

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO

Page 1

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Steedman Estate

Other Name/Site Number: Casa del Herrero; House of the Blacksmith

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 1387 East Valley Road

Not for publication:

City/Town: Santa Barbara

Vicinity:

State: CA County: Santa Barbara Code: 083

Zip Code: 93108

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local: \_\_\_

Public-State: \_\_\_

Public-Federal: \_\_\_

Category of Property

Building(s): \_\_\_

District: X

Site: \_\_\_

Structure: \_\_\_

Object: \_\_\_

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

8

16

3

1

28

Noncontributing

\_\_\_ buildings

\_\_\_ sites

\_\_\_ structures

\_\_\_ objects

\_\_\_ Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 10

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

**5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

# STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

## 6. FUNCTION OR USE

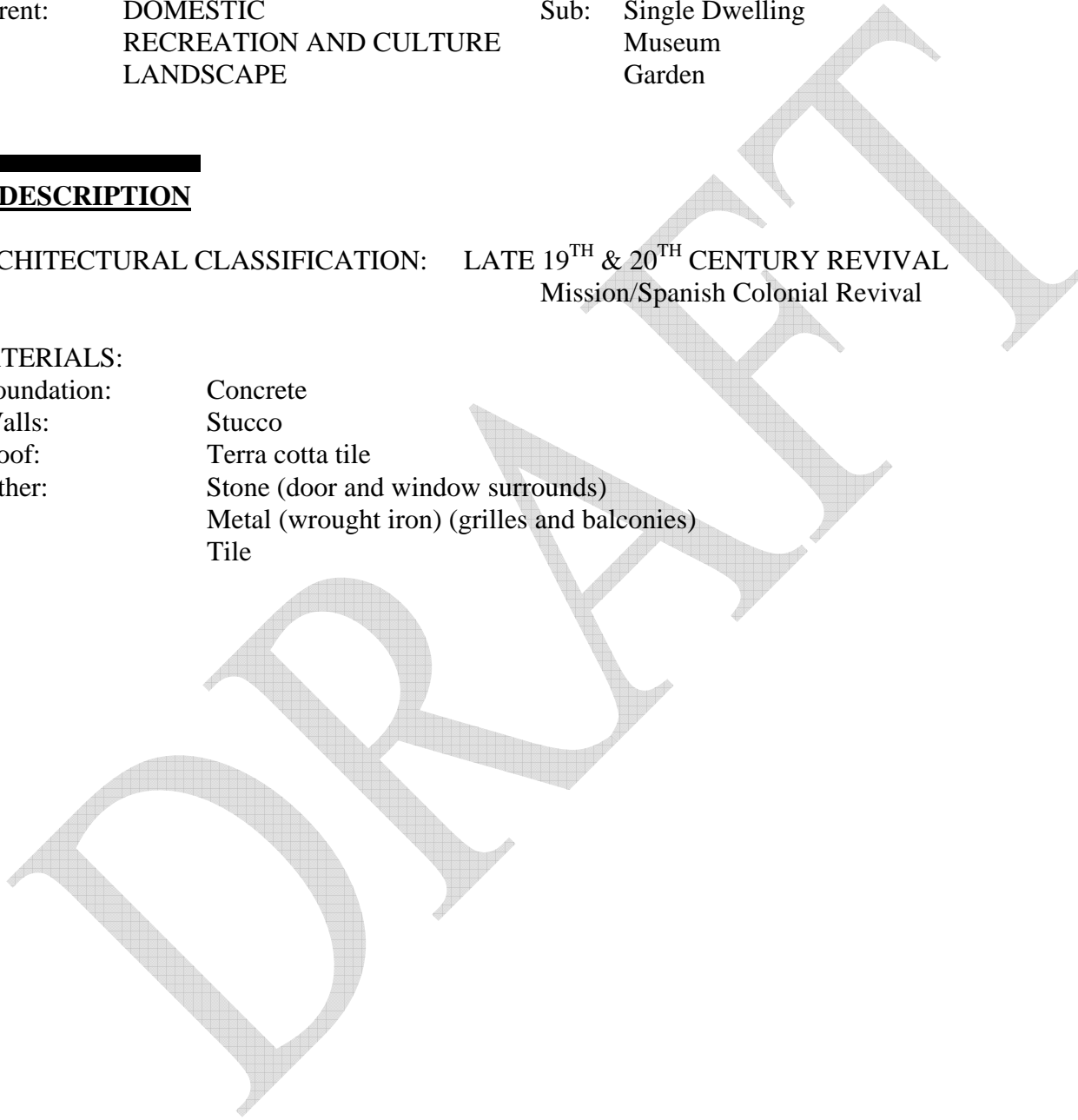
Historic:	DOMESTIC LANDSCAPE	Sub:	Single Dwelling Garden
Current:	DOMESTIC RECREATION AND CULTURE LANDSCAPE	Sub:	Single Dwelling Museum Garden

## 7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> & 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVAL  
Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

MATERIALS:

Foundation:	Concrete
Walls:	Stucco
Roof:	Terra cotta tile
Other:	Stone (door and window surrounds) Metal (wrought iron) (grilles and balconies) Tile



**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 4**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

## Summary

The George and Carrie Steedman Estate, named “Casa del Herrero” by its owners, stands as one of the most fully developed, richly documented and intact examples of the America Country Place Era. Its gardens, architecture, interior design, and furnishings appear untouched by time and reflect a remarkable sense of artistic unity and authenticity in representing the evolution of Spanish Colonial Revival design in the United States. In 1922 George and Carrie Steedman of St. Louis, Missouri, decided to build a second home in the fashionable Spanish Colonial Revival style on their new property in Montecito, California, where an actual Spanish colonial adobe house still stood on land that had originally been deeded by Spain to the Santa Barbara Presidio in the eighteenth century. George Fox Steedman, an industrialist, engineer, and amateur architect, had a vision for the house and grounds that went beyond fashion, and he assembled an extraordinary team of architects, landscape architects, antiquarians, and horticulturists to produce the Casa del Herrero estate (House of the Blacksmith)—recognized today as a masterpiece of the Country Place era. His participation in every detail of the property’s buildings, furnishings, and gardens is the reason the estate makes a single artistic statement that is greater than the sum of its parts.<sup>1</sup> Today the entire 11-acre site is owned and operated as a historic house museum and garden by the non-profit Casa del Herrero Foundation, with the goal of preserving the house and grounds, as well as the family’s collection of antiques, books, sketchbooks, drawings, and horticultural records.

As its small scale and intricate details make clear, the Steedman Estate was a response to the “genius” (or spirit) of its place and the increasing interest in foreign travel and collecting among the nouveau rich who were drawn to California’s mild climate, striking juxtaposition of ocean and mountain, and informal social life in the 1920s. Not simply an imitation of a European or East coast prototype, the Casa broke new ground in adapting conventions of Spanish architecture and garden design to the Mediterranean-like climate of Montecito, which was fast becoming the preferred winter resort among prosperous industrialists, many of them from the Midwest. This Mediterranean-inspired version of an American country place features one of architect George Washington Smith’s most celebrated Spanish Colonial Revival-style houses and a historic designed landscape by two of the West Coast’s most important early twentieth-century landscape architects: Ralph T. Stevens and Lockwood de Forest, Jr.<sup>2</sup> Smith was one of a small group of architects who popularized the vernacular architectural forms of southern Spain, particularly Andalusia, and contributed to Santa Barbara’s identity as one of the most vibrant centers of Mediterranean-inspired architecture and landscape architecture in the United States.

The house and grounds reflect a remarkable synthesis of Hispanic-inspired house and garden design—one that is unparalleled in both authenticity to Spanish prototypes and response to the Mediterranean-like climate and scenic beauty of California coast. The thematic unity reflected by the fusion of landscape design, architecture, and interior design reflected at the Casa del Herrero is unsurpassed among other Montecito estates of the 1920s. Notable is the lively unity brought to the gardens, architectural forms, and interior design by Steedman’s use of antique materials derived from Spanish homes and gardens. In a process known as reverse-design, Steedman continually relied on the expertise of antiquarians Arthur and Mildred Byne to secure antique materials that could be used in the design of his house and gardens. Particularly striking is the extensive use of tiles (called *azulejos*) for interior floors and stairways, outside patios, and wall decoration, and decorative effect of

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<sup>1</sup> This integration is rooted in the Arts and Crafts philosophy, although the Casa is outside of the movement’s mainstream style and time period. See Adrian Tinniswood’s essay on the Casa del Herrero in *The Arts & Crafts House*, pp. 92-95.

<sup>2</sup> Stevens was the son of California’s pioneering horticulturist and nurseryman Ralph Kinton Stevens and had grown up on a nearby Santa Barbara property called Tanglewood (now Lotusland.) De Forest was also known as Lockwood de Forest III, and his father, Lockwood de Forest II, was an artist and business associate of Louis Comfort Tiffany.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 5**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

polychrome glazed tile used in garden benches, exedra, fountains, runnels, and pools. Also striking is the development of outdoor rooms, water features, and a spatial organization that echo the landscape traditions of Southern Spain.

Seemingly appropriate to the architecture, the landscape's spatial planning is rooted in Mediterranean traditions and Beaux-Arts principles. Patios and courtyards extend the living space into the gardens in the Hispano-Arab manner.<sup>3</sup> The indoor-outdoor lifestyle facilitated by these transitional spaces would soon take its place in the national consciousness as a regional phenomenon equated with California history and modern living, and the Casa has several exceptional examples of the style. Typical of the era, the landscape plays a dominant role in the success of this country place and is a synthesis of European typologies: however, the Casa is a unique expression because the desire for authenticity resulted in intimate Spanish patios and Spanish-style water features organizing its Italian-inspired axes and Anglo-American lawns. The landscape is an extension of the house, offering a spatial organization of sequential views from the house and a gradual transition from formal outdoor rooms to an informal and naturalistic garden on the lowest level. On the one hand, the estate is steeped in an antiquarian's quest for historical reference and authenticity, and, on the other, it offered fresh perspectives, selectivity of details, an asymmetry of forms, a simplification of space and form, and a horticultural diversity that surpassed its romantic Andalusian prototypes, such as the Alcazar Gardens of Seville and the Alhambra and Generalife Gardens in Granada. For this reason, the estate is an outstanding example of the distinctive California style of landscape design that coalesced in the 1920s and became an important forerunner of modern California style that--through the work of Lockwood De Forest, Thomas Church, and Garrett Eckbo --would by the 1950s transform landscape design in the United States.

Santa Barbara had a national reputation as a horticultural wonderland, and offered Steedman and his designers a rich plant palette. Subtropical horticultural materials reinforce the image of the West Coast's resort-like Mediterranean climate. Palms are used for foundation planting, there is a cactus garden, and citrus trees are utilized for screening (an early example of landscaping with edible plants and an innovation unknown to most gentleman farmers). Lush gardens such as these were only possible in the arid west with the application of water. Adding to the estate's importance is its private water supply, which is housed in a nearby Spanish Colonial Revival-style pump house. The community fountain on its front façade symbolizes the very real connection between the reverence for water in the Mediterranean region and a similar outlook shared in the west for this scarce resource—one reason Spanish Mission and Mediterranean styles were selected as appropriate for California architecture in the late nineteenth century.

These historicist styles and the twentieth-century Spanish Colonial Revival style of the Casa del Herrero were romanticized interpretations of the past that symbolized a retreat from overcrowded, industrialized cities. Modern technology was not completely rejected however. Examples can be found at the Casa in the garden's underground irrigation system, the house's up-to-date kitchens and baths, the pump house mechanics, and the fact that garages were incorporated directly into the Casa—a reflection of a lifestyle already embracing the automobile.

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<sup>3</sup> Various terms have been used to describe the multicultural gardens created in the countries conquered by Islam or inspired by Islamic-origin prototypes (which in turn were derived from ancient Persian and Roman prototypes) See *The Islamic Garden*, Elisabeth MacDougall and Richard Ettinghouse, eds., Consuelo M. Correcher's, *The Gardens of Spain*, and *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain* by D. Fairchild Ruggles. Steedman's inspiration seems to have come from his travels in Southern Spain and the influence of antiquarians Arthur and Mildred Byne, who had written extensively on Andalusian patios and gardens.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 6**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance**

The Steedman Estate's approximately 11 acres include a separate, 50-by-33-foot parcel on a nearby lane where its private water supply is located in a pump house designed in Spanish Colonial Revival style. The Spanish Colonial Revival-style residence, or casa, and two servant's cottages on the main property are located close to what was once a quiet country road (now a busy thoroughfare.) The casa is surrounded by formal gardens connected to the house through architectural garden spaces and sits within a naturalistic designed landscape. The property slopes from the garden behind the house to an ocean vista. Two seasonal creeks, meandering near each property line, drain the site along its length just as they always have. The appearance of the house (which retains its original furnishings) and garden today can easily be reconciled with historic photographs. The seven acres of the gardens and orchards have been maintained over time by a continuous succession of gardeners resulting in a consistent treatment of the landscape. Likewise the property was owned by the original family until a private, non-profit foundation established by the family and local supporters opened it as a museum in 1993. Overall, the estate retains the feeling of the early twentieth century. Although the viewshed is compromised by neighboring trees, no buildings have entered the view, and the ocean can still be seen from the second floor. House and gardens are intimately linked through patio transition elements, which are axially linked to the interior spaces and the greater landscape. This is typical of the Mediterranean gardens which inspired the design, but it makes it difficult to separate the estate's resources into discrete elements.<sup>4</sup>

**The estate's resources fall into three basic categories:**

- The main house, or casa, with its original furnishings, collections, and its supporting buildings—Carmelita Spring House (Pump House), Shop, Gardener's Cottage, Butler's Cottage (with attached Guest Apartment and Garages), Glass House, Lath House, and Tool Shed;
- Architectonic garden spaces enclosed by walls extending from the casa that provide indoor-outdoor transitions to the designed landscape including the Spanish Garden Patio, the Loggia with its Terrace, and the Service Court (these contributing resources are discussed in the main house, or casa, section and mentioned in the historic designed landscape section);
- The historic designed landscape including formal gardens, orchards, informal Cactus Garden and park-like setting, and structures including fountains, pools, pergolas, tile benches, and exedras.

**General Description**

Casa del Herrero, built initially as a second residence for George and Carrie Steedman of St. Louis, is located in Montecito, an unincorporated suburb of Santa Barbara, California, that gained popularity in the mid-nineteenth century as a health and winter resort for Eastern and Midwestern elites. The site was acquired by the Steedmans in 1922 and originally included approximately eight acres. A contour map completed in March 1922 by F. F. Flournoy, a civil engineer, shows that the property was roughly trapezoidal and dropped off gradually to the south (Fig. 1). Two creeks (or swales) meandered along each side, and there were acacia, pepper, (*Schinus* sp.), and gum (*Eucalyptus* sp.) trees on the site as well as cypress hedgerows (*Cupressus macrocarpa*, the native, but planted, Monterey cypress), and a stand of cactus. The Pacific Ocean was on the horizon, as Montecito at that time had far fewer tall trees. The estate was enlarged in 1925 with the acquisition

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<sup>4</sup> An abundance of original source material has survived. Building and landscape descriptions are based on the literature and on reviews of the surviving documents, drawings, correspondence, and invoices by Robert Sweeney and Susan Chamberlin.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 7**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

of approximately two-and-one-half adjoining acres on the southwest. These fully incorporated the western creek, which had been bisected by the original property line. In 1927 a site nearby on Picacho Lane including a well owned by the Carmelita Springs Water Company which supplied water to the estate for a fee, was purchased as its permanent water source.

The estate includes three habitable buildings: the main house, or Casa, and two servant cottages. The main house has an abundance of antique fittings, furnishings, art, and wrought iron. Decorative tile, both antique and made to order, embellishes the main house and the landscape.

Outbuildings include a workshop, garden buildings including glass and lath houses and an equipment room. A pump house on the nearby property contains machinery that draws water from a well, stores it in a reservoir enclosed by the building, and delivers it to the main property as needed.<sup>5</sup> The principal structures on the main site are situated on the northern, or upper, portion of the property within proximity of East Valley Road. All buildings, including the pump house, are Spanish Colonial Revival in style and distinguished by asymmetrical compositions, planar wall surfaces, and red tile roofs.

The garden, though with strong Spanish overtones, was intended in both form and plant material as a regional response and never as a literal interpretation of a Spanish prototype. Steedman referred early on to his "...original idea of a small, simple California place 'by the road'."<sup>6</sup> A network of polychromatic tiled pools, exedras and a runnel on the south axis is a prominent feature of the designed landscape and suggests the sparing use of water characteristic of Andalusian gardens. Other garden structures include a pair of pergolas, two arbors and a seating area constructed of Roman brick and tile.

George Steedman had input in and made contributions to every building and garden on the estate. That being said, the house and its closely associated architectural garden spaces are the work of architect George Washington Smith with contributions by Lulah Maria Riggs (the most important member of Smith's office who had a successful career despite the disadvantages female architects faced). The site plan, spatial organization of the gardens and grounds, and plant palette are the work of landscape architects, Ralph Stevens, Lockwood de Forest, and Francis T. Underhill.<sup>7</sup> Smith guided the site plan and also designed the Gardener's Cottage, while Edwards, Plunkett and Howell designed the Butler's Cottage, with later alterations by Riggs and Steedman. The pump house, also referred to as the Carmelita Spring House, was designed by Edwards and Plunkett to hide the reservoir and utilitarian pumping equipment, supplied by Steedman and arranged to his specifications. The Shop was designed by Floyd Brewster. Although various designers worked on the estate, the buildings and gardens are stylistically consistent thanks to the vision and hands-on participation of the client and his antiquarian consultants, Arthur and Mildred Stapley Byne.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Due to County of Santa Barbara conditions imposed during the conditional use permit process, the water is only used in the gardens today.

<sup>6</sup> Note on drawing by Steedman in response to proposal by Ralph Stevens, ca. November 1922. Casa.

<sup>7</sup> Both de Forest and Underhill were also architects. As discussed below, Peter Riedel's contribution to the landscape has been exaggerated. Alterations to the plant palette are discussed in the Description of Individual Resources section.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur Byne, especially, made numerous suggestions and the Byne's' collective publications on Spanish architecture, gardens and antiques were fundamental sources for details. Inspiration also came from other writers on Spanish architecture and gardens. Snook & Kenyon General Contractors constructed the main house, or Casa, the original water tower (demolished when the pump house was built), the Gardener's Cottage, and did site work for Stevens. Marshall Laird, a Los Angeles cabinetmaker, fabricated much of the new woodwork for the Casa; Thompson & Banks, constructed the Butler's Cottage; O.J. Kenyon general contractor worked on the 1931 house remodeling and constructed the book tower-library and the new Shop.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 8**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

The overall landscape plan is American Beaux-Arts in conception.<sup>9</sup> Gardens are organized by intersecting, Italian-inspired, formal axes that center on the Casa and its three architectonic garden spaces: the Spanish Garden Patio on the east, the Service Court on the west, and the Loggia with its terrace on the south. These spaces provide the transition from indoors to outdoors characteristic of Spanish and Mediterranean architecture, which was the inspiration for the estate's design. To the north is a walled, rectangular pebble-paved entry court centered on an octagonal fountain. To the west are less formal service areas and a kitchen garden. The eastern axis extends from inside the house to the Spanish Garden Patio and then through a sequence of formal garden spaces to a sunken Rose Garden hidden behind the East Exedra. The dominant southern axis is framed by curving eugenia hedges (*Syzygium paniculatum*) and an allée backed by rows of evergreen citrus trees forming a keyhole shape distinctive even in aerial views. Pineapple guava trees (*Feijoa* now *Acca sellowiana*) planted behind the citrus reinforce the axis, creating a year-round foliage composition in bronze-green, lime-green, and gray-green leaf textures. This axis descends from the Loggia and Terrace, through the south lawn allée to two terraced, walled gardens. Hidden below is a Cactus Garden. Character-defining features of the landscape include the patios; the Loggia-Terrace; two tiled exedras, one on-axis east of the Spanish Garden Patio, the other off-axis as a folly on the distant southern horizon; a network of Spanish-style tiled rills and pools on the southern axis; garden structures including a pair of pergolas with tiled benches; and a seating area, called the Orange Terrace, constructed of Roman brick and tile; and an Italianate arbor. A walled Herb Garden is south of the Service Court. All formal elements sit within a picturesque, informally designed, park-like landscape with paths meandering through trees and the cactus garden. The orchard, with its rows of trees mirroring the curves of the twin eugenia hedges, functions as a semi formal transition to the naturalistic park and helps screen it on both the east and west. Metal garden furniture designed by Steedman to resemble Spanish tooled leather chairs and carved tables is another character-defining feature of the estate.<sup>10</sup>

### Historic Development and Physical Evolution of the Estate Grounds

There are several identifiable stages in the evolution of the estate, which was developed on the site of a small adobe house surrounded by minimal planting when the Steedmans purchased the property. The main house was designed and constructed in period revival style in the 1920s. Although George Steedman reworked aspects of the estate with his architects and consultants and commissioned new work over the years, the Spanish Colonial Revival style was maintained. The first stage in the property's development is 1922-1925 when the Gardener's Cottage and the Casa with its walled patio (both designed by Smith) and Stevens' overall site plan (including water piping, drainage, the network of formal paved paths, the more rustic paths winding through the informal park-like landscape, the access points from the road, and much of the planting) were completed. Some key garden features, such as the boulder retaining-walled south lawn, the curving eugenia hedges, the evergreen citrus orchards that screen the formal elements from the more informal areas, an allée leading to the walled Pepper Tree Fountain garden (sited by Stevens with a fountain designed by Byne), the Cactus Garden, and the Southern Exedra (sited off-axis by Riggs) were also completed at this time; however, other character-defining garden details would come later.

The second phase in the property's development begins in 1925 when the Casa was finished and the Steedmans acquired the parcel to the southwest. Steedman enjoyed the design process and initiated changes to the house and gardens, which resulted in the remodel to the "main south axis" by Francis T. Underhill and Lockwood de

<sup>9</sup> Griswold and Weller, *Golden Age*, p. 329; Karson, *Genius for Place*, p. 273.

<sup>10</sup> Artist Gordon Kenneth Grant assisted Steedman in the design and construction of this furniture, which is made of Duralumin, an aluminum alloy containing copper, manganese and magnesium used in the aircraft industry. Artist Channing Peake may have designed some pieces based on stylistic differences.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 9**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Forest.<sup>11</sup> Although this specific design was not entirely carried out, the concept of grass terraces with low steps framed by arbors and Italian cypress trees prevailed; Stevens' boulder retaining wall was removed at this time. A later building campaign began in 1927 when the Carmelita Springs Water Company property was acquired. First the Butler's Cottage and then the Carmelita Spring House (pump house) were built. Around 1927 de Forest remodeled the arrival sequence, eliminating one driveway, reconfiguring the service area, and designing a pebble-paved, rectangular entry court in front of the Casa. Stevens' circular drive was eliminated at this time. The star pool was added to the south garden axis by June 1928, and Steedman began thinking about tile to finish it. Presumably the runnel and peacock pool were added at this time too. In 1929 the guest apartment was added to the Butler's Cottage by Steedman.

The third phase in the property's development begins in 1930 when the Steedmans took up permanent residence at the Casa. The service areas of the house were reconfigured, one garage was eliminated, and additional garages were added to Butler's Cottage at this time. Numerous changes to the garden are reflected in sketches by Steedman that show the eastern axis, which begins inside the Casa and extends to the Spanish Garden Patio, fleshed out. These sketches, accompanied in some cases by invoices, include the Orange Terrace addition north of the Cutting Garden; the tiled East Exedra terminating the axis of the Spanish Garden; the Rose and Dahlia Garden hidden below the Exedra; and the Saints' and Sinners' Walk, now known as the Camellia Garden, east of de Forest's Entrance Court. Also around 1930 the Loggia parapet was removed and replaced with an iron railing and steps centered on the axial orientation. Beginning in the 1930s Carrie Steedman greatly enhanced the original cactus garden with the addition of numerous species.

A later building campaign produced the 1933 library; and the extant Shop was built in 1934, replacing the original, much smaller workshop in the same location. Also in 1934 the existing Glass House, Lath House, and Tool Shed were built, replacing earlier structures shown on the original drawings.

When the Steedmans' younger daughter, Medora Steedman Bass (1909-1987), inherited the estate upon the death of her mother in 1962, she made some changes in the gardens to reduce maintenance.<sup>12</sup> After her death the landscape became very overgrown. After the Casa del Herrero Foundation was established in 1993 by her son, George Bass, Jr., and other local supporters, original furnishings were arranged to resemble 1931 photographs,<sup>13</sup> and restoration of the landscape began. In some cases remodels and alterations took place outdoors. Designer Cynthia Nolen designed the Herb Garden plantings in the western garden. To increase guest access and parking, Donald H. Bensen, architect, redesigned the space adjacent to the garages—the boulder retaining wall was moved back 21 feet into the planting bed in 2005, and the plan to widen the entry drive slightly to meet fire regulations will be implemented in the future. Also in 2005, architect Jeff Gorrell designed the new wrought iron entry gates for preexisting gateposts to secure the estate. Landscape architect Sydney Baumgartner's plan for the Pump House garden was installed. Baumgartner's plan to remodel the frontage road planting has been commissioned by the Foundation Board but not carried out at this writing.

The main house and its outbuildings are visually in pristine condition and appear today virtually as they did at the time of George Steedman's death in 1940. The formal gardens have been largely restored, but work continues on the informal landscape surrounding them.

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<sup>11</sup> Steedman to Smith, September 28, 1925 with numerous attached instructions and landscape plan by de Forest dated 23 November 1925.

<sup>12</sup> See Description of Individual Resources for these changes. At its peak, the garden was maintained by eight gardeners (with as many as 13 during the Depression, when Steedman gave work to day laborers.)

<sup>13</sup> David Bisol consulted on the restoration of the interiors. All but a few objects that appear in a set of 1931 Dapprich photographs were found in the house.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 11**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**Description of Main House, or Casa (Contributing Building)**

The Casa del Herrero, or House of the Blacksmith, (Number 1 on the site plan) is a surprisingly small building compared with other houses of the Country Place Era. Inspired by the rustic farmhouses of the Andalusian region of Spain, George Washington Smith designed the Casa under the almost obsessive supervision of his client, George Fox Steedman, an engineer who contributed numerous details and vetted every Smith drawing.<sup>14</sup> Adjacent to the house and enclosed by its extending walls are architectonic garden spaces including the Spanish Garden, the Loggia with its Terrace, and the Service Court that links house and Shop. These transition spaces function as outdoor rooms and link house and gardens.

Smith designed the building as the main residence on the estate with input from Lulah Maria Riggs (an architect in his office), Steedman, and Steedman's antiquarian consultants, Arthur Byne and Mildred Stapley Byne, American expatriates living in Madrid who were the leading authorities on Spanish architecture and decorative arts. It is an eighty-four by forty-four-foot, two-story building originally comprising a total of 7,392 square feet including two attached garages. There is also a partial basement. The walls of the house are nineteen feet tall; the red-tiled, gabled roof rises another five feet to its ridge. The foundation, basement and frame are constructed of reinforced concrete; the frame has six-inch hollow tile and brick infill. Interior walls are stud-framed plaster.

The principal facades—north and south—are stylistically distinct and both display a scholarly knowledge of Spanish vernacular. The north elevation with its asymmetrical composition suggests the accidental massing of Andalusian farmhouses. An octagonal one-story library tower, designed by Lulah Maria Riggs and added in 1933, projects from the northeast corner. The main entry has a modern wooden door decorated with nails, framed with cast stone. A plaque overhead with an image of a centaur blacksmith makes analogy with both the Steedman name (STEED man) and his interest in metalwork. A balcony, with a wrought iron railing, projects above. The irregular window openings are embellished with wrought iron grilles, or *rejas*, both antique and made-to-order. Because there was an insufficient quantity of antique tile for the house and garden, Byne commissioned new tile from Les Fils de J. Chemla, a small Tunisian firm, capable of producing modern tile based on historic prototypes.<sup>15</sup>

The casa exterior includes architectonic garden spaces designed by Smith with input from Steedman. The Loggia and Terrace on the south façade, the Spanish Garden Patio on the east, and the Service Court on the west are exterior architectural features extending from the house. They are described in greater detail below.

The south, or garden, elevation with its double arched Loggia and extending Terrace is basically symmetrical; a service wing set back from the main block extends to the west. A corner balcony with chamfered wood posts and turned balusters opens from a second floor servant's bedroom. Its supporting end beams are painted with grinning cats' heads. The Loggia is recessed into the volume of the house with a Terrace extending from it to the south. Stone surrounds frame the two windows flanking the loggia. That on the dining room window to the west is a Catalan reproduction. The one on the living room window to the east is sixteenth-century Catalanian and was added in 1928; the window was enlarged to accommodate it.

The arcade over the Loggia originally was open as a sleeping porch; it was enclosed with wood framed

<sup>14</sup> Gebhard, in "Casa del Herrero, the George F. Steedman House...", details his involvement and the design process.

<sup>15</sup> Details from the original correspondence. See also Jean Smith Goodrich's "Tile at the Casa del Herrero" in *Noticias*, Autumn 1996, pp. 59-62 and Judy Sutcliffe's unpublished tile notes for the docents at the Casa. The address for Les Fils de J. Chemla was Route de Bardo, Tunis.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 12**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

casements in 1957. Two flanking bedrooms originally opened to small balconies through French doors. The east bedroom window was modified with an antique stone frame similar to the one below and installed at the same time; the balcony was removed and the void reduced in size.

The Spanish Garden projects from the east elevation and is enclosed with walls extending from the house. Two six-light casement windows with iron grilles flank the door to the living room. Two iron balconies ornamented with Spanish glass finials project from second story bedrooms. That to the south was added after 1928 but *before* the southern balcony off this same room was removed and replaced with the antique stone window frame. A six-light casement window with iron grille and a small round headed window set in a deep reveal are between the balconies. The shallow, scalloped second story overhang rests on carved wooden brackets. Three triangular cutouts form a decorative vent in the gable.

The west façade forms one side of the Service Court; it is enclosed by walls extending from the Casa on the north and south and the Shop façade on the west. Segmental arches in the façade originally opened to two garages. The extant garage on the north has double wooden doors, one with a wicket. The second garage was incorporated into the service area of the house in a 1931 remodeling; the remaining arch now frames a tiled flower sink and the Casa's service entrance. The overhanging second story is supported on over-scale concrete corbels. On the second floor, two six-light casement windows flank a small round-headed window. Two smaller casement windows with iron grilles light the servants' dining room to the south of the entrance. As on the east elevation, three cut out triangles form a decorative vent in the gable. The balcony turns the corner from the south façade.<sup>16</sup>

In a reverse process somewhat akin to the planning and construction of William Randolph Hearst's Castle at San Simeon, the Casa was designed to accommodate a collection of antique furniture, art, decorative art, and architectural fragments assembled by Steedman during a trip to Spain in 1923. He was assisted by Arthur Byne and Mildred Stapley, the leading authorities at the time and who were also working for Hearst.<sup>17</sup> Steedman's most important acquisition was the requisite decorated ceiling or *artesonado* that he bought for the entrance hall from Arthur Byne. The ceiling consists of forty-eight painted wood panels—small pictures—recessed in frames supported on open beams fourteen inches on center.

An axis originating in the entrance hall continues outside to organize the formal garden spaces to the east. It passes through the living room to the Spanish Garden Patio and has its visual terminus at the East Exedra. Other features of the entrance hall are French doors to the Loggia and views to the South Lawn Garden. A Tunisian-tiled staircase curving to the second floor was originally separated from the dining room by a wall. At the top of the staircase a pair of wooden corbels carved with fantastic animal-like creatures support a beam.

Steedman initiated several minor changes almost immediately after its completion in June 1925. These included reworking the south dining room window and reducing the size of doorways leading from the entrance hall to the dining room and stair hall. These were nominally done under the supervision of George Washington

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<sup>16</sup> In 1999 minor restorations to the exterior were undertaken. Lynn Morris Contracting replaced the original lead gutters with copper painted to look like lead (the originals had insufficient support for their weight and were sagging.) A water-damaged balcony was restored: three balcony corbels with faces were replaced with new ones carved to match by Richard Targoni, then painted to match by Steve Nagelman; some spindles were replaced, and tiles had to be removed to replace rotten wood underneath; new tiles made to match in Mexico replaced damaged ones; copper flashing was installed to prevent water damage from reoccurring and causing more damage. Other restorations, such as painting and plastering, have matched the original.

<sup>17</sup> Details can be found in Gebhard's "Casa del Herrero", Goodrich's "Casa del Herrero", and in unpublished materials in the Casa del Herrero Foundation archives and the Architecture and Design Collection at UCSB.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 13**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Smith. Smith died in 1930.

More extensive remodeling work was completed in 1931 under the supervision of Lulah Maria Riggs, who launched her independent career after Smith's death. Her design for the octagonal library is particularly distinctive; the wood-paneled interior with its gilded trim is Gothic in spirit, a quality enhanced by the frieze of panels painted by artist Channing Peake and copied from cuts of *Speculum Humanae, Salvation's Block Book*, circa 1470. The service areas of the house were reconfigured and expanded into the southern garage; interior circulation was modified accordingly. A wall separating the dining room and stair hall was removed and parallel circulation routes leading from the entrance hall to the dining room and stair hall, and to the service areas and garages beyond, were combined. Doors from the entry to the dining room and on through to the pantry and kitchen were plastered over. At the same time, a large silver safe and closet were added in the original garage space. A porch was incorporated into the adjoining servants' dining room and a new door at the end of the hall opening to the Service Court was added. Telltale evidence of these changes is visible in the filled arched opening in the entrance hall and in the pantry. The extant garage interior has a dark tile floor to hide oil stains.

### **The Loggia and Terrace (Contributing Structure)**

The Loggia designed by Smith (number 2 on the site plan) is recessed into the volume of the house with a Terrace extending from it into the South Lawn Garden. It is framed by a huge cup-of-gold vine (known in Spanish as *copa de oro*, *Solandra maxima*, *S. rigata*) and references Italian design, specifically the fifteenth-century Villa Cigliano in San Casciano. While the over-all feeling of the house is Andalusian, the southern façade "more resembles a Tuscan villa than a Spanish farmhouse."<sup>18</sup> This terrace feature, common to Country Place era houses, serves both to ground the building and as a transition to the garden. It is designed so that an axis that begins at the Loggia's central column bisects the outdoor space and organizes the long South Lawn and descending gardens symmetrically. Tiles and decorative painted details by Peake ornament the Loggia. The terrace extending from the Loggia was originally enclosed by a parapet with a central wall fountain and a stairway at each end. Around 1930 the terrace was redesigned. A central, curving staircase on axis with the south garden was built, the original parapet and side stairways were removed, and the original fountain (with a frog spout) was relocated. Until more evidence emerges, the redesign of the terrace is attributed to Steedman. Steedman's unique, handmade metal garden furniture, tooled to resemble Spanish leather chairs and carved tables, is featured here and in other parts of the gardens.

### **The Spanish Garden Patio (Contributing Site)**

The living room opens through arched French doors with spool shutters to a walled patio garden. This character-defining feature of the estate (number 3 on the site plan) is pictured in numerous books and magazines. Steedman's intention for the space is reflected in its original name, Spanish Garden, however it is less a garden than a classic Hispano-Arab, ground level, paved, outdoor living room (known in Spain as a patio) which links house and grounds. Because the patio is enclosed by the east façade and walls extending from the house, it is both an exterior architectural feature and part of the designed landscape. In a letter dated March 10, 1924, Steedman suggested to Smith that the general idea for the patio be based on the gardens at the Convento de la Merced at Seville. The garden resembles the sketch he enclosed with this letter.

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<sup>18</sup> David Gebhard, "Casa del Herrero, the George F. Steedman House," p. 282. Gebhard's first publication on Smith is a 1964 museum catalog.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 14**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

The arcaded walls were based on measured drawings Steedman made at the Generalife. Smith designed the space guided by Steedman's suggestions. It is a classic, Islamic-inspired patio of quadripartite form with a central water feature symbolizing the four rivers of life.<sup>19</sup> One of the four quadrants was paved for seating; the other three are planting beds. The patio extends the length of the east elevation of the house and is enclosed by three arcaded walls. Seven arches to the east and three to the south are open, while three to the north are blind. A tracery of creeping fig (*Ficus pumila*, *F. repens*) eventually became overgrown and both obscured and threatened the walls. It was recently cut back. Opposite this original planting and reaching to the balcony is an old, climbing 'Cecile Brunner' rose. A wall fountain flanked by tile panels is on the north wall. Brick paving with tile inserts is particularly fine, and there are tile plaques with stylized cypresses on the south wall and a tile bench on the west wall. The small octagonal fountain at the center of the space was probably designed by Byne.<sup>20</sup> An axis that begins inside the house in the entry hall continues through the living room doors and then through the French doors to the patio, bisecting the space and its central fountain. The axis was originally designed to continue through the central arch in the enclosing patio wall, bisect the cutting garden beds, and terminate at a bench against a wall. Today this axis bisects the Blue and White Garden's lawn and visually terminates at the East Exedra on the other side. It continues through the Rose Garden hidden below. The Spanish Garden's planting beds were outlined with box hedges (or possibly myrtle), and a pepper tree (*Schinus molle*) shaded the patio. By the 1970s the beds held blue violas, and a palm tree had replaced the pepper. Mrs. Bass, the Steedman's daughter, eventually substituted miniature ivy (*Hedera helix* unknown cultivar) to reduce maintenance, and it remains today, as does the palm tree. Steedman's hand-crafted metal furniture is featured in this patio.

**Service Court (Contributing Site)**

Linking the main house and Mr. Steedman's workshop to the west is a sandstone-paved Service Court (number 4 on the site plan) designed by Smith. The two buildings and walls extending from them on the north and south form the enclosure and create an architectonic exterior space, which also functions as a garage court. The Casa originally included two garages framed by arches. As detailed above, one garage was remodeled to expand the interior floor space.

Designed like a Spanish working patio, or courtyard, the subtle details of the Service Court include a large, central catch basin grate carved from local sandstone; a downspout crafted from roofing tiles that empties into a water jar, an antique bell, decorative iron clothesline hooks, and a tiled flower sink. The north wall of the service court (an extension of the workshop's north wall) has a gateway wide enough for cars. This gateway extends above the wall and is topped with a red tile roof and an old wisteria vine (*Wisteria sinensis*). The south wall is ornamented with a tile bench under an arched opening covered with an iron grill. This "window" overlooks the Herb Garden below, and a gate in the wall leads down to it. Steedman wrote to Smith referencing the Byne's writings as details for the tile course around the court were settled.<sup>21</sup>

**Shop (Contributing Building)**

The extant Shop (number 5 on the site plan) is located across the service court and forms part of its enclosure.

<sup>19</sup> Bryn Homsey, "Islamic Style: Symbolism and Design on the Spanish Terrace" in *Newsletter of the Casa del Herrero*, July 2002, not paginated.

<sup>20</sup> Attribution is based on Steedman's correspondence with Byne and his sketches.

<sup>21</sup> October 29, 1924, Steedman to Smith, referring to the Byne's articles on Spanish gardens in the *Architectural Record*, March 24, pp. 278-79.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 15**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

It is two stories high and measures fifty-three by twenty-eight feet. The east elevation opening from the court rises nine feet to the plate line; the south elevation, where the two stories are fully exposed, rises to eighteen feet. The east elevation facing the Service Court is blank except for the wooden entry door and a small casement window with an iron grille. The north elevation has three arched windows with vertical mullions and an oriel window with leaded glass panes. The south and west facades have blind arcades infilled with brick on the lower level and six-light casements above. On the south façade, an exterior stairway with tiled risers leads to the upper level. The door is shaded by a fragrant, white-flowering *Plumeria* (frangipani) growing against the wall. The shop itself is on the upper level, and rooms for making wine are located below in the cellar. The Casa del Herrero Foundation installed a bathroom in the Wine Cellar in 2001 and undertook restorations.<sup>22</sup>

The Shop is a replacement of the original building (labeled “Office”) designed by George Washington Smith and completed in 1925. After Smith’s death, his former draftsman and construction supervisor, architect Floyd E. Brewster, designed the new building to Steedman’s specifications, and it was finished in 1934. A remarkable collection of tools, coded and organized by Steedman for multi-disciplined metalworking and woodworking, creates a striking interior design; few contemporary workshops of this quality remain. The Shop illuminates Steedman’s character for visitors and strongly reinforces his personal contributions to the Casa and its grounds. His office in the northwest corner features a fine tile mural of Santa (Saint) Barbara, which was originally installed on a wall near the Pepper Tree Fountain. The northeast corner of the Shop was set aside for Carrie Steedman to arrange flowers and store her equipment.

**Gardener’s Cottage (Contributing Building)**

The Gardener’s Cottage (number 6 on the site plan) was the first building completed on the estate.<sup>23</sup> Constructed between May and December 1923, George Washington Smith designed the cottage after a trip to Mexico in December 1922, and it is arguably more Mexican than Spanish in inspiration. It occupies the extreme northeast corner of the property and fronts directly onto East Valley Road—a Smith device that references Hispano-Arab site planning. The exotic effect from subtropical and succulent plants shown in early photos creates a separate component landscape along the road that still exists. The landscape architect is unknown. The siting and planting are similar to Smith’s first own home (later known as the Craig Heberton House) so he probably suggested it, but the planting selection was most likely carried out by Ralph T. Stevens, who was already employed by Steedman on the landscape design for the Casa. The cottage’s plan includes a living room, two bedrooms, kitchen, bath and walled courtyard. The front door was located in the courtyard, as was the garage. Access was through a gated driveway on East Valley Road or through a small opening in the wall at the back of the courtyard. The garage had a bedroom for a chauffeur above it. This unit was rotated off the orthogonal grid of the rest of the building. The bathroom, positioned between the living room and garage, served as a hinge for the change in angle. There is no central hall, so circulation takes place room-to-room or in the roofed outdoor corridor, another George Washington Smith device that references Spain.

The Steedman’s first gardener was John H. Hartfeld, who was hired in 1923 by Stevens and went on to an important career as a City Parks Superintendent. Hatfield moved in immediately with his family. Part of his job was receiving and storing in this cottage the many crates of antiques and tiles that Steedman had shipped from Europe and North Africa when the Casa was being built. Today the garage is converted to living space, and

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<sup>23</sup> This building, sometimes called the chauffeur's cottage, is on the Casa property but has a separate address: 1419 E. Valley Road. The Butler's Cottage attached to the garages and the Casa del Herrero Foundation offices is often mistakenly called the “Gardener’s Cottage” because one of the estate's gardeners lived there for many years and was still in residence when the Foundation was established.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 16**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

there is a detached four-car garage for automobiles and Casa maintenance equipment located nearby. At an unknown date the bathroom was remodeled. Various restorations and new wiring since 1994 have matched original construction and painting.<sup>24</sup>

**Carmelita Spring House or "Pump House" (Contributing Building)**

A tiny, 50-by-33-foot parcel on nearby Picacho Lane contains the Pump House that supplied water to the Steedmans (number 7 on the site plan).<sup>25</sup> Without this reliable water source, the Casa del Herrero estate might have taken a different form or never been built, as water (or the lack of it) is always an element in Western cultural landscapes, and the Montecito County Water District could not yet meet the needs of residents.<sup>26</sup>

Steedman initially purchased water for the estate from drawn from a well on land across Valley Road (as it was then known) owned by Mrs. Lyde V. Conrad. He built a water tower there in 1922.<sup>27</sup> In 1927 he acquired the Conrad property, intending to re-sell most of it while retaining the water source. With this in mind, he commissioned Edwards and Plunkett to design a new pump house to replace the water tower; however, Steedman himself designed the interior mechanisms. Known as the Carmelita Spring House in deference to the name of Mrs. Conrad's company and fronting on Picacho Lane, it is a simple structure comprising an equipment room and reservoir. The well sits in front of the building in a small, paved courtyard, while most of the pumping equipment and reservoir are hidden within. A wall fountain on the front façade was used as a community fountain in the manner of ancient Spain, and people in the neighborhood continued to draw water from the Carmelita Springs for some time. Spanish allusions and decorative tile embellishment belie the pragmatic function of the building. The Carmelita Spring House was completed in 1929 and received an honorable mention award as "Among the Best Examples of Civic and Commercial Architecture Erected in Santa Barbara" by the influential Community Arts Association Plans and Planting Branch that same year.<sup>28</sup>

The Pump House has historic integrity both inside and out. Despite some new electrical circuits, it is a unique surviving example of an early twentieth-century water-delivery system. It is still the water source for the Casa del Herrero gardens, but the Foundation was forced to connect to the Montecito Water District as part of the conditional use permit process that it underwent to become a museum.<sup>29</sup> In 2004 Sydney Baumgartner's landscape design for the Pump House front garden was carried out, although the original hardscape apparently remains as it matches paving at the Butler's cottage.

**Butler's Cottage and Garages (Contributing Building)**

The Butler's Cottage on the northwest corner of the estate was constructed in 1928 (number 8 on the site plan).<sup>30</sup> Designed by Edwards, Plunkett and Howell around the same time as the Pump House, it has three

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<sup>24</sup> The date of the garage conversion is unknown. Lynn Morris Contracting has carried out restorations for the Casa del Herrero Foundation Board. He installed a set of French doors to replace solid ones in the garage per a request.

<sup>25</sup> Note: this property has no address but is identified as the building 365 feet up Picacho Lane.

<sup>26</sup> For the history of water in Montecito see Myrick's *Montecito and Santa Barbara Vol. II: The Days of the Great Estates*, pp. 506-518. Francis T. Underhill called the first meeting of the Montecito Water Committee to order in February 1921, which led to the Montecito County Water District, but it would be several years before it could supply water in adequate amounts.

<sup>27</sup> A pump house was located here according to 1918 and 1924 Sanborn insurance maps. The water tower was apparently necessary for effective gravity feed to the Casa property.

<sup>28</sup> The original award from February 1930 is located on a wall in Steedman's office.

<sup>29</sup> Dan Eidelson, a former member of the Casa del Herrero Foundation's Board of Directors, has studied the details of the Pump House mechanics, water delivery for the buildings, and the garden irrigation systems.

<sup>30</sup> This building is on the Casa property but has a separate address: 1385 East Valley Road; however, its attached garages,

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 17**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

bedrooms and was planned with the first butler, William G. Hart, and his family in mind.<sup>31</sup> It is a two-story structure but is visible as such only from the rear or south elevation because of the steep grade draining to the creek. Stylistically it conforms to the Andalusian farmhouse mode established by Smith for the main house. A small, axial entry garden on the north terminates at a tiled bench opposite the front door. An exceptionally fine old kentia palm stands at the northwest corner of the cottage, and there is a small patio on the southwest corner of the building. Paving at this cottage matches the paving at the Carmelita Spring House designed by the same architects. The landscape architect is unknown. Steedman tried unsuccessfully to acquire property on the western side of the creek in order to have a planted area around the Butler's Cottage.

Like the main house, the cottage was altered almost immediately. Work began in 1929 with the addition of a two-room guest apartment designed by Steedman on the south side of the building (today the offices of Casa del Herrero Foundation). As first completed, the house had two garages at the southeastern corner of the building. They were covered by a gabled roof positioned perpendicularly to the gable of the main house. In 1931 two garages designed by Riggs were added, and all four were then covered by a roof with a ridge parallel to the main house. Carved corbels, whimsically painted with faces, project from simple columns. Finally, in 1935, open space on the southeast corner between the guest apartment and garages was enclosed as a room according to drawings prepared by Steedman himself.

### **Entrance Court (Contributing Site)**

A stone wall fronting the property along East Valley Road is shown on Stevens' drawings but not on the 1922 survey. The original automobile entry designed by Stevens consisted of two driveways from the road leading to a circular turnaround in front of the house. This informal treatment, reminiscent of Olmsted's picturesque aesthetic, was quite typical of estates of the period. There were plantings and an axial walkway in the center that aligned with a gate in the wall along East Valley Road. The gate and a mailbox designed by Steedman remain. Although the arrival sequence to the Casa's Entrance Court was remodeled by Lockwood de Forest around 1927, original plants selected by Ralph Stevens remain (number 9 on the site plan). The plants are virtually identical to those in historic photos except they have grown larger. They form foundation planting around the building, an approach that differed from the Eastern tradition and produced interesting shadow patterns on the walls that complemented the architecture. Stevens did not originate this type of planting but he was one of the earliest and best practitioners.<sup>32</sup> *Distictis lactiflora* climbs to the roof east of the door (this is the vanilla-scented trumpet vine introduced by Dr. Francesco Franceschi, also known as *D. laxiflora*.) Short *Chamaerops humilis* palms, tall *Phoenix roebelenii* palms, dracaena (*Cordyline australis*), flax (*Phormium tenax*), and grey *Butia capitata* palms contribute to the emphatic effect. Giant bird of paradise (*Strelitzia nicolai*) screens the garage and service area and was probably planted after the driveway through the court walls was eliminated. At this time the walls were extended and a small gate was added.

Drawings by Lockwood de Forest show the north entrance court in its present configuration as a rectilinear, walled and paved enclosure. Both Stevens' second or eastern entrance to the site from East Valley Road and his central planting area were eliminated at this time. The western entrance was given a small rectangular court at the road and a curving drive leads to a gateway on an axis with the front façade but not with the front door, as Smith used asymmetry typical of Andalusia here.<sup>33</sup> The Entrance Court's gate posts were topped with potted

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apartment, and offices have the address of the main house address. It is often mistakenly called the "Gardener's Cottage".

<sup>31</sup> See Hart, "Upstairs, Downstairs at Casa del Herrero" for life at the Casa as recalled by William's son, Edward.

<sup>32</sup> Streatfield, "The Garden at Casa del Herrero," p. 290. Some of the "cactus planting" of this court, noted by the Garden Club of America visitors in 1926, may remain. One dragon tree was later moved to the Cactus Garden.

<sup>33</sup> Gate posts were also located at the beginning of the curved drive. Jeff Gorrell, architect, designed new wrought iron gates for

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 18**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

agaves. A cross axis was defined by a narrow driveway through the court's western walls, leading to the service area and aligned with a gate leading to the Camellia/Saints' and Sinners' Garden on the east. A wellhead was specified as the central focal point. Steedman made additional drawings showing pebble paving arranged in geometric patterns based on those at the Generalife and Patio de la Reja at the Alhambra in Granada and the substitution of an octagonal, tiled Moorish-style pool for the wellhead. This design is essentially how the court was completed.

The entry area near the house is paved with black and white pebbles arranged in patterns to form a castle and lion—symbols of Ferdinand and Isabella—and the eagle of the Hapsburg Emperor Charles V. This paving dates from the completion of the Casa. The larger area of de Forest's motor court was paved around 1927 to Steedman's design with black and gray pebbles.<sup>34</sup> Low white stucco walls frame the court with wrought iron gates leading to the Camellia Garden on the east and the service areas on the west.

**Camellia Garden (Contributing Site)**

Now a rectangle defined by hedges and walls and planted with camellias, this garden was a bit of a left-over space in the original planning phases. Today the Camellia Garden (number 10 on the site plan) links the Entrance Court with the Blue and White Garden. It was probably developed in the 1930s.<sup>35</sup> Called the "Saints' and Sinners' walk" on some of Steedman's sketches, a statue of Bacchus (or Pan) stands at one end of the cross axis opposite another of Saint Francis.

**Garage Court (Contributing Site)**

In front of the garages is an asphalt-paved area, where staff and visitors now park (number 11 on the site plan). The rectangular configuration was determined by de Forest when he redesigned the Casa's entrance court around 1927, and his drawings indicate a garage building and a shed, but not the Butler's Cottage. De Forest shows a drive from the main entrance on East Valley Road and from the entrance court to this parking area, which is the way it was carried out. The entrance court drive was later eliminated, the walls extended, and a small gate was installed, presumably all by Steedman. To accommodate guests, a minor remodel to the area in front of the garages was designed by Donald H. Bensen, architect, for the Casa del Herrero Foundation in 2000 and carried out in 2005. The rectangular parking area was enlarged by relocating the stone wall opposite the garages twenty-one feet into the planting area. Eventually the entrance drive will be widened slightly to satisfy the local fire department.

**Blue and White Garden (Contributing Site)**

Originally this rectangular garden (number 12 on the site plan) was called the Cutting Garden. Four beds were created by brick paths bisecting the garden and creating axes from the Spanish Garden to the East Exedra and between the Orange Terrace on the north and an arbor covered with an old, white banksia rose (*Rosa banksiae* var. *banksiae* 'Alba Plena' or Lady Banks' rose) on the south. Two columns supporting the arbor are

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them in 2005 for the Casa del Herrero Foundation to secure the property.

<sup>34</sup> One drawing dated 5/22/27 shows the design essentially as it was completed. This date coincides with the recollections of Edward Hart, who remembers his father, William, (the estate's butler) working with gardener John Hartfeld to construct the paving. The Da Ros family, one of Santa Barbara's most important masonry firms, is credited with the first pebble paving of the castle, lion, and eagle symbols by the door. Ozzie Da Ros later restored the Moorish-style pool when it was damaged by a visitor's car.

<sup>35</sup> It does not appear in the earliest photos.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 19**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

reproductions of the original antiques.<sup>36</sup> Steedman worked out plans for the Cutting Garden incorporating numerous flower varieties in the manner of English landscape gardener Gertrude Jekyll; however, Mrs. Steedman's name is on many of the nursery bills for flowers and seed, so they probably collaborated to some extent. Miss Ruth Johnston, landscape architect, submitted an undated bill for "plans for flower garden" (8 hours) and supervision (10 ½ hours). Several bills from 1931 for flowers and seed from various nurseries cite her, and a bill for 13 hours dated 1931, implies that the Steedman's final design was based on her involvement.<sup>37</sup>

Today the East Exedra forms one side of this garden, and at some point the flower beds were replaced by a large central panel of lawn with borders of perennial flowers in blue and white to complement the East Exedra's tile (hence the name, Blue and White Garden). As a tribute to her parents, who liked to stroll in the moonlight here, the Steedman's daughter, Medora Bass, initiated the plantings of white flowers.<sup>38</sup> She may also be responsible for redesigning the Cutting Garden to reduce maintenance. The perennial borders are dominated by agapanthus (*Agapanthus africanus/orientalis*), and there are also plantings of fragrant perennial heliotrope (*Heliotropium arborescens*), calla lilies (*Zantedeschia aethiopica*), Japanese anemones (*Anemone x hybrida*), Shasta daisies (*Chrysanthemum maximum, C. x superbum*), statice (*Limonium perezii*), and a low edging of candytuft (*Iberis sempervirens*) with various blue and white annuals added seasonally. Today the Blue and White Garden is interpreted for Mrs. Bass' period, although white 'Iceberg' roses were recently added.<sup>39</sup>

### **Orange Terrace (Contributing Structure)**

So named because it was framed surrounded by orange trees, this brick terrace defined by brick benches is located opposite the arbor in the Blue and White Garden (number 13 on the site plan). It was probably designed by **Lockwood de Forest**. The unusual, thin Roman bricks used in its construction are similar to bricks found in Val Verde's Atrium Art Gallery, designed by de Forest for Wright Ludington.<sup>40</sup> The Orange Terrace appears in Steedman's **1930s** garden plans, and one highly detailed drawing indicates that he selected tile for the structure.

### **East Exedra (Contributing Site)**

The designed landscape's secondary axis begins in the living room and continues through the Spanish Garden Patio and the Blue and White Garden to terminate at a semi-circular exedra on the east side of the Casa (number 14 on the site plan). In classical architecture an "exedra" is a semi-circular or rectangular recess. Here the exedra is a character-defining component of the landscape design. The highly decorative tiled benches and wall fountain with its colorful tiled mural—in hues of blue, green and yellow—have made it one of the most iconic elements on the estate. Steedman, with input from the Bynes, is the most likely designer.

### **Rose Garden (Contributing Site)**

<sup>36</sup> In 2000 the Casa del Herrero Foundation Board made the decision to replace the deteriorating antique columns with reproductions; the originals are in storage. At this time, Lynn Morris Contracting replaced the crumbling redwood superstructure of the pergola with an exact replica in clear cedar, sandblasting the wood to age its appearance and painting to match the original.

<sup>37</sup> Miss Ruth Johnston helped her mother, Mrs. Harleigh Johnston, run the family's San Ysidro Ranch and then co-managed it with her brother, Keith. Ruth was only listed in the Santa Barbara City Directory as a landscape architect briefly.

<sup>38</sup> Medora Steedman Bass writes about the Casa del Herrero in "The Garden of Medora Bass" in *The American Woman's Garden*, by Verey and Samuels, pages 22-27.

<sup>39</sup> The garden Mrs. Bass designed is pictured in Verey and Samuels, *The American Woman's Garden*, p. 27.

<sup>40</sup> This insight is from de Forest's son, Kellam de Forest. Located in Montecito but now subdivided from Val Verde, the Atrium is also called the Val Verde Pool House. Personal communication from de Forest to Sweeney and Chamberlin, 2007.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 20**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Tucked behind and below the semi-circular East Exedra is the **Rose Garden** (number 15 on the site plan.) Originally called the Rose and Dahlia Garden, it contained numerous kinds of flowers. Reached by twin curving staircases and laid out, like the exedra that hides it, as a semi-circle, this may be the "Secret Garden" sometimes mentioned by Steedman in his correspondence. It is not shown on Stevens' original plans. On the back side of the Exedra a lead shell drips into a water jar, forming a focal point for the Rose Garden. It was purchased in 1934 from Robert L. Lewis' El Paseo Shop.

The designer of the garden is unknown. Numerous sketches and plans by Steedman in 1930 indicate his involvement, but he may have worked over the ideas of others, as he did with the architecture. There are bills from consultants in the early 1930s and invoices from nurseries visited by consultants. Thirty-five irises were selected and paid for by **Ruth Johnston** in 1931 at the Southern California Iris Gardens in Pasadena.<sup>41</sup> A 1933 bill from **Thomas B. Johnson**, of Montecito<sup>42</sup> indicates "advice on planting and preparing Rose garden including pruning and planting new roses. 53 roses as list attached" (which sadly has not survived). Steedman's drawings include dahlia notes referencing the Dahlia section of Sydney B. Mitchell's *Gardening in California*.<sup>43</sup> Today the radiating beds are enclosed with low hedges of Japanese boxwood (*Buxus japonica*) and filled with tree rose standards, which give it the medieval look preferred by Steedman, according to Medora Bass. To the south are a small, informal lily pool and a swing seat.

### **South Lawn Garden (Contributing Site)**

The south side of the house opens to an expansive, axial garden (number 16 on the site plan), which originally had an ocean vista. Now blocked by neighboring trees, the ocean is still visible from the second floor of the main house. Many of the features here and the essential concept of garden rooms descending from a keyhole-shaped grassy area surrounded by hedges and orchards can be attributed to Stevens, but the present details and the spatial qualities near the Terrace evolved from a remodel that began in 1925 when Lockwood de Forest and Francis T. Underhill were called in. The expressive power of this part of the landscape is due to a series of water features based on Spanish and Moorish examples, which were designed by Steedman and Byne.

Francis T. Underhill, whose knowledge and advice was highly respected by his Montecito neighbors, apparently proposed the initial change. He was particularly known for his treatment of long sweeping allees and vistas that were divided into segments and enlivened by various ground treatment. A note by de Forest on his drawing for the area states, "This scheme suggested by Mr. Underhill has been checked by him on the ground and has received his approval. Its simplicity and nice proportion meets with my unqualified approval." De Forest's drawing shows further definition of the lawn area opening from the Terrace on the south front. Stevens had used curved eugenia (*Syzygium paniculatum*) hedges to enclose the space. Underhill proposed superimposing parallel brick paths bordered by low box hedges in front of the eugenias, leading to a paved platform with L-shaped benches and parapets to mark the transition to the lower garden. Steedman added numerous comments and suggestions to de Forest's drawing and concluded, "I believe my changes are of detail only, and do not alter the fundamentals of Mr. Underhill—but simplify the details, and make the completed job more formal and in better Spanish tradition."<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Dated 6/11/31, this and other invoices are in the Casa del Herrero archives. The note, "in Rose Garden" is in Steedman's hand (included were 10 D.K. Williamson, 10 Hexagona, 6 Purpurea, 6 Foliosa, and 3 Fulva).

<sup>42</sup> Johnson was the president of the Garden Club of Santa Barbara and Montecito in 1935.

<sup>43</sup> The book, published in 1923, is specific to California conditions. Steedman's 10/4/30 drawing for "Rose & Dahlia Garden" also references Baily [sic] p. 958/9.

<sup>44</sup> November 29, 1925 comments on the de Forest drawing of November 23, 1925 now in the Environmental Design Archives,

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 21**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Photographs confirm that the work was at least partially completed but had been modified by 1927. The east-west bench returns and parapet extensions leading to the lower garden were removed, possibly in conjunction with installation of the pergola structures in place today, which are covered with red trumpet vines (*Distictis buccinatoria*).

Numerous Italian cypress trees (*Cupressus sempervirens* 'Stricta') appear on the Underhill-de Forest scheme and some were planted. They are shown in photographs, and a 1931 invoice for tree spraying lists 44 Italian cypresses.<sup>45</sup> No Italian cypresses remain in the South Lawn area today; presumably they succumbed to fungus diseases as did yews, *Taxus* sp., elsewhere on the site.

In a letter to George Washington Smith mentioning the de Forest work, Steedman says, "This work consists of paths, pools and terrace on the main south axis."<sup>46</sup> Pools do not appear on the drawing de Forest produced two months later, so the water features added to the main south axis may be the work of Steedman, who owed some inspiration to Smith's own work with Spanish fountains, not to mention the fountains he saw in his travels in Spain. The star pool in the south garden is probably one of the pools Steedman mentioned in his letter. He began to add to the de Forest scheme, and the result was not simple. The pool and surrounding area were reworked repeatedly, both on paper and in execution. Initially the ground was articulated into a center section for the pool and flanking rectangular areas crisscrossed by diagonal paths, a design surely inspired by a prototype in Spain. The spaces between the paths were variously filled with grass, ivy and low plants. This layout first appears in a photograph taken by J. Walter Collinge published in May 1926, right after the Garden Club of America's now legendary tour of California gardens.<sup>47</sup> The tiled octagons imbedded in the lawn today are vestiges of the paths and originally marked points of intersection. At one point a basin on a pedestal was installed in the center of the pool surrounded by a parterre; it had been removed by 1928. Twin orange trees were planted in the lawn. Clearly Steedman was experimenting. His exploration led to fussiness, which he eventually reversed in favor of the underlying theme of simplification.

Arthur Byne may have provoked some of the changes. He and Mildred Stapley visited the Steedmans in 1930. Byne later wrote to Steedman about the Casa garden, which in his opinion was "very messy, there is no scheme, and no amount of little tinkering will ever help it." He sent three sketches, suggesting simplification and stating, "Your long vista presents a great opportunity and must be developed to its limit." Byne invited Steedman to add "all the detail you wish in the way of planting, but don't lose track of the general idea....I know this will be hard for you to resist....You remind me exactly of my father; he appreciates the simplified thing when it is shown to him but by the time he has 'perfected' it little remains of the simplicity."<sup>48</sup>

Although de Forest's and Underhill's plan was not carried out as originally designed, the underlying concept eventually was adopted in the form of simple lawn panels with broad, gentle steps flanked by tiled seating areas (thus replacing Stevens' boulder retaining wall). The central water features are probably Steedman's and it was his idea to have greenery between the flagstones, not mortar.<sup>49</sup> At some point the orange trees were replaced by

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University of California, Berkeley.

<sup>45</sup> Freeman, Myers & Co., Tree Consultants.

<sup>46</sup> Steedman to Smith, 9-28-1925.

<sup>47</sup> Special rail cars brought the club from the East.

<sup>48</sup> Byne to Steedman, 3-24-1930.

<sup>49</sup> An undated Steedman drawing shows the Star Pool and adjacent diagonal planting beds with paving, the peacock pool, and the note, "moss joints, see 'Jeckyl' [sic] p. 56," referring to one of English garden writer Gertrude Jekyll's books. Moss does not survive in this much sun; grass does.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 22**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Steedman by coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*), but Medora Bass reluctantly removed them because they blocked the ocean view and darkened the house too much. On the recommendation of the Garden Committee, the Casa del Herrero Foundation Board approved the replanting of coast live oaks in the side panels of the South Lawn in 2006. French drains were installed and decomposed granite was substituted for turf to ensure a better growing environment for fungus-prone oaks.

**Birdhouse-Sundial (Contributing Object)**

A unique, combination Birdhouse-Sundial, designed by Steedman (number 28 on the site plan), sits off-axis on the east side of the south lawn near the Spanish Garden Patio. The supporting Byzantine column was purchased in Florence in 1924.

**Fern Garden & Pepper Tree Fountain with Cactus Garden Overlook (Contributing Site)**

A paved, walled garden with a central fountain and curved steps shaded by two large pepper trees (*Schinus molle*) is shown on Stevens' plan below the South Lawn Garden, and this is essentially the form of the Pepper Tree Fountain today (number 17 on the site plan). It was and remains a principle feature for the axis that begins at the loggia, but the feeling here is intimate. Steedman returned to Europe in 1924, meeting with Arthur Byne in Touris, France, where they discussed the pool for this axis (its original terminating point), which is identified in the correspondence as the "pepper tree fountain." Byne redesigned it in a Moorish configuration and arranged for the Chemla Company to produce the tile.<sup>50</sup> It is a character defining feature of the estate.

No pepper trees remain today, and shade is provided by native coast live oak trees (*Quercus agrifolia*). The garden is filled with tree ferns (*Cyathea cooperi*), hence its current name. Rare, naturalized veltheimia bulbs (*Veltheimia bracteata*) bloom in spring. Hidden behind the foliage is a tile plaque of Saint Francis (San Francisco) mounted on the wall. The plaque of Santa Barbara from the opposite wall is now in Steedman's office.

Just below the Fern Garden is Cactus Garden Overlook, a terrace garden with tile benches (named the "Padre's Benches" by Steedman) and a low wall with an iron gate leading to the Cactus Garden below. This area was reworked after Stevens' 1925 plan was completed, but the designer of the space in its current configuration is unknown. It is filled with camellias. Originally a tall wall with an arched opening led to the Cactus Garden. This wall was lowered by at least 1932, and vases were installed on each side of the gate.<sup>51</sup> Tables and benches were set up on this terrace for barbecues served by Steedman from his own hand-made grill. He entertained staff, day laborers during the Depression, and friends alike. The estate's main, north-south garden axis has its visual terminus at the gate in this terrace wall with the brightly tiled Southern Exedra off-axis in the distance; however, a sunken cactus or "desert" garden is revealed from the edge of the terrace.

**Cactus Garden (Contributing Site)**

The Cactus (or "desert") Garden (number 18 on the site plan) is only visible from the edge of the walled terrace above it, an example of the "surprises" George Washington Smith felt were essential to the sense of mystery which distinguishes Spanish gardens. An iron gate in the wall above opens to steps that lead down to this

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<sup>50</sup> A sketch dated March 1924 signed by Byne and entitled "An Additional Fountain for G.F. Steedman" specifies tile and shows the fountain almost exactly as it was built.

<sup>51</sup> A unique drainage detail prevented the vases from filling with water. Today they are in storage for conservation.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 23**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

informally and naturalistically designed space, where paths wind picturesquely through a collection of cacti and succulents framed by old eucalyptus trees and three huge dragon trees (*Dracaena draco*); one of these is among the largest in the Santa Barbara region. Two gum trees (*Eucalyptus* sp.) shown on the original 1922 Flournoy "Contour Map" survey remain. Ralph Stevens is the original designer of this garden with many plants later contributed by Carrie Steedman.

"Cactus" indicated on the 1922 survey was not identified by species, but the clump, approximately 30-by-40 feet, was rendered to look like prickly pear (*Opuntia ficus-indica*). The clump was also shown on Ralph Stevens' c. 1925 "Landscape Scheme" and appears in a historic photo with an original eucalyptus tree. No prickly pear remains in this location. Stevens' 1922 list specifies two dragon trees as well as "80 succulents in variety," although whether all were located here cannot be confirmed as the plan does not survive. The garden is laid out in the manner Stevens described as ideal—"a gentle slope facing the south and in full sun"—in the 1930 book, *Cacti and Other Succulents*, where it was pictured.<sup>52</sup> In June 1932 Mrs. Steedman began buying succulents from E. O. Orpet, the famous Santa Barbara horticulturist and former park Superintendent and continued to buy succulents from him for several years. An invoice, dated September 14, 1936, from Mrs. J. D. Wright details cactus and succulents purchased by Mrs. Steedman when the Wright's noted cactus garden at their Montecito estate, Quien Sabe (designed by Peter Riedel) was disbursed in the early 1940s (most plants going to Ganna Walska's Lotusland in Montecito and to the Huntington Estate in San Marino).<sup>53</sup> Some of the most historically important plants at the Casa del Herrero estate may be found in this Cactus Garden, but survey work on the succulent collection is needed to confirm that they still survive. Joe Acquistapace, head gardener for forty-nine years, claimed late in life to have moved one dragon tree to the Cactus Garden from the Casa's original front garden.

### **Southern Exedra or "Moorish Watering Trough" (Contributing Structure)**

During the planning phase for the estate, Steedman referred to this tiled structure framed with tile benches as the "Moorish Watering Trough," but Smith called it an exedra (number 19 on the site plan) and he is the designer of record. Steedman submitted numerous sketches of ideas to Smith copied from books, and correspondence reveals that Riggs contributed to the design. She also placed it off-axis in the landscape, and it appears this way on Stevens' 1925 plan.<sup>54</sup> It is not clear why she selected the off-axis position. Perhaps she wanted to break the symmetrical formula or was treating the exedra as a surprise (or folly) in a picturesque landscape that would only be revealed from certain vantage points.

### **Orchard—East and West (Contributing Site)**

The Orchard is divided into east and west mirror images (number 20 on the site plan). Both sides follow the curves of the eugenia hedges and separate the designed landscape from the informal portions of the site. Correspondence with Steedman indicates that Stevens' intention was to use the orchard trees for screening. He placed the evergreen, subtropical trees in front, including citrus of many varieties, pineapple guava (*Feijoa sellowiana*, *Acca sellowiana*), loquats (*Eriobotrya japonica*), custard-like cherimoya (*Annona cherimola*), and avocado, with the deciduous trees in the background, so the screening would be effective year-round. His

<sup>52</sup> "The Landscape Value of Succulents" by Ralph T. Stevens in *Cacti and Other Succulents* edited by Pearl Chase, 1930, p. 12. An arched, stucco wall and the Cactus garden below are shown in the top photo facing page 48. The dragon trees cannot be seen. This wall was later lowered.

<sup>53</sup> Whether Riedel was involved at the Casa at this time is not in the record.

<sup>54</sup> Steedman letter to Smith (no date; handwritten on Santa Barbara Club stationary); see also Smith letter of 3-3-1925. Steedman's sketches were from books by Peixotto, Whittlesley, and the Bynes.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 24**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

architectonic layout reinforces this interpretation because the typical gentleman farmer of the era would have placed his orchard in the outlying areas of the site and treated it in a more conventional manner.

Stevens' list was tailored to Santa Barbara's Mediterranean climatic conditions and drew upon his exceptional knowledge of plant material. He selected the best available avocado varieties, 'Fuerte', 'Dickinson' and 'Puebla,' for this still-novel fruit, as well as 'Coolidge' pineapple guava, a new cultivar of *Feijoa sellowiana*, itself only in California since 1905, when Stevens' former boss, Franceschi, introduced it. Although Steedman might not have realized it, his orchard was on the cutting edge of California horticulture. Some restoration is needed, and surviving plants also need to be surveyed; one original birdhouse is in storage.

A path through the west side of the orchard leads to the Herb Garden.

**Herb Garden (Contributing Site)**

This garden (number 21 on the site plan) has a medieval quality and is enclosed by walls and an arbor. Once called the Western Garden, its major elements (walls, paths, beds, and entry points) are shown on Stevens' plan. A 1932 drawing by Steedman details plants, mainly herbs, for this space. The north gate leading to the Service Court is ornamented with a Byzantine stone doorframe purchased in Florence in 1924. The gate in the west wall has wooden spools and a tile roof made from green-glazed, split flowerpots. The south wall is low and topped with the arbor that supports a wisteria vine. Two intersecting brick paths create four planting beds in the manner typical of both Hispano-Arab and Medieval gardens. Cynthia Nolen designed the garden and plantings were installed by the Santa Barbara Garden Club c. 1999. The beds are outlined by low germander hedges (*Teucrium fruticans*), and they are filled with assorted herbs and clipped bay laurel standards. Espaliered bushes grow against the walls.<sup>55</sup>

**Garden Service Area (Contributing Site)**

The garden service area (number 22 on the site plan) behind the Work Shop runs lengthwise along the west side of the site. This area is separated from the rest of the estate by screening created by hedges, orchards and a stone wall extending from the guest apartment attached to the Butler's cottage (today's Foundation offices) to the northwest corner of Steedman's Shop. The wall is pierced by a gateway built of sandstone and topped with a tile roof and an old red bougainvillea vine, possibly an original planting of 'Crimson Lake' or 'Rosea,' which appear in the invoices. This gateway leads to the parking area by the garages and bears a resemblance to a gate at Thatcher School pictured in Lockwood de Forest's scrapbook, suggesting that he was the designer.<sup>56</sup>

Included in the garden service area are a kitchen garden and three one-story garden buildings: a lath house with attached gardener's office; a glass house (or greenhouse); and a tool shed, which replaced similar structures in 1934. Immediately to the south of the tool shed is a vernacular, open nursery area, planted by several generations of gardeners, with numerous young dragon trees (*Draecena draco*) creating an otherworldly effect. The western creek that drains the site cuts through the Garden Service Area and runs along the property line. A small arched bridge spans it behind the Butler's Cottage and a large storm drain contributes runoff to it.

**Kitchen Garden (Contributing Site)**

<sup>55</sup> In 1995 Lynn Morris Contracting restored the pergola columns and the redwood superstructure. The columns are exact replicas, sandblasted for an aged appearance.

<sup>56</sup> See fig. 12.2, p. 271 in Karson, *Genius for Place*. Lynn Morris Contracting replaced the rotting beams above the gateway in 1997, matching their diameters and rustic quality.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 25**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Unlabeled garden beds appear on the original Stevens plan for the area south of Steedman's office (today's Shop.) They have long functioned as a kitchen garden with mixed vegetables and flowers (number 23 on the site plan). An old 'Belle of Portugal' rose that climbs the wall of the Shop may be one of four that were purchased in 1929.<sup>57</sup> A fragrant old white plumeria (frangipani, *Plumeria sp.*) also grows against the wall. The frog-spouted fountain, which was originally on the Terrace parapet, is located in the Kitchen Garden and creates a focal point for the view from the gate on the west side of the South Lawn.

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<sup>57</sup> Campbell Horticultural Co., Santa Barbara invoice dated May 1, 1929.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 26**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**Lath House & Gardener's Office (Contributing Building)**

Designed in 1934 by Steedman, the Lath House (number 24 on the site plan) has low walls of concrete and a domed lath superstructure.<sup>58</sup> There is an attached Gardener's Office (or head house) with a red tile roof on the north end. Sided in redwood, it was originally unpainted.

**Glass House (Contributing Building)**

The Glass House (number 25 on the site plan) has low concrete walls with a domed glass superstructure shaded by a covering of wired lath that originally could be rolled up over the roof with cords and pulleys.<sup>59</sup> The glass house has three rectangular concrete bins built onto the east wall and sunken partly below grade. It is possible that they were compost bins, although the practical Steedman, who designed this building in 1934, probably wouldn't have placed them with such difficult access; perhaps they held grapes for winemaking in the cellar directly opposite.

**Tool Shed (Contributing Building)**

The Tool Shed (number 26 on the site plan) has a gabled tile roof with whitewashed board and batten walls on the south side and low walls of concrete with attached concrete "stalls" sunken below grade on the north side. The purpose of these stalls is unknown; they may have been used to produce wine.

**Informal Park-like Landscape (Contributing Site)**

Paths and access roads meander through the outer reaches of the site in a manner typical of the picturesque English landscape of the eighteenth century, of Olmsted's nineteenth-century parks, and of Country Place era gardens in general (number 27 on the site plan). One such curvilinear path winds through the Cactus Garden, and another leads from the Gardener's Cottage across a bridge surrounded by naturalized Canary Island date palms (*Phoenix canariensis*) and bamboo (possibly supplied by Riedel as a clump appears on Stevens' 1925 plan). In 1924 Steedman suggested to Smith that the open well near the cottage would be a good place for a "simple Spanish Wellhead" in brick and stucco, such as the one illustrated in the Byne's writings on Spanish gardens. This wellhead was built and still exists. Correspondence between Stevens and Steedman indicate that Stevens envisioned a jungle of 100 palm varieties here, but Steedman was afraid they would block views. Numerous original trees, mainly pines, including Monterey pine, *Pinus radiata*, cypress, and eucalyptus are no longer present, but other volunteering trees have taken their place.

**Contributing Resources****Buildings:**

Main House "The Casa" (previously listed in the National Register)  
Shop  
Gardener's Cottage  
Butler's Cottage

<sup>58</sup> About half of the original lath has been replaced to date by Lynn Morris Contracting.

<sup>59</sup> Lynn Morris Contracting restored the Glass House in 1997. It was impossible to obtain a wire gauge thin enough to match the original, so the lath covering can no longer be rolled up. Much of the wooden lattice was replaced at this time, and all broken glass panes were restored. The entire structure received new glazing putty.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 27**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Carmelita Spring House (Pump House)  
Lath House & Gardener's Office  
Glass House  
Tool Shed

Structures:

Loggia & Terrace  
Southern Exedra (Moorish Watering Trough)  
Orange Terrace

Sites:

Spanish Garden Patio  
South Lawn Garden  
Service Court  
Entrance Court  
Camellia Garden  
Garage Court  
Blue and White Garden  
East Excedra  
Rose Garden  
Fern Garden & Pepper Tree Fountain; Cactus Garden Overlook  
Cactus Garden  
Orchard (East & West)  
Herb Garden  
Garden Service Area  
Kitchen Garden  
Informal Park-Like Landscape

Objects:

Birdhouse-Sundial

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 28**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide:    Locally:   Applicable National  
Register Criteria:A X B    C X D   Criteria Considerations  
(Exceptions):A    B    C    D    E    F    G   

NHL Criteria:

4

NHL Theme(s):

III. Expressing Cultural Values  
5. architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design

Areas of Significance:

Architecture  
Art  
Landscape Architecture

Period(s) of Significance:

1922-1940

Significant Dates:

1922-1925; 1927

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Steedman, George Fox (engineer, designer)  
Smith, George Washington (architect)  
Riggs, Lutah Maria (architect)  
Stevens, Ralph T. (landscape architect)  
De Forest, Lockwood, Jr. (landscape architect)  
Underhill, Francis T. (landscape consultant)  
Byne, Arthur (antiquarian, author, and consultant)  
Byne, Mildred Stapley (antiquarian, author, and consultant)  
Edwards, William Albert (architect)  
Plunkett, Joseph (architect)  
Howell, Henry (architect)  
Brewster, Floyd E. (architect)  
Riedel, Peter (landscape architect)  
Peake, Channing (artist)  
Grant, Gordon Kenneth (artist-metal craftsman)  
Hartfeld, John H. (gardener)

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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Historic Contexts:

XVI. Architecture

M. Period Revivals

2. Spanish (Mission) (1890-1940)

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**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 30**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**

The Steedman Estate (Casa del Herrero) is nationally significant in American landscape history as an outstanding example of a Country Place era estate and for its remarkably high artistic value in representing the influence of Spanish architecture and gardens on domestic design in the United States. A fusion of architecture, decorative arts, horticulture, and landscape architecture, the property is a masterpiece of Spanish Colonial Revival style and represents the nationally important regional interpretation of the Country Place movement – one that drew attention to the creative achievement of West Coast designers in the 1920s and gave form to a distinct California Style in architecture and landscape design. As a result, it became an important antecedent in the development of the modern California home, which featured an integration of indoor-outdoor living spaces, the sequential development of views, use of hedges and other vegetation to define and organize exterior space, the symbolic and suggestive use of plant materials as transitional elements, and the creation of harmony through well-ordered, often informally arranged, elements of design. It is being nominated under NHL Criterion 4 for its outstanding representation of the Mediterranean-inspired Country Place era estate and for its outstanding artistic values as a synthesis of art, architecture, landscape architecture, interior design, and horticulture. The estate is nationally significant under the theme, Expressing Cultural Values. It is one of the few estates from Montecito's Country Place era that remains virtually as it was constructed.<sup>60</sup>

The Steedman Estate is the result of an interdisciplinary collaboration and recognition of the opportunities afforded by the idyllic climate of the California coast. Though with strong Spanish overtones, both the buildings and the designed landscape of subtropical plants were intended as a regional response for increasingly affluent and sophisticated clients, not as a literal interpretation of a Spanish prototype. It is the definitive example of the twentieth century Spanish Colonial Revival style in architecture and in landscape architecture as it evolved on the West Coast in the 1920s and drew national attention to Santa Barbara as the center of its expression. The estate introduced some of the earliest examples of patios and courtyards, which afforded opportunities for outdoor living and would soon be acknowledged nationally not only as indicative of a regional style equated with California, but also as one of the most important contributions of West Coast designers to twentieth-century American domestic architecture and landscape design.

Typical of the time, both house and gardens incorporate modern elements. The plan of the Casa is unapologetically adapted to a twentieth-century lifestyle and includes a modern kitchen and bathrooms as well as a garage integrated into the building. The gardens have underground irrigation systems and fountains that draw upon water from the mechanized Carmelita Spring House nearby. The period of significance for the Steedman Estate extends from the Steedmans' purchase of the land in 1922 to 1940, the date of George Steedman's death and the close of the Country Place era with the advent of World War II. The landscape is maintained as closely as possible to its appearance at this time, although some of Mrs. Bass's changes remain, as noted in the description of individual resources.

Several characteristics distinguish the Casa del Herrero from country places elsewhere and mark its importance as a regional prototype. It stands out as an example of the flourishing local interest in exotic horticultural material, for its synthesis of contemporary design forces at play in the search less for historical re-creation than for inventive solutions for southern California, and for its harmonious integration of formal and naturalistic traditions in landscape design. Noteworthy also is the property's association with several talented designers and authorities on Spanish architecture, art and decorative art who collectively were highly influential in

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<sup>60</sup> Michael Redmon, introduction to Jean Smith Goodrich's, "Casa del Herrero."

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 31**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

establishing the distinctive regional character of the west coast and shaping its built environment.

The Steedman Estate is nationally significant as a masterwork in architecture and landscape architecture that synthesizes a number of traditions and beautifully integrates them as one artistic whole. Its furnishings and collections are intact. It possesses a high degree of historic integrity, as numerous original drawings, photographs, correspondence, and invoices confirm. Several important West Coast architects and landscape architects are associated with its design. The Casa del Herrero is an iconic estate included with its gardens in Mark Alan Hewitt's book, *The Architect and the American Country House*, where it is described as "a landmark in the development of the modern Spanish house in America" and presented as the equal of the great eastern and midwestern country houses.<sup>61</sup> To the authors of *The Golden Age of American Gardens* the estate "epitomizes the Spanish tradition as it developed in its own particular way in California in the twenties."<sup>62</sup> David Streatfield, the foremost scholar of California gardens, calls it "one of the finest surviving gardens of the 1920s in California."<sup>63</sup> Robin Karson, director of the Library of American Landscape History, describes it "one of the region's finest landscape designs."<sup>64</sup> Its gardens are the featured opening for the "Historic Gardens" chapter of *The American Woman's Garden* by Rosemary Verey and Ellen Samuels. Patricia Gebhard, George Washington Smith's most recent biographer, states: "These gardens are the best preserved of George Washington Smith's many houses and represent the prime example of his approach to site planning."<sup>65</sup> The Casa's East Exedra and South Lawn fountain sequence are some of the most easily recognizable features of Spanish Colonial Revival-style gardens, judging by their appearance in numerous glossy books and magazines.<sup>66</sup> The tilework used throughout the house and gardens to help link them stylistically, is historically important; many are antique, while others were commissioned by Steedman and manufactured by the Chemla firm of Tunis in North Africa, which produced tile for the Santa Barbara County Courthouse, a National Historic Landmark.<sup>67</sup>

In the water-scarce west, the Casa's still-functioning private water supply, located in the Carmelita Spring House, adds to its significance as a symbol of the time before municipal and state water projects led to development in California. For many, Steedman's fully-equipped shop uniquely distinguishes his home from other noteworthy houses open to the public. Both the Spring House and shop are virtually unaltered.

Some of the most noteworthy early twentieth-century designers on the West Coast, who were influential forces on the built environment, collaborated with Steedman, including George Washington Smith, Lulah Maria Riggs, Ralph T. Stevens, Lockwood de Forest, and Francis T. Underhill. The participation of Arthur Byne and Mildred Stapley, whose involvement in the early years of the Hispanic Society of America, founded in 1904 in New York and whose publications in large measure provided information and established credibility for twentieth-century Spanish Colonial Revival architecture, adds luster to the Casa surpassed only by the Bynes' role at Hearst Castle, San Simeon. When it awarded the Casa del Herrero a Stewardship Excellence Award in 2002, the Cultural Landscape Foundation noted that the property is one of the few Montecito, Country Place era

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<sup>61</sup> Mark Alan Hewitt, *The Architect and the American Country House: 1890-1940*, p. 212; see also David Gebhard's original research cited by Hewitt.

<sup>62</sup> Mac Griswold and Eleanor Weller, *The Golden Age of American Gardens*, p. 329. Griswold and Weller's California sections are based on David Streatfield's work.

<sup>63</sup> David C. Streatfield, "The Garden at Casa del Herrero," *Antiques* 130, pp. 286-293.

<sup>64</sup> Robin Karson, *A Genius for Place: American Landscapes of the Country Place Era*, p. 274.

<sup>65</sup> Patricia Gebhard, *George Washington Smith*, p. 24.

<sup>66</sup> Power and Heeger, *The Gardens of California*, is an early one of many examples.

<sup>67</sup> Goodrich, "Casa del Herrero."

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 32**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

estates that has retained its design integrity.<sup>68</sup> The estate is a key survivor of the Country Place era, an important work by significant American designers, and a transition, technologically if not stylistically, to modernism.

The Casa del Herrero is unique in the Santa Barbara region because its buildings, acreage, furnishings, and gardens are virtually intact, and it is Spanish Colonial Revival in style. The Stow House in the Goleta Valley is furnished, but it is Victorian; while Ganna Walska's Lotusland (unfurnished and remodeled into a botanic garden) and Val Verde (furnished but not yet open to the public and missing its pool house with its gardens) are both more grandly and abstractly Mediterranean. What remains of the subdivided, Italian-style Las Tejas acreage was recently restored, but it is privately owned, so the extent of the restoration cannot be ascertained. Many others estates that are considered landmarks in the Country Place era in the books cited above have been subdivided or greatly altered, including the Gillespie estate (El Fureidis) and the Meeker estate (Constantia, garden design by Lockwood de Forest).

### **The Country Place Era**

The Country Place era in the United States, as defined by Norman T. Newton, developed between approximately 1890 and 1930 as the American economy expanded. Newton ends the era with the Great Depression, although Griswold and Weller, Hewitt, and others see the end date as 1940, when World War II was beginning. The era was marked by the construction of very large country houses with extensive gardens that enhanced an exclusive, leisurely lifestyle away from the crowding of the industrialized cities. Landscape was central to the "country place phenomenon."<sup>69</sup> The grand estates in Montecito, where the Casa del Herrero is located, were a regional manifestation of national and European trends.

Newton observed that the era coincided with a "period of concentrated eclecticism in architecture."<sup>70</sup> However, eventually the eclectic, imported European styles began to be rejected, and the Colonial Revival Style emerged on the East Coast as appropriate. As early as 1912 the *Architectural Record* had identified "four characteristically national types of houses...Spanish Mission, the Southern Colonial, the Dutch Colonial, and the Georgian Colonial."<sup>71</sup> Architects in California increasingly turned to the Spanish Missions of the West Coast's colonial period for inspiration. After the success of Bertram Goodhue's fanciful buildings for the 1915 Panama-California International Exposition in San Diego and its subtropical landscaping, largely the work of Paul G. Thiene, the "Spanish" style swept southern California as the most popular. This Spanish Colonial Revival style, as it came to be called, was not based on California's rustic, colonial past but on a romanticized interpretation of the architecture of Spain that was considered appropriate for California's history and climate.<sup>72</sup>

While Norman Newton lamented the architecture of the Country Place Era stylistically, he observed that it was "a period of remarkable progress in quality of landscape architectural design." He ascribes to Charles Adams Platt and his book on Italian villas, published in 1894, the "growing strength of design," particularly during the first two decades of the twentieth century.<sup>73</sup> Axial, formal gardens extending from the buildings began to replace the informal, gardenesque aesthetic of the Victorian era. California architects were especially drawn to

<sup>68</sup> See [www.tclf.org](http://www.tclf.org).

<sup>69</sup> Robin Karson, *Genius for Place*, p. xiv.

<sup>70</sup> Newton, *Design on the Land*, p. 427.

<sup>71</sup> Quoted in Hewitt, *The Architect and the American Country House*, p. 83.

<sup>72</sup> Gebhard, "The Spanish Colonial Revival in Southern California."

<sup>73</sup> Newton, *Design on the Land*, pp. 427-428.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 33**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Mediterranean architecture and landscape architecture because it was suitable for the climate. A definitive regional style for the state emerged early in the Santa Barbara area and was fully developed here. The Gillespie House, El Fureidis, in Montecito, designed by East Coast architect Bertram Goodhue in the late nineteenth century in "Persian" style and completed in 1903, had one of the first and most celebrated of the axial gardens. The Knapp estate, Arcady, had an eclectic landscape with several designers, but Francis T. Underhill's pool house and Italian water gardens were often singled out for praise. Though based in Pasadena, Reginald Johnson designed a number of the grand estates in Montecito. His J. P. Jefferson estate, Mira Flores, a 1918 remodeling of an earlier building and now the Music Academy of the West, fused a Spanish house type with axial Italian gardens designed by Paul G. Thiene, also of Pasadena, just as Herbert Croly, editor of the *Architectural Record*, had recommended as appropriate for California in 1913.<sup>74</sup> Many designers of Montecito gardens turned to Italian sources for inspiration, one of the most notable being the talented and much admired Mrs. Oakleigh Thorne, who personally laid out the gardens of her winter home, Las Tejas (1918).<sup>75</sup> All the above were widely published.

In Santa Barbara the evolution was from a Mediterranean aesthetic to a passion for architecture inspired by the farmhouses of the Andalusian region, thanks largely to the skill displayed by George Washington Smith in this more informal and picturesque Spanish vernacular style.

Recent research has established that George Washington Smith built his own groundbreaking house on Middle Road in Montecito in 1918.<sup>76</sup> With the possible exception of a few less significant works by James Osborne Craig (1888-1922), for which dates have not been established, this is the first specifically Andalusian building in Santa Barbara. Craig left two buildings of such potency, completed posthumously, that one suspects he would have given Smith ample competition. His patrons Bernhard and Irene Hoffmann, who went on to figure prominently in the rebuilding of Santa Barbara in Spanish Colonial Revival style after the 1925 earthquake, commissioned both. One was the Hoffmanns' own house, Casa Santa Cruz; the other was El Paseo, a commercial shopping plaza comprised of small shops and an open-air restaurant arranged around the historic colonial adobe, Casa de la Guerra. Francis T. Underhill played an important role in the preservation of this house, owned by his wife's family, and in the landscape design of El Paseo.

Only after 1918 with the work of George Washington Smith at his own home did a specifically Spanish garden style develop in Montecito. Smith's houses, often L-shaped and employing courtyards, patios, water features, and sometimes exterior circulation, such as the Casa del Herrero Gardener's Cottage, were designed to engage the landscape and were widely admired throughout the state and published nationally. According to David Gebhard:

His axial brick, tile, or gravel pathways, often traversed by the soft trickle of water in runnels, his central tiled fountains surrounded by potted plants, his elaborate pergolas and masonry seats, and, above all, his use of glazed tile left no question in the visitor's mind that she or he was indeed transplanted into a Hispanic/Moorish world.<sup>77</sup>

Because of its mild climate, the patio and the Mediterranean outdoor lifestyle in general was widely acknowledged to be best for California and its architecture, and by 1931 Winifred Starr Dobyns could

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<sup>74</sup> Clark, "Reginald D. Johnson: Regionalism and Recognition," p. 18. Mira Flores received a gold medal from the American Institute of Architects, the first for a California designer.

<sup>75</sup> The main axis was Italian in style but the garden was eclectic. Later subdivided, what remains has recently been restored.

<sup>76</sup> This is two years later than previously thought.

<sup>77</sup> David Gebhard, "Introduction" in A.E. Hanson's *An Arcadian Landscape*, p. ix.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 34**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

confidently state, "Houses with patios, courtyards and terraces, loggias and galleries are in such general use because they are so admirably adapted to California life and a genuinely local color in garden design is growing up in connection with this domestic architecture."<sup>78</sup>

The interest in Spanish gardens is corollary to the emergence of an increasingly Hispanic Mediterranean aesthetic in Country Place era architecture. As David Streatfield has noted, it was also part of the search for regional appropriateness that is an important part of the history of landscape design in California.

The late historian David Gebhard is credited with the most authoritative examination of the Spanish Colonial Revival style in domestic design in the United States and the contributions of California architects, particularly George Washington Smith, to its fullest and final flowering in Santa Barbara in the 1920s. According to Gebhard, "The Spanish Colonial Revival, from its Mission phase on, was almost totally a myth created by newcomers to the area" and the increasing sophistication and wealth of Californians sparked a desire for "increased opulence and display, and for historical correctness....The simple life was giving way to the affluent life of the 1920s."<sup>79</sup>

In "The Spanish Colonial Revival in Southern California, 1895 to 1930" published in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* in 1967, Gebhard identified two phases of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, the early Mission Revival phase which included the Pueblo Revival (also called Santa Fe) style and Mexican influences, and the later Mediterranean style (ca. 1910 to early 1930s.) with its Andalusian and Moorish influences. In his view the Mission Style derived as much from the simple adobe dwellings that had been built in California from the late eighteenth through the nineteenth century as it did from the Spanish ecclesiastical architecture in California. Gebhard classified the style as a nineteenth-century one and credits its continuing popularity to the fact that it became associated with the Arts and Crafts (or Craftsman) movement. The second phase, he described, "could properly be called Mediterranean, for it assembled architectural elements not only from Spain and Mexico, but from Italy and from the Islamic world of North Africa." Architects (and also landscape architects) coming to California had formal education in East Coast schools and Beaux Arts training and with it a knowledge of Italian and Mediterranean villas. He dates the introduction of the second phase before the 1915 exposition (ca. 1910) and mentions that even as early as 1902, Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson had built the Gillespie house "El Fureidis," in Montecito with its Persian-Moorish gardens. The provincial architecture of Spain (especially Andalusia) and of Mexico, however, inspired the typical Spanish Colonial house of the 1920s and was used "admirably" as a "point of departure" by George Washington Smith and James Osborne Craig of Santa Barbara, Wallace Neff of Pasadena, Reginald Johnson, John Byers, Roland E. Coates, and Gordon Kaufman in LA area and Lillian Rice, William Templeton Johnson, and Mead and Requa in San Diego. To Gebhard, Smith's buildings were "unquestionably...the most sophisticated of the later Spanish Colonial Revival buildings."<sup>80</sup>

### **A California Style of Landscape Design**

The history of landscape design and horticulture in California begins with the arrival of Spanish colonizers in

<sup>78</sup> Dobyns, *California Gardens*, 17-18.

<sup>79</sup> David Gebhard, "The Spanish Colonial Revival in Southern California, 1895 to 1930," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 26, no. 2 (May 1967): 131, fn. 2; 136..

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 132; 136; fn. 23, 137; 139. Gebhard also references "J. M. Gillespie House, Montecito," *Sunset* XXXII, May 1914, pp. 1060-1063, and Herbert D. Croly, "The California Country House," *Sunset* xviii, Nov. 1906, pp. 50-65. Gebhard continued in his writings to return to Smith's work and give attention to the Steedman Estate. Gebhard and Lutah Maria Riggs were instrumental in the preservation of Smith's records and drawings.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 35**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1769, who established a chain of presidio garrisons and Franciscan missions. (Native American California Indians did not practice landscape design, although proto-agricultural practices have been identified). The Spanish applied Mediterranean principles of planning and agriculture and treated the scarce water as a community resource, which they channeled through aqueducts to reservoirs and fountains. Small homeowners relied on creeks and wells. Gardens were utilitarian. Plants were grown primarily for food; due to the lack of water ornamentals were not common. Many plants that the next generation of settlers from the East would consider exotic, such as citrus, date palms, olive trees, and prickly pear cactus, were imported at this time. Houses of adobe were simple and might feature an enclosed patio typical of Spain or the Mediterranean region but more often did not. The property that Steedman acquired for the Casa del Herrero was originally part of Pueblo lands deeded by Spain in 1782 to the Santa Barbara Presidio and contained a small adobe house of approximately 270 square feet, presumably constructed by Jose de Jesus Cota, who was granted 19 acres of Presidio land in 1868.<sup>81</sup> The rancho period following the decline of the Missions, when California became part of Mexico, was brief. The Gold Rush in 1849 brought a flood of settlers, and California joined the United States in 1850. The period that followed was characterized by attitudes toward buildings and landscape that were similar to the attitudes of Americans on the East Coast. Redwood forests were turned into lumber for Victorian-style houses, water was privatized and exploited with Yankee ingenuity, and exotic plants from all corners of the globe were imported and grown with an enthusiasm that is still unrivalled. Santa Barbara was particularly known for its nurseries.<sup>82</sup> Plant introductions were made by Joseph Sexton, R. Kinton Stevens (Ralph's father), and Dr. Francesco Franceschi, an Italian who co-founded the Southern California Acclimatizing Association (SCAA) with Charles F. Eaton in 1893 and was briefly partners with the Dutch horticulturist, Peter Riedel, from 1907-1909. Ralph Stevens worked for the pair during his summer vacation doing landscape design with Riedel. Riedel continued to operate the SCAA after his partnership with Franceschi ended, while Franceschi continued with plant introductions at his Montarioso Nursery.

Victoria Padilla, one of the earliest of the California garden historians, describes the period from 1900 to 1930, when the Casa del Herrero estate was built, as "The Golden Age" when "a true southern California style of gardening" evolved as people talented in the art of landscaping arrived and used the numerous exotic plants available with a discrimination lacking in the previous period. The new profession of landscape architecture had a strong influence on shaping the great estates, as did the many fine nurseries. The availability of water continued to be a factor. While Padilla does not specifically mention the Casa del Herrero, she is the first to write about the landscape architects Ralph Stevens and Lockwood de Forest, describing Stevens' horticultural expertise and his style during this period as "Mediterranean in character with emphasis on formal pools, wide sweeps of lawn, ... and bold accents of trees" and de Forest's "flare for the dramatic."<sup>83</sup> These qualities and Stevens' knowledge of plant material are in evidence at the Casa, and it was probably de Forest's flare that caused Steedman to hire him to remodel the south lawn area and rather conventional entry court.

"There is much of magic in these California gardens. Perhaps it is the quality of light which bathes them in sun or moon shine. Perhaps it is the inspiring background of mountains, sea or desert," wrote practitioner Winifred Starr Dobyns, one of the first to recognize the emerging California style of landscape design that emerged in the burgeoning suburban growth that was occurring in Southern California in the 1920s. In *California Gardens*, a well-illustrated portfolio published in 1931, she wrote:

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<sup>81</sup> Alexandra C. Cole, "Steedman House, Casa del Herrero," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form*, 1987. The house is shown on the 1922 survey. According to Maria Herold, of the Montecito History Committee, a branch of the Cota family still lived in this adobe house before the Steedmans acquired it. Conversation with Susan Chamberlin, 2008.

<sup>82</sup> Padilla, *Southern California Gardens*.

<sup>83</sup> Padilla, "The Golden Age" section begins on page 90 of *Southern California Gardens*; quotes for Stevens and de Forest are found on pages 114-115.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 36**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Some of the finest landscape artists of the country have been called to lay out new California communities which far visioned city planners are carving out of the hills and sea coasts before untouched by man. Over night palaces and villas seem to spring into being on barren hillsides and in wooded canyons. Within a short year a garden will blossom where yesterday only greasewood and scrub oak clothed the ground. Wealth and art together have been employed to lay out many of California's great gardens.<sup>84</sup>

Dobyns defined the distinct characteristics of this new style: a distinct response to climate, water features contained in pools, cascades unleashed to flow into thickets of lush undergrowth, evergreen hedges, a wealth of native and exotic trees and flowering plants, thick garden walls, pebbled or tiled (brick or flagged) pavement, and the intermingling of cultural traditions borrowed from Spain, Italy and other Mediterranean countries. Noting the importance of garden walls, she wrote:

The use of the garden wall is a direct inheritance from Mediterranean ancestors who knew well the charm of the walled garden and the enclosed patio....The real garden...lies behind the house, secure in its privacy and making us feel by means of the walls that it is part of the house itself with the atmosphere of shelter and human occupation. Walls of stuccoed tile or brick make an enchanting background for the tracery of vines or espaliered fruits and for the play of shadows which are often sufficient decoration in themselves.<sup>85</sup>

The most important of these characteristic was the outdoor living room—one that certainly applied to the Steedman Estate with its many carefully composed and furnished outdoor rooms. Dobyns wrote:

Outdoor living rooms are a most important element in California gardens. As they may be occupied at all seasons of the year, thought and artistry are well spent on their furnishing. These may take the form of a cloistered patio, almost a part of the house itself, with overshadowing olive trees and murmuring fountains, or of a flagged sitting area beneath the spreading branches of a majestic oak. They may be small sun-bathed walled gardens with a lawn panel and bright flower borders where chairs and benches are arranged in friendly fashion under the orange trees laden with golden fruit.<sup>86</sup>

David Streatfield's landmark book, *California Gardens: Creating a New Eden*, surveys the history of the state in terms of its cultural landscapes and the forces that shaped them, including the water projects. Streatfield calls the 1920s "the greatest decade in California's garden history" and attributes its greatness to a number of factors: water was more widely available; an extraordinary range of plant material was supplied by nurseries; large trees could be moved thanks to new technology; there were numerous sophisticated garden designers and, most importantly, there were numerous sophisticated, affluent clients who knew what they wanted.<sup>87</sup> George Steedman was such a client, and Streatfield recognizes that he was a dominant force in the success of the Casa del Herrero. It is prominently featured and described as "one of the most exquisite houses and gardens of the Spanish Colonial Revival period."<sup>88</sup> The contributions of all its designers are acknowledged and the strong

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<sup>84</sup> Dobyns, *California Gardens*, 1931, p. 15.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>87</sup> Streatfield, *California Gardens*, p. 104. His series of articles on the "Evolution of the California Landscape" was published in *Landscape Architecture* in 1976. Numerous other articles were published before his book was released in 1994.

<sup>88</sup> Streatfield, *California Gardens*, p. 113.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 37**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

influence of the Bynes is noted. Streatfield is the first author to fully develop the concept of regionalism in the design of California gardens, creating a sense of place unique to a region through materials, forms, and plants. George Washington Smith's Spanish-style patio gardens begin this chapter because he established his reputation for the style based on his own two small houses and the style would become an important force in California's sense of place. Lockwood de Forest is also featured, as is Francis T. Underhill.<sup>89</sup>

Although he does not describe it in detail in *The California Garden* author Jere Stuart French places the Casa del Herrero in the context of an authentic Spanish typology where a sense of place is created with enclosure and water features, used "as both a symbol and a fact of life," creating an oasis-like setting where the patio is the transition between indoors and outdoors and functions as a private refuge. Californians of every class embraced the typology and its private space for outdoor living, whereas the typical American outdoor space was a front porch overlooking an open lawn and the street. In the boom years of the twenties, as much planning and money went into the major gardens as went into the houses. George Washington Smith is mentioned as an important force in California's Spanish-style gardens, and the Casa del Herrero is pictured.<sup>90</sup>

Richly illustrated with hand-colored, historic photographs, *The Golden Age of American Gardens* is national in its treatment. This "Golden Age" coincides with the Country Place era. The authors conclude that in the 1920s, "it's doubtful whether any other state, even double-barreled New York...offered as many beautiful, important estate gardens as California."<sup>91</sup> To bolster this claim, they discuss the Garden Club of America's famous three-week trip to California by private train from New York City in 1926. Santa Barbara was the primary stop, and the Casa del Herrero was one of more than fifty gardens on the tour in that city alone. Placing his work in the context of the era, George Washington Smith is given his own section to highlight his importance on the design of the small Spanish garden, and he is called "probably the best designer of houses on the West Coast."<sup>92</sup> De Forest also receives special treatment for his innovations, and Ralph Stevens' skill as a horticulturist is acknowledged. The Casa del Herrero is one of "Three Large Mediterranean Gardens" examined as case studies in the "Southern California" section to illustrate that when Smith planned large estates, it was often as a sequence of outdoor rooms. Also included to illustrate this concept are Il Brolino and La Toscana, two of his Italian-style designs.

Although primarily an architectural historian, David Gebhard's interest in landscape design is reflected in much of his writing. His 1967 essay "The Spanish Colonial Revival in Southern California, 1895-1930," is essential for understanding the regional context for this style and its basis in myth. He further developed the theme and its impact on landscape design in his introduction to A. E. Hanson's book, *An Arcadian Landscape*, where George Washington Smith is credited with making the California courtyard specifically Spanish in style. Other Gebhard writings on Smith discuss his approach to site planning and gardens. Smith's collaboration with Florence Yoch has also been noted and is probably best represented by Il Brolino, the estate of Miss Mary Stewart, where Yoch derived inspiration from the prototype of the Italian garden and Smith the vernacular farmhouse of the Tuscan countryside in Italy.

Robin Karson's recent book, *Genius for Place: American Landscapes of the Country Place Era*, is also national

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<sup>89</sup> Streatfield's "Regional Gardens" chapter begins on page 154 of *California Gardens*, but he explored this theme in earlier articles, such as "Where Pine and Palm Meet: The California Garden as a Regional Expression" and in his work devoted to the Arts and Crafts garden.

<sup>90</sup> French, *The California Garden and the Landscape Architects who Shaped It*. "The Spanish Garden" section begins on p. 87, and two color photos of the Casa del Herrero are featured.

<sup>91</sup> Griswold and Weller, *The Golden Age of American Gardens*, p. 311. The authors acknowledge Streatfield's scholarship.

<sup>92</sup> Griswold and Weller, *Golden Age*, p. 328.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 38**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

in scope and demonstrates how, rooted in socio-economic conditions, landscape design became central to the aesthetics of the era. Karson examines case studies of gardens that survive with a high degree of historic integrity, with an entire chapter devoted to Lockwood de Forest and his design for the Val Verde Estate of Wright Ludington in Montecito. In her biography of de Forest, she describes George and Carrie Steedman as among his most important early clients and the Casa del Herrero as one of the finest landscape designs in southern California.

### **Creating the Casa del Herrero**

The Steedman Estate is one of the best preserved, historically significant, and intact examples of the “heyday” of Montecito estates in the 1920s. The property meets the definition of a historic designed landscape and represents a West Coast variant of the Country Place era, one resulting from the close collaboration between owner-client and an interdisciplinary team of designers. The creation of the property reflects a remarkable synthesis of culture, artistic expression, natural environment, and historical antecedents.

San Diego’s Panama-California International Exposition (1915) exerted great influence on the horticulture, landscape architecture, and architecture of the American West (through the contributions of Carlton Winslow, Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, Clarence Stein, and Paul Thiene). The following decade saw the emergence in Santa Barbara of a distinctive California style of landscape design that derived its inspiration from Mediterranean sources, most importantly the gardens, vernacular countryside, and palaces of southern Spain, but gained its expressive power from the ideas, talents, and imagination of American clients and their designers.

The site plan and the spatial organization and horticultural display of the grounds and gardens are the work of landscape architects Ralph T. Stevens and Lockwood De Forest with contributions by Frances T. Underhill. The house and architectural aspects of the gardens and patios are the work of architect George Washington Smith, and his assistant Lulah Maria Riggs. Together they pioneered in the development of Spanish Colonial estates and homes based on the Andalusian country homes of southern Spain. Their work incorporated features derived from Spanish antiquities (wall and floor tiles, window and door grilles, chimney caps, fountains and tanks, colorful tiled benches, columns and capitals, runnel and runlet, etc.), many of them having Moorish and Persian origins. A number of other artists and architects were involved. Antiquarians Arthur and Mildred Byne set the tone and thematic content of the gardens, interior design, and the furnishings of the house, and they informed Steedman’s reinterpretation of Spanish prototypes and stylistic features. Above all, the guiding force in the creation of Casa del Herrero and the selection of talented designers and advisers was the owner himself, George Steedman.

George Fox Steedman and Carrie Howard Steedman moved into their new house on the day of Santa Barbara’s devastating 1925 earthquake, when much of the business district was leveled. Thus the Casa del Herrero is linked to an important aspect of Santa Barbara’s architectural and cultural history. It was after the Santa Barbara earthquake that civic leaders proposed that the massive rebuilding required should be consistent architecturally. The style adopted was Spanish Colonial Revival, which continues to this day to contribute to the city’s beauty and dominates its cultural identity. The principal architect of the house was George Washington Smith, one of the architects credited with creating the city’s rich legacy of Spanish Colonial Revival design and, through it, drawing national attention to the achievement of California’s practitioners in landscape architecture, community planning, and architecture. Numerous original architectural drawings and invoices for purchases for the house and gardens confirm that the estate remains today essentially as it was designed in the early twentieth century. Distinctive for owner George Steedman’s involvement in the design

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 39**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

process and the collaboration of a cadre of talented designers and advisers, the estate is a nationally significant representation of the Country Place movement and highly intact example of the important regional prototype associated with the Mediterranean-like climate, Hispanic history, and horticultural development of California and the West Coast.

George Steedman (1871-1940) attended the Lawrence Scientific School of Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, and Harvard University, where he studied engineering, was on the crew team, and developed an interest in art and architecture. He later co-founded a traveling fellowship at Washington University in St. Louis, and he and his wife established the George Fox Steedman Architectural Collection at the St. Louis Public Library. After graduating from Harvard he joined his father's company, Curtis and Co. Manufacturing Company, in St. Louis. In 1903 he married Carrie Robb Howard (1874-1962). Their daughter, Katherine, was born in 1904; a second daughter, Medora, was born in 1909. During World War I, Curtis and Co. obtained major contracts for projectile forgings from both Britain and the United States.

The Steedmans' decision to build in Montecito was probably made after a visit of several months' duration in 1921. Between 1922 and 1925 George Steedman worked closely with George Washington Smith and Ralph Stevens in the design of the Casa and its landscape. As noted, he traveled through Spain in 1923 with architect Louis La Beaume, a St. Louis architect, and antiquarians Arthur and Mildred Stapley Byne to view sites and purchase artifacts and furniture. He returned to Europe in 1924. Between 1925 and 1934 Steedman further developed the gardens and the outbuildings. He designed the mechanical system of the Carmelita Spring House, the Glass House, the Lath House, the Shed, and the guest apartment attached to the Butler's Cottage. He also designed the underground irrigation system for the south lawn area and, in the early 1930s, worked with architect Floyd Brewster on the design of a new workshop. Steedman became interested in silversmithing in the mid-1920s and in 1927 studied with George Gebelein, the foremost American silversmith, in Boston.

It is difficult to separate Steedman's work from his consultants because he re-worked their drawings and supplied his own drawings and suggestions to them based on specific examples from books and articles, many authored by the Bynes. Steedman was a "perfectionist" according to his daughter, who added that "he always respected my mother's advice."<sup>93</sup> Carrie Steedman was an important member of the Garden Club of America's Santa Barbara Chapter, and her floral arrangements (in Steedman's silver vases) often won prizes in local flower shows. Her influence on the design of the estate lies primarily in many plant selections (her name appears on many garden invoices in the 1930s and it is clear that she added plants to the cutting gardens and the cactus garden).

Steedman's architect, George Washington Smith (1876-1930) was born in Pennsylvania. He attended the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and Lawrenceville Scientific School, and studied architecture at Harvard from 1895 until 1897 when he was forced to quit for financial reasons. He worked in the architectural office of Newman, Woodman, and Harris in Philadelphia. The prospect of a better financial situation apparently led him into a career in stocks and bonds, and he was so successful that he retired in 1912, married, and pursued a career as an artist in Europe. He became an architect in 1918 after his own first house was completed. He moved quickly. By the time George Steedman commissioned him in 1922, Smith had established himself as the most important proponent of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture in Santa Barbara. In his office at the time were projects for City Hall Plaza and the new Lobero Theatre; plans for the Daily News building were underway a month later. The gardens of his own two houses were influential for their vernacular Spanish types; the first, El

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<sup>93</sup> "The Garden of Medora Bass: Casa del Herrero" in *The American Woman's Garden* by Rosemary Verey and Ellen Samuels, p. 23.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 40**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Hogar (later known as the Heberton House), was published nationally and recognized as a new direction in Spanish Colonial Revival design and California domestic architecture. The first definitive study of his work was published in 1964, and books devoted to him were released in 2001 and 2005. Smith is highly significant in the history of California and the western United States for his contributions to twentieth-century domestic architecture. His impact on garden design, especially through the adaptation of Spanish design features and orchestration of outdoor living spaces, was also considerable. The Casa del Herrero was important in the context of his overall career because it achieved a coherence of design and artistic quality due to Steedman's unswerving quest for perfection, abundant financial resources, and insistence on a collaborative design process in which Smith was able to contribute substantially to the design of the gardens and grounds as well as the dwellings and architectural features. Although a number of Smith's design remain in Montecito, none possess the authenticity and artistic coherence of the Steedman Estate or embody Smith's affinity for the architecture and gardens of Andalusia and his remarkable skill in adapting these historical forms into a refreshing new idiom of house design well-suited to California's climate, scenic beauty, and rising wealth. The house, furthermore, has been recognized as an iconic example of the Spanish house type adapted to California living. Smith considered the estate to be one of his best works.

Smith's assistant, Lutah Maria Riggs (1896-1986), was an accomplished architect in her own right. She was one of the first women to graduate from the school of architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, and was one of a handful of licensed female architects in the early years of the twentieth century. Despite the obstacles women faced and difficulties during the Great Depression, Riggs had a long and successful career. George Washington Smith employed her as a junior draftsman in 1921, and by 1924 she was officially a partner. Licensed as an architect in 1928, Riggs is acknowledged as a major design force in Smith's office. During this period she also did freelance artwork. When Smith died suddenly in 1930 she began her independent career. Her commissions during the Depression years included a house in the Art Deco style, the library at the Casa del Herrero and work for the Los Angeles landscape architect A. E. Hanson, collaborating on the Murphy estate gardens and designing buildings for his developments on the Palos Verdes peninsula. In the 1940s and later in her career, she designed in a number of styles for numerous clients, including the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, where she collaborated with landscape architect Beatrix Farrand on the design of the Blaksley Library. She also collaborated with Elizabeth de Forest, who continued her husband Lockwood's landscape architecture practice after his death. Riggs was elected president of the Santa Barbara Chapter of the A.I.A. During World War II she lived in Hollywood, working at the M.G.M. and Warner Brothers studios as a set designer. She produced modernist designs toward the end of her career and a large garden in Los Angeles. Her most famous commission is the Asian-influenced Vedanta Temple in Montecito, which she designed in the mid 1950s. She and David Gebhard organized and catalogued Smith's drawings. Rigg's work at the Casa came rather early in her career, and Steedman was an important client. The octagonal library tower addition she designed for Steedman is considered highly representative of her mature work and is an important character-defining feature of the estate.<sup>94</sup>

### **The Historic Designed Landscape and Horticultural Collection**

George Washington Smith who was originally trained as an artist, understood landscape design as well as architecture, and his popularity as a designer of fine homes and country place estates was based as much on the amenities provided by the siting of his houses and the development of pleasing and intimate outdoor rooms as on the comfort and informality of house designs based on the vernacular Andalusian farmhouse. He projected through his work the concept that both house and garden should complement the other stylistically. His own

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<sup>94</sup> For Riggs, see Gebhard, *Lutah Maria Riggs*, and A. E. Hanson, *An Arcadian Landscape*.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 41**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

travels to Spain and his work with Steedman and the Bynes gave him a deep appreciation of the subtle beauties of the Spanish garden, features of which he incorporated into his own Andalusian-inspired homes, El Hogar (1918) and Casa de Greco (1920) in Montecito. He wrote: "In the Spanish garden, the long open vista of the Italian garden is transformed into a vista through many gateways so that a feeling of intimacy and mystery is achieved, rather than an effect of formality and grandeur...one has new surprises as he progresses through the gardens."<sup>95</sup> This outlook guided the site plan by Ralph T. Stevens; however, his layout reflects the Beaux-Arts principles that dominated the typical landscape architect's training in the early twentieth century.

Originally the design of landscape architect Ralph T. Stevens, the Casa del Herrero's designed landscape represents a synthesis of several garden traditions and the influence of several designers. From the beginning of the design process, Steedman sought the collaboration of his architects, Smith and Riggs, as well as the advice of the Bynes in the development of the gardens and patios close to the main house and in the design and placement of benches, exedras, and water features. The lawn--typical of the eastern United States and England (but not typical of Spain)--is combined with the Italian habit of organizing space symmetrically about an axis, a style which predominated in the Country House era. Smith's Spanish patios and courtyards serve as both outdoor rooms and transitions to the gardens. Within this framework, Spanish motifs and water elements were used in a decorative way, such as the Star Pool-to-Pepper Tree Fountain sequence. Neither is the plant material particularly Spanish, yet the overall feeling is decidedly Spanish due to the subtle presence of water, decorative tile, intimate scale of the outdoor spaces, and effective use of citrus and palm trees.<sup>96</sup> Gardens and grounds were designed in conjunction with the house in the manner of an Italian villa, a single unit in the countryside.<sup>97</sup> This was typical of the Country Place era on the West Coast and in the eastern United States and Europe. Also typical of the Country Place era, the landscape is formal around the house with axial gardens giving way to the more informal outlying areas that screen the property from neighboring lots. Elements typical of the era--including a terrace to ground the building, cutting gardens, a rose garden, the axial vista, and a sundial--all impart the use of these elements in Spanish gardens rather than the more typical Italian or French-inspired conventions found in most formal landscape design in the United States at this time. Refinements to Stevens design were made over the years Steedman lived here, including suggestions to the South Lawn made by Francis Underhill and carried out by Lockwood de Forest, and a newly designed entrance court designed by de Forest.

Ralph Tallant Stevens (1882-1958) was the son of R. Kinton Stevens (ca. 1849-1896), a pioneer California nurseryman who established his home and nursery, called Tanglewood, in Montecito (later known as Lotusland). Ralph Stevens obtained a degree in landscape architecture from Michigan State College (now University.) In 1907, on vacation, he worked for Dr. Francesco Franceschi and Peter Riedel doing landscape design when they were associated in the Southern California Acclimatizing Association. Stevens worked for O. C. Simonds in Chicago and was one of the first faculty members in the landscape gardening program at the University of California, Berkeley. He returned to Santa Barbara to open his landscape architecture office in 1917 and became the City of Santa Barbara's first salaried Superintendent of Parks. He served from 1919 to 1921 but continued for many years as an unpaid Parks Commissioner and landscape architect for the department. "A peerless plantsman," he made significant design contributions to Ganna Walska's Lotusland (such as the famous Blue Garden), the Santa Barbara County Courthouse (NHL), the Royal Hawaiian Hotel on Waikiki Beach in Honolulu, and he designed the succulent garden at the Tremaine House by architect Richard Neutra, which would be featured in the landmark 1964 book, *Modern Gardens and the Landscape* by Elizabeth

<sup>95</sup> G.W. Smith quoted in Streatfield, *California Gardens*, p. 154.

<sup>96</sup> David Streatfield, "Where Pine and Palm Meet...", p. 67.

<sup>97</sup> This typology originates in ancient Rome and included agriculture: in Spain the villa's equivalent is the *carmen* or the hacienda.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 42**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

B. Kassler. Stevens authored articles on plant materials for *Bailey's Standard Cyclopedia of American Gardening*. Stevens Park in Santa Barbara was named for him.<sup>98</sup> Streatfield considers Stevens an important contributor to the development of the Spanish Colonial Revival landscape style in California, particularly for designs utilizing subtropical plant material at the Steedman Estate and the Santa Barbara County Courthouse. His work at the Casa was somewhat early in his long and varied career. He is an important twentieth-century, American landscape architect.

Because Santa Barbara truly has a Mediterranean climate, supplemental irrigation was required for much of the landscape. Stevens' 1925 "General Landscape Scheme..." details the system of water pipes that delivered water to the Casa, its outbuildings, fountains, and points in the gardens from the Conrad property across the road. Steedman designed an underground irrigation system in 1932 for the south lawn area.<sup>99</sup> Although the pipes underground are intact, the sprinklers are in storage, and today the grounds are watered through a system of PVC pipe on an electric timer.

No doubt working from broad concepts supplied by Smith, Stevens first laid out and planted the site, and the estate's primary spatial organization shows on his plans. The earliest clue to his intentions was a planting plan he sent to Steedman in November 1922, which does not survive. A lengthy plant list keyed numerically to the plan was attached and remains in the archive. His list was tailored to Santa Barbara's Mediterranean climate conditions and drew upon his exceptional knowledge of plant material. From the list and nursery invoices, it is clear that many of the suggested plants were actually purchased. Stevens explained his approach in a letter stating that should Steedman "not particularly like the idea of giving the so-called Mexican or Arizona touch to the planting at the front entrance," he suggested instead "the large-leaved semi-tropical character" consisting of Aralias, Bird of Paradise, Dracaena, Treeferns [*sic*] etc. and many flowering things.<sup>100</sup> Judging by early photos, the latter character is the one Steedman selected, and it still survives, although there is some evidence that "Arizona" (i.e. cactus and succulent) plantings were also included but later moved to the Cactus Garden.

The basic components of Stevens' landscape plan are formal garden and informal surrounding park with the matching curving hedges and orchards as a screening device between them. A stone wall fronts the property, and two entrances from Valley Road lead to a circular drive in front of the house. A major axis extends south of the house in response to the orientation. A lawn below the rear terrace was supported by a retaining wall of large, rustic boulders. The axis that bisects the lawn is defined by eugenia hedges (*Syzygium paniculatum*) and backing citrus orchard rows following the curve of the retaining wall, then narrowing into an alley. The axis terminates visually at a small pool under an existing pepper tree *Schinus molle*, to which another was added to create a pair. Cactus—shown on Flournoy's survey—is indicated below. A walled "private garden" (which would become the Spanish Garden) opens from the living room, and a cutting garden bisected with paths extends to the east.

Work on the site began in November 1922 and continued sporadically until June 1925. Surviving invoices from 1922 and 1924 reveal that Peter Riedel provided some building materials, labor, and bamboo. Mrs. Bass remembers hearing his name in connection with the garden,<sup>101</sup> but she does not elaborate, and his role at the Casa is difficult to ascertain. Riedel was an important nurseryman and landscape gardener whose career was in flux. During this period he was doing construction and supervision for Ralph Stevens, whom he had known

<sup>98</sup> For Stevens see Padilla, *Southern California Gardens*, and Chamberlin, "Tremaine Garden: A Mid-Century Modern Classic".

<sup>99</sup> This drawing "Sprinkler System, 10/27/32" shows a network of pipes and sprinkler heads with pipe sizes and other notes.

<sup>100</sup> Ralph T. Stevens to George Fox Steedman letter of 11-20-1922.

<sup>101</sup> Verey and Samuels, *The American Woman's Garden*, p. 23.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 43**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

since about 1907.<sup>102</sup>

As usual Steedman prepared detailed alternative suggestions based on the initial proposal. A new drawing by Stevens (dated 1925 by Steedman) shows the landscape approximately as it was completed and indicates the relationship of the Main House, Gardener's Cottage and service buildings to the site's sloping topography. The major aspects of the 1922 plan appear along with a third entry road near the Gardener's Cottage that snakes around the grounds and terminates in a path at the western property line. Another path loops through the southernmost part of the property, past an exedra, which was sited off-axis in a picturesque manner by Riggs. The Pepper Tree Fountain with its colorful glazed tiles was sited by Stevens but designed by Byne.

The estate's horticultural collection dates for the most part from the period of its development in the **1920s**.<sup>103</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century several Santa Barbara nurseries had a national reputation. Stevens' background with some of California's most famous horticultural pioneers ensured that the Casa del Herrero plant palette would be extraordinary, but he tempered the design by choosing things appropriate to a Mediterranean image. The oldest trees on the grounds survive from the previous era and appear on the 1922 survey. These eucalyptus, Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*), and pines represent a fraction of the original; only a few pines remain from what was once a thick planting of forty plus trees.<sup>104</sup> Along with numerous additional trees (including volunteer oak, *Quercus agrifolia*, black acacia, *Acacia melanoxylon*, and Victorian box, *Pittosporum undulatum*, volunteers from hedging) they now shade the surrounding informal portions of the landscape and contribute to screening, particularly the hedgerow of tall Monterey cypresses along the east property line. All, including Monterey cypress for hedging and the volunteers, were popular in the previous, Victorian era. The ubiquitous native coast live oak tree, *Quercus agrifolia*, does not appear on the survey, probably because they were too common and numerous to count. An orchard was shown in the southwest corner of the piece of property acquired and surveyed in 1925. Today an olive orchard grows here; however, because thirty-six "Mission" olive trees were purchased by Stevens in 1931, it is impossible to determine if these trees were planted by him or preexisted on the site.

The designed plant palette, primarily the work of Ralph Stevens, reinforces the image that the Casa was an exotic place suitable for a winter resort. Some plants are still rare, but some have become so common (such as agapanthus) that they are now considered a regional cliché. The palette is diverse, reflecting Stevens' background as a contributor to *Bailey's Cyclopedic of American Horticulture*, an employee of Dr. Francesco Franceschi and Riedel's Southern California Acclimatizing Association and the son of one of California's most important Victorian-era nurserymen. The varied collection is free of Victorian excess and adheres to themes that were developed for the landscape's garden spaces, reflecting Stevens' background as an educated landscape architect. These gardens were the repository for plants from important California nurseries and Santa Barbara gardens, as shown by invoices that remain in the Casa's archives.<sup>105</sup> Based on invoices and drawings,

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<sup>102</sup> In his invaluable article on "The Garden at the Casa del Herrero," David Streatfield notes, but does not specify, Riedel's involvement at the Casa. Subsequent writers, such as Griswold & Weller and Power & Heeger, have apparently inflated his importance. The only documents uncovered concerning Riedel are payments for his services (written to Stevens) and invoices mentioning him in terms of labor and supplying bamboo. See the Riedel bio below.

<sup>103</sup> Horticultural information provided by Susan Chamberlin, landscape historian, based on surveys of the documents and an on-site analysis. An unusually rich horticultural record could be reconstructed from invoices Steedman meticulously saved, however several key years are missing, and this work remains to be done.

<sup>104</sup> Fungus infestations, which have eliminated conifers throughout the county, may explain this.

<sup>105</sup> One invoice, dated April 1926, from O. Niedermuller, another important Santa Barbara landscape figure, is for "moving plants from Arlington grounds." The Arlington Hotel, a victim of the 1925 earthquake, had a famous garden that dated to the Victorian era. Another invoice lists cactus and succulents that were moved from the Wright's famous cactus garden at their estate, Quien Sabe. In addition to numerous Santa Barbara Nurseries, most notably E. O. Orpet's, plants were purchased from—among others—Armstrong

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 44**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

probably the most historically significant species are found in the Orchard and in the Cactus Garden. Much work still needs to be done to survey this material. The entry court by the front door includes much of its original plant material and is a beautiful example of the 1920s innovation of subtropicals used for foundation planting where winters are mild.

The Cactus Garden in itself is worthy of landmark status because of its historic significance and integrity. David Streatfield notes that by the early years of the twentieth century, a cactus garden was an “almost indispensable feature of large California gardens,” and he attributes the fashion to Rudolph Ulrich, who created “Arizona Gardens” at nineteenth century resort hotels and on the Stanford estate, now Stanford University.<sup>106</sup> George Washington Smith’s own first house had cactus and other succulents growing around the front door, one of the earliest examples of a landscape use for the plants where they were not confined to a separate garden area. This is also the treatment in front of the Gardener’s Cottage at the Casa del Herrero. Famous cactus gardens in Santa Barbara were once found at Mrs. Ellwood (Sarah) Cooper's home (she introduced dragon trees to the region); the J. Waldron Gillespie estate, El Fureidis, established in 1893;<sup>107</sup> John D. Wright estate, Quien Sabe; Amy Du Pont’s garden, Casa Del Sueño (a fraction of which remains); the garden of Ann Stow Fithian on the Thorne estate, Las Tejas; and Ralph Stevens’ childhood home, Tanglewood (now Lotusland). Following Dr. Francesco Franceschi, E. O. Orpet was the most important local propagator of succulents; both introduced various species to the region and greater California. Probably the area's most famous cactus garden is at Lotusland, much of which was designed by Ralph Stevens for Madame Ganna Walska c. 1940—1950; it is now altered. Stevens also designed the iconic succulent garden at the Tremaine House in 1949; it, too, is now altered.

As he had with the house, Steedman began modifying the gardens almost at once, and continued to develop them over several years. The overall emphasis was to create more formal and axial elements in the entry motor court, eastern gardens, and in the rear garden south of the house, while simplifying and opening up some of the spaces. A series of Islamic-style water features, inspired by the Alcazar Gardens of Seville and the Generalife of Granada, was added as the organizing device to the south, and the East Exedra and Rose Garden were added to the east. Lockwood de Forest, Jr., was responsible for much of the spatial reorganization to the north and south, while the new water features, East Exedra, and Rose Garden were apparently designed by Steedman with the advice of the Bynes. However, the highly decorative water features—pools, fountains, and runnel—bear a strong conceptual resemblance to those developed in the gardens at Smith’s own home.

Steedman’s correspondence reveals a lack of confidence in Stevens' design abilities, and he turned to Lockwood de Forest as his primary designer in 1925. However, Stevens returned to consult several times in 1930, and his draftsman spent at least 28 hours on “planting plans.” It appears from the invoices that Stevens selected additional orchard trees, numerous fuchsias and ferns; perhaps the fern plantings in the Pepper Tree Fountain garden originate at this time.

**Lockwood de Forest III** (1896-1949) was known professionally as Lockwood de Forest, Jr. (His father was a painter and a business partner of Louis Comfort Tiffany). Born in New York City, de Forest attended Thatcher

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Nurseries of Ontario, Paul J. Howard's and Howard & Smith of Los Angeles, the California Nursery Company of Niles, Evans Gardens of Santa Monica and Evans & Reeves of Los Angeles, Theodore Payne of Los Angeles, and Berkeley Horticultural Nursery.

<sup>106</sup> David C. Streatfield, “The Garden at Casa del Herrero,” note 17, p. 293. See also Julie Cain, “Rudolph Ulrich's Arizona Gardens.” Many of these Arizona gardens were formal with bedded-out succulents. For informal cactus gardens in Santa Barbara, see Dobyns, *California Gardens*, plates 176-177.

<sup>107</sup> “Introduction” by Ralph Hoffmann in *Cacti and Other Succulents* edited by Pearl Chase, p. 10.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 45**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

School in Ojai, California, briefly attended Williams College, worked for a landscape architect in Baltimore, and took a class at Harvard in landscape architecture before volunteering to serve in World War I. Following the war, he spent one year in the Landscape Architecture program at the University of California, Berkeley, and then went on a grand tour of Europe to study gardens and plants. De Forest worked for Ralph Stevens for about one year beginning in 1921, and he opened his own office shortly thereafter. His work at the Casa del Herrero took place early in his career. Stevens had hired him to do drafting on some of the early site plans, and when Steedman asked de Forest to remodel the southern lawn area in 1925, it was apparently to flesh out the suggestions of Francis T. Underhill. However, de Forest's later remodeling of the entry sequence and creation of the Entrance Courtyard were critical to the success of these areas.

De Forest is considered a brilliant and innovative designer who had a flair for simple, architectonic spaces that reflected the regional landscape through plants, materials, and carefully composed views. He participated in the master planning process and collaborated with Beatrix Farrand on the design for the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, a county landmark where California native plants are arranged in a park-like setting, not as specimens.

He is seen as an important figure in the move toward modernism and away from the historic styles employed at the Casa and elsewhere. With his wife, Elizabeth Kellam de Forest, he founded and co-edited *The Santa Barbara Gardener* (1925-1942), which is widely regarded as one of the best early gardening magazines published on the West Coast. It ceased publication when Lockwood de Forest left his practice to serve in World War II. One of the first to champion drought-tolerant and native plants, his essay, "Do Lawns Belong in Southern California?" appeared in a national publication and is a landmark in West Coast landscape theory. De Forest also practiced architecture, notably at Val Verde, the Ludington estate, where he also redesigned the gardens. His work was featured in *The Architectural Forum*, *House Beautiful*, and *Country Life in America*. Not considered an advocate of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, his work at the Casa is some of the most historically-based of his career. Like Stevens, de Forest is an important twentieth-century, American landscape architect and has been credited with introducing a modernistic approach to landscape design in California.<sup>108</sup>

**Francis Townsend Underhill** (1863-1929) was both an architect and a landscape gardener. He was born in New York into a prominent family. He represented New York City in Congress for one term and served under his friend, Theodore Roosevelt, in the Spanish-American War. Underhill visited Santa Barbara for its healthy climate for several years before purchasing a ranch in the Santa Ynez Valley in 1885. In 1904 he bought another ranch in Santa Barbara to raise horses and rare plants and built a house he called La Chiquita which is considered a landmark in the evolution of the California Bungalow and survives today as the Ty Warner Cottage on the grounds of the Biltmore Hotel. Underhill married Carmelita Dibblee, a descendant of one of Santa Barbara's most important founding families, in 1906. With no formal training, he opened an office in Montecito in 1910, where he practiced architecture and landscape architecture for the region's affluent winter visitors.

Underhill's well-proportioned and abstract classicism, both in buildings and gardens, is considered a hallmark of his design. The Willis Ward estate (1914) is a landmark in the evolution of the California garden for its spatial relationships and its unirrigated meadow. Underhill's water gardens and pool house at Arcady, the George Owen Knapp estate, in Montecito, were widely known and admired. Other lauded commissions included the Billings and Peabody estates. Underhill was president of the Santa Barbara Club when Steedman stayed there in 1925; presumably they knew one another through this connection. He was an influential member of the Montecito County Water District, and was an expert on roses and dahlias. One of Underhill's most important contributions to California's Spanish-influenced style of the 1920s was the role he played in the

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<sup>108</sup> David Streatfield's book on de Forest is forthcoming. The most complete bio to date is found in Karson, *Genius for Place*.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 46**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

preservation and restoration of Casa de la Guerra, his wife's family home, which had been featured in the 1840 book, *Two Years Before the Mast*, by Richard Henry Dana. It was incorporated into the El Paseo shopping plaza designed by James Osborne Craig. Today the adobe is an historic landmark, and Underhill's garden design has been eliminated. His work at the Casa del Herrero was apparently limited to advising de Forest on the south garden remodeling. This was late in Underhill's career after he had already closed his office due to his poor health.<sup>109</sup>

Other designers were consulted, including **Ruth Johnston**, landscape architect; and **Thomas B. Johnson**, for the Rose Garden; as well as **Jessie M. Phillips**, landscape architect, of Pasadena; but their contributions appear to be minimal.<sup>110</sup>

### A Reverse Design Process for House and Garden

In a process that seems anachronistic today—analogy can be made with Hearst's San Simeon, though on a much smaller scale—the Steedman Estate was to some extent designed to accommodate a collection of antique furniture, decorative art, and building fragments that Steedman purchased in Spain in 1923 and Italy in 1924. Arthur Byne, an American expatriate living in Madrid guided most of the purchases, as he was doing this simultaneously for Hearst and Hearst's architect, Julia Morgan. Byne and his wife Mildred Stapley, antiquarians by profession, were essential to Steedman's vision of a home and gardens evocative of the best of Spanish culture and design.

**Arthur Byne** (1884-1935) and his wife **Mildred Stapley Byne** (1875-1941) had established a high reputation for connoisseurship of European, especially Spanish, antiques and design. Working independently and with the Hispanic Society of America in New York, they published a series of scholarly books and articles between 1911 and 1931 that contributed to the intellectual framework for the Spanish Colonial Revival movement. Byne enrolled in the Architecture Department at the University of Pennsylvania as a special student in 1903. He received a Certificate of Proficiency in Architecture in December 1905 and then spent a year at the American Academy in Rome. Byne was a prolific and talented delineator and watercolorist. Reproductions of his drawings of Spanish buildings appeared on fifteen covers of *Architectural Record* between 1911 and 1920. The importance of these covers in promoting an appreciation for Spanish Colonial Revival design cannot be overestimated.

The Bynes traveled extensively in Spain before moving permanently to Madrid around 1920, where they changed careers in Madrid, becoming antiquarians supplying furniture, decorative arts and occasionally entire buildings to American collectors, most notably William Randolph Hearst, whose architect, Julia Morgan, designed his stately home, or "castle" (La Cuesta Encantada) at San Simeon, California, to incorporate them. Steedman's collection of antiquities for the Casa del Herrero is part of this context but on a more modest scale. The Bynes accompanied Steedman on his trip through Spain, Portugal and Majorca in 1923, advising on his purchases for the Casa. They also later advised on specific aspects of the estate's design and served as his liaison to the Chemla tile company in Tunisia. They met again in France in 1924 where, at Steedman's request, Byne reworked the design for the entrance hall of the Main House and the Pepper Tree Fountain. Mildred

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<sup>109</sup> De Forest's 23 November 1925 drawing, "Sketch Suggestions for South Lawn, George F. Steedman, Esq." located in the UC Berkeley Environmental Design Archive, states that the "scheme" was suggested by Underhill. Steedman noted that his penciled-in changes would not alter "the fundamentals of Mr. Underhill." For Underhill see "Underhill, Francis Townsend" by David Streatfield in *Pioneers of American Landscape Design* edited by Birnbaum and Karson and its bibliography, Myrick's *Montecito*, and "In Memoriam" in *The Santa Barbara Gardener*, September 1929, p. 2.

<sup>110</sup> Phillips billed for a professional consultation in September 1933; hours and purpose not noted.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 47**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Stapley's participation in selecting the tile is confirmed in a letter to Steedman written from Tunis on January 9, 1924. Their work at the Casa and at Hearst's San Simeon estate can be seen as the culmination of their careers as the popularity of the Spanish style they had championed in the 1920s faded during the Great Depression. Arthur Byne was an honorary member of the American Institute of Architects and was awarded the Cross of Merito Milita for scientific research by the Spanish Minister of War in 1927.

The most significant example of reverse architectural design at the Casa is the entrance hall, whose dimensions were predicated on a fifteenth-century Gothic ceiling removed from a convent in the Province of Teruel in southern Aragon. Of the old Spanish doors acquired for the house, probably only one determined architectural form. This is the seventeenth-century Mudejar door and frame from Ecija, a type suggested by Smith and installed in the second floor hall. Doors could be and were adjusted to fit (by Marshall Laird, a Los Angeles cabinetmaker); the *rejas* or iron window grilles were less malleable. Though purchased with specific locations in mind, the *rejas* ultimately determined the specific size of the window openings. The finest *rejas* identified by Steedman are on the stairway and beauty parlor windows on the front façade and on the living and dining room windows opening to the loggia at the rear.

In a letter of July 18, 1923, Steedman indicated to Smith that there was "no hurry in having any conference on the house plans until the Spanish purchases arrive." This reveals the degree of coordination between the furniture and the layout of the house Steedman had in mind. Steedman followed up in December with plans of the first and second floors in which virtually all the Spanish items were accounted for, each coded in accordance with his own handwritten inventories. Steedman returned to Europe in 1924, this time to Italy, and purchased much of the decorative stonework that embellishes the garden today. The door surround, which he identified as "Byzantine," leading from the western garden into the garage court is the most important example of architectural cause and effect.

The Bynes' consulting work for Steedman coincided with their growing familiarity of historic and contemporary gardens in Southern Spain, which led to a series of well-illustrated articles for *Architectural Record* in 1923 and 1924 and finally the publication of *Spanish Gardens and Patios* in 1924. During this period many of Smith's other clients, many of them residents of Montecito, worked through the Bynes to acquire antique features—such as tiles, well-heads, and pools, (called *estanques* by the Bynes), for their homes and gardens. Steedman clearly appreciated the connoisseurship and expert advice of the Bynes on matters of garden design. Their writings help illuminate the inspiration that Seville's famous Alcazar gardens had on Steedman's use of tiles as well as the renewed interest in their use among modern-day European designers for places in Seville such as the Medinaceli Gardens and the Parque de Maria Luisa:

"The only decorative accessory is the *azulejo*. Indeed, these gardens are a veritable museum of fine mellowed sixteenth-century *azulejos*; yet for all their prodigality there is a restraint as compared with the new Sevillian work. This is particularly noticeable in the pavements, mostly in unglazed dark red without coloured insets. On the other hand fountains, basins, benches, stairs, and the Emperor's pavilion, are all in polychrome. Best among the fountains are those at the intersections of paths—low, star-shaped, and treated in yellows, greens, and blues. These appear to have been taken as the model for every new fountain placed in Seville in the last ten years."<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Byne and Byne, *Spanish Gardens and Patios*, 1928, p. 194.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 48**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

The polychromatic tiles that graced and enlivened the gardens of the Alcazar Palace in Seville set a standard of craftsmanship and design that Steedman endeavored to emulate in the decorative character of his house and gardens. He engaged both his architect, George Washington Smith, and consulting antiquarians Arthur and Mildred Bynes, in his search for authentic historic materials as well as the artistic use of acceptable contemporary tiles—ones that approximated the quality, craftsmanship, and beauty of antique originals. The tile more than any other characteristic lends the country place estate a sense of stylistic unity, authenticity, and distinction that is unparalleled in other estates of its period and region. Unlike the grandeur, extravagance and highly eclectic results that distinguish Hearst's estate, the use of tile and other antique pieces at Steedman's home remains true to the scale, character, and simplicity of the Spanish prototypes that inspired them.

A variation of the reverse design process that shaped the character of the main house is also evident in the estate's landscape design. Despite his use of irrigation and affinity for lush semi-tropical plantings (particularly evident in the fern garden on the South Lawn and around the Entrance Court), Steedman appreciated and honored the subtle but distinctive role of water in the Andalusian garden. Garden features, some using antique tiles, were created following the models proffered by the Alcazar Gardens in Seville and other Spanish gardens. Especially notable are the exedras and pools which, when viewed from the loggia, window, or balcony of the second story, shimmer in the sunlight and ripple in the breeze. The development of water features, such as Peacock Pool and Pepper Tree Fountain, where one hears the gentle sound of water running through a narrow runnel or splashing over the rim of a tiled basin, recall the Bynes' words about the sparing use of water in the Spanish garden:

“Water, seen and heard, was a more indispensable part of the garden design than the plants themselves. Arid Spain was made fertile by Moorish irrigation. The Moors were great hydraulicians, and what one sees today of scientific irrigation is but a miserably small fraction of what they left when driven out of the Peninsula. In using water as a decorative adjunct to the garden the scarcity of supply influenced the manner of its application. A very little had to be made to look like a great deal....Water was too precious to lie silent in a broad expanse; it had to be confined in terra-cotta canals and made to murmur through all its course.”<sup>112</sup>

According to the Bynes, pools and basins required special design to display water to its best advantage and heighten its effect so that “it glides over [the rim], sparkles in the sun, and increases the luster of the tiles in so doing, then is caught in an outer gutter and carried off in an open canal.” A fountain was to be glazed in tile because “its glazed surface makes a thin film of sunlit water gliding over seem greater in volume.”<sup>113</sup>

### **Search for Perfection**

The attention that Steedman lavished on the **tilework** throughout the main house and gardens was substantial and is indicative of his intense involvement in the design process as well as the collaborative relationship he forged among his designers. Steedman became particularly concerned about the quality of tile used on the estate when he exhausted his sources for antique tile. Steedman, at Smith's suggestion and through the personal intervention of the Bynes, established a rapport and business arrangement with the firm, Les Fils de J. Chemla, of Tunis in North Africa. The firm was able to produce a wide variety of tiles to Steedman's specifications and, in some cases, to Steedman's own hand-drawn designs.

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 49**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

In 1923, during his trip abroad, Steedman purchased a limited number of antique tiles and larger quantities of modern Sevillian tile but soon realized that he needed much more. He explained to Smith that he “did not have sufficient time in Spain to study the modern tile market -- what I saw led me to believe that it was very difficult to find good modern Spanish tile – but that it may be possible to find some small manufacturer who makes and decorates his tile by hand” and indicated that he was writing to Arthur Byne, asking him to try to locate such a tile maker. He concluded, “The more I saw of old and new tiles in Spain the surer I became that we should use but very little tile.”<sup>114</sup>

Smith responded: “The only tile I have ever found that I can use satisfactorily other than antique tile, is a tile made in Tunis by, I understand, an old Spanish family, made by hand.” He was referring to the Chemla firm and later suggested that Arthur Byne arrange to purchase this tile. Steedman did not at first accept this suggestion, writing on August 24 that he had samples of the Tunis tile and felt “almost certain Mr. Byne can get as good or better tile in Spain at a small fraction of the cost.” On September 10 Byne wrote the following to Smith, “Mr. Steedman is much concerned over tiles for his house (as he has every reason to be). I am frankly not in favor of modern Spanish tiles; I am sure more artistic results can be had in America for less money. As to the Tunis Tiles I have never seen any but have often heard them praised. Of course old Spanish tiles, to my mind, are always preferable but difficult to obtain in uniform quantities.” Byne followed up two days later in a letter to Steedman stating, “I will gladly undertake anything I can in connection with the Casa del Herrero so far as tiles are concerned.”<sup>115</sup>

Byne revisited the issue in December, asking Steedman for a list of the tile that would be needed “so that I can get it going in the works here.” Smith sent the list in December, again holding out for Tunisian tile. Steedman gave Byne full “discretion and authority” to select the tile with the reminder, “I want to keep things simple and don’t want to do anything needlessly extravagant, and I always try to lean toward the simple, conservative thing rather than the highly organized or showy.”<sup>116</sup>

The Bynes went to Tunis in January 1924 to obtain the tile. The process took on a life of its own, as Mildred Stapley reported:

Fourth day in Tunis....Imagine how our hopes were dashed on finding Chemla ill; we were left to ramble over his pottery works - a mere yard where a number of Arabs are working in the same primitive manner that you saw at Fajalanfa outside Granada....

We picked out the tiles whose design most approached the Spanish, had a large basket of them brought to the hotel, & have since been laying the floor of our room in a thousand different schemes. The designs are not exactly what we hoped to encounter, but the technique surpasses everything in Spain....

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<sup>114</sup> Steedman to Smith, July 16, 1923, George Washington Smith Collection, University of California, Santa Barbara.

<sup>115</sup> Smith to Steedman, July 23, August 7, 1923. Steedman to Smith, August 24, 1923 George Washington Smith Collection, University of California, Santa Barbara; Byne to Smith, September 10, 1923. Byne to Steedman, September 12, 1923, Casa del Herrero Archives.

<sup>116</sup> Byne to Steedman, ca. October 1923 (not in archives; mentioned in Steedman to Smith, October 29, 1923). Smith to Steedman, December 4, 1923. Steedman to Byne, December 11, 1923. George Washington Smith Collection, University of California, Santa Barbara

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 50**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

As foreseen, Chemla...had never seen a blue print. The array of them frightened him. Of all that was explained to him he seized but one motif: being an Oriental he took immediately to the idea of making a fountain. In fact...we begin to fear that nothing else will be done till the little garden embellishment is turned out to his satisfaction!

Never mind, we are going to see it through....A. is making drawings day & night, explicit down to the last detail, all numbered & lettered in French according to the specimens we have selected.<sup>117</sup>

Five days later, Byne reported that he had "just this minute terminated with M. Chemla....We have gone into the question of the tiles for the Casa del Herrero in a most exhaustive manner." He continued:

My wife wrote you of some of the difficulties we were experiencing: the truth is we could never begin to tell you all the troubles we have had. To begin with, let me say that a hand-made product in a land like ours, for example, very much assisted by every known mechanical appliance is a very different thing from a hand-made product in Africa where nothing else but a primitive tradition is known....

And now as to the decorative quality of the tiles: they are very beautiful but our task was made extremely difficult for the reason that there is no stock to draw from....Fortunately for us there is a most excellent museum of old Persian and Tunisian tiles and with these before me I was able to design a sufficient number of patterns. I made full size drawings of all these with color-notes and in each case referring definitely to the old example from wh[ich] I copied. There is no doubt in my mind about Chemla's ability to reproduce these as all the chemical side of the work has long been the family patrimony and they can secure most artistic results....

Another difficulty was that all Chemla's tiles, like the Persian they follow, have the various patterns outlined by a dark line of manganese wh[ich] keep the colors from running together: now this is contrary to the Spanish tradition and in some cases very bad....I worked days with Chemla to convince him of this. Now he can do it and is enthusiastic over the thought. At the same time I didn't dare try the experiment in very important places. So you see, in many ways, I was much held down by local traditions – wh[ich] are of a pottery nature more than architectonic.

Still I am confident you will receive a stack of excellent tiles...<sup>118</sup>

A letter from Byne written a week later reveals his intentions:

Have created a stair in black and green, I think very effective. I am not so sure about the advisability of the dado, think twice before doing it as it is apt to rob the stair walls of their simplicity. For my taste the black 'scrub' will suffice....Worked very hard over the dressing room and lavatory. Tried for black and silver scheme but Chemla wasn't sure of himself. Smith's scheme in blue and white alone I felt would be cheerless. My scheme is

<sup>117</sup> M. S. Byne to Steedman, January 9, 1924. George Washington Smith Collection, University of California, Santa Barbara

<sup>118</sup> Byne to Steedman, January 14, 1924. George Washington Smith Collection, University of California, Santa Barbara.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 51**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

much more colorful – blue, green, yellow, and white....Baths gave me much to worry over and will worry you still ... You must simplify the panel forms and regulate heights. Much of the success here depends on the colors Chemla secures particularly the apple green...This Tunisian tile is going to be a 'great adventure.' If they turn out well I should like to be around – if not, well....<sup>119</sup>

### Other Designers

A number of other designers and artists assisted Steedman as he developed his country estate in the period between 1922 and his death in 1940. During this time he continually refined the design, adapting it to his evolving stylistic taste, the expanding horticultural interests of Mrs. Steedman and himself, his increasing time and talent as a metal-smith and craftsman, as well as practical daily needs.

**Edwards, Plunkett and Howell** was an important Santa Barbara architectural firm from 1925-1940 and an influential force in promoting the Spanish Colonial Revival style of architecture due to numerous commissions following the 1925 earthquake. William Albert Edwards (1888-1976) was born in Santa Barbara and attended the University of California at Berkeley before receiving a degree in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania in 1912. He practiced in Santa Barbara until the 1925 earthquake, when he began his partnership with Joseph Plunkett (1900-1946), who was a master of the quick sketch. Plunkett was born in New York and attended Syracuse University. He moved to California in his junior year and never finished his degree, but he immediately found work with architects due to his skill. Henry Howell (1889-1962) joined the firm in 1926 but left in 1928 to begin his own practice. Among the notable buildings the firm designed (many without Howell) are the Fox-Arlington Theater, the Santa Barbara Airport Terminal, parts of the Santa Barbara County Courthouse (uncredited), and numerous small buildings and residences including the Copper Coffee Pot (Aldo's) on State Street, Santa Barbara Fire Station #3 on East Sola Street, and Rockwood (also known as the Santa Barbara Women's Club). Their work at the Casa is strong but little known because the Pump House and Butler's Cottage are unpublished outbuildings and have not been open to the public.

**Floyd E. Brewster** (1888-1971), a Cornell graduate, designed a number of Santa Barbara buildings including his own house on Mission Canyon Road and the Hazard Memorial Museum of Comparative Oology (now the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History), completed in 1922. Brewster began working in George Washington Smith's office in 1923. In October 1933 Brewster, devastated by the Great Depression, wrote to Steedman urgently requesting a \$400 loan, explaining that he was about to lose his house. Steedman took him under his wing and offered him temporary work in his shop if necessary. He noted later that "Brewster worked on drawings from 3/3/34 to 6/8/34 and worked out \$400 @ 15¢ hour" (seemingly a mathematical impossibility). These drawings led to the new workshop. Besides designing this building, Brewster's primary responsibility at the Casa was supervising construction and serving as a liason between Smith and Steedman. The house Brewster designed for his own family is pictured in Staats' 1929 book, *Californian Architecture in Santa Barbara*.

**Johannes Petrus "Peter" Riedel** (1873-1954) was born in Holland, into a family of German origins. He attended horticulture school in Amsterdam, then immigrated to the United States in 1893. When he arrived in Santa Barbara in 1905, he went into business as a nurseryman. Riedel called himself a "landscape gardener" as early as 1907-1909, when he was partners with the distinguished horticulturist, Dr. Francesco Franceschi (a.k.a.

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<sup>119</sup> Byne to Steedman, January 21, 1924. George Washington Smith Collection, University of California, Santa Barbara.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 52**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

E. O. Fenzi) in the Southern California Acclimatizing Association, which Franceschi had co-founded in 1893. When their partnership dissolved, Riedel became the owner of the SCAA and continued to operate it both as a nursery and as a design-build landscaping company. His work at the Casa was done during a difficult period in his life when he was closing the SCAA and living with his family on the J. D. Wright estate, Quien Sabe, in Montecito, where he designed and maintained the gardens, including the famous cactus garden that was later disbursed to Casa del Herrero and Lotusland in Montecito and to the Henry Huntington estate in San Marino. Riedel did construction and supervision at various times for landscape architect Ralph Stevens. This is apparently his primary role at the Casa del Herrero. There are no invoices for plant material from the SCAA in the Casa archives (although some years are missing), but he did supply bamboo. Riedel first listed himself as a "landscape architect" in the Santa Barbara city directory in 1929, and several important commissions are attributed to him. Riedel's perfectionism was always a problem for his business, however, and his true love was horticulture. He retired from landscape architecture in 1934 to become a teacher of landscape architecture and horticulture and the chief consulting arborist for the Santa Barbara Parks Department. His important book, *Plants for Extra-Tropical Regions*, was published posthumously in 1957 by the California Arboretum Foundation.<sup>120</sup>

**John H. Hartfeld** (1893-1965), the former superintendent of grounds at the E. W. Marland estate in Ponca City, Oklahoma, was the first gardener at the Casa del Herrero. Born in Holland and orphaned at the age of three, Hartfeld was hired by Ralph T. Stevens in 1923 to live in the Gardener's Cottage with his family, manage the incoming crates of antiques and tiles shipped from overseas for the Casa, buy plants and help plant the grounds, assist with projects during construction, water, and do garden maintenance. Recruited by philanthropist Dwight Murphy, Hartfeld left the Casa in 1930 to become the Superintendent of the City of Santa Barbara's Parks Department. His leadership during the Great Depression, when the department was an important source of work for the unemployed, made him a popular city official. Hartfeld also designed and built winning floats for the city's entries in Pasadena's Tournament of Roses Parade. He worked for the city until 1935, when he became a landscape architect, landscape contractor, and nurseryman.

**Channing Peake** (1910-1989) was born in Colorado and moved to California at the age of five. After high school in the San Fernando Valley, he attended the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland. His parents moved to Santa Barbara, and he followed in 1928, enrolling in the Santa Barbara School of the Arts. Some time during this period and still quite young, he began working for George Steedman, doing both decorative paintings at the Casa del Herrero, including the powder room ceiling, the library friezes, living room panels, and loggia, and adapting Spanish Gothic artwork into designs for silver for Steedman to craft. Peake also may have worked on the metal garden furniture because some of the designs are consistent with his style. He left the Casa del Herrero in 1934 and traveled to Mexico to study mural painting with Diego Rivera. He was attending the Art Students League in New York around 1937 when an instructor there, Rico Lebrun, tapped him to assist on his murals for the Works Progress Administration Penn Station post office annex. A founding member of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Peake exhibited in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Paris, and Rome. He was also a rancher and larger-than-life local character in Santa Barbara County. He studied and worked in Europe for two years in the 1950s. His work includes murals, paintings, sculptures, and prints. Influenced by Picasso, whom he met several times at his home in the south of France, Peake's later work has an abstract, modern quality. He collaborated with Howard Warshaw on the Don Quixote mural (1958-59), which

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<sup>120</sup> Many details of Riedel's life can be found in an unpublished, 1984 manuscript by his daughter Nellie "Babe" Riedel Preuss entitled "Our Dutch Heritage." There are numerous factual errors about his commissions and his role in the Southern California Acclimatizing Association, which is understandable because the author was working with family documents and memories and not providing a scholarly analysis. For more on Riedel, see Padilla, *Southern California Gardens*, and Chamberlin, "The Life of Dr. Francesco Franceschi and his Park (Part II)."

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 53**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

can still be seen at the Santa Barbara Public Library. The Channing Peake Gallery in the Santa Barbara County Administration Building is named for him. His work at the Casa del Herrero took place very early in his career when he was still in his early twenties. Despite its Gothic inspiration, it has a whimsical character. Peake later said his exposure to Steedman's library, antiques, and Gothic art were influences on his own art.

**Gordon Kenneth Grant** (1908-1940) was born in Oakland, California. He was both a painter and a metal craftsman (specializing in silver.) His Navajo ceremonial pictures were included in the 1936 Olympics art exhibition, and his mural, "Industry and Agriculture," (1936-38) can still be seen at the Ventura post office. Brother of the artist Campbell Grant and a friend of Channing Peake's, Grant began worked at the Casa del Herrero between 1935 and 1940. He assisted George Steedman with his silver work and with the metal garden furniture. While he was still quite young, Grant died in a freak accident involving a miniature canon in the Casa del Herrero Shop.

### Conclusion

As noted by the Cultural Landscape Foundation in Washington, DC, when it awarded the Casa del Herrero a Stewardship Excellence Award in 2002, the property is one of the few Montecito Country Place era estates that has retained its design integrity. With one of the finest gardens of the 1920s in California, Casa del Herrero—House of the Blacksmith—stands today as one of the most fully developed, best-documented, and intact examples of the American Country Place era. Its designed landscape is an outstanding example of the synthesis of contemporary and historic design forces at play in the search for a prototypical solution for southern California. Working with significant architects, landscape architects, and consultants, George Steedman involved himself in every aspect in a quest for the perfect functional and aesthetic solutions. The result is a fusion of architecture, art, horticulture, and landscape design unequalled today on the West Coast. Due to its state of preservation, its original water source, documentation on its irrigation system, its horticultural collection, and its rich association with noted West Coast landscape architects, the Steedman Estate comprises one of the most important residential landscapes of the early twentieth century. It represents an important antecedent in the rise of the modern California style of indoor-outdoor living. The family's wish that the Casa be preserved and their generosity in securing its future are the keys to its integrity. George Washington Smith, writing to George Steedman about the Casa, stated his belief that "it is and will be considered the most successful house in the Montecito valley. I mean this, and have never said it before about any other house."<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Smith to Steedman, May 29, 1925.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 54**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 55**

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**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 56**

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**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 57**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO****Page 58**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

## Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register.
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

## Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University: George Washington Smith Collection, Architecture and Design Collection, University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara; Lutah Maria Riggs Collection, Architecture and Design Collection, University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara; Julia Morgan Collection, Special Collections Department, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; Lockwood de Forest III Collection, Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley.
- Other (Specify Repository): Casa del Herrero, Santa Barbara; Santa Barbara Historical Museum Gledhill Library; Santa Barbara Botanic Garden Blaksley Library; Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History Library.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Acreage of Property: 11 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	11	257800	3813370

Verbal Boundary Description: The Steedman Estate consists of 1) the 10.93 acre parcel identified in the County of Santa Barbara Assessor's Map Book 9, page 06, Parcel 18; and 2) a small discontinuous parcel identified in the County of Santa Barbara Assessor's Map Book 11, page 19, Parcel 8.

Boundary Justification: The boundaries include all of the property associated with the Steedman Estate during the period of significance 1922 to 1940. This includes the 10.93 acre parcel containing the grounds, gardens, houses, and outbuildings, and a nearby but discontinuous, 50-x-33-foot parcel containing the pump house on Picacho Lane.

**STEEDMAN ESTATE/CASA DEL HERRERO**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

**Page 59**

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

Name/Title: Molly Barker  
Executive Director  
Casa del Herrero Foundation

Susan Chamberlin  
Landscape history consultant to the Casa del Herrero Foundation

Robert Sweeney  
President  
Friends of the Schindler House

Address: 1387 East Valley Road  
Santa Barbara, CA 93108

Telephone: 805-969-1554

Date: June 12, 2008

Edited by: Linda Flint McClelland  
National Park Service  
National Historic Landmarks Program  
1849 C St., N.W. (2280)  
Washington, DC 20240

Telephone: (202) 354-2258

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS PROGRAM

February 25, 2009