



# CICLAVIA



A HISTORIC GUIDE  
TO PASADENA



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## WELCOME TO CICLAVIA—PASADENA

Welcome to CicLAvia Pasadena, our first event held entirely outside of the city of Los Angeles! And we couldn't have picked a prettier city; bordered by the San Gabriel Mountains and the Arroyo Seco, Pasadena, which means "Crown of the Valley" in the Ojibwa/Chippewa language, has long been known for its beauty and ideal climate. After all, a place best known for a parade of flower-covered floats—the world-famous Tournament of Roses since 1890—can't be bad, right?

Today's route centers on Colorado Boulevard—Pasadena's main east-west artery—a road with a long and rich history. Originally called Colorado Street, the road was named to honor the latest state to join the Union at the time (1876) and was changed to "Boulevard" in 1958. The beautiful Colorado Street Bridge, which was built in 1913 and linked the San Gabriel Valley to the San Fernando Valley, still retains the old name.

It might have been the car that spurred the development of Pasadena—some of today's route was even part of the famous Route 66—but we were pleased to find the bicycle at its

**Written by Andrea Richards**

**Designed by Colleen Corcoran and Tiffanie Tran**

**Printed by Pace Marketing Communications**

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beginnings. Several buildings in Pasadena's historic core, the area known as Old Pasadena, are directly related to a turn-of-the-20th-century bicycling craze. In fact, almost half a century before the Arroyo Freeway, there were plans to connect Los Angeles to Pasadena via an elevated bicycle path. Let's bring that back!

This guide would not have been possible without the assistance of two of Pasadena's great preservation organizations, **Pasadena Heritage** and the **Pasadena Museum of History**, who provided much of the historical information and almost all of the beautiful photographs. Thank you to the helpful staffs of both. On your next trip to the Crown City make sure you visit the museum's two-acre campus or take one of Pasadena Heritage's fascinating tours.



**CicLAvia transforms LA's streets into a safe, fun, car-free space for walking, bicycling, skating, jogging and seeing the city in a whole new way.**

Cars filled with young people  
in a parade on Colorado St.  
east of Lake Ave., 1927

Courtesy of the Archives,  
Pasadena Museum of History



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#### NEIGHBORHOOD EXTRAS—LEGEND



**CULINARY LA**



**INSTAGRAM SPOTS**



**SEEN IT: FILM LOCATIONS**



**LITERARY LA**



**SING IT**

## CICLAVIA COMING SOON

**August 9**

**CicLAvia—Culver City Meets Venice**  
Presented by Metro

**October 18**

**CicLAvia—Heart of LA**



### SOURCES:

"A Brief History of Bicycles in the Los Angeles Area," by Nathan Masters, *kcet.org*

"Bikeway Was Ahead of Its Time," by Cecilia Rasmussen, November 29, 1998 *Los Angeles Times*

City of Pasadena

Pasadena Heritage Walking Tours

Pasadena Museum of History

### BOOKS:

*All About Pasadena and Its Vicinity* by Charles Frederick Holder (1888)

*Downtown Pasadena's Early Architecture* by Ann Scheid (Arcadia Publishing, 2006)

*The Arroyo Seco* by Rich Thomas (Arcadia Publishing, 2008)

*Pasadena 1940-2008* by Patrick Conyers, Cedar Phillips, and the Pasadena Museum of History (Arcadia Publishing, 2009)

*Pasadena: Crown of the Valley* by Ann Scheid (Windsor Publications, 1986)



*Magnolia House*

Discover the  
**HEART  
BEAT**

*of Southern  
California's Culture*



**PASADENA**

[www.VisitPasadena.com](http://www.VisitPasadena.com)



Colorado Blvd. looking east  
to Marengo Ave., c. 1890

*Courtesy of the Archives,  
Pasadena Museum of History*



## OLD PASADENA

After Pasadena's incorporation in 1886, the population grew to 30,000 residents in less than two decades. Unlike the organic growth of most cities, where commercial establishments flourish amid residential areas, Pasadena's founders banned business development within the residential neighborhood on Orange Grove Avenue. Instead, the town established a business district at the easternmost boundary, an area that eventually became known as "The Four Corners" (the intersection of Colorado Street and Fair Oaks Avenue). By the early 1900s, the business district expanded eastward with Victorian-style brick buildings lining Colorado Street.

While the wealthy, mostly white residents of Pasadena built homes outside of downtown, minority communities, limited by land covenants, occupied the noisier areas close to the business district and the railroad tracks. Many of these Chinese, Japanese and African American residents worked in the nearby hotels or in the grand homes along Millionaire's Row. The Doty Block, on the southeast corner of S. Fair Oaks and Dayton Street, featured a hotel

that first served Japanese Americans (Hotel Mikado) and later became Pasadena's first Black-owned hotel, the Hotel Carver, which had a famous jazz club.

The construction of the Mediterranean-style Civic Center in the 1920s and the widening of Colorado Street in 1929 changed the look of downtown. Buildings along Colorado had to be cut back 14 feet for the street expansion; when rebuilt, the new facades were in the Mediterranean and Art Deco styles.

The Depression ended the city's resort era. By the 1940s the downtown area had changed from fancy hotels to bars and pawnshops. During the 1960s and 70s, the area became a countercultural center with artists moving into abandoned buildings and a host of head shops and adult bookstores; the City's Redevelopment Agency wanted to topple the derelict buildings and build skyscrapers.

In the 1980s, many of downtown's buildings were slated for demolition. Thankfully, Pasadena Heritage came to the rescue. Working with businesses and the City, they transformed the area into one of the nation's greatest downtown revitalization successes.



A burger from Jake's,  
38 W. Colorado Blvd.



*The Great Dictator* (1940), *The Sting* (1973), *Yes Man* (2008)



"Home in Pasadena"  
by Al Jolson



In the alley behind the  
Kinney-Kendall at *The Sting*



*The Brass Check* by Upton  
Sinclair

## 1 One Colorado

*Full city block along Colorado Blvd., between De Lacey and Fair Oaks*

A collection of 17 historic buildings form this upscale outdoor shopping mall that gives you a taste of the area's picturesque alleys and cleaned-up aesthetic. Especially nice are the cobblestone drain ways and the ghost sign for Clune's Pasadena Theater, Pasadena's first theater. These service streets and alleys long ago housed businesses such as blacksmiths, livery stables and foundries—trades and industries essential to life in the growing town.

.....

## 2 Bear Building

*2 E. Colorado Blvd.*

The intersection of Fair Oaks Ave.—the main artery to Los Angeles before the freeway—and Colorado was the original center of Pasadena, known early on as “The Four Corners” and the Schoolhouse Block (for the 5 acres of land that housed the city's first 1878 school). Built in 1902 with its façade updated in 1929, this Spanish Colonial Revival building once housed a cigar factory. Be sure to check out the WPA-style mural by local artist Kenton Nelson and the fabulous ceiling of what was the Mecca Room; both are now part of an 800 Degrees Pizzeria Restaurant.



**3. KINNEY-KENDALL, 1897**

*Courtesy of the Archives, Pasadena Museum of History*

## 3 Kinney-Kendall Building

*65 E. Colorado Blvd.*

You might not guess that this building, the home of a pawnshop for sixty years (one of the last vestiges of the area before its revitalization), is the work of Pasadena's most famous architects, Charles and Henry Greene (the Gamble House, the Blacker House). In fact, it's the only commercial building still standing designed by the Arts & Crafts masters. The brothers were just starting their careers in 1896 when they designed the three-story building, which doesn't really display their signature style.



## 4 Site of First Presbyterian Church (now Post Office)

*Corner of Colorado Blvd. & Garfield Ave.*

By 1910, Pasadena had more than 50 churches. The Methodists and Presbyterians claimed the largest congregations and so it was fitting that they had the biggest churches on Colorado. Before moving further east (see **Pasadena Presbyterian Church**) the Presbyterians first built a church on this site in 1876, which was replaced by a more impressive structure in 1886. In 1914 this post office replaced the church and encouraged the eastward expansion of the shopping and business district.

## 4. FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 1886

*Courtesy of the Archives, Pasadena Museum of History*



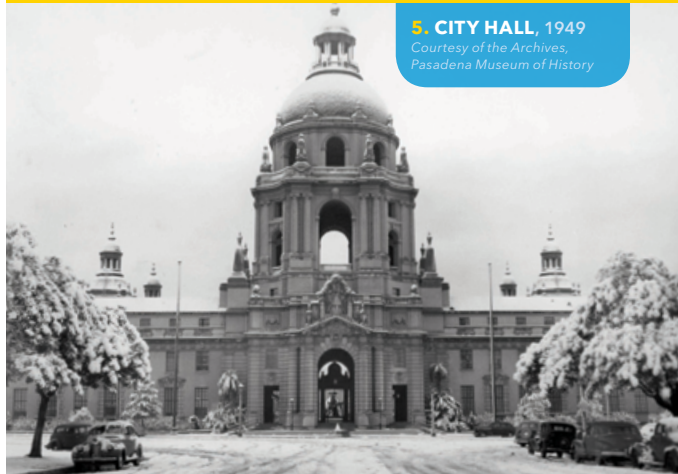
## 5 City Hall/Civic Center

*100 Garfield Ave.*

In the 1920s, a new Civic Center was built along the axes of Garfield and Holly Streets. Three major buildings were proposed: a library, a city hall and an auditorium. The most prominent California architects competed for the jobs—Myron Hunt was selected to design the 1925 library, and the San Francisco-based team of Bakewell and Brown were awarded City Hall, completed in 1927. The beautiful 2,997-seat auditorium, opened in 1932, was designed by Cyril Bennett, Fitch Haskell and Edwin Bergstrom and remains one of the most revered performance halls in the U.S.

## 5. CITY HALL, 1949

*Courtesy of the Archives, Pasadena Museum of History*





## **6 Maryland Hotel**

*411 E. Colorado Blvd.*

Opened in 1903, this was the only one of Pasadena's grand hotels that remained open year round; the others all closed after the season for wealthy travelers ended in April. Eventually made up of nine different buildings, the hotel had a main building (complete with a ballroom) and then a series of bungalows and cottages connected by winding pathways through a glorious garden. Famed architect Myron Hunt, who was new to California at the time, designed the gardens, including the hotel's famous—and much photographed—pergola, and later oversaw the design of two new wings in 1908; he also redesigned the hotel after a 1914 fire destroyed the main buildings but thankfully not its bungalows. (Hunt even lived at the hotel at the time.) The blaze started during the hotel's usual Saturday-night dance, but thankfully all 223 guests were evacuated safely. Until the Maryland closed in the 1930s, it was the center of social life for Pasadena's most fashionable residents, and many prominent people, including presidents, were guests there. Two small portions of the once-regal hotel remain—the 1929 Maryland Apartments on Euclid Ave. and a portion of the garden wall along Euclid, just north of All Saints Church.

**Raymond Ave. at  
the Hotel Green**  
*Courtesy of the Archives,  
Pasadena Museum of History*



## RAYMOND AVENUE

The 1885 arrival of the Santa Fe Railroad, which operated the region's first transcontinental route across the U.S., transformed the sleepy suburb of Pasadena into a primo destination for tourists, especially wealthy Easterners looking to escape the cold winter months. Walter Raymond, proprietor of a successful Boston-based travel agency and son of one of the Santa Fe's original stockholders, knew that to appeal to a wintering clientele, Pasadena needed a grand hotel. So in 1883 he hired architect J.H. Littlefield to build one atop a hill in what is today South Pasadena.

With 200 guest rooms and 55 acres of grounds, the four-story Raymond Hotel had a distinctive mansard roof and was visible for miles. From the sweeping Victorian veranda, guests were afforded a panoramic view of the Arroyo Seco, the snow-covered San Gabriel Mountains and the farmland and orchards surrounding Pasadena. But in just a few hours on Easter Sunday in 1895, the all-wood Raymond burnt to the ground. Completely rebuilt, the hotel reopened in 1901 and was even more lavish than before; there was even a tunnel built into the hillside that delivered guests directly from

the train station to the hotel via an underground elevator. For three decades, the Raymond was *the* place to stay, until the Great Depression provided a serious blow to business. Reportedly, Raymond's family moved into the caretaker's quarters (today this house is the Raymond Restaurant) and the hotel closed.

Raymond Avenue, named for the hotel and its owner, was the site of three of Pasadena's grand hotels: the Raymond (1886), the Green (1891), and at its far north end, the Painter (1888). Owned by abolitionist John Hunt Painter, the Painter was originally known as La Pintesca for its picturesque view, and unlike the other grand hotels was open year round. Because of this—and its high altitude—it was a popular choice for health seekers.

While banks and businesses lined Colorado Boulevard, Raymond Avenue offered many cultural attractions—a public library was built on North Raymond, an opera house on South Raymond—alongside many establishments that catered to hotel guests. Today, remnants from this era remain—including part of the Hotel Green—to remind us of the area's elegant past.



Picnic basket from Marston's eaten in Memorial Park



*This Is Spinal Tap* (1984),  
*Pulp Fiction* (1994)



"Lunchbreak (Cobras Theme)"  
by Ozma



Anywhere in front of the  
Castle Green



*The Seventeen Widows of Sans  
Souci* by Charlotte Armstrong

## 7 Memorial Park/ Memorial Park Metro Station

85 E. Holly St.

This five-acre park, originally known as Library Park, is home to the beautiful Levitt Pavilion, which hosts free concerts in the summer. The historic band shell—used for sing-a-longs and concerts since the 1930s—was restored in 2002. The stone entrance arch of Pasadena's first public library, constructed here in 1890, remains at the park's northwest corner; the library itself was damaged by an earthquake in 1933 and later dismantled. Next to the park at Holly St. and Arroyo Parkway is Metro's Memorial Park Station, a below-grade light-rail station served by the Gold Line. Today, the Metro Gold Line runs along the same route that the Santa Fe Railroad originally operated.

## 8 Armory Center for the Arts

145 N. Raymond Ave.

Serving the community for more than 60 years, this arts education nonprofit offers exhibitions, classes and programs in partnership with local schools, community groups and city agencies. Once known as Pasadena Art Workshops, the organization changed its name in 1989 after renovating and moving into this city-owned site, the former National Guard Armory.



7. MEMORIAL PARK BAND SHELL, 1992

Courtesy of the Archives, Pasadena Museum of History

## 9 Vanderbilt Commercial Block

26-38 S. Raymond Ave.

Frank Hudson, who also designed Los Angeles's Museum of Natural History, designed this Romanesque two-story brick building built in 1894. A variety of businesses were established here that catered to the guests at the Hotel Green; one bit of lore is that screen legend Rudolph Valentino rented a room upstairs where he taught wealthy divorcees to dance. During Old Pasadena's deteriorating days from the late 1970s to the mid-1990s, the popular coffee shop, the Espresso Bar, was located in the alleyway behind #34 (director Tim Burton, then living at the Castle Green, was a fan).



## 10 Raymond Theatre

129 N. Raymond Ave.

Built in 1920 and designed by Cyril Bennett—whose local architectural firm also designed the nearby Civic Auditorium—this Beaux Arts style theater was one of the great theaters in Southern California during the 1920s. Owned by the Jensen Theatre Corporation, the 2000-seat venue hosted the top vaudeville performers of the day and served as a popular movie palace. It was sold in 1948 and reopened as the Crown Theatre, still serving as Pasadena's premier movie house until the 1970s when it became a concert venue. Known as Perkins Palace, the auditorium showcased some of the most famous new wave and punk bands in the 1980s (Adam and the Ants, the Cure and New Order all made their SoCal debuts here—Wendy O. Williams of the Plasmatics even blew up a car onstage). In the 1980s, preservationists began opposing developers who sought to turn it into an office building; a twenty-year battle ensued that had musicians such as Slash and David Lee Roth showing up to testify in the building's support at city hearings. In 2009, the theatre's interior was transformed into condominiums, offices and retail space.



10. RAYMOND THEATRE, 1921

Courtesy of the Archives, Pasadena Museum of History

## 11 Braley Building

35 S. Raymond Ave.

Originally built to house local businessman and civic leader Edgar Braley's bicycle emporium, today this classic Beaux Arts building is owned by the Church of Scientology, who renovated the structure (it was the first building LEED certified in Old Pasadena). Designed by prolific Pasadena architect C.W. Buchanan, the building's original function is evident in its gorgeous atrium that features stained-glass windows that incorporate bicycle wheels in the design. After initial success with his bicycle business, Braley turned this four-story building into an automobile showroom and offices.



## 12 Hotel Green (Castle Green)

*99 S. Raymond Ave.*

The original Hotel Green, built in 1887, stood on the southeast corner of Raymond Ave. and Green St. Eventually the hotel expanded into a lavish resort with three buildings, beautiful gardens, a bowling alley, glass rooftop ballroom and a 205-foot bridge called the Bridge of Sighs that spanned Raymond Ave. This enclosed bridge, a piece of which remains today, was a favorite spot for high society to watch the annual Rose Parade. Today, what remains of the original grand hotel is the fanciful annex opened in 1889, now known as the Castle Green. With its Moorish turrets and domes, Victorian verandahs and Spanish-style balconies, architect Frederick Roehrig created a breathtaking building that remains one of Pasadena's most beloved landmarks. The Hotel Green housed distinguished winter guests such as the Gamble family and Andrew McNally, both of whom were so fond of the area that they eventually moved here permanently, as well as the Rockefellers, the Roosevelts and the Vanderbilts. Today, the 126-year-old National Register building, also a local Historic Monument, has been faithfully restored and has been turned into privately owned condominiums.



**12. HOTEL GREEN, c. 1910**

*Courtesy of the Archives, Pasadena Museum of History*

## 13 Central Park

*275 S. Raymond Ave.*

Opened in 1902, Pasadena's first public park owes its existence to the city's resort era, when it served basically as the backyard of the Hotel Green. Tourists staying at the Green (and other nearby hotels) loved its landscaped grounds, created by local Thomas Chisholm. During its heyday, the park had a bandstand, an aviary and a zoo; today, some of these tourist accoutrements remain, including a court, a horseshoe pit and a lawn bowling area complete with clubhouse.

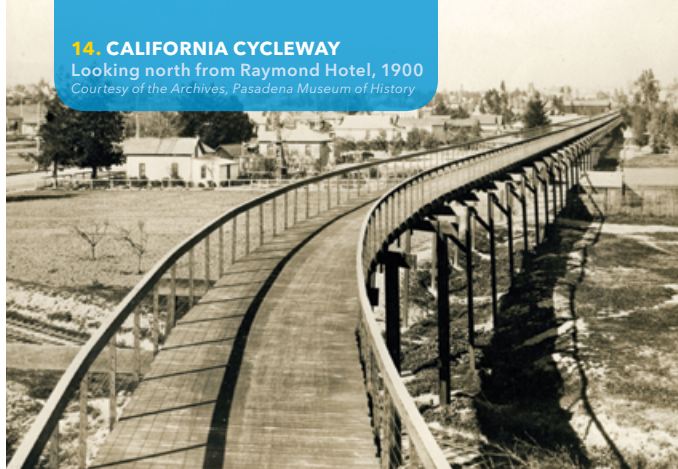
## 14 Site of the California Cycleway

*Dayton Street, just behind the Castle Green*

Long before the creation of the Arroyo Seco Parkway that links Pasadena to Los Angeles—LA's first freeway built in 1940—there were plans to link the two cities via a 9-mile elevated bicycle path. Created and funded by Horace Dobbins, a millionaire and one-time mayor of Pasadena, work began on the California Cycleway in 1896. At the time, bicycles, not automobiles, were thought to be the future of transportation. Pasadena's residents and its steady supply of visitors embraced bicycling, enough so that in 1900 there were 15 bicycle shops in town. The first and only part of the elevated bikeway constructed, in fact, connected two of the area's posh hotels—a 1.4 mile length from the Hotel Green to the Raymond Hotel. The four-lane wooden bikeway, which was billed as an uninterrupted "paradise for the wheelman," stood three to 50 feet above the ground and opened on New Year's Day as a part of the 1900 Rose Parade; some 600 cyclists participated in the inaugural ride. Interestingly, it wasn't the car that did in the cycleway—it was the streetcar. Dobbins got in a two-year-long battle with Henry E. Huntington, owner of Pacific Electric, over rights-of-way for his route. By the time the two compromised, the nationwide bicycle craze was over. Today, the Arroyo Seco Parkway (the Pasadena Freeway/110 North) follows much the same route of the proposed cycleway.

## 14. CALIFORNIA CYCLEWAY

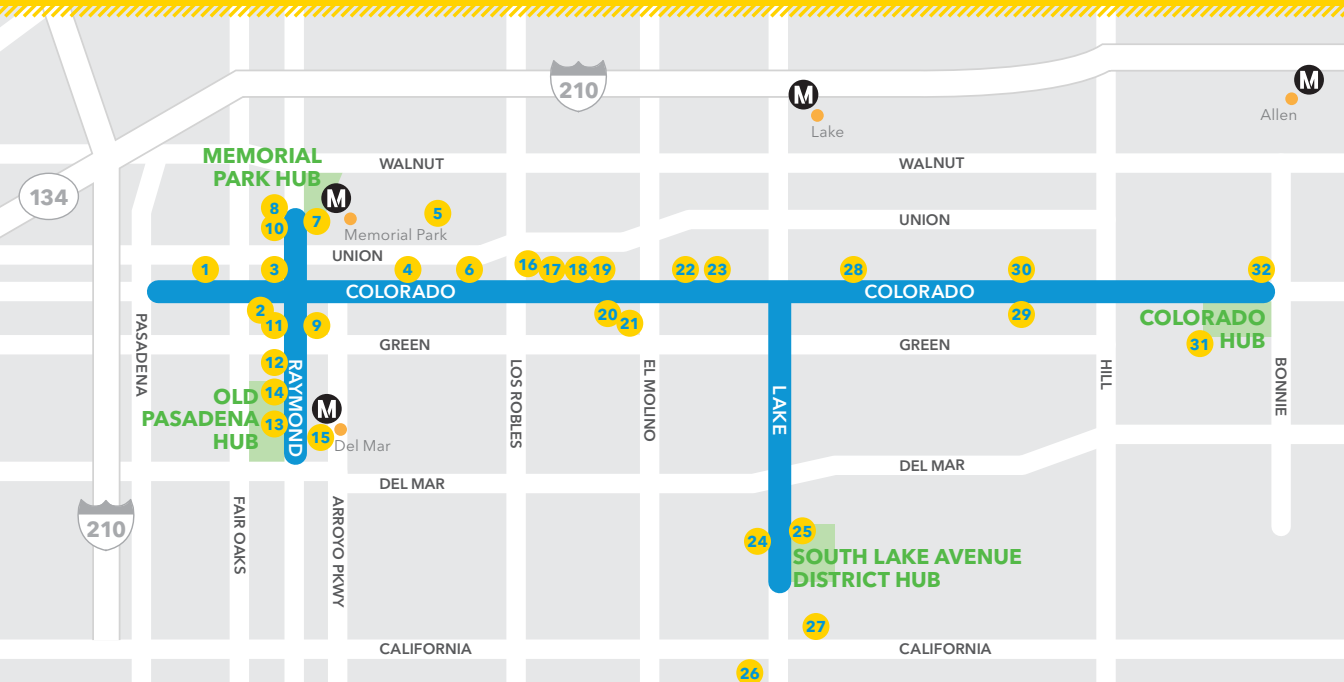
Looking north from Raymond Hotel, 1900  
*Courtesy of the Archives, Pasadena Museum of History*



## 15 Del Mar Station/ Site of Santa Fe Station

*230 S. Raymond Ave.*

Serving Metro's Gold Line, part of this station incorporates the old Santa Fe Station, a mission-style building constructed in 1930 that serviced the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway (and later Amtrak) until 1994. The train station waiting room and adjacent luggage room are now restaurants. Home to the Super Chief, the ultimate in luxury trains, until the 1970s, the station was known as the "Gateway to Hollywood" since many celebrities disembarked here to avoid the press at LA's Union Station.



PASADENA – 3.5 miles

1/4 mile



CicLAvia Route  
Ruta de CicLAvia



Metro Rail Stations  
Estaciones de Metro



Pasadena Playhouse  
Courtesy of the Archives,  
Pasadena Museum of History



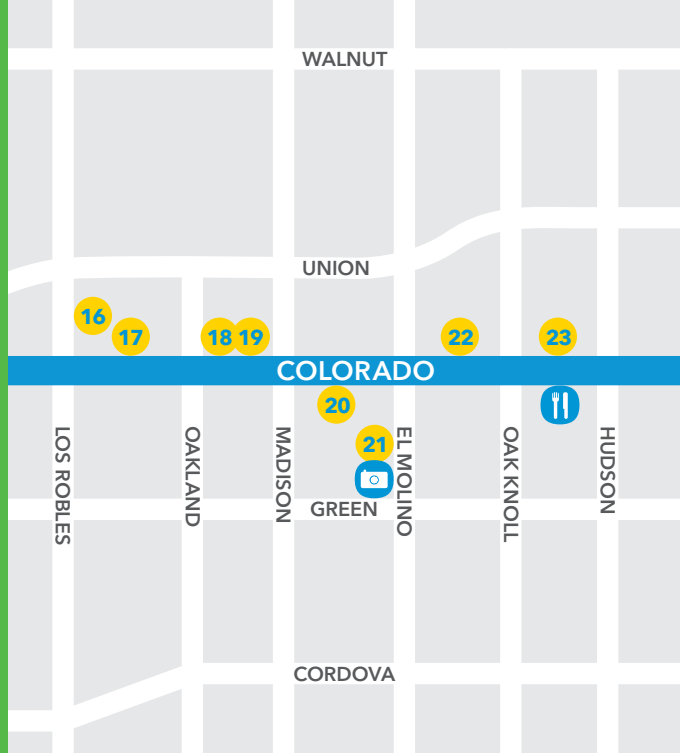
## THE PLAYHOUSE DISTRICT

During Pasadena's early days, its commercial heart was today's Old Pasadena and that bustling downtown area didn't extend much past Fair Oaks Avenue, beyond which lay various ranches and citrus groves. In 1900, Colorado Street east of Marengo Avenue was one of the exclusive residential districts of the city. The construction of the post office at Garfield Avenue began the movement of businesses eastward, and the construction of the Civic Center sealed the deal; by 1931, only a few of the old houses on Colorado remained.

The Playhouse District evolved during the 1920s and 1930s as a major concentration of retail, business, professional and artistic activities along Colorado Boulevard emerged. This progression represented the eastward growth of the city's urban character and amenities during this period, after Pasadena's economy had changed from agriculture to tourism. This period promoted the construction of residential, religious and cultural facilities including the historic Playhouse Theatre Building in 1925. The District still retains many of the original buildings and architectural features built during this

time, and a significant portion of the District has been on the National Registry of Historic Places since 1994.

Today the Playhouse District continues to be a lively cultural center, housing a number of important museums (Pasadena Museum of California Art, USC Pacific Asia Museum), as well as galleries, live performance theatres (Pasadena Playhouse, Boston Court Performing Arts Complex), cinemas (Laemmle Playhouse 7, the Regency Academy) and Southern California's oldest independent bookstore (Vroman's). With cafes tucked into courtyards and arcades featuring great restaurants, there are also plenty of dining options in the area.



Lee's Sandwiches,  
766 E. Colorado Blvd.



*40 Year-Old Virgin* (2005),  
*Transformers* (2007)



"Little Old Lady from Pasadena"  
by Jan & Dean



Playhouse neon sign,  
39 S. El Molino Ave.



*Behind the Screen* by William J. Mann,  
*My Bookstore* by Ronald Rice,  
*Distant Land of My Father* by Bo Caldwell

## 16 Pacific Asia Museum

46 N. Los Robles Ave.

Art dealer and self-taught anthropologist Grace Nicholson commissioned this building, her “Treasure House of Oriental Art,” in 1924 as both a residence and an art gallery. She hired Marston, Van Pelt and Maybury, Pasadena’s leading architectural firm, for the design of her dream palace that was modeled after buildings in Beijing’s Forbidden City. Nicholson did much of the research for the design herself, making sure every detail was stylistically correct. Opened in stages during the 1920s, the building became a center for the arts; the first-floor galleries featured American Indian and Asian art, as well as the work of local, national and international living artists. The second floor housed more galleries, an auditorium and Nicholson’s private apartment where she lived until her death in 1948. In 1943, she gave the building to the city, and it became the Pasadena Art Institute (later the Pasadena Art Museum) until moving in the seventies to become the Norton Simon Museum. In 1971, the Pacific Asia Museum was established here, one of few U.S. institutions dedicated to the arts and culture of Asia and the Pacific Islands. In 2013, an institutional partnership with the University of Southern California formed today’s USC Pacific Asia Museum.



### 16. PACIFIC ASIA MUSEUM

Courtesy of the Archives, Pasadena Museum of History

## 17 Warner Building

477 E. Colorado Blvd.

Another structure by the Pasadena firm of Marston, Van Pelt and Maybury (see **USC Pacific Asia Museum**), this wonderful Art Deco building features a green glazed terra-cotta grille above the windows that was designed by Jess Stanton, who also did design work on the Pasadena Civic Auditorium. The 1927 building originally housed several exclusive shops that catered to the wealthy guests of the nearby Maryland Hotel. Currently, the Warner Building is home to Linden Optometry.



## 18 Pasadena Star-News Building

525 E. Colorado Blvd. .

Home of the *Pasadena Star-News* for more than 60 years, this 1925 Beaux Arts building is made of reinforced concrete, its massive walls and columns designed to support the weight of hundreds of tons of printing machinery. The paper, which has been around since 1883 (although it had different names and mergers), also broadcast radio programming under the call sign KPSN, performing the first broadcast of the Rose Parade in 1926. Directly across the street at 520 E. Colorado is a Spanish Colonial building built for the Singer Sewing Machine Company in 1926; Singer had a store here for more than 50 years.



18. PASADENA STAR-NEWS BUILDING, 1927

Courtesy of the Archives, Pasadena Museum of History

## 19 Pasadena Presbyterian Church

585 E. Colorado Blvd.

The Presbyterian Church has long been established in Pasadena; its history—and its churches—are a microcosm of the area's larger history, from its geographical movement east to the architectural shifts from Victorian to Modern structures. Founded in 1875, the congregation met in a private home; they built their first church a year later at the corner of what was then Colorado St. and Worcester (now Colorado Blvd. and Garfield Ave., the present-day location of the post office). In 1886, they replaced the small chapel with an impressive Romanesque-style brick building, which featured a tall, slender steeple and the first pipe organ in town. (The same 1891 windstorm that destroyed the First Methodist Church's tower also downed this steeple.) In 1908, the church moved, purchasing this site and erecting a new Gothic Revival chapel. After 61 years, that structure was damaged in the 1971 Sylmar earthquake, and the congregation hired architect John Gougeon for the design of its new church. Completed in 1976, Gougeon's design might seem dull when viewed from Colorado Blvd., but walk around back to see the dramatic soaring arch and massive stained glass window. Among items salvaged from the old sanctuary are the 6,000-pipe organ and the 1908 campanile bells, which are now mounted on the tower in front of the church.

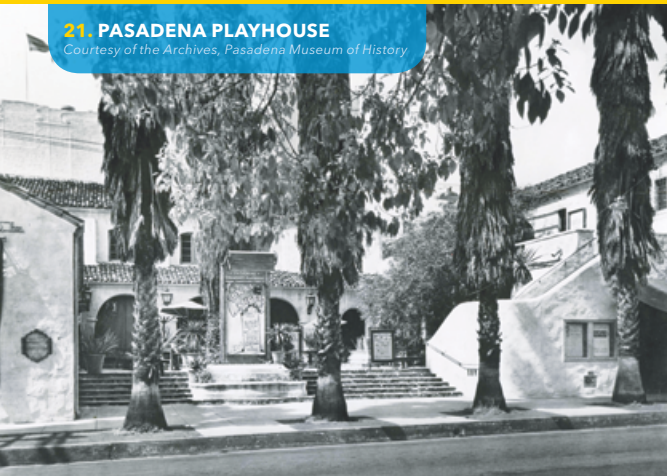
## 20. UNITED ARTISTS THEATRE, 1931

Courtesy of the Archives, Pasadena Museum of History



## 21. PASADENA PLAYHOUSE

Courtesy of the Archives, Pasadena Museum of History



## 20 United Artists Theatre

606 E. Colorado Blvd.

In 1996, the current owners (Angeles School Supply) of this 1931 theater removed the building's 1960s sheet-metal façade to reveal the Art Deco beauty beneath. Originally one of a chain of United Artists motion picture theaters, this one was, like most in Southern California, designed by the firm of Walker and Eisen. The 900-seat theater was, according to the *Pasadena Star-News*, "modernistic throughout" with black and silver decorations.

## 21 Pasadena Playhouse

39 S. El Molino Ave.

One of the finest works by architect Elmer Grey (the Beverly Hills Hotel, the Huntington Library, CalTech), this Spanish-colonial Revival building opened in 1925. Built as the home of the community theatre organization started in 1916, the Playhouse quickly became a hub of the theatre community west of the Mississippi. Playwrights Eugene O'Neill and Tennessee Williams premiered work here and actors such as Raymond Burr, Dustin Hoffman and Gene Hackman received training at the affiliated theatre school. After being declared as the official State Theatre of California by the legislature in 1937, and many more decades of success, the school closed and the Playhouse went bankrupt in 1969. In 1975, the City of Pasadena purchased the building, reopening the Playhouse in 1986.

## 22 Vroman's Bookstore

695 E. Colorado Blvd.

A Pasadena institution, this bookstore is Southern California's oldest and largest independent bookstore. Adam Clark Vroman, a leader in the growing town's cultural life, founded the store in 1894; he also helped to establish the Southwest Museum and the Pasadena Public Library. According to the shop's website, when Mr. Vroman died in 1924, he left the bookstore to longtime employees, one of whom was the great grandfather of the current owner. There are even stories that during WW II, Vroman's donated and delivered books to interned Japanese Americans (one confirmed account from Manzanar clearly recalls textbooks coming from Vroman's).

## 23 Robinson's Department Store Building

777 E. Colorado Blvd.

Don't dismiss this massive mid-century block; the two-story concrete building has a distinguished architectural pedigree. Designed by Charles Luckman and William Pereira, Robinson's Department Store opened on the site in 1958; the architects would later work together on LAX's iconic Theme Building. Target opened here in 1993, and since they were required to retain the iconic building, turned it into their first two-story store in the country.



23. ROBINSON'S, 1992

Courtesy of the Archives,  
Pasadena Museum of History

Lake Ave. at Del Mar Blvd.,  
c. 1950  
*Courtesy of the Archives,  
Pasadena Museum of History*



## SOUTH LAKE AVENUE

Just east of the Playhouse District, South Lake Avenue is a vibrant business district and shopping area with fancy boutiques, high-end chains and even a Trader Joe's. Some of these shops are set in charming courtyards, others strip-mall style on the avenue itself. Throughout the 20th century, commerce has moved in an easterly direction down Colorado Boulevard, from the Victorian beginnings of the city's downtown in Old Pasadena to the 1920s opulence of the Playhouse District. The Depression, of course, affected this growth, shuttering many long-established businesses, including most of Pasadena's grand hotels. The only one that still operates as a hotel today is the Langham Huntington Hotel, which is in the Oak Knoll neighborhood at the end of South Lake Avenue.

While the post-war era left these older neighborhoods "blighted," the newfound prosperity brought as a result of the war's end fueled suburban development in Pasadena, as it did everywhere else. One of the neighborhoods most changed was South Lake Avenue. Before the war, South Lake was residential, bounded by homes on both sides of the street. But the



opening of Bullock's Department Store in 1947 changed all that. Created with the automobile in mind, Bullock's "store of tomorrow" boasted an interior designed to feel like a private residence or an exclusive country club with lavish landscaping surrounding the store. The elegance and prestige of Bullock's led to the development on both sides of South Lake Avenue, and the area became the chicest part of Pasadena during the midcentury.

But, of course, neighborhoods change with the times, and the rebirth of Old Pasadena in the late 1980s put the shops along South Lake into decline. Since then, South Lake has been on the rise again thanks to redevelopment and a growing appreciation for its historic jewel—the Bullock's building was added to the National Register in 1996. Today, the north section of South Lake near Colorado Boulevard and Green Street is a banking, financial and business center; south of Green Street, South Lake continues to be a thriving retail district until residences begin at California Boulevard.



Make your own ice-cream float at Float in the Burlington Arcade



Children's barbershop in Macy's



*Legally Blonde* (2001), shot at CalTech



*Helen of Pasadena* by Lian Dolan



"Buzzbomb from Pasadena" by the Dead Kennedys

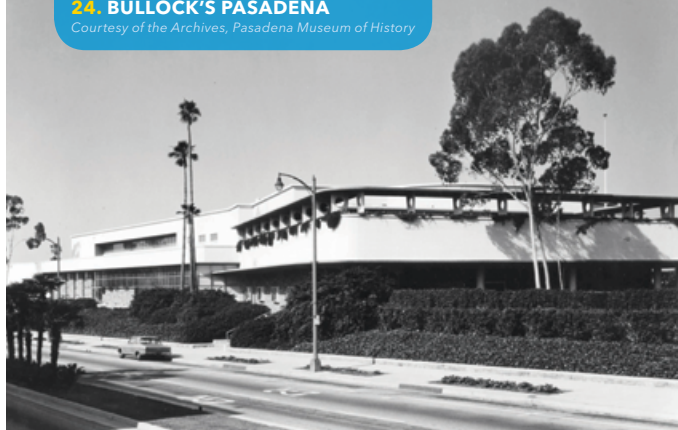
## 24 Bullock's Pasadena (Macy's)

401 S. Lake Ave.

Saved by Pasadena Heritage, this building is "a sublime example of a post-World War II department store, carefully engineered to meet the precise aspirations of residents of Pasadena," according to the Los Angeles Conservancy. The Pasadena outpost of the famed department store, this Late Moderne-style structure, designed by the firm of Wurdeman and Becket (their first of more than 100 department store designs), is so beautiful it might bring architectural fans (or high-end shoppers) to tears. In fact, *Arts and Architecture* magazine described it as "one of the world's most modern buildings." Though there are no longer lunchtime fashion shows at the Coral Room, shopping here remains an experience, from the building's sweeping exterior to its elegant and often cozy interior. Apparently, the architects worked closely with interior designer Raymond C. Dexter to create the shop's departments, each one punctuated with thoughtful and magnificent elements (the wallpaper, the world map mural in the children's section). Along with the impressive building, landscape architect Ruth Shellhorn created complementary grounds that have been altered as the surrounding area (once a six-acre parking lot) has been developed into retail establishments.

## 24. BULLOCK'S PASADENA

Courtesy of the Archives, Pasadena Museum of History



## 25 Burlington Arcade

380 S. Lake Ave.

A replica of London's 19th-century shopping arcade that runs behind Bond St. from Piccadilly to Burlington Gardens, this jewel-box nook comes as a surprise when walking along South Lake Ave. From a car, you'd probably miss it. So be glad you are on a bike or walking and can stop to admire its pink ceilings and seafoam green trim, which recall the type of confection you just might find for sale from one of the tenants.



## 26 Haskett Court

*834 E. California Blvd.*

This charming, six-unit bungalow court built in 1926 was designed by Pasadena architect Charles Ruhe for W.B. Haskett, whose family lived in the complex until the early 1980s. After that, the Tudor-style cottages were converted into retail shops until they were acquired by the non-profit Heritage Housing Partners, who restored the landmark (listed on the National Register of Historic Places) and sold the residences to first-time homebuyers. Please don't disturb residents as you admire this fine example of a 1920s bungalow court.

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## 27 Pie 'n Burger

*913 E. California Blvd.*

Just off South Lake, this classic burger joint is a Pasadena institution, especially for Caltech students for whom it's basically the school cafeteria. Open since 1963, little has changed by way of recipes or interiors: there's a Formica counter, swivel stools and homemade thousand island on the burgers. In other words: perfect. Proprietor Michael Osborn, who has owned the diner since 1972, grew up eating here when he visited his grandmother who worked around the corner at Bullock's.

## EAST COLORADO

The prosperity of the post-war years continued to push the city's expansion eastward, and instead of tourism and agriculture, the economy shifted to technology and industry. According to the city, there were 394 industrial establishments in Pasadena by 1954. Plus, the completion of the Arroyo Seco Parkway in 1940—a fast and direct route to Los Angeles—quicken suburban development of the area. To accommodate the growth—both residential and commercial—new housing tracks were developed, including the purchase of the Hastings Ranch area (just north of today's route).

Such rapid growth brought problems, among them smog and pollution from new factories and businesses. Also, as newcomers flocked to Pasadena, race-based housing restrictions remained, effectively segregating the city and limiting minority populations to older sections of the city. It's important to note that the Pasadena school district wasn't desegregated until 1970 and only then by federal decree—the only school system outside of the South to be forcibly desegregated. Plus, construction of the Foothill and Long Beach freeways displaced

many low-and-middle income families, most of whom were minorities. By the 1960s, a city founded by abolitionists was heavily segregated, and a place renowned for its beauty and climate faced serious environmental concerns; all was not well in the Crown City.

It's taken a few tumultuous decades to turn things around. Revitalization efforts in the 70s, 80s and 90s were both great successes (Old Pasadena!) and failures (the Plaza Pasadena mall, currently the site of Paseo Colorado). What mostly improved the city over the last four decades was dedicated efforts from its citizens: preservationists created Pasadena Heritage and brought about a new respect for the city's architectural treasures, and voters changed laws so that more minority representatives were elected and a greater emphasis placed on neighborhood concerns. Today's Crown City has come a long way from its affluent roots; it's a diverse city with vibrant communities and a keen awareness of history.



Andy's Coffee Shop,  
1234 E. Colorado Blvd.



*Mad Men* (Season 4),  
*Transformers* (2007)



"Pasadena" by John  
Paul Young



The Saga hotel neon sign



*Blame* by Michelle Huneven

## 28. BARD'S THEATER

Courtesy of the Archives,  
Pasadena Museum of History



28

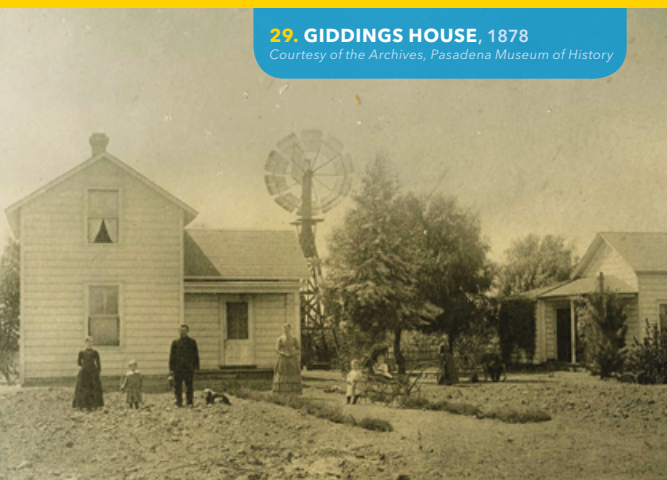
## Bard's Theater (Academy Cinemas)

*1003 E. Colorado Blvd.*

Divided into a six-screen complex in 1984, this was once a 1700-seat movie palace opened in 1924. Sadly, little is left of the original architecture from Pasadena's longest-running movie theater (although the terrazzo entrance still remains). Designed by prolific architect Lewis A. Smith, who did the nearby Rialto Theater in South Pasadena, the Highland Theater in Highland Park and the beloved Vista Theater in Los Feliz, the theater has had many name changes (Bard's Egyptian, the Colorado Theatre) and renovations. A 1940s redo replaced the theater's original Egyptian Revival style with a more contemporary Streamline Moderne; the grand theater hosted star-studded previews up until the 1960s.

## 29. GIDDINGS HOUSE, 1878

Courtesy of the Archives, Pasadena Museum of History



29

## Site of the Giddings House

*Corner of Colorado Blvd. and Holliston Ave.*

Iowan Joshua Reed Giddings moved to Pasadena in 1874 and was one of the town's original settlers. (Like other town founders, the Giddings family had links to the abolitionist movement.) His family home was located at 1318 E. Colorado and was famous for its mulberry tree, which provided much-needed shade in the summer and served as the site for many of the town's early gatherings. The home was razed in 1956; today a mile marker designates its former location.

### 30 **Holliston Avenue Methodist Church (Community Church at Holliston)**

*1305 E. Colorado Blvd.*

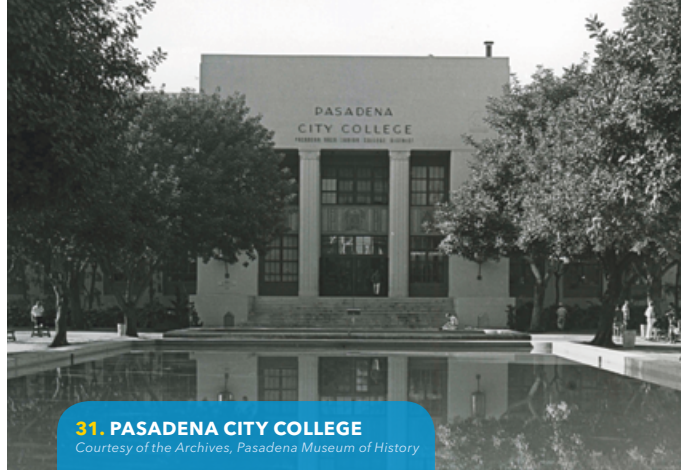
In 1887, the first incarnation of Pasadena's First Methodist Church, an impressive Gothic-style building with a 140-foot tower, was built on the corner of Colorado and Marengo. After the tower was blown off during a windstorm that also collapsed the roof, a new church was built on the same site in 1901. Made of brick with a Sespe sandstone veneer, that structure was dismantled in the mid-1920s and moved to this location.

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### 31 **Pasadena City College/ Pasadena High School**

*1570 E. Colorado Blvd.*

When the first three buildings of what was then Pasadena High School were built in 1912, they were considered to be "in the country." Today, these three buildings remain (one of them is named after social worker Jane Addams) in the campus' central quad although they were remodeled in the 1930s, and much of their original Beaux Arts ornamentation removed. In 1924, a junior college was established on campus that eventually became today's Pasadena City College.



### 32 **Saga Motor Hotel**

*1633 E. Colorado Blvd.*

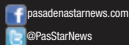
This fabulous Mid-Century Modern motel, built in 1959, was designed by local architect Harold Zook to appeal to passing motorists on what was still Route 66 at the time. (The gorgeous neon sign is designated as a Pasadena Historic Sign.) A familiar landmark, it remains a great spot for watching the annual Rose Parade. According to the Los Angeles Conservancy, "...the Saga Motor Court is a proud reminder of the golden age of motel design."



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