

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

Designation Status: Listed on the Potential Historic Resources List

Assessor Parcel Number: 029-033-004

Constructed: c. 1915

Property Description: The two-story Craftsman house sits on a raised foundation of ashlar cut sandstone. A complex jerkinhead gable roof covers the wide overhanging eaves. Fenestration is composed of multi-light wood sliding and casements windows and multi-light French doors. Facing towards East Micheltorena Street, the south elevation is the primary street façade. It has an L-shaped configuration with a slightly projecting wing at its east end capped by a clipped, front gable roof. Sandstone piers set flush with the wall plane bracket either end of the projecting wing. Its fenestration is composed of a large triple window compose of a central fixed light flanked by narrow multi-light wood casements. On its west the projecting wing is flanked by a recessed wing capped by a side, clipped gable roof with two dormers. At its east end the recessed wing features an imposing staircase of cut sandstone blocks that leads up to the front door. The fenestration of the recessed wing features a centrally placed multi-light wood frame casement window flanked by triple windows. Facing towards Alta Vista Road, the east elevation is picturesque in its massing with a slightly recessed story-and-a-half wing capped by an asymmetrical clipped gable roof. A centrally placed multi-light French door flanked by multi-light wood casements that open onto a narrow balcony is set below the gable peak. Another French door of the same type is set at ground level. On its south side, the recessed wing is flanked by a slightly projecting one-story wing capped by a side, clipped gable roof. Large sandstone piers set flush with the wall plan are set at either end of the projecting wing; its fenestration is composed of a series of large multi-light wood frame windows (which may be sliders). A low retaining wall of sandstone blocks extends along the East Micheltorena Street and Alta Vista Road street frontages. A detached one-car garage is located at the southwest corner of the parcel facing East Micheltorena Street.



Architect: Unknown

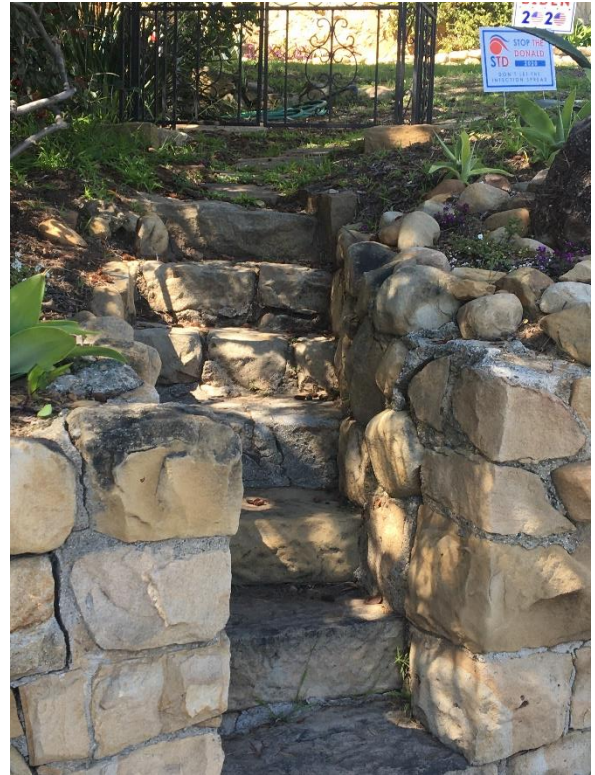
Architectural Style: Craftsman

Property Type: Residential

Original Use: Residential

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 retains enough of its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, that it conveys its original c.1920 appearance.



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 house features the following character defining features. The low pitched jerkinhead gable roofs over the wide overhanging eaves, shingles siding, wood divided light windows, and sandstone foundation and piers. Because the house 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 and craftsmanship:

Sandstone wall: There is a sandstone retaining wall of rounded stones abutting the sidewalk, lining the 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."

Works Cited:

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