

Fullerton High School

201 E. Chapman Avenue

1922 and later

Spanish Colonial Revival

Status: Local Landmark



The present Fullerton High School campus is actually the third site for the city's initial high school. The Fullerton Union High School District was established in 1893, at which time all grades attended the same building for classes. This first brick school building stood near the corner of Spadra Road (now Harbor Boulevard) and Wilshire Avenue.

Shortly after 1900, a new complex was erected on Commonwealth Avenue where Amerige Park is presently located. In 1911, a fire destroyed the main building, and the school was moved again, this time to its current location on East Chapman Avenue.

An initial group of wood of frame bungalows was replaced in 1922, when thirteen separate buildings were erected in a quadrangle on twenty-two acres. In 1930, the construction of Plummer Auditorium continued the Spanish Colonial architecture on the campus. Science Buildings #1 and #2 were constructed in 1949 and 1953, respectively, designed by architect William H. Harrison. These two science buildings are the only classrooms on the campus which remain true to the high school's original 1919 campus master plan. Designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, the concrete buildings have red tiled roofs, decorative dentils, and covered arched walkways, and are topped with copper cupolas. Subsequent buildings constructed on the campus have been less successful in adhering to this style.

The present-day "historic walkway" is the remains of a raised "veranda" that overlooked an assembly lawn adjacent to Chapman Avenue. The walk spans the distance between the science buildings and the Fullerton High School Auditorium. The freestanding pillars that now line the walk are the remains of a covered arcade which fronted the school's administration building and the library wings of the Study Hall. The covering and archways were removed with the demolition of the administration and library buildings, and the pillars and walkway were left in place (presumably due to utility tunnels under the walkway).

Additionally, the ornate archway at the front of Science Building #1 (east end, facing Chapman Avenue) and the arcade between the two science buildings are remnants of the same arcade system as the walkway described above. The columns of the historic walkways and arcade are constructed of poured-in-place concrete, and are designed in a simple “contemporary” Mission-style, including a square shaft with tapered edges, a formed frame base, and a folded leaf capital with an inset shield detail. Recessed in the floor tile of the historic walk and arcades are metal plaques commemorating the school’s graduating classes, dating from 1918, to the present. These plaques have been referred to as “time capsules”, and it is reported that they contain yearbooks and other memorabilia from the school’s early classes.

In the center of the historic walk way (south side) is a double stairway. These stairs are the remains of the administration building, constructed sometime between 1927 and 1930. The stairs include concrete steps, ornate concrete pilasters, and a concrete vent for the utility tunnels which is of an ornate interlocking design.



In 2020, new construction took place along the east side of Science Buildings #1 and #2 to house elevators to meet handicap accessibility requirements. Unfortunately, these plane, box-like additions are not in keeping with the original architecture of these buildings.

