

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

Primary #  
HRI #  
Trinomial  
NRHP Status Code

Other  
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

Listings

Page 1 of 8 \*Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) The George Riddell Miller Home

P1. Other Identifier: \_\_\_\_\_

\*P2. Location: ☐ Not for Publication ☐ Unrestricted

\*a. County Fresno and (P2c, P2e, and P2b or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

\*b. USGS 7.5' Quad Fresno North, CA Date \_\_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_; R \_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_ of Sec \_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_ B.M.

c. Address 617 E Carmen Avenue City Fresno Zip 93728

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone \_\_, \_\_ mE/ \_\_ mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, decimal degrees, etc., as appropriate)

APN 451-041-11

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

The property located at 617 E Carmen Avenue, the George Riddell Miller Home, is located within a rectangular parcel on the north side of E Carmen Avenue near the intersection of N Echo and E Carmen avenues. The subject property consists of a one-story single-family residence with attached carport and a detached one-car garage. The residence takes up about one-half of its parcel, centered within the parcel, with its primary elevation facing south towards E Carmen Avenue; it sits slightly above street level and gradually slopes down toward the street. This single-family residence was constructed in 1919 of stucco over wood frame in the Craftsman architectural style. It has rectangular plan. The main roof consists of multiple gables but is primarily side gabled with a centrally placed pop-up gable that has a large vertically-oriented vent. (See Continuation Sheet)

\*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP2 Single family property

P5a. Photograph or Drawing (Photograph required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



\*P4. Resources Present: ☒ Building  
☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐  
Element of District ☐ Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5b. Description of Photo: (view, date, accession #) September 11, 2018

\*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: ☒ Historic ☐ Prehistoric  
☐ Both

1919; Building permit #4966 issued 06/24/1919

\*P7. Owner and Address:

Jeanette A. Borba

617 E Carmen Avenue

Fresno, CA 93728

\*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address) Laura Groves van Onna  
Historic Preservation Specialist  
City of Fresno

\*P9. Date Recorded: May 7, 2019

\*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)  
Intensive

\*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.")  
Evaluation of 617 E Carmen Avenue

for the City of Fresno Local Register of Historic Resources

\*Attachments: ☐ NONE ☐ Location 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

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) The George Riddell Miller Home \*NRHP Status Code 5S3/5D1

Page 2 of 8

B1. Historic Name: The George Riddell Miller Home

B2. Common Name: The George Riddell Miller Home

B3. Original Use: Single-family residence

B4. Present Use: Single-family residence

\*B5. Architectural Style: Craftsman

\*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

According to the original building permit record, the one-story residence and detached one-car garage were constructed in 1919.

\*B7. Moved? ☒ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Original Location: \_\_\_\_\_

\*B8. Related Features:

B9a. Architect: Unknown

b. Builder: E.J. Farr

\*B10. Significance: Theme Fresno's Expansion Northward

Area Wilson's North Fresno Tract

Period of Significance 1919-1953 Property Type Single-family residence Applicable Criteria Local Register

Criteria i and iii (Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope.

Also address integrity.)

The George Riddell Miller Home is located on lot 5, Block 12 in Wilson's North Fresno Tract, which was surveyed and platted in 1908. Wilson's North Fresno Tract is one of several within the Tower District. According to the original building permit record, this residence was constructed in 1919. It was among the first one-third of residences constructed in the 6-block area of Wilson's North Fresno Tract known locally as the "Wilson Island." The increase in streetcar access with the extension of the Forthcamp Line northward on N Wishon Avenue in 1908 in addition to the relocation of Fresno State Normal School in 1913 (later known as Fresno State University and now as Fresno City College) to the northeast corner of N Van Ness and E McKinley avenues, were instrumental in opening this area to new residential use. (See Continuation Sheet)

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

\*B12. References:

Building Permit Records

City and County Directories

District Record for Wilson Island Historic District Prepared August 6, 2009 by Karana Hattersley-Drayton

*The Fresno Bee*

Fresno County Assessor

Fresno County Recorder

Karana Hattersley-Drayton and Jeannine Raymond, "Historic Property Survey Report and Local Historic District

Nomination for The Wilson Island, Fresno, California," 2009

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

U.S. Census Records

U.S. Department of Labor Records

Virginia McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 2014

B13. Remarks:

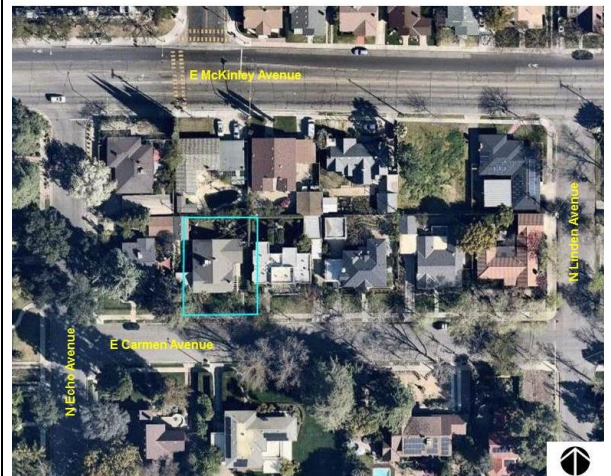
\*B14. Evaluator: Laura Groves van Onna

Historic Preservation Specialist, City of Fresno

\*Date of Evaluation: May 7, 2019

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)



## CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: The George Riddell Miller Home

Page 3 of 8

**\*P3a. Description Continued:** The roof has open, overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails as well as simple brackets and a vertically-oriented vent beneath each gable, and it is clad in asphalt composition shingles. The exterior is clad in stucco. Original metal light fixtures remain within the front porch and side yard patio.

All door and window openings are original and wood-framed, except for those on the east end of the rear (north) elevation. Original door openings include the main entry and side entry. The original windows are all wood windows, each with multiple divided lights over a single light. Most of these windows operate as single-hung; however, there are pocket windows along the side (west) elevation that have the ability to slide down into the wall, creating a completely clear opening. There is also a horizontally-oriented, wood-framed screened opening topped by an angled awning supported by curved brackets centrally located on the rear (north) elevation, aligning with the roofline; it is located just below the ceiling on the interior, where it is operable for ventilation with a hopper opening.

The primary (south) elevation of the property consists of the façade of the residence framed by the carport to the west and the arbor with picket fencing to the east. The façade of the residence consists of the main entry on the west end and two sets of wood windows equally spaced within the central and eastern portion. The main entry is sheltered by a recessed porch open on the west end of the primary façade and on the south end of the side (west) façade. The porch is elevated on a concrete platform topped by brick pavers, is supported by a large square column on the southwest corner of the residence, and is accessed by steps both from the south by an original concrete path with steps and railing leading from the sidewalk as well as from the west by a concrete driveway topped by a wood-framed carport – which aligns with the setback of the residence. The main entry faces west and consists of an original wood door, topped by four vertically-oriented lights and covered by a screen door. Each set of windows on the primary elevation consists of a group of three windows; within each group, the central window has twelve divided lights over a single light, and the side windows each have nine divided lights over a single light.

The arbor with picket fencing on the east end of the primary elevation also aligns with the setback of the residence and is accessed by a narrow original concrete path with steps leading from the side walk. It leads to the partially visible side yard and back yard. On the south end of the side (east) elevation, there is a side yard patio topped by an attached trellis. Like the front porch, it is elevated on a concrete platform topped by brick pavers and accessed by brick steps. The side entry is accessed through the side yard porch and consists of a set of narrow French doors covered by a wide screen door and flanked by single-hung windows. The chimney is located within the side yard patio, between two single-hung windows and south of the side entry; it is also clad in stucco.

The detached single-car garage located within the rear northwest corner of the property was constructed in 1919 with the main residence of wood frame, and it is clad in shingles. It is currently utilized as a storage shed. It has a front gabled roof, with simple brackets and open, overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails, has barn doors, and is accessed by the concrete driveway along the west property line. The garage is not visible from the public right-of-way due to side yard fencing consisting of vertical wood panels topped by latticework, which aligns with the rear setback of the carport.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: The George Riddell Miller Home

Page 4 of 8

**\*P3a. Description Continued:** Front landscaping includes lawn with small mature trees and plantings immediately surrounding the residence and railing for the steps leading from the sidewalk, as well as three equally spaced large mature trees along the sidewalk. Rear landscaping includes lawn as well as brick-paved pathways surrounded by mature plantings.

Extant original interior features include wood flooring, a terra cotta-tiled fireplace, built-in wood cabinets with multiple divided lights, metal floor venting, and metal light fixtures with frosted glass.

**\*B10. Significance Continued:** The subject property is a contributor to the Wilson Island Historic District, which was designated to the Local Register of Historic Resources on October 29, 2009. The Wilson Island Historic District encompasses 80 properties, 78 of which are contributors, within a 6-block area bounded by N Echo Avenue to the west, E Carmen Avenue to the north, E Floradora Avenue to the south, and the back side of the commercial lots along N Wishon Avenue to the east. The "Wilson Island" is one of Fresno's most architecturally distinct neighborhoods, with homes constructed from 1910-1984, but primarily representative of architectural styles prevalent from 1910-1954. Additionally, this neighborhood was settled by many of Fresno's influential families with important ties to banking, education, architecture, and commerce.

Within the District Record for Wilson Island, the George Riddell Miller Home is recognized as a "distinctive one-story Craftsman cottage." George Riddell Miller and his wife Elsie Gertrude Miller lived in the home from 1919-1953. James and Edith Herring are also noted as long-term residents, having lived in the home for 34 years. The home has not yet been evaluated for individual listing to the Local Register of Historic Resources.

According to his naturalization paperwork for the U.S. Department of Labor and 1920 U.S. Census Records, George Riddell Miller was born on November 25, 1875 in Crieff, Scotland to Scottish parents. His last foreign residence prior to arriving in the U.S. was Glasgow, Scotland. He arrived at the port of New York City on or about June 15, 1904, married, and was living with his wife Elsie Gertrude Miller at 617 E Carmen Avenue in Fresno California by 1920. Elsie was born c. 1891 in Robinson, Illinois to a father from Ohio and a mother from Pennsylvania. Miller's occupation is referred to as a secretary in the vineyard industry and also as an accountant.

The building permit record for this property identified E.J. Farr as the contractor for 617 E Carmen Avenue; an architect has yet to be identified. Elmer Jewett Farr was born in 1862 in New York City and arrived in Fresno, California in 1897. He was an acclaimed building contractor and resident of Fresno for forty-three years before passing away in 1940. He is known for having constructed several homes in Fresno, particularly along Van Ness Avenue, for leading building operations for the Fresno City Schools for several years, and for serving as the first president of the Fresno Contractors Association – which later became known as the Fresno Builders Exchange. His residence located at 245 N Fulton Street in the Lowell Neighborhood is individually listed in the Local Register of Historic Resources as Historic Property #139. It was constructed in 1907 as an American Foursquare property type with elements of the Craftsman architectural style. He lived here with his wife Carrie Louise Farr as well as their daughter Vida and son Forest. Once the family sold the home and at the time it was listed on April 8, 1980, it functioned as the Garden House Tea Room.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: The George Riddell Miller Home

Page 5 of 8

**\*B10. Significance Continued:** The George Riddell Miller Home was constructed in the Craftsman architectural style. The Craftsman style originated in southern California, primarily inspired by brothers Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene who practiced together in Pasadena from 1893-1914. It was the predominant style for smaller homes constructed throughout the U.S. from 1905 through the early 1920s. Character-defining features include a low-pitched, gabled roof that has open, overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails; porches, either full- or partial-width, with a roof supported by square columns that frequently extend to ground level; and one or one and one-half stories in height.

### Eligibility

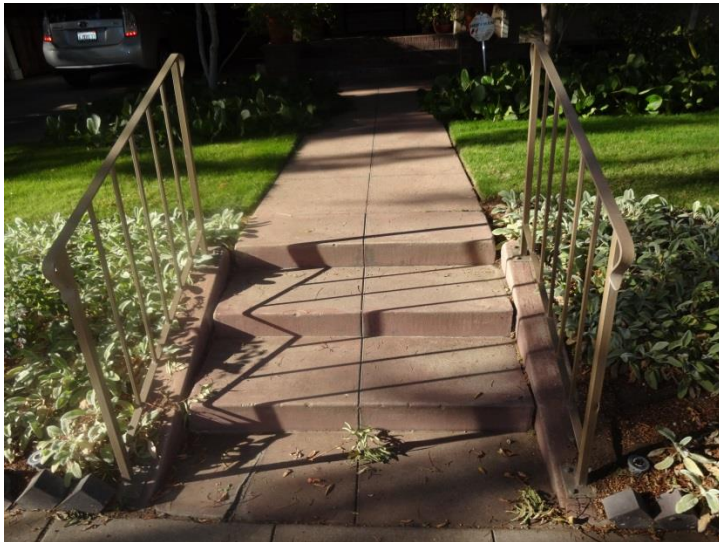
The George Riddell Miller Home located at 617 E Carmen Avenue is eligible for listing in the City of Fresno's Local Register of Historic Resources. The property is greater than 50 years of age and possesses integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association (FMC 12-1607). Additionally, it is significant under Local Register Criterion i because it is associated with Fresno's early expansion northward within the "Wilson Island" of Wilson's North Fresno Tract in the Tower District and Criterion iii because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Craftsman architectural style and represents the work of a local master builder, E.J. Farr.



## CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: The George Riddell Miller Home

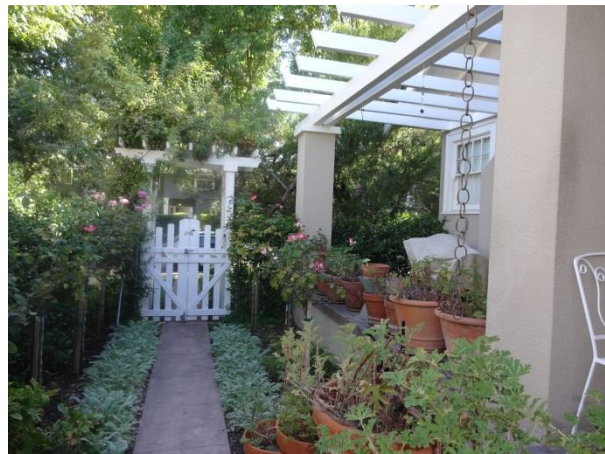
Page 6 of 8





## CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: The George Riddell Miller Home  
Page 7 of 8



## CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: The George Riddell Miller Home

Page 8 of 8



Form 5900  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
NATURALIZATION SERVICE

No. 4644

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**  
**DECLARATION OF INTENTION**

☒ Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof

State of California, In the Superior Court  
County of Fresno, SS: of Fresno County.

I, George Riddell Miller, aged 46 years,  
occupation Accountant, do declare on oath that my personal  
description is: Color White, complexion Fair, height 5 feet 4 inches,  
weight 160 pounds, color of hair Brown, color of eyes Brown  
other visible distinctive marks None  
I was born in Crieff, Scotland  
on the 25th day of November, anno Domini 1875; I now reside  
at 617 Carmen Avenue, Fresno, California  
(Give number, street, city or town, and state)  
I emigrated to the United States of America from Liverpool, England  
on the vessel "Celtic"; my last  
foreign residence was Glasgow, Scotland; I am not married; the name  
of my wife is Elsie Gertrude Miller; she was born at Robinson, Illinois  
and now resides at 617 Carmen Avenue, Fresno, California  
It is my bona fide intention to renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign  
prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, and particularly to George V. King of Great  
Britain and Ireland, of whom I am now a subject;  
I arrived at the port of New York, in the  
State of New York, on or about the 15th day  
of June, anno Domini 1904; I am not an anarchist; I am not a  
polygamist nor a believer in the practice of polygamy; and it is my intention in good faith  
to become a citizen of the United States of America and to permanently reside therein;  
SO HELP ME GOD.

George Riddell Miller  
(Original signature of declarant)

Subscribed and sworn to before me in the office of the Clerk of  
said Court this 30th day of Sep, anno Domini 1904

D. M. BARNWELL,  
Clerk of the Superior Court  
By [Signature], Deputy Clerk

No. [SEAL]



E. J. Farr