



**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA  
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION**

**RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING THAT CITY COUNCIL  
DESIGNATE AS A CITY LANDMARK  
OUR LADY OF SORROWS CHURCH  
33 EAST SOLA STREET  
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA  
039-072-007  
RESOLUTION 2016-4**

**FEBRUARY 24, 2016**

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, on January 27, 2016, the Historic Landmarks Commission adopted Resolution of Intention 2016-1 to hold a public hearing to consider a recommendation to City Council for designation of the Our Lady of Sorrows Church located at 33 East Sola Street as a City Landmark; and

WHEREAS, the Staff Report concluded that the church at 33 East Sola Street, completed in 1929 in the Spanish Romanesque subset of the Spanish Colonial Revival style with dark intricate cast stone details that contrast with the smooth stucco walls, is significant for its historical and architectural influence on the heritage of the City; and

WHEREAS, the church has retained a high level of historical integrity as its location, setting, association, footprint, design, materials, and workmanship have not been altered so that it conveys its original 1929 appearance; and

WHEREAS, the proposed boundary of the City Landmark designation includes the 1929 church building, significant trees, including the large Norfolk Island Star Pine on the

south elevation of the church, the elegant palms, except for the non-original windmill palms, and the open lawns around the building.

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 Our Lady Of Sorrows Church as a City Landmark is eligible for a Categorical Exemption; 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 Landmarks Commission; and

WHEREAS, in summary, the Historic Landmarks Commission finds that the Our Lady of Sorrows Church at 33 East Sola Street Assessor's Parcel No. 039-072-007, meets the following City Landmark criteria 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
- G. Its embodiment demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials or 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 February 24, 2016, the Historic Landmarks Commission of the City of Santa Barbara hereby recommends to the City Council that it designate the Our Lady of Sorrows Church located at 33 East Sola Street, Assessor's Parcel No. 039-072-007, as a City Landmark and makes findings based on the historic and cultural significance of facts presented in the Staff Report.

**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA  
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION**

**Adopted: February 24, 2016**

**HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION  
CITY LANDMARK DESIGNATION  
STAFF REPORT**

**OUR LADY OF SORROWS CHURCH  
33 EAST SOLA STREET  
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA  
039-072-007  
FEBRUARY 24, 2016**

**Background:**

The 1929 Our Lady of Sorrows Roman Catholic Church was designed by noted architect Edward A. Eames in the Spanish-Romanesque subset of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The property was placed on the Potential Historic Resources List in 1978. Although the church rectory that sits directly to the west of the church was also designed by Edward A. Eames in 1927, the rectory was not added to the Potential Historic Resources List and has not yet been evaluated for historic significance. The parish school, Notre Dame



*Above: View of the front elevation of the Our Lady of Sorrows Church. September 2015.*

School, was constructed in 1926 and sits one block behind the church on 33 East Micheltorena Street. The Church embodies character defining features of the Spanish Romanesque subset of the Spanish Colonial Revival style with its ornate octagonal bell tower, elongated stained glass windows with rounded arches, dark stone details that are highlighted against the light, simple smooth stucco walls, and the intricate rose windows. The proposed boundary of the City Landmark designation includes the significant trees, including the large Norfolk Island Star Pine on the south elevation of the church, the elegant palms, except the non-original windmill palms, and the open lawns around the 1929 church building. Because the Church meets the City Landmark eligibility criteria for its architectural style and historical significance it is the opinion of the Historic Landmarks Commission Designation Subcommittee that the building is an excellent candidate for City Landmark designation.

Vicinity Map

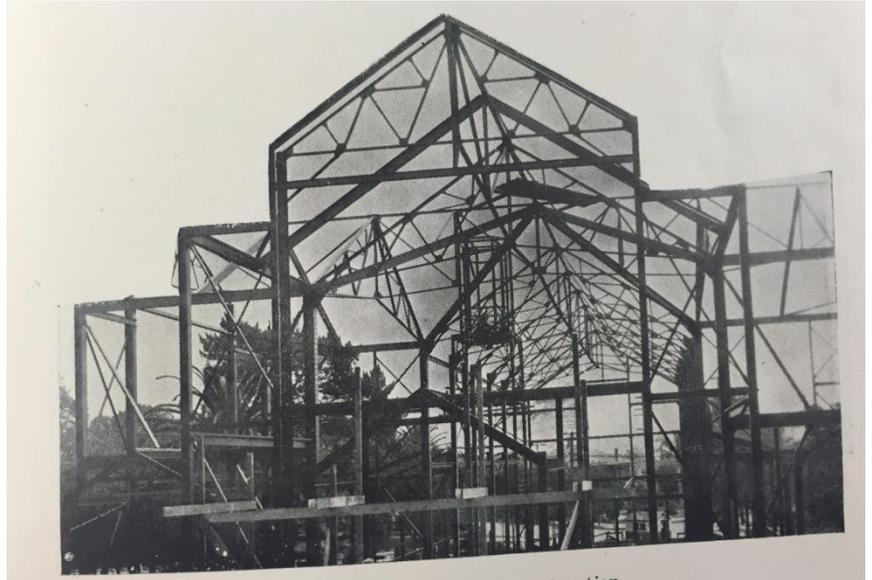


Vicinity Map, City of Santa Barbara Mapping Analysis and Printing System, 2013

**Historic Context:**

Our Lady of Sorrows Church is the successor parish of the Royal Presidio Chapel founded in the eighteenth century by the Spanish when they arrived in Santa Barbara. The previous Our Lady of Sorrows church building was constructed and completed in May 1867 at Figueroa and State Streets, however the earthquake on June 29, 1925 destroyed that church. A new site was selected at the corner of Anacapa and Sola Streets for a new church and rectory. The church is unique in that it sits on an angle on the site facing the corner rather than the being parallel to the street so that the entrance faces east and the apse to the west. This is the only church in Santa Barbara that recognizes the European tradition of having the building set on the east/west axis. This is an early Roman tradition as the earliest churches in Rome had a façade to the east and an apse with the altar to the west. But for most of the Middle Ages to modern period the altar was to the east, front door to the west. In Alta California, the Spanish built their churches with the altar to the west, door to the east.

Because the earthquake had destroyed the previous church, the new church was designed to be particularly resilient to earthquakes. The architect Edward Eames, was likely chosen for his experience in designing steel frame Catholic



*Above: Construction of the steel frame Our Lady of Sorrows Church in 1928. The steel frame construction was designed to be resilient to earthquakes. Courtesy Graffy de Garcia, Erin. Our Lady Of Sorrows 1782–2004. 2004*



*Intricately carved dark stone surrounds the wood double entrance doors and is used to contrast with the white stucco. September 2015*

churches in San Francisco, where since the 1906 earthquake, architects were becoming well versed in using the steel frame as a seismic design. Our Lady of Sorrows Church's steel frame was unique in Santa Barbara in 1929 when it was completed, with the cornerstone dated May 26, 1929.

**Spanish Romanesque subset of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style:**

The cross shaped church, with the open belfry is designed in the Spanish Romanesque subset of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The Spanish-Romanesque inspired church has a basilica plan, in the shape of a cross, set diagonally on the lot with the wood double door entrance and tower facing the corner of Anacapa and Sola Streets, facing directly east. The church features many intricate details including; elaborate pre-cast stone work in the tower, around the elongated rounded arched windows and doors. The Church features over 50 stained glass windows and four rose windows. Rose windows are circular windows with mullions and traceries generally radiating from the center and filled with stained glass. The



*The rear of the church features a rounded apse and a rose window. The church features four rose window and over 50 stained glass windows. September, 2015*

term is used as the windows resemble a rose and its petals. The rose window is considered one of the most characteristic features of medieval architecture. There is no consensus for the beginning date of the Romanesque style, with dates ranging from the 6th to the late 10th century, this later date being the most commonly held. Romanesque architecture is an architectural style of medieval Europe. The style can be identified all across Europe, despite regional characteristics and different materials. Spanish Romanesque architecture spread throughout the entire northern half of Spain combining features of ancient Roman and Byzantine buildings and other local traditions. Spanish Romanesque architecture is known by its massive quality, thick walls, round arches, sturdy piers, groin vaults, large towers and decorative arcading characterized by elongated semi-circular arched openings. It developed in the 12th century into the Gothic style that was marked by pointed arches. Romanesque buildings have clearly defined forms, frequently of very regular, symmetrical plan; the overall appearance is one of simplicity when compared with the Gothic buildings that were to follow.

The Spanish Romanesque left its mark especially on religious buildings such as cathedrals, churches, monasteries, cloisters, and chapels. California's 52 year period of Spanish-Franciscan cultural impact and the following brief Mexican period brought in piecemeal elements of the Spanish period styles in the early twentieth century. The formal influence was a combination of high style details with

vernacular mission and adobe buildings. This building is an excellent example of the Spanish Romanesque style a subset of the Spanish Colonial Revival movement, which became an important part of Santa Barbara's heritage in the early 1920s, when the City deliberately transformed its architecture and look from an ordinary western style town into a romantic Spanish Colonial Revival city. When the earthquake of 1925 occurred, the Santa Barbara Community Arts Association viewed the disaster as an opportunity to rebuild the downtown in definitive styles of the Spanish Colonial Revival, Mediterranean and Mission styles that reflect the unique heritage of the City. Many architects, later notable for their use of this style created commercial facades and whole new buildings in a variety of the style.



*Above: The East side elevation of the building features rows of elongated, arched, stained glass windows and a rose window in the transept. September 2015.*

Therefore, in the 1920s, in Santa Barbara, the Spanish Colonial Revival style sources were broadly and loosely interpreted. Each architect and educated client developed a favorite formal Spanish repertoire and some were inspired by buildings seen in travels to Spain, Mexico, or Spain's former South American colonies. However, both architects and clients tended to like examples clearly based on Spanish European designs rather than Mexican or South American interpretations of original Spanish structures. This Spanish Romanesque inspired church with its white stucco walls and dark contrasting stone details fits in the Spanish aesthetic of the City new identity. The building received an award from Santa Barbara Beautiful in 1976 and is featured in the book, *Santa Barbara Architecture*.

**Significance:**

The City of Santa Barbara defines historic significance as outlined 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. Our Lady of Sorrows Church meets the following four criteria:

*Criterion A. Its character, interest or value as a significant part of the heritage of the*

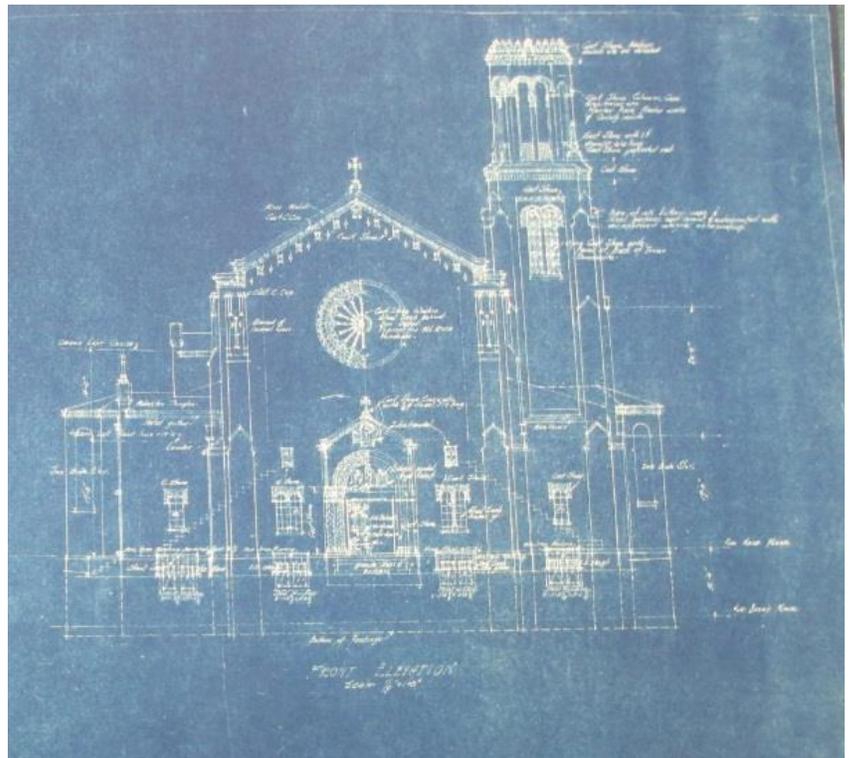
*City, the State or the Nation;* This building is an excellent example of the Spanish Romanesque subset of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, which became an important part of Santa Barbara's heritage in the 1920s, when the City deliberately transformed its architecture and look from an ordinary western style town into a romantic Spanish Colonial Revival city. This transformation was the result of the planning vision of a number of Santa Barbara citizens in the early 1920s with the founding of the Santa Barbara Community Arts Association, who urged that the town identify its individual character and then use planning principles to develop it. As an original 1929, Spanish Colonial Revival structure, it qualifies as a City Landmark because it 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 building embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Spanish Romanesque subset of the Spanish Colonial Revival style that is an important architectural style of Santa Barbara. Its smooth stucco walls, elongated, rounded arches, tall tower with an open belfry and ornate stone detailing are character defining features of the style. Between 1922 and 1925, several major cultural buildings within the downtown core, were built using the architectural motif of the City's Colonial and Mexican past. As a result, when the earthquake occurred in 1925, the Community Arts Association viewed the disaster as an opportunity to rebuild the downtown in Spanish Colonial Revival/Mediterranean/Mission styles that reflect the heritage of the city.



*Above: The intricate carving of the window grills and surround of the tower, September 2015.*



*Above: The original drawings of the façade of the church illustrating how the church has retained its original features.*

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

The Church's composition, massing and simplicity are exemplary elements of design. In addition to the solid wood doors, stained glass and rose windows, the elaborate pre-cast stone surrounding the entrances and windows and lining the cornices demonstrate outstanding attention to detail, materials and craftsmanship.

***Criterion I, Its unique location or singular physical characteristic representing an establish and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood;***

The diagonally set church with its intricate belfry rising over the corner of East Sola and Anacapa Streets has been an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood since 1929.

***Historic Integrity:***

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its original appearance. There are essential physical features that must be considered to evaluate the integrity of a significant building. Since 1929, the church's location, setting, association and feeling have not changed. The original design, materials, and workmanship have been retained so that the building conveys its original 1929 appearance. Thus, the building has retained a high level of historical integrity.

***Recommendation:***

Staff Recommends that the HLC adopt a resolution to recommend to City Council that the Our Lady of Sorrows Church be designated as a City Landmark. Staff recommends the proposed boundary of the City Landmark designation include the 1929 church building, the open lawns around the building, significant trees, including the large Norfolk Island Star Pine on the south elevation of the church, and the elegant palms, except for the non-original windmill palms.

**Works Cited:**

Days, Mary Louise. *Our Lady of Sorrows Church Complex, July, 2001*. Gledhill Library.

Graffy de Garcia, Erin. *Our Lady Of Sorrows 1782–2004*. 2004

McMillian, Elizbeth. *California Colonial, the Spanish and Rancho Revival Styles*. Schiffer Publishing Ltd, Atglen, Pa) 2002.