

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

Designation Status: Listed on the Potential Historic Resources List

Assessor Parcel Number: 029-042-009

Constructed: 1929

Property Description: One Story Spanish Colonial Revival house with complex intersecting gabled and hipped roofs covered in terra-cotta tiles. The walls are covered in smooth stucco. The shallow porch is defined with arched openings with stucco scallops at the corners of the massive piers. The porch shelters a wood front door flanked by a one-over-one wood sash window. On the east side of the porch a set of masonry steps with solid balustrades leads down to the front garden. Under center gable is a triptych window with elaborately turned wood trim that embellish a central fixed window flanked by one-over-one wood sash windows that open onto a decorative cast iron balcony. A side stucco chimney with an arched-crown is at the south side of the building. The driveway leads to a detached carport with a tiled side gable roof. To the east of the carport is a one-story flat roofed building with stucco walls and a flat roof surrounded by a solid parapet. A shed-roofed porch with a tiled roof projects of the building's west elevation.



Architect: Unknown

Architectural Style: Spanish Colonial Revival

Property Type: Commercial

Original Use: Residence

Significance: The Historic Landmarks Commission listed the property on the Potential Historic Resources List in 2014 based on the findings of the Lower Riviera Survey that concluded the building was historically significant for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act. 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 property had an accessory building added in 1981 and the building had a rear addition added in 1987. The rear addition does not impact the historic integrity of the building as based on the footprint of the 1931 Sanborn Map and now, the front elevation has remained the same and the character defining features remain on the building. The building conveys integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling and association so that it conveys its c. 1929 appearance.



Criterion A. Its character, interest or value as a significant part of the heritage of the City, the State or the Nation: In 1916, Bertram Goodhue, author of a book on Spanish Colonial architecture, helped to kick-start the new Spanish style with his designs for the Panama California Expo in San Diego. Until then, the only Spanish themed architecture mimicked Mission prototypes. Soon, however, architects and patrons began to look to Spain itself for detailed examples of the Spanish style. Throughout the territories initially settled by the Spanish in the Southwest, as well as Texas and Florida, the Spanish Colonial Revival flourished. Santa Barbara had many architects including George Washington Smith, Lulah Maria Riggs, Winsor Soule, Reginald Johnson, William Edwards, and Joseph Plunkett talented in designing in the style. Another key to the success of the Spanish Colonial Revival in Santa Barbara was the Plans and Planting Committee through which Pearl Chase and others helped to sway Santa Barbara towards a more unified architectural style based on the City's Spanish Colonial and Mexican past. After the earthquake of 1925, much of the rebuilding of Santa Barbara was in the

Spanish Colonial Revival style. The smooth stucco walls and terra-cotta roof reflect the design envisioned by the planners as character defining features of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, a theme carried throughout the City.

The building qualifies under criterion A as an excellent example of original moderate residential Spanish Colonial Revival style building that is essential to the identity of Santa Barbara.

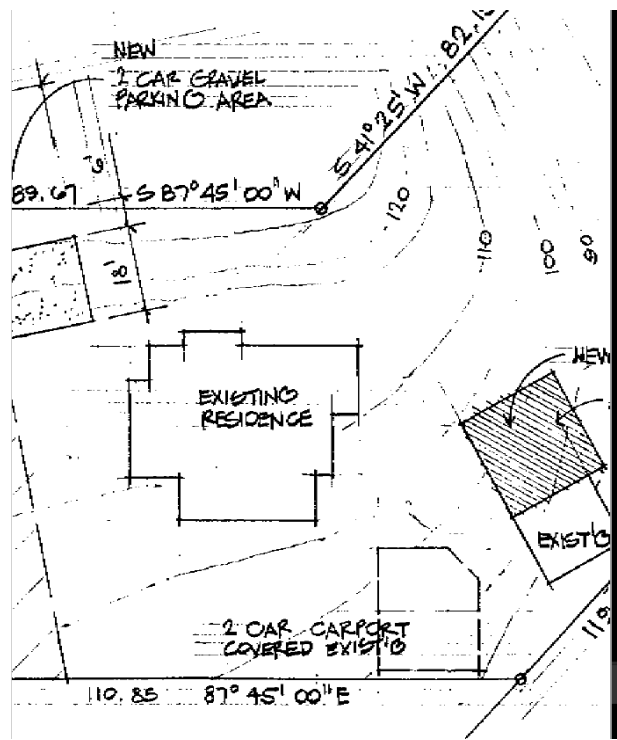
Criterion D. Its exemplification of a particular architectural style or way of life important to the City, the State or the Nation:

The Spanish Colonial Revival style emphasized the interplay of cubic volumes, patios, pergolas and verandas; each interpreted and redefined by local architects or regions in their own oeuvre of the form, massing, and decorative treatments. This structure may qualify under Criterion D due to the following character-defining features:

- **Roof:** Terra-cotta red tiles cover the intersecting gabled roofs. The tiles create a decorative transition from the roof to the smooth stucco.
- **Wall Materials:** The Spanish Colonial Revival style building features smooth, whitewashed, planar, stucco walls, with the emphasis on broad, uninterrupted wall surfaces punctuated by careful use of openings. The illusion thick walls help the plaster building to feel believable as it imitates buildings originally made of load-bearing masonry.
- **Window Details:** The building features wood windows character-defining of the style with elaborately turned wood trim dividing the triptych windows.
- **Porches and Balconies:** The house has a unique deep front porch defined with massive piers with scallop corners. The emphasis is on the balconies with balustrades made wrought iron.



1931 Sanborn Map. Illustrating original Footprint of the property



1981 drawing of the addition of the guest house to the property

- **Tower and Chimneys:** There is a hipped roof tower on the south side of the front gable in with a small diamond decorative detail above the one-over-one pair of windows. The stucco chimney in the center is a tower-like elements with decorative openings that is both practical and ornamental.



Criterion G. Its embodiment of elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship:

Current foot print of the property (2020)

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- **Porches and Balconies:** The house has a unique deep front porch defined with massive piers with scallop corners. The emphasis is on the balconies with balustrades made wrought iron.
- **Tower and Chimneys:** There is a hipped roof tower on the south side of the front gable in with a small diamond decorative detail above the one-over-one pair of windows. The stucco chimney in the center is a tower-like elements with decorative openings that is both practical and ornamental.
- **Sandstone wall:** There is a 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.

City Directory:

1930: no listing

1935: A. J. LeSage, owner

1940: Mrs. Lillian Spurgeon

1945: Robert Spurgeon

1950-55: Mrs. L. M. Spurgeon, owner

Works Cited:

Grumbine, Anthony, Harrison Design. Hernandez, Nicole. *Santa Barbara Style Guides, Spanish Colonial Revival*. City of Santa Barbara, Community Development Department. November 2014.

Post/Hazeltine. 2014 Lower Riviera Survey. City of Santa Barbara Community Development Department.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Santa Barbara 1930. Courtesy of Gledhill Library.

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