

ESPLANADE WALKING TOUR

Walk along Fair Park's Esplanade



Start your walking tour at the Parry Ave. gate located at the West end of the park.

The Grand Esplanade was the architectural focal point of the 1936 Texas Centennial.

The Esplanade was also Dallas' singularly stunning contribution to the "City Beautiful" movement in American planning. Bold Art Deco facades define the glorious Esplanade. Monumental art works and lighting accent it. It is truly one of the most spectacular public spaces in the United States.

[41] PARRY AVENUE ENTRANCE, 1936

This symbolic entrance to Fair Park is the largest of the four original Texas Centennial Exposition entry gates. The striking 85-foot-high pylon greeted the hordes of pedestrians who accessed the 1936 event from the streetcar terminus on Parry Avenue. The base of the pylon displays a sculptural frieze by Texas Artist, Buck Winn.

[7] DALLAS' FIRST MUNICIPAL COLISEUM, 1910 (now the Women's Building)

This was Dallas's first municipal coliseum. The State Fair constructed it primarily for livestock shows and also used it for musical entertainment throughout the year. In 1935, Texas Centennial Exposition architect George Dahl renovated the building into the exposition's Administration Building.

The central arched opening, or *entrado*, of this elevation contains two key pieces of artwork. The Texas-themed mural is by Italian artist Carlo Ciampaglia.

The sculpture [37] – the "Spirit of the Centennial" – is by Raoul Josset.

In 2000, adaptive reuse of the building resulted in the nation's first museum devoted to the historical achievements and contributions of women. That museum closed in 2011.

[3] D.A.R. HOUSE, 1936

This modest imitation of Mount Vernon served as the Conoco Travel Bureau Hospitality House during the 1936 exposition. It now hosts the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

[35] THE ESPLANADE, 1936

The principal axis of the Texas Centennial Exposition was developed along the existing layout of the State Fair grounds. George Dahl strengthened the formal axis by adapting existing, unrelated State Fair exhibition halls with new, monumental facades and projecting porticos on each side of a 700-foot-long reflecting pool.

The porticos establish the visual framework of the Esplanade and accentuate the grand perspective leading up to the Hall of State. Monumental artwork deftly combines with additional site features to complete the visually complex – and dramatic – spectacle.

During special events in the park, the Esplanade pool comes to life with "dancing waters" shows set to music. At the eastern end of the pool, it will be hard to miss the striking David S. Newton replicas of Lawrence Tenney Stevens's 1936 sculptures, "The Tenor" and "The Contralto."

[13] CENTENNIAL BUILDING, 1905 and [12] AUTOMOBILE BUILDING, 1948

The Centennial Building originally debuted in 1905 as the first steel-and-masonry exhibition building at the fairgrounds. George Dahl's renovation in 1936 included three new monumental porticos built as part of a frontal expansion of the building.

Dahl made similar architectural gestures on the opposite side of the Esplanade, where he also incorporated an earlier exhibit hall into the new axial ground plan. This building, however, burned after the exposition. In 1948, the Automobile Building replaced it.

The design for the two original buildings included a giant mural under each portico by Carlo Ciampaglia (on the Centennial Building) and Pierre Bourdelle (on the Automobile Building). The cameo reliefs are by Bourdelle. In front of each portico, monumental sculptures by Laurence Tenney Stevens or Raoul Josset represent the six flags that have flown over Texas since Spanish exploration in 1519.

Artists recreated the original murals on the Automobile Building in 1999 and restored the original murals on the Centennial Building in 2000.

[4] HALL OF STATE, 1938

The terminus of the Esplanade, and the exposition's architectural centerpiece, was the State of Texas Building – now known as the Hall of State. You can see an impressive use of Texas limestone in its monumental entrance and flanking lateral wings.

Beyond that, however, is its use of art to express the history, culture and geography of Texas. A team of international, national and regional artists – including several winners of the prestigious Prix de Rome – assembled to augment the Art Deco architecture. That collaborative effort produced some of the most splendid, and awe-inspiring interior spaces in the United States.

The Hall of State is the home of the Dallas Historical Society and houses their offices.

[18] FOOD & FIBER BUILDING, 1936 and [17] EMBARCADERO BUILDING, 1936

George Dahl consolidated the livestock and agricultural facilities of the exposition on the north side of the Cotton Bowl. The main axial approach into this "Agrarian" district uses the matching porticos of the Food & Fiber Building and the Embarcadero Building as objects in the foreground to frame the view of, and focus attention on, a distant pylon.

Workers completed restoration of the Food & Fiber Building in 1999 and conservation of its mural in 2000.

[20] TOWER BUILDING, 1936

The 179-foot-tall triangular tower of the original "U.S. Government Building" marked the geographic center of the Texas Centennial Exposition. It also stood in splendid, isolated contrast to the fair's predominantly horizontal sprawl. Workers completed exterior restoration of this structure – now called the Tower Building – in 1999. This restoration included artist Raoul Josset's gilded, stylized eagle sculpture and a bas-relief promenade of Texas history by Julian Garnsey.

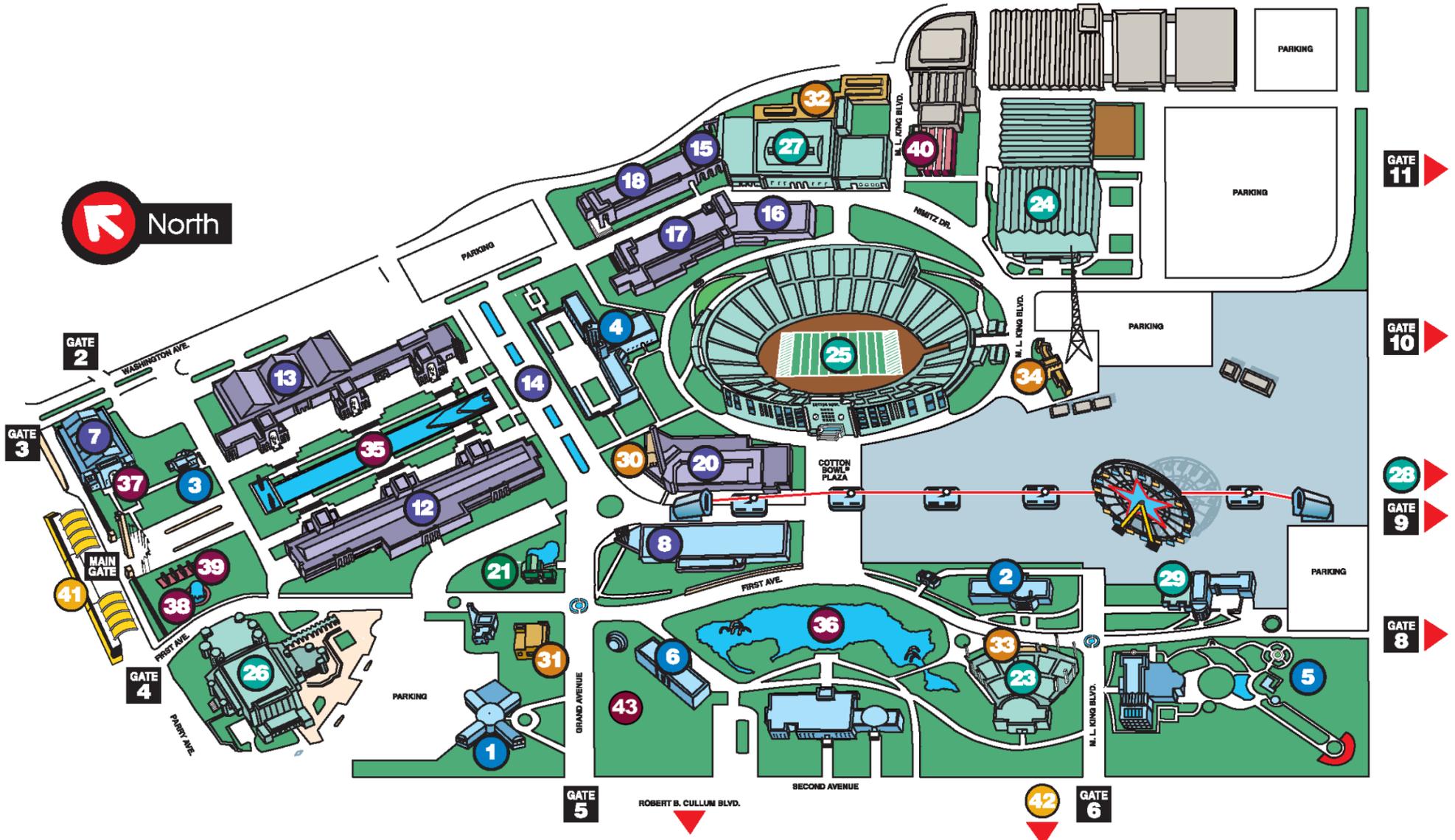
[26] THE MUSIC HALL AT FAIR PARK, 1925

Built in the Spanish colonial revival style, the Music Hall was the General Motors Building during the Centennial Exposition. It underwent extensive remodeling in 1972.

The Music Hall at Fair Park is management by the Dallas Summer Musicals.

FAIR PARK, TX

One fun thing leads to another.



Museums

- 1 African American Museum
- 2 Children's Aquarium
- 3 D.A.R. House
- 4 Hall of State
- 5 Texas Discovery Gardens
- 6 Perot Museum Nature Building



Exhibit/Event Facilities

- 7 The Women's Building
- 8 Grand Place
- 12 Automobile Building
- 13 Centennial Hall
- 14 Court of Honor
- 15 Crafts Village
- 16 Creative Arts
- 17 Embarcadero Building
- 18 Food & Fiber Pavilion
- 20 Tower Building



Sports/Entertainment

- 23 Band Shell
- 24 Coliseum
- 25 Cotton Bowl Stadium
- 26 Music Hall at Fair Park
- 27 Pan American Arena
- 28 Starplex Pavilion
- 29 WRR 101.FM



Special Interest Points

- 35 Esplanade Fountain Centennial Murals & Statues
- 36 Leonhardt Lagoon
- 37 Spirit of the Centennial
- 38 Smith Fountain
- 39 Texas Vietnam Memorial
- 40 Texas Woofus
- 43 Museum Green



Dining

- 21 Old Mill Inn Restaurant



Fair Park Support Facilities

- 30 Fair Park Administration Offices
- 31 Friends of Fair Park/ Magnolia Lounge
- 32 Mounted Patrol/ Canine Headquarters
- 33 Restrooms
- 34 State Fair of Texas Offices



Transportation

- 41 DART Fair Park Station
- 42 DART MLK Station at Trunk