

Fullerton Auditorium formerly Plummer Auditorium

201 E. Chapman Avenue

1930

Spanish Colonial Revival

**Status: Local Landmark;
Listed on the National Register**



Designed by architect Carlton M. Winslow and constructed for \$295,500 in 1930, the Fullerton Auditorium is an outstanding example of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture with Italian Renaissance design elements. The walls are poured-in-place concrete, and the gable roof features red clay tiles. The imposing front façade is symmetrical in design and richly decorated with Neo-classical motifs. A wide variety of cast concrete emblems embellish the classically shaped parapet, windows, and rectangular portico. The four-story high tower is crowned with an octagonal dome clad in mosaic tile in rich shades of blue, gold, and green.

Just as outstanding is the interior workmanship and detailing. The large auditorium, which seats over 1,300 people, features an elaborate ceiling of painted and decorated rough-hewn beams, the original wrought iron chandeliers, arched side isles with composite capitals, and other classical ornamentation. In 1995, the building was fully rehabilitated and improved to meet seismic safety requirements. Additionally, the grand Wurlitzer Organ, original to the building, was restored and is in use today.

A 75-foot-long, 15-foot-high mural entitled “Pastoral California”, painted by WPA artist Charles Kassler in 1934, is located on the west side of the building under the arched arcade. A landmark in its own right, the mural is a true “fresco” – a medium rarely used for this type of artwork – that was totally restored through a community effort in 1997, after it had been covered by paint for 56 years.

The building was first named for Louis E. Plummer, superintendent of Fullerton High School and Fullerton Junior College from 1919 to 1941. Mr. Plummer was highly involved in public educational activities, not only in Fullerton but with organizations at the state and national level as well. The building was renamed Fullerton Auditorium in 2020.

The building was constructed in 1930, after several years of planning by the city's leading citizens. Since its construction the facility has been a center of entertainment for the community. Music organizations from both the high school and junior college have performed for social and civic groups. Not only do students gain their first experiences in drama, dance, and music there, the auditorium is used to stage important theatrical productions and community-oriented cultural programs. Throughout its 90+ year history the auditorium has served the community well, giving Fullerton its fine reputation as a cultural and educational center for north Orange County.

In 2020, the Fullerton Joint Union High School District was awarded a \$3,434,000 California grant for seismic and handicapped access improvements to the Auditorium. The grant covered 50% of the \$6,868,000 project cost, with the District funding the remaining amount. The project started in January 2021; in addition to stabilizing the clock tower, an addition was required on the east side of the auditorium to provide proper handicapped access to the auditorium seating, and additional restrooms. These improvements were completed in November 2022.



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