

BEHIND THE SCENES: A Walk Through Time - Walking tour explores Santa Barbara's Architectural Foundation

By Brett Leigh Dicks, News-Press Correspondent

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As tour docent Daniel Archuleta leads the Architectural Foundation of Santa Barbara's Saturday morning Sabado Tour, he pauses at the top of De la Guerra Plaza, just near City Hall.

With one hand Mr. Archuleta points across the road to the narrow El Paseo walkway while with the other he grasps a scrapbook of historic photographs. Amongst the myriad of historic images of Santa Barbara are photographs of the people who held sway over the city.

There is naturally a generous selection of images picturing both Bernhard Hoffmann and Pearl Chase, who championed the idea of the Santa Barbara's architecture being a uniformed homage to the city's Spanish roots.

"This is a photograph of Herbert Hoover, the 31st president of the United States, and Mrs. Hoover walking along the paseo," Mr. Archuleta says as he turns his attention to the scrapbook. "And that is what Bernhard Hoffmann and Pearl Chase envisioned, a walkway that led from here all the way up State Street and back.

"Initially it worked out that way, but now there are segments of the walkway missing."

Santa Barbara has no shortage of architectural treasures. From iconic structures of national and international renown such as the Santa Barbara County Courthouse

and Old Mission Santa Barbara through its historic theaters to Jeff Shelton's whimsical take on the city's embrace of Spanish Colonial Revival, the aesthetics of Santa Barbara's built environment as championed by Mr. Hoffman and Ms. Chase has played a significant role in defining the city's image.

It is something the Architectural Foundation of Santa Barbara knows only too well. Founded in 1983, the nonprofit charitable organization was formed with the goal of enhancing the awareness and appreciation of Santa Barbara's architecture and built environment. And as a means of celebrating the city's architectural heritage and enlightening the community to it, the organization hosts two weekly walking tours of downtown Santa Barbara.

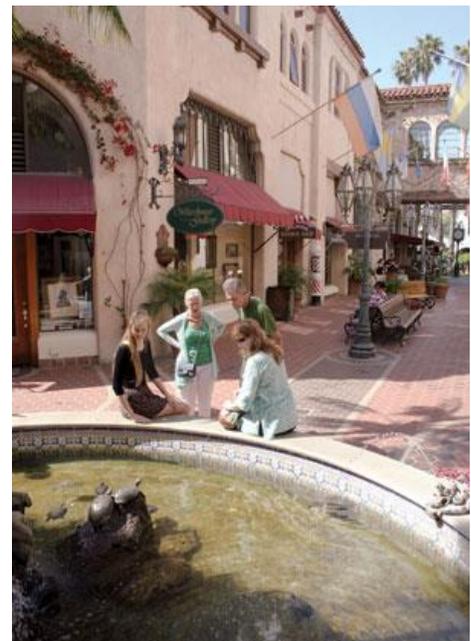
The Sabado Tour departs at 10 a.m. from the steps of City Hall every Saturday, while Sunday's Domingo Tour leaves from the Anapamu entrance to the courtyard of the downtown Public Library, also at 10 a.m. Both tours offer participants an insight into Santa Barbara's various architectural styles and aesthetics, significant and historic buildings, past and present building usage, as well as an enthralling overview of the city's history as it pertains to its buildings.

"I like people to get the flavor of the history here," says Mr. Archuleta, who is in his third year of leading the tours. "I am a teacher by training and I need visuals, so I have devised this scrapbook to give people something concrete in their minds when I am talking about the people behind the buildings and styles. It has taken me a while to put the book together, but I think it really helps people relate to the city's history."

The Architectural Foundation of Santa Barbara orchestrates a number of public outreach projects as a means of educating the community about local architecture, including the built environment and the design elements that characterize it. All the programs are volunteer-run and often involve participation and support from local design and building professionals.



Domingo Tour docent. Eve Savage, above left, welcomes participants to a Sunday morning tour. At right, Ms. Savage introduces them to the history of La Aracada
Brett Leigh Dicks photos



Through these programs and associated resources, the Foundation seeks to promote quality in design, construction and preservation, and to foster an understanding of excellence in the urban environment. They take the form of lectures, elementary and high school programs, an art gallery, a library, scholarships and, of course, the walking tours.

"The two tours we offer every weekend explore different themes," says Ms. Nancy Claire Caponi. "The Sabado Tour is the first tour we started and that deals with Santa Barbara's earlier architectural history going back to the days of the first Spanish and Mexican settlers. The Domingo Tour was formed to focus on 20th-century architectural history — and specifically the 1925 earthquake, when a lot of buildings came down — and the subsequent rebuilding in the more unified style you see today."

The Saturday Sabado Tour, for which Mr. Archuleta is a docent, starts in De la Guerra Plaza, where it explores the 19th-century heart of Santa Barbara. Here participants are told the history of buildings such as Casa De La Guerra, City Hall, the Santa Barbara News-Press and La Placita before migrating across the road and traversing the ornate walkways of El Paseo.

The historic Meridian Studios, which feature architectural work of great character from the 1920s by George Washington Smith, and later added to by Carleton M. Winslow, is another fascinating port of call. So, too, are the Lobero Theatre and nearby Lobero Building, which was designed by Julia Morgan, the architect of Hearst Castle, and started out life as Margaret Baylor Inn.

The tour then moves on to the Santa Barbara Recreation Center, the Castillo Building (which is home to Santa Barbara Bank & Trust), the Masonic Building and Montecito Bank, which was designed by Myron Hunt and is said to be modeled on a Sicilian basilica.

The Sabado Tour wraps up at the Hill-Carrillo Adobe, also known as Carrillo Adobe. Daniel Hill of Massachusetts built this adobe in 1825 for his bride, Rafaela L. Ortega y Olivera, granddaughter of the founder and first commandant of the Royal Presidio of Santa Barbara, Jose Francisco Ortega.

The Domingo Tour starts at the Santa Barbara Public Library and not only takes a post-earthquake look at Santa Barbara's historic architecture, but explores its art as well.

"I tell people that the earthquake was a happy accident," says Domingo Tour docent Eve Savage. "Who would have thought that the earthquake could have been a positive thing? The week after the earthquake Pearl Chase gathered all the city fathers and they passed the ordinance that resulted in the city's current architectural style."

From the Public Library the tour meanders through La Arcada Court and up State Street, experiencing public art, hidden courtyards and the numerous architectural highlights.

The next stop is the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, along with the nearby East Figueroa and San Marcos buildings, before moving onto the Upper Hawley buildings and then exploring the considerable histories of both the Granada and Arlington theatres.

The tour then sojourns past the U.S. Bankruptcy Court and Santa Barbara Medical Clinic Building before turning its attention to the ornate Trinity Episcopal Church, the adjoining Notre Dame School and opposing Santa Barbara Yoga Center.

The tours run every Saturday and Sunday morning year-round, weather permitting. The walks are an easy stroll and take about 90 minutes. Participants are encouraged to bring their cameras. The cost is a \$10 donation, with children under 12 free, but they should be accompanied by an adult. The tour is not recommended for strollers or young children, and walking shoes, suntan lotion and a hat are highly recommended.