

# THE CAPITAL

*"Preserving Santa Barbara's historic sites of enduring community value"*

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## JULY MEETINGS OF INTEREST

### PEARL CHASE SOCIETY

Next Board of Directors meeting: July 6 at the Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society, 316 Castillo Street, 3:30 p.m.

### CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

#### **City Council Public Comment and Participating Online**

City Council chambers are now open to the public for in-person meetings, or you have the option to participate electronically: 1) via telephone: Call (805) 564-5301 and leave your name, return phone number and the number of the item you wish to speak on. You will be called back during the meeting and will have the chance to make your statement then. 2) you may participate in the Zoom meeting that may be accessed [HERE](#).

City meetings are broadcast live on City TV channel 18 and streamed live [HERE](#), where they are also archived and viewable on demand.

#### City Council

Tuesdays at 2 pm at Council Chambers, City Hall: July 18, 25

#### Planning Commission

First, second and third Thursdays of the month at 1 pm at Council Chambers, City Hall: July 6, 13, 20

#### Historic Landmarks Commission

Every other Wednesday at 1:30 pm at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street: July 5, 19

#### Architectural Board of Review

Mondays at 3 pm at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street. Full Board meets July 10, 24

### COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

County Board of Supervisor Meetings and Planning Commission meetings are broadcast live on CSBTV20. They are also streamed live [HERE](#) where they are also archived and viewable on demand.

#### County Board of Supervisors

Three Tuesdays of the month at 9 am. The first and third meetings are held in Santa Barbara in the Board of Supervisors Hearing Room, 105 East Anapamu St., 4th Floor. The second meeting is (typically) held in Santa Maria at 511 East Lakeside Parkway. July 11 (SB), July 18 (SM)

#### County Planning Commission

Three Wednesdays of the month at 9 am. The first and third meetings are held in Santa Barbara at 123 East Anapamu Street, Room 17, and the second meeting is (typically) held in Santa Maria at 511 East Lakeside Parkway. July 5 (SB), July 12 (SM), July 26 (SM)

#### County Historic Landmarks

##### Advisory Commission

Second Monday of the month at 10 am at 123 East Anapamu, Room 17 (unless specified otherwise). July 10

## Society News and Notes

*By Steve Dowty, President of the Pearl Chase Society*

### **WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

It's becoming very clear that there is a wide range of opinions about what should be done with State Street. The alarming number of vacancies is concerning, since the local economy has long been dependent on a vibrant downtown—for residents and visitors alike. We have heard the inevitable question, "What Would Pearl Chase Do?" and while we cannot speak for her, we can act in her name, in the name of preservation of a graceful and more beautiful Santa Barbara. After all, she stated repeatedly, "Good Style is Good Business." No doubt she would not find the current condition of State Street reflecting a good style.

So, the question becomes, what do our members want to see of our organization? What are your wishes for the future of Santa Barbara's main street, the storied heart of downtown and beyond?

The purpose of the Pearl Chase Society is "to increase the public awareness of Santa Barbara's irreplaceable historical, cultural and architectural resources, to gather and disseminate information useful in the preservation of structures, neighborhoods, and gardens of the City and County of Santa Barbara, to engage in such charitable and educational activities as will promote the preservation and enhancement of Santa Barbara's historic sites of rare value and continuing community interest."

In this time of economic challenges and myriad societal issues, it sometimes seems that concerns about historic preservation and community character have been pushed to the side. State mandates that require more housing and less stringent local review mean that it is more difficult now than ever for individuals and organizations to be heard by decision-makers whose priorities may not be compatible with the historical character of Santa Barbara.

The never-ending conversations about State Street and De la Guerra Plaza, as well as demands for development on every available space define this moment no less than when the earthquake struck

nearly a hundred years ago (See inside for plans to commemorate *that* moment in our history). Pearl Chase believed in citizen activism, "Get the message across," she admonished. "Make the politicians feel they must pay attention to the people."

What do you want them to hear from the Pearl Chase Society? Please weigh in your thoughts at [PCS@pearlchasesociety.org](mailto:PCS@pearlchasesociety.org)

**Annual Meeting**  
 Harry's Plaza Cafe  
 Sunday, July 23 @ 4PM  
 Banquet Appetizers and a full bar in the private room.  
 Speaker: Mary Turley  
 on Our Neighborhood Voices statewide initiative.

**Want to get involved, or have submissions for The Capital? Email us at [PCS@pearlchasesociety.org](mailto:PCS@pearlchasesociety.org).**

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Please direct inquiries  
and comments to:

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**Newsletter**Cheri Rae, *editor*Lisa DeSpain, *graphics*

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**EARTHQUAKE: A City Changed Forever***By Cheri Rae*

**A**t 6:42 on Monday morning of June 29, 1925, the earth below Santa Barbara began to shake, tremble, rumble, and groan as the powerful tectonic forces of nature released in just 18 devastating seconds. An early morning golfer at La Cumbre Country Club described the moment as though a monster had roared and violently shaken him. Another eyewitness described the sound as “a million dogs crunching bones.”

In just moments, Santa Barbara went from a Famous Winter Resort, Playground of the Wealthy to a Stricken City, as virtually the entire downtown commercial district lay broken and battered, its unreinforced masonry and brick buildings literally crumbled to the ground in the 6.3 quake.

On State Street, the Fithian Building lost its third floor; the four-story San Marcos Building, considered one of the best buildings in town, was left with just a façade, while its walls were reduced to dust. The Californian Hotel, City Hall, the County jail, and Courthouse, all were damaged significantly during the initial shaking, and the shocks that followed.

Uptown, the graceful old Arlington Hotel, located on the block between Victoria and Sola, State and De La Vina, saw its venerable water tower located on the roof, crash to earth, causing great destruction and the loss of life in its wake.

On the upper east side of town, the two-story wood-frame Queen Anne-style home occupied by Pearl Chase and her father creaked and swayed, but, like so many residences, was largely undamaged. St. Francis Hospital on the hill, blocks from the city center, sustained substantial damage; after a healthy baby boy was born during the chaos, he and his mother were evacuated to Cottage Hospital on the other side of town. Cottage was shaken but intact, although the local reporter wrote about a patient, Mattie Temple, “a brunette who turned gray from fright over the shock.”



*Courtesy Santa Barbara Historical Museum, Gledhill Library.*



*Earthquake damage, clockwise from left: Telegraph operator, 800 block State Street; failed Sheffield Reservoir; Santa Barbara Mission; San Marcos Building. All photos from the Edson Smith collection.*

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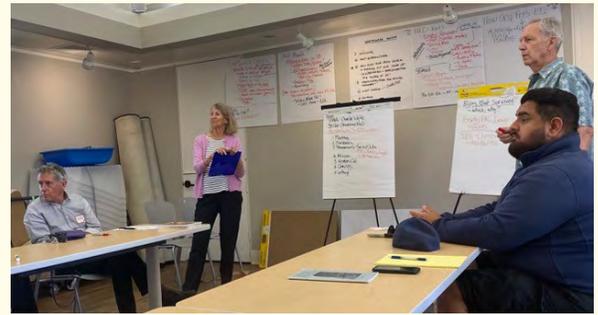
At the historic Mission, the morning service had just concluded, and the congregation had just left the sanctuary when the building began to sway, stones began to fall, and the distinctive pink domed towers cracked and broke apart.

Father Augustan ran to the second story to retrieve the elderly, bedridden Fr. Englebrecht; he carried him on his back, running to safety when the staircase gave way and the two of them fell through a hole to the first floor. The two priests were shaken, but miraculously unharmed.

On the other side of town, the Sheffield Dam failed, as the sandy soil underlying it liquefied, and the center of the broken structure simply floated away. Some 30 million gallons of flood waters cascaded through Sycamore Canyon on the city's lower east side, sweeping cattle, and destroying buildings along the way, depositing two feet of water and debris from ruined cars, uprooted trees, and demolished homes downstream.

Quick-thinking workman immediately responded and shut down the town's utilities ~ natural gas lines, water and electricity, preventing the kind of devastation by fire that had occurred in San Francisco 17 years earlier. But downtown Santa Barbara was in shambles, with damage to an estimated 85 percent of the business district. It was also cut off from the world, with telephone and telegraph lines down, and only ham radio still working.

The news still traveled fast. Fifteen miles off the coast, the steamship *Barbara C.* telegraphed to a Los Angeles station feeling "unusually heavy undulations," while the captain of a tugboat just off the coast felt the tremor and headed to Stearns Wharf, establishing an offshore communications center of sorts. Mayor C.M. Andrea issued a statement about the natural disaster, "Santa Barbara terribly stricken. Property damage serious but very few injured. Therefore, please do not send doctors, nurses or medical supplies. If you can, send bread and milk! In the morning it will be appreciated. Also cooked foods. The reason for our desire for cooked foods is that all our gas has been turned off and no fires will be lighted at present. We have no electricity and the poles are all down."



Left to right, Santa Barbara Conservancy President Steve Hausz, along with members Pat Sales and Richard Closson, presided over an organization meeting; Council Member Oscar Gutierrez was one of many attendees who shared ideas about the Centennial celebration.

The natural disaster became a turning point in Santa Barbara, as visionary leaders set forth plan to usher in a new architectural approach to the rebuilding effort—one that embraced the romantic past with an eye to a more beautiful and unified future. Nearly a century later, the Santa Barbara Conservancy has brought together leadership from a variety of local organizations to pool their knowledge and talents to commemorate the events before, during, and after the 1925 earthquake.

From the energy, excitement, and exchange of ideas at the initial meetings, the Centennial celebration of the Santa Barbara Earthquake will be an extraordinary time of learning, sharing, and discovering details of the moment when everything changed, and how the city was transformed into the jewel on the Pacific it is today.

If you have stories to share or an interest in getting involved in the earthquake centennial, please email [PCS@pearlchasesociety.org](mailto:PCS@pearlchasesociety.org).

Santa Barbara Earthquake, Folk song:

[Recording](#)

[Transcript of lyrics](#)

[Reuters newsreel footage](#)

## Restoration in Action: Main-Begg Farmhouse Porch

By Cheri Rae

The Pearl Chase Society provided a grant to the Main-Begg Farmhouse to address concerns about the integrity of the front porch that made it unusable. President of the Board, Robin Cederlof, reported, "As you may recall the corner of the deck was sinking, over the years, rain onto the deck would just pool, rotting the deck boards and support beams underneath."

She added, "That problem has been fixed, thanks to the financial support from the Pearl Chase Society and the great carpenters of Pacific Development Construction."

For more information about the historic farmhouse: [HERE](#). Photos courtesy Main-Begg Farmhouse / Robin Cederlof



Present-day work: Preserving the past, ensuring the farmhouse's future.



Levelling and bracing the sagging corner.



The front porch restored, usable once more.

## State Street Advisory Committee, Public Meeting

By Steve Dowty, President of the Pearl Chase Society

**M**.I.G., the planning firm tasked with designing the State Street master plan, presented three scenarios for our downtown central business district at a State Street Advisory Committee's public meeting on May 24, 2023.

Included in the visual presentation drawings were streetscape variations, realistically rendered with bicycles, balloons and crowded with people to show "active" urban environments.

Bike traffic was a common thread to all scenarios, which admittedly was a "shock" to some committee members. This was not because bicycles, E-bikes and other non-automobile vehicles were just coming to the program but, in fact that, now bike facilities (embedded in the required fire lane) seemed to drive each and all the plans.

Since the closure of State Street to cars, reckless bike riding and speeding motorized E-bikes has become a nuisance and danger to many pedestrians. And public

comment at the meeting provided testament to this.

There is a broad scope for envisioning the State Street master plan. The planning team has set out to include: streetscape, historic resources, public art, public amenities, downtown housing, homeless engagement, equity and accessibility, stormwater management, utilities, mobility plan, sustainability, view corridors, and economic development.

Thus far the planning team has dealt with, almost solely, circulation. The three scenarios showed a few differences in circulation; for instance, two-way cars allowed on certain blocks, one-way traffic allowed on others, and a "multi-modal" plan where cars, bikes and pedestrians are allowed. Some good ideas to come out of the first design presentation are civic surprise spaces such as a central plaza at Carrillo and State. Also, by raising portions of the street level to the curb/sidewalk level would provide flexible use over a broad area. These are a few ideas however, there are so many more program items (mentioned above) to be addressed. M.I.G.'s design contract is running down. And this is a concern.

NOTE: On June 27, the City Council voted to extend the closure of State Street through 2026.

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## PRESERVATION WATCH

by Christine Neuhauser

"I will see your four (stories) and raise you one, or two or whatever we can get away with."

**1609-1615 Grand Avenue—Thirty units planned built under the state-allowed "Builder's Remedy law."** The "Builder's Remedy" comes from the state's Housing Accountability Act (HAA). It essentially states that if a county or city is not in compliance with California's housing development goals, developers are authorized to bypass zoning laws so long as the new housing development contains at least 20 percent low-income housing or 100 percent middle-income housing. Santa Barbara is considered low on affordable housing units.

The builder of this proposed development on the Lower Riviera, Craig Martin Smith of Industrial Partners from Los Angeles provides only six affordable units. Without the "Builder's Remedy," only four units would be allowed for the double lot. The four-story project, with underground parking, still must be reviewed by the Planning Commission. For an interesting article about the background of the builders, click [HERE](#).

**425 Santa Barbara Street—If former City Attorney Barry Capello loses an appeal at City Council, how can anyone else expect anything more?** Developer Ed St. George won his appeal at City Council, and received approval for his four-story, nineteen-unit complex with three designated "below market rate units" and no parking spaces. For Nick Welsh's take on the hearing, click [HERE](#).

**Funk Zone: Not too much will be funky here anymore**—Four proposed projects will change the character of the area. At least some housing is involved.

**SOMOFunk**—A full City block bounded by Santa Barbara Street, East Mason Street, Gray Avenue, and East Yanonali Street. This four-story, nearly 200,000-square-foot mixed-used development and Mason proposes 155 residential units. The review has moved from the Architectural Board of Review to the Planning Commission.

**Garden Street Hotel**—Located at 101 Garden Street, it is a three-story project featuring, 250 hotel rooms (combines six parcels). The Planning Commission wants some housing mixed in, but according to developer Brian Cernal, that is unlikely.

**The Platform Project**—located at 301 East Yanonali; one and two stories, merchants and food. HLC liked it

**35 Anacapa Street**—Two six-room hotels at two stories; the ABR like it.

For a comprehensive article about these plans, complete with renderings—and many comments, click [HERE](#).

### Uptown

**1500 State Street, 27 units above Cantwell's Market**—The project is four stories, 48 feet high; does provide 34 parking spots. Three units are below market rate.

**La Cumbre Plaza**—685 units, and some areas as high as 88 feet. Fifty-six units would be below market rate. Cernal Collective project. Two owners of the plaza at opposite ends.