

HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
STRUCTURE OF MERIT DESIGNATION REPORT
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1426 BATH STREET
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA
APN 039-061-023



Designation Status: Added to the Historic Resources Inventory on February 28, 2022

Constructed: 1892

Architect: Unknown

Builder: Unknown

Architectural Style: Queen Anne Free Classic

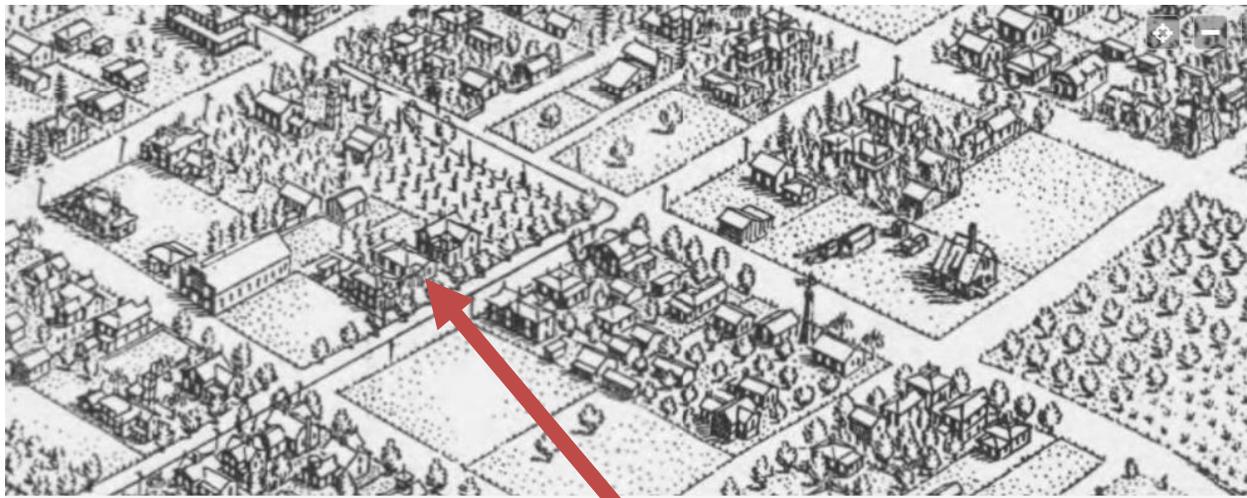
Property Type: Residence

Original Use: Residence

Property Description: This two-story, Queen Anne Free Classic house has a steep-pitched, hipped roof in the center with gables extending toward the west (front elevation) and side elevations. The picturesque quality of the Queen Anne Free Classic house is achieved through an intricate roofline silhouette. All the walls are covered in square shingles. The house features a projecting bay on the front elevation topped by a pediment gable and undulating bays on the north elevation. The house features simple lines at the overhanging cornice. Cornice. The entrance under the front porch which is at the northern corner supported by two widely spaced classical Tuscan columns. Features a bay window to the far end corner topped by a pedimented gable to match that over the entrance. The front wood door is four pane-over panel. The windows are a combination of one-over one wood windows and multiple pane wood windows.



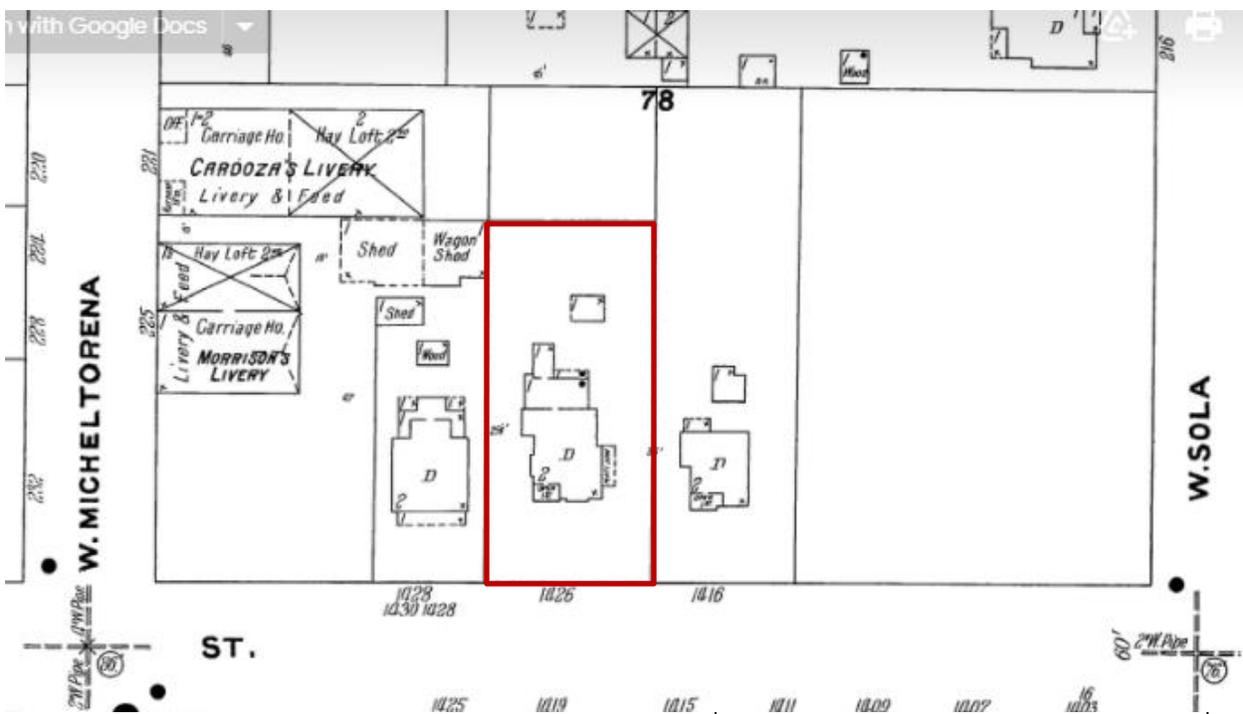
Wall: A low, three course ashlar cut sandstone wall lines the streetscape.



1898 Birdseye view of Santa Barbara Map, illustrating the house at 1426 Bath Street.



1892 Sanborn Map, shows the house this site. Courtesy, Gledhill Library. Page 24



1907 Sanborn Map, shows the house and barn on this site. Courtesy, Gledhill Library. Volume 1, Page 42



Left: 2000 Aerial Map provided by City of Santa Barbara Maps and Printing System.

Significance: City of Santa Barbara establishes historical significance as provided by the Municipal Code, Section 30.157.025. Any historic building that meets one or more of the criteria listed in the Code can be considered a significant historic resource. The structure may be significant as a Structure of Merit per the following criteria:

Historic Integrity

The house is good condition, although a few windows have been replaced, almost all of the original materials and design still present. Including the character defining front porch and shingle siding. The east side of Bath Street retains many of the early 20th Century houses so that the house retains its integrity of setting. The house has high integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, allowing it still to convey its original appearance.

Criteria C. 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;

This Queen Anne Free Classic style house was constructed c. 1892, as it is on the 1892 Sanborn Map. Between 1850 and 1880, several blocks within the west downtown area were planted with fruit and nut orchards intermingled with many single-family dwellings. Subdivided city lots closer to State Street began to line the streets. A small real estate boom occurred from 1872 to 1874 due to the widely advertised beauty and climate of Santa Barbara. Between 1860 and 1874, property values in the city increased from \$100 to \$5,000 for an entire city block. At a time when skilled laborers such as carpenters, bricklayers, plasters, machinists, and blacksmiths made \$3–4 a day, a workingman’s family might still be able to



afford to purchase land and build a home. A drought that occurred over the winter of 1876–1877 caused a drop in real estate value that would persist for the next several years. American commercial development of lower State Street and residential areas west of Chapala Street increased exponentially during the late nineteenth century. As the Southern Pacific Railroad neared Santa Barbara, the value of land rose, creating a short-lived real estate boom in 1887 that died with the realization that the railroad would not be connecting with San Francisco anytime soon. Several residential subdivisions such as the Verona Tract, the Mission Hill Addition, and the Brinkerhoff Block developed as a result of this boom. By 1892, west downtown streets such as Chapala, De la Vina, Bath and Castillo Streets were lined with residential buildings. In 1896 the trolley line on State Street was converted to electric cars and the line was again extended to reach areas farther north and east as residential development continued. When the city began to improve streets, which included grading, curbing, installing gutters, laying sidewalks, and eventually paving, the costs were divided among the property owners. Often residents of a particular area would petition the council to allow the owners to hire the contractor themselves, skipping the city bidding process and potentially saving a few dollars. This fiscal practice

was continued in the laying of sewer and water pipes beginning in the 1890s. The west downtown streets closer to State Street experienced this development earlier than those west of Bath Street. By 1907, the entire west downtown area had new water pipelines, sometimes replacing the earlier lines; some disgruntled residents had to pay a second time for water lines. From 1903 to 1907, the city escalated street grading, curbing, and guttering, issuing several contracts a month for single and multiple block projects. Contracts for sewer lines during this time period were issued just as frequently (Santa Barbara City Council 1903–1907). Infrastructure costs were eventually assumed by the City in the 1910s. This period of increased infrastructure development parallels the growth in available subdivided land and increased number of new homes in the west downtown area.

The building embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Queen Anne Free Classic style that is an important architectural style of Santa Barbara. Including its shingle patterns, lack of ornament under the cornice, and streamlined patterns along the cornices and the classic style columns on the front porch are character-defining features of the Queen Anne Free Classic style. This style offers a more simplistic array of craftsmanship with less ornamentation than the Queen Anne style.

As part of the Victorian period, Queen Anne Free Classic was popular from the late 1800's to the early 1900's, with its peak from 1900 to 1910. In 1900, the highly decorative Queen Anne was steadily declining in popularity, while the Free Classic became the only Victorian style to grow in popularity. In Santa Barbara, it tended to come stylistically close to the early stages of American Colonial Revival, while still retaining Queen Anne characteristics such as asymmetrical plans, and variously shaped shingles. Although sometimes difficult to distinguish from American Colonial Revival because of similarities in moldings, siding, columns, etc., Queen Anne Free Classic is a distinct and important part of Santa Barbara's history and streetscape character. The Queen Anne Free Classic was popular during a period of great growth in Santa Barbara and examples can be found throughout the historic neighborhoods surrounding downtown. Across the county, the roof pitch of the typical Queen Anne Free Classic tends to be fairly steep. In Santa Barbara, however, the pitch of many Queen Anne Free Classics is quite low. This is partially due to climate, as well as the transitional period in which it was popular, coincided with the time that Craftsman and other lower-pitched roofs were being used.

Sandstone wall: There is a three course sandstone retaining wall abutting the sidewalk, lining the front streetscape. A feature that gives the region such distinction while offering a surprising and pleasing bit of artistry. Walls usually require far less engineering compared to bridges, so they offer more opportunity for stonemasons to express themselves and their artistry in the selection, carving, and setting of stones. Use of masonry for construction in the Santa Barbara area dates back to the time the Spanish arrived. Since it was necessary to travel some distance into the woods to obtain lumber, but rocks were found scattered on the ground, stone became the preferred building material. The tradition of building with stones continued in Santa Barbara County through the 19th century. This method of construction was often chosen because local brown sandstone was readily available and easily transformed from round or shapeless boulders into symmetrical smooth faced stone for building purposes.

A local stonemason explained in July of 1883, “When a quantity of it is wanted, a blast of powder is drilled into the heart of one of the large boulders and exploded and a number of square edged building stones are produced” (Santa Barbara News-Press July 1883). Many residences, walls, bridges, and commercial structures were constructed out of local sandstone during the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Immediately after World War I, Santa Barbara began a concerted effort to revamp its visual image. During this time, city planners carefully monitored all construction of any new structure to make sure it was consistent with the master plan that was based on Spanish Colonial Revival/Mediterranean streetscape mode (Conrad and Nelson, 1986: 14).

The use of a traditional building material, sandstone, in the construction of the walls built during this period was in line with Santa Barbara's planning and design efforts. In the years from 1870 to 1940, when Santa Barbara was quickly evolving into a vibrant, growing city, the period witnessed an extraordinary explosion of stone construction made possible by the abundant supply of sandstone, cadre of expert masons, and financing by private citizens. This period provided an atmosphere conducive to the building of public and private spaces of all kinds, walls, bridges, gardens, and an assortment of other stone works and encouraged some exceptional expressions of the mason's art. Among the most apparent expressions of the beauty in stone that give the region such distinction are the stone walls.

Conclusion: The c. 1892 house and its associated sandstone walls qualifies for Structure of Merit designation as it retains high historic integrity and meets criterion C.

Works Cited:

Grumbine, Anthony, Harrison Design. Hernandez, Nicole. *Santa Barbara Style Guides, Queen Anne Free Classic*. City of Santa Barbara, Community Development Department. November 2014.

Morlet, Aubrey, Applied Earthworks, Inc. "City of Santa Barbara, West Downtown Historic Building Survey." City of Santa Barbara, Community Development Department. January 2012.

Santa Barbara Conservancy. *Images of America, Stone Architecture in Santa Barbara*. Arcadia Publishing, 2009.

Maps:

1898 Birdseye Map of Santa Barbara

Sanborn Maps 1892 and 1907. Courtesy Gledhill Library of the Santa Barbara Historic.