

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code _____

Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 5 Resource name(s) or number (assigned by recorder) *Levengood House*

P1. Other Identifier:

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

*a. County *Orange County*

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad *TCA 1667*

Date: _____

*c. Address *1205 South Birch Street*

City *Santa Ana*

Zip *92707*

*e. Other Locational Data: Assessor's Parcel Number *013-152-02 TR 921 LOT 31*

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries.)

Substantially intact and enhanced by its landscaping, this is an example of a modestly sized Spanish Colonial Revival home. The tiled roof is cross-gabled and moderately pitched over the front of the building, while the rear of the house is flat-roofed and circled by a tile-edged parapet. Smooth stucco covers the exterior of the building. Clay pipe vents pierce the gable ends. A porch is recessed beneath the side gable on the north half the façade. Wooden posts with carved brackets support the roof overhang and a waist high stucco wall encloses the porch space. A tripartite window and the entry open onto the porch. In an unusual departure from a standard Spanish roof configuration, a small, front gabled dormer is located above the porch. The southern half of the façade contains a large, picture window, to which an aluminum canopy has been added, offset to the south and a tall, slender window to the north. A three-sided bay projects from the south elevation. Although re-roofed, the house retains its design integrity.

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (list attributes and codes) *HP2. Single-family Property*

*P4. Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other

P5a. Photo



*P5b. Photo: (view and date)
*West elevation
September 2003*

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources: historic
1929/ Source: City of Santa Ana Building Permits

*P7. Owner and Address:
*Brian A. and Lisa Bist
1205 South Birch Street
Santa Ana, CA 92707*

*P8. Recorded by:
*Leslie J. Heumann
SAIC
35 S. Raymond Ave. # 204
Pasadena, CA 91105*

*P9. Date Recorded:
October 1, 2003

*P10. Survey Type:
Intensive Survey

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

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

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Page 2 of 5

*NRHP Status Code 5S1

*Resource Name or #: Levengood House

- B1. Historic Name: Levengood House
 B2. Common Name: Same
 B3. Original Use: Single-family Residence
 B4. Present Use: Single-family Residence

*B5. **Architectural Style:** Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

*B6. **Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations): Constructed in 1930.

*July 5, 1930. Residence and garage.
 June 11, 1943. Reroof.
 October 6, 1952. Reroof residence.
 June 26, 1986. Wood patio deck, spa.
 February 8, 1990. Reroof house and garage.*

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

*B8. **Related Features:**

None.

B9a. Architect: Unknown

b. Builder: Unknown

*B10. **Significance: Theme** Residential Architecture

Area Santa Ana

Period of Significance: circa 1920-1954 **Property Type:** Single-family Residence

Applicable Criteria: C

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

The Levengood House is architecturally significant as a representative example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, one of many that characterize the Wilshire Square neighborhood. The house and garage were constructed in 1930 at a cost of \$3,650.00 for Mrs. Mary Levengood, who had occupied the residence by 1931. The house remained in the Levengood family until at least 1952, according to city building permits. According to the 1991 Wilshire Square Home Tour brochure, Mary Levengood was the widow of Frank Levengood, a farmer who struck oil in his bean fields. Mrs. Levengood raised her granddaughter in this house, and lived here until she died in the late 1950s. She also built the house next door, on the corner, for her son.

(See Continuation Sheets 3 and 4.)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) _____

*B12. **References:**

*City of Santa Ana Building Permits
 Santa Ana History Room Collection, Santa Ana Public Library
 Sanborn Maps*

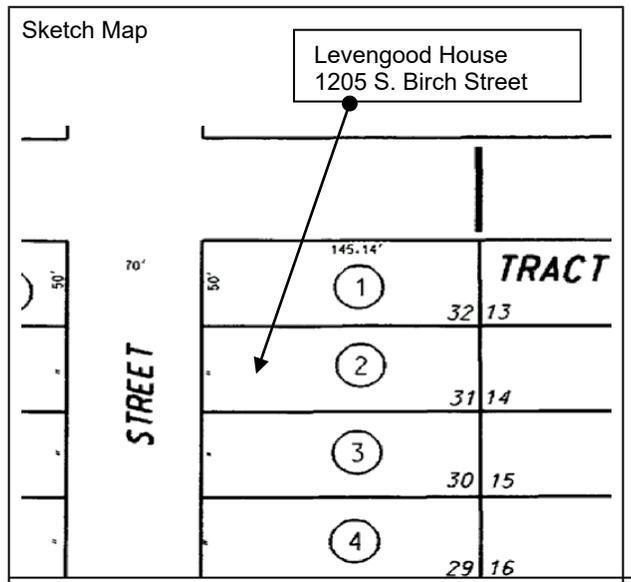
(See Continuation Sheets 4 and 5.)

B13. Remarks:

*B14. **Evaluator:** Leslie J. Heumann

***Date of Evaluation:** October 1, 2003

(This space reserved for official comments.)



***B10. Significance (continued):**

Santa Ana was founded by William Spurgeon in 1869 as a speculative town site on part of the Spanish land grant known as Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana. The civic and commercial core of the community was centered around the intersection of Main and Fourth Streets. Stimulated by the arrival of the Santa Fe Railroad and incorporation as a city in 1886, and selection as the seat of the newly created County of Orange in 1889, the city grew outwards, with residential neighborhoods initially developing to the north, south, and east of the city center. Agricultural uses predominated in the outlying areas, with cultivated fields and orchards dotted with widely scattered farmhouses.

The Levengood House is located in Wilshire Square, a neighborhood located south of the city center and bounded by West McFadden Avenue on the north, West Edinger Avenue on the south, South Main Street on the east, and South Flower Street on the west. This area remained agricultural in use into the early twentieth century, the landscape dotted with walnut and orange groves. The 1912 plat map of Santa Ana showed South Main Street and Fairview Avenue (now McFadden Avenue) as the only streets in the area, with the majority of the property held by a few landowners: N. Palmer, H. K. Hanson, O'Brien, and Lewis.

Development of Wilshire Square began circa 1923, when newspaper advertisements for newly subdivided lots costing between \$635.00 and \$1,875.00 boasted "five foot sidewalks, curbs, electricity, gas, sewer, city water and ornamental trees" (Santa Ana Register, April 12, 1923). By 1923, all of Flower, Garmsey, Van Ness, Ross, and Borchard and portions of the remaining streets had been laid out. Lathrop Junior High School, designed by architect Frederick Eley in 1921 (demolished circa 1970), was constructed on the southwest corner of Fairview and Main and became an anchor of the neighborhood. In 1925, over 65 homes had been built in Wilshire Square, according to a count of addresses listed in the city directories. A 1927 map indicated that the area was zoned for single-family residences, except the east side of Sycamore, which was set aside for "courts and apartments," apparently as a buffer for the "neighborhood business" zone on South Main Street. By 1930, maps of the City showed that, with the exception of a gap between Borchard and Edinger Avenues on Birch, Broadway, and Sycamore, all the streets in Wilshire Square were in place. Mapped by the Sanborn Company between 1931 and 1940, the neighborhood was substantially developed prior to the beginning of World War II.

Built in three phases, Wilshire Square primarily showcases the revival architectural styles popular during the first phase, circa 1923 to 1931, when 326 homes were built: variations of the Tudor Revival, the Spanish Colonial Revival, and the Colonial Revival. A handful of Craftsman bungalows completed the picture. A second phase, from 1935 to 1942, marked the recovery from the Great Depression and the war preparation years, and resulted in another 171 homes. The post World War II building boom added 91 homes, many in the newly popular California Ranch style. Enhanced by the canopies of mature trees that line many of the streets, Wilshire Square developed as a middle class neighborhood of white and blue collar workers. Homes were both owner and speculator built, and, regardless of style, are unified by their one-story height, scale, common setbacks, and the placement of detached garages in the rear of each property. Retaining these qualities today (2003), the neighborhood was recognized for excellence in urban design by the Orange County Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1997.

The Levengood House qualifies for listing in the Santa Ana Register of Historical Properties under Criterion 1, as a building with the "distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or period." The combination of stucco walls and tiled roof and treatment of the patio with its rustic wood posts exhibited on the house are typical features of the Spanish Colonial Revival and demonstrate that the style could be used effectively on both large as well as relatively modest homes. Additionally, the house has been categorized as "Contributive" because it "contributes to the overall character and history" of Wilshire Square and "is a good example of period architecture" as an illustration of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Character defining exterior features of the Levengood House that should be preserved include, but may not be limited to: materials and finishes (stucco, wood, tile); roof configuration and treatment; massing and composition; original doors and windows; porch; and architectural detailing (porch posts, brackets, and beam).

In July and August 2024, the original 2003 DPR forms were supplemented with the results of new research and analysis completed by James Williams, on behalf of the City of Santa Ana (City). Specifically, the property was reevaluated to assess its historical significance, due to associations with former residents Lisa and Brian Bist, who acquired the property in 2003, per City planning records. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the Bists were highly involved in neighborhood activism and local politics in Santa Ana, which activities are summarized briefly below. Except where noted otherwise, the following accounting of their accomplishments and contributions is based principally on the oral testimony of current Historic Resources Commission (HRC) Commissioner Alberta Christy, HRC Chair Tim Rush, and Guy Ball, an associate of the Bists. Mr. Williams briefly interviewed each of these individuals in June and July 2024, in addition to reviewing testimony provided by Commissioner Christy at the HRC's May 8, 2024 hearing. The oral interviews were supplemented with desktop research, as cited below.

***B10. Significance (continued):**

In the estimation of Rush and Christy, Brian and Lisa Bists' earliest historically significant activities were in the area of neighborhood improvement. All three informants for this evaluation noted the Bists were important contributors to the founding and early operation of the Wilshire Square Neighborhood Association (WSNA), which was established in 1989 to promote the betterment and maintenance of the city's Wilshire Square neighborhood. Brian was particularly involved in the organization of the WSNA, serving as a founding co-chair and contributing to the drafting of its by-laws. The Bists' work with the WSNA was a springboard to involvement in the Communication Linkage Forum (known informally as Com-Link), described in one source as "an umbrella organization of neighborhood associations" (Adams 2007). Brian and Ball helped to found the Com-Link in 1989. The organization's purpose was to provide local residents and neighborhood associations a neutral forum in which they could discuss issues facing neighborhood among themselves and with City staff and elected officials (City of Santa Ana 2024). In addition to Brian's work with Ball to establish Com-Link, Lisa served on the body's Neighborhood Improvement and Code Enforcement (NICE) committee, which furthered Com-Link's objectives by targeting apparent blight in the city (Adams 2007). According to Commissioner Christy, among Lisa's main contributions while serving on the NICE committee, were initiatives to establish a landscaping ordinance and a commercial code enforcement program in the city. She was also involved in efforts to help Main Street business owners rehabilitate their building façades by lobbying to secure redevelopment funds to finance improvements. Com-Link continues to operate to this day and counts 60 neighborhood associations as participants (City of Santa Ana 2024).

In 1998, Lisa was elected to the first of two consecutive terms on the Santa Ana City Council, serving until 2006. As a councilmember, she continued to champion neighborhood improvement and built relationships with important businesses and institutions operating in the City. According to Commissioner Christy, as a member of the City's Environmental and Transportation Advisory Commission, Lisa championed an urban forestry campaign, in addition to a program of street modifications to protect entrances into some neighborhoods. Commissioner Christy observed that, Lisa was also a key player in the City Council's outreach to significant public and private institutions. During her tenure on the City Council, Lisa contributed to the Council's successful efforts to support the Bowers Museum's acquisition of a new collection from the British Museum, to facilitate the establishment of the Mexican Consulate in the city, to convince First American Financial Corporation to keep its headquarters in Santa Ana, and to facilitate the development of the Santa Ana Auto Mall.

Overall, Commissioner Christy claimed, the Bists' significance is due to their instrumental roles in effecting concrete changes in Santa Ana that improved the city's public image.

Based on the supplemental research, it is recommended that, in addition to the property's architectural significance as an example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, as described in the 2003 evaluation, the property is significant for its associations with the contributions of Lisa and Brian Bist in the area of local neighborhood activism and politics. Because of the Levengood-Bist House's associations with the Bists, the property is found to qualify for listing in the Santa Ana Register of Historic Properties under Criterion 4(b), which recognizes a property's associations "with famous people, original settlers, renowned organizations and businesses" (Santa Ana Municipal Code, Section 30-2). Additionally, the Levengood-Bist House qualifies in the category "Key," which provides for the listing on the Santa Ana Register of Historical Properties of a property that is "associated with a significant person or event in the city" (Santa Ana Municipal Code, Section 30.2.2). The Levengood-Bist House's character-defining features remain those identified by the 2003 evaluation, as listed above.

***B12. References (continued):**

- Adams, Brian E. *Citizen Lobbyists: Local Efforts to Influence Public Policy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007.
- Ball, Guy. Oral interview with James Williams. July 17, 2024.
- Christy, Alberta. Oral interview with James Williams. June 28, 2024.
- City of Santa Ana. "Com-Link," City of Santa Ana, Official Government Web Site [web site]. <https://www.santa-ana.org/com-link/>.
- Harris, Cyril M. *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. New York, WW Norton, 1998.
- Heumann, Leslie J. *California Department of Parks and Recreation Form 523: Levengood House*. 2003. Record on file with the City of Santa Ana Planning Department.
- Historic Resources Commission. *Historic Resources Commission, Special Meeting Agenda, May 8, 2024*. [video recording of hearing]. <https://santa-ana.primegov.com/Portal/Meeting?meetingTemplateId=22057>.
- Marsh, Diann. *Santa Ana, An Illustrated History*. Encinitas, Heritage Publishing, 1994.
- McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.

(See Continuation Sheet 5.)

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____

Page 5 of 5

Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) *Levengood House*

*Recorded by *Leslie J. Heumann, SAIC*

*Date *October 1, 2003* Continuation Update

***B12. References (continued):**

- National Register Bulletin 16A. "How to Complete the National Register Registration Form." Washington DC: National Register Branch, National Park Service, US Dept. of the Interior, 1991.*
- Office of Historic Preservation. "Instructions for Recording Historical Resources." Sacramento: March 1995.*
- Historic maps in the collection of the History Room of the Santa Ana Public Library.*
- Rush, Tim. Oral interview with James Williams. July 1, 2024.*
- Santa Ana and Orange County Directories, 1905-1931.*
- Santa Ana Register, April 12, 1923.*
- "Vintage Santa Ana Right On Track." The Register, January 13, 1990.*
- "Neighbors Gear Up For Big Project." Los Angeles Times, August 6, 1992.*
- "Neighborliness Lives On Wilshire Square's Streets." Los Angeles Times, October 5, 1996.*
- "Wilshire Square—A Profile in Pride of Ownership." City Line, July/August 2001.*
- Wilshire Square Neighborhood Association, Home Tour Brochures, 1989-1994.*
- www.wilshiresquare.com*
- www.geocities.com/Heartland/3383/aia.htm*