



FRESNO HIGH  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
HOLIDAY HOME TOUR

## — 2024 Holiday Tour Homes —

The map for the homes on this year's tour is displayed below. On the following pages you will find the home descriptions describing unique details and features of this years' homes.

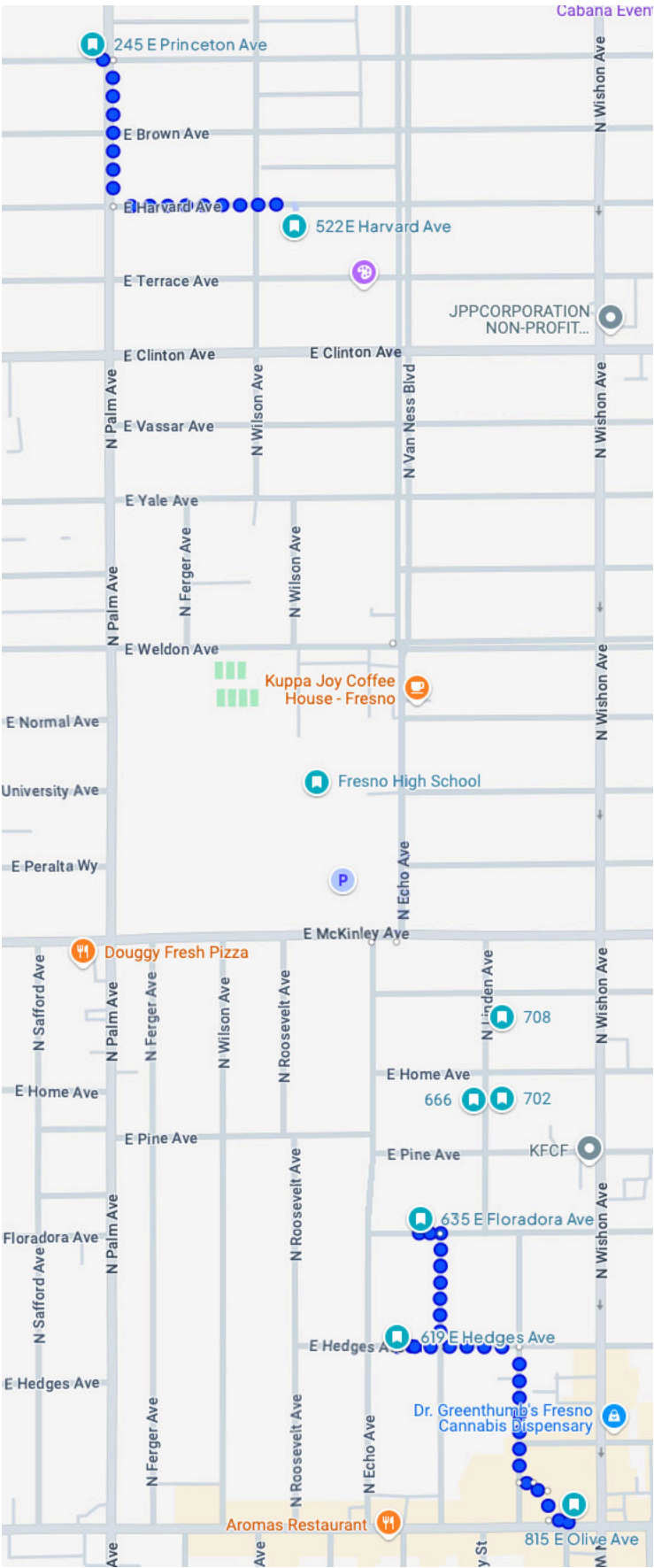
This document has been formatted to be printed out and carried with you on the tour for easy reference.

Enjoy the tour!

## Tour Etiquette

- Getting started: A pre-tour party at Moto across from the high school will start at 4:00pm and end at 6:00pm. Food and drinks can be purchased there. The home tour will begin promptly at 5:30.
- Please have either your paper ticket or your online receipt/ticket ready to show at each home.
- Be sure to wear comfortable shoes. You will be given paper booties at the first home you enter. Please carry them with you from one home to another.
- Please be careful with steps and stairs.
- No photos are allowed inside the homes.
- No food, drinks or smoking allowed.
- Restroom facilities are only available at the Tower Theatre.
- Please make sure to end your tour by 8:30.
- Masks are not required this year but you may want to wear one when in close quarters in the houses.
- Parking is available at Fresno High and the Tower Theatre.
- Tickets can be purchased at Moto the night of the tour.
- Donations can be made online to help fund the tour and other related activities by the tour committee, including supporting various student groups such as the music department, the art department, the drama department, sports teams and other student activities. Sponsors may donate \$500 to fund a FHS student scholarship given in May.
- We hope you enjoy the tour. Thanks so much for supporting us. Happy Holidays!

# Tour Map





## THE PEACE HOME

619 E. Hedges Avenue

This Tower District bungalow was built in 1920 for approximately \$3500. At 732 sq ft, it is the smallest home on the Fresno High Home Tour. The homeowner purchased the home in 2022.

### Front Yard

In the front yard, the homeowner installed a water-wise yard with raised beds where she grows a vegetable garden with some marigolds, irises and poppies thrown in. The two cinder blocks with peace signs in them are one of the items that help give this home its name. There are also glass peace signs hanging from the corner of the house.

### Living Room

Inside the home, the living room highlights the homeowner's love of art, music and antiques. Most of the art and antiques were purchased from local artists and businesses. You will also notice the original hardwood floors throughout. The bookcases around the ceiling were installed by the homeowner's son, a woodworker and metal fabricator. The solstice tree has peace themed ornaments. And there is a peace sign in the stained glass of the Tower fox.

### Library

The small room off the living room is referred to as the library. Due to the cozy size of this room, the homeowner uses it for yoga and tap dance practice. It is connected to the bedroom through a Jack and Jill bathroom, that was updated in 2022.

The homeowner lives as close to a zero-waste lifestyle as possible: that includes living without a car, washing machine and dryer. Her electric bike is her only mode of transportation and she stores it in her bedroom.

### Kitchen/Dining room

The last room in the house is the kitchen/dining room, which still has the original cabinets, but with new counters and floor tile installed in 2022. The dining area and utility closet were not part of the original home.

### Backyard

When the homeowner moved in, the backyard wasn't landscaped. It now has a deck with string lights, inviting landscaping and a flagstone path leading back to the front of the home.





## THE HARVARD HOME

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522 E. Harvard Avenue

This house was built in 1933 for the MacGillivray family and designed by Taylor-Wheeler, who were prominent architects in the area and responsible for the design of many homes in the Fresno High area. In fact, this home falls within the proposed Terrace-Gardens historic district, which was originally proposed in the 1991 tower specific plan to protect the large population of Taylor-Wheeler designed homes in the immediate area. The house was originally a 2 bed 1 bath but has been expanded to a 3 bed 2.5 bath by previous owners in the late 1980s. The same owners also added 6 skylights throughout the original part of the home to provide more natural light. Some of the other former owners completed energy efficiency upgrades to the home including new windows throughout. Even with several large updates over the years, the house has maintained most of its original character.

### Living Room And Dining Room

The original part of the house maintains its original hard wood floors, which were refinished about 10 years ago. A previous owner was a collector of French antiques and installed the antique French mirror over the mantle. You'll also notice the original built ins and sconces in the dining room. The current

owners have been in the home for three years and are slowly adding their own touch to the house. They recently painted the living and dining rooms and plan to paint other rooms in the house in the near future. The current owners are fans of music and both play several instruments. One of the owners even played the cello in the Fresno State orchestra.

### Guest Room

This room is one of the two original bedrooms in the house and overlooks the English style "secret garden" in the back yard. The garden has gone dormant for the winter, but in the spring will be full of roses, foxgloves, and jasmine. Much of the furniture in this room was left to the owners by the previous owner who moved overseas and was unable to take both the furniture and her dogs. She picked the dogs! The one piece of furniture not left by the previous owner is the antique Chinese chest at the foot of the bed. This was purchased by one of the owner's great-grandparents during a trip to China in the 1900s. This room still has its original doors with original hardware, including the skeleton key for all original doors in the house. The closet also has original built in dressers. The other original

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bedroom also has a built-in dresser in the closet. That room is being used as an office for one of the owners. You'll also notice one of the added skylights near the door which provides a significant amount of light during the morning and early afternoon. In fact, it's so effective that for the first few months of living in this house, one of the owners would instinctively reach for the light switch when leaving the room to try to turn it off.

### Bathroom

The bathroom has all original pink and blue tile and the original cast iron bathtub. This is the only original bathroom in the house and was also the back of the house before the extension was added. The original bathroom window was turned into a shelf as a result, but you can still get a good idea of the window that was originally there. A skylight was added by a previous owner to make up for the loss of natural light.

### Kitchen

The kitchen was last renovated by the previous owners approximately 30 years ago and the current owners hope to do their own renovation within the next year. Originally there was a breakfast nook with a window where the pantry is now located. You can just about see where the old window well was through the shelves. The bottom shelf was actually the bench to the breakfast nook. The area where the kitchen table is located used to be a separate mudroom, but the deciding wall was removed by previous owners to expand the kitchen. The arch leading from the kitchen to the back room is where the original back door was. You can get a good sense for how thick the walls for the original house are when you walk through the arch.

### Back Room/Family Room/Extension

This part of the house was added in the late 80s by a previous owner who was a contractor. They also added a second floor to this part of the house which has a large primary bedroom, walk in closet, and full bathroom. Apparently they had been planning to

add a spiral staircase to the second floor, but ended up choosing a more standard staircase. They also added a half bath and laundry room downstairs. The house also has a small unfinished basement that was originally accessible cellar doors in the backyard, but the expansion built over the original entrance. There is now a trap door with a ladder leading down to the original stairs to the basement in the laundry room. From the basement, you can actually see the sidewalk leading from the original back door and some of the lawn that was there as well! The grass is VERY dead, but still there! Because the basement is hard to access, the current owners use it for storage. The current owners use this space as a family room and office space.

### Back Yard/Apartment

The backyard was one of the spaces the owners were the most excited about when they first saw the house. There are two mature pecan trees and two large almond trees which the owners believe were planted not long after the house was built. The current owners have added a lot of their own plants to fill in the gardens. There is also the secret garden around the side of the house that you have to walk through a vine covered gate to access. The current owners love hosting friends and family in the back yard during good weather.

Looking towards the garage, you may have noticed the garage door and the driveway tile match! People frequently think that the garage door is actually tiled, but if you look closely, it's actually a standard aluminum garage door with a really good mural on it! One of the previous owners was an artist who used the garage as a studio and also painted the garage door. You may have also noticed there is a second floor on the garage. It's a 400 square foot apartment with a full bathroom, kitchenette, living room, and bedroom. The owners aren't sure exactly how old the apartment space is, but they did find an ad in the Fresno Bee from 1960 advertising the space for rent as a "guest house in northwest Fresno."





## THE WACASAR HOME

635 E. Floradora Avenue

Construction began in 1940 on this 2127 square foot side-gabled cottage by Harris Construction for an estimated cost of \$7,900. The last of three neighboring lots to be developed by the Wacasar family, 635 E. Floradora is on the registry of 80 homes listed as part of the Wilson Island Historic District. The current owner has occupied the home for seven years and has added some unique touches as well as keeping some very important features. Original details throughout the house include oak floors, door casings around every entry, brass knobs on doors, original drawer hardware consistent throughout the house, and original crank windows in some rooms.

### Living Room

The front entry portico has painted multicolored panels that surround a blue door; the door matches the blue water pump that stands off to the side of the main entryway. Upon entering the front door, the oak floors, the recessed ceiling and doorways with the lined casings throughout the house are distinct. Walk left and step down into the large roomy living room with its original glass windows and west wall fireplace. The living room opens to the backyard via French doors. On the wall over the couch, near the porch doors, hangs an original painting by Dixie Salazar, a local artist, known for her efforts to save the Tower.

### Dining Room

Through the dining room, the original window offers a bit of character with noticeable moisture on the window. Walk into the u-shaped kitchen and see the industrial red Wolf stove, the heart of the kitchen. The cabinetry and hardware in the kitchen are original. The faucet with the hot and cold knobs have been kept to the original design. Walk past a basement door to the laundry area and notice the milk drop on the outside wall near the door. As you continue the walk through the hallway, there is an additional bath and bedroom. The bath has a unique makeup table for personal supplies.

### Master Bedroom

In the Master Bedroom, the current owner chose to keep the original pink floral wallpaper. The master closet is elevated with sliding doors. The lighting hardware is original. The master bath has original tile and floor. The original metal medicine cabinet is gone and has been replaced by an original oak cabinet.

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### Den

Finally, as you head to the back patio to exit, there is a room with couches and chairs. Above the couch in this room is artwork by Glen Delpit, a neighbor and local artist.

### Backyard

On the patio, comfortable chairs are available to relax and enjoy the serenity of the L-shaped backyard. Walking around the house to exit is the detached garage that is an extra room/guest area away from the house. Lastly, as you walk out the driveway towards the street, look up at the side of the roof line and see the double gabled roof that gives the house the description of a side gabled house. By the door, there is also the "Milk Drop" that was viewed from inside.





## PRINCETON COTTAGE

245 E. Princeton Avenue

This classic 1948 post-war cottage was designed by the famed Fresno Taylor-Wheeler Builders. Orville Taylor and Dennis Wheeler founded their company in 1927 and produced some of the finest and most unique homes in the Fresno area. Dennis Wheeler was a graduate of Fresno High, which makes these Taylor-Wheeler homes extra special. This charming home lies in the Terrace Gardens District. The property features unique beige brickwork on the exterior, including angled brick corners on the kitchen nook cutout. The fireplace has a hidden gem of an upside down Craycroft stamped brick in the original masonry fireplace. The registers in each room keep the floors cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

The owners were drawn to this natural light-filled property with its refined architectural detail and most of the original elements lovingly preserved. Also appealing were the finished attic and basement which add character-filled living space. Art collecting, music, family, aviation, and education are among the many pastimes the owners enjoy, as seen by the collections in many of the rooms. The family's French heritage is a large part of life in this home.

The art of the owners' daughter is featured throughout. Her pieces have been sold throughout the country and cover a wide range of media. Unless otherwise noted, all original art pieces in the home are by her.

### Living Room

High cove ceilings in the living room are a staple of a Taylor-Wheeler home. The entire home has original windows, and the front living room windows each contain 15 individual panes, beautifully framing the view of the surrounding homes. The Christmas tree features hand crafted ornaments hand painted by both of the homeowners' daughters.

The book collection includes Fresno County history books. The hallway light fixtures with handblown glass were purchased by the owners from a shop in Pennsylvania.

### Office and Bathroom

One of the homeowners served in the United States Air Force as a T-38 instructor pilot, and aviation photos feature him "at work." He is currently an Airbus Captain with United Airlines.

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One of the final projects complete by the homeowners' son in college were the T-38 model the homeowner flew and the stand it rests on. He is an aviator as well, following in his father's footsteps. The charcoal pencil drawings are of various aircraft the homeowner has flown during his career. A writing enthusiast, he published his first book *Still Climbing: A Pilot's Turbulent Journey Validating Life's Important Lessons*, in 2023.

The bathroom is on the left with original tile, beautiful octagon sink, and scalloped cabinetry.

### Guest Room

The picture rail molding is consistent in all the bedrooms. All original honey colored wood floors. This room is the homeowner's creative zone.

### Master Bedroom

The gallery wall is a collection of vintage art, mostly curated from California antique shops. The double archway features sight view completely through the house, adding to the airy and open feel. The master bedroom overlooks the yard down below.

### Basement and Hallway

Original wood paneling, painted brick and exposed mortar. In the hallway next to the classic telephone nook is a framed antique French dinner cruise menu from a cruise the homeowner's parents enjoyed in 1963. There is a copy of the inside of the menu for guests to peruse. The menu items are quite adventurous. The left side is in French and the right side is mostly in English.

### Dining Room

The modern glass chandelier is handblown. There are a number of woodblock prints including those of Clare Leighton from the 1930s. The traditional mail slot is still being used.

### Kitchen and Breakfast Nook

The breakfast nook has the original French door with crystal knobs that are consistent throughout the house. There is the classic Taylor-Wheeler feature of a corner built-in shelf with cutout detail.

The kitchen has original tiled walls and an arched doorway as well as an original shallow single basin sink. There is also a built-in spice cabinet.

The backyard is a work in progress but there are plans to build a deck off the west side of the garage under the shade tree. The homeowners enjoy spending family time cooking outdoors, drinking coffee by the fire and on the porch swing.



## THE TOWER THEATER

815 E. Olive Avenue

On December 2 the Tower Theatre will open its doors wide to Fresno High Home Tour participants as favored guests. The Tower Theater is one of the most significant landmarks in the Fresno High neighborhood. Eighty-five years ago the Tower Theatre opened for the first time on December 14, 1939, with a private showing of Nelson Eddy in *Balalaika*. Co-hosts for the event were developer and owner A. Emory Wishon (1882-1948) of San Francisco, a prominent California hydroelectric executive, and Charles P. Skouras of Los Angeles, president of Fox West Coast Theaters.

The theater was designed by architect S. Charles Lee. As a result of the 80 foot neon-adorned tower jutting from the rooftop of the new theater, this Fresno neighborhood came to be known as the Tower District, and the community enjoyed its very own Art Deco movie house during the heart of Hollywood's Golden Age.

There are three main architectural variations of Art Deco buildings, each with its own distinctive characteristics. Streamline Moderne, the style of the Tower Theatre, evolved as a result of the Great Depression. In that period of extreme hardship combined with the war in Europe, Art Deco principles began eliminating extraneous decoration and ornament to optimize efficiency and

economy. It retained much of earlier Art Deco design, such as smooth planes, curved lines, and geometric simplicity, but distinguished itself by an increased emphasis on industrial sensibilities and the tendency to take on even more simplified contours to heighten the sense of utility in its function. The Tower was one of nearly 2,500 Streamline Moderne theaters built worldwide of which 636 are currently in operation. Most are in the U.S., many are in Europe, especially France.

The theater continued to show first run movies until 1980, when it shifted to older films and later became known for its foreign film series. As with all things on this planet, both animate and inanimate, time and use took its toll on the theater, and it was restored during a Certified Historic Rehabilitation completed in 1990. In 1991 the restoration work was recognized by the California Preservation Foundation's Award of Outstanding Achievement in Restoration and from the San Joaquin Chapter of the American Institute of Architects an Award of Honor. On September 24, 1992, the Tower Theatre was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

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For several years, the theater operated a series of entertainment lineups that brought in top-name performers such as Dizzy Gillespie, the Neville Brothers, Dave Brubeck, Joan Rivers, Johnny Cash, Gregory Peck, Ray Charles and Tony Bennett, as reported in The Fresno Bee. Then 2020 arrived, bringing the coronavirus with it, and theaters were shut down. Then Adventure Church announced plans to purchase the theater for their use, igniting a bitter struggle waged by the community in opposition to the sale. Ultimately the City of Fresno bought the theater for \$6.5 million, and 809 Olive Ave. LLC currently operates it with Nick Kennedy serving as general manager. Now the Tower again offers a variety of events such as musical groups, movies, and other activities.

### The Entrance

The Streamline Moderne style on the exterior of the theater is concentrated at the entrance. "Speed lines" are a key feature of this style, conveying a sense of speed and motion, using long, sweeping lines (an illusion of speed) and rounded corners and edges, resembling the aerodynamic shapes of cars or airplanes. Other features include a horizontal orientation, the use of a glass brick wall in the mezzanine level, a flat roof, the use of chrome, and horizontal grooves or lines in the walls.

### Main Theater

Inside, the theater was one of the first in the U.S. to use ultraviolet (black) light as an ornamental device, illuminating fluorescent wall and ceiling murals. During the remodeling completed in 1990 in the auditorium, black light wall sconces, murals, painted wall surfaces and seating were restored. The richly patterned carpet, etched-glass doors, gold- and silver-leafed casework, hardwood paneling and ceiling murals were replicated, and its neon cove lighting and bas-relief etched glass panel were repaired.

During a couple of renovations to make changes to the stage, theater seats were removed and the number was ultimately reduced to 730. Note the 90-plus panel LED screen at the back of the stage that can be used by performers or as a movie screen. On tour night, a slide show highlighting FHS Home Tour events will be shown.

### Lounge Areas

On large event nights, a full bar is open in the lower lounge (once the home of The Daily Planet restaurant) and on other nights it becomes its own entertainment venue.

Behind the stage, visit the dressing rooms where you will encounter excited actors from Fresno High School ready to greet you. Tour participants will be guided into rooms and pass through doorways normally closed to the public. Docents, including Fresno High students, will be present to highlight points of interest. While you stroll through the theater, music performed by Fresno High School students will entertain you.

Today the Tower Theater remains one of the most recognizable and important landmarks in our neighborhood and in Fresno itself.