

**HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE DESIGNATION
REPORT (Contributes to the Historic Significance of El Pueblo Viejo Landmark
District
Completed By Chloe Millet under the supervision of Nicole Hernandez, MFA,
City Architectural Historian**

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
305 EAST ANAPAMU STREET
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA
APN: 029-131-024**

Background:

In 1926, the First United Methodist Church was designed by Los Angeles architect Thomas P. Barber in the Spanish Romanesque subset of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The property was placed on the Potential Historic Resources List in 1978.

The Church embodies character-defining features of the Spanish Colonial

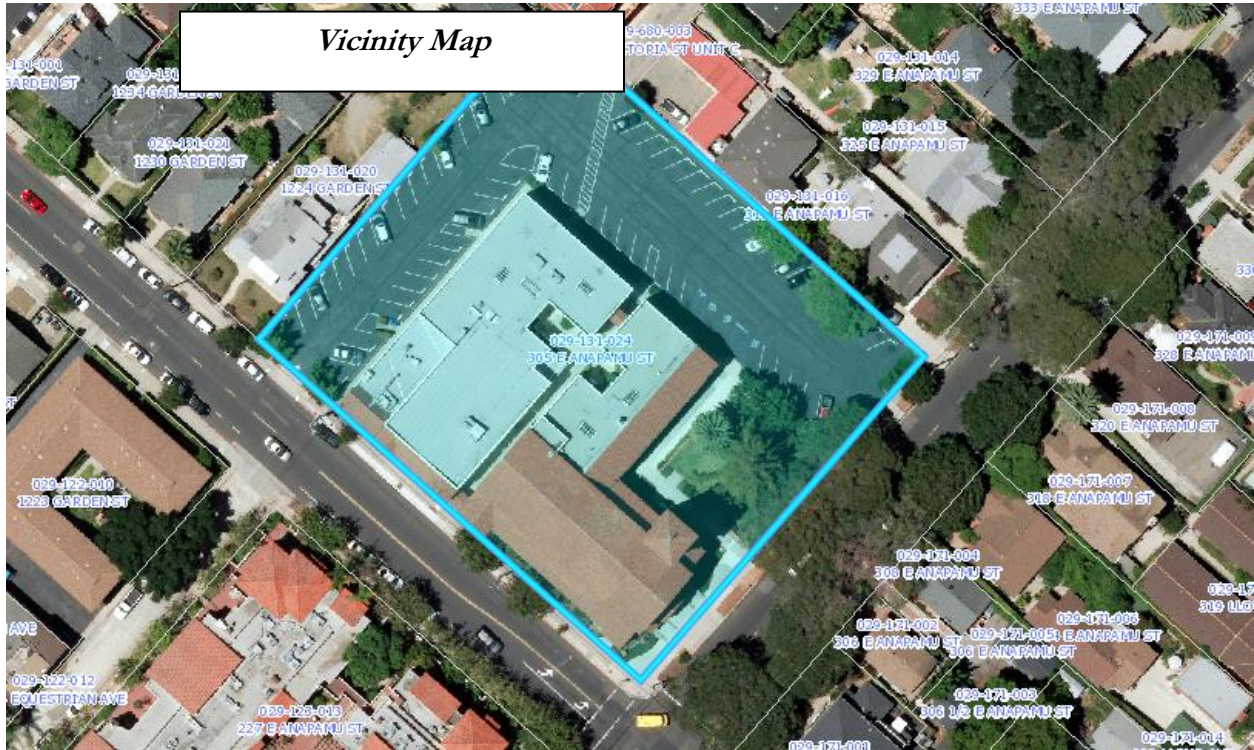
Revival style with its ornate square bell tower, capped with stone dental molding and three round arches. More character-defining features include a terracotta tile roof, a rounded stone arch with intricate details surrounding the wooden door, elongated stained glass windows with rounded arches, dark stone details that are highlighted against the light, simple smooth stucco walls, and the intricate rose windows. A large redwood tree sits in the churchyard. In 1931, the tree was dedicated to Dr. Charles Stoddard, who was the “past Department Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic and for forty years a member of the Board of Trustees of the Church.” Dr. Stoddard was a physician and was recognized as a prominent member of the community.

The proposed boundary of the City Landmark includes the entire parcel. Because the Church meets the City Landmark eligibility criteria for its architectural style and historical significance, it is the opinion of the Historic Landmarks Commission Designation Subcommittee that the building is an excellent candidate for City Landmark designation.



Above Left: View of the front elevation of the First United Methodist Church. June 2020.

Above Right: Original 1926 blueprints.



Vicinity Map

Blue line indicates proposed boundary of the City Landmark designation. This includes the large redwood in the churchyard.

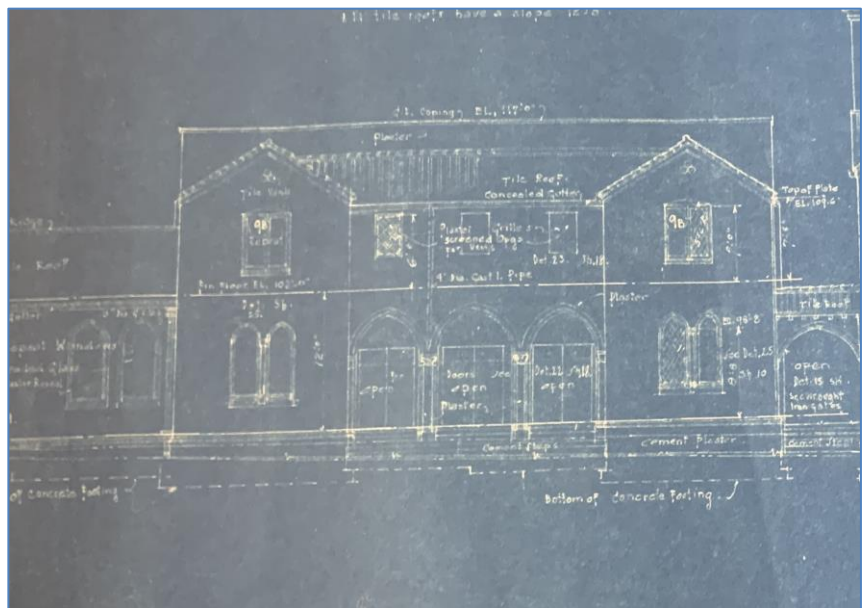
Vicinity Map, City of Santa Barbara Mapping Analysis and Printing System, 2015.

Historic Context:

The First United Methodist Church as it stands today replaced the original structure that was damaged beyond repair in the 1925 earthquake. The congregation of the First Methodist Church was organized in Santa Barbara in 1868. This became the third Protestant Church in Santa Barbara, as it was founded shortly after the Congregational and Episcopal Churches. Both the congregation and the building continue to play an active role in the community.

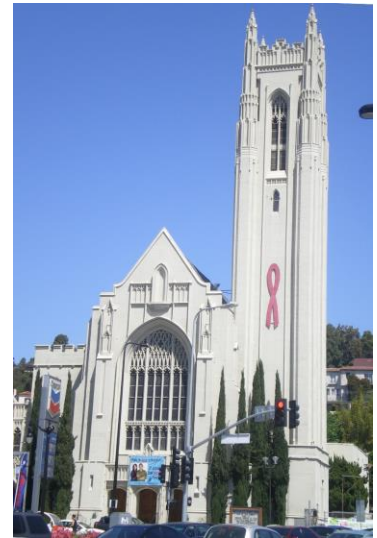
Spanish Romanesque subset of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style:

The church has a rectangular form with a front facing gable. The Church is designed in the Spanish-Italian Romanesque subset of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The church features many intricate details including; elaborate pre-cast stone work in the tower, and around the elongated rounded arched windows and doors. The Church features many stained glass windows and two rose windows. Rose windows are circular windows with mullions and traceries generally radiating from the center and filled with stained glass. The term is used as the windows resemble a rose and its petals. The rose window is considered one of the most characteristic features of medieval architecture. There is no consensus for the beginning date of the Romanesque style, with dates ranging from the 6th to the late 10th century, this later date being the most commonly held. Romanesque architecture is an architectural style of medieval Europe. The style can be identified all across Europe, despite regional characteristics and different materials. Spanish Romanesque architecture spread throughout the entire northern half of Spain combining features of ancient Roman and Byzantine buildings and other local traditions. Spanish Romanesque architecture is known by its massive quality, thick walls, round arches, sturdy piers, groin vaults, large towers and decorative arcading characterized by elongated semi-circular arched openings. It developed in the 12th century into the Gothic style that was marked by pointed arches. Romanesque buildings have clearly defined forms, frequently of very regular, symmetrical plan; the overall appearance is one of simplicity when compared with the Gothic buildings that were to follow.



Above: The rear building of the Church
And Original 1926 blueprints.

The Spanish Romanesque left its mark especially on religious buildings such as cathedrals, churches, monasteries, cloisters, and chapels. California's 52-year period of Spanish-Franciscan cultural impact and the following brief Mexican period brought in piecemeal elements of the Spanish period styles in the early twentieth century. The formal influence was a combination of high style details with vernacular mission and adobe buildings. This building is an excellent example of the Spanish Romanesque style a subset of the Spanish Colonial Revival movement, which became an important part of Santa Barbara's heritage in the early 1920s, when the City deliberately transformed its architecture and look from an ordinary western style town into a romantic Spanish Colonial Revival city. When the earthquake of 1925 occurred, the Santa Barbara Community Arts Association viewed the disaster as an opportunity to rebuild the downtown in definitive styles of the Spanish Colonial Revival, Mediterranean and Mission styles that reflect the unique heritage of the City. Many architects, later notable for their use of this style created commercial facades and whole new buildings in a variety of the style.



Above: The Hollywood Methodist Church, located in Los Angeles. Designed by Thomas Barber.

Therefore, in the 1920s, in Santa Barbara, the Spanish Colonial Revival style sources were broadly and loosely interpreted. Each architect and educated client developed a favorite formal Spanish repertoire and some were inspired by buildings seen in travels to Spain, Mexico, or Spain's former South American colonies. However, both architects and clients tended to like examples clearly based on Spanish European designs rather than Mexican or South American interpretations of original Spanish structures. This Spanish Romanesque inspired church with its white stucco walls and dark contrasting stone details fits in the Spanish aesthetic of the City new identity.

Architect:

Thomas P. Barber was born in England in 1862 and moved to the United States as a child. He received his education in Colorado Springs. Soon after he graduated, he opened his own architectural office in the area. The firm specialized in church architecture. After working alone for a time, his brother, William Barber, joined the practice as a partner. Together, the Barbers designed several public buildings throughout Colorado, the most notable of these being the University Memorial Chapel in Denver.

In the late 1920's, Thomas Barber left his firm and moved to Los Angeles without his brother. He continued to work on his own and became recognized in the area as an ecclesiastical architect. One of his most notable designs was the Hollywood Methodist Church in Los Angeles, which began construction in 1927. Barber died in Glendale, Arizona in 1932.

Significance:

The City of Santa Barbara defines historic significance as outlined by the Municipal Code, Section 22.22.040. Any historic building that meets one or more of the eleven criteria (Criteria A through K) established for a City Landmark or a City Structure of Merit can be considered significant. The First United Methodist Church meets the following four criteria:

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

City, the State or the Nation; This building is an excellent example of the Spanish Romanesque subset of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, which became an important part of Santa Barbara’s heritage in the 1920s, when the City deliberately transformed its architecture and look from an ordinary western style town into a romantic Spanish Colonial Revival city. This transformation was the result of the planning vision of a number of Santa Barbara citizens in the early 1920s with the founding of the Santa Barbara Community Arts Association, who urged that the town identify its individual character and then use planning principles to develop it. As an original 1926, Spanish Colonial Revival structure, it qualifies as a Historic Resource because it is a significant part of the heritage of the City.

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

The building embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Spanish Romanesque subset of the Spanish Colonial Revival style that is an important architectural style of Santa Barbara. Its smooth stucco walls, elongated, rounded arches, tall tower with an open belfry and ornate stone detailing are character defining features of the style. Between 1922 and 1925, several major cultural buildings within the downtown core, were built using the architectural motif of the City’s Colonial and Mexican past. As a result, when the earthquake occurred in 1925, the Community Arts Association viewed the disaster as an opportunity to rebuild the downtown in Spanish Colonial Revival/Mediterranean/Mission styles that reflect the heritage of the city.

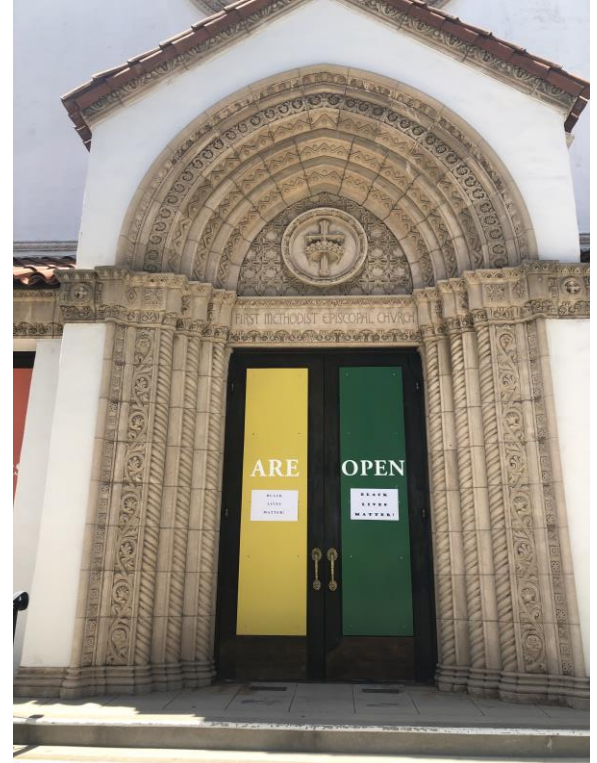
Criterion F, its identification as the creation, design or work of a person or persons whose effort has significantly influenced the heritage of the City, the State or the Nation;

The Church was designed by Thomas P. Barber, a recognized ecclesiastical architect in the Los Angeles and Colorado Springs areas.

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

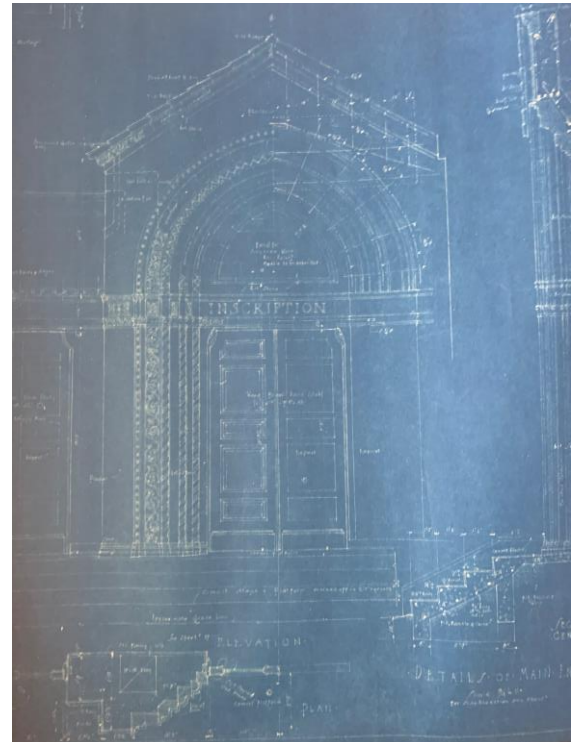
The Church’s composition, massing and simplicity are exemplary elements of design. In addition to the solid wood doors, stained glass and rose windows, the elaborate pre-cast stone surrounding the entrances and windows and lining the cornices demonstrate outstanding attention to detail, materials and craftsmanship.

Criterion H, Its relationship to any other landmark if its preservation is essential to the integrity of that landmark;



Above: The detailed stone arch surrounding the front door demonstrates attention to detail and craftsmanship.

Below: Original 1926 blueprints



Located in the historic El Pueblo Viejo Landmark District. This building is essential to the integrity of the district as a whole.

Criterion I, Its unique location or singular physical characteristic representing an establish and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood;

The church with its intricate belfry rising over the corner of Garden and East Anapamu Streets has been an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood since 1926.

Historic Integrity:

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its original appearance. There are essential physical features that must be considered to evaluate the integrity of a significant building. Since 1926, the church's location, setting, association and feeling have not changed. The original design, materials, and workmanship have been retained so that the building conveys its original 1926 appearance. Thus, the building has retained a high level of historical integrity.

Works Cited:

“Colorado Architects Biographical Sketch.” *Colorado Historical Society*, 15 Aug. 2006, pp. 1–3.

McMillian, Elizabeth. “California Colonial, the Spanish and Rancho Revival Styles.” Schiffer Publishing Ltd, Atglen, Pa) 2002.