

**HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE REPORT**

**431 East Valerio Street
Santa Barbara, California**

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Architectural Historian**

February 21, 2023

Designation Status: Designated
a Structure of Merit on March 15,
2023

Assessor Parcel Number: 027-123-006

Constructed: c.1905

Architect: Unknown

Architectural Style: Queen
Anne Free Classic

Property Type: Single
family residence

Original Use: Single
family residence

Property Description: The two-story house at 431 West Valerio Street features a low-pitched hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves and a front facing gable projecting on the west side of the house. There are a complex of hipped roofs toward the rear of the main hipped roof. Narrow redwood weatherboards adorn the walls in the main body of the house with decorative, round shingles in the peak of the gable. The house has half length, classical, Tuscan columns that support the flat roof of the ½ width projecting porch with narrow weatherboards for a porch railing. Wood steps lead to the wood floor of the porch where there is the wood, pane over panel front door and an ornate leaded glass window. Under the gable, on the first floor, there is a tryptic window with a fixed wood window flanked by one-over-one wood windows with ogee lugs in the upper sash. The other windows on the house are one-over-one wood windows with ogee lugs in the upper sash. The east, side elevation has a bay window with decorative leaded glass in the upper sash.



Above: Front elevation of the Queen Anne Free Classic style house. Photo taken December 5, 2022 by Nicole Hernandez.

The house has a two-story rear addition with a hipped roofs completed that has similar clapboard and is compatible to the original c. 1905 portion of the house.

Permit History:

2012: the house was restored back to a single-family residence after being an eight person Residential Care Facility- interior alterations.

2014-15: New Detached garage

2014-15: New covered porch on rear elevation.

2014-15: Two windows on second floor of the front elevation replaced to match existing, including ogee lugs in upper sash.

2020: Convert Garage into Accessory Dwelling Unit.

Historic 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 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

431 E. Valerio Street has had some rear additions and minor alterations but have not altered the street facing view to a large extent. The building conveys integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling and association so that it can convey its c. 1905 appearance.

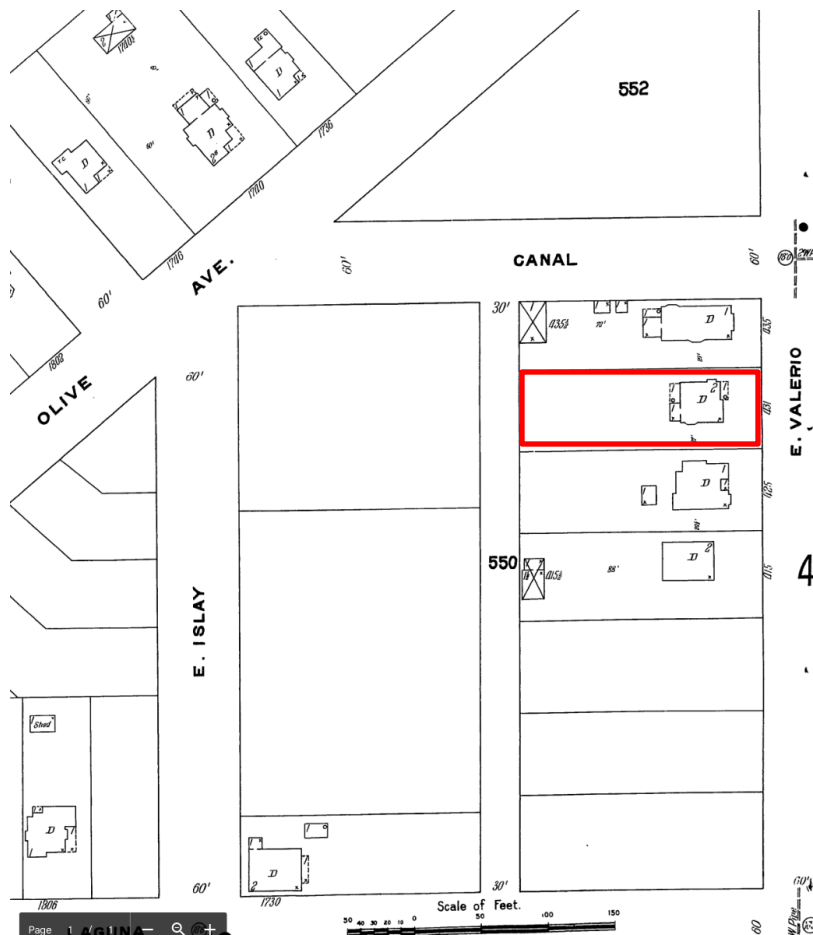
Criteria 3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, architectural style or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic or historic value, or represents a significant and distinguishable collection whose individual components may lack distinction.

Historic Context: The c. 1905 Queen Anne Free Classic style house, sits between Olive and Laguna Streets in the Upper East Side neighborhood. The history of the neighborhood starts in 1887, the Southern Pacific Railroad Company's coastal route was finally completed. Now possessing a convenient and reliable transportation link to Southern California, Santa Barbara quickly established



Above: Front porch features quintessential Queen Anne Free Classic details with Tuscan columns, a pane-over-pane front door and leaded glass windows. Photo taken December 5, 2022, by Nicole Hernandez.

itself as a premier destination for wealthy families from the Midwest, East Coast, and even Europe. The growth of the resort industry helped to increase the city's population, with many settling in Santa Barbara to work in the tourist industry. By the early 1880s, the city's network of streetcar lines had extended to Mission Santa Barbara. Running along State Street to Victoria Street and then up Laguna Street to the Mission Santa Barbara the line, by providing accessible transportation to the downtown core, proved to be a major factor in increasing development in the Upper Eastside (Post/Hazeltine). By 1907, there were four houses on the 400 block of East Valerio, including 431 E. Valerio that was the second house from western corner.



Sanborn Insurance Map page 3, 1907,
showing 431 East Valerio Street



Aerial map illustrating additions to the house on the rear of the building with and new accessory buildings and garage. City of Santa Barbara Maps and Printing System.

The house qualifies under criterion 3 as it embodies distinctive characteristics of the Queen Anne Free Classic architectural style. The house appears in the 1907 Sanborn map along with its neighbors at 415, 425, and 435 E. Valerio Street. That were the two oldest buildings on the block (then called W. 4th Street). The Queen Anne Free Classic style was extremely popular from 1900-1910 in Santa Barbara, when much of the city was being developed. The Queen Anne Free Classic shares certain characteristics with its relative the Queen Anne style, while still containing many distinct and important features that place it in a class all its own as it reflects the transition in tastes when buildings were less ornate and becoming more simple.

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, variously shaped shingles, and decorative bracket details. 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, including the Brinkerhoff Avenue Landmark District and Lower De La Vina Historic District.

This structure qualifies under Criterion 3 due to the following character-defining features of the Queen Anne Free Classic building:

- **Roof:** The house at 431 East Valerio Street features a low-pitched hipped roof. In Santa Barbara, the pitch of many Queen Anne Free Classics is quite low, compared to the steep roofs of the Queen Anne. 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 becoming popular.
- **Gable, Cornice and Eave Details:** The house has character defining Queen Anne Free Classic wide overhanging eaves with less ornament than those of a Queen Anne. The lines along the cornices are very elegant and streamlined rather than the intricate spindle work or gingerbread featured in the Queen Anne. The front facing gable has the character defining features of the round shingle pattern in under the gable.
- **Wall Materials:** This Queen Anne Free Classic has walls that are a combination of narrow wood weatherboards on the main body and on the porch railings.
- **Porch Columns:** The strongest defining features of the Queen Anne Free Classic are the porch posts. Rather than the turned spindles of the Queen Anne, the Free Classic has classical columns, Tuscan style, for porch supports.

Across the country, these columns often ranged from simpler Tuscan columns to high-styled Corinthian which featured leaves at the capital. Santa Barbara favored the simpler Tuscan Style,



Above: decorative circles adorn the open gable.

Below: Elegant and simple brackets are under the eaves.

Photo taken December 5, 2022, by Nicole Hernandez.



but there are examples of a variety of styles throughout the city. The columns on 431 East Valerio Street are Tuscan columns partial height, sitting on a low, wood wall that serves as a porch railing. Columns can be individually spaced, but are often paired, especially when there is a large, open span in the porch.

- **Door:** The wood front door has the windowpane over the solid wood panel doors that so elegantly adorn the Queen Anne Free Classic homes.
- **Windows:** The Queen Anne Free Classics of Santa Barbara often have intricate windows, and 431 East Valerio Street has beautifully ornate leaded glass windows facing the porch and in the bay window on the side elevation. The rest of the windows are wood, one-over-one, double hung with ogee lugs in the upper sash.

Sandstone: A low sandstone, one-course, wall lines the streetscape under the wood picket fence. As stated in *Images of America, Stone Architecture in Santa Barbara*.

Sandstone is a feature that gives the region 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 when the Spanish first arrived. Since it was necessary to travel some distance into the woods to obtain lumber, whereas 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 easy to transform 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, a 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.

Architectural Historian Conclusion: As an original c. 1905 Queen Anne Free Classic style home with the artistry and craftsmanship of the Santa Barbara native sandstone wall along the streetscape, the house retains the required historic integrity and meets Criterion 3 of the Santa Barbara Municipal Code to qualify to be designated a historic Structure of Merit.

Work Cited:

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

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