

IN HARMONY WITH THE LAND

**THE RANCHO SANTA FE CIVIC CENTER:
ARCHITECTURE OF LILIAN RICE**

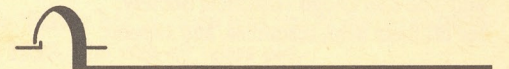
**Women In Architecture
September 23, 1989**

This tour was organized by San Diego Women In Architecture in conjunction with an exhibit of the same name at the SDHS Museum of San Diego History. "In Harmony With the Land," original drawings and photographs of work by Lilian Rice, Hazel Wood Waterman, and Harriett Barnhart Wimmer, opened August 19, 1989, and will close December 31, 1989.

Out of respect for homeowners along the tour route, please stay in the public right of way and off private property. WIA thanks you for your co-operation.

Cover photo: Paseo Delicias from the front of La Morada (The Inn), 1923.
San Diego Historical Society—Ticor Collection

Photo on following page: Lilian Rice, approximately 18 years old.
San Diego Historical Society—Ticor Collection



CREDITS

Research: Lucinda Eddy

Text: Barbara Thornburgh Carlton

Drawings and Photographs courtesy of:
San Diego Historical Society

Drawings: Lilian J. Rice

Map: Perin A. C. Schultz

Design: Barbara Thornburgh Carlton

Layout: Artifax

Printing: Xpress Press

Tour Organization:

Barbara Thornburgh Carlton

Janene Christopher

Andrea Heimbecker

Theresa Friederich

Jeanne Zagrodnik

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and The San Diego Historical Society,
for all their help, resources, and support.

INTRODUCTION

When Mexico ruled California, Rancho Santa Fe was Rancho San Dieguito, a land grant deeded in the 1830's to Don Juan Maria Osuna. In 1906, the Santa Fe Railroad purchased the land and planted thousands of eucalyptus seedlings as an experiment to produce wood for railroad ties. The project failed. The new forests eventually blended in with the natural vegetation. In an attempt to recoup its losses (and its pride), the railroad formed the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company. Its goal was to develop a prestigious planned community of country estates while preserving the Rancho's natural beauty and its history. In 1922 the Company chose the San Diego architectural firm of Requa and Jackson, noted for its expertise in Spanish and Mediterranean architectural styles, to develop a master plan for Rancho Santa Fe. The project soon proved too time consuming for the principals, who handed it over to their associate of one year, Lilian Rice. Throughout the 1920's and 1930's, Rice supervised the design and construction of the Civic Center, as well as many homes throughout the Ranch.

LILIAN RICE (1889-1938) was born and raised in National City. Her father was the first principal of San Diego High School, her mother an amateur artist. Her progressive parents encouraged her interest in architecture. She was one of the first students to earn an architecture degree from UC Berkeley, where she absorbed the prevailing concept of regionalism. Upon her graduation in 1910, she returned to San Diego. During this decade, she taught drafting and descriptive geometry at San Diego High School and San Diego Teacher's College. In 1912 she began working for Hazel Waterman, San Diego's first woman architect.

She joined Requa and Jackson in 1921. Soon after taking on the Rancho Santa Fe project, she set up an office in the Civic Center, where she continued to practice after leaving the firm in the late '20's. The growth of Rancho Santa Fe substantially occupied Rice for the rest of her life. In the late 1920's and early '30's, she designed several buildings in a style reminiscent of Bay Area Regionalism in La Jolla, Pacific Beach, and La Mesa. Just as her practice was beginning to expand in the late '30's, she died suddenly in 1938. She was 49 years old.



POINTS OF INTEREST

1 The Inn at Rancho Santa Fe Termination of Paseo Delicias 1922 onward

The Inn began in 1922 as a small guest house for Santa Fe Company officials. Within a year, increasing numbers of visiting prospective buyers prompted its expansion to essentially the building we know today, which was called La Morada. In 1941, under new ownership, it was renamed The Inn at Rancho Santa Fe, and two of the present cottages were built. The facade has since been remodeled, and more cottages added.

On the crown of a low hill, the Inn nestles into its grassy landscape. From its front terrace, one can look down the length of Paseo Delicias. Inside, a massive entry colonnade leads to the "living room," which is characteristic of Rice's large public rooms. It is dominated by a ceiling of enormous wood beams and trusses, tied by heavy straps and resting on carved corbels, or supports. A simple fireplace graces the end wall. The effect is at once baronial and welcoming, combining grandeur and warmth, rusticity and grace.



San Diego Historical Society—Ticor Collection

The Inn, view southeast from terrace, ca. 1923.

2 Residence, 16780 La Gracia ca. 1920's

This quiet house, set far back from the street, is thought by some to have been designed by Rice for herself, though this is apocryphal. It is modest in scale but thoughtfully executed. Large windows sport simple decorative shutters. The tile roof is textured with extra tiles, called "kickers," which create strong highlights and shadows for a rustic visual effect. The ends of beams and rafters are decoratively carved. At the north side, the attached lean-to of board and batten construction is unusual. It may have been either a later addition or a private variation. Rice did occasionally use this type of construction for attached service porches in Rancho Santa Fe, though we associate it more with her later work elsewhere in the county.

3 Registered historic landmark plaque

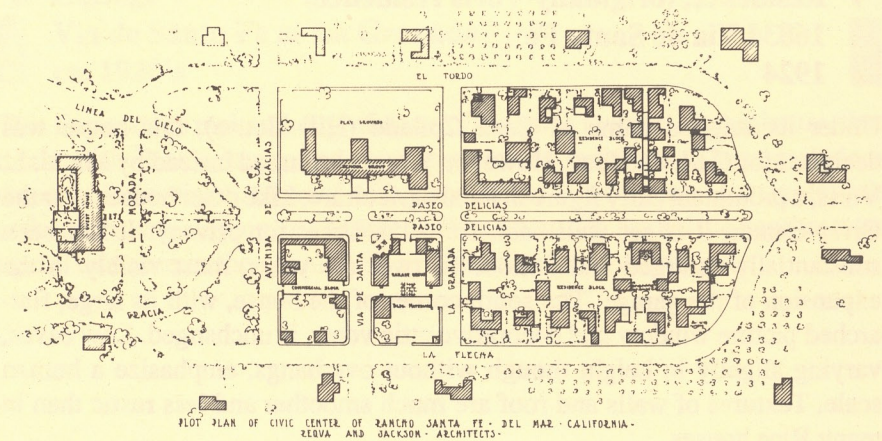
Rancho Santa Fe was named California State Historic Landmark No. 982 by the State Historical Resources Commission on February 3rd, 1989. This plaque was dedicated June 2nd, 1989.

4 Paseo Delicias and Arcade 1922

Paseo Delicias, with its landscaped center divider, is the heart of the Civic Center. Originally, this arcade along Paseo Delicias was open to the patio beyond. It has since been filled in with shops. These original commercial buildings were designed with an intimate, village-like scale enhanced by the inherent structural limitations of authentic materials, such as whitewashed adobe walls, heavy red Spanish tile roofs, and large exposed roof beams.

5 Patio off Paseo Delicias (now called Country Squire Courtyard) 1923

Buildings were arranged to create tiny patios, connected by walkways, or paseos. Though the intervening 66 years have seen major changes, this patio still exists, beautifully detailed and lovingly maintained. Details of wrought iron, lighting, heavy wood doors with fanciful shapes and hinges, and abundant bougainvillea help set the mood. This central fountain is a later but thoroughly appropriate addition. The effect on human behavior is deliberate, and enchanting. The arcaded sidewalks were designed for strolling. The little paseos were designed to pull you in with a tantalizing glimpse of flowered courtyards beyond. The patios themselves invite you to linger. A relaxed pace is part of the overall strategy. It is virtually impossible for a visitor to hurry through Rancho Santa Fe.



PLOT PLAN OF CIVIC CENTER OF RANCHO SANTA FE - DEL MAR - CALIFORNIA -
REAVA AND JACKSON - ARCHITECTS -

San Diego Historical Society—Ticor Collection

Original Civic Center plot plan, ca. 1922.

6 Offices, (originally Harlan residence) 6036 A and B La Flecha 1922

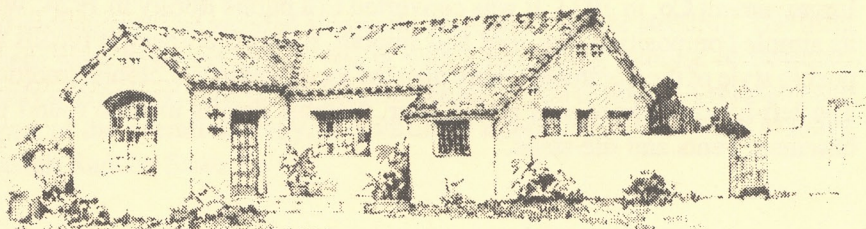
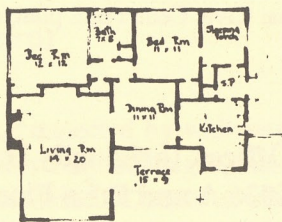
This was the first residence designed by Rice for the Rancho Santa Fe Land Improvement Co. in 1923. It was converted to a public library in 1924. With its simple composition, flat roof and smooth, rounded corners, it recalls the pueblo style of the Southwest more than the local Mexican Colonial tradition. The left-hand entrance was added later. Notable details include round tile basement vents and tile steps.

7 Residence, (originally Voris residence)

16834 Via de Santa Fe

1924

Under its original name of Casa Collado (Hill House), this house was designed for C.M. Paddock. However, it was purchased instead by Mr. U. L. Voris, a prominent early figure in local agriculture. Like other houses near the Civic Center, it is set well back from the street for privacy. It has been substantially enlarged and remodeled over the years, most visibly in the expansion of the garage. The south corner of the house, with its large, flat-arched picture window and decorative attic vents, is unchanged. Low eaves, varying slightly in height though without overhangs, emphasize a human scale. Textures of walls and roof are much smoother and less rustic than in many Rice houses.



CASA COLLADO . . . LOT 3 - BLOCK 31
RANCHO SANTA FE . . . CALIFORNIA

San Diego Historical Society—Ticor Collection

Sketch of Casa Collado, 1924.

This drawing is typical of Rice's residential sketches.

The floor plan was often included to one side.

8 Cottage

Via de Santa Fe at La Granada

ca. 1920's

This tiny cottage makes thoughtful use of the same features, in miniature, that distinguish Rice's larger and more prestigious buildings. These include a smooth plaster finish, tile roof with some kicker tiles for texture, a single arch at the entry, and sloping, or "battered" chimney walls. Round tile vents appear again, this time in the attic. Solid shutters decorate the windows.

9 Residence, (originally Larrick residence)

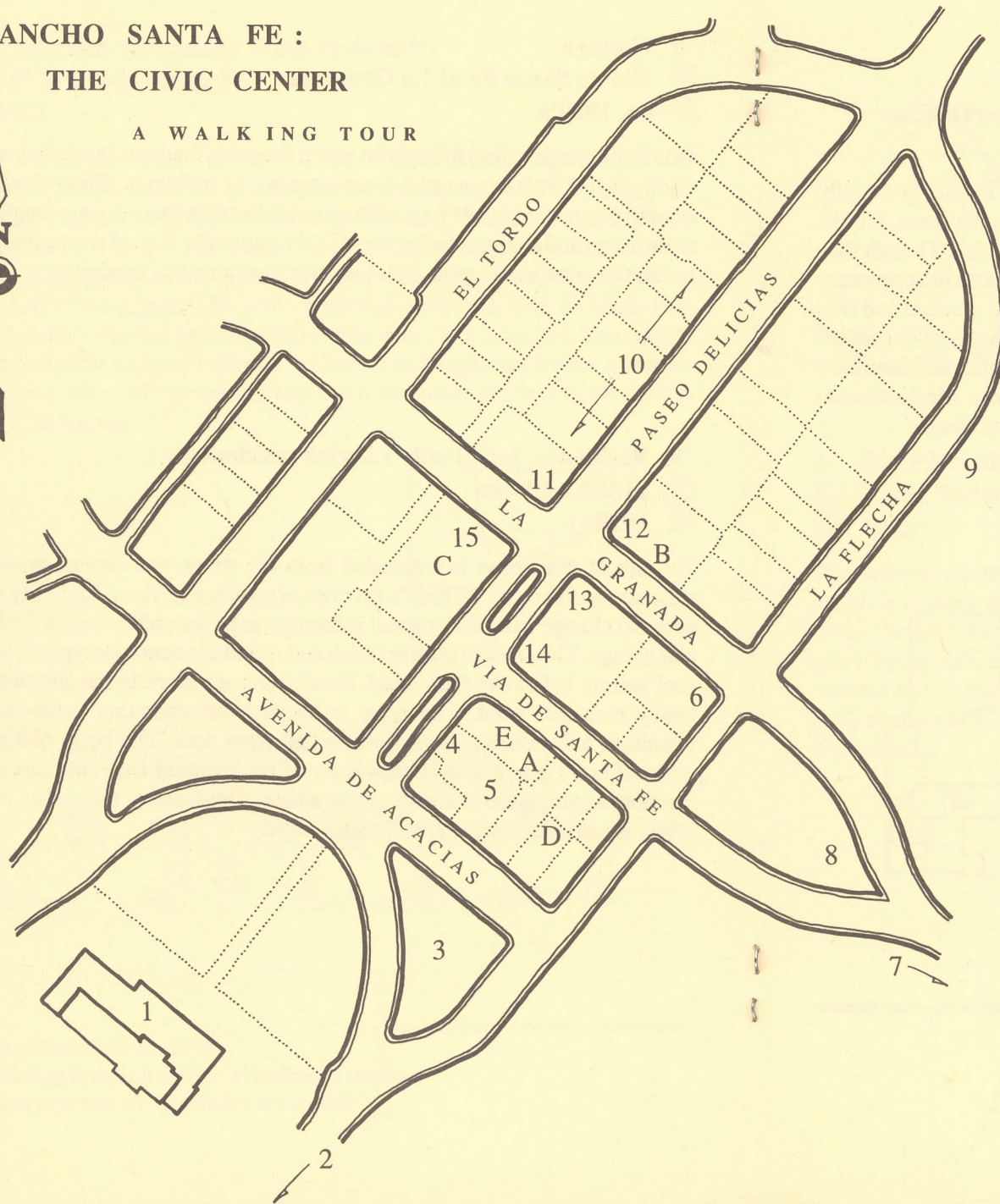
6135 La Flecha

1928

The life of this house is concealed from the street, and centers around an enclosed garden, one of Rice's favorite organizing devices. The only major external change from the original is thought to be the arch between the house and garage. The smooth plaster finish and round tile vents are typical, but the roof texture is heavier than usual. Roof spans are short, in keeping with the heavy materials used. The entry is layered, incorporating grille-covered openings, a flattened arch, and an arched front door. The beam and plank-covered entry porch is a continuation of the exposed roof structure at the interior. Again, these elements create a charming sense of scale. The overall effect is intimate, friendly, and picturesque.

RANCHO SANTA FE :
THE CIVIC CENTER

A WALKING TOUR



POINTS OF INTEREST

1. The Inn at Rancho Santa Fe
2. Residence
16780 La Gracia
3. Registered historic landmark plaque
Avenida de Acacias at La Flecha
4. Paseo Delicias and arcade
5. Patio off Paseo Delicias
(now called Country Squire Courtyard)
6. Offices (La Flecha House)
6036 A and B La Flecha
7. Residence
16834 Via de Santa Fe
8. Cottage
Via de Santa Fe at La Granada
9. Residence
6135 La Flecha
10. Town Houses:
6126 Paseo Delicias, " Casa Blanca"
6122 -14 Paseo Delicias
11. Stores
Paseo Delicias at La Granada, NE corner
12. La Valenciana Building
(originally Christiancy Apartments)
Paseo Delicias at La Granada, SE corner
13. Site of Garage Quadrangle, corner garden
6033 Paseo Delicias
14. Site of gas station
La Granada north of Paseo Delicias
15. Site of original school
Paseo Delicias at Via de Santa Fe

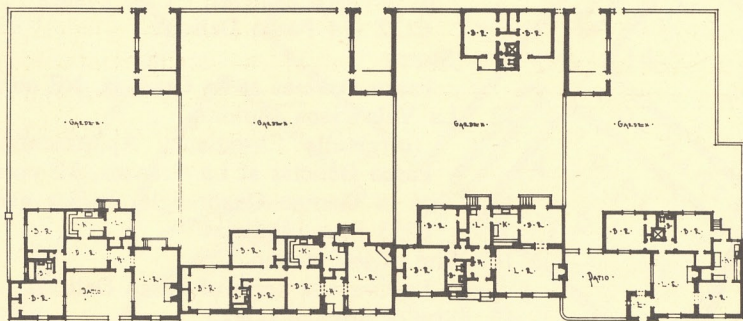
CIVIC CENTER SPONSOR LOCATIONS

- A. Gavroche Children's Clothier
- B. Quimby's Restaurant
- C. Rancho Santa Fe Flowers
- D. Sonrisa Bakery
- E. Ylonka's Boutique

10 Town Houses

6126 Paseo Delicias, "Casa Blanca,"
(Ida Mae Moore residence), and 6122-14 Paseo Delicias
1926

These five "townhouses" were designed as variations on a theme. To be fully appreciated, the group should be first viewed from across the street. Unlike the previous houses, they form a solid wall along the sidewalk. Though they share similar materials, details, and forms, each is unique both in appearance and in plan. Flat roof lines alternate with tiled. Decorative wooden and iron grilles protect street-facing windows. Note particularly the front entrances: small in scale yet bold in form, each is thoughtfully worked out and beautifully detailed, individual in composition and character. In true Mediterranean fashion, the walls conceal diminutive patios and private gardens.



PASEO DELICIAS

GROUP OF RESIDENCES IN CIVIC CENTER, BLOCK D, RANCHO SANTA FE, CALIFORNIA

Plan of townhouses, 1926.

San Diego Historical Society—Ticor Collection



PASEO DELICIAS AT LA GRANADA
RANCHO SANTA FE, CALIFORNIA

San Diego Historical Society—Ticor Collection

Stores at the corner of Paseo Delicias
and La Granada, 1923.

11 Store building

Paseo Delicias at La Granada, N corner
1923

The original rendering of this building shows it substantially as it appears today. It is more fanciful than most buildings in the Civic Center. Unusual details include the herringbone brick exterior wainscot, iron window grilles and balcony rails, and fancifully carved eave supports on the La Granada side. Arched and rectangular doorways lead to different shops. A tearoom originally occupied the Paseo Delicias side, and the village's first Post Office faced La Granada.

12 La Valenciana Realty Building
(originally Christiancy Apartments)
Paseo Delicias at La Granada, E corner
ca. 1928

The “mixed-use” building is not an entirely new concept. This early example contained a real estate office, several apartments on the second floor (one of which Rice occupied for a time), and the architect’s office. It won an AIA Honor Award in 1933. The low building which occupies the street corner today was probably an early addition. From the walled patio a spiral stair, whose rail was originally stepped, leads to the second floor. At the upper landing, the two wings meet at a polygonal tower. The long wooden veranda upstairs recalls “Monterey style” frame buildings. Arches, both round and flat, create arcades leading to the businesses on the ground floor. The facade mirrors the variety of uses to be found inside. Rhythms of arches and windows, of rafters, beams and rails create carefully considered shadow patterns, depth and relief.



San Diego Historical Society—Photograph Collection

Christiancy Apartments, ca. 1948.

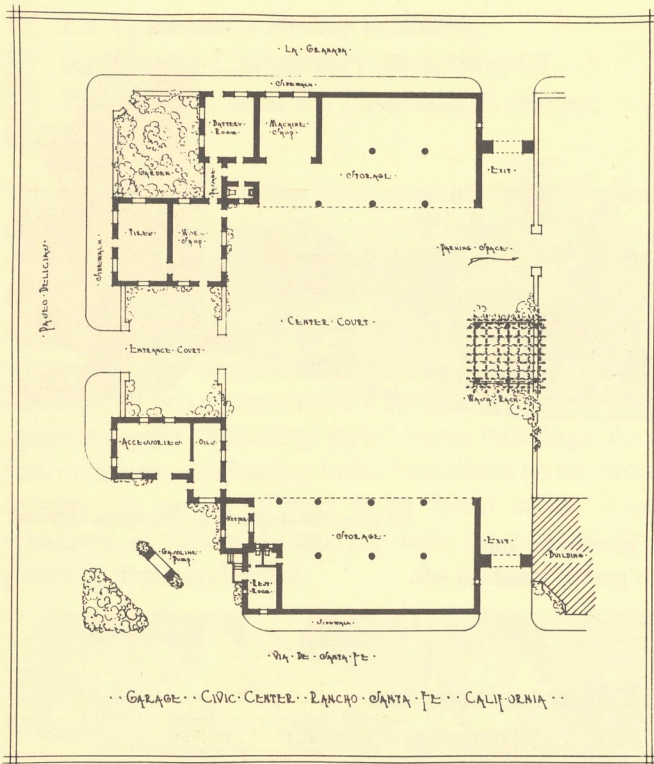


San Diego Historical Society—Photograph Collection

View up Paseo Delicias toward the Inn.
Garage Quadrangle with garden stands at left.

13 Site of Garage Quadrangle garden
Paseo Delicias and La Granada, S corner
1922

This entire block first housed the “Garage Quadrangle,” devoted to auto services. At this corner, shown on Rice’s plan between rooms for batteries and tires, stood a garden with palm trees, bordered by a low wall. The garage owner’s house replaced the service rooms surrounding the garden early on, possibly even before the plan was realized. When the block was converted to other commercial use, the garden was removed.



Sketch for Garage Quadrangle block showing garden and gas pump, 1922.

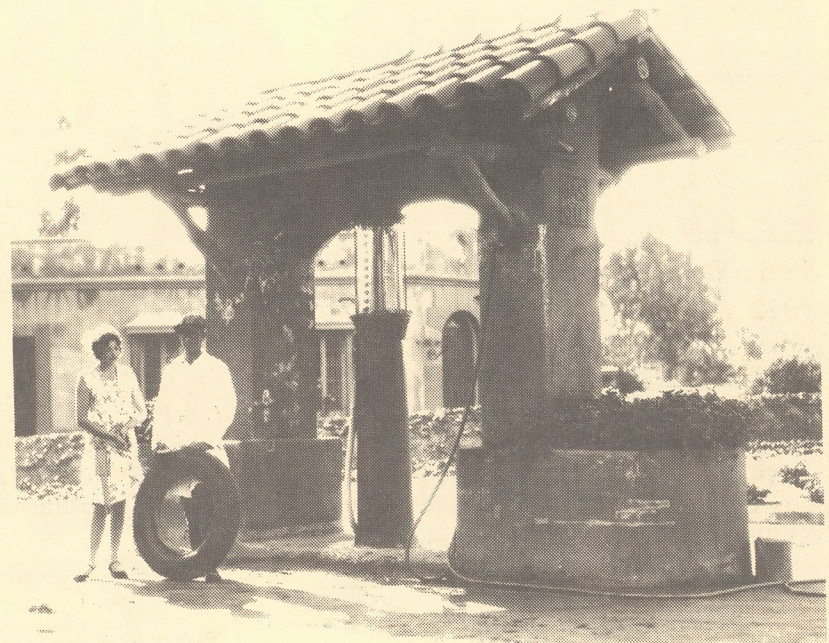
San Diego Historical Society—Ticor Collection

14 Site of gas station Paseo Delicias at Via de Santa Fe, S corner 1922

Early photographs show village gas station on this corner, part of the Garage Quadrangle. It was built in the same picturesque style as the rest of the Civic Center to disguise, as far as possible, its modern technological function. The single pump stood in an arch under a tiled roof with rustic, exposed wooden supports. Large planters nearby, full of vines and flowers, added to the illusion of the village well (which in a sense it was!).

15 Site of original school La Granada NW of Paseo Delicias ca. 1924

This corner was the site of Rancho Santa Fe's first school, which contained two classrooms. When the school outgrew this site, the building passed through a variety of uses. Traces of the original construction remain, notably the three large rectangular window facing La Granada.



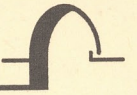
The village gas pump, 1928.

San Diego Historical Society—Ticor Collection



CONCLUSION

Lilian Rice believed firmly in the value of planned communities, and in creating harmony between buildings and their surroundings. What makes Rancho Santa Fe so special is its rare cohesiveness and unity, from the most prominent civic buildings to the humblest cottage, its complete, richly textured fabric rather than any single feature. It is beautifully suited to its site, designed to be seen against the backdrop of eucalyptus trees, arid hills and distant mountains, to evoke the spirit of the old ranchos. Its roots lie in the soil and in the image of old California. Her adaptations of the materials, forms, and details of Spanish and Mediterranean architecture embody a philosophy of picturesque, romantic charm. She drew her inspiration both from the Rancho's history and her travels through rural Spain. With her understanding of past architecture and her philosophy of modern town design, Lilian Rice created a genteel fantasy in the eucalyptus grove that continues to captivate us today.



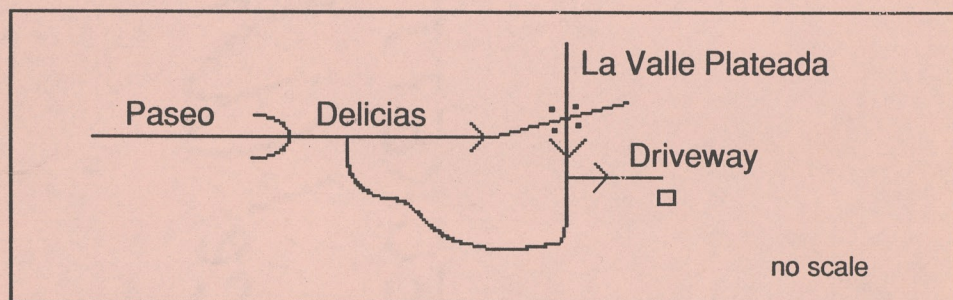
Right: Eucalyptus grove, ca. 1920's.

Welcome to Women In Architecture's self-guided walking tour of the Rancho Santa Fe Civic Center, focusing on houses and commercial buildings by architect Lilian Rice. Your participation helps us increase public awareness of Rice's work, and supports WIA's scholarship fund.

IMPORTANT TOUR DAY INFORMATION

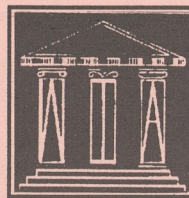
Four houses on this tour will be open for visitors from 10AM to 3PM:

1. 6135 La Flecha (Stop #9).
2. 6126 Paseo Delicias, "Casa Blanca" (stop #10).
3. 6118 Paseo Delicias, (stop #10). Note: light refreshments will be offered in the private garden of this house.
4. 6855 La Valle Plateada, (Stop #16). Though it is not in the Civic Center, this house has been graciously opened to us. Drive NE on Paseo Delicias approximately 1 mile from the Civic Center. Turn right on La Valle Plateada (the stop sign has a flashing signal). No. 6855 is on the left at about 200 yards. Park on the street and walk up the driveway from the gate (about 100 yards) to the main house.



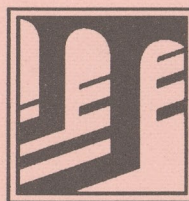
This residence is a fine example of Rice's adaptation of the Colonial patio-centered plan. Rooms on all three sides open directly to the patio. The patio becomes an outdoor room, used at least as much as those indoors. The second story of the north wing was an early addition by Rice, though the balcony above the patio is recent. The exterior stucco and gate structure are new and the present dining room was the kitchen; otherwise the house is remarkably little changed. The living room in particular, with its dark beams and tile floor, looks today virtually as it did in the 1920's.

The design concept creates the effect of several small buildings about the patio rather than one large one. Varying eave and ridge heights and the angled entry emphasize this additive composition. Skillful siting protects residents' privacy from the street and focuses on the fine vistas across the valley. Inside the narrow wings, one is never far from a window and a view. Noteworthy details include the wrought iron rails, an arched front door, and many interior touches.



WOMEN IN ARCHITECTURE is a non-profit organization, founded in 1978, whose goal is to promote architecture, design, and women in the design professions. WIA is a forum for exchanging resources and ideas. WIA presents educational and professional programs for members and the public, and provides scholarships for women students of architecture.

For membership or other information, contact: Women in Architecture, P.O. Box 84924, San Diego, CA 92138-4924 tel. 619/293-7633



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