

**HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
STRUCTURE OF MERIT DESIGNATION
STAFF REPORT**

**THE HIRTE APARTMENT HOUSE, 205 AND 209 NATOMA STREET, 115 BURTON
CIRCLE
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA
APN 333-063-006**

AUGUST 9, 2017



Vicinity Map of 205 and 209
Natoma Street, 115 Burton Circle



Designation boundary is entire parcel to allow for HLC review for compatibility

Significance

The City of Santa Barbara establishes historic significance as provided by the Municipal Code, Section 22.22.040. Any historic building that meets one or more of the eleven criteria established for a City Landmark or a City Structure of Merit can be considered significant. It is the opinion of the Historic Landmarks Commission Designations Subcommittee that the building at 205 and 209 Natoma Street, 115 Burton Circle is an excellent candidate for Structure of Merit designation per the following three criteria:

Criterion A. Its character, interest or value as a significant part of the heritage of the City, the State or the Nation

The building was designed as an apartment house in 1940 for Mrs. Mabel F. Hirte, drawn by Edward C. Jenkins and built by Andrew C. Jensen. Located on a curving corner lot, this triplex residence is a fine example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The building's complex, irregular plan conforms to the contours of the parcel. The building has a one-story portion of the building on Burton Circle and a two-story portion of the building facing Natoma Street. Together the triplex makes a horseshoe space around a rear courtyard. The building's walls are clad with smooth-textured stucco and its complex, low-pitched, cross-hipped roofs are covered with red clay tile. Windows are primarily wooden fixed and double-hung sash. Most entrance doors are wood, six-paneled or pane over panel. The garage doors are panel doors. The condition and integrity of the property are good.

In Santa Barbara, examples of Spanish Colonial Revival can be found throughout the City as one of its most defining styles of architecture. This architectural style characterizes the residential expansion of the West Beach neighborhood in the early twentieth century as a response to the growth of the City's resort industry and improvements to the transportation system. This Spanish Colonial Revival triplex was designed in 1940 and is a character-defining style in the West Beach area. The building would be a contributing structure to the proposed West Beach Historic District. The proposed West Beach Historic District represents Santa Barbara's residential and tourist development along the waterfront from 1900 through 1950. The district has an important collection of Spanish Colonial Revival multi-family residential buildings and courtyard apartment buildings. A portion of the district includes an area originally known as Burton Mound, an archaeological site that was once the location of a prehistoric Chumash settlement. In the early 1900s, this same area was the site of the Potter Hotel, a large luxury resort. After the hotel was destroyed by a fire in 1921, the land was subsequently divided for multi-family residential use and became known as the Ambassador Tract. In addition, between 1920 and 1930, the population of Santa Barbara increased by over fifty percent, with people lured by the climate and the prospect of employment in the booming tourist industry.



The smooth stucco siding, deeply recessed casement windows, and terra-cotta tile roof contribute to the Spanish Colonial Revival style character.

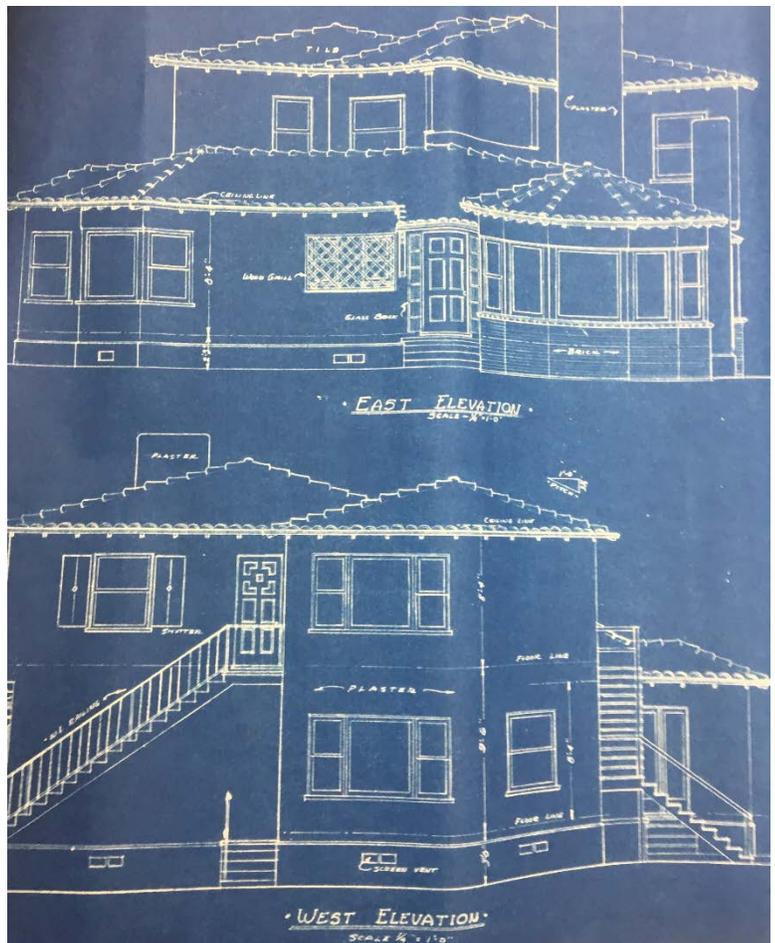
Consequently, West Beach became the center for smaller hotels, motels and cottages, apartment buildings, boarding houses, restaurants, bathhouses, and an amusement area. The district's contributing properties include residences, hotels/motels, and small commercial buildings. The district's predominant style is Spanish Colonial Revival, with a few examples of other styles such as Arts and Crafts and Minimal Traditional. Therefore, as an exceptional example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style that is illustrative of the development of Santa Barbara's status as a vacation destination in the early twentieth century, the triplex at 205 & 209 Natoma Street, 115 Burton Circle qualifies for listing as a City of Santa Barbara Structure of Merit under criterion A.



The round portion of the building follows the contours of the site. Photo taken June 2017.

Criterion D. Its exemplification of a particular architectural style or way of life important to the City, the State, or the Nation

The triplex embodies the Spanish Colonial Revival style's character-defining features, including the whitewashed stucco walls; terra-cotta roof tiles that create a decorative edge from the roof to the wall; recessed, wood windows; wood panel doors, the simplicity in detail; and the emphasis on the interplay of cubic volumes and patios, all typical of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. It represents an example of an architectural style that first appeared in residential and commercial architecture shortly before 1918. Despite the introduction of other styles, the Spanish Colonial Revival style maintained its popularity in Santa Barbara through the 1940s. The triplex also contributes to the visual integrity of the surrounding neighborhood, which is primarily residential in character, encompassing many other



The original elevation drawings for the building drawn in 1940.

Spanish Colonial Revival style buildings.

Because the triplex at 205 and 209 Natoma Street, 115 Burton Circle exemplifies its architectural style, it is eligible for listing as a City of Santa Barbara Structure of Merit.

Criterion G. Its embodiment of elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials and craftsmanship

The triplex embodies the following elements that demonstrate an outstanding attention to design, detail, materials, and craftsmanship: the design of the low-pitched, cross-hipped roofs with terra-cotta roof tiles that create a decorative edge from the roof to the wall; the largely unadorned, whitewashed, stucco walls; recessed, wood windows; panel doors; the round portion of the building that follows the unique contour of the parcel; and the rear courtyard. Because the triplex demonstrates these outstanding elements, it qualifies as a Structure of Merit under criterion G.

Historic Integrity

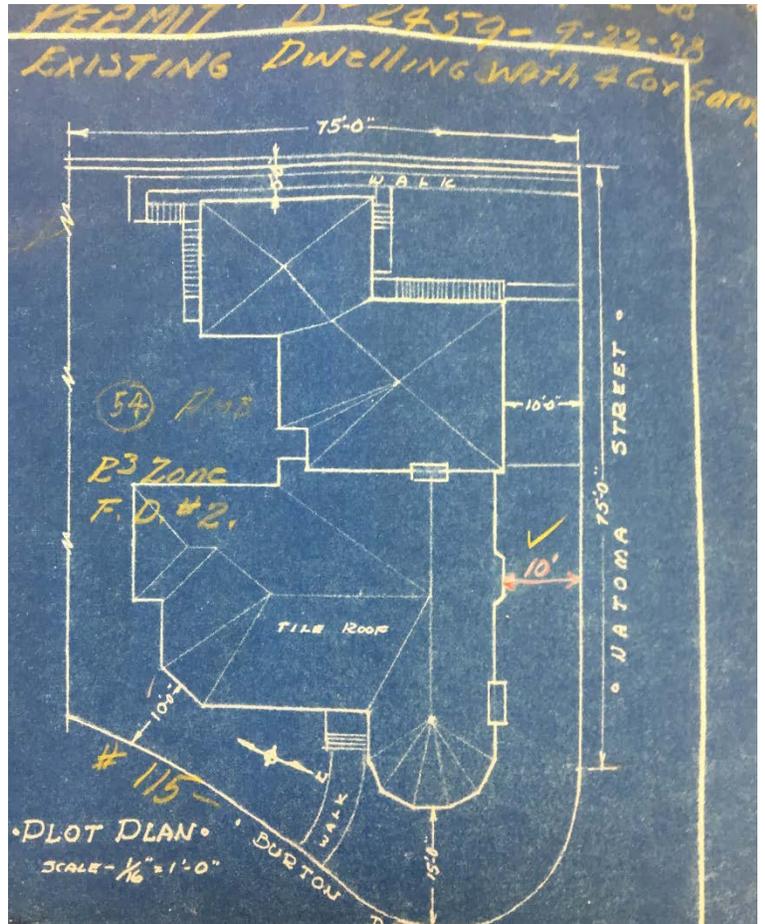
The triplex is in good condition, with almost all of the original materials still present. The triplex retains enough of its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, allowing it to convey its original appearance. An addition was added to the rear of the portion behind Natoma Street in 1950 that is not visible from the public right-of way and is compatible with the architecture of the triplex. The triplex also contributes to the visual integrity of the proposed West Beach Historic District streetscape that has maintained much of its historic integrity.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Historic Landmarks Commission adopt a resolution to designate the triplex building as a Structure of Merit. Staff recommends the entire parcel be designated as the building sits on most of the parcel.

Works Cited

City of Santa Barbara Community Development archive plans dated May 6, 1940
Grumbine, Anthony. City of Santa Barbara Spanish Colonial Revival style guide. 2014



The original 1940 site plan of the building illustrates minimal alterations to the structure.



The elevation facing Natoma Street. Photo taken June 2017.