

History of 717 Esplanade

Local citizens, neighbors and real estate professionals have conveyed to us the following anecdotal histories of 717 Esplanade.

In the early 1900s, Redondo Beach had a population of 2,000. Over the course of the 20th century, Redondo Beach evolved into a beach resort destination and residential community. The road that parallels the beach was originally named "Ocean View." "Ocean View" was later changed to "The Esplanade."

The Hotel Redondo (site of today's Redondo Beach Veterans Park) was built in 1889 and existed until 1926. Homes built on the Esplanade during that era were within walking distance of the Hotel Redondo and the "Plunge." The "Plunge" was advertised as the largest indoor salt water heated pool in the world.

It is believed 717 Esplanade was originally built in the 1920s. In 1933, a civil engineer from Syracuse, NY, William Hutton Blauvelt, acquired 717 Esplanade. After Mr. Blauvelt's death in 1935, his widow, Adele Blauvelt, continued to live in the home until her death 3 years later in 1938. Born in 1868 in Philadelphia, Adele Blauvelt served, as the New York State legislative chairman of the national women's party, was a suffragette, and an activist for equal rights for women. While living in Redondo Beach, Adele Blauvelt wrote a column called "City Planning" in the local newspaper, *The Reflex*. She also served on the Redondo Beach Planning Commission.

The adjacent parcel immediately to the north, 715 Esplanade, was built in 1905 at the end of the Victorian era. The home was last sold in 1957 to Nell and Phil O'Reilly. Mr. & Mrs. O'Reilly are both now deceased, but the home remains owned by their family; it is now subdivided into several apartments occupied by multiple tenants. Immediately to the south of 717 Esplanade is a condominium building that contains several dozen units. Across the street from 717 Esplanade are single-family residences, some built decades ago and others built within the last several years. The Esplanade continues to be a popular public walking promenade in Redondo Beach.

At some point during the 1940s, the 717 Esplanade parcel was assigned two addresses: 717 and 719 Esplanade; and, the home was subdivided into 2 separate residences. Later, a third residence became incorporated inside the structure.

Various families occupied 717-719 Esplanade residences until 1994. Barbara Allen purchased 717-719 Esplanade in 1994, and that same year obtained a "Mills Act" historic designation for the home through the City of Redondo Beach. The Mills Act historic designation ended in February 2012. Thus, the property today is no longer encumbered by any historic designation covenant, as confirmed by the City of Redondo Beach.

The current owners of 717-719 Esplanade purchased it in 1998. A 3-year long renovation of the home started in 1999 and was completed in 2001. The comprehensive renovation/restoration returned the home to its original single-family residence character and address designation as 717 Esplanade.

The renovation of 717 Esplanade that was completed in 2001 restored the home to being a single-family residence, with the essential character elements of the original home. Today, 717 Esplanade is in compliance with current building and seismic standards as approved in 2001. The home is also now restyled to be consistent with the Spanish-style architecture of Southern California's most historically significant "Spanish Revival" homes that were built in the early 1920s.

The "Spanish Revival" architectural style grew in popularity around the turn of the 20th century when many young American architects returned from studies in Spain, Italy and Mexico. The "Spanish Revival" style incorporates architectural elements from these other countries in hundreds of homes, bungalows and apartment buildings throughout Southern California. The "Spanish Revival" is marked by two main phases: the "Mission Revival," which incorporates stucco walls, cloistered patios, tile roofs, tiled fountains and exposed-beam ceilings; and, the more elaborate "Mediterranean Revival," which contained elements of Italian Renaissance and Spanish Andalusian forms. Elements of the "Spanish Revival" are incorporated throughout 717 Esplanade today.

While its architectural style and artistic finishes reflect the "Spanish Revival" of the early 20th century, the most recent renovation and restoration of 717 Esplanade was designed to make the home accommodate the lifestyle of today's 21st century family.

The home consists of approximately 7,028 sq. ft. of living space (per the architect's City approved renovation plans) allocated to 3 floors. The home now has a large kitchen with island that extends into an adjacent family room with fireplace, in an open grand room style, that also provides ocean front and beach views, and easy access to an exterior living area on a large radiant-heated deck that has a cooking area for al fresco dining. The grand room flows into a vaulted ceiling living room with fireplace that contains floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The entire ceiling of the grand room is hand painted to reflect the coffer style of the early 1920s. The living room has hand painted garlands at the border of where the walls meet the 16 ft. high vaulted ceilings.

The Master Suite has a large ocean facing balcony, connected master bath, separate his and her closets, and a master suite designated laundry room. The home contains 2 other bedrooms (each with a private bath), a library with fireplace, a gym with attached bath, an office with separate file-room, and a home TV/entertainment room with a fireplace and built-in bar.

The main floor also contains 2 powder baths (one off the entry foyer and one off the kitchen), as well as a large laundry room. On the ground floor is a self-contained one-bedroom apartment (with its own kitchen, laundry, bath and entrance) conducive to being an independent living area for another generation of the family, or a separate residential area for staff for the home.

Except for the library and gym, the rooms inside 717 Esplanade contain spectacular ocean views. The ocean views extend from the northern most point of Santa Monica Bay to the cliffs and hills of Palos Verdes Estates to the south.

There is an infinity-edge pool/Jacuzzi area on the north side of the home, and a slate-terraced loggia on the west side of the home that leads to a private gate which connects the property via an exterior stairway to the Redondo Beach "Upper Strand," a popular public walkway that parallels the Pacific Ocean.

The entire home contains state-of-the-art *Crestron and Lutron* "smart house" touch panel electronics for controlling all lighting, heating/cooling, security, pool and jacuzzi functions, exterior cameras and audio-visual entertainment systems.

The home has 6 full bathrooms, each with unique custom "Spanish Revival" tile work, and 2 powder baths on the main floor. There are a total of 5 fireplaces (with custom gas logs) and 3 laundry facilities (one on each of the 3 floors).

The attached garage provides a direct secure pathway from vehicles into the kitchen. The garage has patterned brick floors and extensive mahogany wood finished cabinetry. The garage accommodates 3 cars and the brick patterned driveway provides another 3 parking spaces in front of the garage.

Exterior balconies on the west and north sides of the home and ground level loggias create additional outdoor entertainment areas. The walled-in front courtyard with an artfully tiled fountain serves as an intermediary tranquility space between the home's front yard and the main front door entry to the home, creating an additional layer of privacy between the street and the home's front door.

When entering the home through the main front door, the foyer exposes a 22-ft. high wood beamed ceiling with giant trusses. A grand staircase with intricate "Spanish Revival" tile patterns on each stair riser and wrought-iron vintage patterned railing leads from the foyer to the upper floor, providing expansive areas for displaying large pieces of art. Floors throughout the home are travertine, marble or wood.