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CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
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RESOLUTION NO. 95-113

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
SANTA BARBARA DESIGNATING THE COTA-KNOX HOUSE
AT 914-916 ANACAPA STREET AS A CITY LANDMARK

WHEREAS, on May 11, 1994, the Historic Landmarks Commission adopted a resolution of intention to begin the Landmark designation process; and

WHEREAS, on May 16, 1994, a categorical exemption of the proposed designation was issued by the City Environmental Analyst; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Landmarks Commission held a public hearing on May 25, 1994, during which hearing comments were invited on the proposed designation; Sarah Case, a University of California at Santa Barbara graduate student, presented the proposal; no persons spoke in opposition to the designation; and

WHEREAS, on May 9, 1995, the City Council received a recommendation from the Historic Landmarks Commission to designate the Cota-Knox House as a City Landmark; 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, archaeological, cultural or aesthetic significance by adopting a resolution of designation within ninety (90) days following receipt of a recommendation from the Historic Landmarks Commission;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA THAT:

1. The Cota-Knox House and a portion of the grounds located at 914-926 Anacapa Street, Assessor's Parcel Number 29-291-24 shown on Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein, is designated as a City Landmark.

2. The City Council finds that the Cota-Knox House together with a portion of the grounds as described above, meets the following criteria listed in Section 22.22.040 of the Municipal Code:

- a. The Cota-Knox House has character, interest and value that make it a significant part of the heritage of Santa Barbara;
- b. Its identification with Jose Lobero, the Cota family, and Dr. Samuel Knox, persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the City;

- c. It exemplifies a particular architectural style and way of life important to the City;
- d. It exemplifies the best remaining architectural type in its neighborhood;
- e. The original embodiment of elements demonstrates outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials, and craftsmanship;
- f. It has a unique location and singular physical characteristics representing an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood.

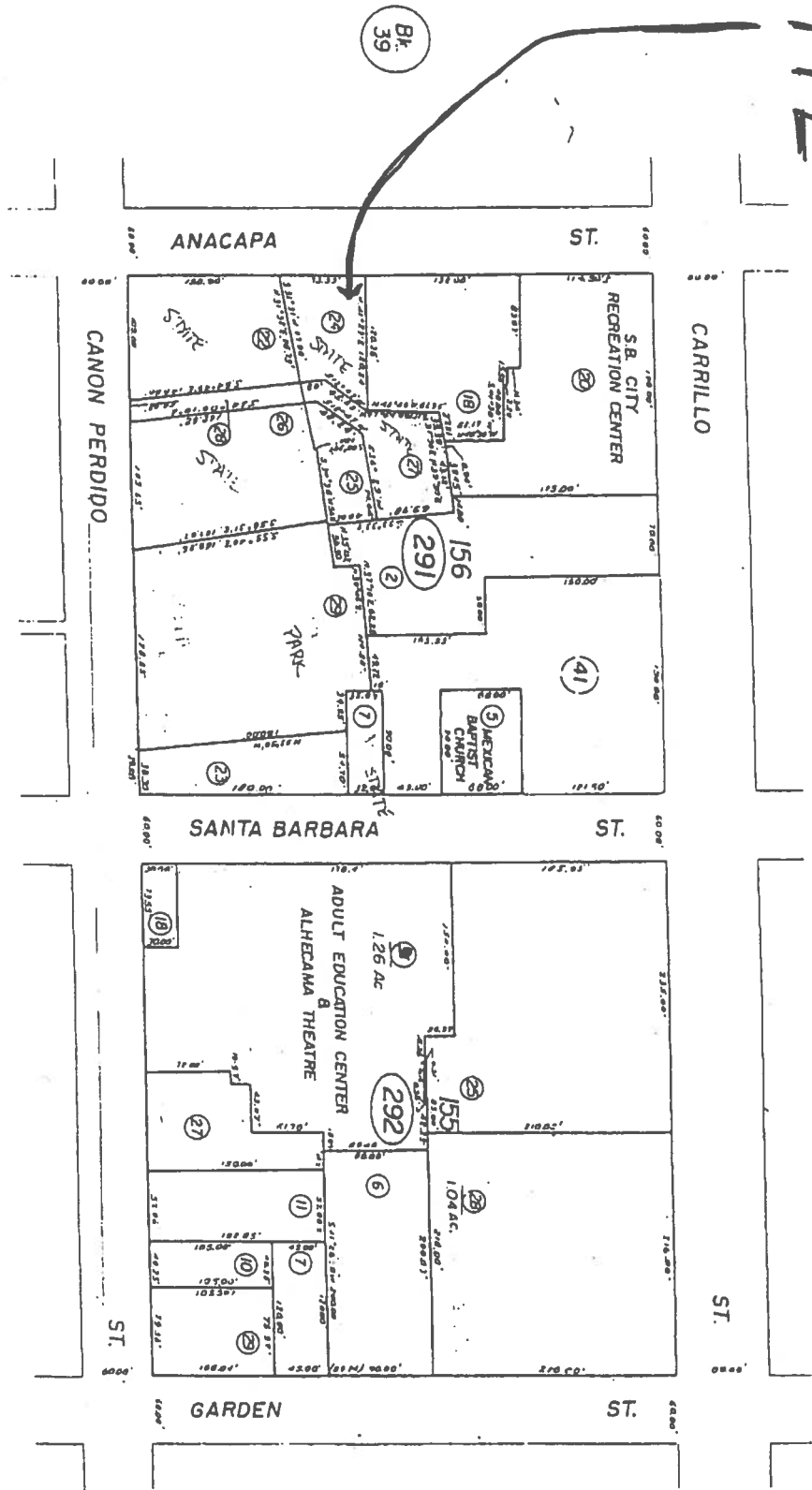
2. The Landmark boundary includes the building and the grounds bounded by the property line on Anacapa Street, the property line on the east side, and a distance of three feet out from the outermost walls of the building on the northeast and northwest sides. These findings are based on historic, architectural, and cultural significance of facts presented in Exhibit B, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

3. The City Clerk shall cause this resolution, upon adoption, to be recorded in the Office of the Recorder of the County of Santa Barbara pursuant to Santa Barbara Municipal Code Section 22.22.055.

Adopted July 18, 1995

EXHIBIT "A"
Resolution No. 95-113

SITE



PUEBLO LANDS

Bk. 31

Bk. 39

NOTE - Assessor's Block Numbers Shown in Ellipses.
Assessor's Parcel Numbers Shown in Circles.

Assessor's Map Bk. 29 - Pg. 29
County of Santa Barbara, Calif.

Bk. 29

29 29

Historical Background:

In 1850, Santa Barbara legally became an American city and the next year the first municipal officials commissioned a survey. Captain Salisbury Haley took on the job and began work that year. Haley had the formidable task of creating a system of a grid of streets meeting at right angles to a haphazardly built town with residences and businesses that did not at all conform to the order he attempted to impose on them. As a result, early city officials required that several buildings be knocked down in order to make room for the newly created streets. One of the homes to be knocked down was that of Maria Jesus Olivera de Cota, widow of Francisco Cota, on the block that was to become Anacapa Street, between Carrillo and Canon Perdido Streets.

Francisco Cota's grandfather, Pablo Antonio Cota, had traveled through Santa Barbara as part of the "Sacred Expedition" of Portola in 1769. Born in 1744, enlisted in 1768, Cota answered the call of the Spanish crown to settle "Alta California" in 1769. Francisco Cota himself became prominent in the Santa Barbara community, an elector and major landowner. After the secularization of Santa Ines Mission in 1836, Cota worked as commissioner and administrator of the estate from 1837 to 1840. Cota served as justice of the peace there from 1847-48. In 1839, Gen. Pio Pico granted Cota the Santa Rosa rancho, located on the stagecoach road between Lompoc and what is now Buellton. After his death, Cota's wife sold the Santa Rosa rancho to Joseph Cooper and moved into a town adobe. As a result of the Haley Survey, the adobe house later was scheduled to be destroyed in 1871 in order to make room for the 900 block of Anacapa Street. Her home extended into the planned Anacapa Street. Despite Maria's appeals and the support from the Hispanic community, the city stood firm on its insistence that the building be torn down.

Maria Cota was left without a place to live in town. Her son-in-law, Jose Lobero, offered to build her a home on the remainder of her property located in city block 156. Jose Lobero (born Giuseppe), had married Maria Cota's daughter, Maria Clara Lugarda Cota. Lobero, an Italian immigrant who had lived in Santa Barbara since 1857, played the violin and was rumored to have performed in Milan's La Scala opera house. Well known in 19th century Santa Barbara, Lobero owned a tavern on State Street and dreamed of building southern California's first opera house.

In May of 1871, Lobero arranged for the construction on the remaining lot facing the soon-to-be-built Anacapa Street, between Canon Perdido and Carrillo Streets, bordered by the properties owned by Ventura Pico to the northeast, the heirs of F. Schiappa Pietra to the southeast, the heirs of Ramon Malo and Juana Lugarda Cota de Malo to the northwest, and Anacapa Street to the southwest.

Maria Cota's brick home was constructed on the site, west of the Presidio-era Pico Adobe, across from the opera house Lobero finally built in 1875 with money from his saloon, his wife's family, and Col. W. W. Hollister. An 1873 Assessor's Book entry confirms that Maria Jesus de Cota owned a lot 141 feet by 156 feet on Anacapa Street, 219 feet from Carrillo Street, worth \$1200, with improvements including a dwelling, fence and trees worth \$2000.

In 1877, Maria Cota died. Dr. Samuel Budd Page Knox and his wife Helen had arrived in Santa Barbara in 1875 and purchased the home. Dr. Knox, born in Brownsville, Pennsylvania, had been a surgeon during the Civil War and became one of only 12 doctors in Santa Barbara. His brother, Philander C. Knox, later served in Theodore Roosevelt's administration as Secretary of State. Knox remained in private practice but also supervised the Santa Barbara County Hospital from 1879-1884, 1890-1891, and 1893. Knox also became the first president of the Santa Barbara library, in 1880, and was known for riding a high-wheeled bicycle on State Street, the first man to do so.

The Knoxes had adopted a daughter, Gertrude Wright. Wright became well-known as a singer and performer and married Major Joseph Feeley, a customs official in the Dominican Republic. In 1922, Dr. Knox died, having willed his property, including the Pico Adobe, to Wright. Wright applied for and was granted a building permit for a \$1500 residential repair in September, 1922 and another for \$500 in March of 1924. These alterations could have been made to either property and it remains unknown exactly to what changes these permits correspond. Gertrude Wright Feeley and her husband lived in the house for a short period of time but soon moved to Montecito. Wright retained ownership of the building, however, and remodeled it into an office building in 1954. After the death of Mr. Feeley in 1964, Mr. Thaddeus Suski, an advertising executive for theater and film, purchased the building, then referred to as the Feeley building, along with the Pico Adobe. Their historical significance already had

been recognized by members of the Santa Barbara community. In a letter to the executors of the Feeley estate, the city's Advisory Landmark Committee recommended that "persons who will appreciate their historical significance and desire to preserve them" acquire the buildings.

In 1971, Irene Hayes Suski, wife of Thaddeus, sold the structure to Richard Investment Trust with Quentin Richard as trustee. Its current owners, the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation, had been interested in the property since the early 1970s, partially because of its location near the Presidio. Irene Suski and Mr. Richard had expressed willingness to cooperate. After negotiations with Richard and the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the Trust and the State of California acquired the property in 1976 through a gift/sale contract with the help of lawyer Jeremy Hass. The Cota-Knox building, owned by the State since 1984, continues to be used as office space.

Architectural Description:

The Cota-Knox house is one of the few mid-19th century brick structures left standing in Santa Barbara. The one story brick building represents a transition between the older Spanish style of Santa Barbara homes and the Anglo-American style introduced in the late 19th century. The home resembles Mexican-style adobes but with important differences and Victorian embellishments. Both the plan and street facade are symmetrical, an Anglo-American influence, and the wood and brick detail similarly derive from eastern styles. Two double-hung windows (originally double casement windows) flank the central door on each side facing Anacapa Street. A three step wood porch, removed some time before the turn of the century, and the low-pitched, slanting roof also point to Victorian influence. As a representation of this unique, transitional style, the Cota-Knox house serves as a reminder of Santa Barbara's past, a time of contact and interaction between Mexican and Anglo-American cultures.

Several of the owners of the Cota-Knox house altered the building to serve their purposes or tastes. The original plan and descriptions suggest that Maria Cota's brick home contained five rooms, and measured 35'2" in the front by 26'4". An additional wing stood at the northeast corner. Other additions were made by 1892.

Later additions to the roof followed the original design of a shed roof, slanting to the rear. Earlier decoration, however, was removed at an unknown time and replaced by plain brick.

Brick sections of the building remain in fairly good condition with support from metal tie bars, but the wood sections show some wear and age. The building, now adapted for office use, continues to serve a significant function as a cultural and architectural landmark in the city of Santa Barbara. Listing in the California Historic Resources Inventory attests to its historic and architectural importance. As one of the last buildings of its kind, the Cota-Knox house is and ought to remain a part of the city's built landscape.