

HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE REPORT
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309 East Micheltorena Street
Santa Barbara, California

Designation Status: Listed on the Potential Historic Resources List/Eligible to be designated a Structure of Merit.

Assessor Parcel Number: 027-251-017

Constructed: 1875

Property Description: Two-story Queen Anne style house has beautiful chevron patterns in the shiplap siding within squares of wood framing. The hipped roof has a medium pitch, with wide overhanging eaves adorned with brackets. The front façade has two towers, one tops a hexagonal bay and the other a wide three-window bay. The small, side, two-story porch has a slope roof, turned railing and jigsaw brackets at the top of each pillar and spindles over the second floor porch. All windows are wood, one-over-one, double hung. Three small-seeming additions at the rear are covered in the same shiplap. A ashlar cut sandstone wall lines the streetscape.



Architect: Unknown

Architectural Style: Queen Anne

Property Type: Residential

Original Use: Residential

Significance: The Historic Landmarks Commission listed the property on the Potential Historic Resources List in 1986 when the State of California Office of Historic Preservation determined the building was eligible as Structure of Merit. The City of Santa Barbara establishes historical significance as provided 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 structure may be significant as a Structure of Merit per the following criteria:

Historic Integrity: The building conveys integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling and association so that it conveys its 1885 appearance.

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

The residence has character-defining features of the Queen Anne style. Few styles of architecture allow for the exuberant level of detail found in the Queen Anne style. The culmination of Victorian taste, this style shows the eclectic range found in the new era and the ability for manufacturers of the time to distribute these details throughout the country. Thanks to these factors, a variety of ornate columns, spindle work, and elaborate shingles adorn Queen Anne properties.

Queen Anne architecture was born in the later part of the Victorian era, which included Gothic Revival, Italianate, Stick, and Second Empire styles. In the 1870s in England, architect Richard Norman Shaw introduced the Queen Anne residential design. It was intended to evoke domestic architecture of some 200 years earlier.

In the United States, our own first centennial was then approaching, and at the huge Philadelphia Centennial Exhibit in 1876, two model houses were built in the Queen Anne style. Americans immediately took to the style. Massively popular in America, Queen Anne spread across the nation at a rapid pace.

The Queen Anne style was characterized by a break with the box shape, a freer articulation of outer wall shapes, and a taste for outside living on wide verandahs. By 1886, it was still new on the West Coast and first appeared in San Francisco.

Queen Anne homes display irregular rooflines with corner towers, variegated walls, and an emphasis on the horizontal that lends a dynamic, restless quality to the composition as a whole. Surface textures became a defining characteristic of Queen Anne decoration. The Queen Anne taste for drama and asymmetry became apparent in complex roof shapes and an eclectic appropriation of ornamental features from earlier styles.



Although it had little to do with its namesake: Anne of Great Britain (1665-1714), Queen Anne architecture did look to the past. Whether it was ancient Rome with its swags, garlands, and high-classical columns, or the richly patterned walls of the earlier High Victorian Gothic, Queen Anne combined a wide variety of architecture features into one decorative whole.

The residence is an example of the Queen Anne architectural style that dominated Santa Barbara from the 1870s until the 1910s. The house has the character-defining features of the style in its decorative towers, brackets under the eaves, elaborate turned railing and spindles of the two-story side porch, elongated double hung windows.

Criterion G. Its embodiment of elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship: The building embodies not only outstanding attention to design, but also extreme attention to detail, materials, and craftsmanship in the wide, shiplap siding, wood thin porch columns; distinctive towers over bay windows; a two story side porch with elaborate railing and spindles on the top of the second floor porch.

- **Sandstone wall:** There is a three-course sandstone retaining wall abutting the sidewalk, lining the front streetscape. A feature that gives the region such distinction while offering a surprising and pleasing bit of artistry. Walls usually require far less engineering compared to bridges, so they offer more opportunity for stonemasons to express themselves and their artistry in the selection, carving, and setting of stones. Use of masonry for construction in the Santa Barbara area dates back to the time the Spanish arrived. Since it was necessary to travel some distance into the woods to obtain lumber, but rocks were found scattered on the ground, stone became the preferred building material. The tradition of building with stones continued in Santa



Barbara County through the 19th century. This method of construction was often chosen because local brown sandstone was readily available and easily transformed from round or shapeless boulders into symmetrical smooth faced stone for building purposes. A local stonemason explained in July of 1883, “When a quantity of it is wanted, a blast of powder is drilled into the heart of one of the large boulders and exploded and a number of square edged building stones are produced” (Santa Barbara News-Press July 1883). Many residences, walls, bridges, and commercial structures were constructed out of local sandstone during the

nineteenth and early twentieth century. Immediately after World War I, Santa Barbara began a concerted effort to revamp its visual image. During this time, city planners carefully monitored all construction of any new structure to make sure it was consistent with the master plan that was based on Spanish Colonial Revival/Mediterranean streetscape mode (Conrad and Nelson, 1986: 14). The use of a traditional building material, sandstone, in the construction of the walls built during this period was in line with Santa Barbara's planning and design efforts. In the years from 1870 to 1940, when Santa Barbara was quickly evolving into a vibrant, growing city, the period witnessed an extraordinary explosion of stone construction made possible by the abundant supply of sandstone, cadre of expert masons, and financing by private citizens. This period provided an atmosphere conducive to the building of public and private spaces of all kinds, walls, bridges, gardens, and an assortment of other stone works and encouraged some exceptional expressions of the mason's art. Among the most apparent expressions of the beauty in stone that give the region such distinction are the stone walls.

Work Cited

Grumbine, Anthony; Hernandez, Nicole. *Santa Barbara Style Guide*. Community Development Department. 2014

Santa Barbara Conservancy, *Images of America, Stone Architecture in Santa Barbara*. Arcadia Publishing, 2009