

HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE REPORT
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January 4, 2022

2151 MISSION RIDGE ROAD SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA

Designation Status: Listed on the Historic Resources Inventory on January 4, 2022



Assessor Parcel Number: 019-161-002

North elevation: Photo provide by
architect Will Sofrin. 2021

Constructed: 1922: Permit for original house for
owner Chas. Forsyth.
1924: Permit for garage
1927: Permit for 2nd story addition
1932: Permit for exterior stairs
1933: Permit for 2nd Story addition by Edwards and Plunkett
1934: Permit to extend walls and expand windows
1935: Permit for garage by Edwards and Plunkett
1935: Permit new plumbing and heating in guest house by Edwards and Plunkett

Architect: Edwards and Plunkett, 1933-35
Additions and alterations and 1935 garage

Architectural Style: Spanish Colonial Revival

Property Description:
The two-story house has a combination of shed and gable roofs covered in terra-cotta tiles. The wood frame, stucco-clad house features iron Juliette balconies on the North and South elevations, a covered porch and second story balcony on the north elevation.

The windows on the north elevation feature horizontally divided casement windows that are typical of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The north elevation features an arched doorway recessed deep in the wall. The west elevation has a large expressive stucco chimney typical of the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

Significance: The building qualifies to be designated a Structure of Merit under the following criteria provided by the Municipal Code, Section 30.157.025

Historic Integrity: The building retains most of its original features so that it has high historic integrity of location, feeling, setting, design, materials, workmanship and association and can convey its 1933-35 appearance which is the date of the alterations by noted architects Edwards and Plunkett. The 1933 additions and alterations were completed so early in the history of the house, they have gained historic significance in their own right and thus the period of significance at is 1933-35.



West elevation: Photo provide by architect Will Sofrin. 2021



South elevation: Photo provide by architect Will Sofrin. 2021

Criterion 3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, architectural style or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic or historic value, or represents a significant and distinguishable collection whose individual components may lack distinction;

The building exemplifies the Spanish Colonial Revival style which emphasizes 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. Santa Barbara has examples of the Spanish Colonial Revival style throughout the city



South elevation: Photo provide by architect Will Sofrin. 2021

from the distinct commercial buildings on State Street, to large homes and estates on the Riviera, to multi-family housing and hotels in the West Beach neighborhood along the waterfront. This building is an example of the Spanish

Colonial Revival Style, which became an important part of Santa Barbara's heritage in the 1920s when the City deliberately transformed its architecture and look from an ordinary western style town into a romantic Spanish Colonial Revival/Mediterranean style city. This transformation was the result of the planning vision of a number of Santa Barbara citizens in the early 1920s with the founding of the Santa Barbara Community Arts Association, which urged that the town identify its individual character and then use planning principles to develop it.

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 house at 2151 Mission Ridge Rd. 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 for the transformation of the visual character of the community from a Victorian era town into an evocative celebration of Mediterranean and Spanish inspired architecture.

Originally built in 1922, the house had permits as early as 1927 for a second story addition. In 1933, the owner, Arnold Hopkins, hired Edwards and Puckett to add the second story addition. Hopkins hired Edwards and Plunkett again in 1935 to design the garage.

As an original building designed in the style important to the identity of Santa Barbara, the Spanish Colonial Revival structure employs the following character-defining elements of the Spanish Colonial Revival style:

- Emphasis on expansive planer wall surfaces;
- A combination of complex voids and masses creating an interplay of volumes;
- Gable and shed roofs covered in terra cotta tiles with emphasis on the terra cotta tile edge that

creates a decorative edge from the roof to the wall;

- Round windows beneath gable peaks
- Windows are recessed at the wall plane with a stucco return and no trim and the casement windows are wood, horizontally divided lights
- The iron balconies;
- Arched front entrance opening; and
- Expressive, tower like stucco chimney

The notable architectural firm of Edwards and Plunkett designed 1933 additions and alterations and the 1935 garage. They were among the most famous of Santa Barbara's Spanish Colonial Revival practitioners. Legacy works of Plunkett and Edwards include: the Arlington Theatre, El Encanto Hotel, the Santa Barbara Municipal Airport, the clubhouse for the Santa Barbara Woman's Club, the fire station at 415 East Sola Street, and National Guard Armory. As the work of Edwards and Plunkett, the building qualifies under criterion 3. After the earthquake of 1925 occurred, Edwards and Plunkett formed their partnership the day of the earthquake to benefit from this opportunity to rebuild the city.

William Edwards was born on May 4, 1888 in Santa Barbara, then a small town with Victorian buildings and horse-drawn streetcars. He attended the University of California at Berkeley, then transferred to the University of Pennsylvania where he received a degree in architecture in 1912. He opened his Santa Barbara office in 1919 and practiced alone until the disastrous earthquake of 1925. On that day he formed a partnership with Joseph Plunkett, a master of design and rendering.

Plunkett was born in Rome, New York, in 1900. He entered Syracuse State University in 1919. During his junior year in 1922, he and some friends took a trip to California. Plunkett never returned east and never completed his degree. Instead, he associated himself with an architect in Santa Maria, where he engaged in design work for the Santa Maria Inn. Plunkett's designs are characterized by their remarkable attention to detail, namely window treatments and ornamental iron and tile designs. After marrying in 1923, Plunkett and his wife settled in Santa Barbara where, following the earthquake of 1925, he had an incredible architectural opportunity as the city decided to rebuild and unify Santa Barbara under the aesthetics of the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

On the day of the Earthquake, Edwards and Plunkett obtained a permit to tour the rubble of the downtown area and were immediately available to design reconstruction. They were flooded with commissions and were influential in promoting the Spanish revival style in the rebuilding of Santa Barbara. Edwards' talent and experience gave the firm the technical excellence required by the newly-formed Architectural Board of Review. A third partner, Henry Howell, joined them in 1926 as the firm became fully established as commercial architects. Notable examples of their work then were the Red Cross Drug Store, the East Sola Fire Station, the Copper Coffee Pot, and the Cold Springs School. Howell left the firm in 1928 to establish his own practice.

Edwards and Plunkett worked together steadily until World War II. They maintained offices in the Meridian Studios during most of their partnership. During these years, 1929-39, they completed their legacy masterpieces, including; the Arlington Theatre, El Encanto Hotel and the Bungalow Gardens, the Santa Barbara Municipal Airport, the clubhouse for the Santa Barbara Woman's Club, and National Guard Armory. The A.R. Demory House in Santa Barbara and the E.G. Linscott House in Hope Ranch both won awards in the Annual Plans and Planting Committee Competition. These large commissions kept the firm busy during minimal construction years of the Depression.

They dissolved their partnership in the early war years; Edwards went north to take a government drafting position. After the war he returned to Santa Barbara and formed the firm of Edwards and Wade in 1946. He retired in 1950. His son, Peter, carried on the family tradition of fine architecture.

As an example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style with additions completed by noted architects Edwards and Plunkett, the house at 2151 Mission Ridge qualifies under Criterion 3.

Conclusion: 2151 Mission Ridge meets criterion 3 outlined in the Santa Barbara Municipal Code and retains sufficient historic integrity to qualify as a historic resource.

Works Cited:

City of Santa Barbara. *Street File Permit and Plan Archives*.

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

Redmon, Michael, "Architect Joseph J. Plunkett" *Santa Barbara Independent*. 2017