

HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

HISTORIC SIGNIFIGANCE REPORT

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The Gray Pavilion

1118 East Cabrillo Boulevard
Santa Barbara, CA



Figure 1 The Cabrillo Pavilion from the beach side from: Herics, Sebastian, 22 March 2021.

Designation Status: Structure of Merit

Assessor Parcel Number: 017-353-001

Constructed: 1926

Historic Name: The Gray Pavilion

Architect: Roland Sauter, Keith Lockard, and Windsor Soule

Builder: Anton Johnson Company of Los Angeles

Architectural Style: Spanish Colonial Revival

Property Type: Community Center

Original Use: Bathhouse Pavilion

What makes this place historic?



Figure 2 A recognizably urban Santa Barbara before the earthquake from: "Santa Barbara Aerial," c. 1923. *Calisphere.org*. Edson Smith Photo Collection, Black Gold Cooperative Library System. Accessed 24 March 2021. <https://calisphere.org/item/db7aa609563bcb3125a4e928f25715fb/>.

The Cabrillo Pavilion is historic because of its ties to not only prominent community members and architects of Santa Barbara, but also because its style embodies Spanish Colonial Revival.

In the 1920s, Santa Barbara found its roads paved, sidewalks built, and houses under construction as the city became increasingly urbanized (See Fig. 2). Believing in advertisements, East Coasters escaped by rail to Santa Barbara for relaxation. One of those easterners was David Gray who decided to retire at 46 years old. He had grown tired of sitting on the board of directors for the Ford Motor Company his father helped establish, and constructed another one of his homes in Santa Barbara to enjoy retirement beginning in 1916 (Tompkins, 395).

In the most non oxymoronic way, Gray was a humble millionaire. He cared deeply about Santa Barbara and called it his favorite place on earth; a sentiment from a man who owned homes in some of the best places in the country. No wonder he chose to be buried in the Santa Barbara Cemetery when he passed. With his love of Santa Barbara, Gray funded free concerts for locals by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra every year, and prettied up Montecito roads by large donations to landscaping projects (Tompkins, 396).

By the 1920s, Gray and a number of other citizens feared the development of a west coast Coney Island with so many wealthy tourists staying in Santa Barbara. The East Boulevard Improvement Association was established in 1924 to purchase much of the pristine land between Stearns Wharf and the Bird Refuge so no out-of-town developer could (Tompkins, 396). As a member of the Association's executive committee, Gray had no small say in purchasing and keeping the land until the city could manage it (Days).

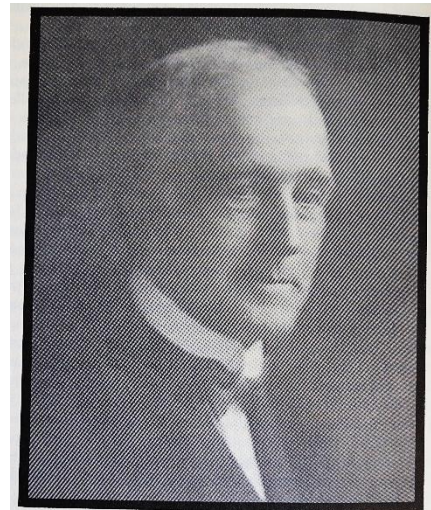


Figure 3 Mr. David Gray from: Tompkins.

Then the Santa Barbara earthquake struck in 1925, and the popular public Plaza del Mar Bathhouse built in 1915 had to shut its doors (Conard, 2-3). And of course, Mr. Gray responded with a \$100,000 (about a \$1.5 million today) gift to the city for constructing a new public bathhouse, but on East Beach land, with the condition that the city would furnish the new bathhouse (“32”). With the earthquake rubble still being cleared, the city gave a unanimous nod to Gray’s offer. But when the building was completed in 1927 and named the Cabrillo Pavilion, the city reneged—it couldn’t accept the building because it couldn’t afford the furnishings after all. Gray said not to worry, and covered the furnishings on his own dime, as well as the additionally unforeseen costs of equipment use and architectural fees (Cole, 8).



Figure 4 The Cabrillo Pavilion from: “Santa Barbara Waterfront,” 1931. *Calisphere.org*. Edson Smith Photo Collection, Black Gold Cooperative Library System. Accessed 24 March 2021. <https://calisphere.org/item/2d6766e575873e8813c76bd5723edc6f/>.

Were the architects worth the money when the total expense of the Pavilion went over \$100,000? Gray thought so when he settled for Roland F. Sauter and his partner E. Keith Lockard, prominent Spanish Colonial Revival style architects. After all, Sauter had impressed Gray when the architect designed Gray’s rustic stone home in Montecito just five years earlier in 1920 (Cole, 8).

Frederick Sauter was born in 1886 in Baltimore County, Maryland, and graduated from the Maryland Institute in 1910 with a degree in architecture. After working as a draftsman in San Francisco, he moved to Santa Barbara in 1912 and found work as a construction foreman at “El Cerrito,” the Santa Barbara hilltop estate of one of the founders of the Cadillac Motor Company, Clarence A. Black. Sauter oversaw the construction of Black’s Spanish Colonial Revival complex with elaborate stonework that was central to the estate’s design. The crafted stonework would become a central trademark for all of his future projects in Santa Barbara as he refined his Spanish Colonial Revival style (“Sauter and Lockard”).

Sauter opened his own architecture firm in 1914 and partnered with the recent Berkeley architectural graduate E. Keith Lockard in the 1920s. Sauter & Lockard contributed vastly to Santa Barbara’s Spanish look after the 1925 earthquake, including the Colonial Revival styled Gray Pavilion. Their firm was later

chosen in 1932 to design the new City Hall and Santa Barbara High School. Sauter & Lockard thus brought considerable expertise to the Gray Pavilion when it was designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival Style in 1926 (“Sauter and Lockard”).



Figure 5 From: Herics, Sebastian, 22 March 2021.

Looking at the building from the beach, the low-lying massing of the building painted in white stucco, topped with a red-tile roof, immediately recalls eighteenth century Spanish colonial buildings of California and the American Southwest. The side gables of the central building and of each building at the end of the wings are characteristically simple and unadorned, covered only by red tile. Another major Spanish feature are the prominent row of rounded columns that support the upper balcony, creating a mesmerizing portico that can be found on old Spanish adobes and medieval Spanish structures.

Still from the wide view of the beach, the windows and doorways recess into the planar walls to mimic the thick white adobe walls of early Spanish California homes (Grumbine).



Figure 7 The iron rejas over the rain spouts from: Herics, Sebastian, 22 March 2021.

Walking up to the building to the promenade, other Spanish-details begin to emerge. Notice the balustrade of the portico and the sitting wall along the cement promenade—they are decorated by sandstone oval patterns and cast stone tiles with Cabrillo’s ship or sea shells. The centered water spouts on the gables of each wing even have iron *rejas*, or grilles, which are characteristic to Spanish Colonial Revival. Going between the columns underneath the porch, the beach-facing entry doors recess under large Spanish-styled arches, with characteristic red-tiled steps leading to the second story at each end of the shaded entry porch.



Figure 6 The cast stone tiles of Cabrillo's ship and shell motif from: Herics, Sebastian, 22 March 2021.



Figure 8 The recessed arches underneath the portico from: Herics, Sebastian, 22 March 2021.

Walking around the sides of the building to get to the Cabrillo facing portion of the Pavilion, note the iron-work light fixtures with Spanish inspired scrolls. Without missing a single detail, the shell pattern from the tiles of the beach-facing façade repeats on the bases of the lamp posts too. The Spanish-style is also found by the playground nearby, with a stoa supported by smooth Tuscan columns with a low-pitched tiled roof.

Looking at the Pavilion from the Cabrillo Boulevard side, the prominent recessed arch entrance, *rejas*, and arched chimneys fit perfectly within the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The play of planar surfaces is especially noticeable in the outside corners of the building.

With the building completed in 1927, it continued to be used by the city and the community in a variety of different ways undergoing numerous architectural changes. Before Pearl Harbor in 1941, the city re-dedicated the Pavilion as a recreational community center, but when World War II began, the upper floors were closed for use by military personnel. After 1945, the upper story was used as a meeting space for the Native Sons and Native Daughters of the Golden West. By the 1990s, the building had been used as a youth center, art offices, and social facility, with the bath house and café located below



Figure 10 The Spanish-styled stoa from: Hernandez, Nicole.

on the first story (Days). The building was recently renovated in the 2010s based on original architectural drawings as well as to meet new state environmental standards (Cole, 8-14).

The Cabrillo Pavilion has remained a central feature of Santa Barbara's East Beach since it was completed in 1927, both as a visual feature for the local neighborhood and as an exquisite example of Spanish Colonial Revival by a famed local architectural firm.



Figure 9 A corner of the building that shows the dynamism of planar surfaces from: Herics, Sebastian, 22 March

Property Description:

The following text is taken from a Historic Structures Site Report:

The Cabrillo Pavilion is a rectangular building constructed of reinforced concrete, clad in white plaster, with shallow-pitched red tile roofs. Its long rectangular shape, oriented east/west toward the ocean, is broken visually into smaller elements by changes in height and roof plane. The eaves-front central block is two stories with a prominent two-story gabled and flat roof entrance wing extending to the north, facing East Cabrillo Boulevard. This central block is flanked by tall single story wings terminating in cross-gabled shallow bays. A dramatic colonnade extends along the beach front, with 11 arched openings symmetrically behind it.

On the second floor, a shed roof enclosure with seven paired picture windows sits atop a decorative cast concrete railing. Windows are arranged symmetrically. Paired arched windows are located in the gabled bays, and paired 4-over-4 windows light the north elevation. Three pane casement windows are located on the



Figure 11 Lamp post base with repeated shell motif from: Herics, Sebastian, 22 March 2021.

second floor of the north elevation. An arched opening with an over scale multi-light transom and paired glass doors provides access on the Cabrillo Boulevard elevation (Cole, 14).

Historic Integrity:

“Integrity” is how well a historic place or resource represents the period or theme for which it is being recognized for. To prove “Integrity,” researchers use the National Register of Historic Place’s definition of “Integrity.” For the National Register, Integrity is determined by the historic resource’s Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association (Integrity, 44). The Gray Pavilion maintains its integrity because it successfully conveys its original 1926 appearance.

Historical Significance:

“Historical Significance” is a term used by the city to call a place historical. A place earns “Historical Significance” if it meets one or all of the criteria listed below in the City of Santa Barbara. The Landmarks Commission and City Council decides whether or not, based on these criteria, if a historical place is a Historic Landmark or a Structure of Merit (Chapter 22.22). This building was designated a **Structure of Merit**, because it:

Meets Criterion A. *Its character, interest, or value as a significant part of the heritage of the City, the State, or the Nation.*

The Gray Pavilion is a significant part of the heritage of the city because of its community value and use, its association with philanthropist David Gray and the architectural firm Sauter & Lockard.



Figure 12 Iron work of a refurbished original lamp from: Herics, Sebastian, 22 March 2021.

~~Meets Criterion B.~~ *Its location as a site of significant historic event.*

Meets Criterion C. *Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the City, the State and the Nation.*

The building is closely identified with David Gray, and the architectural firm Sauter & Lockard.

Meets Criterion D. *Its exemplification of a particular architectural style or ways of life important to the City, the State, or the Nation.*

The Gray Pavilion exemplifies Spanish Colonial Revival through its:

- Planar wall surfaces
- Low-lying massing
- Red-tiled roof
- Columned portico
- Recessed windows and entries
- Iron detailing of grilles and light fixtures

Meets Criterion E. *Its exemplification of the best remaining architectural type in a neighborhood.*

The Gray Pavilion is the only Spanish Colonial Revival beachside structure in the East Beach neighborhood.

~~Meets Criterion F.~~ *Its identification as the creation, design, or work of a person or persons whose effort significantly influenced the heritage of the City, State, or the Nation.*

~~Meets Criterion G.~~ *Its embodiment of elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship.*

~~Meets Criterion H.~~ *Its relationship to any other landmark if its preservation is essential to the integrity of that landmark.*

Meets Criterion I. *Its unique location or singular characteristic representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood.*

The Gray Pavilion's unique location on the beach-side of Cabrillo Boulevard, and outstanding Spanish Colonial Revival detailing, makes it an established and familiar visual feature of the local East Beach neighborhood.

~~Meets Criterion J.~~ *Its potential of yielding significant information of archaeological interest.*

~~Meets Criterion K.~~ *Its integrity as a natural environment that strongly contributes to the well-being of the people of the City, the State or the Nation.*

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