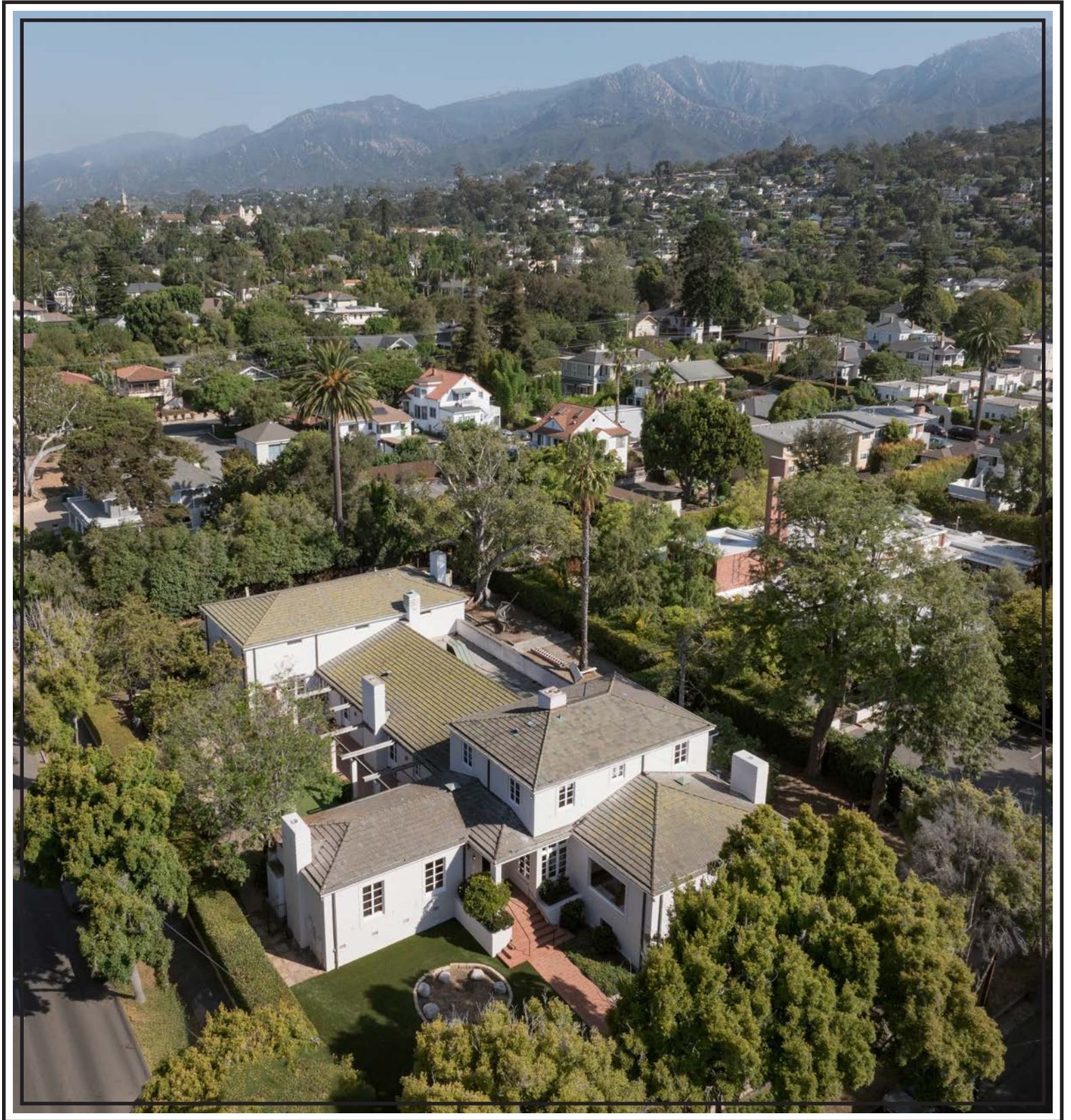


# **The McCormick House**

## **Santa Barbara, California**



**Offered at \$7,500,000**



# The McCormick House

**1600 Santa Barbara Street  
Santa Barbara, California**

**I**n our beautiful Southern California coastal enclave of Santa Barbara, there are a handful properties of highly-prominent significance, and rarely will any come up for sale. Now one of these treasured properties is for sale for the first time in its 85-year history, the McCormick House. Built in 1940 by the celebrated philanthropist Katharine McCormick, and donated in 1968 to the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, the large structure and grounds of the McCormick House offer an estate buyer or an investor a truly one-of-a-kind opportunity to acquire a generational property in the heart of the city.

**A**fter nearly 50 years of use as an art education center by the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, and previously as the private residence of Katherine McCormick, a new owner has a blank slate to re-imagine the approximately 12,500 square-foot structure (per plans), on an 0.72-acre parcel. The A++ location is 3 blocks to downtown Santa Barbara and to the center of the renowned Theater/Arts District; the property also sits as the entry gateway to the prestigious Upper East neighborhood, and is across the street from the gorgeous Alice Keck Park Memorial Garden.



**E**xplore the following pages to learn more about the unique history of the property, and the intriguing possible uses into the future.



## Property Data

**Address:** 1600 Santa Barbara Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**Parcel Number:** 027-192-020

**Lot Size:** 0.72 Acres, 31,363 SF

**Building Size:** 12,538 +/- Square Feet  
per City records, including  
lower level spaces

**Zoning:** R-M (Residential Multi-Family)

**Current Land-Use:** Conditional Use Permit  
for art education center  
(CUP is non-transferable)

**Mills Act:** Eligible to apply for property  
tax reduction with Structure  
Of Merit designation

## Offering Highlights

- Unique and prominent historic property in Santa Barbara's Upper East neighborhood
- Owned and operated since 1968 by the Santa Barbara Museum of Art as an art education center
- Major systems renovation in 1990's
- Future potential uses include as a grand residential estate, or as a creative multi-residence property
- Premier location across from Alice Keck Park Memorial Garden and by downtown Santa Barbara
- The McCormick House is for sale for the 1st time in its 85-year history





**A**n older structure from the late 1800's was the first residence on the property now known as 1600 Santa Barbara Street. By 1940 the property had been acquired under the direction of Katharine McCormick who commissioned a brand-new structure on the property. Katharine McCormick had wealth at the time through marriage to Stanley McCormick, an heir to the International Harvester Company fortune.



**T**he McCormicks were known for their large Montecito property holdings later to be known as Riven Rock. In her own right prior to her marriage, Katharine McCormick had become just the 2nd woman to graduate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1904, with a degree in Biology. Later, Katharine became a noted local philanthropist for the arts, and a national advocate for many social causes. She was largely responsible for the development and growth of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art from the 1940's to the 1960's.

## The McCormick House Era

**T**he new structure Katharine had built at 1600 Santa Barbara Street in 1940 (the address was then known as 203 East Arrellaga Street), was permitted as a recreational building and used for medical therapeutic purposes related to her husband's illness. The floorplan layout with several rooms off of central hallways was the result of this intended use. The architect was the well-regarded Chester Carjola who also designed many notable civic buildings of the period, including the Museum of Art building on State Street.

**I**n 1948 after her husband's death, Katharine McCormick had the building converted to a residence, and over the following decade made alterations and additions to the home. All the changes to the residence were also designed by Chester Carjola, and in the same Minimal Traditional architectural style, providing a consistency of design throughout the structure. Katharine McCormick died at the end of 1967 and willed the property to the Santa Barbara Museum of Art for art education purposes.





# The Santa Barbara Museum of Art Era Ridley-Tree Education Center

**T**he Santa Barbara Museum of Art honored the intentions of Katharine McCormick and worked to establish art education classes at 1600 Santa Barbara Street upon inheriting the property. A formal Conditional Use Permit for this use was approved by the City of Santa Barbara in 1970, and this same use of the property continued into mid-2025. The art education center has been relocated into the main Museum of Art building on State Street, allowing the sale of the property.



**O**ver the 56 years of its operation, the art education center served multiple generations of individuals, families and their children, becoming a favorite local cultural touchstone. In the early 1990's, the property underwent a substantial renovation under the direction of architect Don Nulty. The interiors, foundation and utility systems were upgraded, and much of the landscaping and grounds were re-imagined. Only a few minor exterior changes to the building were made, and those changes continued to respect the Minimal Traditional style.

**T**he building was re-named the Ridley-Tree Education Center in appreciation of donations to the Santa Barbara Museum of Art by Leslie Ridley-Tree, one of Santa Barbara's most generous modern-era philanthropists.

**W**ith a varied past history of multiple uses, the McCormick House provides a potential buyer with different pathways for future uses. While the most recent use for several decades was as an art education annex of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, this use was achieved through a conditional use permit (CUP) for a commercial use which may not transfer to the next property owner, even if the use stayed the same or similar. The R-M zoning would not allow for this commercial use typically, and because of the uncertainty and likely longer time frame to know whether a commercial use similar or otherwise might be allowed by the City of Santa Barbara, the Seller is not likely to entertain Buyer interest for this potential use.

**C**onversely, the unusual and flexible beneficial zoning for this part of town, could allow for future uses either as an unparalleled grand private residential estate, or to develop within the existing historical building into a uniquely beautiful multi-residence property for investment or re-sale.

## A Future Rich in Possibilities

### The McCormick House's Next Chapter

**S**ee the following pages for more context about the future possible uses described on the left. A complete land-use report is available upon request for serious inquiries, along with an historical resources report. The reports detail zoning and land-use rules, and what are the different opportunities, possibilities and constraints for the next property owner. The historic nature of the property may limit exterior modifications and preclude additions to the building footprint, but at the same time may provide significant property tax benefits. A state law called the Mills Act is a possible pathway to reduced property taxes in conjunction with upgrades and maintenance of historical properties, ask about details.







# A Legacy Estate-in-Waiting

## The McCormick House as a Grand Residence

**B**ring your imagination to re-transform the McCormick House back into a private residence for the ages. The structure and grounds offer a buyer a tableau of unmatched home size, history and grandeur for an in-town Santa Barbara location. From the wide gallery-style hallways, to the generous room sizes – including an amazing 60' x 30' regal ballroom with 18-foot ceilings – the approximately 12,500 square feet of living areas (per architect) provide plenty of space for an estate home with all the rooms and amenities the next owner desires. The current configuration does not have traditional living, kitchen or bedroom spaces, but the structure was once a residence; the creative buyer can explore various new residential configurations.



**T**he main entry level of the building comprises ~7,600 square feet, allowing for a future residence to be primarily laid out conveniently on a single story at street level. A lower mostly below-grade level of ~3,800 official habitable square feet is currently purposed for workshops and storage spaces and contains many exposed utilities, but has ample ceiling heights to be resurrected into comfortable multi-purpose living spaces. An added upper level is about 1,100 square feet and has been used most recently as a 4-room guest apartment. The grounds surrounding the residence provide several distinct spaces, including a traditional central courtyard. Refer to the floorplan layout and property site plan later in the booklet.





# A Remarkable Investment Opportunity

## Adaptation to a Uniquely Special Multi-Residence Property

**A**s an alternative to an owner-user re-establishing the McCormick House as a grand residential estate, an investor may be interested in the property due to its location in a land-use zone favorable for a possible conversion of the property to multi-family or condominium use. While considered to be in the first block of estates in the Upper East neighborhood, the property is also in the last block of multi-family (R-M) zoning which is the common zoning designation going further towards downtown. The conversion of the property use to apartments or condominiums is made more appealing for an investor buyer due to the overlay in the City of Santa Barbara Average Unit Density (AUD) zone. Per a land-use report prepared by Suzanne Elledge Planning & Permitting Services, the AUD rules might allow reconfiguration of the McCormick House into up to 20 units, with a 10% affordability component. Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) rules for multi-family housing may allow additional detached dwelling units.

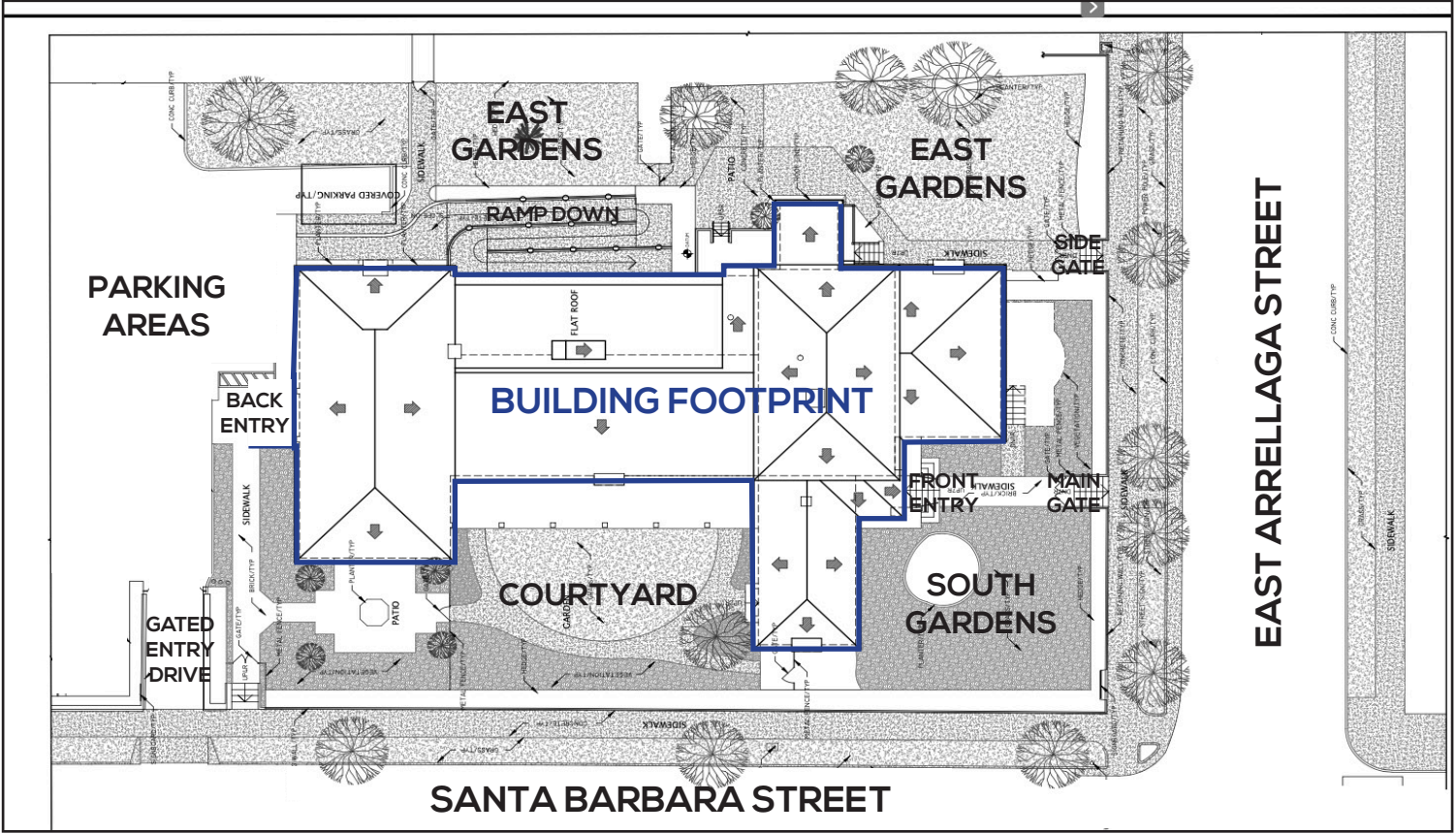
**F**urthering the appeal and financial viability for an investor/developer, is a new law enacted in October 2025 by the City of Santa Barbara, called the Adaptive Re-Use Ordinance, allowing redevelopment within the existing structure of current commercial-use buildings in a multi-family zone. This ordinance eliminates limits on the number of dwelling units, and removes requirements for parking and open spaces. The ordinance also bypasses discretionary review if exterior modifications are minor, providing a financially advantageous ease and brevity to the entitlement process. The possible Mills Act property tax benefits may further improve an investor's return.

Please contact the listing agents for examples of possible layouts of apartments or condominiums inside the existing McCormick House structure, and for a development financial pro-forma. The A+ location within the world-class coastal city of Santa Barbara, the notable and historic nature of the building, and the lack of existing new-condition apartment inventory in classic buildings in Santa Barbara, all combine to provide the creative and savvy investor with a one-of-a-kind multi-residence conversion opportunity.

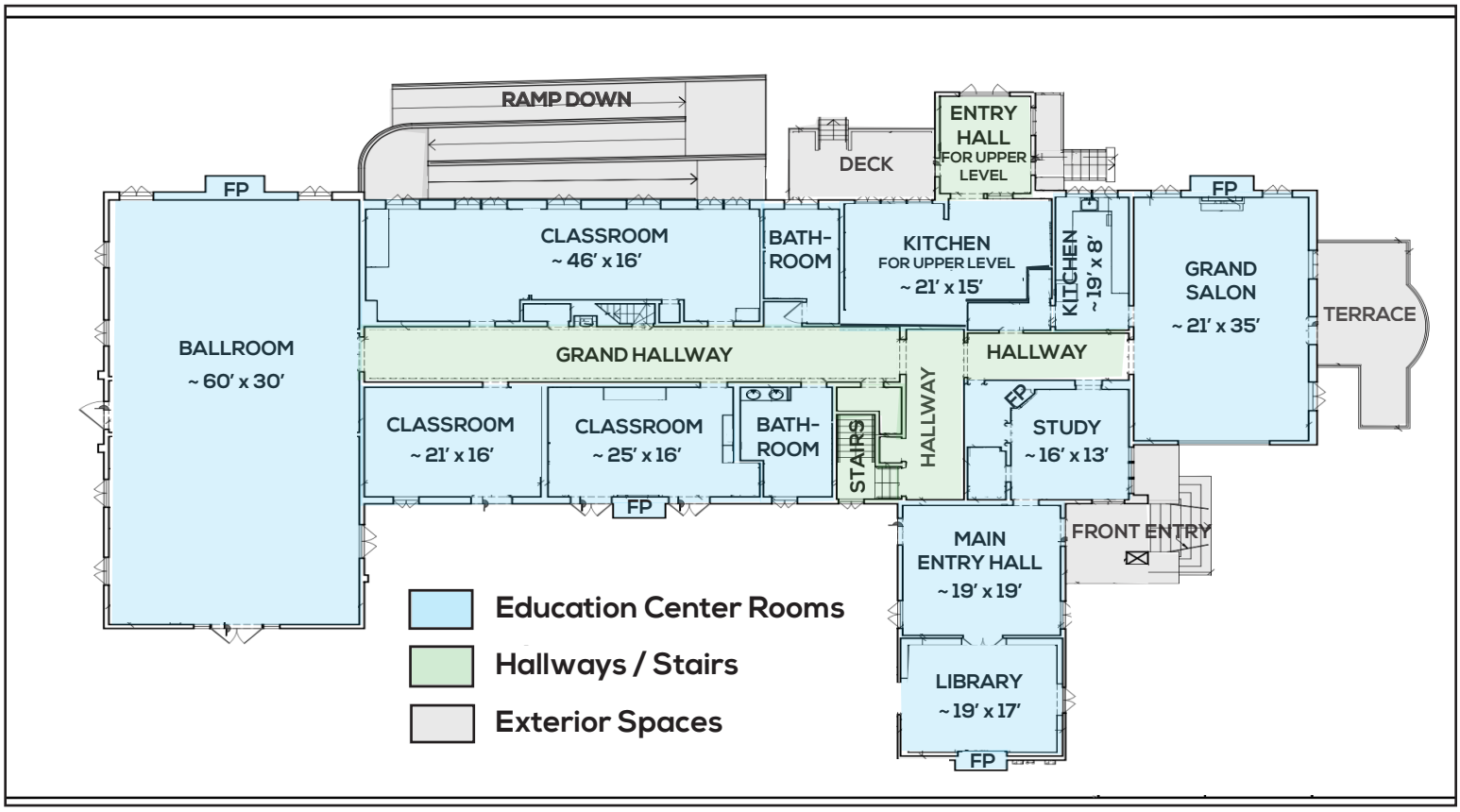
For links to referenced documents above, visit property website at [1600SantaBarbara.com](https://1600SantaBarbara.com) or ask agents for PDF files of the following:

- Land-Use Report
- Historical Resources Report
- Mills Act Handout
- Adaptive Re-Use Ordinance
- Average Unit Density (AUD) Handout
- Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Handout

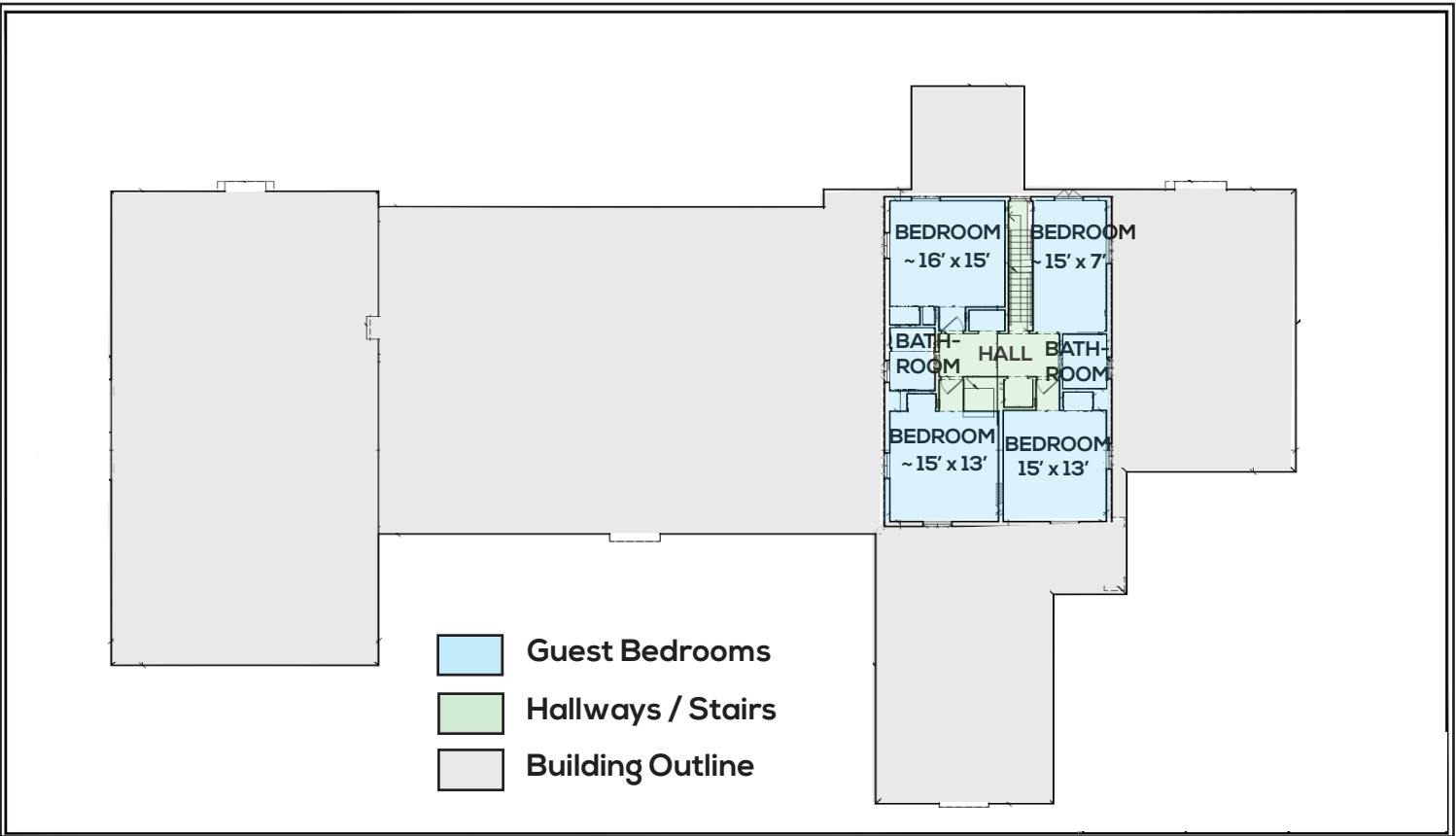
Site Plan



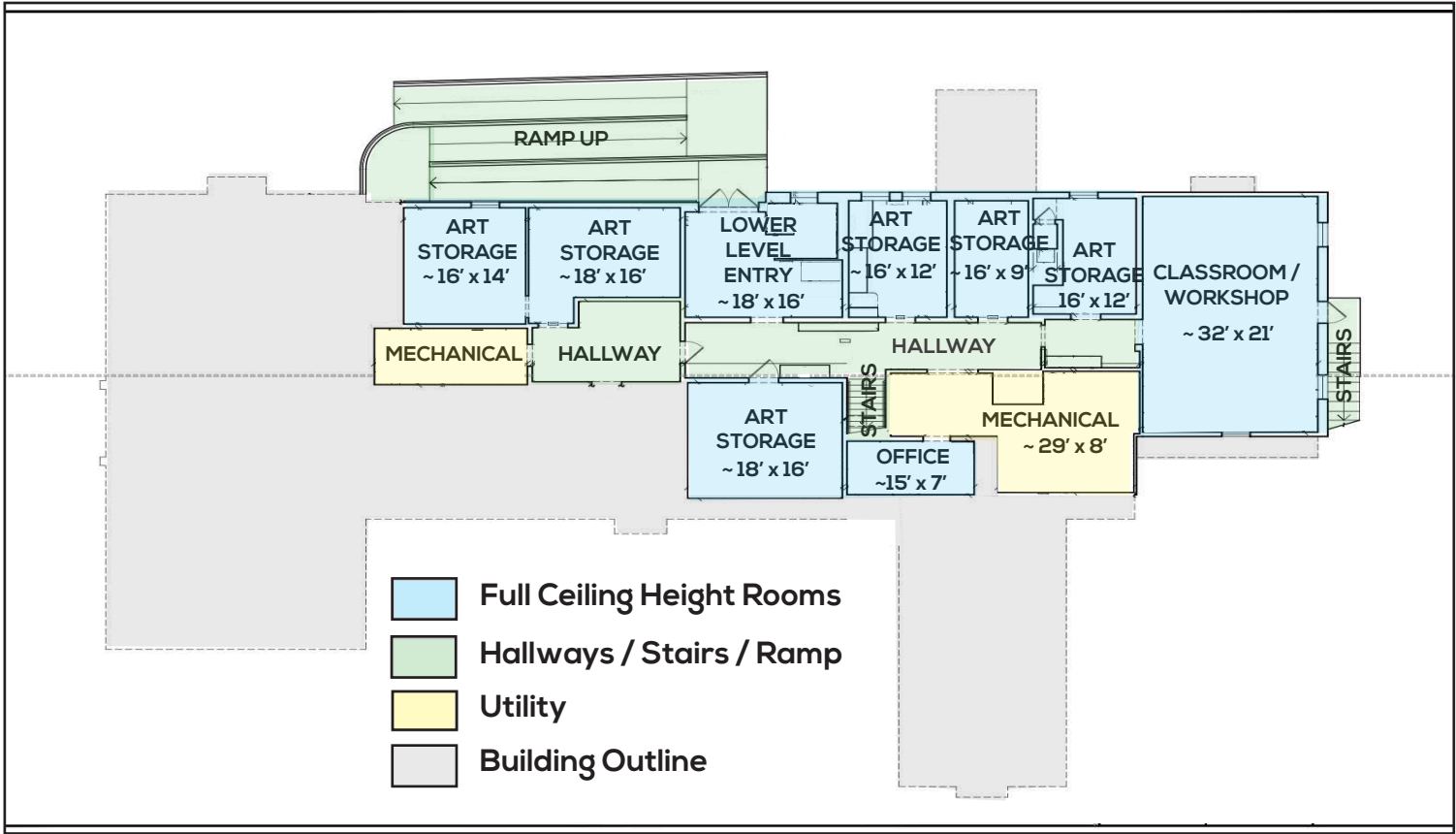
Main Level Floorplan

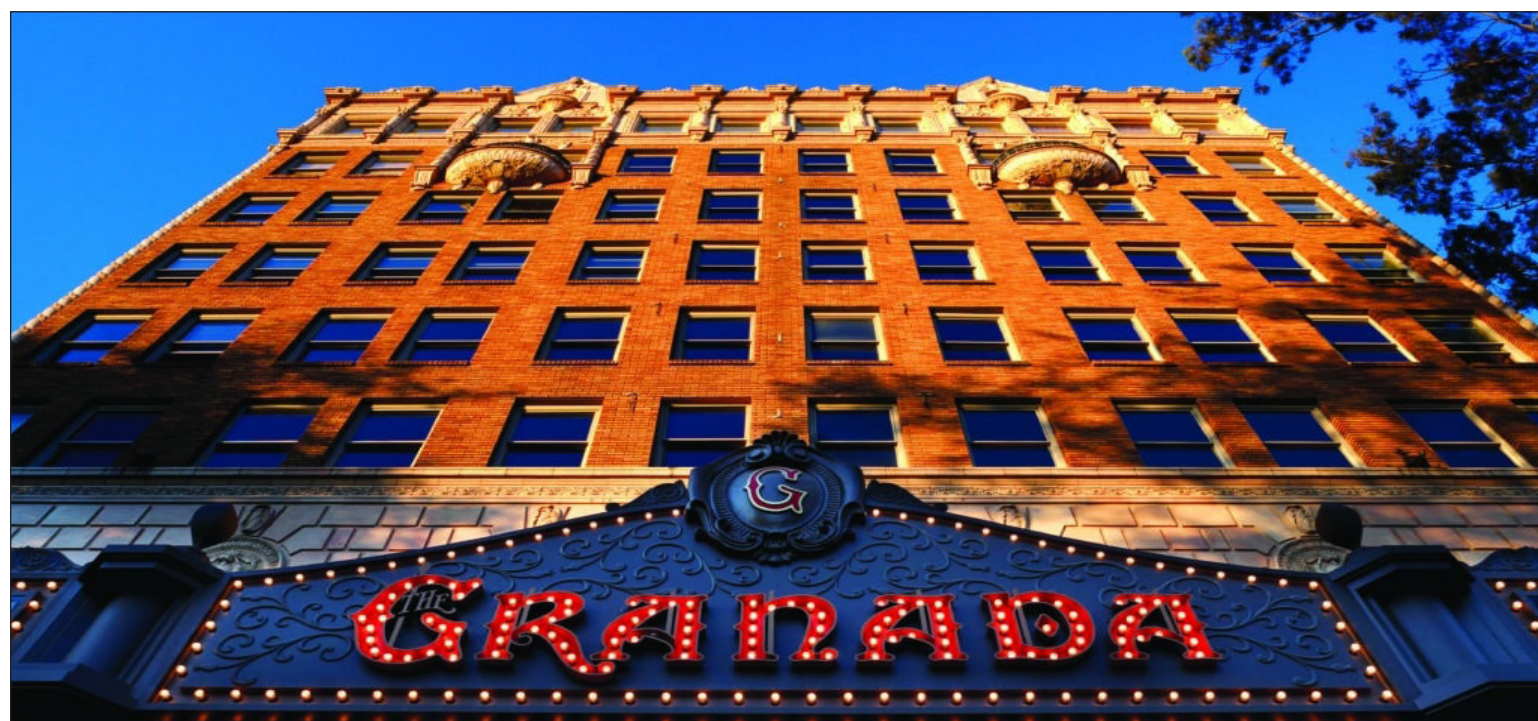


Upper Level Floorplan



Lower Level Floorplan





# An Unmatched Central Location

## In Beautiful Santa Barbara, California

**T**he McCormick House rests at the entrance to the Upper East, which is Santa Barbara's oldest and most prestigious neighborhood. Properties in the Upper East feature large estate homes on lot sizes of typically about a half-acre. The McCormick House's generous building size and lot size make it a fitting portal estate to the Upper East neighborhood.

**T**he location also has the benefit of being the closest grand estate to downtown Santa Barbara, and specifically the upper end of downtown which features the Theater/Arts District. The Theater/Arts district includes 4 major performing arts theaters, dozens of fine dining and other restaurants, boutique shopping, the Public Market, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, the famous Santa Barbara Courthouse, and other cultural and recreational spots. 1600 Santa Barbara Street is within 3-5 blocks of all of the above.



**F**or open space and park lovers, the south entrance of the property faces across the street from the famous Alice Keck Park Memorial Garden, perhaps Santa Barbara's finest park space with exotic gardens, creeks, ponds and fauna. One block further is the 2-block long Alameda Park, Santa Barbara's largest downtown park and home to notable civic cultural event gatherings such as the Solstice Parade celebration and an annual Earth Day commemoration. The beaches and waterfront are 1.5 miles down the street. There may not be a more valued central location than the McCormick House to enjoy the best of what Santa Barbara has to offer, while maintaining the grandeur and privacy of an Upper East estate property.

# View of Downtown Santa Barbara



Waterfront

Funk  
Zone

West  
Beach

Lower Downtown

Theater / Arts  
District

Alameda Park

Alice Keck Park  
Memorial Garden

The McCormick House  
1600 Santa Barbara Street

Santa  
Barbara  
Harbor

Pacific Ocean

← Los Angeles 100 miles  
San Francisco 300 miles →

Theater / Arts  
District

Santa Barbara Mission  
8 Blocks



# The McCormick House

1600SantaBarbara.com

Presented by:

**Ken Switzer**

**805-680-4622**

**KenSwitzer1@yahoo.com**

**DRE: 01245644**

**Josh Ramirez**

**805-455-9066**

**Josh@JoshRamirez.com**

**DRE: 01734132**

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