

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

STATE STREET PARKWAY
MISSION STREET TO CONSTANCE AVENUE
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA
SEPTEMBER 26, 2022

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

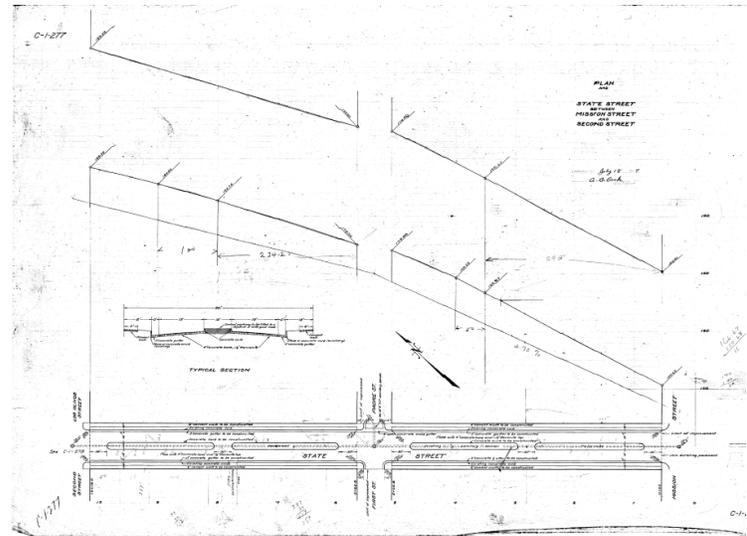
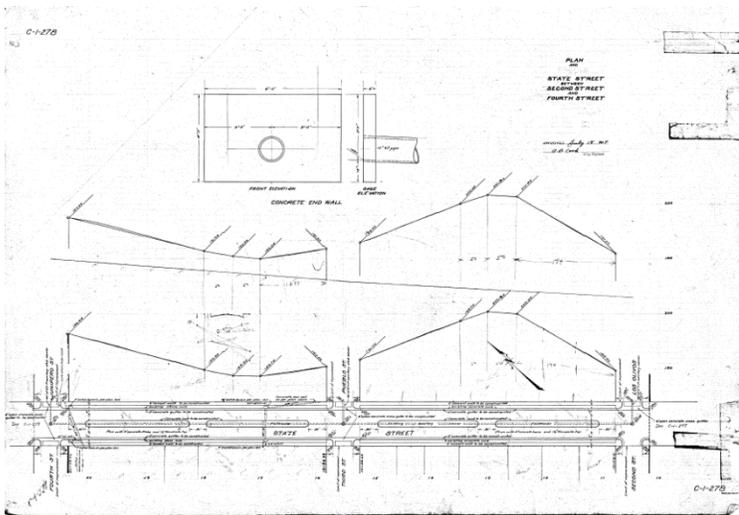
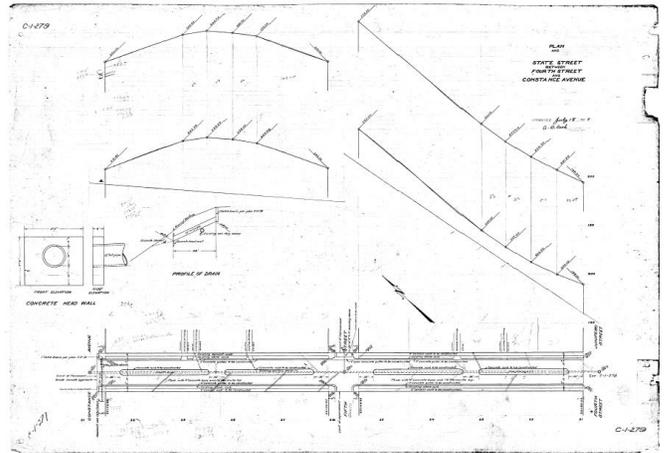
Assessor Parcel Number: ROW

Constructed: 1917

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

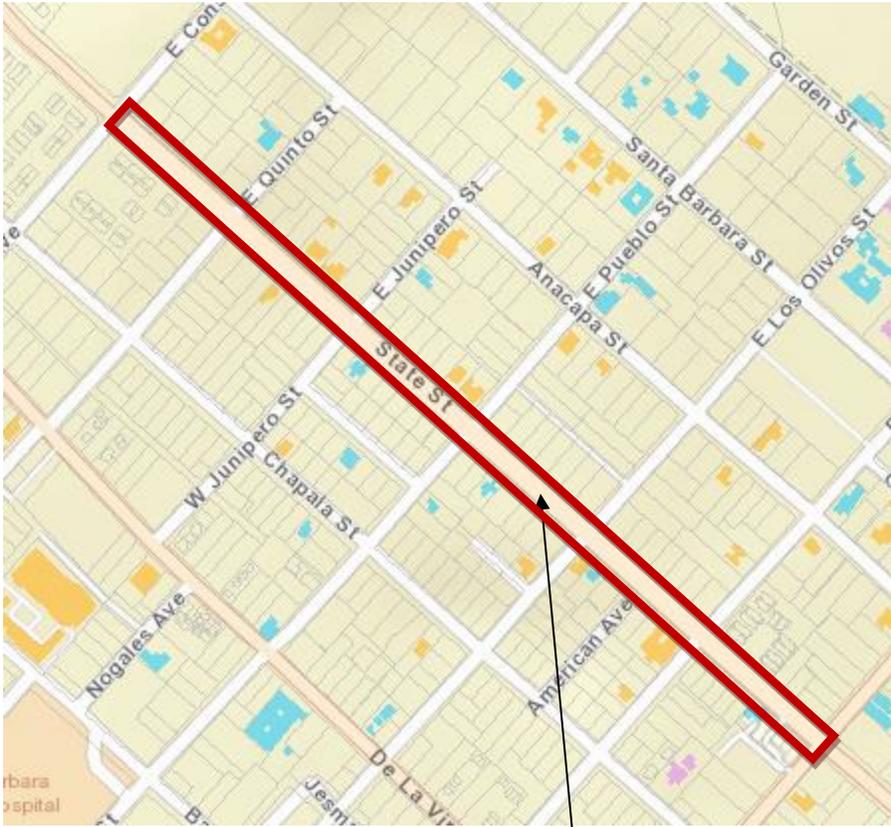
Historic Name: State Street Parkway

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



North

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 Street to Constance Avenue 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 Avenue 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 Avenue 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.*

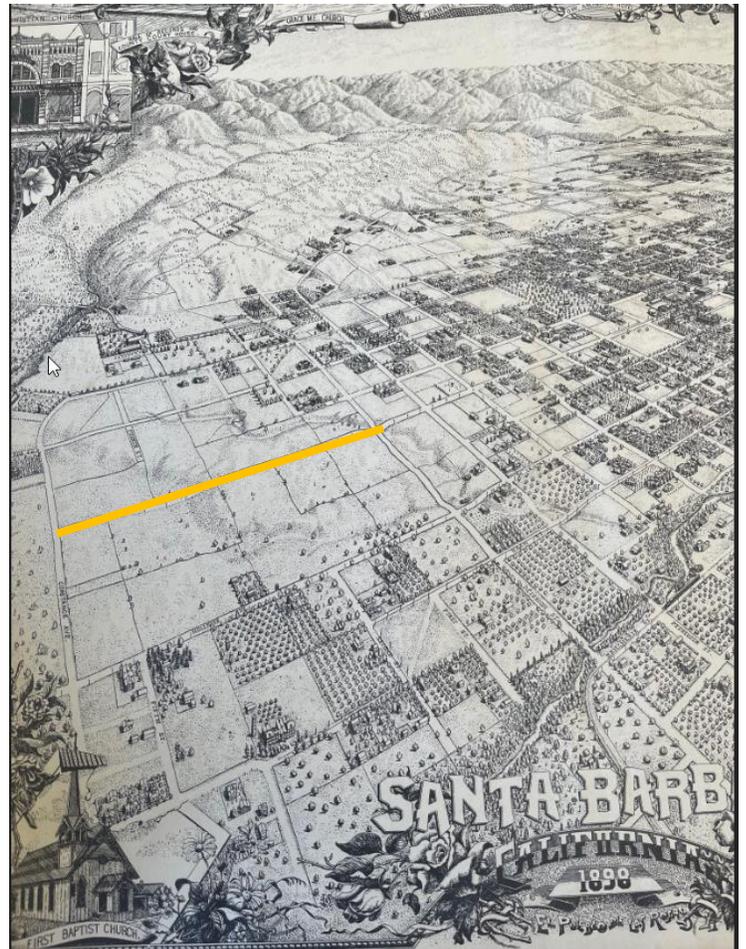
Significance: The Parkway qualifies to be designated a historic resource under the following criteria provided by the Municipal Code, Section 30.157.025

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 Street to Constance Avenue 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 Avenue 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 Street to Constance Avenue 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 Ave., Second Ave., Third Ave., Fourth Ave., Fifth Ave. and Sixth Ave. (Constance Avenue).



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

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 Street and Constance Avenue 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 Street to Constance Avenue 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 Street and Constance Avenue (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



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.

ordinances to identify the landscape area between street curbs and gutters and the adjacent public sidewalk.”

In fact, State Street had an existing landscaped parkway from Sola to Micheltorena Streets. Council actually tried to remove it and residents protested and even requested to extend it. In an article dated 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; many 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).



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.

By 1925 the City completed the landscaping with the installation of Pindo Palms all along the parkway, a tree native to Paraguay. The decisions on the plantings in the State Street Parkway were made by the City of Santa Barbara’s Park Commission in 1924. Below are the minutes pertaining to the plantings in the State Street Parkway.

April 2, 1924

[Present were Messrs. Soule, Jackson, Stevens and Mrs. White]

“Moved by Mr. Jackson, seconded by Mr. Stevens, that the property owners on State Street above Mission Street be notified that the Park Commission would proceed with the permanent planting of

trees and shrubs in the parking centers provided that the property owners plant the designated trees in the parking (area) on either side of the street.”

July 2, 1924

[Present were Messrs. Soule and Stevens and Mrs. White]

“Mr. Stevens in his report on the planting of the parking spaces and street trees on upper State Street above Mission recommended the planting of English ivy as a cover plant rather than lawn as less laborious and expensive to maintain, with close clipped shrubs at each end and low growing Palms of the *Cocos australis* type in the center; with Oaks and Black Acacias alternating along the street, planted 20 to 25 feet apart, with the intention of cutting out the acacias in ten years or when the oaks had attained a sufficient size. (*The palm trees' botanical identity was later changed to *Butia capitata* or pindo palm or jelly palm.*)

Mr. Orpet was to make an estimate of the cost of planting these trees to the property owners according to the front foot(age). On receipt of his report Mr. Soule would send letters to the owners stating the plans of the Commission.”

August 4, 1924

[Present were Messrs. Soule, Jackson and Mrs. White]

“Mr. Orpet reported that the cost to the property owners on upper State Street for parking and planting of street trees would be twelve and a half cents per front foot.

Mr. Soule read the form of the letter he would send to each property owner giving the cost and the plans for planting and parking.”

November 3, 1924

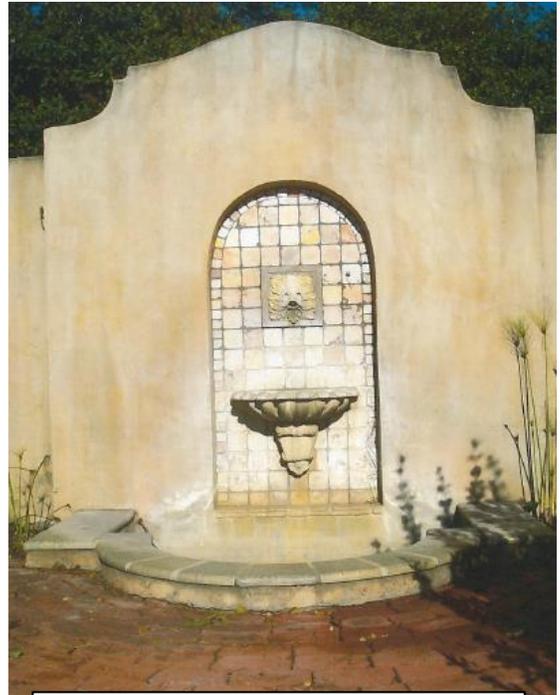
[Present were Messrs. Soule, Jackson, Stevens, and Orpet and Mrs. White]

[A \$291.00 claim from City and Kentia Nurseries was allowed for payment] No details.

“When the bids for the Palms on upper State Street were opened it was found that those offered by the lowest bidder, the Exotic Nurseries, were not up to the standard required, so this bid was disallowed, and the contract given to the City and Kentia Nurseries.”

Of note, persons present at the cited 1924 Park Commission minutes included Ralph Tallant Stevens and Edward Owen Orpet. Both served as City Park Superintendent during the 1920s. It is significant that members of the community with such talent and vision were on the Park Commission and helping to shape the beauty of the State Street Parkway. Below is a summary their contributions to the city.

Ralph Tallant Stevens (1882-1958) was a well-known landscape architect in Santa Barbara. Stevens was a visionary landscape architect. The Cultural Landscape Foundation stated in its biography of Stevens: "Stevens' projects synthesized International and Californian design ideals, integrating formal ideas gleaned from the Mediterranean, Islamic, Spanish Colonial Revival and Hawaiian traditions with a more laid-back California style. He was known for his planting plans, which often included large massings and elaborate plant palettes featuring tropical plants." His work in Santa Barbara included the landscape designs for portions of Franceschi Park, Alameda Park, Oak Park, the Bird Refuge, and Plaza del Mar, as well as the plantings along Cabrillo Boulevard and many residential commissions. He served as the Park Superintendent from 1919- 1921.



Landscape design by Ralph Tallant Stevens at 2112 Santa Barbara Street

Edward Owen Orpet's contributions were highlighted by Historian Michael Redmon's article on Orpet Park in the Santa Barbara Independent which stated,

"Edward Owen Orpet was the Park Superintendent for the City of Santa Barbara from 1921-1930. The park that carries his name, located near the intersection of Alameda Padre Serra and Moreno Road, was founded in 1919 and christened Hillside Park. The park was renamed in 1963 to honor the man commonly known as the "plant missionary." Orpet was an inveterate experimenter. His interest in succulents resulted in his amassing a collection of more than 800 species and varieties. He corresponded with people all over the world in his quest for beautiful, unusual plants. He introduced 30 varieties of aloes to this area. From East Africa to Chile to the Himalayas, Orpet continued to search out new botanic species to beautify his adopted home.

He made an extremely active park superintendent. He supervised plantings along Cabrillo Boulevard as well as the islands in the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge. The planting of olive trees along Olive Street was largely his work, as were the cork oaks in the Samarkand neighborhood and the magnolias on San Andres Street. He also was instrumental urging the use of ice plants along California highways...By the time of his death at age 93 in 1956, he was one of the most respected horticulturalists in the country, a recognized expert in orchids and cacti. E.O. Orpet was one of Santa Barbara's most distinguished horticulturalists.

On November 3, 1924 the bid of City and Kentia Nurseries to provide the palm trees was accepted. It appears, therefore, that the trees were planted either in late 1924 or early 1925.

Note: in his booklet report on city parks issued at the end of World War II, Superintendent Finlay MacKenzie wrote on page 25 about the "Upper State Street Center Parkways." He stated "The upper State Street planting has been changed from that of annual flowers to hardier geraniums. This has reduced maintenance costs and has proved to be just as satisfactory, with a longer period of color resulting. As this area is equipped with a sprinkling system, a part-time caretaker is able to keep this center parkway planting in fine condition."

Most of the houses along the blocks from Mission Street to Constance Avenue 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 Mission Street to Constance Avenue 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.

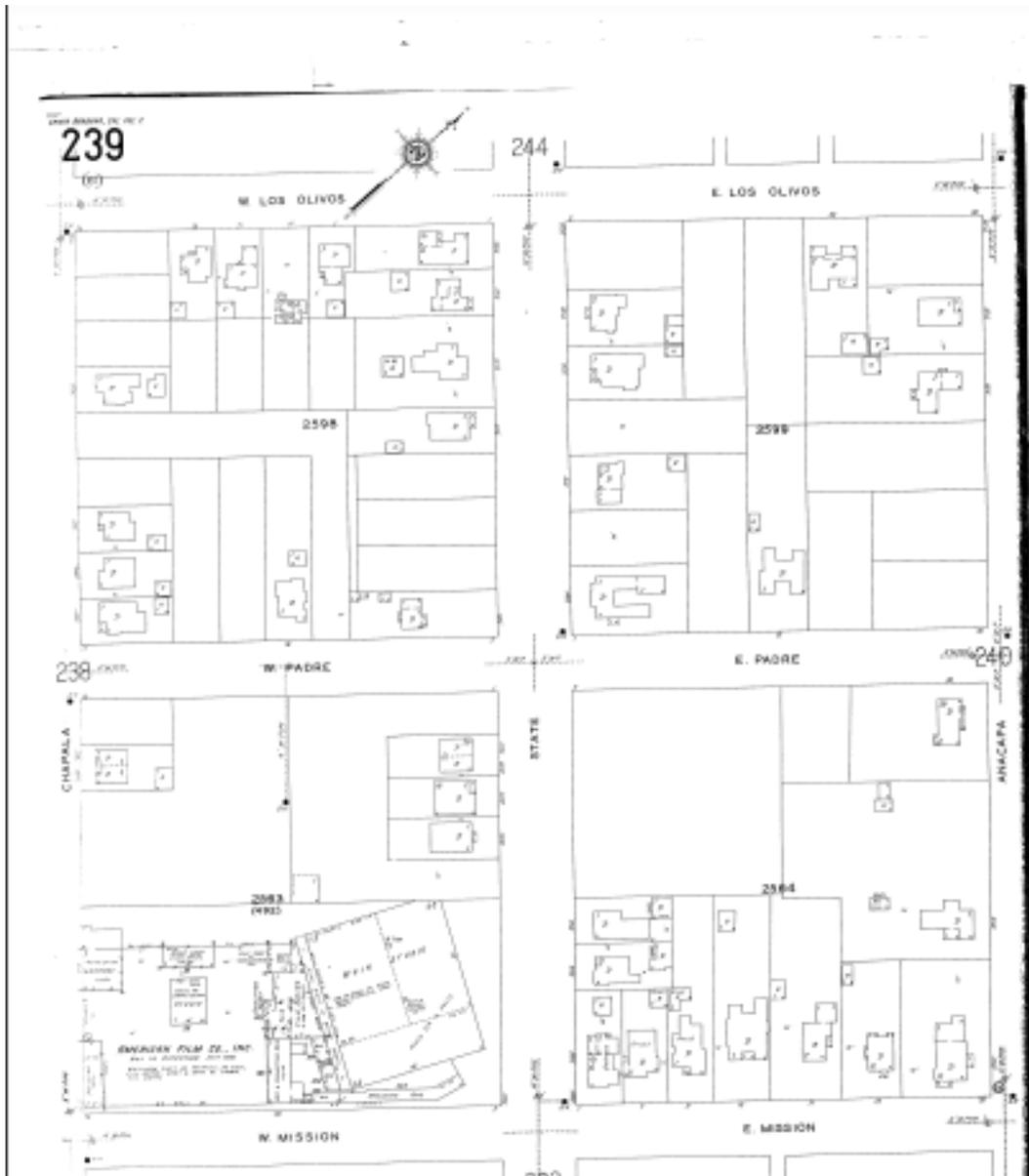


The State Street Parkway facing northwest with a view of the American Colonial Revival style house constructed in 1942 facing the Parkway and rosemary plants in the Parkway. Photo taken July 18, 2022, by Nicole Hernandez.

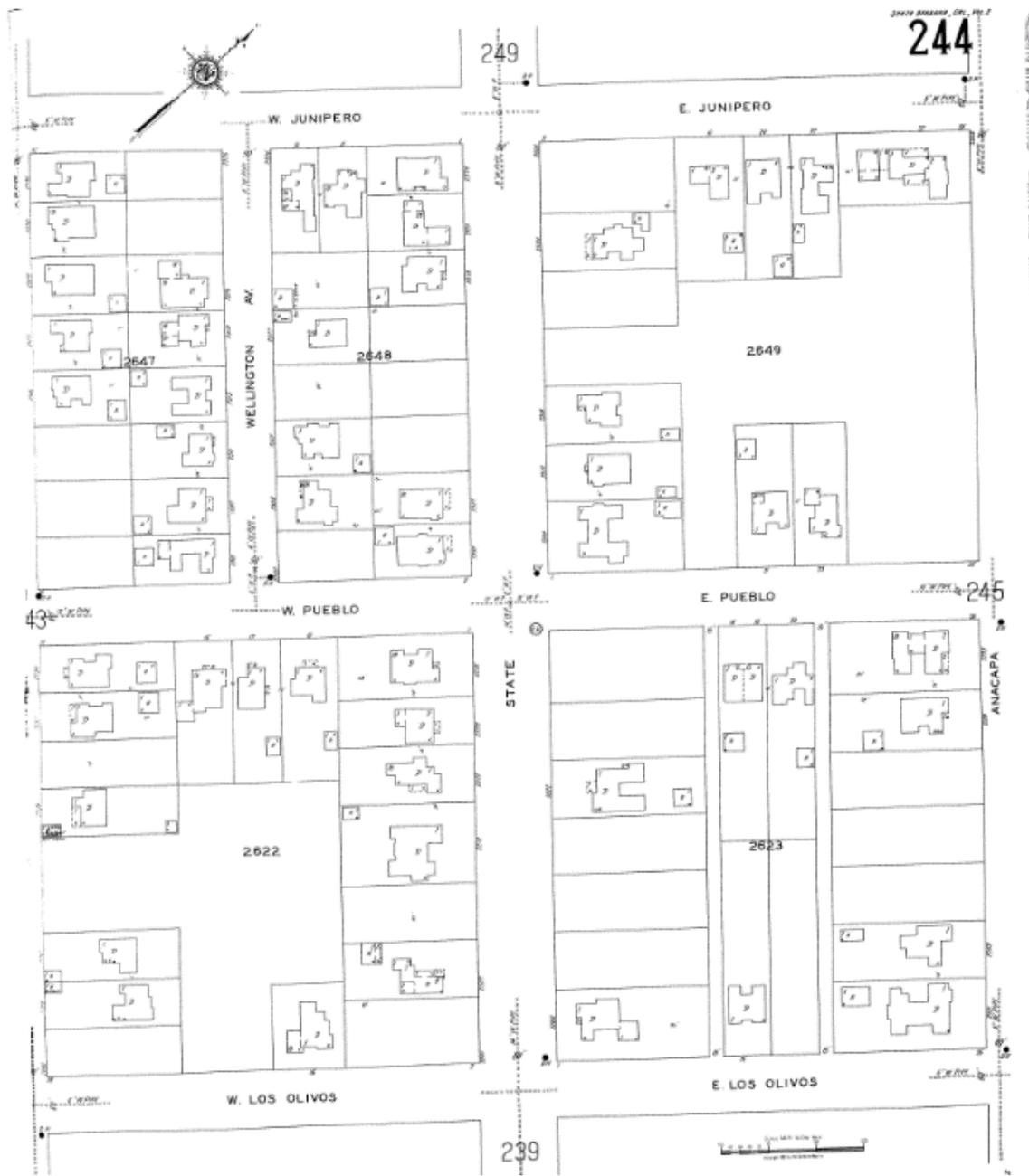
The area to north of Constance Avenue and the State Street Parkway and residential district remained agricultural land. The Ontare Ranch's headquarters, consisting of several barns and corrals, was located near the intersection of De La Vina Street and Alamar Avenue, just several blocks north of the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

Even as late as 1948, State Street above Mission Street was almost entirely residential in character. This was because 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

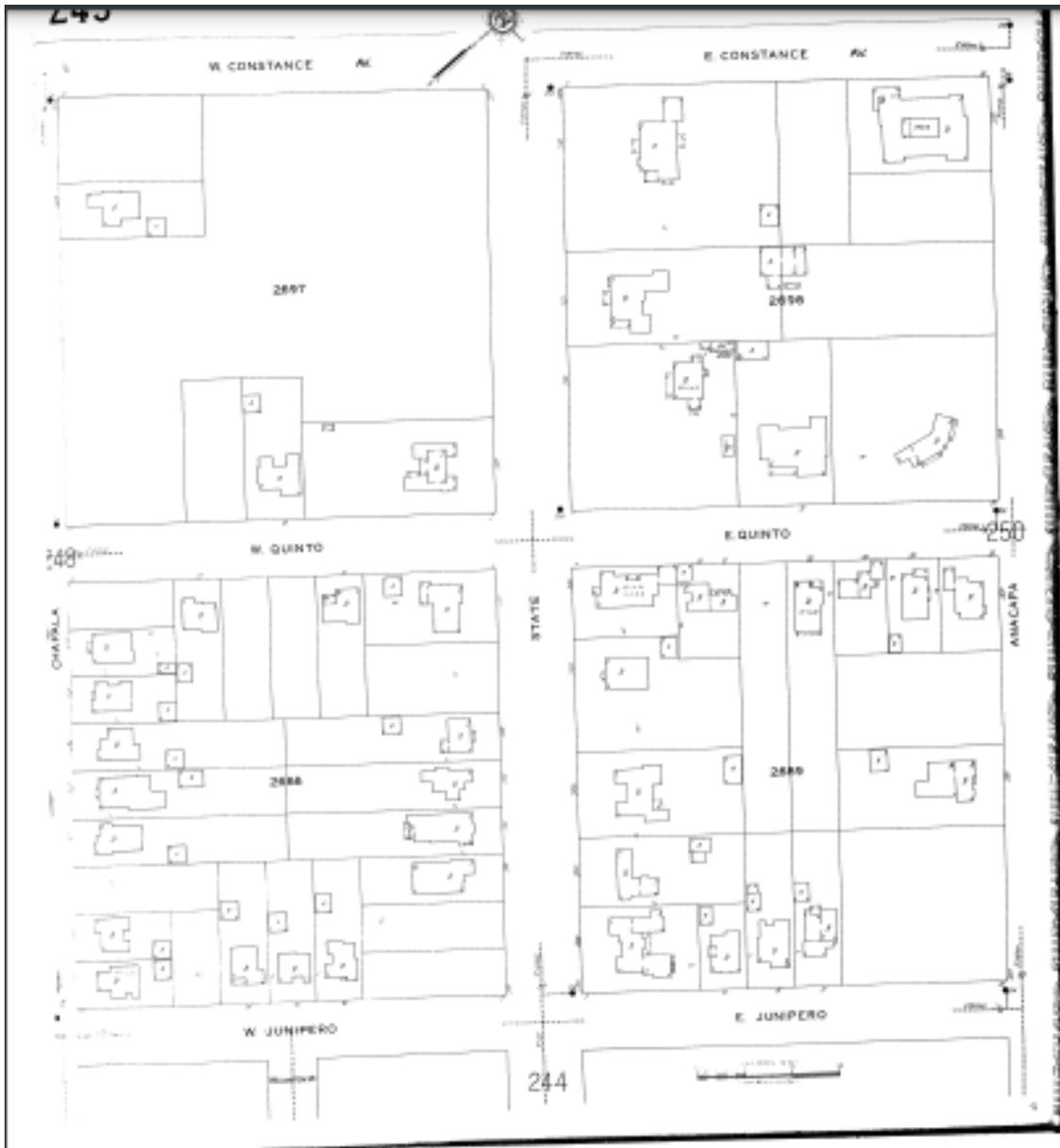
the San Roque neighborhood. This project transformed the segment of State Street between Mission Street and Constance Avenue into a commuter corridor. It was during this period that several single-family residences were built on the few remaining vacant parcels (Post/Hazeltine Associates).



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 Street to Constance Avenue. 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 Avenue. 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 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 Avenue that marks the end of the Parkway and transitions from the small houses facing the Parkway to the Commercial area above Constance Avenue. 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 Street to Constance Avenue since 1917, over 100 years, and creates a cultural landscape whose trees and landscape represent an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood.



Proposed boundary of the State Street Landmark Parkway: The proposed boundary of the Landmark is from exterior curb to exterior curb of State Street, including the pavement. Specifically, from the southern curb line of Mission Street to the northern curb line of Constance Avenue (See Attachment A for a Site Plan with significant trees and boundary line).

Conclusion: 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 representing the philosophy of the City Beautiful movement. In addition, the State Street Parkway, installed in 1917, represents an established familiar visual feature of the neighborhood. Thus, the State Street Parkway qualifies for two criteria outlined in the Santa Barbara Municipal Code to be considered a historic Landmark; Criterion 3 and Criterion 5.

Attachments:

- A. *Drawings of State Street Median with Landscaping with Boundaries by Fred Sweeny.*
- B. *State Street Median. A Parkway Landscape designation nomination packet. June 27, 2022.*
- C. *City Park Commission Meeting Minutes From 1924, Verbatim Account read by Mary Louise Days, Historian on August 31, 2022.*

Works Cited:

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Redmon, Michael. "The Man Who Named Orpet Park" Santa Barbara Independent. Tuesday, February 3, 2015.

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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