

## Mulvehill House Architecture

Mr. James David Mulvehill and his wife, Mrs. A. S. Mulvehill arrived on January 15, 1915 upon the Str. Mongolia from Iowa via San Francisco. Mr. E.F. Mulvehill (father) was an entrepreneur with roots leading back to Ireland, he is said to have owned a popular hat factory, managed a drug store, dabbled in real estate, and was the Notary Attendant at their local bank. The Mulvehill's were renowned, well known and fortunate enough to find their way to Oahu, where they would purchase a plot of land on the newly established 'Dowsett Tract' in Nu'uaniu, creating a quaint home designed by the late Robert Gaylor Miller in 1924, a unique space inspired by a variety of styles, to be called 'The Mulvehill House.'

Architect Robert Gaylor Miller of Phoenix, son of Andrew. M. Miller was of Scotland descent, immigrated from Bolton Village, Canada. His father was a mason, lumberman and Superintendent at Saginaw and Manistee Lumber Company Mills in Williams, Arizona. Robert Miller grew up as a member of the Santa Fe Reading Rooms in Topeka, Kansas- a boarding house for men working on the trains- He then took a job with the U.S. Government Ship Yards in Los Angeles, California. Miller would then find himself in Honolulu in the midst of the 1920s and go on to help design the "Honolulu Hale" in the traditional and well known Spanish Revival architectural style. Miller was known for being influenced by the "Spanish Mission style in his work, suggesting that "anything referring to as Hawaiian in style in fact, is an adaptation of Spanish architecture" (Hawaiian Modern, 29125.) Although, Millers original plans for the house had a rather Italian influence to it, higher pitched ceilings and walls, deep arches, clay tile roofing and no chimney. But the finished product came out to be a little more subdued with elements from the Spanish Revival style.

\*FUN FACT: The home is believed to have been influenced by the "Storybook Style" (Provincial Revivalism) due to its architectural elements drawn from homes located in the French country/English cottage, later known as "Storybook Style" or "Hansel and Gretel." propagated by Harry Oliver, a Hollywood director in the early 1920s. This style is known for its 'imagination, using pitched roofs in shake singles, brick/stone facades, use of chimneys or towers, box windows and eyebrow dormers, exposed beams, arched windows and doors. Ultimately these whimsical homes were the inspiration for 'Lord of the Rings', 'The Hobbit' and the dwarves' cottages of the 1937 film "The Snow White."

Upon further inspection, it should seem more appropriate to believe the architectural properties found in Storybook style homes are not found in the Mulvehill house- character defining features include the front lanai with its red acid-stained floors, large square columns, arched openings and arched doorways. The roof is a multi-hip form with exposed eaves, decorative rafter tails, with a brick chimney. Originally, the roof was of wood shingles, but today it is of staggered asphalt. Wooden shingles with notched cover up the exterior walls, with a rough stucco/plaster finish on the interior walls. Screen doors and windows are present throughout the exterior of the house, decorated with turned spindles and original brass locking hardware. The ceiling in the living and dining room is vaulted and the hallways are arched and flanked with small inset niches. Interior doors to closets, bathrooms and bedrooms are wood-paneled are also arched. Bedrooms also include tall, thin pairs of 12-lite casement windows. The kitchen still has the original tongue and groove wall boards and Douglas Fir flooring are still intact.

By the early 2000s', when the home was purchased by its current owners, Amerjit Ghag and Larry Heim, it was in much need of renovation and rehabilitation. The foundation was sinking and termites had done extensive damage, especially the exposed beams holding the home's steep pitched roof. The rehabilitation architect -Geoffrey Lewis- assisted in performing some modifications. The trio decided to

add a master bedroom, a mezzanine and a dormer with a gabled roof, pushing the roofline higher and adding a stairway and some extra attic space. The once enclosed rear porch area, or better known as 'lanai,' became the family room we see today. In 2012, the home was placed on the Hawaii Register of Historical Places.

### **Features of the home:**

#### **Shape;**

- water foundation
- symmetrical trapezoid shape
- lopsided H shape
- low to ground- 1 level
- multi-lite roof
- gabled roof
- multi-line windows
- window grilles /spindles
- single box window- not original
- brick chimney, original- Art Deco?
- decorative wooden frames
- covered front porch/entry patio
- square columns
- notched clipped shingle roof
- notched clipped shingles w/ edged siding walls

#### **Roof and Roof Features;**

- multi-hip roof w/ exposed eaves
- varies in size and notched edging)
- gabled roof
- exposed eaves, rafter tails; 2'-0" on center
- clipped rafter tails and tongue and groove boards
- originally truss, now opening system for vaulting
- main hipped roof- chimney
- steep-pitched; 8:12 slope

#### **Openings;**

- Arched entry doors (x3)
- arched hallways (x2) 9'-0"
- multi-line arched windows
- arched entry patio
- screened openings (x3) off front porch
- multi-lite arched doors with wooden baluster shutters (x14)
- screen windows

- 6,8,10,12 pane casement windows
- picture windows

**Projections;**

- entry portico
- arched hearth fireplace
- ceiling beams
- exposed eaves, rafter tails; 2'-0" on center
- clipped rafter tails and tongue and groove boards
- brick chimney
- multi-lite box window
- gabled roof

**Trims and secondary Features;**

- wooden decorative frames
- arches molding above windows
- decorative wooden balusters on doors

**Materials;**

- rounded copper gutters
- wooden capitals
- metal balusters
- kitchen walls faced with tongue and groove boards with center bead grooves
- exterior walls have wooden shingles- original notched edging
- brick fireplace
- stucco interior walls - thick plaster coating on ceilings and walls
- roof is asphalt shingles today
- concrete stairs

**Setting;**

- located downward slope of 25,267 square feet lot
- sidewalk runs parallel to home
- tree near back patio- shading
- front yard
- garden surrounding house
- backyard slope towards Kauhipuna Stream
- Alika Avenue, Nu'uauu
- wealth and prominence of neighborhood
- quiet, spacious
- traffic runs along narrow lanes
- Original irrigation rock systems intact (x7?)

**Materials at Close Range;**

- exterior hollow tile walls, wood sheathing
- with plaster on interior
- stucco interior walls - thick plaster coating on ceilings and walls

#### **Craft Detail;**

- fenestration- original
- brick chimney covered in stucco- art deco
- decorative mantel informal
- exposed brick at shaft
- above fireplace- decorative seal/coat of arms
- back patio; door and hardware original

#### **Individual Spaces;**

- basement (originally carport)
- maid's quarters (now laundry)
- covered front porch
- back patio /backyard
- family room (once opened)
- dining room
- kitchen
- bedrooms (x2)
- full baths (x2)
- half bath (x1)
- master bedroom
- attic/storage space
- garage

#### **Related Spaced and Sequence of Spaces;**

- hallway not connected to kitchen
- must walk through dining room of family room to get to kitchen
- stairway to basement
- maid's quarters
- carport
- stairway to master bedroom

#### **Interior Features;**

- ceilings beams
- gobbled roof supported by decorative brackets
- arched hallways
- arched windows/doors
- sheathed ceiling- 1x6 tongue and groove
- V-groove boards

**Surface Finished and Materials;**

- brick covered in stucco fireplace
- stucco covered interior walls

**Exposed Structures;**

- ceiling beams
- exposed eaves
- exposed brick under chimney