

# THE SPRECKELS MANSION

## HISTORIC BEACH HOME

At the time the house was built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, most of the homes being built in Coronado were Victorian-style architecture, constructed out of wood with an ornate design. At the time John D. Spreckels built his beach house, a mix of humble Italian Renaissance Revival and Beaux-Arts architectural styles, it stood in stark contrast to the neighboring homes. Today, it is one of the city's few remaining examples possessing the distinctive characteristics of construction using reinforced concrete that has not been substantially altered.

The 17,990 square-foot compound—nearly one-half acre, built on three contiguous 6,000 square-foot lots, includes a main house, a guest house and caretakers living quarters for a total of 12,750 square feet with a total of nine bedrooms, eight full bathrooms and three half bathrooms. The 6,600 square-foot main house originally featured six bedrooms, a basement and an attic has been modernized and restored to its turn of the century charm.

After recent restoration of the most historic home of Coronado, it retains the most commanding vista on the island taking in America's most beautiful beach, the Coronado Islands, Point Loma, and romantic sunsets over the Pacific. The main house now includes three bedroom suites with three full bathrooms and two half bathrooms; a guest house with three bedrooms and three full bathrooms; and caretakers living quarters with three bedrooms and two and one-half bathrooms.

The two-story rectangular home reflected architect Harrison Albright's preference for humble, classical style and unpretentious, simple lines. To evoke a vertical effect, full-length, double-hung wooden windows, unadorned except for the flower ledges, characterized the front of the home. A covered, recessed front porch framed the entrance to the home, and offered two additional side points of access, characteristic of second-revival Italian Renaissance.

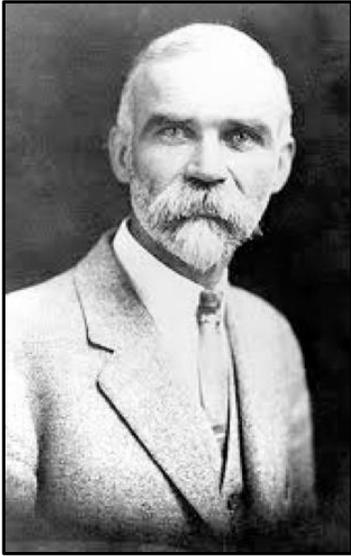


*Main House 1940's*

A semi-circle drive fronted the home, while a central pergola was built atop the flat red-tiled roof as a third floor—an ideal setting to view the Pacific Ocean. The smooth, cream-colored stucco façade completed the Italian Renaissance look. The symmetrical appearance was further enhanced by chimneys at both ends of the home's two adjoining wing. An inset balustrade accentuated the flat roof lines.

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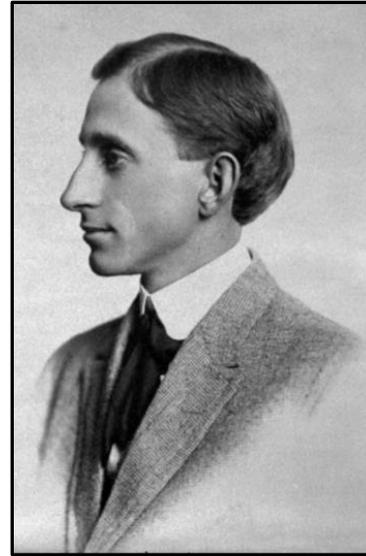
## THE ARCHITECTS



**HARRISON ALBRIGHT**  
Spreckel's Personal Architect

The home was designed by Southern California architect Harrison Albright (1866 – 1932), Spreckel's personal architect who introduced the use of reinforced concrete embedded with steel to Southern California in 1905. This method attracted Spreckels, who had moved his family from San Francisco to Southern California for safety following the 1906 earthquake. The construction was completed by Los Angeles firm Noyes & Boggs.

Working under Spreckels, Albright is known for many other architectural contributions to the region that also feature the use of reinforced concrete, including the Coronado Public Library, the Glorietta Bay Inn (the original Spreckels mansion) and the Coronado Bank building, as well as the U.S. Grant Hotel in San Diego.



**HARRISON ALBRIGHT**  
San Diego's Architect of Choice

In 1928, a 3,000 square-foot unit with two master bedroom suites was added at the rear of the property. The guesthouse was designed by acclaimed architect Richard Requa (1881 – 1941), apprentice to well-known San Diego architect Irving Gill.

In his effort to preserve San Diego's Spanish-influenced history, Requa, who became San Diego's "architect of choice" during the booming 1920's, was known for his style of "Southern California Architecture." This was a Spanish Revival architectural style infused with Mediterranean and Mission styles, sometimes incorporating American Craftsman influences.

Each master bedroom suite features an 18-inch fresco that runs along the perimeter of the rooms on the upper walls, one depicting San Diego historical scenes and one of the French countryside. A northeast wing includes two apartments above a four-car garage.

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### JOHN D. SPRECKELS Father of the Crown City



John Diedrich Spreckels (1853 – 1926) is often called “the father of Coronado.” The son of a wealthy sugar baron, he was a man of great fortune. In 1880, Spreckels founded J.D. Spreckels and Brothers Company, extending his steamship shipping enterprise into the Far East. A year after he made his first trip to San Diego in 1887 to gather supplies, the entrepreneur made his first of many regional property purchases: the Coronado Beach Company.

Spreckels eventually came to own the Hotel Del Coronado, Coronado Tent City, North Island, the San Diego-Coronado Ferry System, Union-Tribune Publishing Company, San Diego-Arizona Railway and Belmont Park. The wealthiest man in San Diego at the time, Spreckels worked with his personal architect Harrison Albright to build several buildings throughout both San Diego and Coronado and contributed significant funding to the 1915 Panama-California Exposition.

Located at 1043 Ocean Boulevard, the Claus Spreckels Home, also known as the Spreckels Beach House, was originally built in 1908.

With a 115-foot unobstructed ocean view, it was originally to be the beach home of John D. Spreckels, whose personal residence was less than a mile away at what is now known as the Glorietta Bay Inn on Glorietta Boulevard. Spreckels, who never lived in the beach home, gifted the property to his son Claus Spreckels Jr. and his bride, Miss Ellis Moon, as a wedding gift in 1910.



Claus Spreckels died in 1935. His widow, Ellis Moon Spreckels, remodeled the home in 1947. Following her death in 1968, the home was passed on to daughters Tookie Spreckels Northkutt and Claire Spreckels Brey. The 27-room property remained in the Spreckels family until 1970, when it was sold to Achilles and Elisabeth Coutris.

*“One of America’s few great Empire Builders who invested millions to turn a struggling, bankrupt village into the beautiful and cosmopolitan city San Diego is today.” – Austin Adams, Spreckels’ biographer*

# THE SPRECKELS MANSION

## THROUGH THE YEARS

### Preserving History



The Spreckels Beach House is one of the oldest homes along Ocean Boulevard, captivating visitors from near and far with its Italian Renaissance charm. During a visit to Coronado in 1920, the Prince of Wales was served tea in the guest house.

In 1982 the beachfront home was selected to be the Designer Showcase house for the San Diego Historical Society and local chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers.

Also in 1982, it was designated a Coronado Historical Landmark by the Coronado Historical Association.



In 2006, the home received an official Historic Resource Designation from the City of Coronado. It was the 89<sup>th</sup> home to be designated based on 1) its reflection of the city's cultural, economic and social history; 2) its aesthetic and architectural prominence; 3) having been designed by a noteworthy architect; 4) the involvement of the original owner, John D. Spreckels, with the city's economy, both locally and regionally; and 5) for the social events that occurred at the home.

In 2007, the front dwelling was also approved by the City of Coronado to receive a Mills Act designation. The Mills Act allows the homeowner of a historically-designated property to receive a significant reduction in property tax in exchange for the preservation and necessary restoration of a Historic Resource.



The home has recently undergone significant improvements, including a complete remodel of the kitchen and Butler's Pantry, a restoration of the guest house, and new awnings replicating the 1911 model.