

# California Hotel

**305 N. Harbor Boulevard**

**1922**

**Spanish Colonial Revival**

**Status: Local Landmark**



The building presently called Villa del Sol was formerly the California Hotel, constructed by the Fullerton Community Hotel Company led by Charles Chapman. The original plan of the hotel was a “U”-shaped with an open courtyard facing Spadra Road (now Harbor Boulevard). The three-story building contained 22 apartments and 55 hotel rooms with some shops on the ground floor. The building’s Spanish Colonial architectural style, designed by the local architects Frank Benchley and Eugene Durfee, included rectangular windows, a flat roof, and two towers at each end of the wings fronting the street. When completed at a cost of \$136,000 in 1922, the hotel was “the place” to stay when visiting the area, and the Fullerton News Tribune published regular reports on who was registered there.

This building lost some of its effect when it was converted to its current commercial use in the 1960s. As part of this conversion, the one-story addition was built across the front, enclosing the courtyard. At the same time, tile roofs were added to the courtyard and second story balconies, the turrets that were located on the towers were removed, and other modifications to ground floor openings were made in order to accommodate retail uses.

The building was extensively rehabilitated in 1995. With this rehabilitation, some of the former detailing was restored, and the work done in the 1960s was altered to better fit a Spanish Colonial architectural style. While the removal of the one-story addition along Harbor Boulevard would have restored the building to its original design, this option was impractical for economic reasons.