



City of Santa Barbara
Planning Division

Memorandum

MEETING DATE: April 29, 2020
TO: Historic Landmarks Commission
FROM: Nicole Hernandez, City Urban Historian
SUBJECT: Information regarding Structure of Merit
ADDRESS: 111 West Valerio Street
PROJECT: Request to retain an un-permitted fence.



The purpose of this staff memorandum is to provide the Historic Landmarks Commission with information related to the historic Structure of Merit located at 111 W. Valerio Street, condition of the property prior to the installation of the un-permitted fence, context of the neighborhood, and guidelines for historic context in the Secretary of the Interior’s Guidelines and the Draft Historic Resource Design Guidelines accepted by HLC in 2015.



Above: Images of previous low, wood picket fence at 111 West Valerio Street

The well-known architect, Samuel Marshall Hsley constructed the house at 111 West Valerio Street in c. 1894, in a shingled, vernacular interpretation of the American Colonial Revival style. The Historic Landmarks Commission designated the building a Structure of Merit in 1989.

Images of the streetscape prior to the unpermitted fence construction are provided for the Commission’s reference.



Image of previous low, wood picket fence and low wall across Chapala Street, looking South

The house sits on a corner that retains a high level of historic integrity as a late 19th/ early 20th century streetscape. The streetscape on this corner is characterized by low stone walls and low wood picket fences. The following historic resources are in close proximity:

- 1703 Chapala Street: Structure of Merit, Queen Anne Free Classic style house constructed in 1903
- 1632 Chapala Street: Structure of Merit, Queen Anne style house constructed in 1894
- 32 West Valerio Street: Potential Historic Resources List, Queen Anne Free Classic style constructed in 1903.

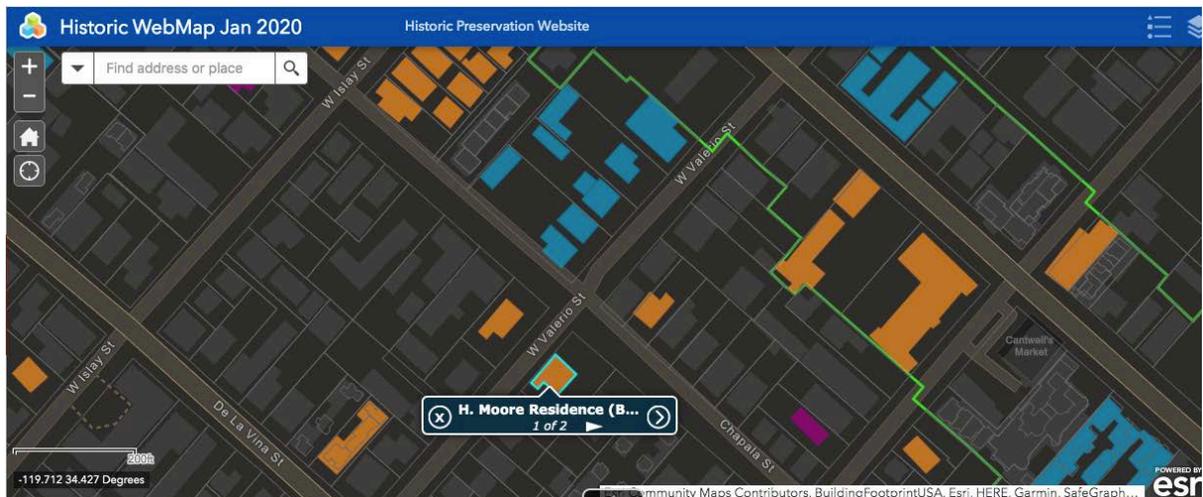


Image of previous low, wood picket fence and low wood picket fence across Valerio Street, looking West

Right: Image of low, wood picket fences on opposite corners of Chapala and Valerio Street, looking West



The map provided below shows identified historic resources highlighted in blue (Listed on the Potential Historic Resources List), orange (Structures of Merit) and purple (Landmarks). There are un-identified historic resources in this area as well.



The Secretary of the Interior address setting with the following statement, “The setting is the area or environment in which a historic property is found. It may be an urban or suburban neighborhood or a natural landscape in which a building has been constructed. The elements of setting, such as the relationship of buildings to each other, setbacks, fence patterns, views, driveways and walkways, and street trees together create the character of a district or neighborhood. In some instances, many individual building sites may form a neighborhood or setting.” The Secretary of the Interior’s

Guidelines find the following action as not recommended; “Introducing a new building or landscape feature that is visually or otherwise incompatible with the setting’s historic character (e.g., replacing low metal fencing with a high wood fence).” *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings* Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer (1995, updated 2017) U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service Technical Preservation Services Washington, D.C. pg. 52 and pg. 146.

Below is an Excerpt from Draft Historic Resource Design Guidelines Approved by HLC in 2015 page 92 and 93, followed by appropriate guideline.

HISTORIC RESOURCE DESIGN GUIDELINES

FENCES, WALLS, AND HEDGES



Transparent low fencing is typical for historic streetscapes like the low wrought iron fence topping a low sandstone wall.

Historically, stone walls, hedges, wood picket, and wrought iron fences that were low in height were used at the front of a property. They were relatively transparent in nature, allowing views into front yards. Santa Barbara is known for its beautiful shades of sandstone that were used in walls throughout the City. The stones were locally quarried and walls built by talented Italian stonemasons. These walls are important assets to the City and should be preserved, retained, and restored. If an original stone retaining wall is collapsing and needs to be reconstructed in concrete, use the original stone as a veneer. Reduce water pressure on a retaining wall by improving drainage behind it or by providing drains in the wall to allow moisture to pass through it. Although sandstone retaining walls are encouraged for the streetscape, concrete retaining walls are appropriate for portions of the property not visible from the public-right-of-way.

The project does not meet the following guideline:

15.49 Match new fences and walls in material, height, and design with those that appear historically in the neighborhood and the architecture of the house.

Also available on the City’s Historic Preservation page:

SantaBarbaraCA.gov/HistoricPreservation: