

**HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION**  
**HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE REPORT**  
Prepared by Nicole Hernandez, MFA, City Architectural Historian  
**527 East Micheltorena Street**  
**Santa Barbara, California**

**Designation Status:** Listed on the Potential Historic Resources List

**Assessor Parcel Number:** 027-260-019

**Constructed:** c. 1920

**Architect:** Unknown

**Architectural Style:** Craftsman

**Property Type:** Residential

**Original Use:** Residential

**Property Description:** The one-story Craftsman style bungalow has low pitched front facing gable with wide overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails and a utilitarian grill and windows in the open gable. The exterior walls have narrow wood clapboard siding. The full width front porch has massive stucco corner posts and a railing with wide wood posts has a central main entrance centered in between two large, wood, triptych windows with double hung divided light windows flanking a large fixed pane window divided light transoms. The house sits between two large commercial buildings as this side of the street has been altered. However the house sits across the street from the proposed Bungalow Haven Historic District and relates to those historic resources designed in the Craftsman style. The perimeter, ashlar cut, stone wall along the property is original to the streetscape, the interior stone walls and landscaping are new and not original to the site.



**Significance:** The Historic Landmarks Commission listed the property on the Potential Historic Resources List in 2014 when the Lower Riviera Survey determined they were eligible as Structures 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 Craftsman style house retains many character-defining original materials. The building's original design and wood siding are intact, as are the low pitched gable over the full width porch and the massive corner posts. This side of Micheltorena Street has lost integrity with the large commercial buildings replacing the once residential feel, but the houses across the street retain integrity and are within the boundary of the proposed Bungalow Haven Historic District. This Craftsman bungalow relates to those buildings across the street. The building retains enough of its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, that it conveys its original c.1920 appearance.



Photo from Lower Riviera Survey prior to landscape project.

**Criterion D. Its exemplification of a particular architectural style or way of life important to the City, the State or the Nation:** The house was designed in the Craftsman style. Craftsman style homes are known for their intimate scale and intricate wooden details gently layered over wood clapboards, shingles, stone, and bricks. Their porches turn back time while providing a gentle transition between the outside world and cozy spaces inside. The Craftsman houses are uniquely American creations that began to appear around 1905 in Southern California. They are a fusion of wooden Asian architectural details, the English Arts and Crafts movement, and an innovative

California spirit. Mastered by the Greene brothers, whose landmark Gamble House still stands as a masterpiece of the ideals that the Craftsman style promoted, the fashion translated to all scales of home building. These houses became extraordinarily popular throughout the U.S. during the first 30 years of the 20th century. Pattern books and periodicals furthered the study of the architecture; even kits to build an entire house could be ordered and delivered to building sites.

The low pitched gable roof, exposed rafter tails under the wide overhanging eaves, the full width front porch with massive corner posts are character defining features of the design that exemplify the simple intricacy of the Craftsman style. Because the bungalow exemplifies the Craftsman style and is illustrative of the development of Santa Barbara's residential neighborhoods during the early twentieth century, it is eligible for listing as a City of Santa Barbara Structure of Merit under Criterion D.

**Criterion G. Its embodiment of elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship:** The residence embodies the following elements that demonstrate an outstanding attention to design, detail, materials, and craftsmanship:

- Wide overhanging eaves with large brackets.
- The full width front porch has two massive columns at the corners
- The main entrance is centered in between two large wood triptych windows with the large



fixed windows flanked by divided light windows.

- **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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.”

**City Directories:**

1920: W. C. Nielson

1925-30: Mary E. Bairley (owner)

1935: Paul Huffine

1940: Mrs. Helen Davis/Donald Roland

1945-56: David Watson (owner)

**Work Cited**

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