

HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
HISTORIC SIGNICANCE REPORT
By Nicole Hernandez, MFA, Architectural Historian

STATE STREET PARKWAY
MISSION TO CONSTANCE STREET
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA
JULY 28, 2022

Designation Status: Nominated for Landmark Status in June 2022 by the Upper East Association

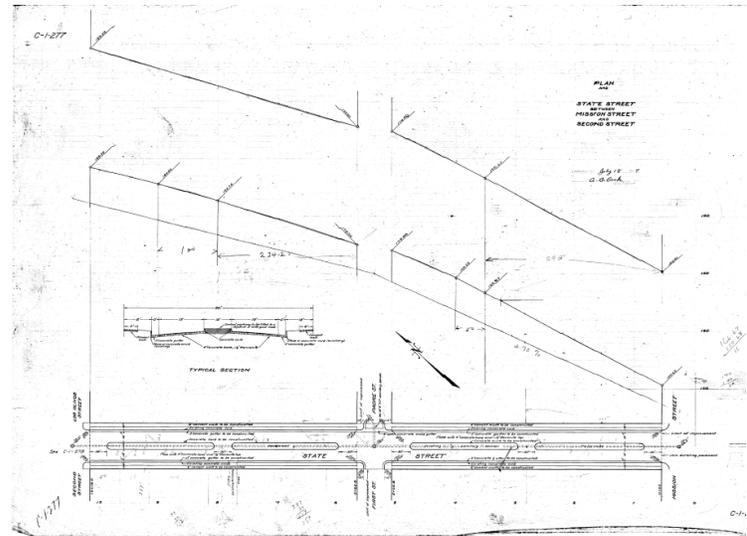
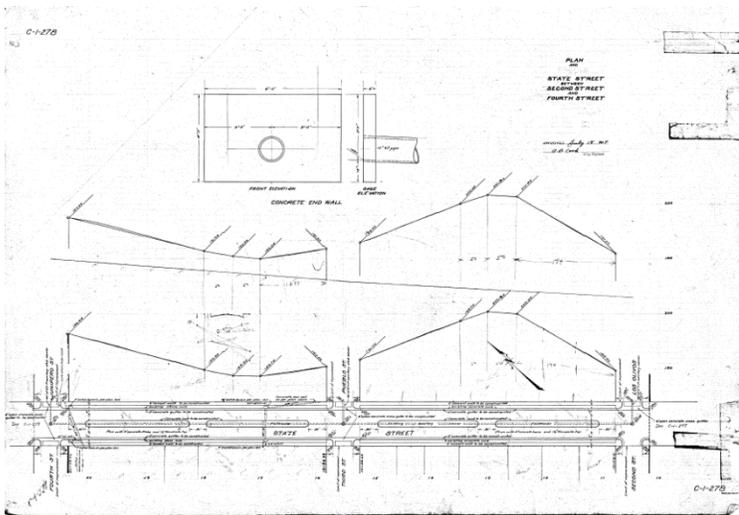
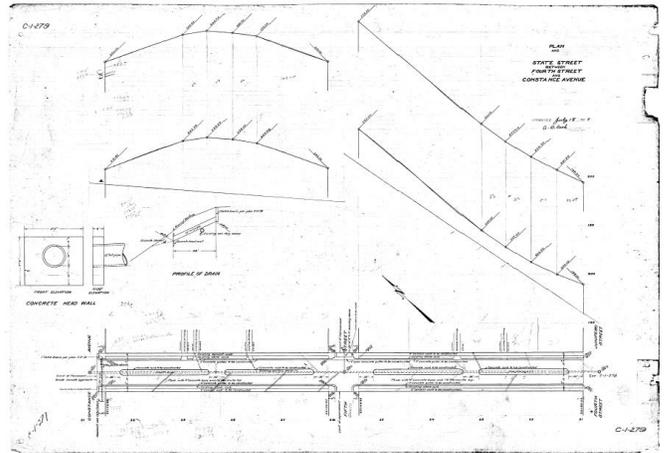
Assessor Parcel Number: ROW

Constructed: 1917

Designer: Drawings were signed by A.B. Cook and dated July 18, 1917 City of Santa Barbara Department of Public Works Engineers

Historic Name: State Street Parkway

Period of Significance: 1917-1925



Above images: 1917 Drawings of the State Street Parkway by Public Works Department

Vicinity Map, City of Santa Barbara Mapping
Analysis and Printing System, 2020



State Street Parkway, running from Mission Street to Constance Avenue. Yellow parcels are identified historic Structures of Merit and blue parcels are on the Historic Resources Inventory

Property Description: The parkway runs six blocks from Mission to Constance Street filled with Pindo Palms trees, a tree native to Paraguay and various ground covers, including rosemary, agaves natal plums, and purple lantana. The parkways feature concrete curbing that define the edge to the street. At the corner of Mission Street, the streetscape transforms from a commercial character to a street lined with predominately early 20th century residential houses separated from the street by a sidewalk and tree lawns. On the corner of West Padre and State Street is a Colonial Revival style church and at the corner of East Constance is a 1970 contemporary multi-unit apartment building.



Integrity: Integrity is the ability to convey its original appearance. There are essential physical features that must be considered to evaluate the integrity. The State Street Parkway retains its character-defining features, including the Pindo Palm trees and residential character of early 20th century homes lining the streetscape, sidewalks and tree lawns that create a Cultural Landscape. Since 1917, the cultural landscape from Mission Street to Constance Street has retained integrity of design as it has not been altered, it retains integrity of materials as it still retains the Pindo Palms that were installed prior to 1925. The cultural landscape as whole has enough historic integrity of location, feeling, setting, design and association that it can still convey its appearance as it was during the period of significance from 1917-1925, from when it was constructed to when all the palms were installed and the street took a residential appearance creating a cultural landscape as a whole.

*Parkway looking North up from Mission.
Photo taken July 18, 2022, by Nicole
Hernandez.*

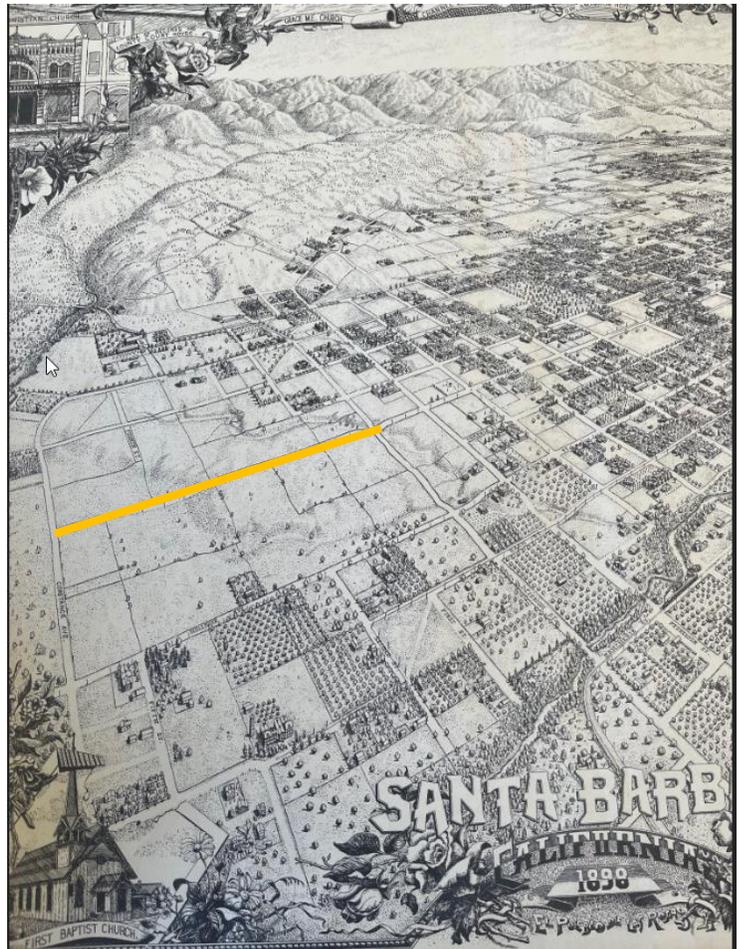
Significance: The Parkway qualifies to be designated a historic resource under the following criteria provided by the Municipal Code, Section 30.157.025

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;

Historic Context: *Much of the historic context for this report is based on the designation submittal packet by Fred L. Sweeney, AIA, on behalf of the Upper East Association Board of Directors and the research of historian Post/Hazeltine Associates in their Historic Structures/Sites Reports on State Street.*

Much of the growth of Santa Barbara as tree filled, green city was due to the philosophy of the City Beautiful Movement and vision of many early planners and residents. The State Street Parkway extending from Mission to Constance Streets is a result of early planning efforts to create a beautiful and individual city. Below is an early local historic context of Santa Barbara and the portion of State Street from Mission Street to Constance Street as per historians Post/Hazeltine Associates:

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century Santa Barbara was slowly taking on the characteristics of an American city. This was accomplished, in part, by the imposition of an orthogonal grid laid over the informal arrangement of the Spanish/Mexican adobe buildings that had initially formed the core of City. With the establishment of a street grid, State Street, which extended from the beach to Mission Street, became the City's primary commercial corridor. In 1870, commercial development was focused on lower State Street between De La Guerra and Cota Streets. Less than ten years later, the State Street commercial corridor extended in an almost unbroken line from Carrillo to Haley Street. Above Carrillo Street however, the State Street corridor remained semi-rural and undeveloped.



Above: Outline in yellow, the section of State Street from Mission to Constance in the Birdseye view map of 1898, illustrating it as undeveloped and rural.

Santa Barbara continued to develop fitfully until the mid-1880s. By that time the economic downturn caused by the 1878 Depression dissipated when Southern California entered into the first of its periodic real estate booms. The popularity of Santa Barbara as a resort destination, and the 1887 completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad line linking Santa Barbara and Los Angeles helped fuel the City's economy. The commencement of rail service to Santa Barbara on August 19, 1887 was greeted with much celebration as many were convinced that the railroad's arrival would lead to greater prosperity for the City. The coming of the railroad did increase building and construction in Santa Barbara, but the focus of new development was concentrated almost exclusively in the waterfront area and the downtown core of the City. Above Mission Street small farms, ranches and orchards continued to be the predominate form of development.

During this period, State Street, Santa Barbara's principal transportation and commercial corridor, ended at Constance Avenue. If one wished to travel further north, toward Goleta, the primary access was along Hollister Avenue, which extended west from the intersection of Mission Street and De La Vina Street to Goleta. As late as the end of the nineteenth century the area continued to remain rural and essentially undeveloped. The area started to be subdivided in tract maps, the dates of these tract maps are March 4, 1874, superseded by tract maps recorded in 1888, 1906 and 1923. The approved subdivisions were the "Van Vactor and Myers Tract," and the "Mission Hill Addition," both of which created lots for individual sale and designated streets above Mission Street as First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth (now Constance Avenue).



1907 Sanborn Map- overview of City, illustrating that State Street ended at Constance Street. No individual pages were created to show development along State Street from Mission to Constance Streets.

Beginning in the first decade of the twentieth century and accelerating in the postwar World War I period, the area between Constance Avenue and Mission Street began to develop as a residential neighborhood. Much of the impetus for the development of the neighborhood was due to improvements in the City's streetcar system. By 1913 streetcar lines linked both Oak Park and the Upper East to downtown Santa Barbara. One of the lines was just a few block below the State Street Parkway at Islay Street. The presence of convenient transportation to the downtown area and the growing popularity of the automobile made the outlying neighborhoods increasingly attractive to the City's residents. Close enough to downtown for work, shopping, social and civic activities, but far enough removed from its less desirable sections, which often included stables, rail yards and saloons, these outlying neighborhoods appealed to the prosperous working and middle class residents of Santa

Barbara. The first residence built between Mission and Constance Streets along State Street was a modest one-story, Craftsmen style house, built in 1914 located at 2117 State Street

By 1914, State Street above Mission was unpaved and undeveloped, but had been subdivided. Real estate developers were preparing to build on the new subdivisions on either side of State Street and wanted the street to be paved. As early as November 1914, at a City Council meeting, a representative of the property owners above Mission Street, requested permission to pave state Street from Mission to Constance Street since it would be more cost effective that the City paving the street. Another one of the first houses built in this section of State Street was completed 1915 at 2426 State Street in the Craftsman style and its neighbor completed in 1916 at 2410 State Street in the Shingle style.



The State Street Parkway facing east on 2400 block, illustrating the Craftsman style house constructed in 1915 and a Shingle style house constructed in 1916 both of these houses are designated Structures of Merit- facing the streetscape. Photo taken July 18, 2022, by Nicole Hernandez.

However, it was not until 1917, that the City designed plans for paving the section of State Street between Mission and Constance (where State Street ended). In the first half of 1917, there was much debate about installing the Parkway along this section. As noted in the designation submittal essay written by Fred L. Sweeney, Pat Saley and Mary Louise Days, “The term “parkway” was coined in the 1860s by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux as part of their recommendation to the Borough of Brooklyn to introduce wide tree-lined boulevards in residential neighborhoods. Those wide boulevards created vehicle surfaces for the new automobiles on each side of a center landscape area with a “roadbed” in the middle for horse-drawn carriages. That term then became commonly used to describe landscape areas that were part of a street system. To this day, this term is not only used for middle of a street’s landscape area, but also in city ordinances to identify the landscape area between street curbs and gutters and the adjacent public sidewalk.”



The State Street Parkway facing west illustrating agave plants in the Parkway and a Spanish Colonial Revival style house facing the streetscape. Photo taken July 18, 2022, by Nicole Hernandez.

In fact, State Street had an existing landscaped parkway from Sola to Micheltoarena Streets. Council actually tried to remove it and residents protested and even requested to extend it. In an article date March 3, 1917, illustrates that residents like the “pretty little strip of garden” that served as a check for speeding and even supported extending the park strip along upper State Street to Constance Avenue. The article states, “The advantage of the double track is also beginning to be appreciated and the fact that the city has remained inactive on beautification plans submitted years ago by one of the most noted authorities in American is coming home to our people with an emphasis that may arouse them to a revival of the Robinson Report and bring about its application.” The article is referring to the report completed in 1909 by one of the most important City Beautiful Movement practitioners Charles Mulford Robinson who completed a report, titled *Regarding the Civic Affairs of Santa Barbara also the Report of the Eleven on The Improvement of the City Streets*. He states in the report the Santa Barbara street grid is monotonous and the natural conditions are favorable for the creation of a “city beautiful” by remodeling the existing town. The Report explicitly states:

For State Street, Above Victoria, I recommend a band of center parking, giving double roadways. This would have a stately effect that would be suitable on the main-the vertebral-avenue of the city; it would give an interesting variety to the town’s street development, contrasting to with the side parkings elsewhere, and except Cabrillo Street. State is the only important thoroughfare in the city which is wide enough for it. When the pavement must be replaced or repaired the change should certainly be made. The center parking could be twenty feet in width; and if there be an objection that it would be difficult to keep the strip green and beautiful through the long dry season, even so the street would look far better for division, than with the dusty and needlessly wide expanse now offered. At worst, a bridle path, planted on either side with mesembryanthemum or cactus, yucca, etc. would transform – by this middle strip- a very costly and unpleasant thoroughfare into one conveniently and thoroughly interesting. It is idle for Santa Barbara to try to attract by copying the wide asphalted streets of the Middle West. The secret of success, with towns as with people, is individuality, not imitation.”

To clarify, landscaped parkways were referred to a “Hobbleskirts” or “Parking” as declared on March 11, 1917, in the Santa Barbara Morning Press, “The Press, however, is pleased to make note of the fact that, officially, “Hobbleskirt” is known as ‘State Street Park.’ ”

By July of 1917, the plans for the paving and parkway were underway. The Public Works Department prepared engineering drawings dated July 18, 1917 for the construction of two single paved lanes on each side of a parkway with concrete curbs (see drawings on page 1). There was a break at the end of each block which allowed vehicles to turn-around at the end of each block, so that cars would not have to go all the way to the end of State Street. By October 17, 1917, the Santa Barbara Morning Press reported, “The upper State Street paving is proceeding without a hitch. This will be between Mission and Constance Avenue. The improvements will include paving, and parking (Parkway) in the middle of the street.” As stated earlier, based on the Public Works drawings, “parking”



The State Street Parkway facing west illustrating 1920s Spanish Colonial Revival style houses facing the streetscape. Photo taken July 18, 2022, by Nicole Hernandez.

means landscaped Parkway. A February 10, 1918 Santa Barbara Daily News article states “The paving has begun with preparation for parking (Parkway) in the center, a request from the neighbors.”

Other houses gradually began to fill the blocks of State Street; the majority of them constructed during the 1920s (see Sanborn Maps from 1930-31 illustrating development of the lots along State Street framing the Parkway, pgs. 9-11). By 1925 the City completed the landscaping with the installation of Pindo Palms all along the parkway, a tree native to Paraguay. It is not clear what other landscaping was in the Parkway. Most of the houses along the blocks from Mission to Constance streets along State Street were built in typical early 20th century styles including, Craftsman, Spanish Colonial, American Colonial and Tudor Revival styles. In Santa Barbara, the Spanish Colonial Revival style was one of the dominant residential designs during this period. Largely inspired by the architecture of Spain and its colonies, the Spanish Colonial Revival style was a regional manifestation of the period revival movement. By the early 1930s, at the onset of the Great Depression, residential growth in Santa Barbara, as in the rest of the nation, ended almost entirely. By this time, however, most of the blocks on State Street from



The State Street Parkway facing west with a view of the historic Congregational Church facing the Parkway and rosemary plants in the Parkway. Photo taken July 18, 2022, by Nicole Hernandez.

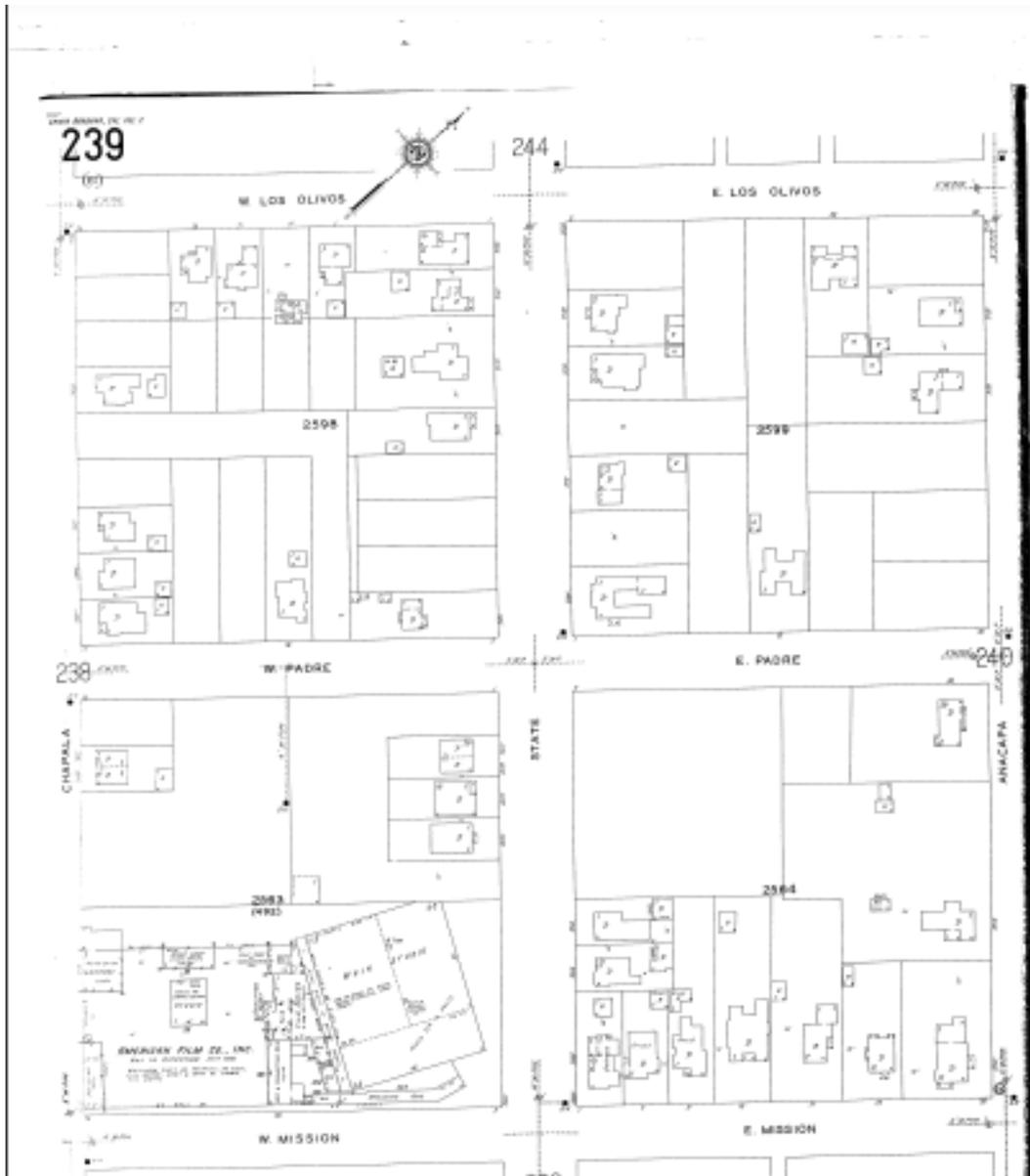
Mission to Constance Streets had been developed. The Congregation Church was the rare addition to the block constructed in 1935 at the corner of State and Padres Streets. The blocks, with its few remaining empty lots, would have to wait until the postwar period for further expansion.

The area to north of Constance Street and the State Street Parkway and residential district remained agricultural land. The Ontare Ranch's headquarters, consisting of a number of barns and corrals, was located near the intersection of De La Vina and Alamar Streets, just several blocks north of the State Street Parkway.

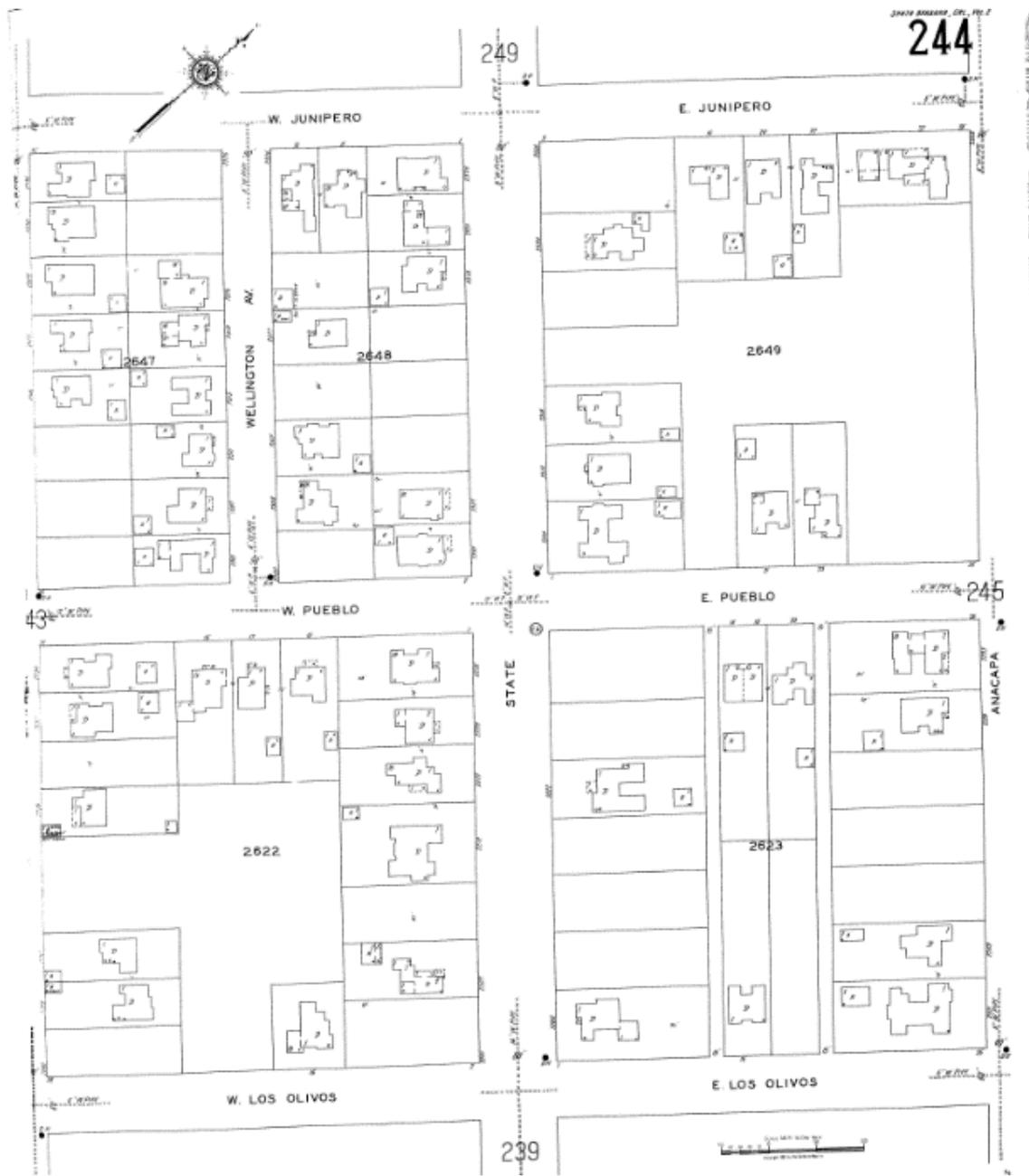
Even as late as 1948, State Street above Mission Street was almost entirely residential in character. This was due to the fact that State Street still ended at Constance Avenue. Consequently upper State Street, which did not carry commuter traffic north of the City, was not an attractive location for commercial real estate. However, after World War II development west of downtown Santa Barbara required the construction of a direct link between the downtown area and post-war suburban tracts located west of the City. In 1949, the City of Santa Barbara extended State Street west from Constance Avenue to the San Roque neighborhood. This project transformed the segment of State Street between Mission Street and Constance Avenue into a commuter corridor. It was during this period that several single-family residences were built on the few remaining vacant parcels (Post/Hazeltine Associates).



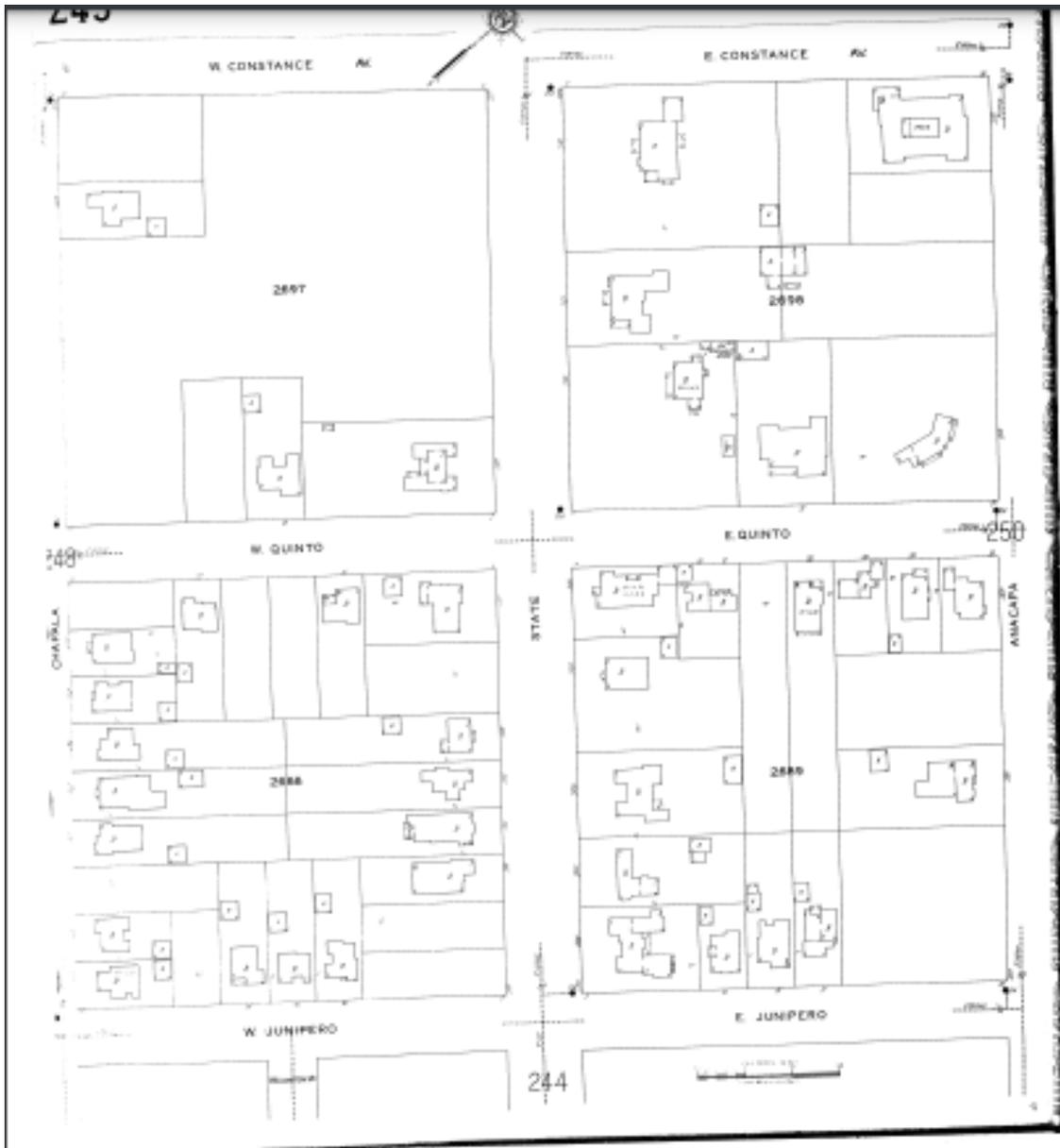
The State Street Parkway facing northwest with a view of the American Colonial Revival style house constructed in 1942 facing the Parkway and rosemary plants in the Parkway. Photo taken July 18, 2022, by Nicole Hernandez.



1931 Sanborn Map, illustrating the American Film Studio (formerly Flying A Film Studios) on the corner of State Street and Mission and the housing development along State Street from Mission to Los Olivos Streets. Vol. 2. Page 239



1931 Sanborn Map, illustrating the housing development along State Street from Los Olivos to Junipero Streets. Vol. 2. Page 244



Right: 1931 Sanborn Map, illustrating the housing development along State Street from Junipero to Constance Streets. Vol. 2. Page 249

The State Street Parkway embodies distinctive characteristics of the period in the early 20th century when Santa Barbara was purposefully creating a visual beautification to the City. Designed in 1917, Santa Barbara created the Parkway to soften, beautify, and create greenspace to the newly developing residential portion of State Street from Mission Street to Constance Street. The installation of the Parkway represents a period when the nation as a whole was beautifying cities and towns with parkways as part of the City Beautiful Movements.



The State Street Parkway facing Southwest toward Mission Street with a view of the transition from Commercial the corridor. Photo taken July 18, 2022, by Nicole Hernandez.

The Parkway is a defining characteristic of early twentieth-century planning movements including the City Beautiful Movement. Inspired by the World’s Fair in 1893, the City Beautiful movement was a response to the accumulating dirt and disorder in industrial cities. The philosophy of the movement is fairly simple: that beauty in the urban landscape is essential to public welfare. City Beautiful advocates believed that better sanitation, improved circulation of traffic, monumental civic centers, parks, parkways, public spaces, civic art, and the reduction of outdoor advertising would make cities throughout the United States more profitable and harmonious.



The State Street Parkway facing West where the modern apartment building on the corner of State Street and Constance that marks the end of the Parkway and transitions from the small houses facing the Parkway to the Commercial area above Constance Street. Photo taken July 18, 2022, by Nicole Hernandez.

Engaging architects and planners, businessmen, social reformers and journalists, the City Beautiful movement encompassed landscape beauty and civic grandeur, to create a more humane and functional city.

“Mean streets make mean people,” wrote the movement’s publicist and leading theorist, Charles

Mulford Robinson, encapsulating the belief in positive environmentalism that drove the movement. As noted earlier, Santa Barbara was extremely privileged to have Robinson complete a report on *Civic Affairs and Improvement of the City Streets of Santa Barbara*. Combining the parks and boulevards of landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted with the neoclassical architecture of Daniel H. Burnham's White City at the Chicago's World Columbian Exposition in 1893, the City Beautiful movement viewed a City as a delicate organism that could be improved by bold, comprehensive planning. Two organizations, the American Park and Outdoor Art Association (founded in 1897) and the American League for Civic Improvements (founded in 1900), provided the movement with a national presence.

Criterion 5. Its unique location or singular physical characteristic represents an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood.

The State Street Parkway has been a feature on State Street from Mission to Constance since 1917, over 100 years, and creates a cultural landscape whose trees and landscape represent an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood.



Conclusion: Because the State Street Parkway creates a Cultural Landscape that embodies distinctive characteristics of the period in the early 20th century when Santa Barbara was purposefully creating a visual beautification to the City and represents the city beautification effort representing the philosophy of the City Beautiful movement. In addition the State Street Parkway is a cultural landscape installed in 1917 that represents an established a familiar visual feature of the neighborhood. Thus, the State Street Parkway qualifies for 2 criteria to be considered a historic resource.

Attachments: *State Street Median. A Parkway Landscape designation nomination packet.* June 27, 2022.

Works Cited:

1898 Birdseye View Maps of Santa Barbara. City Of Santa Barbara, Community Development Archives.

Fairfield, John D. "The City Beautiful Movement, 1890-1920." Oxford Research Encyclopedias <https://oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.001.0001/acrefore-9780199329175-e-558>

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Robinson, Charles Mulford. *Regarding the Civic Affairs of Santa Barbara also the Report of the Eleven on The Improvement of the City Streets*. Printed for the Civic League by the Independent. 1909

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