

Update: 505 E. Los Olivos St & Grand Ave proposed housing projects

Both projects are currently in a "quiet phase."

- 1609 Grand Avenue - The eight-story project (six floors of 58 units on top of two stories of parking) on Grand Avenue is waiting for the applicant to pay the preliminary fees to start the City's environmental review process.
- 505 E. Los Olivos Street – The E. Los Olivos project is proposed to be 11 stories high (eight stories of 255 units on top of three floors of parking) and is awaiting a fee invoice from the City for starting the environmental review phase. However, the applicant is now requesting a lot split from the City, and that may delay issuing the fee request. Consequently, the environmental review process may be delayed.

Smart Action for Growth & Equity – Santa Barbara (SAGE-SB) has been following both projects, including filing detailed letters with the City to address all relevant legal issues. All of these filings cost money and SAGE-SB will be announcing a new campaign effort to establish a reserve for future analysis of both projects. The reserve will be used to assess environmental documents (Environmental Impact Reports or EIRs) and submit detailed comments to the City on both projects. It is hoped that the over 5,000 supporters of SAGE-SB's and UEA's efforts will now step forward to assist in providing that reserve amount.



Save the Date!

Fourth District Candidates Forum
September 16, 2026, 7:00 - 8:30 pm.
Cleveland School Auditorium
123 Alameda Padre Serra

The Upper East Association, along with the Riveria Association and the Eucalyptus Hill Improvement Association, will be sponsoring an evening event to allow members to hear from the four declared candidates.

A notice and request for questions from our members has been sent out separately with your questions due to UEA by August 24.

2027 Dues

The UEA board is holding the association's 2027 annual dues steady at \$50 per household. After the increase this year from \$35 to \$50, the association's finances are stronger than they have ever been and can support our important programs. Later in the fall, you will receive a notice when your 2027 dues are payable.

Summer Garden Party

The Upper East Association held our third annual Summer Garden Party on July 3, 2026. It was well attended and neighbors had an opportunity to interact with each other and enjoy snacks and desserts.



Thanks to Deb Trauntvein, this year's event also included music by Denny Aaberg and Karina Amaro. President Steve Forsell and Vice President Fred Sweeney provided information regarding what your UEA board has been working on this year.



There was much discussion regarding 505 East Los Olivos Street, the proposed project behind the Mission. Fred also shared information regarding the upcoming Fourth District Candidates Forum for the November City Council election. (See details in separate story in this newsletter.) Thanks to all those who attended the Garden Party and we look forward to next year's event.

History Corner

The Origins of the Early Upper East Neighborhood

by Fred Sweeney

The Upper East neighborhood that we know today originated in the early nineteen-teens after the "Crocker Houses" were constructed near the Santa Barbara Mission. This included early Victorian mansions, one of which was built on the site of what is today's Roosevelt Elementary School (see Fig. A).

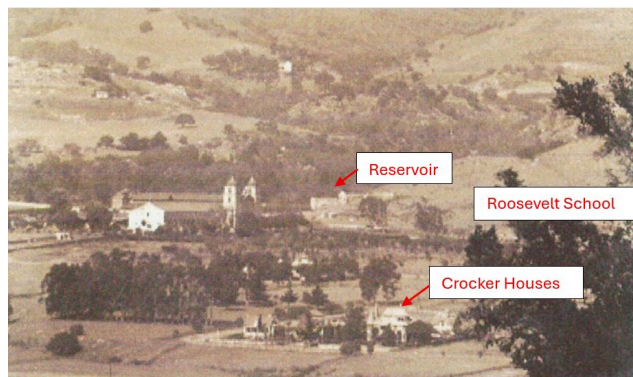


Fig. A *This is a photo of the Crocker Houses built before Garden and Los Olivos Streets were created.*

Most of the upper east set of streets to the east (the mountain side) of State Street – from Constance Avenue south to Mission Street and east to the lower Riviera – were created by developers in what is now known as the "Van Vactor & Myers Tract." Without further research concerning the developers, it is suspected that they may have been part of the City Beautiful movement that was occurring in large and small cities across the country. An outgrowth of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, the movement was about making neighborhoods more livable, allowing for light, air, and landscape, and was introduced to provide healthy lifestyles that we now hold so dear. As a result of that movement, you will find that most of the square blocks within our neighborhood have irregular lot sizes, some with alleys mid-block or more, sidewalk parkways, and some that have what is referred to as "flag lots." The dimensions of the square blocks defining our neighborhood streets were the continuation of the 450 square blocks created by

the Haley survey that formed the main part of the city below Mission Street down to the waterfront.

The layout of these lots is sometimes referred to as egalitarian, meaning more democratic ownership of residential lots for large and small homes. These 1900-era beautification campaigns were also followed by the small homes campaign, fashioned sometimes by catalog home construction plans found in many publications produced during the time up to World War I.

During this period, the emergence of homeowners insurance became prevalent, supporting the bank lending requirements. One company along with others produced maps that actually identified the home footprints within each property on maps. In Santa Barbara, those maps were produced by the San Borne Insurance Company (see Fig. B). What is interesting is that when you review these maps you discover that the residential blocks developed in the same era on the west side (Cottage Hospital side) of State Street are laid out in regular rectangular lots, similar to housing tracts developed in Southern California after World War II.



Fig. B This map shows a portion of the upper east neighborhood in what was known until the 1950s as the San Borne Insurance maps.

In 1918, following the first construction of many of the homes in our neighborhood through the 1920s, the developers convinced the city to pave the then dirt State Street from Mission Street to Constance Avenue along with the parkway we see today.

The other major transportation development that affected our neighborhood was that State Street ended at Constance Avenue (see Fig. C). The main travel route from the north and west of Santa Barbara was Hollister Avenue, which later became De la Vina

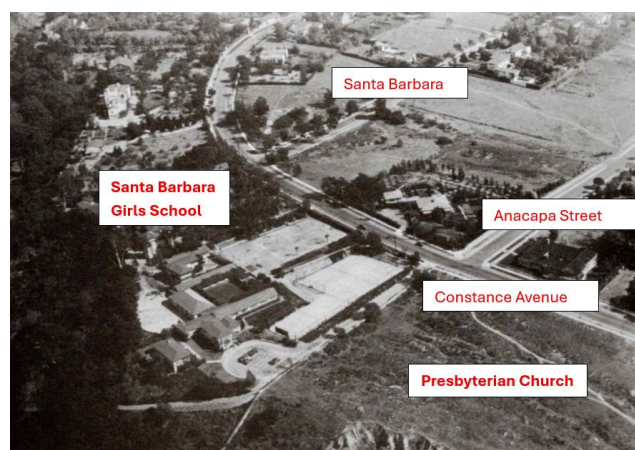


Fig. C Aerial photo of upper Santa Barbara Street, Anacapa Street and Constance Avenue during the 1940s.

Note that State Street did not go past Constance Avenue but ended at an avocado and citrus orchard. State Street did not go through until after WWII around the time that Jordano's built their store #5 in 1951, which today is the site of the CVS Pharmacy at State and Calle Laureles Streets.

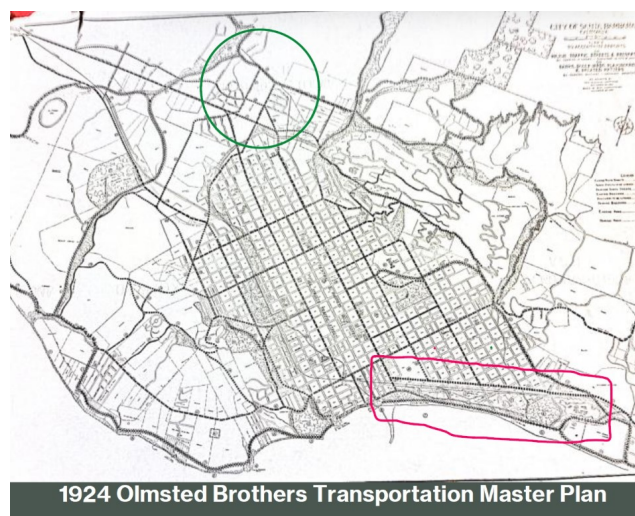


Fig. D This map shows two major recommendations, one that actually came to fruition by the creation of Carrillo Boulevard at the waterfront and one that did not, the extension of Santa Barbara Street up to Foothill Road (the circle in green).

Street.

Many of the ideas for our town's transportation corridors came from a master plan created by the Olmsted Brothers who were hired by a group of wealthy residents of the early twentieth century, among them Bernard Hoffman, Dwight Murphy, and Max Fleischmann. That master plan proposed a parallel road route to Hollister Avenue that was the extension of Santa Barbara Street across Mission Creek up at a diagonal to what is now Foothill Road (see Fig. D). Fig. E shows how things looked in 1949.

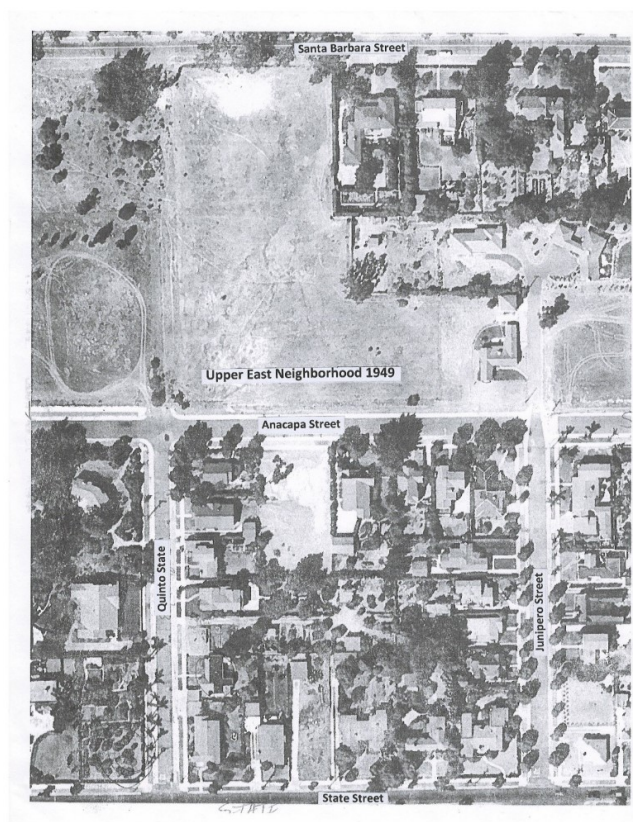


Fig. E Aerial photograph of the upper east taken in 1949. From the 1950s on, many homes were built on the empty lots shown. The result of that flurry of home building gave birth to the formation of the Upper East.

Upper East Association Mission Statement

*To preserve and enhance the spirit
and essence of this historic
neighborhood and its quality of life.*

Happy Hour

by Michael O'Connell

Denizens of the Upper East have no doubt noticed the ornithological phenomenon of dozens, even hundreds of crows, *corvix brachyrhynchos*, flying over the Upper East neighborhood toward the beach in the late afternoon, around five o'clock. It happens virtually every evening. And around seven o'clock, we see them flying back in a roughly westerly direction. Perhaps their formations are a bit more straggly on the way back. And some individuals just aren't keeping up.

Where are they going, and why does it appear to be on schedule?

"Happy Hour" is the obvious answer. Clearly there's something going on at the beach, and if we saw a similar phenomenon in our own, unwinged, species, we would immediately suspect that lower-priced, or free, drinks were the answer. Is there some similar draw on the crows? We guess that crows are generally teetotalers, though we know they are partial to carrion.

Crows, of course, are known for their intelligence – the crow brain is proportional to the crow body in about the same proportion as the human species. And we may flatter ourselves that crows have come to imitate us, for better or worse, in various shared social structures, monogamy, child rearing, getting teenagers to babysit, and complaining loudly if crossed. We know that crows recognize human faces and are known to hold grudges. Clearly more work needs to be done on crow politics.

Does anyone have any ideas about what draws the crows to Happy Hour? The crows fly faster than a sociological observer could walk or run, and driving in pursuit wouldn't work. The electric bicycle might allow pursuit, but only if one didn't stop at stop signs.

Or should the Upper East Association or maybe the City Council establish patrols at various locations near the beach and the bird refuge and wait for the crows to learn the draw of their Happy Hour?