

Tours highlight historic Brookings

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The city's most interesting, historic buildings and houses are a part of the Historic Brookings Tours program which is now in search of tour guides.

The Brookings Historic Preservation Commission, which sponsors the tours, is looking for guides for narrative tours to promote the awareness of architectural history. The tours explain significant architectural and interesting facts about the business district and historic residential areas.

"The tours are a good learning tool besides something fun to do," said Shari Dunn of the Historic Preservation Commission.

Another tour will be added in late 1992 and will feature the SDSU campus. It will include about 15 to 20 structures that are 50 years old and older.

Several sites on the three tours have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places for their significance to American history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture.

Guides participating in the tours must attend a two-day training session in May and later yearly refresher sessions.

Barb Hoiium lives in the original Baptist Parsonage and is also a member of the Brookings Historic Preservation Commission. She called the area a "melting pot" of architecture.

"The tours are wonderful, both for visitors and residents. You take more time to look at things you may have walked by a hundred times," Hoiium said.

Historic Brookings

At present, the commission sponsors three tours: a commercial district tour, a central residential tour and an historic homes tour. All are walking tours.

The commercial district tour runs along Main Avenue between Sixth Street and First Street. It includes such buildings as City Hall, the U.S. Post Office, the train depot and several other original sites. Many of the original historic buildings have been replaced by new buildings.

The College Theatre, presently Movies To Go, was built by Frank McCarthy in 1940. It stands where the original Grand Opera House was erected in 1902. The present building is prominent as one of three art deco buildings.

The central residential tour displays the main area of settlement for doctors, bankers and the like. The homes in this area range in architectural styles from Queen Anne to Craftsman-Bungalow to Georgian Revival. Four churches, the County

Courthouse and the Carnegie Library are also featured in this tour.

The Carnegie Library, the Community Cultural Center since 1976, was designed and built in 1914 by Grant C. Miller. Andrew Carnegie funded the project with an offer of \$10,000 in 1907. The library included a reading room for children.

The Fishback Legacy

Horace Fishback, one of the early settlers in Brookings, contributed in several ways to the history of the city.

Arriving in Brookings in 1879, Fishback and his uncle A.B. Olds opened the Olds & Fishback merchandise store. By 1880 a corner of the store had been transformed into a bank. In two years, the First National Bank was built. Horace Fishback and his uncle began banking in Brookings.

Fishback opened a new bank in 1925 and died there three and a half years later at his desk.

A new building was constructed on the lot of the first Fishback bank in 1919. That structure now houses the Ram Pub.

Horace Fishback purchased the estate for his home in 1885 which extended from Eleventh Street to the State College property line.

The original house was moved on rollers by horses about two blocks to where it still stands on the corner of Harvey Dunn and Sixth Avenue. The family lived there during the four years of construction on the new house, completed in 1902.

The Fishback home, featured in the Historic Homes tour, is an impressive three-story example of 20th century architecture. It includes a barn, built in 1903, which housed horses, cows and buggies.

Following the death of his parents, Horace Fishback Jr. and his wife Margaret moved into the family home in 1939. Horace Jr. was president of his father's bank until his death in 1968. Margaret Fishback remained in the home where she still resides today.

The Fishback home has been kept in its original state by Margaret. Most of the furnishings and decoration remain intact in the home.

The interior includes such features as a mahogany mantel and fireplace, the original grandfather clock and piano in the music room, an oval dining room, a library, a sewing room and a billiard room.

The home also includes a pulley elevator, no longer in use. The hardwood floors are covered with rugs from relatives and several from India.

If interested in a job with the Historic Brookings Tours, contact the Brookings Historic Preservation Commission in City Hall.

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Story of the Week