



NAME	Ford House/Pepito and Joanne's Dance Studio				REF. NO. 50
ADDRESS	1502 North Ross Street				
CITY	Santa Ana	ZIP	92706	ORANGE COUNTY	
YEAR BUILT	1892/Moved 1924		LOCAL REGISTER CATEGORY: Key		
HISTORIC DISTRICT	N/A		NEIGHBORHOOD	Willard	
NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION		B, C	NATIONAL REGISTER STATUS CODE		5S1

Location: ☐ Not for Publication ☒ Unrestricted

USGS 7.5" Quad \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_\_ R \_\_\_\_\_ ¼ of \_\_\_\_\_ ¼ of Sec \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ B.M.

☐ Prehistoric ☒ Historic ☐ Both

**ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:** Queen Anne (Late Victorian)

**DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND RELATED TO PERIOD ARCHITECTURE:**

The Queen Anne (Late Victorian) (also known as the Queen Anne Revival) dominated residential architectural design during the last 20 years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the West, and was nearly as influential on early commercial buildings. Identifying features include the front-facing gable roof, ornate decoration of wood or metal along the eave and in the gable end, avoidance of flat wall surfaces through the use of applied ornamentation of wood or metal, and classical columns or pilasters. Multi-storied residential and commercial examples often incorporated bay windows, sometimes topped with towers. The style borrowed heavily from late Medieval models, with the addition of other regional interpretations. Some of the most well developed examples can be found in California and in the Southern states (McAlester, 263-268).

**CONSTRUCTION HISTORY:** (Construction data, alterations, and date of alterations)

July 30, 1930. Relocate.  
September 15, 1930. Alterations.  
May 27, 1933. Rebuild chimneys.  
June 7, 1937. Alteration to residence.  
March 24, 1941. Reroof.  
September 1, 1955. Convert residence to dance studio for Pepito Perez.  
December 2, 1987. Reroof.

**RELATED FEATURES:** (Other important features such as barns, sheds, fences, prominent or unusual trees, or landscape)

None.

**DESCRIPTION:** (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, settings, and boundaries.)

This unusual example of the Queen Anne (Late Victorian) style features a symmetrical composition consisting of a central, side-gabled volume flanked by two front-gabled wings. Two interior brick chimneys emerge from the ridge of the side gable and a dormer with a bowed and bracketed gable end is centered over the façade. Beneath the embellished bargeboards of the front gables, small, paired attic windows are set into decorative shingle facing beneath triangular sunburst panels. Narrow overlap siding sheathes the lower portion of the building. Each side of the front gable overhangs transitions into a cant bay in an arrangement suggestive of pendentives. Abutting the cant bays, the front porch, now enclosed by windows, projects forward in a shallow curve. Panels of patterned shingles are located beneath the windows. Centered beneath the dormer, the glazed front entry is framed by sidelights and topped by a transom. Highly ornate although not original statuary and light standards embellish the front stairs. The property enjoys a generous frontage along North Ross Street and is bordered by a wrought iron fence set atop a low concrete retaining wall. Modifications to the house include enclosure of the porch and replacement of the porch supports, removal of the original porch balustrade and a matching railing in front of the dormer, and re-glazing of some of the windows.

**HISTORIC HIGHLIGHTS:**

This house was built in 1892 for George Ford, a prominent nurseryman who specialized in English walnuts. Twenty acres of walnut groves surrounded the house at its original location at 1342 North Ross Street. Ford was an early city resident, whose first nursery was located at Sixth and Ross Streets. He shipped walnut trees throughout California and to Australia, and was instrumental in establishing the Santa Ana region as an important agricultural center. Ford is also remembered for the row of 19 camphor trees that he planted on the east boundary of his property on Ross Street. In 1924 George Ford died and his wife, Mary, inherited both the property bounded by Washington, Parton, Ross, and Fifteenth Streets on which the house was located and 400 acres between Santa Ana and Anaheim. A resident of Santa Ana since 1878 and a member of several community institutions, including the Ebell Society, the Santa Ana Woman's Club, the Torosa Rebekah Lodge, and the First Christian Church, Mary Ford was remarried, to W. C. Watkins, the following year. The couple remained in the house until 1930, when Mrs. Watkins sold the property to the Board of Education for the construction of Willard Junior High School. The Ford House was moved to its present location a block and a half north of the original site. After W. C. Watkins died in 1947, followed by Mary Watkins's death in 1951, the house was acquired by Pepito and Joanne Perez, who converted it into a dance studio in 1955. The Perezes had enjoyed success in vaudeville in New York and Pepito had several film credits, including *Road to Rio* (1947) with Bob Hope and Bing Crosby and *Sorry, Wrong Number* (1948) with Barbara Stanwyck and Burt Lancaster. **Pepito Perez, (birth name Jose E. Perez) was born in 1889 in Spain. He is credited with a guest role in the very first "I Love Lucy" episode. Pepito, Joanne (also known as Margaret), and fellow entertainers, Lucille Ball, and Desi Arnaz, were close friends who often got together at this Ross Street house. They were lifelong friends, with Desi and Pepito sharing a love for ocean fishing. This first "I Love Lucy" episode was considered the "lost episode" until the original film was located by Joanne Perez in her own collection at the dance studio in 1990. Desi had given the film to Pepito. Pepito was also known for his elaborate set and costume design which was featured in the "I Love Lucy episode #165 entitled "Little Ricky's School Pageant." Pepito died in 1975, and Joanne continued to operate the dance studio until she was 92 in 2001. As of 2001, the dance academy is still in operation.**

**RESOURCE ATTRIBUTES:** (List attributes and codes from Appendix 4 of Instructions for Recording Historical Resources, Office of Historic Preservation.)

HP2. Single-family Property

**RESOURCES PRESENT:**

☒ Building      ☐ Structure      ☐ Object      ☐ Site      ☐ District      ☐ Element of District      ☐ Other

**MOVED?**   ☐ No   ☒ Yes   ☐ Unknown      Date: July 30, 1930      Original Location: 1342 North Ross Street

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:** (Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, geographic scope, and integrity.)

Santa Ana was founded by William Spurgeon in 1869 as a speculative townsite on part of the Spanish land grant known as Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana. Early growth and development was stimulated by the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1878 and the Santa Fe Railroad in 1886. Following its incorporation as a city in 1886, Santa Ana was recognized as one of the leading communities in the area in 1889 when it became the seat of the newly created County of Orange.

The economic underpinnings of the young community were agricultural, and many residents owned or worked on the ranches that encircled the incorporated area. The Ford House is a remnant from this era, associated with the second George Ford nursery that was originally located to the south on the property now occupied by Willard Junior High School. The house is significant for its association with Ford, who helped to establish the Santa Ana area as an agricultural center through his specialization in the cultivation of walnut trees. The house is also significant for its association with Mary Ford Watkins, a long-time resident who actively participated in community life. Additional significance is derived from the nearly fifty-year association with the Pepito and Joanne Dance Academy. Moreover, despite its alterations, the house is a noteworthy example of the Queen Anne style, particularly in its incorporation of decorative shingling and woodwork and its treatment of the cant bays.

Character-defining exterior features of the Ford House, which should be preserved, include but may not be limited to: original materials and finishes, especially patterned shingles; roof configuration and elements; central porch; bays; and original fenestration where extant.

**SUMMARY/CONCLUSION:**

This resource is currently listed in the Santa Ana Register of Historical Property and has been categorized as “Key” because it “has a distinctive architectural style and quality” as an example of the Queen Anne (Late Victorian) style and because it is characteristic of a significant period in the history of Santa Ana, the agricultural era. Moreover, it is associated with several significant persons in the City, including George Ford, a prominent and influential nurseryman, Mary Ford Watkins, a long-time and active Santa Ana resident, and Pepito and Joanne Perez, entertainment personalities and operators of a long-lived local business (Municipal Code, Section 30-2.2).

**OWNER AND ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

**RECORDED BY:**

(Name, affiliation, and address)

Leslie J. Heumann

Science Applications International Corporation

35 S. Raymond Avenue, Suite 204, Pasadena, CA 91105

**DATE RECORDED:**

October 29, 2001

**SURVEY TYPE:**

(Intensive, reconnaissance, or other)

Intensive Survey Update

**REPORT CITATION:**

(Cite survey report and other sources)

City of Santa Ana. *Santa Ana's Historic Treasures*.

Les, Kathleen. *Historic Resources Inventory 1502 N. Ross*, April 1980.

**REFERENCES:**

(List documents, date of publication, and page numbers. May also include oral interviews.)

Harris, Cyril M. *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. New York, WW Norton, 1998.

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.

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.

Whiffen, Marcus. *American Architecture Since 1780*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969.

Historical Landmarks Inventory Form. January 21, 1985.

*IMdb. (2005) Pepito Perez biography. Retrieved 12/07/05, from [www.imdb.com/name](http://www.imdb.com/name).*

**EVALUATOR:**

Leslie J. Heumann

**DATE OF EVALUATION:**

October 29, 2001.amended 01/05/06

#### **EXPLANATION OF CODES:**

- National Register Criteria for Evaluation: (From Appendix 7 of Instructions for Recording Historical Resources, Office of Historic Preservation)
  - B:** that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
  - C:** that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- National Register Status Code: (From Appendix 2 of Instructions for Recording Historical Resources, Office of Historic Preservation)
  - 5S1:** Is separately listed or designated under an existing local ordinance, or is eligible for such listing or designation.