

San Diego architecture and design shows who we are

By Mary Lydon and Susanne Friestedt

Architecture tells the story of a city's creativity, aspirations, history, art and values. San Diego is now a part of the international Open House movement curated by the San Diego Architectural Foundation (SDAF).

The event, which takes place March 25-26, will bring design aficionados from Southern California and nearby Mexico a rare — and free — opportunity for behind-the-scenes access to the city's most iconic buildings and sites.

Honorary co-chair Gordon Carrier said, "Each of the Open House locations contributes in a unique way to the fabric of our city, with special significance in architectural, historic and cultural value. The innovation behind our city is truly showcased in this big spring weekend."

The OH! San Diego sites include architecture and design studios, museums, schools, hotels, high-rises, and many SDAF Orchid Award winners. Many of the locations boast innovative use of materials, repurposing of space, environmental sustainability, and energy efficiency.

The story of San Diego as a sleepy Navy town that grew into a global binational region

will be told as OH! San Diego showcases the neighborhoods of Downtown, Barrio Logan, Bankers Hill and Balboa Park. Downtown was once filled with overnight lodging for sailors and lined with strip clubs and bars.

Today there are 34,000 residents, 80,000 employees, 4,000 businesses 137,000 jobs and 110 tech and innovation startups.

Barrio Logan sits at the border of Downtown San Diego's East Village. It is home to Naval Base San Diego, as well as the NASSCO shipyard and other military-related facilities. The neighborhood has a rich cultural history and contains many maritime industrial buildings and residences — a challenging mix of land uses.

In 1963, Interstate 5 was constructed through the heart of the community and then, in 1969, the Coronado Bridge created a roof effect over the community. The city council promised a park under the bridge but, when the construction of a state office building began, the community became inflamed and protests ensued. The community staked its claim by landscaping and painting murals on the highway pillars.

Flash forward 47 years where, last month, Barrio Logan's Chicano Park was designated a National Historic Landmark — a great accom-



San Diego Architectural Foundation

Open House San Diego 2017 will feature more than 50 curated sites throughout downtown, including Barrio Logan, Bankers Hill and Balboa Park.

plishment for this community. A large inventory of affordable housing has been built over the past 10 years and a budding arts district is emerging. This mixed-income community is enjoying a renaissance that is being driven by art and culture and it will be exciting to see where it goes.

Bankers Hill is a community just north of Downtown San Diego and east of Balboa Park. It was named Bankers Hill due to its reputation of being home to the affluent. There are many fine examples of homes designed by notable architects including Irving Gill.

The Abbey, built in 1910 by master architect Norman Foote Marsh, is a historic San Diego landmark and a must see on the OH! San Diego tour. A triumphant gold statue of Gabriel blowing his horn sits atop this great example of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture.

Balboa Park is the heart of our city's cultural identity and home to award-winning gardens, historic landmarks, first-class museums, and the world's largest outdoor pipe organ. Balboa Park Conservancy will offer OH! San Diego attendees walking tours of how they are help-

ing to sustain, enhance and envision a bright future for San Diego's crown jewel.

"This is an exceptional lineup of new sites and outstanding architecture that we hope will attract record participation, including attendees and volunteers," says Maxine Ward, director of SDAF and OH! San Diego chair. "Joining New York and Chicago, we're proud to be only the third U.S. official Open House Worldwide City."

We look forward to seeing Southern California design aficionados next month exploring our city and gaining a greater understanding of where San Diego has been and where it is going as expressed through our open space and built environment.

Those seeking additional information about the program, sponsorship or volunteering, or about future OH! San Diego special events, can go to <http://sdarchitecture.org/program/openhouse/>.

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