



SANTA BARBARA TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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To Encourage the Preservation of Historic Buildings and Sites in the County of Santa Barbara

NEWS RELEASE

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Photos available upon request

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FINAL PHASE OF RESTORATION FOR HISTORIC COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER NEARS COMPLETION - Years of research leads to the revitalization of an early Spanish-Colonial Revival building for community use in the heart of downtown Santa Barbara

(SANTA BARBARA, CA, FEBRUARY 27, 2007) – You may have noticed a new look to the historic 1928 building, soon to be the Presidio Resource Center, at 215 E. Canon Perdido Street in downtown Santa Barbara. A recent paint job, refurbished windows, roof tiles, and doorways are just a few of the many improvements underway at the former Santa Barbara School of the Arts building. One of the earliest Spanish-Colonial Revival style buildings that now define Santa Barbara's unique character, **the new community resource center is scheduled to open in late September 2007.**

An ambitious restoration project begun in the early 1990s by the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation (Trust) has led to the revitalization of this historic site. When complete the building will house all Trust curatorial and research collections, making many items readily available to the public for the first time. The collections document and reflect the peoples who have lived in the Santa Barbara Presidio neighborhood since the eighteenth century. These artifacts, manuscripts, maps, photographs, and other materials are used to support El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park's exhibits and educational programs, as well as to provide the public with unique resources for local history.

Using original blueprints, every effort has been made to restore the building to its original appearance while simultaneously meeting current building codes and facility storage needs. **“Our goal is to preserve the integrity of the original building while adapting it for a new public use,”** said Presidio Research Center Director Lee Goodwin.

Meticulous research and restoration work includes the **microscopic and infrared analysis of five layers of stucco and paint to determine the original color of the building, the restoration of all original doors, windows and hardware, re-roofing of the building using many of the original tiles, and the removal of features not original to the building.** Additional efforts to increase community access and reintroduce historic elements to the building include the installation of a wheel chair ramp for handicap accessibility, the installation of a sophisticated drainage system to prevent seepage of moisture into the basement walls and improve overall drainage, repairing the sandstone retaining wall along Canon Perdido Street, seismic stabilization of the building and its structural features, lead and asbestos abatement, and the installation of a new HVAC system to provide climate control and to regulate temperature and relative humidity in the collection storage area of the facility. **San Diego-based Heritage Architecture and Planning, and local contractor Channel Coast Corporation have taken every measure to ensure that restoration work and overall building improvements do not disturb the aesthetics of the historic building.**

Fundraising for the Presidio Resource Center began in 1999 for planning, and a capital campaign was launched in 2003. **In 2006 a \$323,000 grant from the California Culture and Historical Endowment (CCHE) together with matching funds provided by the Trust, completed the funding for the new Resource Center.** Thanks to the donations of hundreds of individuals, private foundations, City of Santa Barbara Redevelopment Agency, and California State Parks, this valuable community resource will soon be complete. **When opened, use of the facility and access to the collections will be free of charge to all visitors.**

ABOUT the 215 E. Canon Perdido Street site – Originally designed by Architects Soule, Murphy and Hastings and built by contractor James Crow in 1928 for a total cost of \$14,000 – the structure was the only permanent building for the Santa Barbara School of the Arts, the center of the fine arts movement in Santa Barbara from 1927 to 1938. The Great Depression and the discontinuation of funding from the Carnegie Foundation led to decreased enrollment and finances contributing to the schools closing in 1938. In 1939, community leader Alice F. Schott purchased the School's property, saving the buildings from an uncertain future. In 1945, Schott deeded the property to the Adult Education Program of the Santa Barbara School District, which they occupied until 1981 before outgrowing the site and moving to a new location. The California Department of Parks and Recreation purchased the site for \$850,000 in 1981. The studio and workshops have been leased to artists, theater groups, and small businesses while formal plans for the site were developed. A general plan for the property was adopted by the State Department of Parks and Recreation, the Santa Barbara City Council, and the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation in 1988.

ABOUT the California Culture and Historic Endowment – CCHE is a state agency that funds projects that tell the stories of California as a unified society and of the many groups of people that together comprise historic and modern California. Projects supported by the Endowment will help the citizens of California to strengthen and deepen their understanding of the state's history, its present society, and themselves.

ABOUT the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation – Founded in 1963 by Dr. Pearl Chase and other concerned community leaders, the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation works to protect, preserve, restore, reconstruct, and interpret historic sites within Santa Barbara County. The Trust is the primary force in the reconstruction and preservation of El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park and the restoration of La Casa de la Guerra in downtown Santa Barbara. Most recently, the Trust has begun reconstruction on the Northwest Corner of El Presidio de Santa Barbara, the eighteenth-century Spanish colonial fort that is Santa Barbara's birthplace. These additions will eventually house the new Presidio visitor's center, and with the help of the new Resource Center, serve to interpret the city's Hispanic heritage, and the larger multi-cultural heritage of the surrounding Presidio neighborhood from the eighteenth century to the present. **For more information visit www.sbthp.org**

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