



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Jimmy's Oriental Gardens & Chung Residence  
Nominated to the National Register of Historic Places**

SANTA BARBARA, CA – The Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation (SBTHP) is pleased to announce that at its February 6, 2026 meeting, the California State Historical Resources Commission voted to add [Jimmy's Oriental Gardens](#), along with the adjacent Chung family house associated with the property, to the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). The National Register is the official list of the Nation's cultural resources worthy of recognition and preservation. The nomination marks an important milestone in recognizing the cultural and historic significance of this beloved local landmark.

Jimmy's Oriental Gardens has long held a special place in Santa Barbara's history. SBTHP purchased Jimmy's Oriental Gardens and the adjacent Chung residence in 2007, citing the property's immense cultural value. California State Parks acquired the restaurant portion of the property from SBTHP in 2014 and added it to El Presidio de Santa Bárbara State Historic Park, which is operated by SBTHP. In 2018, the City of Santa Barbara further acknowledged the site's importance by awarding the building Structure of Merit status.

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The building reflects the layered stories of the Presidio Neighborhood, including its long-standing connections to Chinese and other Asian American communities that have shaped the area for more than a century. The nomination covers both the former restaurant building and the associated residence, which remains under the ownership of SBTHP.

The National Register nomination was written by Heidi Reidel, Associate Planner for the City of Santa Barbara, whose leadership and research were instrumental in documenting the site's history and significance. This project represents a meaningful partnership among the City of Santa Barbara, SBTHP, and California State Parks. "Jimmy's Oriental Gardens and the Chung Family Home are the only remaining buildings from Santa Barbara's historic Chinatown and the Jimmy's building is the only visual representation of Chinese heritage in the area," said Reidel. The nomination process required a lot of work and research, but I felt honored to be a part of protecting these important buildings and it was incredible to learn how well-documented and well-loved Jimmy's legacy is here in Santa Barbara. His family's journey and the impact he left on the community is indicative of the contributions of immigrants to America and the way that complex and layered histories should be celebrated, rather than marginalized," said Reidel.

SBTHP supported the nomination by sharing research, plans, and images. Additional support came from California State Parks, who as the owners of the property, championed the National Register nomination. "The nomination of Jimmy's to the National Register reflects the strength of our partnership with the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation and the City of Santa Barbara. This effort elevates the diverse histories embedded within El Presidio de Santa Bárbara State Historic Park and underscores the importance of telling a fuller, more inclusive story of California's past," said Dena Bellman, District Superintendent for California State Parks.



A key reference guiding the nomination was the California Asian American Context Statement, a statewide framework developed to support the identification and preservation of places significant to Asian American history. This context statement helped inform and expedite the nomination by situating Jimmy's within broader patterns of immigration, business development, and cultural life in California.

Jimmy's Oriental Gardens served as a cultural anchor on Canon Perdido Street. "The Chung family and their business legacy have long been acknowledged and celebrated by the residents of Santa Barbara. It is exciting to see the related buildings achieve national recognition in the effort to acknowledge Chinese Americans' deep contributions to California, and our nation's history," said Anne Petersen, Executive Director of SBTHP. Its history ties together the Presidio Neighborhood's evolution, its diverse community members, and SBTHP's long-term stewardship of the surrounding historic resources. Nomination of the property to the National Register of Historic Places further strengthens SBTHP's mission to preserve and share the layered histories of the site.

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#### ABOUT THE SANTA BARBARA TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Founded in 1963 by Dr. Pearl Chase, the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation (SBTHP) stewards the past and present of the Presidio Neighborhood and inspires preservation advocacy throughout the County in order to create a more vibrant community. SBTHP operates El Presidio de Santa Bárbara State Historic Park, Santa Barbara's 18th century birthplace, under an agreement with California State Parks. In addition to portions of the Spanish fort, El Presidio SHP includes the Alhecama Theatre (1925) and the campus of the Santa Barbara School of the Arts, and Jimmy's Oriental Gardens (1947) the last visible connection to Santa Barbara's Chinatown. The organization also operates Casa de la Guerra, the 1820's adobe home of Presidio Comandante José de la Guerra, and the Santa Inés Mission Mills near Solvang, CA. SBTHP produces dozens of community and school programs throughout the year to provide access to these special historic places. SBTHP is 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; learn more at [sbthp.org](http://sbthp.org).

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