

4 Significance

BRIEFLY STATE HISTORICAL AND/OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE OF THE PROPOSED LANDMARK:
INCLUDE DATES, EVENTS, AND PERSON(S) ASSOCIATED WITH THE SITE. (USE AN ADDITIONAL SHEET IF NECESSARY)

1500 E. First Street (originally 1400 or 1404 E. First Street AKA Park Boulevard depending on the source)¹ is located on the west 50' of Lots 1 and 2 in Block 53 of the Alamitos Beach Townsite. Subdivided in 1904 by the Alamitos Land Company, headed by Jotham Bixby and George Flint, the tract was originally designed to be a stand alone Townsite, prior to being annexed to Long Beach in 1906.

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The house is associated with Calvin Ferguson, who was a pioneer of Crowley County, Kansas. Ferguson, who was instrumental in expanding mail service in the western and southwestern territories of the United States during a key transitional period in U.S. history. The government was focused on homesteading Native American lands, and mail service was one important tool in meeting this objective. Ferguson's ingenuity bridged the transition from "pony express" to stagecoach service. Ferguson was also a notable business and land owner, as well as a property developer in Crowley County, investing in the city's first street car service, which, coincidentally, ran past his Ferguson Building in downtown Winfield.

In making the move to California in the early 1900s, Ferguson utilized his transportation connections to reactivate the IBEX Mine in Needles. He and his wife, Ellen, hired a prominent L.A. architectural firm to design a substantial and novel Craftsman home on a prominent corner in the newly-established Alamitos Beach Townsite. Ferguson was indicative of the type of character settling Long Beach at the time.

Calvin Ferguson & Family

Original Owner and Builder 1906 - 1920

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CALVIN FERGUSON 1914

Ferguson was a man of many lives and talents. He was born in Butler, Pennsylvania in 1848 to a father who was a railroad contractor (not a conductor). At the age of 17, Calvin enlisted in the 54th Indiana Infantry, serving for just 90 days in Kentucky and Tennessee, after which his regiment mustered out. Jobs in steam boating and supplying government stores led him to Baxter Springs, Kansas, and marrying Ellen Chittenden (1849 Indiana-1928 Long Beach) there. He and Ellen spent the

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The couple had no children and are buried in the Cherry family plot in Evergreen Cemetery, Los Angeles.

Mavro and Sarah Greenbaum

1927-1950

The Greenbaums were responsible for turning the original Ferguson home into four apartments. This was probably done soon after they moved in, for the 1930 Census lists four distinct households, including their own. This same census estimated the house to be worth \$10,000 that year. The Great Depression was just beginning to take off, and there is no indication that the couple was financially well off. So, the Greenbaums rented apartments in the carved up house for \$25 and \$30 per month. In 1930, thirteen people lived in the four apartments, ranging in age from 6 to 70. In 1940, nine individuals were living at 1500 E. First, with rents ranging from \$18 to \$20. By this time, Mavro was widowed (no children). One of his tenants, Dorothy Seldomridge – a divorced mother – worked for the State Relief Agency (S.R.A.), a New Deal program. Other tenants worked in the burgeoning aircraft industries that were fast becoming the area's most important economic driver.

Mavro Greenbaum (1874-1953) was born in Essegg, Croatia⁷, arriving in the United States in 1898. He declared allegiance to the U.S. while living in Los Angeles in 1915, where he worked in mercantile at the time. The 1920 Census lists the Greenbaums at 1520 E. 4th Street in Long Beach where Mavro sold life insurance for the Astas Insurance Company and later Metropolitan Life.⁸ The Greenbaums managed to weather the Depression, including a bankruptcy in 1933, and hung onto the house on First Street.⁹

Sarah Greenbaum (1869-1936) was born in New York of Irish parentage.¹⁰ Searches for career or death notices netted no information of value to this house's history.¹¹ No obituary was found in local papers.

Floyd W. and Ethel Babcock

1950-1954

The Babcocks moved to Long Beach shortly before buying the First Street property. Floyd Wylie Babcock (1877-1960) was originally from a farming family in Farmington, Pennsylvania. His mother, Mary, was widowed fairly early and Floyd began working as a jeweler in his early 20s.¹² Perhaps in support of this career, he took a trip to Veracruz in 1913 at the age of 36.

He married Ethel Mae Eisnor (1897-1955) in 1935 in Manhattan, New York. Floyd would have been 58 at the time of their marriage; Ethel only 38. During the 1940s they lived in Lawrenceville, Pennsylvania where Floyd worked for Remington and Sherman Safes & Vaults.¹³

Their move to Long Beach may have been precipitated by health reasons and age. Floyd would

⁷ Greenbaum noted his country of origin as Austria and Yugoslavia, depending on the census year.

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¹³ WWII Draft Card, 1942, for Floyd Wylie Babcock.

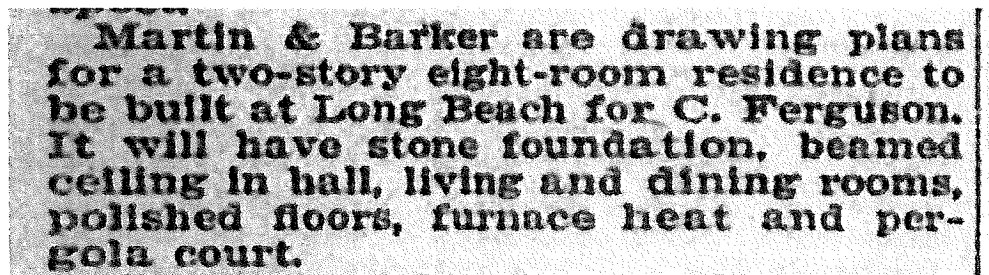
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The association of this residence with the firm of Martin & Barker, as well as the fact that this is the last remaining design in Long Beach by this architectural team, makes a case for protecting the property. This architecture of this distinctive 1906 Craftsman with Japanese influences is rarely found intact in Long Beach today. Its location on this prominent corner in an unprotected neighborhood also points to the value of preserving the residence.

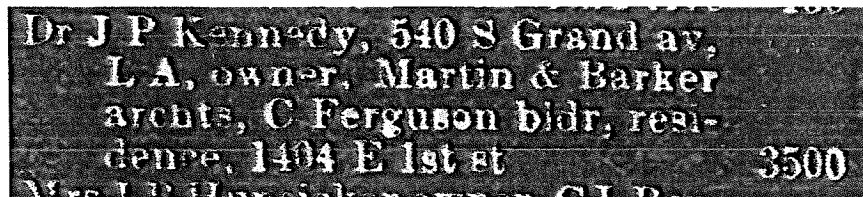
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LAB&C Jun 7, 1906

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Together, Martin and Barker were very busy between 1904 and 1907 with residential designs. Through the efforts of a targeted literature search, only two Long Beach Martin & Barker commissions could be found:

1500 E. First Street for Calvin Ferguson in 1906

1620 E. Ocean¹⁹ for F.W. Flint in 1904 (pictured, below). This residence for Frederick W. Flint, Jr. was a second home for him and his wife, Katharine. Flint was a real estate man, well connected and quite prosperous. He was also Secretary for the Southern California Automobile Association; his work for this group to promote motoring appeared to bring him to Long Beach where his parents lived at a very substantial home location at 543 E. Ocean.²⁰



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Declaration of Intention from Mavro Greenbaum, renouncing allegiance to Francis Joseph, emperor of Austria and Apostolic King of Hungary. U.S. Department of Labor, 5 Apr. 1888.

Petition for Naturalization from Mavro Greenbaum. 11 Apr. 1898.

Babcock

Source: <http://www.joycetice.com/cemt/1970/osceola2.htm>

Anderson

"Obituary-Ramona Anderson," *Long Beach Independent*, 12 July 1972, p. 36

Email correspondence with Gypsy Savides, grand-daughter of Ramona Anderson

Martin & Barker

Literature search of Martin & Barker announcements in Los Angeles Herald, Los Angeles Times

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CALVIN FERGUSON 1911-12

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majority of their married life and career in Winfield in Cowley County, Kansas. The couple had several children, though Ellen had been previously married, having her eldest, William (b. 1867, Indiana), prior to marrying Calvin. Together, they had Juanita (b. 1881, Kansas) and Harry A. (b. 1885, Kansas).³

Winslow newspapers paint a picture of Calvin Ferguson as successful, but not without his detractors, judging from several lawsuits filed against him.⁴ Calvin was also an early principal of the City's Union Street Railway and had an exciting career running mail through what was then U.S. Territories: Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Colorado and New Mexico. Just prior to leaving Winfield for California, Winslow sold the prominent stone Ferguson Building in downtown Winfield for \$20,000, and sold off his furnishing from this location, in anticipation of a move from the state.⁵

His move to California in 1905-06 prompted a new enterprise: Purchase and reorganization of the old Ibex Mine in Needles, California. His daughter, Juanita Lee, married a former Kansas City man by the name of Charles Beach in 1906 in Long Beach.⁶ Son, Harry A., was a superintendent at the Ibex Mine until 1915 when Cal died, age 70, at the house on August 8 that year. He is buried in Sunnyside Cemetery with G.A.R. honors recognizing his military service.

Ellen sold the house on First Street in 1920 moving with her son, Harry, to what was the rear of the lot at 28 Falcon, erecting a home for herself there. She died at age 80 in 1928. Harry tried his hand at a variety of jobs to help support his mother after Cal's death, but his main passion seemed to rest in ranching. He owned a farm in Hesperia, San Bernardino County where he eventually moved, dying in Tulare County in 1947. His older sister, Juanita Lee Beach, had died a few years earlier at the age of 63 in 1944 in Los Angeles.

ADDITIONAL OWNERS & RESIDENTS - Title Chain

James J. and Birdie S. Allan

1920 – 1926

James John "J" and Birdie S. Allan purchased and occupied the house at First and Falcon for a brief number of years. James (1861-1933) was born in Moorefield, Ontario, Canada, becoming a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1890. In 1903 he married Josephine A. Hubbard; the two bought and sold numerous lots in the Pomona area, according to title announcements in the L.A. newspapers.

The marriage ended, and in 1909 he married Birdie Selester Cherry (1880-1950) a Philadelphia native. The couple continued to farm alfalfa in Pomona, California and appeared successful enough to have owned their house and farm free of mortgage. Perhaps "J" met Harry Ferguson, as they would have traveled in the same farming/ranching circles around that time.

J.J. Allan had numerous interests. A 1906 article reported his ownership of three of the five launches across the river in West Long Beach using the Southern Pacific landing. His attempts to secure exclusive licensing put him at odds with another ferryman at the time.

³ D.A. Millington & E.P. Greer, "Winfield Courier History of Cowley County, Kansas" 1901

⁴ Sued by Leander G. Cutting for \$182.75 and had to submit to an auction for non-payment for a nearly new hearse. 1876 and 1888.

⁵ *Winfield Daily Courier*, Jun 2 1905, p8.

⁶ *Winfield Courier*, April 5, 1906.

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have been over 70 years old, though Ethel Mae died first - in 1955 - just a few years after they purchased the First St. house. They did make many changes to the home during their short stewardship. It was during their time that rooms were partitioned, the outside staircase erected, the laundry room added to the garage and a kitchen and living room added to the first floor. (see Section 3 – Description – for specific permits).

Their roots were not deep in Long Beach. Their bodies were interred in Pennsylvania at Tioga County's Babcock family plot.

Samuel A. & Ramona Anderson

1955 - 1978

Samuel Anderson (1899-unknown) was a tenant, off and on, at 1500 E. First Street, beginning in 1938. Born in Illinois and a resident of Slaton, Lubbock, Texas prior to his move to Long Beach, Anderson was in sales most of his adult life. He and his wife, Ramona (1898-1972), bought the property from the Babcocks in 1955, continuing to rent out the various apartments. The Andersons had a blended family, as Ramona's children from previous marriages, Juanita and Paul William Rose, lived off and on with Sam and Ramona over the years.¹⁴ Billy Rose was a well-known character in Long Beach, seemingly on both sides of the law, where he settled after a career in the Navy. Juanita's daughter, Gypsy Savides, is still living and remembers the house well. She plans to send photographs of the home during the 1950s and '60s in support of this landmark application.

The current owner, **Gail Cooper**, purchased the house from Sam Anderson in 1978. She has continued to rent out the partitioned apartments, though reduced the total number of units to three. She occupies one of the two downstairs units.

¹⁴ Ramona was originally named Ada. Married a number of times, she appeared to have had a difficult life. A family tree on Ancestry.com shares a number of pictures and the backstory on this woman and her children, especially Billy Rose (1911-1995)

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Martin & Barker are drawing plans for a two-story eight-room residence to be built at Long Beach for C. Ferguson. It will have stone foundation, beamed ceiling in hall, living and dining rooms, polished floors, furnace heat and pergola court.

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The Design by Martin & Barker

The assessor valued the house at \$4,676.¹⁷

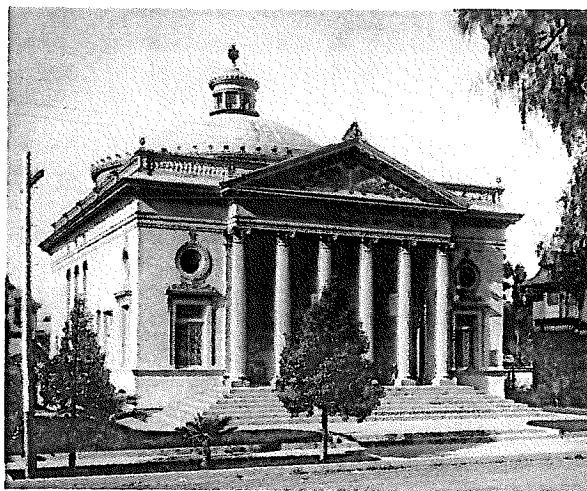
Original assessor description in 1906:

- Single family residence
- Cobblestone foundation
- Bay windows – 3
- Exterior siding
- Gabled shingled roof with dormers – cut-up
- Two living rooms
- Five bedrooms
- One kitchen / One bathroom (upstairs)

When Calvin Ferguson commissioned this Alamitos Beach home in 1906, Martin & Barker were handling several commissions in Los Angeles.¹⁸

Martin was well established in Los Angeles prior to his partnership with Barker, designing such landmarks as the First Church of Christ Scientist in 1901 (right), the Harvey Rice house on Main and Rice Avenues, and numerous commissions for developers, school districts and individual homeowners.

Neal Barker (1856-1925) was a native of Manchester, England, but practiced his craft in Manitoba, Canada for the better part of his professional career. The Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada notes that Barker experienced the fallout from an unscrupulous client who attempted to steal Barker's design and give it to a lower bidder. Barker eventually prevailed, but ended up moving to Pasadena, California after 1900 where he set up shop with his brother, Charles A. Barker (Barker Engineering Company), and L.A. architect, M. Paul Martin.



Exterior view of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, located at 625 W. 17th Street, just west of Figueroa Street. Designed by architect M. Paul Martin, the Corinthian style church was built in 1901 at the cost of \$20,000. LAPL 00075340 [Security Pacific National Bank Collection]

¹⁷ L.A. County Assessor Building Description Blank, dated Dec. 14, 1906.

¹⁸ See addendum of Martin & Barker announcements

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Sources

General

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Notices of Martin and Baker Commissions 1904-1906

LA Herald
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Sec. III, p. 3

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The same architects are also preparing drawings for an eight-room residence to be erected on Fifth avenue near Washington street for A. Leithhead. It will have rustic and shingled exterior. There will be large brick mantels in living room and library, and beamed ceilings in living room. Plate and leaded glass, polished floors, buffet, etc., are also provided.

LA Herald
Dec. 23, 1906

Martin & Barker are drawing plans for a three-story and basement apartment building, 142x61 feet, to be built on Scarff street, between Twenty-third and Adams streets, for John R. Powers and Thomas B. Brown. It will be of frame construction with brick veneer plastered exterior, pressed brick trimmings, staff ornamentation and metal tile roof. It will have a concrete foundation. There will be twenty-four apartments, six of three rooms and eighteen of two rooms, each suite having private bath and buffet kitchen. Steam heat, patent wall beds, private telephone system, two fire escapes, hardwood floors, pine trim and other first class improvements entering into the construction of a modern apartment house will be provided.

W. J. Saunders has drawn plans and

LA Herald
Jun 17 1906

Martin & Barker are preparing plans for a two-story and attic ten-room residence to be erected in Orange for T. M. Schadel. It will have stone foundation and porch piers and rustic siding. Pressed brick fire place, buffet, hardwood floors, first class plumbing, etc., are specified.

LA Herald
Aug 1, 1906
Sec. III, p. 3

Martin & Barker have drawn plans for three frame residences, one of eight rooms and two of nine rooms each, to be erected on Wilshire boulevard, near Hoover street, for H. T. Eldridge. Each house is of a different design and all will be strictly modern in every respect. Plate glass windows, beamed ceilings, oak floors, brick mantels, built-in book-cases and buffet, first-class plumbing, etc., are specified.

LA Herald
May 20, 1906

Martin & Barker are preparing plans for a six-room bungalow to be built on Van Ness avenue, between Sixteenth and Washington streets, for W. C. Beattie.

LA Times
March 5, 1905, p V16

Architects Martin & Barker are taking bids for a one-story mission-style pumping station 20x40 feet, to be built on Ocean Park Heights tract. A complete plant will be installed.

They are also preparing plans for Mrs. B. B. Mosser of a six-room residence to be built on West Twenty-fifth street near Cimarron street.

They have also plans of a one-story four-room school building 64x92 feet to be built in the Cahuenga district.

LA Times

July 24, 1904, p D2

Architects Martin & Barker have prepared plans of a two-story nine-room frame residence to be built on West Twentieth street for Charles Hornbeck. It will have a brick foundation, rustic and shingle siding, plate and leaded glass windows.

They are also preparing plans for F. W. Flint of a two-story eight-room frame residence to be built on the bluff at Alamitos Beach.

They have also prepared plans of a depot building for the owners of the Ocean Park Heights tract to be built on the Pacific Electric Railroad line to be known as Rosborough station. It will be of frame construction with plaster over metal lath exterior and Spanish tile roofing. The building will span the roadway, and will be 17x17 feet, with waiting-rooms on each end.

