

THE CAPITAL

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

Vol. 27, No. 2 • www.PearlChaseSociety.org • February 2024

FEBRUARY MEETINGS OF INTEREST

PEARL CHASE SOCIETY

Next Board of Directors meeting: February 1, 2024 at the Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society, 316 Castillo Street, 3:30 p.m.

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

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: February 6, 13, 20, 27

Planning Commission

First, second and third Thursdays of the month at 1 pm at Council Chambers, City Hall: February 1, 8, 15

Historic Landmarks Commission

Every other Wednesday at 1:30 pm at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street: February 14, 27

Architectural Board of Review

Mondays at 3 pm at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street. Full Board meets February 5, 12, 20

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. February 6, 13, 27, all meetings in Santa Barbara

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. February 14, 28 (both meetings in Santa Barbara)

County Historic Landmarks

Advisory Commission

Second Monday of the month at 10 am at 123 East Anapamu, Room 17 (unless specified otherwise). February 12

News and Notes

By Cheri Rae

The Board of Directors of the Pearl Chase Society met on Thursday, January 11, the first meeting of the New Year. As usual, there was much to share and discuss as we look forward to 2024.

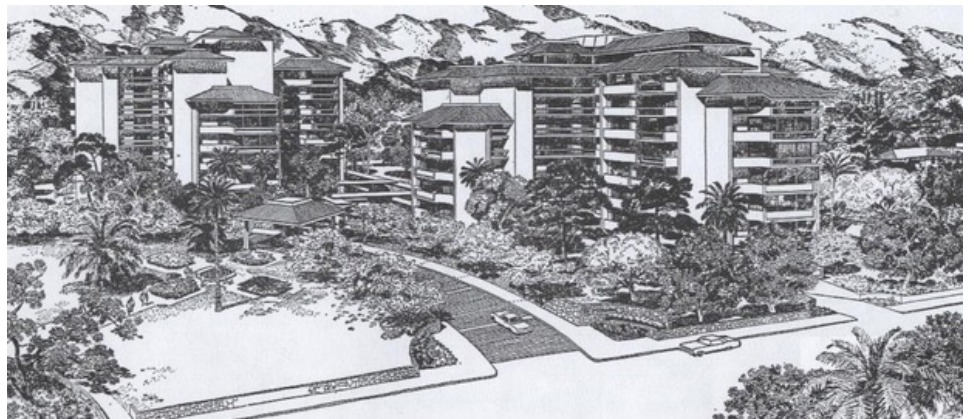
Thanks to the support from our membership and the community, we are renewing our commitment to presenting the Kellam de Forest Speaker Series. It will continue to be hosted at the historic Alhecama Theatre on the property of the Trust for Historic Preservation. Plans are still in the works to finalize our slate of speakers, dates, and the organizing theme, which will be announced shortly.

We are very aware of the state mandates that have drastically curtailed the ability of our long-established local boards and commissions to review projects. The intention of these bills is to fast-track affordable housing throughout the Golden State, with little regard for the history of the community.

The Pearl Chase Society's primary focus is preservation of our unique heritage, which includes the built and natural environment, as well as education about our past, to inform our present and future. See page 4 for a reminder that access to affordable housing in Santa Barbara has been an issue in this town for well over a century. And despite all best efforts, even those of Pearl Chase, there has never been enough. It's a complex issue that requires much thoughtful consideration and historical context.

And while we're on the subject, it took a grassroots movement of citizens who stood up to developers and denied the two nine-story condominiums promoted by developers in the late 1960s. Today, it's the site of Alice Keck Park Memorial Garden. Just imagine what Santa Barbara would look like, feel like, today, if the project had been built.

In response, An Adult Education class called "Should Santa Barbara Go High Rise?" was offered, and the issue put on the ballot in 1972. Voters agreed overwhelmingly that a height limit should become part of the City Charter, around the principle, "high buildings are inimical to the basic residential and historical character of the city."



**Want to get involved, or have submissions for
The Capital? Email us at PCS@pearlchasesociety.org.**

PEARL CHASE SOCIETY
Board of Directors

President

Steve Dowty

Vice President

Christine Neuhauser

Secretary

Dennis Whelan

Treasurer

Nate Cultice

Historian

Patti Ottoboni

Board Members

Emma Brinkman

Tina Foss

Maureen Masson

Kitty Peri

Cheri Rae

Claudia Schou

Members Emeriti

Sue Adams

Bob Baum

Roger Horton

Barbara Lowenthal

Please direct inquiries
and comments to:

PEARL CHASE SOCIETY
P.O. Box 92121
Santa Barbara, CA 93190-2121
For information, call
(805) 961-3938

Newsletter

Cheri Rae, *editor*

Lisa DeSpain, *graphics*

Materials published in The Capital are
copyrighted by The Pearl Chase Society
and may be reproduced only with the
written permission of the editor.

PRESERVATION WATCH

Inspired by the dedicated work of Kellam de Forest, we are reviving this occasional feature, reporting on the work of our various boards and commissions.

HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION, JANUARY 17, 2024



1724 Garden Street Concept Review
This Crocker Row residence is listed on the City's Historic Resources Inventory; it was constructed in 1903, in an Italian-Mediterranean style.

The proposal constructs a two-story rear addition, consisting of a first-floor addition, a second-floor addition, and an uncovered raised patio with few modifications to the street view, as most changes are on the backside, and not visible. An existing 1970's detached garage in front of the original house and cabana in the rear yard will remain and are not under discretionary purview.

The proposed development floor-to-lot-area ratio (FAR) is 84 percent of the maximum guideline.

The approval of a Solar Access Modification and an Interior Setback Modification were supported.

The commissioners were in general high praise of the design and supported the project along with accepting the City Historian's report.

The commissioners noted the additions are beautifully and sensitively done, and that the additions don't compromise but enhance an original design intent. Additionally, they cited an aesthetic appropriateness for the addition and approved a solar modification (allowing greater height) based upon staff support of the modifications. Motion for indefinite continuance.

400 West Carrillo Street *Currently a city commuter parking lot by permit only. It is located in El Pueblo Viejo Landmark District.*

The proposal is to construct a new 63-unit residential building with at-grade surface parking and garage parking as well as additional amenity spaces such as a common room and courtyard outdoor space. The units are proposed to be 100 percent rent-controlled, Moderate-Income and Middle-Income Affordable.

The project calls for the removal of eight King Palms, one Jacaranda, and fifteen Tipu trees on the parcel; but no street trees or trees within the flood control area will be removed. This item was postponed to the January 31 HLC agenda at the applicant's request.



CONSENT AGENDA

Meeting minutes were not posted nor included here.

615 East Valerio Street *Located mid-block between Prospect and Olive streets*

Listed on the Historic Resources Inventory, constructed in 1924 in the Craftsman style. Proposal to construct two one-story additions on the side elevations toward the rear of the existing residence located in the Hillside Design District.

Project includes new roofing, exterior wood weather boards, and wood windows to match the existing materials, configuration, and profile.

Final Approval was given as the project plans demonstrated substantial conformance to the plans that received Project Design Approval on October 11, 2023, which is when the project was last reviewed.

1303 State Street # A *Christian Science Reading Room/Kem Weber Building, Bosse Toy Train Museum, Inc.*

Located in El Pueblo Viejo Landmark District, Part I and designated a City Landmark, designed in 1951 by internationally recognized designer Kem Weber in the Streamline Moderne style, the only one in El Pueblo Viejo district and recognized as such.

The building has the following character-defining features of a Streamline Moderne

LIKE us on Facebook. 

www.facebook.com/PearlChaseSociety

building: a curved, corner-facing entrance with glazed set of doors; Streamline Moderne style neon signage that follows the curve of the integrated canopy, a the horizontal vector line created by the canopy trimmed with aluminum; the solid stucco-clad parapet that extends the length of the State Street façade; the one-story front elevation with horizontal emphasis; the white predominant color; exposed brushed concrete; and stepped, diagonal-cut, aluminum framed windows and doors.

The project proposal is for a 14-square-foot rear first floor addition and includes a new exterior window and door, and the extension of an existing equipment enclosure at the rear.

Final Approval was requested. The exterior alterations are being made primarily for, and will substantially advance, restoration of the Historic Resource to its original appearance; and the exterior alterations are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

800 Alvarado Place *El Encanto Hotel*

El Encanto Hotel Historic District is a designated Landmark located in the Hillside Design District, constructed in 1913-1930 by Soule, Ray, Eaton, Edwards, Plunkett, and Howell in the Craftsman Vernacular / Spanish Colonial Revival style. Proposal for a new natural gas-powered emergency generator and 190-square-foot concrete equipment pad in the front setback north of Building 37. Project Design Approval and Final Approval were requested.

276 Canon Drive

Eligible for inclusion on the Historic Resources Inventory, constructed in 1954 and designed by Paul A. Greene in the Mid-Century Modern style. Proposal for exterior alterations to the existing 830-square-foot, single-unit residence located in the Hillside Design District, including: a nine square-foot addition and roof extension, replacement of existing wood shake siding with vertical board and batten siding to match original, replacement of existing asphalt shingle roof with corrugated metal roof, new front door, window replacement, removal of existing 493-square-foot deck and replaced with a new 393-square-foot deck, and front entry stair and landing replacement.

Project also includes landscape alterations including a California oak tree removal and mitigation. Project Design Approval and Final Approval were requested. This project was last reviewed on October 25, 2023.

1911 State Street # C Located in El Pueblo Viejo Landmark District

Proposal to permit as-built exterior alterations to an existing commercial building, including: window and door replacement, new lighting, skylights, roofing, downspout and gutter, and water heater. Project includes the construction of a new trash enclosure and will abate violations in an enforcement case.

On the Bookshelf: On the Subject of Santa Barbara

By Cheri Rae

Has there ever been a small town with as many books written about it as Santa Barbara? My own bookshelves are lined with books that describe the people and places, history and lore and a variety of other facets of this very special place that has long inspired authors, storytellers, and publishers. It's been going on a very long time. Here are just a few of my favorites that offer thoughtful glimpses of this small town with a large literacy presence.

The intriguing anthology, *Tales of Santa Barbara*, selected by Steven Gilbar and Dean Stewart includes what they describe as "A box of delights, lyric, joyous and uncongenial. It informs us of the variety of ways the town has been experienced and can be known."

A brief glimpse of the stories excerpted include:

New England trader Alfred Robinson visited Santa Barbara in 1829 and wrote about his impression of the town in *Life in California*, published in 1846. He visited the Mission, and wrote, "In the morning we walked to the Mission, distant from the town about half a league....The stone church, with its two towers and extensive wing, its artificial clock, tiled roof, arched corridor, and majestic fountain, was before us."

Richard Henry Dana wrote *Two Years Before the Mast* in 1840, an account of his journey along the coast of California. He was especially taken with the colorful three-day wedding celebration held in Santa Barbara, known as a "fandango." He described "the great amusement of the evening," a predecessor to today's Fiesta mainstay, the *cascarones*: "The breaking of eggs filled with cologne or other essences, upon the heads of the company. The women bring a great number of these secretly about them, and the amusement is to break one up on the head of a gentleman when his back is turned. He is bound in gallantry to find out the lady, and return the compliment."

In 1873, Charles Nordhoff wrote his classic, *California for Health Pleasure, and Residence: A Book for Travellers and Settlers*. He recommended Santa Barbara as a Southern California destination for invalids, noting its lack of temperature extremes. He noted, "I think there is no doubt that Santa Barbara has the most equable climate, in this sense as well as all others, on this coast."

Chumash myths, poetry and a wide variety of essays complete

the volume, a must-have for those wanting an introduction to the literary works of Santa Barbara.

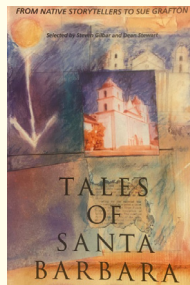
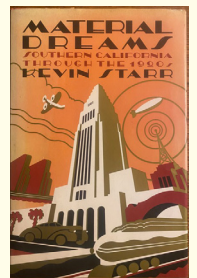


From 1994 to 2004, Kevin Starr served as the California State Librarian. The former professor of history at University of Southern California wrote the definitive history of the Golden State in an eight-book series known as "America and the California Dream." The ambitious project includes my favorite volume, *Material Dreams: Southern California Through the 1920s*. It features meticulously researched chapters about Santa Barbara and its formative, most idealistic years.

As he describes, "Santa Barbara turned its back on glitter and razzmatazz in favor of aesthetic historicizing and other preoccupations of the genteel tradition. The city became a stage set for Spanish romance. Even within the parameters of its elite circumstances, however, the Santa Barbara alternative with its persistent strain of naturalism and aesthetic value, sustained a suitable message for the urbanizing Southland." This volume is essential, admittedly high-level, reading to understand the underpinnings of modern-day Santa Barbara.



Note: Please let me know if you would like to have more of these articles featuring accounts—old and new—that maybe be of interest to developing a deeper understanding of Santa Barbara.



In Memoriam

Roger Horton, Board Member Emeritus

We are sending our deepest condolences to the family and friends of Roger Horton. Deeply committed to the historic preservation of Santa Barbara, he was a member of the Pearl Chase Society from its earliest days. He served as an active, thoughtful, and enthusiastic Board Member for many years. He served two terms as a hard-working, mild-mannered City Council Member, dedicated always to making Santa Barbara a better place to live, for families to flourish and visitors to enjoy.

Rest in peace, dear Roger.



Local History: Housing Issues are Nothing New

By Cheri Rae

"Several people have been interested in a project to provide a number of small desirable cottages near the center of the city where people work, but the difficulty of building under present high prices has kept them from going ahead with the improvement," observed Pearl Chase in *The Morning Press*. The article was titled, "Housing Conditions are Not as Ideal as Citizens Generally Believe."

The year was 1920.

She added, "While there is no one telling which can be done to remedy the situation, much can be accomplished by first a good building ordinance with a supplementary housing regulation. Beyond that the matter is largely one of education of the public by the city."

Despite her years of work leading the Better Homes in America movement in Santa Barbara—and at the request of President Herbert Hoover, working on the issue at the national level—there was never enough for everyone. In 1926 she described her work, "the effort was to encourage families to own their own homes and gardens, and to put knowledge of high standards in house building, home furnishing and equipment, and home life within the reach of all citizens. That the splendid cooperation of the organized groups of the city and the hard work of the hundreds of committee members has counted, may be seen in the increasing number of attractive small houses and gardens throughout Santa Barbara."

She was often asked to help find housing for people who wanted to move to Santa Barbara, and her replies were invariably polite, thorough, and honest: Housing was a serious issue of lack of supply versus demand—with prices to match.

In 1946, when a friend hoped to relocate to Santa Barbara, she wrote to him, "All I can say about housing in Santa Barbara, it is extremely tight and will undoubtedly be so for an indefinite period of time...All small and inexpensive apartments are occupied, and there is a never-ending stream of those who wish accommodations."

She wrote to another friend, "Of course you realize that the housing situation is, at present, and with no signs of improvement in sight, probably more acute than it has been at any time during the war...We have people who have been accustomed to having large homes of their own, glad to be able to find quarters in crowded motor courts, although looking constantly for something to rent or buy; and although there seems to be a constant movement of properties, yet the demand never seems to get any less." She added, "Houses, particularly small ones, are still very rare."

Pearl had a lifelong commitment to maintaining the character of Santa Barbara despite the endless demand for housing. She wrote to another friend about the struggle: "We have tried to encourage people as they come, so that they appreciate the environment. Like not only the climate, but the appearance of the private homes, the commercial buildings, and the gardens."

She was not a fan of what she called, "multiple-family dwellings like apartments." In her opinion, "They are probably the least creditable, the least adapted to modern use." But she acknowledged the inevitable, "I'm afraid they're the form of the future; they are not very well built and few of them are very well designed. She worried that poor design and construction would negatively affect what she called the "experience of living in Santa Barbara."

Note: This article is adapted from *A String of Pearls: Pearl Chase of Santa Barbara*.



Valentines and mementos
from Pearl's college scrapbook,
1905-1909.

Happy Valentine's Day!