

**HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION**

**HISTORIC SIGNIFIGANCE REPORT**

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# Hotel de Riviera

125 West Carrillo Street  
Santa Barbara, CA



*Figure 1* Hotel de Riviera at 125 West Carrillo Street from: Herics, Sebastian, 24 March 2021.

**Designation Status:** Structure of Merit

**Assessor Parcel Number:** 093-313-024

**Constructed:** 1915

**Historic Name:** Hotel de Riviera

**Architect:** Unknown

**Builder:** Unknown

**Architectural Style:** Craftsman

**Property Type:** Commercial

**Original Use:** Hotel

**What makes this place historic?** 125 East Carrillo Street, or the Hotel de Riviera, is historic because it exemplifies the Craftsman architectural style but also has a hint of European design.

Reacting to loss of human craft found in the Industrial Revolution, the Arts and Crafts Movement formed in England and soon spread to the United States. It became known as the Craftsman Movement in the United States and utilized local, natural materials, simplicity of forms, originality, and hand-crafted detail. In 1901, the first issue of *The Craftsman* magazine was published by Gustav Stickley, a strong proponent of Craftsman furniture, textiles, and architecture. Architects such as Greene and Greene in Pasadena, and David Owen Dryden in San Diego championed the Craftsman style, helping it to become the most popular style of the early 1900's (Grumbine).

The Craftsman Movement embodied great variety with the Arts and Crafts English antecedents, to homes with an aesthetic reminiscent of oriental wood joinery, to the Craftsman Bungalow style which ennobled modest homes for a rapidly expanding American middle class (Grumbine).

In Santa Barbara the Craftsman house enjoyed a popularity that can still be seen today. From the small bungalow to the large, almost grandiose house, Craftsman architecture thrived in Santa Barbara.



Figure 2 Note the low-pitch roof and horizontal character of the windows and wood from: Herics, Sebastian, 24 March 2021.

Craftsman architecture is found in the neighborhoods surrounding downtown, but the Bungalow Haven Historic District is home to the largest intact concentration of Craftsman bungalows in Santa Barbara (Grumbine).

Looking at the Hotel from the sidewalk, the first Craftsman feature to note is how wide the front façade of the building is, as well as the low-pitched roof that tops it. Despite being two-stories tall, the roof and width make the building lay low to the ground. The front façade's horizontally oriented rows of windows also add the particularly Craftsman low-building feeling.



Figure 3 The large brackets with curved and pointed beam from: Herics, Sebastian, 24 March 2021.

Other key Craftsman features are the large but simple brackets of the front gable that extend past the edge of the roof. The ganged windows also feature side lights and transoms, detailing that Craftsman homes exhibit. Though not slender like normal Craftsman homes, the large sandstone pillars and wall adds a touch of the natural world, recalling the craftsmanship of earlier times before mechanical processes produced all building elements.

Though the building exhibits many Craftsman style elements, it still feels European. Notice the brackets by the gable again, and how they are actually slightly decorated with a curve. The upper-story protrusion also goes a bit against the Craftsman grain, especially because of its supports that end at a sharp angle. And finally, the gable has a small lattice-like decoration which one would be hard-pressed to find on a standard Craftsman home. The features mentioned above indicate inspiration from Swiss Chalet style, whose buildings

feature overhanging eaves, decorated brackets, and most importantly a stone first story (Poore). The European mix might seem odd in Spanish-styled Santa Barbara, but not so strange when we consider who built the property.

According to Kolsbun and Burgess' *Discovering Santa Barbara*, it was built in 1915 as a Norwegian hotel for Norwegians. It first appeared in the 1915-1916 city directory as the Riviera Apartment Hotel, managed by Axel E. Bern. It was possibly built for Norwegian sailors from ships that would dock here. It seems to be in its original state as no major additions were made except to the garage in 1930. It apparently was not damaged in the 1925 earthquake as there are no permits for repairs until 1930 and 1940. These buildings are unusual in their European feeling and have vines, flowers and shrubs that enhance the cottage and Swiss chalet feeling.

### Property Description:

The main hotel building is a two-story, shallow L-shaped, frame structure with a deep red-stained clapboard exterior. There are numerous white-painted windows—siding, double hung, and casement types. On the front elevation there is an oriel window next to the second-floor enclosed porch. There is another oriel on the west elevation. The building has a low gable roof with a cross-gable at the rear.

Brackets widely separated under the roof overhang emphasize the craftsman bungalow architectural style.

French doors form entrance to the hotel, banked on each side by narrow casement windows set into the stone walls of the enclosed porch. This porch has a tongue-and-groove ceiling. There is a stone chimney on the east elevation, and a small pergola off the "L" wing. The southeast rear corner off the building has an open balcony. An unroofed deck is located at the west elevation, front. The rear elevation has a single door leading into the patio, and a row of second-floor sliding windows. Vines cover large areas of the buildings clapboard sheathing.

The two-story annex building to the rear has a low gable-hip roof with no side overhang. Windows are multi-pane, trimmed in black and white paint. There are two single entry doors facing the patio, one with a shed-roof overhang, and one with a wide unroofed porch. A rear door opens onto a roofed hang, and one with a wide unroofed porch. A rear door opens onto a roofed porch which is adjacent to the Hendry Mechanical Works building.

Hotel de Riviera has attraction gardens containing sculptures and footpaths. At the northeasterly edge of the Carrillo Street frontage is a garden gateway consisting of two-pillars, brick with stucco finish, surmounted by a wooden beam. Bougainvillea covers the top of the gateway. The pole which supports the hotel's neon sign is situated inside the westerly gateway pillar.



Figure 4 Ogee lugs keep the upper sashes locked in place from: Herics, Sebastian, 24 March 2021.

**Historic Integrity:**

“Integrity” is how well a historic place or resource represents the period or theme for which it is being recognized for. To prove “Integrity,” researchers use the National Register of Historic Place’s definition of “Integrity.” For the National Register, Integrity is determined by the historic resource’s Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association (Integrity, 44). The Hotel de Riviera maintains its integrity because it successfully conveys its original 1915 appearance.

**Historical Significance:**

“Historical Significance” is a term used by the city to call a place historical. A place earns “Historical Significance” if it meets one or all of the criteria listed below in the City of Santa Barbara. The Landmarks Commission and City Council decides whether or not, based on these criteria, if a historical place is a Historic Landmark or a Structure of Merit (Chapter 22.22). This building was designated a **Structure of Merit**, because it:

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

~~Meets Criterion B.~~ *Its location as a site of significant historic event.*

~~Meets Criterion C.~~ *Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the City, the State and the Nation.*

**Meets Criterion D.** *Its exemplification of a particular architectural style or ways of life important to the City, the State, or the Nation.*

The Hotel de Riviera exemplifies a mix between Swiss Chalet and Craftsman styles through its:

- Low-lying mass
- Low-pitched gabled roof
- Lattice-motif of gable
- Bracketed eaves
- Ganged transomed and side-paned windows
- Double-hung wood sash windows with ogee lugs
- Wood siding
- Sandstone first story

~~Meets Criterion E.~~ *Its exemplification of the best remaining architectural type in a neighborhood.*

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

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

~~Meets Criterion H.~~ *Its relationship to any other landmark if its preservation is essential to the integrity of that landmark.*

**Meets Criterion I.** *Its unique location or singular characteristic representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood.*

The building's unique mix of Craftsman style and Swiss Chalet make it an established and familiar feature of the local neighborhood.

~~Meets Criterion J.~~ *Its potential of yielding significant information of archaeological interest.*

~~Meets Criterion K.~~ *Its integrity as a natural environment that strongly contributes to the well-being of the people of the City, the State or the Nation.*

### Works Cited

Chapter 22.22 Historic Structures, Santa Barbara Municipal Code.

[http://qcode.us/codes/santabarbara/view.php?topic=22-22\\_22&frames=on](http://qcode.us/codes/santabarbara/view.php?topic=22-22_22&frames=on).

Grumbine, Anthony and Nicole Hernandez. "Craftsman," *Santa Barbara Style Guides*. City of Santa Barbara, Community Development Dept. & Harrison Design, Nov. 2014.

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"How to Evaluate the Integrity of a Property" in *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, National Register Bulletin NRB 15,

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