Museum of Ventura County
100 E. Main St.
The Museum celebrates the history and culture of Ventura County with special exhibitions, programs and events. The George Stuart Historical Figuresbring world history to life, and the Museum Research Library is a treasure trove of photographs, books and documents relating to this region.

Mission Gardens & The Morley Bay Fig Tree
On Main St. between Figueroa St. & Ventura Ave.
This land was once the Old Mission Gardens, surrounded by tall adobe walls, bisecting a line of orange trees and cultivating some of the first orange trees grown in California. The Mission Garden site, located west of Figueroa Plaza, was planted in the 1860s.

Mission Plaza Archaeological Site
(Alhambra Archaeological Museum, Valdez Adobe, & El Califio) — 113 E. Main St.
The Alhambra Archaeological Museum (open by appointment) was named for long-time Ventura Mayor Al Alhambra and built on the home site of adobe house and early mayor Angel Eucanado. To the west of the museum is a walkway called Valdez Alley, where the handsome 1820s Ransom Valdez adobe once stood. The adobe served as the first polling place where all single males voted cast their ballots in the 1832 election. Abraham Lincoln in 1840.

Farther up the hill on Valdez Alley is a little Mexican-era brick building and fountain called “El Califio” (the castle), after the shape of its water spout. The building was part of a seven-mile aqueduct system developed by the Spanish Padres and constructed by Chamucos labor in the 1890s and early 1900s.

San Buenaventura Museum
211 E. Main St. & Figueroa St.
San Buenaventura Museum is the ninth in the chain of 21 Missions and the last one founded personally by Fray Junipero Serra. The Mission’s church building was destroyed by fire in 1769 and in progress on the present church made of tile, stone and adobe. The church’s walls are 12’ 7” feet thick. The Mission Museum highlights mission artifacts such as Chumash baskets and mysterious wooden bells. In the Church garden can be found the almost life-size statue of Fray Junipero Serra. The Mission’s two Norwalk Island Flints, plated in the 1850s, were designated California’s Millennium Landmark Trees in 2004. In 1849 Fray Junipero Serra and his companions headed northward from Mexico found Mission San Diego. This undated missionary lived throughout his life with his Native American missions.

Peirson’s Market and Mission Lavender
204 & 206 E. Main St.
Converted into Jonathan’s Restaurant in 1996, Peirson’s Market was Ventura’s first commercial brick building, constructed in 1877 for Italian merchant Alex Canoisch. His nephew, Nick Peirson, took over the general store in 1889 and the store remained in the family until the late 1960s. The market on the west outside wall is typical of commercial advertising in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1992, archaeologists discovered an elaborate 18th-century era “lavanderia” (laundry) with a tub by 30” washing pool under the building, constructed by Chumash missions converts part of the aquatic system during the early 1800s.

Pry Junipero Serra Statue
Below City Hall on California at Poli Streets
In 1956 the Federal Arts Project funded this heroic sculpture of the Spanish Franciscan scientist by John R. Pence who produced a similar statue in 1929. A wooden replica used in the making of the bronze statue was in the City Hall Annex.

Ventura City Hall & Municipal Art Gallery
501 Poli St.
City Hall, formerly the Ventura City Courthouse, was built by noted Los Angeles architect Albert C. Martin in 1912 in the “Beaux Arts” style. An neo-classical style, rounded windows, and terra cotta facade are offset by 24 vertical columns of the frame. The order that founded the city is 1782. The terra cotta facade and decorative brick gateway are decorated with bouquets of lime beaux, a reminder that Ventura County once billed itself as the “pompeii of the state. The Italian marble entry lobby with its dramatic sweeping stairway leads up to the second floor Municipal Art Collection and what was once the Superior Courthouse, now the City Council Chambers. It is guided by three stained glass domes, a gift from the architect. The city purchased the property, hired the firm of Fisher & Wilke to restore and extensively upgrades the structure and opened it as City Hall in 1972. The City Sheriff’s Office, constructed in 1931, was restored in 1950 as City Hall West, with Chamucos murals in the atrium and bronze entry doors. The Bridge Gallery featuring community arts and events connects to the five-story City Hall North at 565 Poli St., a former county building that now houses the Ventura Chamber of Commerce, Ventura Ventura Technology Center (V7TC), a high-tech business incubator, and the Neogeo Sustainability Center for various social service and arts organizations.

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National Register of Historic Places

For those who would like to explore further, one block east on Poli Street stand these historic structures.

Judge Ewing Residence
600 Poli St.
This Queen Anne style house, built in 1894 for Judge Felix Ewing, is known for its decorative Babeshole drapes, wrap around porch, and stone walls.

The Hammond Residence
657-9 Poli St.
This richly decorated Queen Anne style house was built in 1910 for Harry Hammond, owner of an insurance company.

The Elizabeth Bird Hospital
121 Poli St.
This impressive Moorish Revival building was completed in 1902 as one of the most modern hospitals in Southern California by Dr. Cephas L. Bird. Ironically, he was the first patient admitted and to die in the hospital.

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Climate Site, Figueroa St. Plaza
(no sides to Figueroa St. Plaza)
Nothing remains of Ventura’s Chinatown (called Sai Ben Cong by its residents) that began in 1886 and grew to house over 200 Chinese until 1955. But in 2004, Ventura’s Chinese American Historical Society commissioned sculptor Chinese artist Qi Peng and his wife Guo Song Yun to create the China Alley Memorial Plaza to depict the simple wooden buildings that made up a completely self-contained community with its own shops, businesses, rooming houses, and a Temple. The Temple has since Chinese called “The Joss House.”

Knights of Columbus Hall
Figueroa St. Plaza — 56 S. Figueroa St.
This building, constructed as a motion picture house in 1937, was called the Mission Theater. It was taken over by the Knights of Columbus in the 1960s and slightly altered in 1976.

The Clock Tower Inn
161 & 165 E. Santa Clara St.
Built in the 1930s as a fire station, the building has been converted into a restaurant and hotel. The tower’s purpose was to dry fires.

A.J. Curnock’s Market
Figueroa St. Plaza
On the northeast side of the Clock Tower Inn, facing the plaza rose garden, is the A.J. Curnock Fire Museum. This small exhibit portrays the history and growth of Ventura City’s Fire Department, including the Chinese Fire Company which operated in Ventura for nearly 30 years.

Carlos Helman House
211 E. Santa Clara St.
This fine two-story house, built in 1912, shows many characteristics of the Victorian period of 1860 to early 1900s.

Historic Walking Tour Guide
Downtown Ventura
Sponsored by the Ventura Visitors and Convention Bureau, Museum of Ventura County, Ventura Visitors Organization, San Buenaventura Museum, and the City of Ventura Community Partnerships Division.