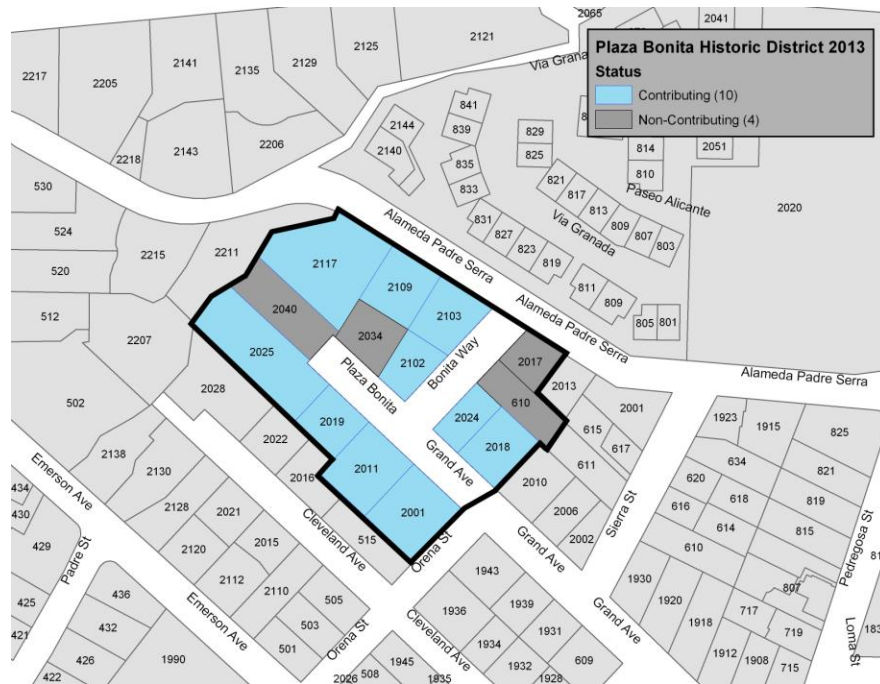


Proposed Plaza Bonita Historic District



The Proposed Plaza Bonita Historic District encompasses the parcels surrounding Plaza Bonita and Bonita Way. Plaza Bonita has 10 contributing properties and 4 non-contributing properties as noted above. Boundaries are Alameda Padre Serra and Orena Streets.

INTRODUCTION

With its visual and historical references to the City's Spanish and Mexican era heritage, the Spanish Colonial Revival style particularly resonated in Santa Barbara and was responsible in large measure for the transformation of the visual character of the community from a Victorian era town into an evocative celebration of Mediterranean inspired architecture. The style was especially appropriate for the environs of Mission Santa Barbara. One of the most outstanding examples of the employment of the style in the Lower Riviera can be seen in the houses designed around Plaza Bonita in the mid-1920s clustered around a small plaza featuring Spanish style fountain. The stone hardscape centered on Bonita Plaza was built by Santa Barbara's notable coterie of stone masons and represents in part, a potentially important example of this type.



The historically significant residences were designed in the mid-1920 to cluster around a small plaza featuring a Spanish style fountain.

HISTORY

Period of significance: 1920-1940

Plaza Bonita has the special characteristic of being centered on a fountain set in a small plaza with extensive sandstone retaining walls, steps and curbs. This development pattern continues to characterize the area. The setting of the district is defined by the large scale geological features such as Mission Ridge to the east, the mouth of Mission Canyon to the north and significant public spaces such as Mission Park with its lawns rose garden and remnants of Mission Santa Barbara's outbuildings and extensive waterworks system. On the east side of the proposed district, Alameda Padre Serra with its concentration of Period Revival houses, and early 20th century institutional buildings such as the former State Normal School and Jefferson School, the El Encanto Hotel and Orpet and Hillside parks also contribute to visual character of the proposed district's setting.

The difficult topography, distance from downtown and unreliability of the City's water system prevented intensive development of the area until the early twentieth century. By the 1920s, a functioning water system, streetcar line and paved streets made the neighborhood popular with the City's middle and upper middle classes. The development of Plaza Bonita during the 1920s through 1940 fell within the heyday of the Period Revival and its Spanish Colonial Revival subtype.

During this same period, a concerted effort was made to make Mediterranean and Spanish Colonial Revival Santa Barbara's dominant architectural styles. Spanish Colonial Revival architecture flourished in Santa Barbara from 1915 through the 1940s. The concentration of original examples of the style in Plaza Bonita represents a significant period of development in the City. The City's architecture became known for the smooth stucco walls, clay tile roofs and recessed wood windows of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, which is exemplified in the this proposed district.



An example of a 1930s Spanish Colonial Revival house in Plaza Bonita.



This 1924 Spanish Colonial Revival residence features a wood balcony supported by heavy, carved corbels. The house features the decorative stucco grills along smooth stucco walls that are unique to the Spanish Colonial Revival style.