



**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION**

**RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING THAT CITY COUNCIL
HOLD A PUBLIC HEARING
TO CONSIDER LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF
THE STARK HOUSE
1709 OVERLOOK LANE
ASSESSOR PARCEL NO. 015-192-016**

RESOLUTION 2013-1

JANUARY 16, 2013

WHEREAS, Section 22.22.050 of the Municipal Code of the City of Santa Barbara grants the Historic Landmarks Commission the authority to initiate a designation process to recommend to the City Council the designation as a City Landmark of any structure, natural feature, site or area having historic, architectural, archaeological, cultural or aesthetic significance; and

WHEREAS, historic research in the form of a Historic Structures Report prepared by Ronald L. Nye dated May 9, 2012 and accepted by the Historic Landmarks Commission with corrections on March 28, 2012, and summarized in a Staff Report has determined that the Stark House located at 1709 Overlook Lane, Assessor's Parcel No. 015-192-016 qualifies for historic designation under City of Santa Barbara Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) criteria; and

WHEREAS, the proposed boundary of the City Landmark designation is five feet around the perimeter of the main house designed by George Washington Smith; and

WHEREAS, the subject property is significant for both its historical and architectural influence on the heritage of the City; and

WHEREAS, under the provisions of Article 19, Section 15308 of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines and the City List of Activities Determined to Qualify for a Categorical Exemption (City Council Resolution Dated November 10, 1998), staff has determined that designation of the Stark House at 1709 Overlook Lane as a City Landmark is eligible for a Categorical Exemption; and

WHEREAS, on December 19, 2012, the Historic Landmark Commission adopted a Resolution of Intention No. 2012-04 to hold a public hearing to begin the landmark designation process for the Stark House located at 1709 Overlook Lane, Assessor's Parcel No. 015-192-016; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Landmarks Commission determined that, while maintenance and minor modifications are permissible, the character-defining features of the building facades are subject to Historic Landmark Commission review; and

WHEREAS, the property owner submitted a statement of support of the City Landmark designation on November 30, 2012; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Landmark Commission has worked with the property owner to rehabilitate the property since 2012; and

WHEREAS, Section 22.22.050 of the Municipal Code of the City of Santa Barbara states that the City council may designate as a Landmark any structure, natural feature, site or area having historic, architectural, archeological, cultural, or aesthetic significance by adopting a resolution of designation within 90 days following receipt of a recommendation from the Historic Landmark Commission, and;

WHEREAS, in summary, the Historic Landmark Commission finds that the Stark House located at 1709 Overlook Lane, Assessor's Parcel No. 015-192-016, meets the following City Landmark criteria (A through K) listed in section 22.22.040 of the Municipal Code:

- A. Its character, interest or value as a significant part of the heritage of the City, the State or the Nation;
- D. Its exemplification of a particular architectural style or way of life important to the City, the State, or the Nation;
- E. Its exemplification of the best remaining architectural type in a neighborhood.
- F. Its identification as the creation, design, or work of a person or persons whose effort significantly influenced the heritage of the City, the State, or the Nation;
- G. Its embodiment of elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials and craftsmanship;
- I. Its unique location or singular physical characteristic representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that on January 16, 2013, the Historic Landmarks Commission of the City of Santa Barbara hereby recommends to the City Council that it designate the Stark House located at 1709 Overlook Lane, Assessor's Parcel No. 015-192-016 as a City Landmark and makes findings based on the historic and cultural significance of facts presented in the Staff Report.

**HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
CITY OF SANTA BARBARA**

**HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
LANDMARK DESIGNATION
STAFF REPORT**

**STARK HOUSE
1709 OVERLOOK LANE
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA
APN 015-192-016
JANUARY 16, 2013**

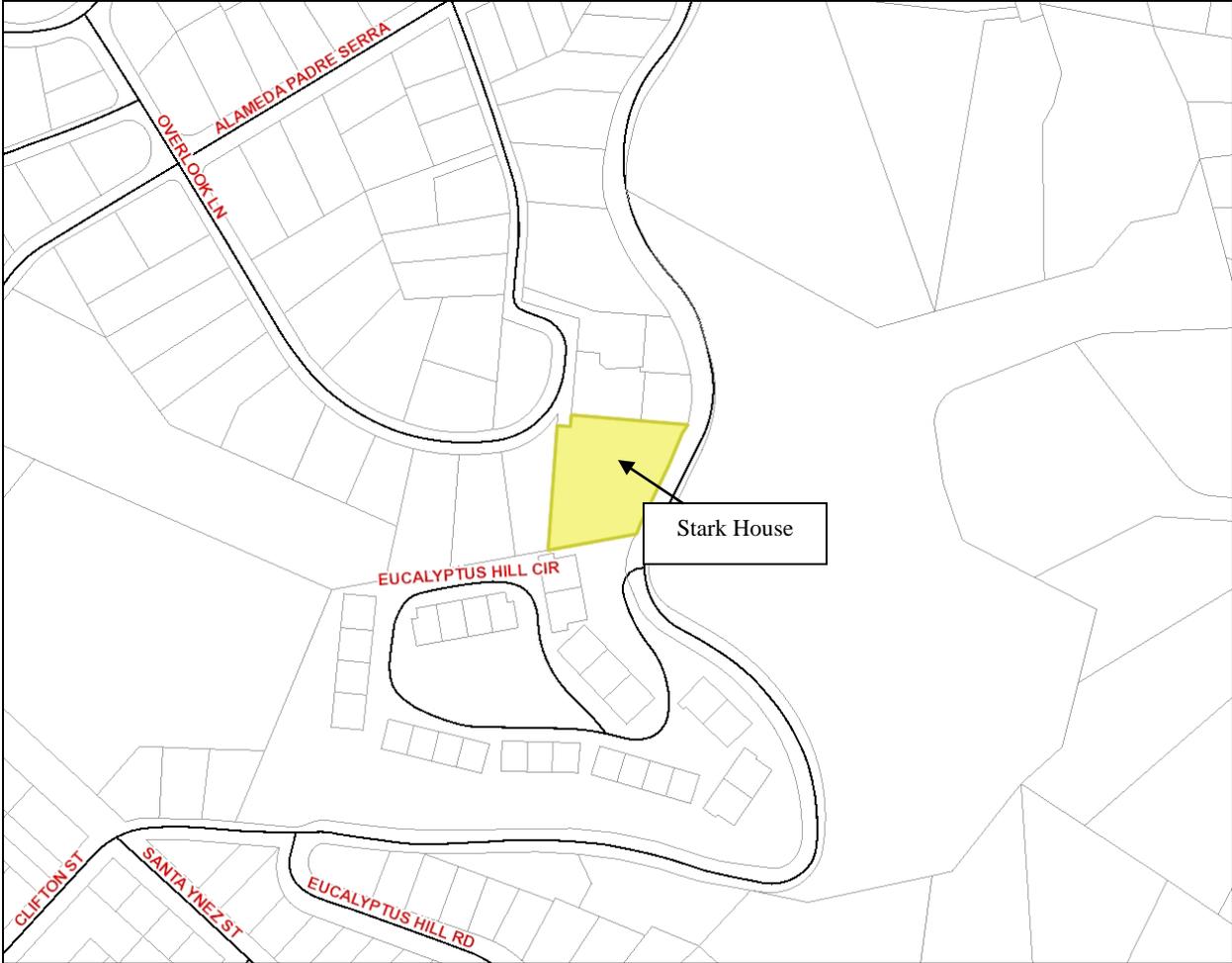
Background:

Historic research in the form of a Revised Historic Structures Report prepared by Ronald Nye dated May 9, 2012 and approved by the Historic Landmarks Commission on March 11, 2012 has determined that the Stark House located at 1709 Overlook Lane, Assessor's Parcel Number. 015-192-016, qualifies for historic designation as a City Landmark under City of Santa Barbara Master Environmental Assessment criteria. The current home owners, Courtney and Tanny Jones, have been working with the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) to make alterations to the building that conform to the Standards for Rehabilitation established by the Secretary of the Interior. The proposed boundary of the City Landmark designation is five feet around the perimeter of the George Washington Smith designed main house as the landscape of the entire parcel has been altered and no longer conveys historic significance. This staff report summarizes the extensive historic research and analysis of the Historic Structures Report (see excerpts, exhibit A).



Above: 1930 Photograph of south elevation of building. Courtesy of Community Development and Conservation Collection, Box 51, Dept. of Special Collections, UCSB Library; Correspondence, G.W. Smith records, Architecture and Design Collection, UCSB.)
Below: 2012 Photograph of south elevation of building.



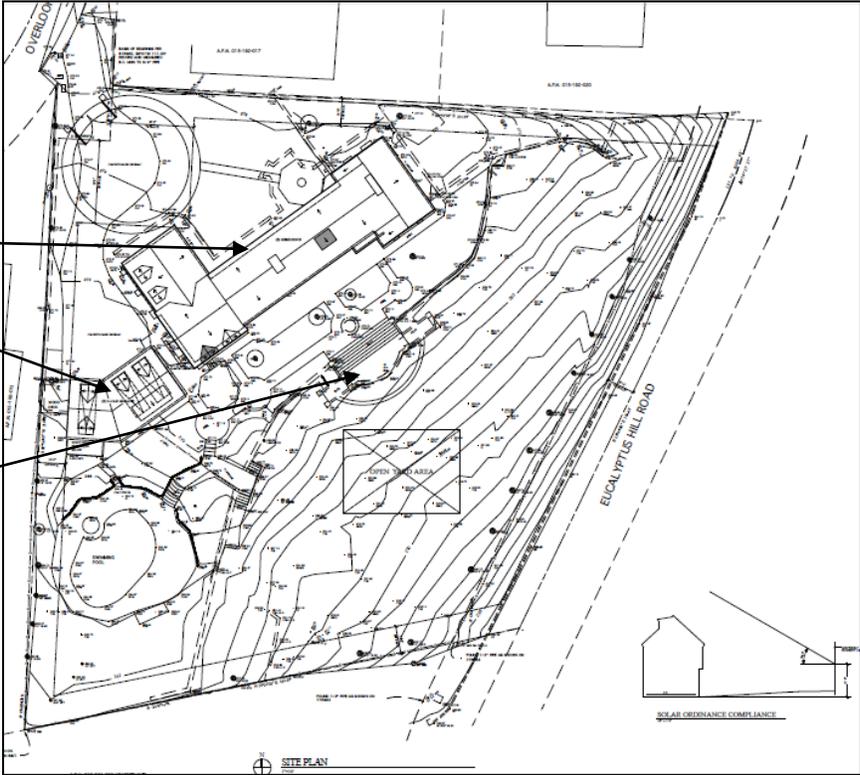


Vicinity Map, City of Santa Barbara Mapping
Analysis and Printing System, 2013

George Washington Smith Designed House

Garage added in the mid-1990s

Bowed belvedere added in the mid-1990s



Site plan from 2012 Construction Documents. The garage was added in the mid-1990s and much of the landscape altered. The proposed designation boundary is 5' around the main George Washington Smith designed house.

Historic Context:

The residence is a two-story, irregularly-shaped structure built in the French Norman style. It was designed by George Washington Smith and erected for Jack Gage Stark and Edith L. Stark in 1928. Jack Gage Stark was an artist who was associated most closely with the California Impressionist group of landscape painters centered in Southern California and achieved modest local and regional critical acclaim.

A set of surviving sketches of the proposed residence drawn in 1928 by Smith reveal that the existing residence retains the general French Norman style and configuration of the architect’s original plan.

The most significant changes to the original design occurred in the 1990s when the garage was removed on the west elevation and a new door and window were installed in place of the old garage doors; a new kitchen door, porch, and window were added on the same elevation; a new bowed wall and window were added to the kitchen on the south elevation; and a new three-car detached garage was built; a new swimming pool was installed, the front lawn and concrete paver driveway were added, and the rear terrace was enlarged.

Lockwood de Forest, Jr. created a landscape plan for the property in 1928. Existing elements that probably date to de Forest’s plan include the Santa Maria flagstone walkway and adjoining, low, sandstone, cobble retaining wall that border the residence’s north and east elevations; the four olive trees on the south elevation terrace; the main sandstone, cobble, retaining wall below the rear entrance that traverses the entire property on the east-west alignment but is interrupted at its center by a modern belvedere addition; a set of sandstone steps near the east end of the main retaining wall; a small flagstone landing and two sets of sandstone steps approximately thirty feet southwest of the house’s south elevation; and scattered olive and ornamental trees. There is no visible evidence of the graceful arrangement of descending terraces, fruit trees, pathways, and steps depicted in de Forest, Jr.’s plan of 1928. The 2012 Historic



Above: West Elevation. Photo taken November 5, 2012



Above: North Elevation. Photo taken November 5, 2012

Structure Report notes that the existing landscaping plan does not represent an intact historically important design or a high quality example of a noted landscape architect's work and does not possess historical integrity. Most of the landscaping is less than twenty years old and its paved surfaces and ornamental features are not compatible with the historically significant residence.

The Stark House has remained as a residence through several home owners: Mrs. and Mr. Jack G. Stark (1928-1953), Mrs. May M. Ford (1954-1958), Mrs. Jolyne G. Ferry (1959-mid 1980s), and currently Courtney and Tanny Jones.

Architect:

George Washington Smith

George Washington Smith (1876-1930) was born in East Liberty, Pennsylvania. Smith became one of the preeminent practitioners of the interpretive Hispanic architectural revival movement. The architectural historian David Gebhard wrote that Smith's Spanish Colonial Revival signature was the "picturesque simplicity" of his use of extensive plain wall surfaces, arches, clay tile roofs, iron grille work, heavy wood components and deeply recessed wall openings, among other elements. The Stark House is distinct from Smith's other French Norman homes because of its radically asymmetrical main façade containing an unbalanced window plan and extensive areas of uninterrupted stucco. David Gebhard considered the Stark House a prime example of Smith's "abstract approach", which merged historical and modern imagery. Smith manipulated the picturesque and primitive aspects of the old architectural styles, Gebhard wrote, resulting in an imagery that was "simultaneously readable as a traditional artifact and as an abstract object of high art".

Landscape Architect:

Lockwood De Forest, Jr.

Lockwood de Forest, Jr. (1896-1949) was born in New York City. De Forest, Jr.'s family moved to Santa Barbara permanently in 1915. De Forest, Jr. started his own landscape business in Santa Barbara in the early 1920s after working for Ralph Stevens, an established landscape architect in Santa Barbara. He was almost immediately successful for his services among Santa Barbara, Montecito and Southern California estate owners. De Forest, Jr. was known for employing the colors and textures of a property's natural surroundings as a principal organizing tool for his landscape projects.

Architectural Style:

The French Norman architectural style was based on the farmhouses in Normandy. French Norman architecture was most popular in the United States in the 1930s. Character defining features of the style are the asymmetrical house with steeply pitched roof with dormers, multi-paned casement windows as displayed in George Washington Smith's design of the Stark House.

Significance:

The City of Santa Barbara establishes historic significance as provided by the Municipal Code, Section 22.22.040. Any historic building that meets one or more of the eleven criteria

(Criteria A through K) established for a City Landmark or a City Structure of Merit can be considered significant. The Stark House meets the following criteria:

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

The building represents an example of French Norman style architecture designed by George Washington Smith that is a significant part of the heritage of the City.

Criterion D, its exemplification of a particular architectural style or way of life important to the City, the State, or the Nation;

The French Norman style residence exemplifies George Washington Smith's "abstracting approach" to architectural design. This blend of historical and modern imagery resulted in a unique design that is important to the City, State, and Nation. The home's distinguishing characteristics, including its horizontal massing, asymmetrical main façade with unmatched gabled wings at each end, unusual window placement, steeply pitched roof with clay shingle roofing, large areas of plain stucco siding, recessed wall openings, and exposed timber beams, have not been significantly diminished by the alterations that have occurred since it was built. The residence features many of the architectural elements that typify the French Norman style, but their creative rendering distinguishes the building from other French Norman designs in Santa Barbara, including those by Smith.

Criterion E, Its exemplification of the best remaining architectural type in a neighborhood.

The property is the best French Norman architectural type in the neighborhood.

Criterion F, its identification as the creation, design, or work of a person or persons whose effort significantly influenced the heritage of the City, the State, or the Nation;

George Washington Smith, the building's designer, is a nationally acclaimed architect of the early twentieth century. Smith's Spanish Colonial Revival domestic and urban building designs were recognized for their "picturesque simplicity". Through his architectural designs in Santa Barbara, Smith made a significant contribution to the heritage of the City, State and Nation.

Criterion G, its embodiment of elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials and craftsmanship;

The Stark House displays a unique combination of materials and design elements which embodies outstanding attention to design, detail, materials, and craftsmanship. High quality elements include its asymmetrical yet picturesque main façade, its recessed and rustic main entry door; its cantilevered second floor that is underpinned by rough-hewn beams; its abstract arrangement of the chimney and adjoining roof lines; and its half-timbered balcony that melds into the adjacent gabled roof on the south elevation.

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

The residence's unique north façade, steeply-pitched cross-gabled roof with clay tile roofing, and recessed wall openings that contrast with large areas of rough stucco siding, give it a singular physical presence. It was built in 1928 and has retained its historical integrity. It therefore qualifies as an established and familiar visual presence in the neighborhood.

Historical Integrity:

In addition to determining significance, there are essential physical features that must be

considered to evaluate the integrity of a significant building. The residence has retained a high level of historical integrity. Its location and footprint have not changed. The integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, particularly on its north elevation, have not been significantly diminished by the minor alterations. Its integrity of setting has been compromised to some extent because of alterations made to the landscaping and construction of a new detached garage. However the house itself retains its character defining features designed by George Washington Smith that convey its historic significance.

Recommendation:

Staff Recommends that the HLC adopt a resolution to recommend to City Council that the Stark House be designated as a City Landmark. Staff recommends the proposed boundary of the City Landmark designation is five feet around the perimeter of the George Washington Smith designed main house as the landscape of the entire parcel has been altered and no longer conveys historic significance.

Works Cited:

Nye, Ronald. Revised Historic Structures Report. May 9, 2012. The report is on file with the City Planning Division.