



SAN DIEGO'S ETERNAL SUNSHINE

**LANDSCAPE ICONS AROUND
IN THE HOST CITY OF ASLA'S
2011 ANNUAL MEETING AND EXPO.**

BY DANIEL JOST, ASLA

WATCH THE WEATHER on KUSI San Diego and you'll hear four different forecasts—as I write it's sunny and 86 degrees in the desert, 74 and fair in the inland valleys, 62 and misty along the coast, and 44 and breezy in the mountains. Within an hour of downtown, you'll find beaches overtaken by sea lions, scrubby hillsides covered in wildflowers, windblown pines, and colorful desert formations.

San Diego has a range of interesting designed landscapes as well. It has world-famous zoos and golf courses. The University of California, San Diego, has one of the best collections of contextual art anywhere, and nearby is Louis Kahn's iconic Salk Institute with its runnel that seems to flow to the sea.

When people think about Southern California, they often think about sprawl, and San Diego has plenty of that. The easiest way to get around is by car, but many parts of the city are walkable and bikable. And thanks to the presence of canyons, the city had built-in limits to its development, so many neighborhoods maintain strong ties to the natural environment.



THIS PAGE
San Diego is home to the Salk Institute and a number of other intriguing landscapes.

IMAGE CREDIT
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FOTOGRAFICA



San Diego also has a dense urban core that has gained new vibrancy in the past few decades. Strategic planning has helped to transform the historic Gaslamp Quarter, once a hangout for prostitutes, into a lively district filled with restaurants and stores. Although downtown is still relatively short on neighborhood park space, it has a brand-new park, designed to accompany the baseball stadium and an iconic new pedestrian bridge that connects the stadium to the waterfront. Aside from areas controlled by the navy and coast guard, the downtown waterfront is publicly accessible and very much alive with people walking, biking, and riding pedicabs.

In some areas along the water, you'll see vendors selling Mexican crafts. San Diego was founded by Spanish monks (the padres) and was part of Mexico until the mid-1800s, so much of its character, from the food to the architecture, has a strong Spanish influence. For years, all that divided the city's southern suburbs from Mexico was a single wire marking the border, but construction of a border fence began in the early 1990s to cut down on illegal immigration and drug smuggling.

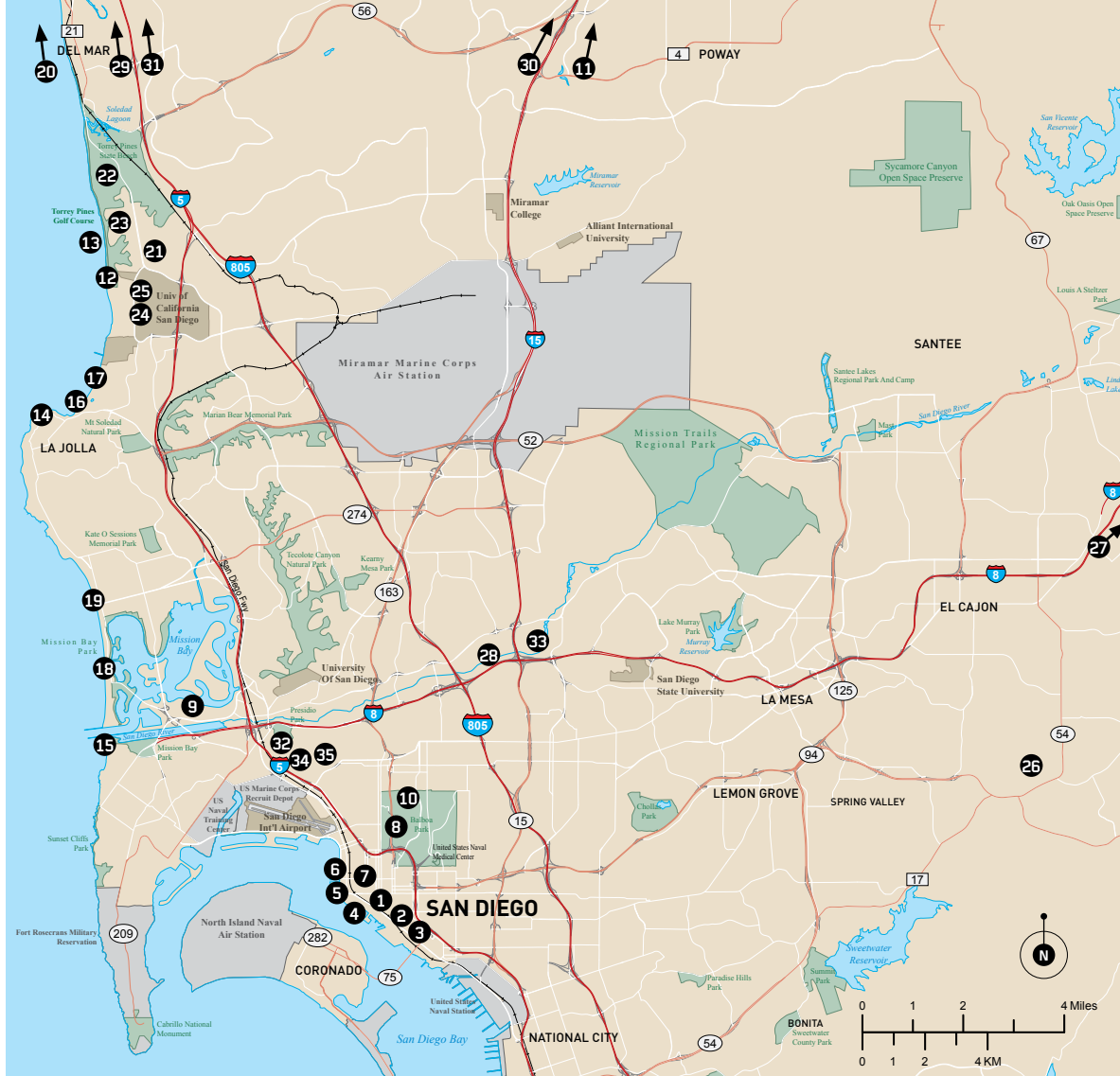
Today, San Diego is the second-largest city in California and the eighth largest in the country. If you are planning to come to this year's ASLA Annual Meeting or you just happen to be in town this summer, here are a few notable landscapes you might consider checking out.

1 Martin Luther King Jr. Promenade

1988–1997: PETER WALKER AND PARTNERS (LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS); CENTRE CITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, CITY OF SAN DIEGO (CLIENT); AUSTIN, HANSEN, FEHLMAN GROUP (URBAN DESIGN); MARTHA SCHWARTZ, ASLA, DENNIS ADAMS, ANDREA BLUM (ARTISTS); CHURCH ENGINEERING (ENGINEERS); MELVIN EDWARDS, ROBERTO SALAS, JERRY DUMALO, MARY LYNN DOMINGUEZ, TAMA DUMALO (SCULPTORS)

Many memorials to Martin Luther King Jr. are tucked away in poor, segregated neighborhoods, but this linear park designed by Peter Walker and Partners has a prominent location between the city's convention center and its bustling Gaslamp Quarter. King is remembered in his own words with more than 30 quotations engraved into flat rectangular stones that alternate from one side of the path to the other. Abstract sculptures recalling the civil rights struggle anchor the promenade.

Some memorials are narrow in their appeal, but on a sunny morning in early April, this place was alive with all kinds of people who were walking, jogging, biking, and riding skateboards. Many visitors end up reading the quotations, and many of them likely leave with King's words echoing in their minds. *Runs from 5th Avenue and L Street to West Market Street and Columbia Street, parallel to Harbor Drive*



1. Martin Luther King Jr. Promenade
2. Children's Park and Pond
3. Petco Park/"Park at the Park"
4. Seaport Village and the Embarcadero
5. Tuna Harbor Park
6. Urban Trees Exhibit
7. County Administration Center
8. Balboa Park
9. Sea World
10. San Diego Zoo
11. San Diego Safari Park
12. Salk Institute
13. Black's Beach
14. Children's Pool
15. Dog Beach at Ocean Beach
16. La Jolla Cove
17. La Jolla Shores
18. Mission Beach
19. Pacific Beach
20. Swami's Beach
21. Neurosciences Institute
22. Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve
23. Torrey Pines Golf Course and the Lodge at Torrey Pines
24. Library Walk
25. The Stuart Collection, UCSD
26. Water Conservation Garden
27. Viejas Outlet Center
28. First San Diego River Improvement Project
29. Solana Beach Coastal Rail Trail
30. Stone Brewing World Bistro and Gardens
31. Cottonwood Creek Park
32. Presidio Park
33. Mission San Diego de Alcalá
34. Old Town San Diego State Historic Park
35. Heritage Park

MAP CREDIT
©Map Resources

2 Children's Park and Pond

1996: PETER WALKER AND PARTNERS (LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS); CENTRE CITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, CITY OF SAN DIEGO (CLIENT); AUSTIN, HANSEN, FEHLMAN GROUP (URBAN DESIGN); MARTHA SCHWARTZ, ASLA, DENNIS ADAMS, ANDREA BLUM (ARTISTS); CHURCH ENGINEERING (ENGINEERS)

Filled with circular mounds of grass and purple ice plant and a fountain that celebrates irrigation heads, this unusual space along the MLK promenade brought Peter Walker and Partners an ASLA Award in 1998. But its function as a place for people has been roundly criticized by *LAM*'s readers. So when I visited this spring, I didn't have very high expectations, yet the space was surprisingly lively on a sunny Sunday afternoon. Most of the grass mounds have been removed to open up views into the space, but the ones that remain all had people lying on them. And there were a lot of people sitting near the reflecting pool.

Among the park's most satisfied users were teenagers who have turned a line of humps covered in purple ice plant into their own BMX (bicycle motocross) course. There are plans to change the space so it serves families and small kids, and it looks as if the BMX area will be removed. But it's worth spending a few minutes here before it changes to see it in action. Most BMX parks are dusty holes that no one without a bike would ever want to visit, and most small parks do little to cater to teens. Slight modifications to this unintentional design could create a unique landscape that solves both problems. *1st Avenue and Island Avenue*





3 Petco Park/"Park at the Park"

2004: SPURLOCK POIRIER LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS (PARK DESIGN); ANTOINE PREDOCK ARCHITECT, P.C. (DESIGN ARCHITECT); HOK SPORT (ARCHITECT OF RECORD); HINES (PROJECT MANAGER AND DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT)

When not in use, professional sports fields are often dead spots within a city, isolated from the surrounding neighborhood by a sea of parking. But the master plan for Petco Park, home of the San Diego Padres, embraces its urban context more than most. Old industrial buildings on site are repurposed as office space, with restaurants and retail on the ground floor, and a new park has grown up between them.

The "Park at the Park," designed by Spurlock Poirier Landscape Architects, has views into the field where the Padres play. During games it is closed off to the public with a series of sliding screens and fences, and ticketholders are able to experience a ball game while lying on a grassy slope. When there are no games being played, it is a favorite spot for condo dwellers to bring their dogs and for locals to bring out-of-town guests. Kids play pickup games at a small baseball diamond, while a sculpture of Tony Gwynn, "Mr. Padre," sits at a high point on the site, overlooking it all. *8th Avenue and J Street; park closed during ball games and events*



4 Seaport Village and the Embarcadero

1978: WIMMER YAMADA AND ASSOCIATES (LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE)

A landmark pedestrian bridge designed by T. Y. Lin International opened this spring, connecting Petco Park to the waterfront. Veer to the right and continue along the Embarcadero and you will pass a marina and a series of simple parks and open spaces designed by Wimmer Yamada and Associates (now Wimmer Yamada and Caughey). To the north of the marina is a quaint "village" of restaurants and shops that is a world unto itself, a theme park without an entry fee. One minute you are passing along a quiet country brook and the next you are in the middle of a lively Italian piazza. As visitors approach the plaza, margarita in hand, admiring the crafts and doodads, a fire eater appears, breathing a four-foot-tall flame from his mouth and calling people to join him for a show. *Kettner Boulevard and Market Place; open daily 10:00 a.m.–10:00 p.m.*





5 Tuna Harbor Park: The Greatest Generation Walk

1990s–2000s: PORT OF SAN DIEGO

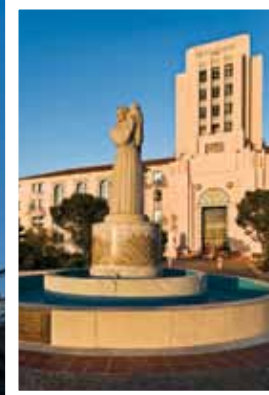
San Diego’s deepwater port is the principal home of the U.S. Navy’s Pacific Fleet—one-third of the navy’s ships are based here, and the military played an important role in the city’s rise in the 20th century. For those interested in connecting with this history, the Greatest Generation Walk is a good place to start. Located next to the *USS Midway*, an old aircraft carrier that serves as a museum, the walk includes a variety of monuments memorializing and celebrating the military. Among the most memorable is *Unconditional Surrender*, a 25-foot sculpture by J. Seward Johnson, inspired by the famous *Life* magazine photo by Alfred Eisenstaedt of a sailor kissing a nurse in Times Square on V-J Day. There aren’t many 25-foot sculptures of ladies in short skirts, and standing at the base of this one, you’ll realize why. A sculptural tribute to Bob Hope and the military is more intimate in scale; a group of life-sized bronzes by Eugene Daub and Stephen Whyte show Hope entertaining the troops. *North Harbor Drive and West G Street*

6 Urban Trees Exhibit

2003–2011: PORT OF SAN DIEGO

One of the most interesting sections of the San Diego waterfront is actually more of a sunny sidewalk than a shaded promenade. In 2003, to enliven the North Embarcadero where massive cruise ships, whale and dolphin watching tours, and fishing vessels unload, the Port of San Diego began a temporary art exhibit called “Urban Trees.” The exhibit was a great success and is now in its seventh iteration. It has helped to attract unique vendors to the area on weekends, including one who was selling Mexican wrestler masks the day I visited.

Not all of the sculptures in this year’s exhibit are tree-like. While a few, like Jeff Zischke’s palm tree made out of plastic rakes, take the name of the exhibit to heart, there’s also a mermaid, a man standing on one hand, and a giant wrenchlike abstract piece. The one thing that connects them is they all seem to “grow” from large pots, which are altered to anchor the sculptures. The current exhibit runs through the last weekend in October. *North Harbor Drive between West Broadway and West Hawthorn Street*



7 County Administration Center

1908, 1926 (MASTER PLANS): JOHN NOLEN;
1935–1939 (BUILDING AND GROUNDS): SAMUEL W. HAMILL, WILLIAM TEMPLETON JOHNSON, RICHARD S. REQUA, LOUIS J. GILL, JESS STANTON, GEORGE PALLISER (ARCHITECTS); ROLAND HOYT (LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT); DONAL HORD (SCULPTOR); 2009 (SAN DIEGO COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT MEMORIAL): HARGREAVES ASSOCIATES (JACOB PETERSEN, PRINCIPAL)

The waterfront location for San Diego’s Civic Center, now the County Administration Center, was recommended by John Nolen, one of America’s foremost landscape architects and planners in the early 20th century. (Others wanted the building in Balboa Park!) But it took years for the city and county to raise the funds necessary. The center was finally built during the Depression with funds from the Works Progress Administration, and its design is characteristic of that era. Be sure to check out Donal Hord’s sculpture *Guardian of the Water* and the mosaics covering the fountain below, which celebrate the preciousness of water in San Diego.

If you happen to be here at night, there is a very simple memorial to fallen police officers on the grounds as well. The names of fallen officers are sandblasted into a frosted glass panel that is illuminated with a cool blue light following the death of an officer. *Pacific Highway and West Cedar Street*

B Balboa Park

1868: CITY COUNCIL; 1910s: CLARENCE S. STEIN, BERTRAM GOODHUE; 1930s: RICHARD REQUA; 2000s: ESTRADA LAND PLANNING

One hundred years ago, in the inaugural issue of *Landscape Architecture*, Robert Wheelwright chronicled “the attacks on Central Park,” enumerating “various schemes that have been proposed for utilizing that ‘waste space’” over the years. Balboa Park provides an idea of what Central Park might look like had all those projects been realized.

In 1868, San Diego was one of the first cities west of the Mississippi to set aside land for an urban park, and many modern maps of the city show a large rectangular green space, located just north of downtown. But looking at an aerial photo of the city, it’s difficult to tell where the city ends and the park begins. The park is sliced into pieces by highways and roads that run through its canyons. Large chunks of Balboa real estate were sacrificed to create a naval hospital and a junior high school; the San Diego Zoo, a municipal golf course, and a Japanese garden—all open only to paying visitors; and a campground leased by the Boy Scouts that occupies its northwest corner. The center of the park is filled with 17 museums, performance venues including an outdoor pipe organ, and restaurants—many of these structures left over from a series of expositions held in 1915 and 1935. And of course all these venues need parking, so there are giant, Walmart-style surface parking lots conveniently located throughout the park.

There were voices crying out in the wilderness, discouraging the despoliation of this landscape over the past century. The Olmsted Brothers, who were the original landscape architects for the exposition of 1915, resigned in protest after a commission decided to place the exposition at the center of the park on a previously undisturbed mesa. After the city decided to keep the buildings of the 1915 exposition intact, John Nolen warned that it was important to avoid further encroachments, and a citizen’s study committee in 1957 warned about adding new facilities that have nothing to do with parks or recreation. But despite these protests, there is hardly any buildable land to protect these days.

That’s not to say you shouldn’t visit Balboa Park. Go for the museums and the gardens between them—the Spanish revival architecture is delightful and has spawned many grassroots movements to save it. Go for the restaurants, the puppet shows, and the organ recitals. Go for the artists’ colony and its dreamy rainbow-colored plaza. But don’t expect to see a great park. The park disappeared a long time ago. *6th Avenue and El Prado*



ANIMAL KINGDOMS

Ever seen an okapi? San Diego has them! And dik-diks and killer whales, too. The city is home to the original Sea World ⁹—with landscapes designed by Wimmer Yamada in the early 1960s—and the “world-famous” San Diego Zoo ¹⁰. Both collect plants alongside their animals.

The San Diego Zoo was an early leader in providing more humane, planted habitats for exotic animals rather than sterile houses and cages with bars. And it has played a major role in breeding endangered species such as the California condor.

The zoo has its own design staff, led by David Rice, Affiliate ASLA, since the late 1970s, that works with outside consultants and zoo employees involved with operations, animal care, maintenance, horticulture, and curation to imagine new habitats. Renovations over the past few decades have furthered the zoo’s reputation for innovative, immersive design, including the Gorilla Tropics exhibit overseen by Rice, Robyn Badger, Kent Scott, and Tom Atkins, ASLA, then with Jones & Jones. Glass walls, moats, and hidden barriers all help to make this exhibit more open than some others at the zoo that use wire mesh.

Some exhibits display the animals in unique ways. The hippo exhibit brings you below the level of the pool where the hippos cool off, and you can see them swimming and diving through the glass. And the zoo has experimented with putting different species in the same enclosure. Orangutans and siamangs, which live in the same forests in Asia, live together at the zoo, stimulating each other and keeping each other company.



In the late 1960s, planning began on the San Diego Wild Animal Park (now known as San Diego Safari Park ¹¹), a more immersive experience with small herds of animals in Escondido. The space was first master planned by Charles Faust but has undergone a number of changes in recent years, including the removal of its monorail.

Unlike some safari parks where you drive through and some animals approach your car, the large open-range exhibits are accessed by tram, and animals here are prevented from crossing the road with a mix of sunken walls and fences. The animals are a bit farther away than at your typical zoo, but it is interesting to see antelope hanging out near giraffes, as they do in the wild. There are also a lot of smaller exhibits to walk through. *Sea World: 500 Sea World Drive; San Diego Zoo: Park Boulevard and Zoo Drive; San Diego Zoo Safari Park: 15500 San Pasqual Valley Road, Escondido, California. All park hours vary with the season. Admission fees required.*

¹² Salk Institute (image, page 88)

1967: LOUIS I. KAHN

The design of the Salk Institute is the stuff of legend. Dr. Jonas Salk, who discovered a vaccine for polio, wanted to create a “crucible of creativity” where biologists could collaborate with people from other backgrounds. With seed money from the March of Dimes, he hired Louis Kahn to design buildings with flexible spaces that could adjust to the changing needs of scientific research.

According to a history of the space written by Marc Treib, years into the process, Kahn was still unsure what to do with the space between the buildings. He had an idea for a tunnel, but didn’t know what to do with the plantings. So he flew in Luis Barragan, the famous Mexican landscape architect, to offer his advice. Kahn recalled the scene: “When [Barragan] entered the space he went to the concrete walls and touched them and expressed his love for them, and then he said as he looked across the space and toward the sea, ‘I would not put a tree or blade of grass in this space. This should be a plaza of stone... a facade to the sky.’”

Barragan was never hired on as the designer, though, and at first some involved in the process were not convinced that a plaza without any trees was a good idea—the original concept was to create a garden where scientists could meet and interact. At one point, Salk hired Lawrence Halprin and Associates to come up with designs for the space, but Halprin and Kahn could not see eye to eye. Halprin thought the space needed to be planted to make it comfortable for people during the summer months, and he eventually resigned from the project, leaving Kahn’s firm to handle the plaza.

The plaza’s design is much beloved for its sublimity, the way it works with the buildings to act as a viewfinder that captures the ocean and the setting sun. In an interesting twist, Halprin was among a group of leading designers including Frank Gehry and Robert Venturi who fought against a proposed addition to the space in the early 1990s. The addition was built on part of a eucalyptus grove, just east of the plaza, that provided a shady counterpoint to the open plaza. *10010 North Torrey Pines Road, La Jolla, California; courtyard open Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.*



BEACHES

San Diego has beaches for everybody, but not every beach is for everybody. Some beaches attract swimmers and snorkelers, while others should be left to expert surfers. Some places cater to families, while others are probably not the best place for children.

13 Black's Beach If you are into the whole naturist movement, you will find this clothing-optional beach, a short walk from the Salk Institute, invigorating. If not, you may be taken aback by the baby boomers lying around in their birthday suits. The beach is located near the city's gliderport, and you can watch people zoom overhead on hang gliders. The beach's challenging waves also make it a destination for experienced surfers.

14 Children's Pool Originally designed with a concrete breakwater as a protected area for children to swim in during the 1930s, this beach in La Jolla has been overtaken by seals and sea lions in recent years. These animals are protected from harassment by federal law, and their presence here has led to a great deal of controversy locally. The beach is no longer a great place to swim, owing to increased coliform counts caused by the seals, but it's a wonderful place for viewing wildlife.

15 Dog Beach at Ocean Beach This beach is for the dogs, literally! Dogs are allowed to run free under the supervision of their owners. A pier nearby is a popular place for fishing.

16 La Jolla Cove With its clear water and abundant sea life, La Jolla Cove is a great place for snorkeling and scuba diving. The cove is home to a variety of species including leopard sharks (don't worry, they're harmless), and it is protected as part of the San Diego La Jolla Underwater Park Ecological Reserve, so surfing, fishing, and removal of sea life are prohibited. At least one company nearby rents snorkeling gear and offers lessons for beginners, including children.

17 La Jolla Shores La Jolla Shores is often cited as the best place in San Diego to learn to surf. Many vendors take advantage of its "mellow" waves to offer surf lessons here.

18 Mission Beach One of the most popular beaches in San Diego, Mission Beach has a boardwalk with vendors and rides, including a wooden roller coaster from the 1920s. The southern portion of the beach has volleyball courts.

19 Pacific Beach This beach is a great place for the whole family. You can rent surfboards, inline skates, or bicycles at shops near Crystal Pier.

20 Swami's Beach Located in the city of Encinitas, along Highway 101, Swami's surf break is world renowned, and the site is especially popular during the winter months. On your way down to the beach, take note of the unique access stairway designed by Glen Schmidt, FASLA, which uses a particularly monstrous laminated wood beam—tall enough to act as the barrier rail on the first flight of stairs—to span the bluff and avoid disturbing a particularly sensitive area.

21 Neurosciences Institute

1995: TOD WILLIAMS BILLIE TSIEN ARCHITECTS; BURTON ASSOCIATES (LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS)

Salk spawned a whole milieu of biological research centers in La Jolla. The Neurosciences Institute, founded by the Nobel prize winner Gerald M. Edelman, is among the most distinguished architecturally. Three celebrated buildings by Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects, carefully integrated into the earth, surround a hidden courtyard, with sleek water features and plantings of bamboo designed by landscape architects at Burton Associates (now Burton Studio). While the campus is publicly accessible, there is little parking on site for visitors during the day, but there is on-street parking nearby. 10640 John Jay Hopkins Drive

22 Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve

1899 (364 ACRES PRESERVED): CITY COUNCIL; 1908–1911 (ADDITIONAL LAND ACQUIRED): ELLEN BROWNING SCRIPPS (PHILANTHROPIST); 1916 (BOTANICAL STUDY): GUY FLEMING AND RALPH SUMNER (NATURALIST/LANDSCAPER); 1922 (FIRST PLAN): RALPH D. CORNELL (LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT); 1949 (SECOND PLAN): RALPH D. CORNELL

Today *Pinus torreyana* is ubiquitous in the Southwest, a dependable, low-water evergreen championed by many landscape architects, but its native habitat is limited to a few hundred acres of coastline in San Diego County and an island near Santa Barbara. The effort to preserve the trees has spanned generations. A city ordinance in the late 19th century forbade cutting the pines, but despite the law, their population was nearly annihilated by people who cleared the land for grazing and used the trees for firewood. In 1899, the city stepped in to preserve some of the remaining pines, and in the following decade, the philanthropist Ellen Scripps continued that effort by buying up adjacent lands. But degradation continued.

After a 1916 report by Guy Fleming and Ralph Sumner raised public awareness of the damage being caused by picnickers and campers, Scripps named Fleming the first custodian of the property. She later brought in Ralph D. Cornell, a well-known landscape architect from Los Angeles, to create a master plan for the park, which she preserved for posterity in her will. A large section of the park was turned over to the state in 1959, and additional lands were added in 1970 following a grassroots campaign, but the pines were once again at risk in the late 1980s, as a beetle infestation killed around 15 percent of the trees. Scientists developed traps laced with pheromones to control the infestation. 12600 North Torrey Pines Road; open daily 8:00 a.m. to sunset; \$10 per car

23 Torrey Pines Golf Course and the Lodge at Torrey Pines

1957 (GOLF COURSE): WILLIAM P. BELL AND WILLIAM F. BELL; 2001 (REDESIGN OF SOUTH COURSE): REES JONES; 2002 (LODGE AT TORREY PINES): WIMBERLY, ALLISON, TONG & GOO (ARCHITECT), JONI L. JANECKI & ASSOCIATES (LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT), DAVID REED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

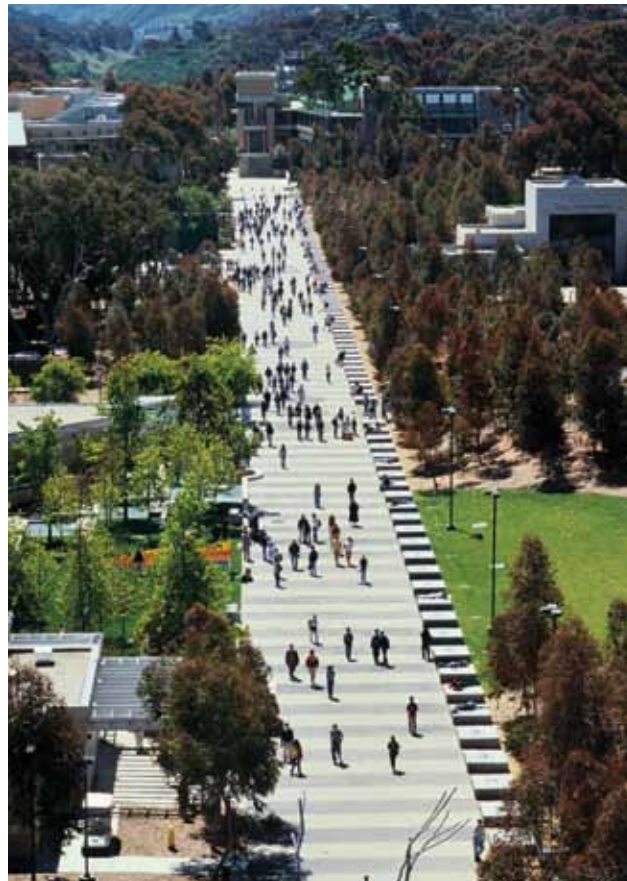
Just outside the reserve is the world-famous golf course of the same name. Believe it or not, these picturesque links overlooking the Pacific Ocean are not part of an elite private club. Torrey Pines's two 18-hole championship golf courses are owned and managed by the city of San Diego.

The golf great Phil Mickelson has called Torrey Pines South Course, redesigned by Rees Jones in 2001, the “hardest golf course in the country.” And in 2008, it became the first municipal course to host the U.S. Open in the event's 108-year history. Out-of-town visitors can book tee times for either course eight to 90 days in advance by calling the city's reservation line between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. local time at 877-581-7117. And whether or not you enjoy golf, it's worth stopping by the lodge to see its unique brick features, inlaid with boulders in a way that feels like something out of the *Lord of the Rings*. 11480 N. Torrey Pines Road; reserve tee times in advance

24 Library Walk

1995: PETER WALKER WILLIAM JOHNSON AND PARTNERS

There is something fitting about a striped path leading to a spaceship-like library named after Dr. Seuss. At the University of California, San Diego, Peter Walker William Johnson and Partners used alternating bands of light and dark-gray concrete pavers to connect William Pereira's iconic library building to the school of medicine. Precast concrete blocks, about four feet wide, line one side of the path, creating a pleasant asymmetry when viewed from above and providing places to sit and watch people move by. Intersects Gilman Drive just west of Myers Drive



THE STUART COLLECTION at the University of California, San Diego

In 1979, James Stuart DeSilva approached the UCSD administration with the idea for a collection of site-specific works by leading artists that would be situated throughout the university's campus. Under the oversight of Mary Beebe, the director of the collection since it began in 1981, the university has commissioned 18 original pieces over the past 20 years. Unlike traditional sculpture gardens, many of the works are integrated into buildings or function as landscapes. The entire university is viewed as a potential site. And many of the artists who are represented in the collection are known for their work in other media and never made a sculpture previously.

Highlights from the collection include:

Two Running Violet V Forms (1983) The San Diego native Robert Irwin's contribution to the collection brilliantly plays with the changing transparency of a small-gauge chain-link fence, coated with blue-violet plastic. The material is barely identifiable as fencing as it zig-zags overhead through the canopy of a eucalyptus grove.

Bear (2005) "When you are driving through the desert, sometimes you see rock piles that suggest animals," Tim Hawkinson told the *Union-Tribune* in 2005. Those formations inspired him to create *Bear*, a monumental pile of stones that weighs over 300 tons! The sculpture sits in a striking landscape designed by Spurlock Poirier Landscape Architects.



Snake Path (1992) Alexis Smith's giant serpent, 560 feet long and 10 feet wide, alludes to the biblical tale of Eve and the serpent and the questions it raises about the value of knowledge, an appropriate subject for a hill near the library. The snake winds its way through a garden by Spurlock Poirier Landscape Architects, which represents the Garden of Eden, and a granite copy of *Paradise Lost* within the garden testifies to the value of knowledge: "And wilt thou not be loath to leave this Paradise, but shalt possess a Paradise within thee, happier far."

La Jolla Vista View (1988) William Wegman's overlook seems like something out of a national park—with its picnic table, drinking fountain, telescope, and interpretive sign. But the view he has captured is one of suburban sprawl. The bronze interpretive sign shows a drawing of the view as it appeared in 1987. A map of the collection is available at the visitors kiosk on Gilman Drive just north of La Jolla Village Drive.



25 Water Conservation Garden

1991–1999: [DENEEN POWELL ATELIER](#)

San Diego imports about 90 percent of its water from Northern California and the drought-stricken Colorado River. The Water Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College takes a different approach than would a typical demonstration garden in educating people about this issue. Rather than merely making a pretty space and labeling the plants with a few interpretive signs here and there, Deneen Powell Atelier created a series of outdoor exhibits that teach people how to design and maintain a low-water garden. “We tried to imagine walking through Ted Walker’s classic text, *Planting Design*,” Jon Powell, ASLA, told *LAM* in 2002.

Many people have praised this approach, and the exhibits are generally well executed. If you are interested in learning how to detail interpretive signage, this is a great place to check out. But though I appreciated some of the exhibits, certain concepts are just too complicated to translate well in static interpretation—such as irrigation design. And the sheer amount of interpretation must overwhelm many visitors. A relaxing stroll through the gardens is difficult, because they are not designed for that—they are designed to convey information. *12122 Cuyamaca College Drive West, El Cajon, California; open daily 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.*



27 Viejas Outlet Center

1998–2000: [IVY LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS \(HARRY MESTYANEK AND DAVID MCCULLOUGH\)](#), [THE CUNINGHAM GROUP \(PHASE ONE ARCHITECTS\)](#), [CARRIER JOHNSON \(PHASE TWO ARCHITECTS\)](#)

If you prefer crisp forms and “design restraint,” then the outlet center run by the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians is probably not for you. But if you have an appreciation for kitschy, over-the-top design, it’s worth taking the trip up to Alpine to see this outdoor mall. Its entries are marked with fake rockwork and towering waterfalls—including one you can actually walk behind! Stone mosaics and sculptures of bears, bighorn sheep, and other animals enliven the space. And at the center of it all is a giant performance area with a shade structure modeled after a dream catcher. Many of the plantings seem to have been designed with water conservation in mind, though the water features were decidedly not. *5005 Willows Road, Alpine, California 91901*

28 First San Diego River Improvement Project

1982–1990: [WIMMER YAMADA AND ASSOCIATES](#)

In the years following World War II, development in Mission Valley exploded with new retail centers built on the floodplain of the San Diego River. To control flooding, plans were developed for channeling the river and lining it in concrete in the 1970s. But nearby property owners didn’t like the idea. Additionally, under the recently passed federal Clean Water Act, the riverside’s natural wetland values needed to be preserved. Wimmer Yamada and Associates worked with a group of property owners to develop a plan for a flood-control channel with naturalized banks that would also provide trails for walking along the water. They made what was a trash-strewn drainage ditch into a public amenity.



29 Solana Beach Coastal Rail Trail

2005: SCHMIDT DESIGN GROUP, BETSY SCHULZ (ARTIST)

A large rails-to-trails project connects Oceanside to San Diego. The portion of this project that passes through Solana Beach, designed by the Schmidt Design Group, is particularly artful. Entry arches integrate handmade tiles by Betsy Schulz that speak to the area's history. Schmidt added texture to a serpentine concrete wall by packing the forms with layers of shells and other found objects. *Highway 101 and Via de la Valle, Solana Beach, California*

30 Stone Brewing World Bistro and Gardens

2008: SCHMIDT DESIGN GROUP (LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT FOR GARDEN); ANDY KJELBERG (ARCHITECT); GREG KOCH (OWNER); DAVID ROBINSON (INTERIOR DESIGNER); ENVIRONS (PERIMETER LANDSCAPE)

When you are in the parking lot of the Stone Brewing Company, there is no signage attesting to the location of this restaurant and its one-acre beer garden, just a series of giant stones. Guests enter through an intimate, somewhat hidden pathway. Once inside, you can eat at a table or walk with your beer into the garden. Parts of the beer garden actually double as a detention basin. *1999 Citracado Parkway, Escondido, California*

31 Cottonwood Creek Park

2004: SCHMIDT DESIGN GROUP

At Cottonwood Creek Park, Schmidt Design Group daylighted sections of two creeks that were previously hidden in a large culvert that ran under the site. The new creeks are planted with riparian vegetation and have a series of overlooks with simple yet powerful rusted steel detailing.

While the creek bed itself is a popular playground, the formal playground in the park is also worth checking out. Its equipment is pretty standard, but its safety surfacing strategy is very thoughtful. It mixes rubberized surfacing and sand in a way that maximizes both accessibility for the disabled and creative play. The landscape architects designed a special fountain that streams water for molding the sand and provided a raised sand area for disabled children; however, the fountain was turned off in light of the ongoing drought when I visited this spring.

The site uses a variety of sustainable building methods, including a pervious concrete parking lot. Both Cottonwood Creek Park and the Stone Brewing Company beer garden are pilot projects of the Sustainable Sites Initiative. *South Vulcan Avenue and Encinitas Boulevard, Encinitas, California*



HISTORIC SAN DIEGO, FOR REAL?

San Diego was the first city in California to be settled by Europeans, so it is filled with history, but strangely, many of the buildings and spaces that appear historic are in fact reconstructions or tributes to the site's history. Here's a quick guide to what's real and what's unreal.

32 Presidio Park It was on this hill that Fray Junipero Serra established the first mission in California in 1769, and the site was officially proclaimed a presidio, or military outpost, of Spain a few years later. However, the Mission-style building you see today does not date to that period. It was actually erected in the 1920s as a museum celebrating Serra.

33 Mission San Diego de Alcalá The padres relocated the mission to its current location in 1774, as it offered a more dependable water supply. The mission was abandoned for several years during the second half of the 19th century, then taken over by a group of nuns. It was in ruins when it was finally rebuilt in 1931 based on drawings from 1813. The fountain in the courtyard is not original but is believed to be located on the site of a historic cistern.

34 Old Town San Diego State Historic Park Before the 1870s, the area that San Diegans know as Old Town was San Diego. After that, new development was focused around the port. In 1968, the place became a historic park, like Colonial Williamsburg, representing the period from 1821 to 1872. Some of the buildings you see are reconstructions. But La Casa de Estudillo is an original structure. It was built around a courtyard in 1829. Its garden most likely dates to the early 1900s and is not in very good shape.

35 Heritage Park The Victorian buildings in this park were salvaged from other sites around town. They are real but they are set in a landscape that does not necessarily reflect their original locations. ●

IMAGE CREDITS

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