

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

**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY NATIONAL BANK  
1000 STATE STREET  
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA  
APN 039-282-014**

**Background:**

The 1919-21 Santa Barbara County National Bank was designed by noted architect Myron Hunt in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The property was placed on the Potential Historic Resources List in 1978. The bank is noted for being a simple basilica form on the prominent corner of State and Carrillo Streets. The building embodies character-defining features of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, for which Santa Barbara is known. Its simple, smooth, yet thick plaster walls and clay tile roof, and its deeply recessed windows and doors under rounded arches with subtle wood window mullions and details carved in wood add to the quality of the architecture and character of the City. This piece of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture contributes to the collection of buildings that will always be key to Santa Barbara's identity. The proposed boundary of the City Landmark designation only includes the 1919-21 building and not the later additions. Because the building meets the City Landmark eligibility criteria for its architectural style and historical significance, it is the opinion of the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) Designations Subcommittee that the building is an excellent candidate for City Landmark designation.



*Above: c. 1930s Historic photograph of the Bank building (courtesy the Santa Barbara Historical Museum).*



*Right: Front elevation facing State Street. January 25, 2016.*



**Historic Context:**

Immediately after the First World War, Santa Barbara began its concerted effort to revamp its visual image, so that the past and present would symbolically merge as one in the Spanish Colonial Revival/Mediterranean style. The success of State Street started with one of the most influential architects in the country, Bertram G. Goodhue, who designed the famous Panama-California Exposition of 1915 in San Diego in the Spanish Churrigueresque style. In 1917, Goodhue was hired to plan the State Street commercial streetscape in the Spanish Colonial Revival/Mediterranean style, where he designed patios, corridors, and covered walks (paseos). Myron Hunt's bank building at the corner of State and Carrillo Streets was one of the earliest examples of a building designed with the Spanish Colonial Revival style motif.



*Above: Side street elevation facing Carrillo Street that features the row of arched openings. January 25, 2016.*

The bank president, Charles A. Edwards, was a man of great civic interest and public spirit. For example, as President of the Board of Trustees, he donated fourteen acres on Mission Ridge for the site of the State Normal School of Manual Arts and Home Economics (now University of California, Santa Barbara). Under Edwards' leadership, the bank grew and prospered. Edwards



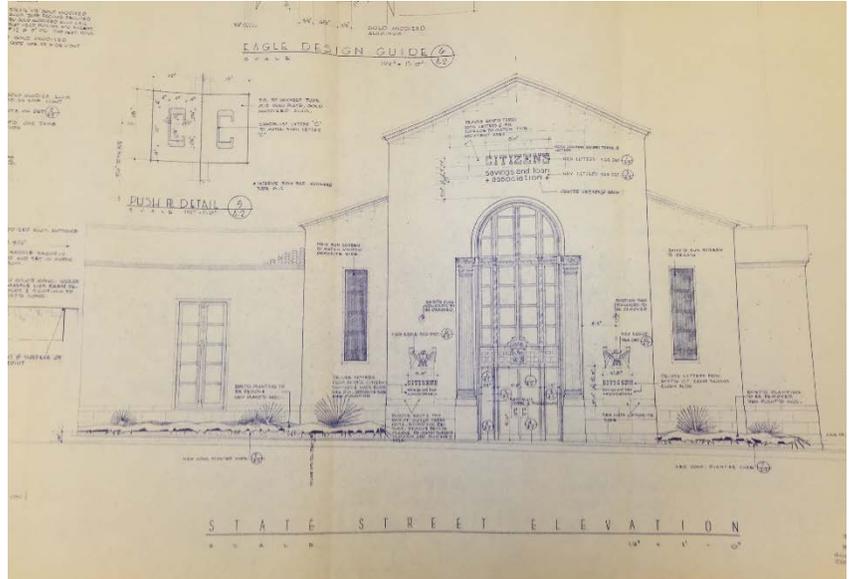
*Above: An early photo showing the interior of the bank with Corinthian columns that echo those flanking the entrance (courtesy the Santa Barbara Historical Museum).*

commissioned Myron Hunt to draw plans for the new building. Edwards spent hours with the architect, working out the details of the exterior and interior. The result was the bank building completed in 1921 and rated as among the most noted in Santa Barbara downtown area.

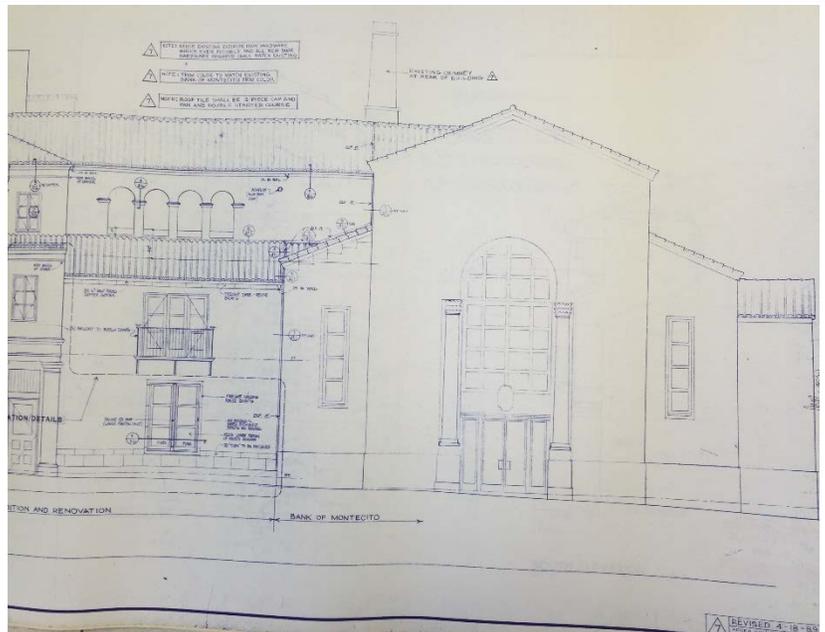
In 1925, Santa Barbara suffered a major earthquake, and damage was so extensive that virtually all of State Street was reconstructed, in a consistent Spanish Colonial Revival/Mediterranean style. Because

the 1925 earthquake had damaged some of the bank building, Hunt was hired to reinforce the building in 1925-26. The rear of the building had a northern extension to house vaults. Only the top of the rear gable and side wings are visible from the rear, as the building was built directly abutting the Hill-Carrillo Adobe that was constructed in 1825-26.

In 1961, interior renovations were made to the building. The 1961 drawings (shown in the image to the right) show the building as Hunt designed it, without any major alterations to the façade. In 1990, the lower square portion to the north had a complete façade renovation, and a third story added to the rear of the building (shown in drawing to the right). The renovated northern portion of the building reads as a separate building from the unaltered basilica form section of the 1919-21 building, so that the addition can be separated from the historic designation boundary.



**Above:** A 1961 rendering of the Myron Hunt building prior to the north wing façade restoration.



**Above:** The 1989-90 plans for renovating the façade of the northern portion of the building, including a third-story addition.



**Above:** Early photo illustrating view of bank building and State Street Streetscape prior to 1990 alterations to the north portion of the bank building (courtesy of the Santa Barbara Historical Museum).

## Architect

### Architect Myron Hunt:

Myron Hunt was one of Southern California's most accomplished early-twentieth-century architects. Dapper and bespectacled, Hunt had a fondness for tweed suits, and his appearance was always tidy, reserved, and precise. He did not seem like the type of person who could have created some of Southern California's most iconic architectural structures, his formal dress and manners belying the creative whirlwind inside his head. Santa Barbara deeply bears Hunt's vision with the Santa Barbara County Bank, the La Arcada Building at 1110 State Street, the San Marco Building, and the Faulkner Gallery. Hunt studied at Northwestern University and at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and spent time in Florence, Italy. By the time he was 34, he had already designed 39 buildings in Massachusetts. Hunt's solo architectural accomplishments include an impressive array of commercial and institutional buildings. His numerous projects included many noted landmarks in Southern California. Hunt was a contemporary of Frank Lloyd Wright, and in 1903, he moved to Los Angeles, where he entered into a partnership with architect Elmer Grey (1871–1963). Opening an office in Pasadena, the firm of Hunt and Grey soon became popular. Some of the firm's Pasadena work was featured in the national magazine *Architectural Record* as early as 1906. They were soon designing large houses in communities throughout Southern California, including the summer ranch home for cereal magnet Will Keith Kellogg. They also began receiving commissions to design larger projects, including hospitals, schools, churches, and hotels. By 1912, Hunt was no longer in partnership with Elmer Grey but had established a new firm with Los Angeles architect Harold C.



*Above: An early photo showing the interior of the bank with Corinthian columns that echo those flanking the entrance. The painting in the background is by Dan Syre Foesbeck and has been moved to the County Courthouse (courtesy of Santa Barbara Historical Museum).*



*Above: Rear elevation of the bank building with round window peaking over the abutting City Landmark, the Hill-Carrillo Adobe constructed in 1825-26. January 25, 2016.*

Chambers. In this partnership, Hunt designed a number of libraries, including the Faulkner Gallery in Santa Barbara, and libraries in Redlands, Palos Verdes Estates, and Pasadena. He also designed one of the three major buildings making up the Pasadena Civic Center. Hunt was the principal architect of all of Occidental College's buildings through 1940. In 1913, Hunt designed a new wing for the Mission Inn in Riverside, California. He designed the impressive Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, which opened in 1921. Hunt's association with Henry Huntington was established in 1909 when he designed his house in San Marino. With a large addition built in 1934, the house was to become the main art gallery of the cultural center built around the Huntington Library. Hunt also designed the Pasadena Rose Bowl. Hunt designed Santa Barbara's San Marcos building in 1926. Santa Barbara is fortunate to have a few Myron Hunt masterpieces in the downtown architectural repertoire.



*Above: An early photo of the front elevation of the bank (courtesy of Santa Barbara Historical Museum).*

**The Spanish Colonial Revival Style:**

The basilica-shaped bank building with its simple gable lined with terra-cotta roof tiles was designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The old form of the basilica plan was inspired from ancient Roman public court building. By extension it was applied to Christian buildings of the same form and continues to be used in an architectural sense to describe those buildings with a central nave and aisles. The building is oriented from west to east, typical



*Above: The front gable is lined with Spanish Colonial Revival style terra-cotta tiles and Italian Romanesque corbel tables under the eaves. January 25, 2016.*

of Christian churches. The form translates well into a bank building with a central public space (the nave) and side areas (aisles) for tellers and offices. On the exterior, Hunt employed subdued images of Italian Romanesque corbel tables under the eaves. The two free-standing Corinthian columns of sandstone that flank the arched entrance are echoed by similar ornate columns on the interior. The bank building features many intricate details, including two-story round arches with deeply recessed, wood windows with ornately carved vertical wood sash bars that divide the many lights in each of the original bays.

California's 52-year period of Spanish-Franciscan cultural impact and the subsequent 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 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 the definitive style of Spanish Colonial Revival, Mediterranean, and Mission, which reflect the unique heritage of the City. Many architects, later notable for their use of this style, created commercial façades and whole new buildings in variations of the style.

Therefore, in 1920s 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 bank building with its white stucco walls and dark contrasting stone details fits in the Spanish aesthetic of the City's new identity. The building received an award from Santa Barbara Beautiful in 1976 and is featured in the book *Santa Barbara Architecture*.



*Above: Early photo of building shows the fluted Corinthian columns flanking the edge of the deeply recessed arched entrance and scored water table (courtesy the Santa Barbara Historical Museum).*



*Above: The main entrance features Corinthian columns flanking the high arch with a deeply recessed divided light window. January 25, 2016.*

**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. Santa Barbara County National Bank 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***

This building is an excellent example 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 1919-21, Spanish Colonial Revival structure, it qualifies as a City Landmark because it is a significant part of the heritage of the City.

***Criterion C. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the City, the State or the Nation***

The building is associated with the first bank president, Charles A. Edwards. Under his leadership, the bank grew and prospered. Edwards commissioned architect Myron Hunt to draw plans for the new building. Edwards spent hours working with the architect in working out the details of the exterior and interior of the new building.

***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 Colonial Revival style, an important architectural style of Santa Barbara. Its terra-cotta tiles; smooth stucco walls; elongated, rounded arches; and ornate wood detailing around the main entrance and windows are character-defining features of the style. Between 1919 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: Intricately carved wood central sash of the elongated rounded arches. January 25, 2016***

***Criterion F. Its identification as the creation, design or work of a person or persons whose effort has significantly influenced the heritage of the City, the State or the Nation***

The building was designed by Myron Hunt, one of Southern California’s most accomplished early-twentieth-century architects. Hunt is noted for his design efforts that significantly influenced the heritage of the City, State, and Nation. He is recognized for several well-known public buildings and landmarks in Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, and Pasadena areas.

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

The bank building’s simple basilica composition, massing, and simplicity are exemplary elements of design. In addition to the ornate wood sashes of the main entrance and windows, the Corinthian columns flanking the front entrance and simple Doric columns of the Carrillo Street elevation separating the dramatic arched windows show outstanding attention to detail. The simple corbel table under the eave of the front gables and the terra-cotta tiles of the roof demonstrate outstanding attention to detail, materials, and craftsmanship.



**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. Although the northern portion of the building was renovated with a third-story addition in 1990, the bank building’s basilica form portion is intact, with a high level of integrity, and the bank building reads as its own structure. Since 1919-21, the bank building, which is still used as a bank today, has high integrity of location, setting, association, and feeling. The original design, materials, and workmanship have been retained so that the building conveys its original 1919-21 appearance. Thus, the building has retained a high level of historical integrity.



***Above: Two views of the bank building after the 1990 addition that illustrate the basilica form of the bank building stands out as its own building retaining high historic integrity. January 25, 2016.***

**Recommendation:**

The HLC Designations Subcommittee and staff recommend that the HLC adopt a resolution to recommend to City Council that the Santa Barbara County National Bank building be designated as a City Landmark. Staff recommends the proposed boundary of the City Landmark designation include the 1919-21 basilica form bank building only and not the northern portions that have been renovated.

**Works Cited:**

Cervin, Michael. *The Hunt for Distinction Myron Hunt, one of Pasadena's most prolific architects, designed some of Southern California's most iconic buildings and arenas.* Pasadena Weekly. 09/01/11. Web 1/25/16.

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City of Santa Barbara Archives. *1000 State Street archive plans (1961, 1989).*