

Chula Vista Public Library South Branch

The South Chula Vista Branch Library is an organization of modest geometric forms that take advantage of absolute contrasts of vertical and horizontal planes, with bold colors and crisp shadows.

Built in 1995, the 4000 square meter project takes advantage of creating a series of courtyards using plant material of the local arid/coastal landscape. Garden elements like the fountain are included in the interior of the building. The exterior courts and terraces were carefully designed to connect indoor and outdoor spaces, as well as to provide places for public use.

The world-renowned Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta studied architecture from 1948 to 1952 at the National School of Architecture of the National Autonomous University of Mexico and worked in the workshop of José Villagran Garcia until 1960. Later, he founded his office with which he would be recognized for a style which incorporated innovative techniques and a unique proportions management, in addition to the use of intense colors and decorative objects and large-scale structures.

Legorreta was a disciple of Luis Barragán and carried Barragan's ideas to a wider realm. Barragan, in the 1940s and 1950s amalgamated tradition and the modern movement in architecture yet his work is mostly limited to domestic architecture. Legorreta applied elements of Barragan's architecture in his work including bright colors, play of light and shadow, and solid platonic geometric shapes. One of the important contributions of Legorreta has been the use of these elements in other building types such as hotels, factories as well as in commercial and educational buildings. His most famous works are the Camino Real Hotel in Mexico City, the IBM Factory in Guadalajara and the Cathedral of Managua.

The educational needs of a growing multicultural population in the border area, as well as the interest in reaffirming the union of both cultures led to the design of this building with outstanding abstract geometric shapes in the landscape of the city of Chula Vista.

Chula Vista boasts more than 52 square miles of coastal landscape, canyons, rolling hills, mountains, quality parks, and miles of trails. The history and development of Chula Vista can be broken into similar periods as the rest of San Diego and California. The Native Americans of San Diego today are descendants of the Kumeyaay tribe, who roamed during the pre-Columbian period occupying much of present-day San Diego County. The Spanish occupation and the establishment of large land grants of the Rancho transitioned into the Mexican government and even larger land grants. When the United States claimed California following the Mexican-American war in 1847, the land use changed from cattle to orchards. During both World War I and II companies like the Hercules Powder Company and Rohr Aircraft Corporation established production in Chula Vista. After World War II, many who work in these companies and military stayed on creating the largest boom and diversity of the city of Chula Vista.

Because the South Chula Vista Library uses bold colors and primitive forms, it makes connection of history between the Spanish ranchos all the way through to today.



South Chula Vista Library – Courtyard
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