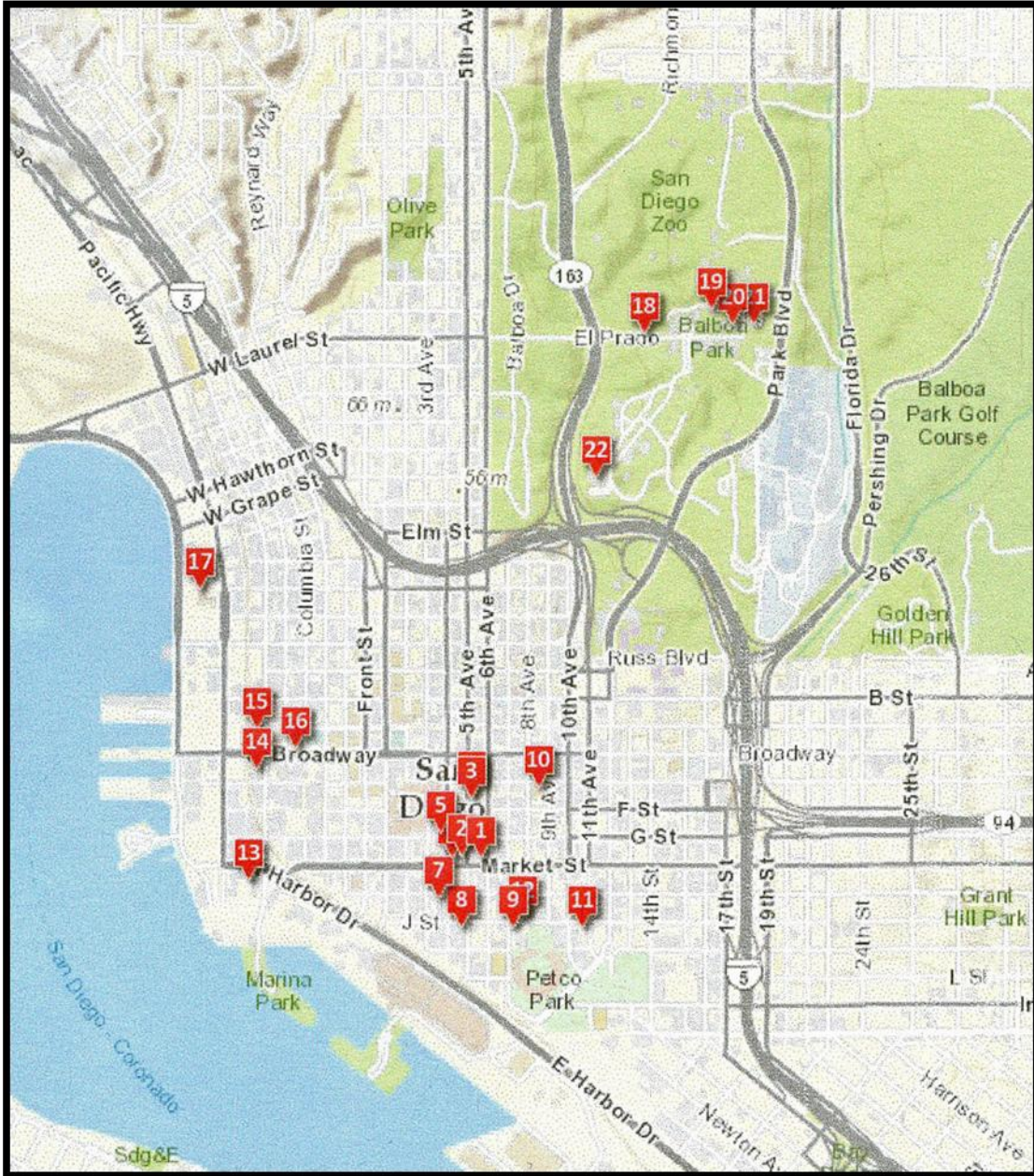


## The Civic & Commercial Architecture of San Diego's Urban Core 1880-1940

Using the photographic resources of The Ned Paynter Collection, we have selected examples of both the residential and the civic and commercial architecture of San Diego's urban core from the establishment of the new downtown through the years of the Great Depression.



The tour has been divided into three sections geographically. Each part follows a chronological sequence slightly modified to eliminate repeated visits to the same area. The route also is designed to accommodate a driver's use of San Diego's one-way streets. Overall the narrative traces the architectural developments from the earliest styles to the latest within the time period.

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## Architectural Styles in San Diego's Urban Core 1880-1940

The urbanization of San Diego began with the arrival of Spanish colonists in 1769. A civilian settlement grew on the river flats below the military outpost on Presidio Hill at the entrance to Mission Valley. This pueblo survived the transition to Mexican sovereignty in 1820 and the establishment of California as a United States territory in 1848. By the 1870s, Alonzo Horton's real estate venture (the Horton's Addition subdivision of 1867) had shifted the center of urban growth from that pueblo (which became Old Town) to a so-called New Town near San Diego Bay. The completion of a connection to the transcontinental railroad system in 1885 led to rapid population growth and a real estate boom that soon collapsed. Following the Crash of 1888, the Census of 1890 showed only 16,200 inhabitants in the city. Many of the oldest surviving buildings in the downtown area date from this time and the following decades of steady growth. By 1910 the population had grown to 39,600, and planning had begun for a fair to celebrate the completion of the Panama Canal. The Panama-California Exposition of 1915-16 in Balboa Park was especially significant in establishing the Spanish Colonial Revival style as a signature for Southern California and an influence on domestic architecture nationwide. Successive waves of construction in various architectural styles prior to World War II created a distinct regional character, a built environment of great diversity.

**The links below lead to Story Map tours of two mutually influential groups of buildings:**

**The Civic & Commercial Architecture of San Diego's Urban Core, 1880-1940**

**The Residential Architecture of San Diego's Urban Core, 1885-1930**

Historical Landmarks designated by the City of San Diego are indicated by the HRB number. Sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places are indicated by their NRHP number. Please respect the premises of private businesses.



**Architectural Styles in San Diego's Downtown:** This is the view from 4th & F in 1990. As seen from the heart of the Gaslamp Quarter, the skyline rising to the northeast was a juxtaposition of architectural statements covering more than a century of San Diego's growth.

**Guidepost for Part One, Gaslamp Quarter & East Village:** Begin your tour at Sixth Ave & Market Street in Downtown. The Gaslamp Quarter is the area including Sixth, Fifth, & Fourth Avenues from Harbor Drive on the south to Broadway on the north. Location 1 is on the NW corner of Sixth & Market.



**1. I.O.O.F. Building, 1882** (HRB #70, #127-088, #207-010; NRHP #78000751) || 526 Market St: Built by Payne & Lack for Masonic Lodge No. 35, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Building contributed to the development of downtown and the local Asian community. Architect Levi Goodrich's Italian Renaissance Revival style conceals structural columns in the cast-iron Doric pilasters.

Directions: 1 block west, Location 2 is the NW corner of Fifth & Market.



**2. Backesto Block, 1884** (HRB #66, #127-037) || 614 Fifth Ave: G. I. Burkett of Burkett & Osgood designed this Classical Revival commercial block to include an existing 1873 brick building. That plan accommodated the Klauber & Levy Grocery, which occupied portions of the building from 1879 to 1887. Additions were built in 1887-88.

Directions: north 2½ blocks on Fifth, Locations 3 and 4 are on the right.



**3. Nesmith-Greely Building, 1888** (HRB #72, #127-057) || 825 Fifth Ave: Architects Comstock & Trotsche mixed Richardsonian Romanesque & Queen Anne Revival. Thomas Nesmith (President, Bank of San Diego) honored daughter Henrietta & her husband, Brig. Gen. Adolphus Greely. He led the Army's 1881 Lady Franklin Bay Expedition to the Arctic & received the Medal of Honor in 1935 for a "life of splendid public service."



**4. Louis Bank of Commerce, 1887** (HRB #73, #127-059) || 835 Fifth Ave: For San Diego's first granite building, architects Clement & Stannard gave an Italianate look to the French Baroque Revival of the Second Empire. Isador Louis established the Bank of Commerce shortly after Thomas Nesmith founded the city's first bank, the Bank of San Diego.

Directions: if driving, turn R on E St, R on Sixth, R on F St, L on Fourth, Location 5 is at the end of the block on the right; if walking, return south to F, go west 1 block and L on 4th: Location 5 is at the end of the block on the right.



**5. Golden West Hotel, 1913** (HRB #96) || 720 Fourth Ave: This is another reinforced concrete structure from the office of Harrison Albright (Spreckels Theatre, 1912). The design by John Lloyd Wright (youngest son of Frank Lloyd Wright) shows how the Chicago School foreshadowed the International Style. The bas-reliefs are by Alfonso Iannelli, a student of Mount Rushmore's Gutzon Borglum.

Directions: 1 block south, the NE corner of Fourth & Market is Location 6.



**6. Broker's Building, 1889** (HRB #127-086) || 422 Market St: Classical Revival details relieve a symmetrical façade of marked regularity, unusually plain for its era, an effect enhanced by the stuccoing of the brickwork. This large office building was constructed by McDougall & Sons, who also built the Lawyer's Block (1889, HRB #127-017) 3 blocks north at 901 Fourth Ave

Directions: continue on Fourth 1 block south to Island for Location 7.



**7. Horton Grand Hotel, 1886-87** (HRB #95 & #54) || 311 Island Ave: The Baroque Revival *Grand-Horton Hotel* by architects Comstock & Trotsche, and the Italianate *Brooklyn Hotel* (both originally built near Fourth & F) were combined and reconstructed here in 1986 as the Horton Grand. At 410 Island, note the William Heath Davis House Museum (1850), the oldest building in downtown.

Directions: go south 1 block and L on J St to Location 8, on the SW corner of J & Fifth.



**8. Grand Pacific Hotel, 1887** (HRB #127-023) || 366 Fifth Ave: This hotel was built by attorney Frank Jennings and physician George Chippen. On the upper two floors, Italianate oriel windows, including an octagonal corner bay, alternate with flat walls. The bracketed cornice features Eastlake detailing.

Directions: continue east on J to Location 9 on the SE corner of J & Seventh.



**9. Simon Levi Company Building, 1913** (HRB #177) || 715 J St: Architect Walter Keller designed residences in the Burlingame tract. Here his industrial design uses the muted Classical elements of late Beaux-Arts. Simon Levi (1850-1918) was a City Councilman, President of the Chamber of Commerce, a Vice President of San Diego Gas & Electric, and a Master of the Masonic Lodge.

Directions: turn L up Seventh, go 5 blocks north and R on E: Location 10 is the second block on the right.



**10. U S Post Office – Downtown Station, 1936-38** (NRHP #85000137) 815 E St: Spanish Colonial Revival master William Templeton Johnson used an approved Post Office style, Starved Classicism, for the WPA-funded Downtown Station. The Art Deco bas-reliefs are by Archibald Garner. Note also: Johnson's Midcentury Modern San Diego City Library (1954, HRB #683) faces the Post Office at 820 E; and, the New Central Library is near Location 11.

Directions: go 3 blocks east, R on Park Blvd, 5 blocks south, R on J: the New Central Library is the first block on the left; Location 11 is the second block on the left.



**11. Carnation/Qualitee Dairy Building, 1926-28** (HRB #289) || 354 Eleventh Ave: Designed in the mode that came to be known as the International Style, this industrial building is a unique example of Modern influence in the work of the Revival-style master architects Charles & Edward Quayle. Visible behind the Carnation Building façades since 2006 are the mid-rise & high-rise residential towers of ICON.

Directions: continue west 2 blocks, turn R on Eighth: Location 12 is the NW corner of J & Eighth.



**12. Fire Station #4, 1936-38** (HRB #326) || 400 Eighth Ave: In 1907, this was the site of Chemical Co. No. 5, which later became Engine Co. No. 4. Architect Gustav Hanssen's Art Moderne station was built with WPA funding. Hanssen also designed the Katherine Redding Stadler House (1914, HRB #861) in Loma Portal.

**Guidepost for Part Two, from the East Village to San Diego Bay:** Starting at Location 12, continue 2 blocks north on Eighth to Market and turn L. From Market & Eighth in the East Village, go west 12 blocks across the Gaslamp Quarter. West Market curves left to intersect W. Harbor Dr; turn R from the center lane & L on Kettner Blvd: Location 13 is the block on the right.



**13. City of San Diego Police Headquarters, Jails and Courts, 1939** (NRHP #98000833) || 501 Pacific Highway: These facilities had been excluded from the 1935 design for the Civic Center (see Location 17). The Quayle Brothers were executive architects on this WPA project. Design architect Alberto Owen Treganza (1876-1944) had a free hand to create a Spanish Colonial Revival pastiche including elements of the Classic, Mediterranean & Pueblo Revivals. Official functions ceased in 1987 and the City quitclaimed the property to the Port District in 1994.

Directions: from Kettner & W. Harbor Dr, go north 4 blocks on Kettner; Location 14 is the last block on the left before Broadway.



**14. SDG&E Station B, 1911-1941** (HRB #354) || 903 Kettner Blvd: Eugene Hoffman designed the original 1911 steam plant. William Templeton Johnson's 1928-29 addition faces Broadway. Art Deco with Spanish Colonial Revival details, it closely resembles his Samuel I. Fox Building (1929, HRB #127-079) at 531 Broadway. Station B now forms the base of the Electra Tower.

Directions: across Broadway, Loc 15 is on the left.



**15. Santa Fe Depot, 1915** (HRB #56; NRHP #72000248) || 1050 Kettner Blvd: This Mission Revival masterpiece greeted passengers arriving to visit Balboa Park's Panama-California Exposition. Also in 1915, architects Arthur Brown & John Bakewell completed San Francisco City Hall & the Horticulture Building for that city's competing Panama-Pacific International Exposition.

Directions: continue north on Kettner, turn R on W. B St, R on Columbia: Location 16 is the NW corner of Columbia & Broadway.



**16. Armed Services YMCA, 1924** (HRB #455; NRHP #07001177) || 500 W. Broadway: Spanish Colonial Revival master Lincoln Rogers designed an Italian Renaissance Revival YMCA: a *Quattrocento palazzo* in terracotta and reinforced concrete. Later, near Honolulu's Iolani Palace, his 1928 Mission Revival YMCA was paired with Julia Morgan's 1927 Italian Baroque Revival YWCA.

Directions: go 4 blocks west on Broadway, R on Pacific Hwy: Location 17 is 1/3-mile north.



**17. San Diego County Administration Center, 1936-38** (HRB #203; NRHP #88000554) || 1600 Pacific Highway: This was a WPA-funded Civic Center for both the City and the County. Architects Richard S. Requa (specifications & construction supervision), William Templeton Johnson (design consultation), Louis J. Gill (administration) & Sam Hamill (planning & lead design) blended Spanish Revival and Moderne, combining a Mission roof, Zigzag Franciscan tile, and Streamlined versions

of Beaux-Arts Classical motifs.

**Guidepost to Part Three, Balboa Park:** From Pacific Highway, take Beech St east 12 blocks to Fifth Ave, L on Fifth, north 10 blocks to Laurel St, R on Laurel which crosses Sixth into Balboa Park; Laurel becomes El Prado: follow it across the Cabrillo Bridge, past the Gill Administration Building (1911), and under the arch of the California Quadrangle into the Plaza de California.



**18. The California Tower, 1915** (El Prado Area, HRB #1; California Quadrangle, NRHP #74000548) || 1350 El Prado: For 1915's Panama-California Exposition, Irving Gill's Mission-Modern was displaced by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue's Spanish Baroque. Carlton Winslow Sr. assisted Goodhue and co-designed the Churrigueresque California Building & Mission-style Fine Arts Building. Sculptures and ornamental carvings are by the Piccirilli Brothers.

Directions: continue east along El Prado to a pedestrian-only portion of the tour: go through the Plaza de Panama and along El Prado to Location 19: turn left, walk north along the Lily Pond.



**19. Botanical Building & Lily Pond, 1914** (El Prado Area, HRB #1) || 1600 El Prado: The Botanical Building is the only structure of the Panama-California Exposition credited solely to supervising architect Carleton Winslow without chief architect Bertram Goodhue. Reflected in the Laguna de Las Flores, it is steel frame & redwood lathe with a Mission-style arched & domed stucco entrance. Behind, it had an attached greenhouse until 1957.



**20. Casa del Prado, 1915** (El Prado Area, HRB #1) || 1650 El Prado: As seen from the Botanical Building, this Churrigueresque & Mission Revival complex consists of the Casa del Prado Theater on the left; Patio B in the center; and the Casa del Prado itself on the right. The Varied Industries & Food Products Bldg of 1915 became a Palace of Food & Beverages for the 1935 California Pacific International Exposition, under consulting architect Richard Requa. This building was the San Diego Public Library's Temporary Central Library during the 1952-54 construction of William Templeton Johnson's replacement for the Carnegie library at 820 E St.

Directions: return past the Lily Pond to El Prado, turn left and pass between the Casa del Prado and the Casa de Balboa; east of Village Place, Location 21 is on the left.



**21. San Diego Natural History Museum, 1932** (El Prado Area, HRB #1) || 1788 El Prado: Even before the 1935 Exposition, William Templeton Johnson's Neoclassical Mediterranean Revival Natural History Museum and his Fine Arts Gallery (1926) in the Plaza de Panama, had confirmed Balboa Park as "the center of the cultural and artistic life of the community." The new north half of the building with its glass atrium is a 2001 addition by San Diego architect Richard Bundy.

Directions: return west on El Prado, turn L at the Plaza de Panama, and go south on *Pan American Rd E* to Pan American Plaza: Location 22 is at the SW end of Pan American Plaza.



**22. The Ford Building, 1935** (HRB #60; NRHP #73000433) || 2001 Pan American Plaza: Walter Dorwin Teague was the "Dean of Industrial Design." His Streamline Moderne pavilion, set in the Palisades area amidst Richard Requa's Pueblo Revival & pre-Columbian Art Deco buildings, was 1935's leading attraction with 2.7 million visitors. Irving Gill's Modernist vision for the Park, rebuffed in 1911, had found an audience.

**Guidepost to Return to the Beginning of the Tour, from Balboa Park back to Market & Sixth:** From Pan American Plaza, follow *Presidents Way SE* to Park Blvd, take Park Blvd south over I-5, passing San Diego High School & San Diego City College on the left; 5 blocks south from C St, turn R on Market, go 6 blocks west to Sixth Ave.