

Chula Vista Public Library South Branch

The Architect

- The library was designed by world-famous Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta
- Legorreta studied architecture at the National School of Architecture, at the National Autonomous University of Mexico
- Later, he founded his own architecture company
- Legorreta had a close friendship with an older Mexican architect named Luis Barragán, and learned many important things from him
- Barragán designed important modern style buildings, mostly houses, in Mexico in the 1940s and 1950s
- He took inspiration from Mexico's simple ranches and villages, and from traditional Mexican homes, where residents spent much of their time living in patios, behind walls
- Barragán developed a distinct style, using bright colors, straight lines, and solid geometric shapes (like squares, circles, rectangles)
- Legorreta learned from Barragán about his unique style and created his own new version, using the bright colors and solid geometric shapes, and designing in a way that used the light and shadows created by the sun
- Legorreta designed buildings all over the world, bringing this style to people outside of Mexico, and using it in other building types such as hotels, factories and educational buildings
- Legorreta's most famous works are the Camino Real Hotel in Mexico City, the IBM Factory in Guadalajara, Mexico and the Cathedral of Managua in Nicaragua

The Building

- When designing a building, it is important to think about the place where it will be built, and the people who live there
- Chula Vista is a large city of more 52 square miles, located in Southern California very close to the border of Mexico
- Like other parts of California, Chula Vista was originally home to Native Americans, the ancestors of the Kumeyaay tribe. It was then occupied by the Spanish before becoming part of Mexico, and later becoming part of the United States
- By the 1990s Chula Vista needed another library to serve the needs of its growing multicultural population and provide better access to books for the people living in south Chula Vista
- In the interest in strengthening the union of both Mexican and American culture, the City of Chula Vista hired Ricardo Legorreta to design the new library
- The building was completed in 1995
- It is 4,000 square meters in size and is made of a group of geometric forms, in Legorreta's signature bold colors
- It has a series of courtyards, with plants appropriate for the local climate, which is an arid (dry) coastal area
- The exterior courts and terraces were carefully designed to connect indoor and outdoor spaces, and to provide a variety of spaces for public use
- Because the South Chula Vista Library uses bold colors and simple forms, it makes a connection between the ranchos of early California and the rich colors of Mexico to today's multicultural Chula Vista



South Chula Vista Library – Courtyard
Photo Credit: Brady Architectural Photograph