W. Fourth Street (1923), Palm Court at 330 W. Palm Drive (ca. 1930), 380 W. Palm Drive (ca. 1950), 127 N. D Street (ca. 1945); 534 S. F Street (ca. 1950), and 529 First Street (ca. 1950).

Under **Criterion 2**, the property at 531 S. F Street is not associated with the lives of persons or events who have made a significant contribution to the City of Oxnard. The original owner, Fred and Lula Bon were not found to have made any known significant contributions to the City of Oxnard.

Criterion 3 relates to archaeological resources and is not relevant to this evaluation.

Under **Criterion 4**, the Bon Ton Courts at 501 S. F Street embodies the architectural design, details and materials characteristics of the courtyard housing, a type of housing popular in the 1920s and is one of the earliest examples of this courtyard type designed in the Spanish Revival style. The characteristic features of the Bon Ton Court include the raised parapets with rounded arches, the heavily troweled stucco cladding, wood fixed and casement windows in pairs or with segmented arches, and gabled porches with tiled roof and arched openings. Landscape features include the courtyard with scored concrete sidewalks, hedges and lawn areas and two large standing light fixtures. Interior features include barrel vaulted living room ceilings and covered dining room ceilings, picture railings, tiled fireplaces with wood mantles, light fixtures and door hardware, wood baseboards, arched wall niches in dining rooms, cabinets in kitchens and bathrooms.

Under **Criterion 5**, the property does not represent the work of a master builder or designer. It was built by a local contractor and no architect was known to have been involved.

Under **Criterion 6**, the property does not meet the criteria for traditional or legendary lore.

Under **Criterion 7**, it does not have a unique location or single physical characteristic, or view representing an established feature associated with the City of Oxnard.

Under **Criterion 8**, the Bon Ton Courts is one of the two remaining examples in Oxnard of courtyard housing from the 1920s. The balance were built between 1930 and 1950.

The Bon Ton Courts has retained its integrity. The property is still in its original location. Its design in the Spanish Revival style has remained essentially intact, with only a few small change to a window within the original opening and the addition of bars on some of the windows at the rear of the buildings. The property's integrity of materials and workmanship are also intact. It is in good condition. In addition, many of the key interior architectural features remain, including barrel and covered ceilings, textured stucco walls, telephone niches, light fixtures, door hardware, woodwork on baseboards, windows, picture mouldings, and original cabinets in kitchens and bathrooms.

In conclusion, the property at 531 S. F Street appears to be individually eligible as a County Landmark under Criteria 1, 4 and 8. It is also eligible as part of a discontinuous district comprised of the remaining seven U-plan courtyard apartment complexes in Oxnard built between 1920 and 1950. Further research would need to be completed to establish the eligibility of this potential district.