

HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE REPORT
Prepared by Nicole Hernandez, MFA, City Architectural Historian
413 Wyola Road
Santa Barbara, California

Designation Status: Eligible to be designated a Structure of Merit

Assessor Parcel Number: 051-193-009

Constructed: 1924

Architect: Unknown

Architectural Style: Spanish Colonial Revival

Property Type: Residence

Original Use: Residence

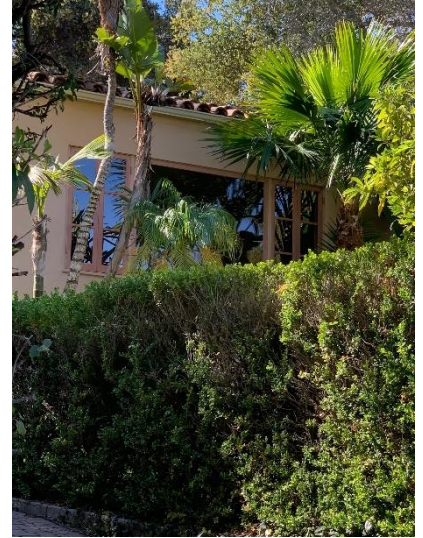
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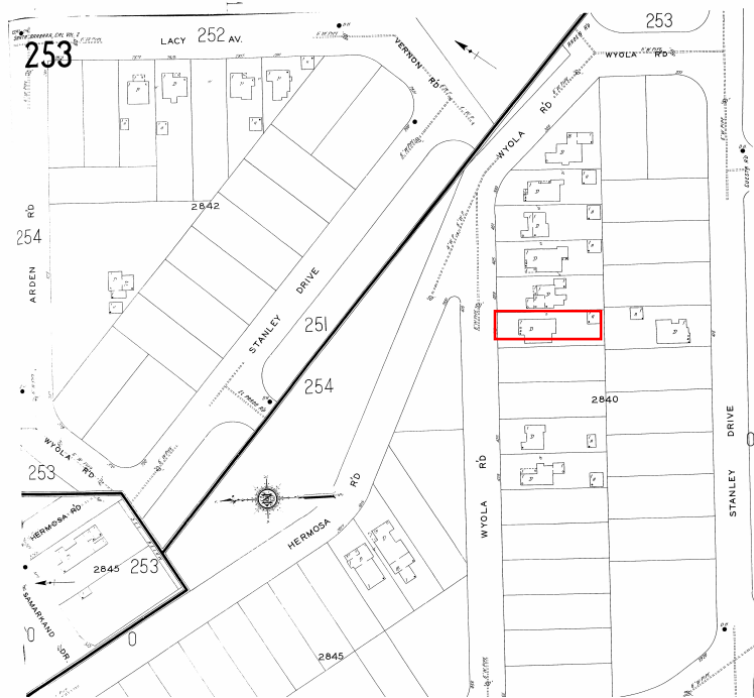
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Property Description: One-story modest interpretation of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The cottage has a side facing gable adorned with terra cotta roof tiles. The walls are covered in smooth stucco. The deep porch is defined with a trellis. The porch shelters a wood front door. Tile covered steps lead to the porch. At the center of the gable is a massive, stucco chimney. The front elevation features a tryptic window set with a central fixed window flanked sets of casement, horizontally divided, wood sash windows.



Significance: The City of Santa Barbara establishes historical significance as provided by the Municipal Code. 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 trellis over the front porch with corrugated plastic roof is not original to the house. However, the house appears to retain all its original roof, siding and window material. The house was one of the first designed in the neighborhood and many of the other houses designed in the 1920s in the neighborhood remain so the house retains its integrity of location and setting. The building conveys integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling and association so that it conveys its c. 1924 appearance.



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

This building was developed as part of the Casa Loma Tract. Post-Statehood (in 1850) and the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo with Mexico, the Casa Loma Tract was part of the Pueblo lands of Santa Barbara. The area was open range grazing land that was co-owned by Harold A. Hollister (son of pioneer William. W. Hollister) and A. C. Greenwell.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1930-31 illustrating the early development of the neighborhood.

In 1922 Earle Ovington took proceeds from the sale of earlier real estate investments and purchased 80 acres of the aforementioned Hollister-Greenwell ranch. Ovington began work with a surveyor, his banker Joseph Paxton, the City Engineer and Santa Barbara City Council on what he named the Casa Loma subdivision. The subdivision was approved and recorded on December 22, 1922. During the following winter of 1923-1924, Ovington and a group of Santa Barbara developers began advertising both locally and in newspapers on the East Coast and in Midwest cities, the health benefits of the Mediterranean climate in Santa Barbara and the attractions of their subdivisions. The article advertises the Spanish style small homes as, “Typically Spanish in design, this little home is most attractive. It is arranged to meet the many requirements of the small home, and for this reason should be found quite desirable.” Articles in the Santa Barbara Morning Press newspaper attest to the success of such advertising as evidenced by increased building permit activity data they cite. After a slow start in 1923 and a particularly inclement winter, the first permit in the second year of the subdivision was issued on February 8, 1924. In 1923, the first year of the Casa Loma development, Ovington saw only three homes built. In 1924 at least ten additional lots were sold with permits issued for new homes. Between 1923 and the fateful stock crash on “Black Friday” in 1929, approximately 12% of the Casa Loma lots were purchased and homes had been built.⁵ The neighborhood was known as the home for a wide variety of professionals and community figures. The balance of the lots sat largely vacant until the housing boom at the end of WWII.

The construction in the Spanish Colonial Revival style was important to the heritage of Santa Barbara as weather big or small, the City's identity is formed on this romantic style and the accumulation of the original pieces from the 1920s attests to the authenticity of the City's architecture as a whole. 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 an 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 side gable roof. 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 of 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 horizontally divided light casement windows.
- **Porches and Balconies:** The house has a unique deep front porch defined with a trellis.
- **Chimneys:** The stucco chimney in the center of the side gable is a tower-like element that is both practical and ornamental.

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

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Works Cited:

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

Hawthorn, Roy. 2018 Historic Structures Sites Report for 2923 Hermosa Street. City of Santa Barbara Community Development Department.

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