



## **Playhouse Village Walking Tour**

Pasadena, settled by a group of farmers from Indiana in the 1870s, originally developed along the Arroyo Seco to the west. Playhouse Village contains approximately 34 buildings, which represent the eastward growth of the City's urban character and amenities during the 1920s and 1930s, after Pasadena's economy had changed from agriculture to tourism. Development of this area was spurred by the construction of Pasadena's grand and imposing Civic Center in the 1920s, promoting the construction of residential, religious and cultural facilities in the area we stand in today.

*Tour commences in front of USC Pacific Asia Museum, 46 N. Los Robles Ave.*

**USC Pacific Asia Museum (46 N. Los Robles)** – The leading Pasadena architectural firm of Marston, Van Pelt and Maybury was commissioned in 1924 by art dealer Grace Nicholson to design her Treasure House of Oriental Art. It was to be her dream Chinese palace, a combination private residence and art gallery. Modeled after buildings in Beijing's Forbidden City, it is 32,570 square feet, and features an authentic Chinese court garden and a roof made of green bamboo-patterned tiles.

*Walk north to the corner of Los Robles and Union and look west, to City Hall and the remaining portion of the Maryland Hotel.*

Construction on City Hall was begun in 1925 and it is in the Italian Renaissance Revival style. It was designed by John Bakewell and Arthur Brown, who also designed San Francisco's City Hall, as well as much of the Stanford and Berkeley campuses. The Maryland Hotel once extended all the way to Colorado Boulevard, but only the portion you see remains today.

*If you have an extra 20-30 minutes, cross north at this corner and walk east to Oakland Avenue for a short tour of the Fuller Theological Seminary campus, following. If you don't have the time, walk south to the corner of Colorado and Los Robles, then turn left along the north side of Colorado, heading east, and skip to the entry for **Linden Optometry**.*

**Fuller Theological Seminary** - Founded in late 1947, Fuller's original location was at the elegant Craven Estate on South Orange Grove Boulevard, which the school renamed "Highgate." The City of Pasadena would not allow them to establish the seminary permanently there, however, and in 1952, they began construction at their present location, bounded by Los Robles Avenue, Union Street, Madison Avenue, and Corson Street. A number of the mature trees at the present campus were transplanted from Highgate. The Seminary occupies a former residential neighborhood known as the Ford Place subdivision. As a result, it boasts a number of historic properties designed by some of the best known architects of Pasadena's early years, including Sylvanus Marston, Frederick Roehrig, and Charles and Henry Greene. Although a number of these are much-altered from their original appearance, the campus is charming and there are still worthwhile examples of a variety of architectural styles.

Just east of Oakland on the north side of Union Street is the Herkimer Arms at 527 Union Street. Although it is on record as being designed by Greene and Greene, it is more likely to be the work of Henry Greene, as Charles Greene had already moved to Carmel at the time of its construction. Walk north along Oakland, turning right at the Prayer Garden and following the path along to the north. Just past the sunken garden is the Orelia K. Hines House (now Carnell Hall), built in 1912 by Sylvanus Marston for Ms. Hines, a scion of one of Pasadena's first banking and political families. It initially stood at the corner of Walnut and Oakland, northwest of its present location, and is distinctly Federal in appearance, although it incorporates Mediterranean flourishes such as the stucco façade and thick wood support beams.

Immediately west of the Hines House is Kreyssler Hall, an imposing Craftsman house in the Tudor Revival style. Although the house was built for W.J. Pierce, it is more commonly linked with W. A. McHenry, a land dealer, banker, farmer and cattle-breeder. Walk west around the side of the house to see its front façade. Directly north of Kreyssler Hall is the Warren K. and Belle R. Dunn house (now rechristened Taylor Hall), built in 1904. Another Craftsman-style home, it sports steeply pitched dormers, carvings on columns, beams and moldings, and other expensive yet unobtrusive features that reflect the taste of early Ford Place residents.

Immediately north of the Dunn House is the Blinn House, home to the Women's City Club, a non-sectarian club founded in 1945. The house was built in 1905 for Edmund Blinn, a Chicago lumberman, and his family. The architect was George Maher, a contemporary of Frank Lloyd Wright's who had shared office space with Wright in Chicago. This is one of only two known buildings by Maher on the West Coast. The leaded-glass windows and lighting fixtures were made by Tiffany & Co. Particularly striking is the mosaic glass on the front of the fireplace, with its iridescent tiles and wisteria motif.

Walking west on Ford Place, you will note Slessor Hall on the south side. Named for Mary Slessor, a missionary who spent 38 years in Nigeria, inspired by Dr. David

Livingstone. This early Craftsman house was originally the Judson Carpenter home and is little changed from when it was first constructed in 1906. Once the property was obtained by the Fuller Seminary, this building became the first women's dormitory. It cost \$19,235 to build, more than double the cost of any other residence in Ford Place. On the north side of the street, close to the corner of Los Robles, are the J. Herbert Hall apartments at 451 – 459 Ford Place. These apartments were designed by Pasadena's most famous architectural duo, Charles and Henry Greene.

Immediately north of the apartments is:

**First Congregational Church (464 E. Walnut)** – On April 7, 1928, the *Pasadena Star-News* reported: "At the cost of more than \$300,000 construction work on the new First Congregational Church at Walnut and Los Robles Avenue was completed today and stands as the final word in the modern trend of church edifices, in the belief of builders and designers. Of simple English Gothic architecture, the structure, designed by Leon Caryl Brockway and Henry M. Patterson, associate architects, and built by William T. Loesch and Son, combines artistic and dignified appearance with utility." The congregation was formed in 1885 as an offshoot from the Pasadena Presbyterian church and was a leading force for temperance in Pasadena.

*From the Church, walk south along Los Robles to the corner of Colorado and Los Robles, then turn left along Colorado to:*

**Linden Optometry (469-483 E. Colorado)** – Also designed by Marston and Maybury, this is one of the finest Art Deco buildings in Pasadena. Built in 1927, the green glazed terra cotta grille above the display windows was designed by Jess Stanton, who also did design work on the Pasadena Civic Auditorium. The terra cotta work was built by Gladding, McBean and Company. The building originally housed a row of exclusive shops catering to the guests of the nearby Maryland Hotel and other wealthy winter visitors to Pasadena.

**Harry FitzGerald, Inc. (489 E. Colorado)** – This one-story stucco building designed in 1926 by architects Cyril Bennett and Fitch Haskell, is one of the most elegant and least altered on all of Colorado Boulevard. Originally an exclusive men's shop, it features a cast stone Tuscan column portico and heavy cast bronze double doors in its deeply recessed entrance. Cast stone panels above the display windows still sport Harry FitzGerald's initials. Note the medallions in the portico ceiling. A Georgian Revival structure, it was a remarkable departure from the red tile roofs and pale stucco walls of the Spanish Revival style favored at this time for buildings along Colorado Boulevard.

*Cross Oakland, heading east*

**New School of Cooking (525 E. Colorado)** – Formerly the headquarters of the *Pasadena Star-News*, this building dates for 1924-25. Pasadena's earliest newspaper, the *Chronicle*, was founded in 1883, and was succeeded in the next year by the *Pasadena and Valley Union*, which merged with the *Pasadena Star* in 1889. The *Star* in turn merged with the *Pasadena Daily News*, becoming the present day *Star-News*. It is unusual in having survived as a small-town local newspaper. The newspaper has since moved further east along Lake Ave and New School of Cooking now occupies the building. Built of reinforced concrete to support the weight of hundreds of tons of printing machinery and equipment, it has relatively simple exterior ornamentation of light brown terra cotta, its most prominent

feature being the two-story high arched entrance with a clock set into the arch above the door.

*Notice the Singer Building across Colorado on the south side of the street. Continue walking east on the north side of Colorado Blvd.*

**Pasadena Presbyterian Church (585 E. Colorado)** – The Church began in 1875 in a private home, with a formal structure being completed nearby the next year. Just ten years later, they were able to afford to build a newer church at the location of the present-day Pasadena Post Office. In 1908, the Church purchased this site and erected a Gothic Revival church and supporting buildings. Unfortunately, the 1971 Sylmar earthquake knocked the pinnacles from the church's bell tower, so severely damaging the sanctuary that the 63-year-old building had to be torn down and was replaced by the structure you see here. John Andre Gougeon, one of Pasadena's finest church architects, was selected for this work. The 1908 campanile bells are now mounted on a 120-foot tower in front of the church.

*If you have a moment, turn north (left) on Madison to:*

**Professional Building (65 North Madison)** – This is Pasadena's only example of Gothic Revival office building architecture, a style much more popular in Eastern cities of the U.S. At eight stories, this 1925 structure is unusually tall for Pasadena. Note the simulated buttresses, which pull your eye up to the parapet, accented by a series of decorated pinnacles.

*Cross Union and Madison to the northeast corner of the intersection and walk north to:*

**Scottish Rite Cathedral, (150 N. Madison Avenue)** - A monumental Moderne structure, the 1924 Scottish Rite Cathedral is a design of simple vertical planes, accented by cast stone panels with projecting grooved buttresses around the entrance. Cast stone arrow feathers flanking each of the three deeply recessed entry doors and the enormous cast stone Sphinxes on each side of the entrance stairs are the only ornamental relief in the geometric design. One of the oldest fraternal orders in Pasadena, this Lodge was organized in 1895. The architect, Joseph J. Blick, had a long and successful career in Pasadena, from 1895 into the 1940s. He also designed the Star-News building in the historic Playhouse Village, now the home of New School of Cooking.

*Retrace your steps south to Colorado and cross Madison, continuing east*

**Bank of the West (587 E. Colorado)** – This National Register-listed building is Italian Renaissance Revival design built in 1927-28. The upper two stories are stepped back and topped by a glass and steel cupola. It has ornate interior murals by Alson Clark (*well worth seeing if the building is open and the Bank does not mind a crowd of visitors*), which echo the medallions on the upper part of the building along Madison and feature oil drilling, citrus agriculture, maritime shipping and the film industry, all of which dominated the economy of the area at the time the building was built.

*Note the Anytime Fitness building across the street on the south side of Colorado:*

**Anytime Fitness (formerly the United Artists Theater – 600-610 E. Colorado) –**

Built in 1937 by Bennett and Haskell (who also designed the Civic Auditorium), this Art Deco structure was remodeled in 1960, but it still retains much of its original character. It originally featured black and silver decoration inside. The architects Albert Walker and Percy Eisen also designed the Fine Arts Building and the Oviatt Building in Los Angeles.

*Continue to the corner of Colorado and El Molino, turn left (north) and walk two blocks north to:*

**Odd Fellows Temple (122 N. El Molino)** -The Temple, which now serves as a convalescent facility, was built in 1933 on what is now the site of the Doubletree Hotel. An earlier Temple was located at Union and Garfield, just a few blocks west of here, from 1917 forward, although the Lodge was established in Pasadena in 1885. The current building was designed by Kenneth Gordon, a very successful Pasadena architect who also designed the Egyptian Theater in Hollywood. It is the only fraternal example of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture in the City, designed to blend with the architecture of the nearby Civic Center.

A two-story, T-shaped structure, the building has tiled gable roofs with exposed and notched rafter tails and symmetrical windows. Sited above street level, it has a one-story shed-roofed loggia across the street façade; recent enclosure of the loggia with wrought ironwork makes it difficult to see the three sets of double wooden doors with raised field paneling and semi-circular fanlights. However, you can still see the second story façade with its two central round-headed windows with paired rectangular windows on both sides. Another round-headed opening leads to a second-story balcony on the south elevation.

*Retrace your steps to Colorado and cross to the other (south) side; cross at El Molino and walk east along Colorado to:*

**Arcade Lane (696 E. Colorado)** – Arcade Lane, an early shopping complex built in 1927, is a commercial property which parallels the bungalow-court concept for residential living. Not surprisingly, it was designed by the architectural firm of Marston and Maybury, Sylvanus Marston having developed the bungalow-court concept that still holds sway in many parts of Pasadena. The Arcade is a Spanish Colonial Revival style of architecture, constructed of brick, part of which has been stuccoed over, with gabled red tile roofs. Although there have been significant alterations to the complex over the years, important elements of the original design remain, including the streetside clock tower, the arcade of arches themselves, and the original storefronts of glass in metal frames. Some of the original wrought iron light fixtures remain, as well as two decorative tile panels on the second level.

*Retrace your steps to El Molino and cross back to the west side*

**Pasadena Playhouse sign (southwest corner of Colorado and El Molino)** – this 1935 freestanding neon sign was originally set into the sidewalk on the east side of Symes Cadillac (now Jacob Maarse florists).

*Walk south along El Molino*

**Lockwood Building (presently the site of Zoe Pilates Studio, Rocklord Studio, Drawn2Art -- 21-27 S. El Molino)** – This two-story reinforced concrete building

with its ornate cast stone façade is one of the finest examples of Spanish Colonial Revival commercial architecture in Pasadena. Built in 1927-28 in a style which complements the adjacent Playhouse, it housed prominent interior decorators and dealers in fine china and quality art goods. The architect, Frederick Kennedy, Jr., was a prominent local architect who designed, among other significant buildings, the First Baptist Church in the Civic Center.

*Continue south to the Playhouse*

**Pasadena Playhouse (35-39 S. El Molino)** – A Spanish-Colonial Revival building with Mission elements, the Playhouse was opened in 1925. It is one of the finest works of architect Elmer Grey, who also designed the Beverly Hills Hotel, the Huntington Library and Art Gallery, and the CalTech campus. In its early years, it had a university attached to it issuing four-year degrees in various theater arts. Graduates include Robert Young, Dustin Hoffman, and Raymond Burr. It closed in 1969 owing to financial difficulties and sat vacant until 1975, when the City of Pasadena purchased the building. It has since been restored and is open for year round performances.

(For tickets to the Pasadena Playhouse or to arrange for a tour, please call 626-356-PLAY or 626-356-7529 or visit [www.pasadenaplayhouse.org](http://www.pasadenaplayhouse.org).)

*Walk south to the corner of El Molino and Green. On corner is:*

**Jacob Maarse (655 E. Green)** – Originally the 1925 home of Symes Cadillac, the doorway still sports a ceramic tile surround which features the Cadillac crest above the door. The architects Marston, Van Pelt and Maybury also designed the Pacific Asia Museum, where this tour began.

*Turn right onto Green Street and walk west*

**Kornrandolph (605-609 E. Green)** – This 1931 building features an Art Deco façade of shiny black ceramic tiles. The stylized butterfly themes present in the decorative elements throughout the building, including the wrought iron gate to the second-floor apartment stairway and the leaded glass transoms above second-story windows, pay homage to the original owner, who featured butterfly motifs in the jewelry he displayed.

**Aarnun Gallery (603 E. Green)** – This two-story brick Colonial Revival ‘rowhouse’ started life as a bakery in 1940.

**Playhouse Village Ambassador Guides (601 E. Green)** – Also built in 1940, this simple one-story reinforced brick building features a stucco façade with corner fluted pilasters and a recessed double-paneled entry.

**Galerie Gabrie (593-597 E. Green)** – This 1929 Monterey Colonial Revival brick building sports a wrought iron gate set into the arch and a gabled tile roof, along with diamond-shaped leaded glass transoms above the display windows.

*Cross Madison to the northwest corner; turn around look at:*

**Mark Piscitelli (589 E. Green)** – This small-scale Spanish Colonial Revival brick building curves at the corner, providing orientation toward both Green Street and Madison Avenue. It features a cupola on its tile roof.

*Turn and look at structure across the street on the southeast corner of Green and Madison*

**Pacific Telephone Company, now known as AT&T (600 E. Green)** – A three-story Beaux Arts style office building constructed of reinforced concrete in 1925, it has a granite base and terra cotta facing; note that it, too, was originally oriented to the corner. In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were two rival telephone companies in Pasadena, the Sunset Phone Company and the Home Telephone and Telegraph Company. The Home eventually won out over the Sunset and built this building as part of their expansion. In 1935, the Home Company merged with Pacific Telephone.

**ICE Culinary Institute (561 – 575 E. Green)** – The eastern end of this block is a one-story Spanish Colonial Revival style commercial block, again oriented toward the corner of Green and Madison. Store fronts and entry doors were altered in the 1950s, but significant detailing remains, including glass transoms, and cast stone elements. The structure at the west end of the block was originally a three-story building dating from the 1950s, with a parking garage at street level and two stories of office space above. It had been boarded up for many years when the Culinary Arts School leased the block; South Pasadena architect Tom Nott completed the current structure, using the shell of the prior building, in 2000.

*At the corner of Green and Oakland, turn and look at the Christian Science Church on the south side of Green Street*

**First Church of Christ Scientist (550 E. Green)** – This Classical Revival structure was one of the first significant structures in this area, built in 1908-09. The Reading Room was added in 1933. It's surmounted by an imposing copper dome, visible from much of the downtown area, and decorated with Ionic columns and Corinthian pilasters. It was the first church to be constructed of reinforced concrete in Pasadena.

*Turn right (north) on Oakland, cross Oakland at Colorado, heading west. As you walk up Oakland, notice the building on your right (30 Oakland to 520-528 Colorado), with the decorative tiles under the windows:*

**Singer Building (520-528 E. Colorado)** – Built in 1926 for the Singer Sewing Machine company, this Spanish Colonial Revival style building features a clay tile roof, and Churrigueresque ornamentation at the entrances.

*Also on this part of the walk, look at the building across the street, on the left side of the street:*

**First United Methodist Church (500 E Colorado)** – This series of five interconnected Gothic Revival buildings was constructed in 1922-24, and is clad in cast stone, similar in appearance to Indiana limestone (a familiar building material to the Indiana Colony which settled Pasadena). Note the gabled parapets raised above the roofline, simple buttresses and foliated tracery patterns on the oak doors and some of the windows. This church replaced a stone building erected by the church in 1901, which in turn replaced a frame church built in 1887 at Marengo and Colorado. The Rose Window in the chapel was brought from the old church on Marengo. The sale of the Marengo property not only permitted the construction of this church, but allowed the congregation to move the 1901 stone church to Holliston Avenue, where it was given to another congregation. The plan and design

is the creation of Thomas P. Barber, a Colorado Springs architect who also designed the First Methodist Church at Franklin and Highland, south of the Hollywood Bowl.

**Gerlach Building (464-468 E. Colorado)** –This 1922 Marston and Van Pelt structure was originally a fine gifts/art store catering to the tourist trade, particularly from the nearby Maryland Hotel. The storefronts were altered in 1939 and again later.

*Cross Colorado Blvd at Los Robles and proceed north to the USC Pacific Asia Museum, where the tour originated.*

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