

San Diego Automotive Museum Murals

Balboa Park's 1935 California State Building, now home to the San Diego Automotive Museum, was constructed for the 1935-1936 California Pacific International Exposition. The building was

and his team. The murals represented California Commerce, Scenic Beauty, Agriculture and Industry. Each mural was 8 x 18 feet and painted on fibre board to look like tilework.



California State Building, 1935. *Courtesy of David Marshall*

designed by Richard Requa, Director of Architecture for that Exposition. Requa wrote that the building "demonstrated the close relationship between the ancient Maya and the twentieth century modern treatment of masses and ornamentation, or a progression from ancient to modern." Maya-styled ornamentation can be seen today on the restored Federal Building, home to the Hall of Champions, across the Pan American Plaza (parking lot).

Short on time for designing and creating several new buildings and remodeling some of the 1915 buildings, Requa asked the Exposition's art director and Hollywood set designer Juan Larrinaga for advice on creating the Maya designs on several buildings. Larrinaga suggested they make the ornamentation from fibre wallboard. Requa wrote that "All of our new decoration was done by this method, much of it designed, and all of it made under his [Larrinaga's] supervision."

The four large murals above the California State Building's entrance were also the work of Larrinaga

All the building's original ornamentation, including the four murals, have been lost. The San Diego Automotive Museum and The Committee of One Hundred hope to see the entire building restored to its 1935 condition, using permanent materials.

After an extensive search of local and distant archives turned up no color photographs of the murals, The Committee of One Hundred commissioned tile artists to recreate the murals in color. Full-size temporary

murals will be installed on the building as the first step in restoration of the entire building, including permanent tile murals.

Restore the Palisades

The Palisades area pleads for the attention it deserves as the core of our 1935 California Pacific International Exposition. By failing to maintain these once-proud historic buildings, the City of San Diego has allowed roofs to leak and damage collections; tree roots to damage floors and injure Park visitors; and ornamentation to go un-repaired while San Diego welcomes millions of tourists, and City and County residents to visit these buildings yearly. The City has completed a facilities assessment for each of these buildings. The City knows what needs to be done. It's time for our City to get to work.



Illustration of restored building. © Robert Thiele Architect.

Saving Starlight

The Starlight Bowl, for many years home to the San Diego Civic Light Opera, is the venue where generations were entertained under the stars in



Volunteers clean up stage. *Courtesy of Save Starlight.*

Balboa Park. It began as the Ford Bowl, created for the 1935 California Pacific International Exposition, where it was home to twice-daily symphony concerts during the Exposition and for years afterward.

Disruption by jet airplanes increased and musical theater didn't last. Unused for the past five years the Starlight Bowl deteriorated. Weeds grew large outdoors as an illicit indoor operation grew cannabis. Homeless people repeatedly broke into the building despite the efforts of Park Rangers.

Along came Save Starlight last year with vision, boundless energy, organizational skills and enthusiasm. Led by Steve Stopper, former audio technician for Starlight, and a team of volunteers, the non-profit group has held two major cleanups of the venue under the approving watch of Balboa Park staff. The City is considering what must be done to insure safety and access before re-opening the Bowl to the public.

The Committee of One Hundred wishes Save Starlight success in this important endeavor.

