


**Downtown Architectural Walking Tour Guide**




Directions: **Call Mr. Smith (210) 385-5310 in case of emergency**

<p><b>Chaperones and individuals who will be meeting the group at the start of the tour:</b></p> <p>Park your car in front of the Federal Court House on East Cesar Chavez Blvd., near Alamo St. There are many parking meters or parking lots to choose from, but I recommend a parking meter and simply put in enough money for 5 hours (around \$6.00).</p> <p>Walk along E Cesar Chavez Boulevard to Dwyer Avenue (4 blocks). Turn Right (north) on Dwyer Avenue and walk 4 blocks to the Bexar County Courthouse. Meet the school group at the Bexar County Courthouse at 9:30.</p>	<p><b>Architectural Walking Tour Directions:</b></p> <p>Have bus drop off students at the Bexar County Courthouse, located at the corner of Dolorosa and Main Plaza. Review expectations, divide students into groups with their chaperones, and answer any questions.</p>
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At each location, students will identify as many architectural features as possible. Parents please read facts to your group and then let students locate the architectural elements.

Building	Facts	Architectural Elements
<p><b>Building 1      Bexar County Courthouse</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built in 1896, architect was James Reily Gordon</li> <li>• Architectural style - Richardsonian Romanesque</li> <li>• Oldest and largest continually working courthouse in Texas</li> <li>• Red color comes from native TX sandstone and TX granite</li> <li>• Beehive spire atop seven story tower</li> <li>• Building nicknamed "Big Red"</li> </ul>	<p><b>Beehive spire:</b> spire on top of the largest tower</p> <p><b>Turrets:</b> small tower projects vertically off wall</p> <p><b>Arches</b></p> <p><b>Post and lintel:</b> horizontal and vertical beams</p> <p><b>Finial:</b> ornament on top of the structure</p> <p><b>Rustication:</b> decorative masonry achieved by cutting back the edges of stones</p> <p><b>Columns</b></p> <p><b>Bonus:</b> What national symbol is hidden on the building?</p>

*Cross Dolorosa to gather everyone at Main Plaza. From Main Plaza, walk towards San Fernando Cathedral. Building 2 is located to the right of San Fernando Cathedral.*

<p><b>Building 2</b> <b>Old Frost Bank Building</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built in 1922, architect was J.P. Haynes</li> <li>• Architectural style – Neoclassical</li> <li>• 12 stories, San Antonio’s first skyscraper</li> <li>• Bas-relief sculptures (medallions) – United States coinage</li> <li>• Frost Bank moved to a 21-story tower in 1973</li> <li>• Now City Council meeting chamber</li> </ul>	<p><b>Medallions:</b> oval or circular painting, panel, or design used to decorate a building</p> <p><b>Pediment:</b> triangular upper part of the front of a building</p> <p><b>Eagles</b></p> <p><b>Roman arches</b></p> <p>Bonus: What is the building called now? Municipal Plaza Building/City Council Chamber</p>
<p><b>Building 3</b> <b>San Fernando Cathedral</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Founded in 1738, completed in 1749</li> <li>• Architect unknown – Canary Islanders</li> <li>• Architectural style – Spanish Colonial and Gothic Revival</li> <li>• First Catholic Parish church in Texas</li> <li>• Burial site of the Alamo’s defenders</li> <li>• Home of first Archdiocese in Texas</li> <li>• Visited by Pope John Paul II in 1987</li> </ul>	<p><b>Façade:</b> face of a building</p> <p><b>Rose windows</b></p> <p><b>Gothic arches</b></p> <p><b>Finials</b></p> <p><b>Stained glass</b></p> <p><b>Quatrefoils:</b> four leaves resembling a flower</p> <p><b>Trifolios:</b> three leaved plant</p> <p><b>Cupola:</b> (Back of building) small dome on a drum on top of a larger dome, adorning a roof or ceiling.</p> <p><b>Inside of building</b> – Tomb of TX Heroes, geographic center of San Antonio</p>
<p><i>After students walk through San Fernando Cathedral, have students exit to the left side of the church. In the courtyard, there are restrooms located in the far corner opposite the gift shop. This is the best time to have students use the restroom until the end of the tour.</i></p> <p><i>After students use the restroom, walk through the courtyard toward the back of San Fernando Cathedral. Cross S Flores St. (Military Plaza) using the designated crosswalk area. Parents can help stop traffic, which is required to stop for pedestrians in crosswalk.</i></p>		
<p><b>Building 4</b> <b>San Antonio City Hall</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built in 1889, architect was Otto Kramer</li> <li>• Architectural style – second empire – Italian Renaissance Revival</li> <li>• Original structure had four stories with an octagonal clock tower, turrets, and domed cupola</li> <li>• Renovated in 1927 – removed the cupola and turret roofs and added a fifth floor</li> </ul>	<p><b>Roman arches</b></p> <p><b>Corinthian columns</b></p> <p><b>Medallions</b></p> <p><b>Modified turret</b></p> <p><b>Fruit reliefs:</b> sculpted elements remain attached to a solid background</p> <p><b>*Nuclear fallout shelter</b></p>

After finding the architectural features on City Hall, walk to the right around the building. Cross Plaza de Armas in the designated crosswalk area at the corner of Plaza de Armas and West Commerce Street.

**Building 5**  
**Spanish Governor's Palace**



- Built in 1749 by Spanish government
- Architectural style – aristocratic Spanish Colonial
- Built for the Spanish presidio's captain, who represented the Spanish king
- Carved doors tell the story of Columbus' voyage to the New World

**Canals:** rain gutters  
**Keystone:** wedge-shaped stone piece at the apex of a masonry arch  
**Coffers:** on doors  
**Post and lintel:** through window

After the Spanish Governor's Palace, cross Plaza de Armas using the same crosswalk. Walk along West Commerce Street. You will be on the same side of the street as the San Antonio City Hall. The first block will be S Flores Street. Keep walking. The second block will be N Main Avenue. Keep walking. The third block will be Soledad. Cross diagonally to Soledad and walk along the right side of the street.




The next intersection is Houston St. Cross Houston Street and walk to the right. You will be on the left side of Houston Street as you walk East. You will cross the San Antonio River. At the next intersection you will be at Houston Street and St. Mary's.

**Building 6**  
**Texas Theater**



- Built in 1926, architect - Robert Boller of Boller Brothers of L.A. and Kansas City, "architects of fantasy"
- Architectural style – Spanish Colonial with some French features
- Largest theater in the southwest in 1926
- \$2,000,000 initial cost – unheard of for the time
- Multicolored, lit fountains flowed continuously in the grand lobby
- Had a playroom in the basement for children to play (under adult supervision) while adults watched the productions
- Theater was destroyed in 1982, but the façade was saved

**Coffers:** a strongbox or small chest for holding valuables.  
**Fluting:** shallow grooves running vertically along a surface.  
**Composite columns**  
**Finials:** ornament on top of the structure  
**Façade**  
**Cartouche:** carved tablet or drawing representing a scroll with rolled-up ends

<p><b>Building 6a (not really a building)</b> <b>Hertzberg Clock</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hertzberg Clock (not a building)</li> <li>• Built in 1878, moved to current location 1910</li> <li>• Built by the E. Howard clock Company of Boston for the Eli Hertzburg Jewelry Company</li> <li>• Called the unofficial timepiece of downtown San Antonio</li> <li>• Pre-electric: must be hand-wound to the present day</li> <li>• Lights are a recent addition so the time can be seen at night</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Building 7</b> <b>Sheraton Gunther Hotel</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built in 1909 by architects Mauran, Russell, and Gordon of St. Louis</li> <li>• 9th through 11th floors added in 1927</li> <li>• Architectural style – Chicago high rise</li> <li>• San Antonio’s largest building in 1909</li> <li>• Flood of 1921 put 6 feet of water in the lobby</li> <li>• Rumored to be haunted</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Keep walking along Houston Street on the same side (left side) heading east.</i></p>		
<p><b>Building 8</b> <b>Majestic Theater</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built in 1929, architect Barry Moor Architects, Inc. of Houston</li> <li>• Architectural style – Spanish/Moorish (interior), theater designer – John Eberson</li> <li>• 3,700 seats, construction cost \$3,000,000</li> <li>• Interior imitates a Spanish garden, with simulated clouds floating across the ceiling</li> </ul>	<p><b>Façade</b>  <b>Loggia:</b> open-sided extension to a house  <b>Arcade:</b> a succession of arches, each counter-thrusting the next, supported by columns, piers, or a covered walkway enclosed by a line of such arches on one or both sides.  <b>Gallery:</b> covered passage that is open at one side</p>
<p><i>After the Majestic Theater, continue walking to the next intersection. You will be at the corner of Houston and Navarro St. Cross Navarro Street and turn left. Walk north on Navarro St. You will be on the right side of the road. At the next intersection</i></p>		

*you will be at Navarro Street and East Travis Street. Look to your left and you will see building 9*

**Building 9**

**Travis Park United Methodist Church**



- Built in 1886, architect – Francis Crider
- Architectural style – Romanesque Revival with Gothic accents
- San Antonio’s oldest Methodist congregation
- Numerous changes and additions over the years, including restoration from a fire

- Turret**
- Keystone**
- Roman arch**
- Finial**
- Quatrefoil**
- Rose window**
- Domes – around corner**

*Cross East Travis Street and turn to the right. If you stop, you can look back and see the Travis Park United Methodist Church from another angle. Walk to the right (east) on Travis Street for about 50 feet. You will be on the left side of the road. Stop and look right. You will see building 10*

**Building 10**

**St. Anthony Hotel**



- Built in 1909, by cattlemen B.L. Naylor, F.M. Swearingen, and A.H. Jones
- The first luxury hotel in San Antonio
- Technologically advanced for the time – doors opened automatically, and lights turned off when the guest locked their room door

- Corinthian columns**
- Canopy:** structure over which a fabric or metal covering is attached
- Cartouche:** carved tablet or drawing representing a scroll with rolled-up ends
- Filigree:** ornamental work especially of fine wire of gold, silver, or copper

*At the next intersection, you will be at East Travis Street and Jefferson. Turn right and cross East Travis Street. You will be walking on the right side of Jefferson. The St. Anthony Hotel will be on your right as you cross the street. Continue walking along Jefferson. You will cross Peacock Alley St. The next intersection will be Jefferson and East Houston St. Turn right and walk approximately 20 feet. Cross E Houston St at North Presa St. You will be standing next to the Buckhorn Museum. Look across Houston Street at building 11.*

**Building 11**

**Kress Building**



- Built in 1938, Architect – Edward Sibbert
- Architectural style – Art Deco
- Kress was a chain of 5-10-25 cent stores that were popular from the 1930s to the 1970s; all were closed by 1981
- Samuel H. Kress envisioned that his stores would be works of art that would contribute to the cityscape

- Quatrefoil**
- Mayan inspired**
- Loggia:** open-sided extension to a house
- Arcade:** a succession of arches, each counter-thrusting the next, supported by columns, piers, or a covered walkway enclosed by a line of such arches on one or both sides.
- Gallery:** covered passage that is open at one side

*Continue walking along N Presa Street. You will be heading south and will be on the right side of North Presa Street. You will cross College Street.*



*In the distance you will see building 12. Keep walking along N Presa Street. You will cross the Riverwalk. At the next intersection, you will cross Crockett St. and stay on the right side on N Presa Street.*

**Building 12  
Casino Building**



- Built in 1927, architect – the Kelwood Company
- Architectural style – Art Deco with Mayan reliefs
- Originally housed clubrooms, dining rooms, and a ballroom
- Aztec design with Mayan reliefs
- Houses apartments today

**Mayan influence- reliefs**

**Dome**

**Cartouche:** carved tablet or drawing representing a scroll with rolled-up ends

*Continue walking along N Presa Street. The next intersection will be N Presa Street and Commerce Street. At the intersection look across the street at building 13*

**Building 13  
Commerce Bank Building – The Vault**



- Commerce Bank Building (first Alamo National Bank) – “the Vault”
- Built in 1899, architects – James Wahrenberger, Coughlin & Atlle B. Ayres
- Architectural style – Renaissance Revival
- Between 1013 and 1915, the building was raised and rolled back sixteen feet and seven inches while business continued inside to make room for a street widening project

**Pediment:** triangular upper part of the front of a building

**Cartouche**

**Oriole window:** form of bay window which projects from the main wall of a building

**Corinthian column – top**

**Ionic column – bottom**

**Cornice:** horizontal decorative molding that crowns a building

*Cross Commerce Street and turn right. The Commerce Building will be on your left and you will be on the left side of Commerce Street. Look across Commerce Street at buildings 14 and 15. Yes they are attached to each other.*

**Building 14  
Staacke Building**



- Built in 1894, architect James Riely Gordon
- Architectural style – Classical and Renaissance Revival
- Housed the largest carriage business in San Antonio
- Primarily TX red sandstone and pink granite

**Columns**

**Finials**

**Cornice:** horizontal decorative molding that crowns a building

**Balustrade:** row of small columns topped by a rail

**Building 15  
Stevens Building**



- Built in 1891, architects – James Riely Gordon and Laub
- Architectural style – Romanesque Revival
- Originally a dry goods store
- Named for John J. Stevens, who brought the first Hereford cattle to Texas

**Oriole window:** form of **bay window** which projects from the main wall of a building

**Arches**

**Balustrade:** row of small columns topped by a rail

**Columns**

**Parapet:** low wall along the roof of a building

*Continue walking along Commerce Street. The next intersection is Commerce Street and Navarro Street. Cross Navarro Street and stay on the left side of Commerce Street. **Watch carefully for cars entering and exiting the parking garage.** In approximately 100 feet, look across Commerce Street for building 16.*

**Building 16**

**Old San Antonio National Bank**

*(Be sure to tell students the cow story)*



- Built in 1886, architect – Cyrus Eidlitz
- Architectural style - Moorish
- Originally owned by famous San Antonio philanthropist George W. Brackenridge
- Legend tells that Mr. Brackenridge kept a cow on the landscaped roof garden so that he could have fresh milk whenever he wanted it

**Moorish style:** Moorish architecture is a variation of Islamic architecture. There are many motifs, or repeated patterns, in Moorish architecture.

**Cupola:** small, most often dome-like, structure on top of a building

**Corinthian columns**

**Arches**

**Cornice:** horizontal decorative molding that crowns a building

*Turn around (U-turn) so that you are now walking on the right side of Commerce Street. Walk to the intersection of Commerce Street and Navarro Street. Cross Navarro Street and turn right. You will be walking on the left side of Navarro Street heading south.*

*You will cross W Market Street. Continue walking on W Market Street until you reach Presa Street. Cross Presa Street and you will find the Briscoe Western Art Museum on the right. You can get the lunches off the bus at this time. We will eat lunch at the Briscoe Western Art Museum.*