

# HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

## HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE REPORT

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### 1242 Dover Lane

### Santa Barbara, California

**Designation Status:** Added to the Historic Resources Inventory in 2014

**Assessor Parcel Number:**  
019-203-002

**Constructed:** 1927

**Architect:** Leonard A. Cooke

**Builder:** N/A

**Architectural Style:** Spanish Colonial Revival

**Property Type:** Single family residence

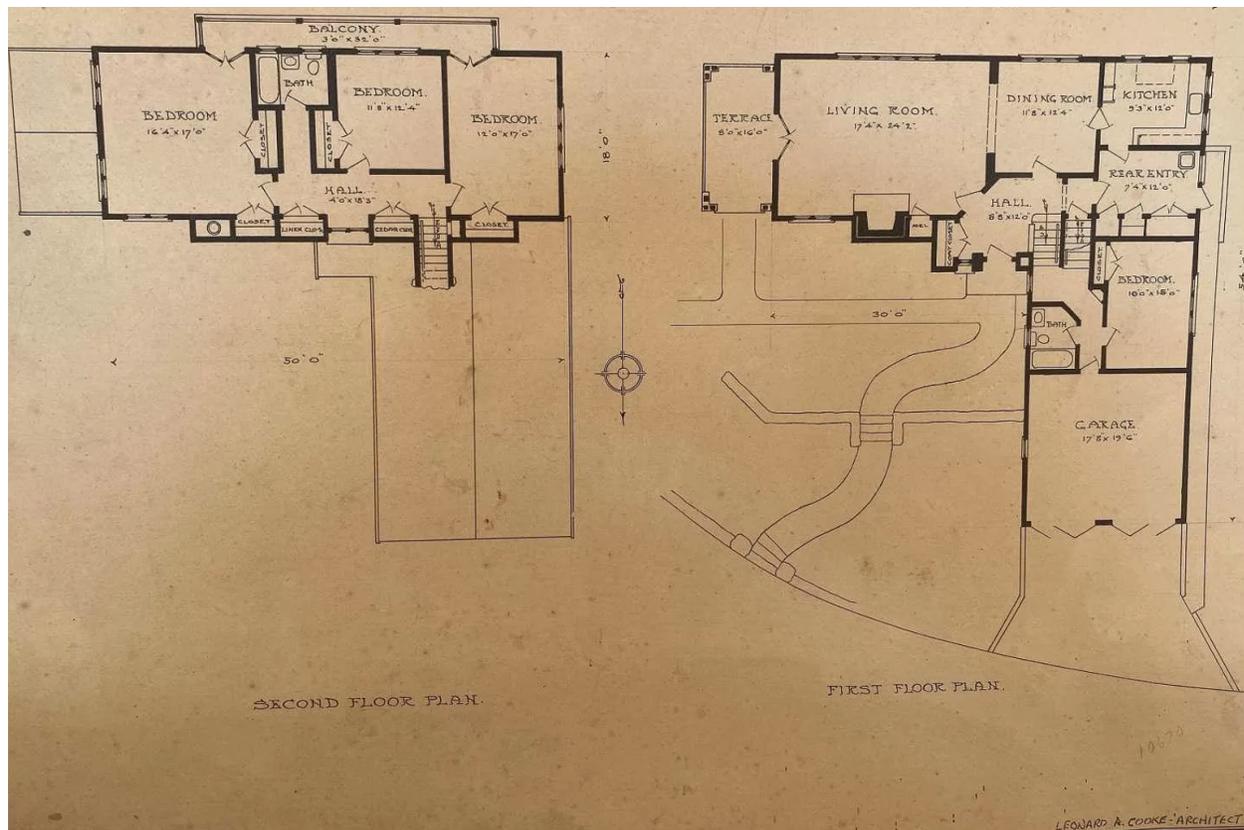
**Original Use:** Single family residence



Photo courtesy of zillow.com property listing for 1242 Dover Lane

### What Makes this Place Historic?

The Spanish Colonial Revival was particularly popular in Santa Barbara's ritzy "American Riviera" hillside, named for its resemblance to the Mediterranean coasts of France and Italy. Long considered too arid and barren to settle, the high-on-the-hill Riviera hamlet reinvented itself as Santa Barbara's most alluring neighborhood over the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1909 the State of California selected Santa Barbara to be the site of a new Normal School, which evolved a few decades later into the University of California, Santa Barbara and relocated to unincorporated County land near Goleta. Local banker Charles Edwards volunteered 14 acres of his own land above



Original drawings, with L. A. Cooke's signature at bottom right, courtesy of zillow.com property listing for 1242 Dover Lane

Mission Santa Barbara, in what would become the Riviera. It was a major turning point for the City; after California accepted his land, Santa Barbara had to shore up sufficient transportation accommodations for students and faculty. The City extended the streetcar line from its Mission Santa Barbara terminus up into the Riviera (these tracks were later paved over as Alameda Padre Serra). In 1913 a group of investors called the Riviera Company incorporated the area for \$300,000 and purchased additional land nearby. The Riviera Company reimagined the neighborhood's entire character between 1920 and 1950 and was responsible for many of its most notable features: the planting of still-extant oak trees, the proliferation of terracing built by twentieth century Italian stonemasons, and strong encouragements (sometimes requirements) that residents construct terracotta-roofed, white-stuccoed Spanish Colonial Revival Style homes. The Riviera Company insisted that unsightly utility cables be placed underground, and that lots be oriented so that no home would impair a neighbor's view. As a result, even to this day the Riviera offers unobstructed, panoramic views of downtown Santa Barbara to the east, the gleaming Pacific Ocean and distant Channel Islands to the south, and the Santa Ynez Mountains to the north.

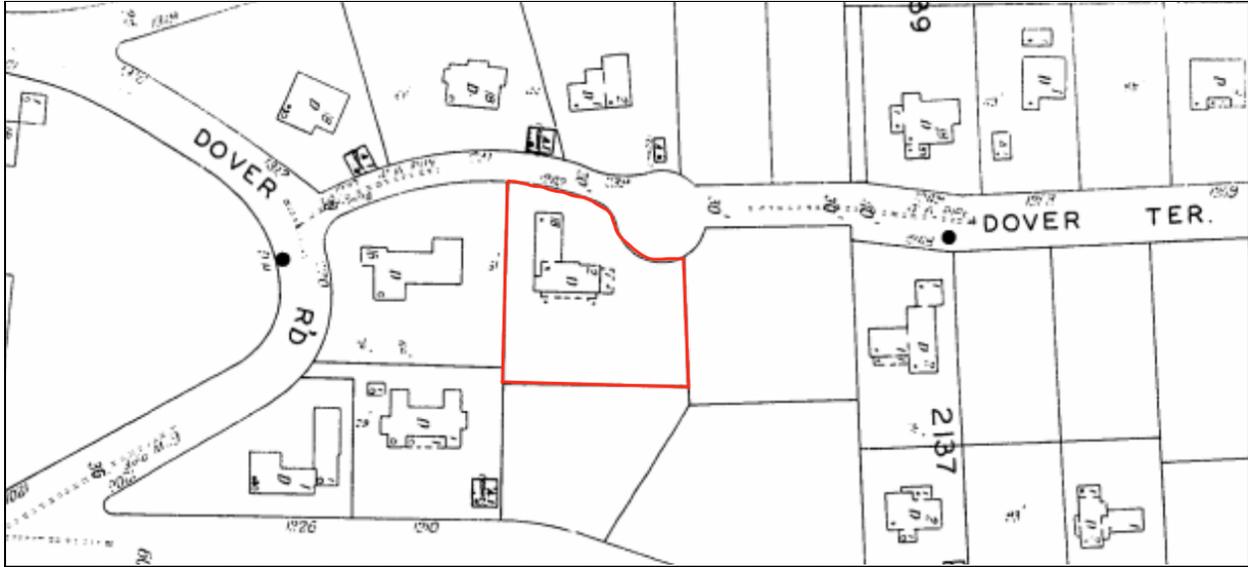
The dominant landscape features of the Riviera are an alluvial fan formed by Mission Creek and Sycamore Canyon Creek, upon which most of downtown Santa Barbara is built, and Mission Ridge, which extends from Santa Barbara Mission to Sycamore Canyon Road. The native vegetation consisted of a coastal sage community, with riparian and marshland plant communities bordering creeks and sloughs. Since the arrival of the Spanish over 200 years ago, human activity has virtually eliminated these habitats from what is now the Riviera neighborhood. The Riviera covers 634 acres and is serviced by public green spaces, including Franceschi Park and Hillside (Orpet) Park.



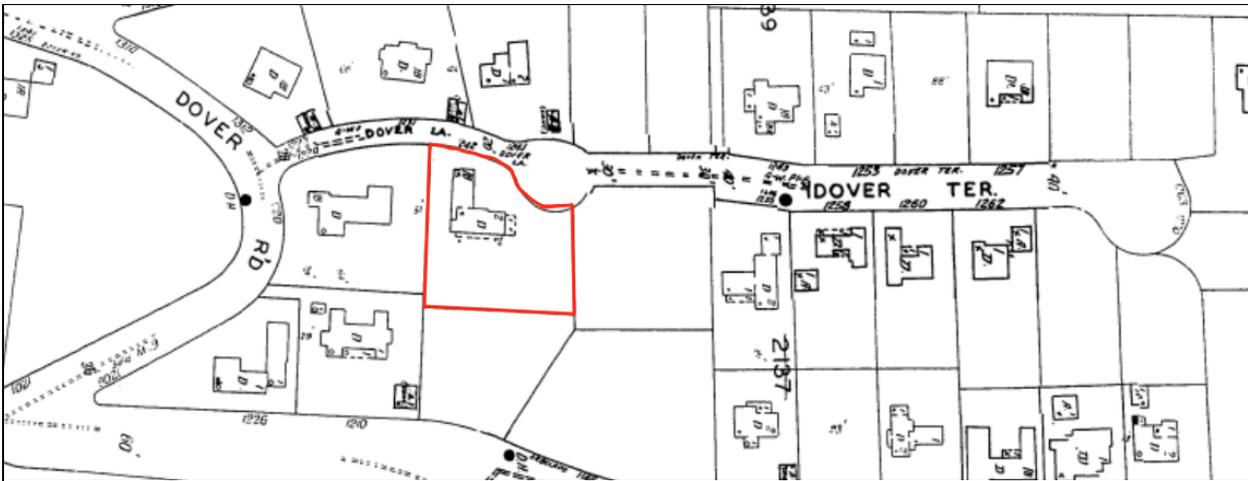
Photos courtesy of zillow.com property listing for 1242 Dover Lane

Institutional development includes two private schools, Marymount School at 2130 Mission Ridge Road and Santa Barbara Middle School on Alameda Padre Serra. Residential development consists primarily of single-family houses set on large parcels, though there is some multi-residential housing, confined mostly to condominium developments. The majority of the housing stock in the Riviera was built between 1915 and 1975.

**Property Description:** 1242 Dover Lane is a two-story, L-shaped Spanish Colonial Revival Style residence with a number of significant visual features. The steeply-pitched, cross-gabled terracotta roof consists of two primary sections: one side-gabled segment contains the main portion of the house, and a front-gabled segment approaches Dover Lane and contains a garage. The garage door is wood paneled with divided transoms in the upper segment. The home's gable ends do not feature cornices, but the side lengths do, which prevents the terracotta from casting a rough, natural, jagged shadow against the smooth stucco walls. The side gable features the home's grand side-entrance porch, which is on the left side of the street elevation and is recessed within its own lower side gable, which matches the home's main side gable. The porch is surrounded by a wrought-iron balustrade railing, which extends back around the elevated rear patio. The porch's gable is supported by thick wood columns. The "front" door is located in the corner of the home's L-shaped configuration, facing toward Dover Lane. A narrow segment of the front gable sloped down to cap the front door, which sits recessed within a slightly projecting archway. The door is flanked by a double-hung window. The walls are a smooth stucco, which is contrasted with the red of the terracotta and brick tiles that line the ground. The windows are all recessed into the stucco walls and feature wood-divided sashes. The windows are mostly casements or double-hung, and they are irregularly spaced around the house, sometimes occurring in pairs of two, or even three (as is the case on the rear balcony). The home features French doors on the side entrance and the rear balcony, which are four-pane, wood-divided, and slightly recessed into the wall plane. The rear balcony features wooden posts and wrought-iron railing work that are similar to the decorative work around the side entrance on the first floor. Below the rear balcony there is an enormous triptych window, with two single-pane sidelights flanking a large single-pane window. A stucco tower chimney projects out from the roof of the side gable and extends down to the ground floor. The home features a lush front garden that slopes downward, descending into the hillside, as well as a large backyard with less landscaping.



Sanborn Maps from 1930 (above) and 1950 (below) showing the development of the Riviera and Dover Lane nook



**Significance:** City of Santa Barbara establishes historical significance as provided by the Municipal Code, Section 30.175.025. Any historic building that meets one or more of the five criteria established for a City Landmark, or a City Structure of Merit can be considered significant. The structure may be significant as a Structure of Merit per the following criteria:

### Historic Integrity

1242 Dover Lane is in excellent condition. The building conveys integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling and association by being an example of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style in Santa Barbara.

**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; )



Street elevation with arched front doorway, stucco tower chimney, wood-divided windows, and sloping gable

Known for its Spanish Colonial Revival architecture, Santa Barbara owes much of its charm to the many thick plaster walls and clay tile roofs of this style. The various subtle details carved in wood or crafted in iron adds to the quality of the architecture and character of the city. Spanish Colonial Revival architecture will always be key to Santa Barbara's identity.

In 1916, Bertram Goodhue, author of a book on Spanish Colonial architecture, helped to kick-start the

new Spanish Colonial Revival Style with his designs for the Panama-California Expo in San Diego. Until then, the only Spanish architecture had been based on Mission prototypes. Soon, however, architects and patrons began to look to Spain itself for detailed examples of the Spanish style.

Throughout the territories originally settled by Spain in the Southwest, as well as Texas and Florida, the Spanish Colonial Revival Style flourished. In Santa Barbara, it was championed by many architects including George Washington Smith, Lulah Maria Riggs, Winsor Soule, Reginald Johnson, William Edwards, and Joseph Plunkett.

Also key to the success of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style in Santa Barbara was the Plans and Planting Committee, through which Pearl Chase and others helped to sway Santa Barbara towards a more unified architectural style based on the City's Spanish Colonial and Mexican past. After the 1925 Earthquake, much of this vision was realized in the rebuilding of State Street and the Pueblo Viejo area, from which Santa Barbara has received much of its beauty and notoriety.

The details of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture vary greatly depending on which period of Spanish architecture is being referenced. In Santa Barbara, the Andalusian vernacular (southern-Spanish farmhouse) was the key inspiration for the simplicity in detail found in much of the region's architecture. The Spanish Colonial Revival Style emphasizes the interplay of cubic volumes, patios, pergolas and verandas; each interpreted and redeemed by local architects or regions in their own oeuvre of the form, massing, and decorative treatments. In Santa Barbara, the Spanish Colonial Revival Style was exemplified by one of Santa Barbara's noted architects from the 1920s, George Washington Smith, who was one of the most popular architects in the United States.

Photo courtesy of zillow.com property listing for 1242 Dover Lane



Santa Barbara has examples of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style throughout the city 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.

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

The Spanish Colonial Revival style emphasized 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. This structure may qualify under Criterion D due to the following character-defining features:

- **Roof:** The home features an asymmetrical, L-shaped footprint, comprising a main segment with one dominant side gable and one front gable projecting perpendicularly toward Dover Lane. The steeply-pitched roofs are uniformly clad in classic terracotta tiles. A smaller side gable projects from the main side gable and contains within it the side porch entrance.
- **Cornice and Eave Details:** The home's gable ends do not feature cornices, but the side lengths do, which prevents the terracotta from casting a rough, natural, jagged shadow against the smooth stucco walls. Stucco and wood cornice lines provide a subtle differentiation between the terracotta roofing and the stucco walling. The smooth cornice prevents the terracotta tiles from casting a rough shadow against the home's stucco walls; the shadow is instead perfectly linear.
- **Patios and Balconies:** The side gable features the home's grand side-entrance porch, which is on the left side of the street elevation and is recessed within its own lower side gable, which matches the home's main side gable. The porch is surrounded by a wrought-iron balustrade railing, which extends back around the elevated rear patio. The porch's gable is supported by thick wood columns.
- **Wall Materials:** The walls are a smooth stucco, which is contrasted with the red of the terracotta and brick tiles that line the ground. The Spanish Colonial Revival Style features smooth, whitewashed, planar, stucco walls, with the emphasis on broad, uninterrupted wall surfaces punctuated by a careful use of openings that are asymmetrically arranged. The thick walls help the plaster building to feel believable as it imitates buildings originally made of load-bearing masonry.
- **Windows:** The windows are all recessed into the stucco walls and feature wood-divided sashes. The windows are mostly casements or double-hung, and they are irregularly spaced

around the house, sometimes occurring in pairs of two, or even three (as is the case on the rear balcony). Below the rear balcony there is an enormous triptych window, with two single-pane sidelights flanking a large single-pane window. Recessed windows are a quintessential feature of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style.

- **Door Details:** The “front” door is located in the corner of the home’s L-shaped configuration, facing toward Dover Lane. A narrow segment of the front gable sloped down to cap the front door, which sits recessed within a slightly projecting archway. The door is flanked by a double-hung window. The home features French doors on the side entrance and the rear balcony, which are four-pane, wood-divided, and slightly recessed into the wall plane.

Leonard Austin Cooke was born in Birkenhead, England in 1880 and immigrated, possibly for health reasons, to the United States in 1901 after attending architecture school. By 1902, he had landed in Santa Barbara, where he found work as a draftsman with a local architect. He moved to Pasadena in 1909 for unknown reasons, working as a draftsman for the famed architectural firm of Charles and Henry Greene, where he learned Craftsman Style design. In fact, he became so adept at designing in the Craftsman Style that many of the houses he worked on independently have since been mistaken for the work of the Greene brothers. Around 1910, Cooke launched a private practice in Pasadena, finally receiving his state license to practice architecture in 1915.

Cooke, however, had already returned to England a year earlier in order to sign up with the Royal Lancashires of the British Army. Working in a defense construction capacity, he reported back to America some of his experiences, which were published in a 1916 issue of the *Southwest Builder and Contractor*. He was reported to have been killed in France, but his friends later received a cablegram from him explaining that he was actually recuperating from his wounds in Liverpool, and that he planned to return to the war with the Royal Hussars.

Around this time, Cooke met his future wife in Scotland, and she accompanied him back to Santa Barbara in 1921. They were married that year in Berkeley, California, and had three children. One of their sons, Noel, would go on to form his own architectural practice in Santa Barbara.

Cooke spent the rest of his life in Santa Barbara. He worked in an office inside of the Howard Canfield Building and lived with his family at 2412 Foothill Road before moving to 433 East Victoria Street. He became involved in civic affairs, serving as chairman of the City’s planning commission and designing entries for the Tournament of Roses, two of which won sweepstakes prizes. He served as an advisor at nearby Port Hueneme during World War II, and eventually retired from architecture in 1951. Leonard Cooke died on October 10th, 1955 at the age of 75.

In Santa Barbara, Cooke designed the Municipal Tennis Courts and many residences, including the George McConnell house in 1927 (*La Muralla*)—named a Better Homes In America Demonstration House—and the J. Langdon Erving home, which cost an incredible \$160,000 to construct in 1930. Other residences he designed in Santa Barbara County can be found around Montecito and Hope Ranch. He also worked on a variety of structures in Altadena and Pasadena, primarily between 1910 and 1912. He was a charter member and former president of the American Institute of Architects. Cooke’s popularity as an architect was said to be bolstered by the extent to which he would go out of his way to accommodate his clients’ wishes.

#### **Work Cited:**

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