

# 132-136 East De La Guerra Street

City of Santa Barbara  
Planning Division  
Nicole Hernandez, MFA, Architectural Historian  
October 16, 2019

**Designation Status:** Designated a Structure of Merit on October 16, 2019

**Assessor Parcel Number:** 031-081-018

**Historic Name:** Santa Barbara Historical Society Museum

**Constructed:** 1964-65

**Property Description:**

A one and a half story, U-shaped structure made of concrete block to imitate traditional adobe brick walls and a terra cotta tile roof. The façade facing Santa Barbara Street primarily consists of the museum's far-stretching east wing. The single-story, terra cotta roofline has prominent eaves supported by exposed, evenly spaced wooden rafters creating a decorative edge from the roof to wall, before finally intersecting with the low slung, cross-gable of the museum's main body. Three large wooden support beams appear below each triangulated point of the cross gables. Fenestration on this façade includes paired wood casement windows with lights divided by horizontal mullions, most of which are covered by protective iron grilles or rejas. On the De La Guerra Street facing façade, a shed roof extends over a non-original balcony on the second story. The museum's main entrance has two large wooden, river of life doors recess in a wood frame



Photograph from 1978 Survey, not the balcony is not part of the front elevation

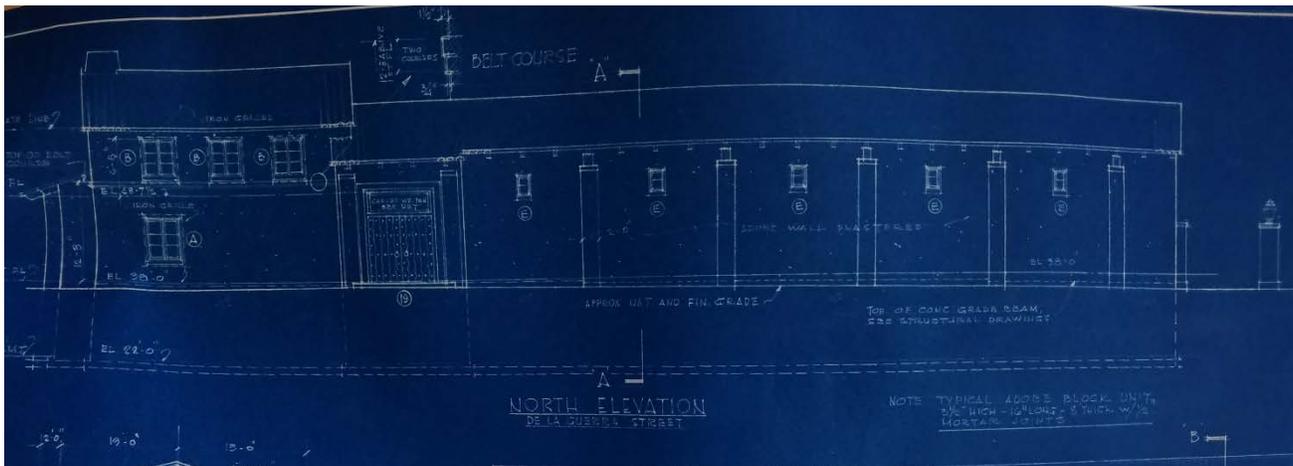
flanked by fluted buttresses, creating a sense of solidity and permanence.

**Architect:** Robert Ingle Hoyt, FAIA

**Architectural Style:** Adobe style, but with concrete block/Spanish Colonial Revival

**Property Type:** Museum

**Original Use:** Museum



Original drawings of Robert Ingle Hoyt, FAIA

**Significance:**

The building qualifies to be designated a Structure of Merit and is eligible under the following criteria provided by the Municipal Code, Section 22.22.040:



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

The Spanish Colonial Revival style building at 136 E De La Guerra Street is important to the heritage of Santa Barbara as the details that are found in the building constitute a resource valuable for its ability to exemplify methods of construction, craftsmanship, attention to detail and artistry reflective of the style. As the building houses the Santa Barbara Historical Museum, the architect designed the concrete block building to imitate Adobe construction, which the Spanish introduced to California in 1769.



The Spanish constructed their presidios, pueblos and missions almost exclusively of adobe construction. The later Mexican and Early American Periods of California continued using this building method. As the oldest buildings in California, Adobe buildings serve as important links to California's past as a colony of Spain, a province of Mexico, and during early statehood.

The 1964 Santa Barbara Historical Museum pays homage to the adobes of the past. In Santa Barbara, architecture following or imitating Spanish and Mexican influences became an important part of Santa Barbara's heritage in the 1920s, when the City deliberately transformed its architecture to mimic these styles. This transformation was the result of the planning vision of the Santa Barbara Community Arts Association founded in the 1920s, which urged that the town identify its individual Spanish and Mediterranean character and use planning principles to develop it. The 1964 building is an example of an effort after World War II to continue the tradition to design the City in unique Spanish Colonial Revival style even after the popular architectural styles of the nation were now turning to the simplified ranch and mid-century styles. The building stands on an important location on East De La Guerra near the original Presidio. It is significant that the Robert Ingle Hoyt, FAIA designed the Museum in concrete block to imitate adobe in the adobe style and not in the new popular styles being constructed throughout other areas of Santa Barbara, as it contributes to the significance of the rest of the Spanish Colonial Revival streetscape most of which was building in the 1920s.

**Criterion F. Its identification as the creation, design or work of a person or persons whose effort has significantly influenced the heritage of the City, the State or the Nation:**

**Robert Ingle Hoyt, FAIA**, designed the building. Born on March 21, 1913 in Connecticut, Robert Ingle Hoyt, FAIA, received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from Yale in 1936. In 1941, Hoyt, FAIA graduated from Cornell University with his Master's degree in Architecture. Following school, Hoyt, FAIA worked for multiple architectural firms in New York. In 1947, he opened his own independent firm in Santa Barbara, California. Hoyt's, FAIA, body of work includes commercial buildings, schools, the Office building at the Santa Barbara Bowl (a designated historic Structure of Merit) and the mid-century modern style Unity Church (a designated historic Structure of Merit). In 1981, Robert Ingle Hoyt, FAIA, was elevated into the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects as an architect esteemed for his contributions and influence to the architecture of Santa Barbara.



Work Cited: Robert Ingle Hoyt, FAIA papers, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara.

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

The structure at 136 E De La Guerra Street is noteworthy for its simple U-shaped plan enclosing an inner courtyard, concrete block imitating thick adobe walls, solid wood planked door with thick wood trim, deeply recessed windows with thick unpainted wood trim covered by iron bars or rejas to allow the windows to be open for ventilation while still keeping the rooms secure, and the gabled roofs comprised of terra cotta tile.

**Historic Integrity:** According to Commissioner Mahan, although the balcony on the North elevation was a late addition, Robert Ingle Hoyt sketched the balcony on his original sketch, but it did not make it to the working drawings. The building retains most of its original features and most of the surrounding neighborhood is intact so that it has high historic integrity of location, feeling, setting, design, materials, workmanship and association. The building can convey its 1964-65 original appearance and intent of the architect.