

The Lavery House
236 17th Avenue SE
HPC #97-01, Designated May 1997



The circa 1920 Lavery House is significant for its association with Queen Anne and Craftsman style architecture, as well as its association with the City's early development of the Bayboro area in what is now known as the Old Southeast Neighborhood. The land on which the house now sits was sold by local developer Charles L. Harvey to Robert and Nellie Lavery for \$1 and other considerations.

The Lavery House was built in the Queen Anne style, named and popularized by a group of nineteenth century English architects led by Richard Norman Shaw. The identifying features of the Queen Anne style include a steeply-pitched irregularly-shaped roof, patterned shingles, cutaway bay windows and other techniques used to avoid a smooth-walled appearance. The majority of the other examples of Queen Anne architecture in St. Petersburg were built in the downtown area, with the most notable being the John Williams House. Through the years they have either been demolished to make room for new construction or the context of their surroundings has been altered significantly. The Lavery House however, remains in its original single family neighborhood. The Bayboro House, another notable building of the Queen Anne style, is located just to the east of the Lavery House and looks onto Tampa Bay.

The Lavery House is a two and one-half story wood frame structure covered with asbestos shingles that obscure the original clapboard siding. The house, which is rectangular in plan and sits on a continuous rusticated concrete block foundation, is covered with a steeply-pitched hipped roof with a lower side-facing cross gable. The house's most unique features includes its asymmetrical facade with a dominant front-facing attic gable. The cutaway bay window sandwiched between these two gables at the second floor and occurring along the northwest corner of the house is typical of Queen Anne style massing.

The Old Southeast Neighborhood had its beginnings shortly after the turn of the century through the development plans of Mr. Charles Albert Harvey, who organized the Bayboro Investment Company in 1905 and began to develop land around Booker and Salt Creeks. In addition, the Company bought all the land to the east of Fourth Street between Seventh and Nineteenth Avenues South in hopes of creating a harbor. (The area south of Bayboro Harbor and Salt Creek would be developed as residential property.) Development in the immediate area continued when W.J. Overman's rearrangement of J.P. Titcomb's Plan of Bayboro was chartered by the City in 1912. Also in 1912, William and Katherine Rouse applied for and obtained a charter for their subdivision, Rouslynn. This subdivision abuts Bayboro on the north and extends to 22nd Avenue SE to the south.

During St. Petersburg's second boom era from 1919 to 1926, several well known St. Petersburg citizens would reside in the Rouslynn and Bayboro areas. One of these residents was J.M. Lassing, a major player in the early development of St. Petersburg who would donate land to the City which became Lassing Park, located along Tampa Bay east of Beach Drive SE. The surrounding area of the neighborhood was built out between the 1920's and 1940's as a single family style neighborhood and maintains this historic character today.