

## **A Brief History of Escondido Adobe**

Escondido began as Juan Batista Alvarado's rancho called Rincon del Diablo. His 1843 adobe home, and the 1857 home of a later owner of the rancho, Judge Oliver Witherby, were in close proximity to each other. Both were SE of Bear Valley Parkway at Hwy78. The Joseph Snooks adobe was built in 1845 on a hill N of Bear Valley middle school. Additional homes were the 1870 Zenas Sikes Adobe (south of the Westfield mall, and open for tours) and Omer Oaks adobe (in Kit Carson Park). Originally within the Bernardo Township, today those two would be considered Escondido homes.

Escondido was established in 1886. The city's second City Hall, a WPA project, opened on the city's 50th anniversary in 1938. Referred to as the Adobe City Hall, it was located on Grand Ave (Palomar hospital was built behind it in 1950).

Hacienda de Vega restaurant on S. Escondido Blvd began as an adobe home built in the 1930s. After visiting the home in the late 1940s, L R Green was inspired to form the Adobe Block Company in 1949. Located on 100 acres in what is Kit Carson Park today, the Adobe Block Company produced million of bricks using soil from that location. Green used some blocks for his own home construction business. But most blocks were sold to other builders throughout San Diego, Riverside, Orange and Imperial counties.

The Weir Brothers Construction company moved to Escondido in 1951. They were the most well know adobe home builder in the area. Their office building on S Escondido Blvd still exists today. Because of the ready access to large amounts of adobe blocks, many other local contractors also built in adobe from time to time. Due to 1980s changes in the building code, adobe homes can no longer be built in California.

# Adobe

# Home Tour

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### Special thanks to:

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For 55 years the Escondido History Center has worked to collect, preserve, exhibit and interpret the history of our community. We are also the steward of Grape Day Park.

[www.escondidohistory.org](http://www.escondidohistory.org)  
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Jack Weir built this home in 1962 for Reuben H. Fleet, on what was originally 50 acres (today it is 2). In general, this home is rustic with distressed features. The adobe blocks were made on site and some

bricks have been sandblasted to showcase their makeup, including visible straw. The Weir Brothers had an employee whose job was to find large vintage timbers for use in the homes they constructed. Wood for this project came from the old Ocean Beach pier. The home was enlarged c1998 and then a casita and an outdoor living room were built in 2004. The owner is a landscaper and the property is always evolving. Make sure to spend some time exploring and look carefully: the garden is full of surprises.



The Rancho Santa Fe Style is on view in this lovely home. It was built by the Weir Bros. in 1964 for Don and Eleanor Findlay. In 1996 the current owner enlarged and remodeled the home adding a new kitchen, master bedroom suite, laundry room and expanded the garage. In 2008 another remodel, by Tim Manchester

in consultation with the Weir Bros., was undertaken. It very successfully made previous changes more seamless and upgraded finishes throughout the home. Opening up a wall in the family room to install French doors flanked by windows highlights the view of Bernardo Mountain. The spectacular pool, outdoor kitchen and entertaining area makes this secluded 1 acre property a great place to entertain.

Construction on this home began in 1979 and finished in 1982. It was built by local dentist Dr. Zingheim as a spec house, along with its twin, just 3 doors down the street. The adobe bricks were made on site.



Although built by another contractor, it has some typical Weir features including round windows and a rotunda. The high ceilings, not typical for an adobe home, in combination with ceiling fans and of course, thick walls, make this home cool even on hot summer days. Adobe homes are often somewhat dark, but high transoms bring light deep into this home. Don't miss the outdoor shower built by the current owners in 2005. It's just one feature on their nearly 2 acre property that is clearly designed for outdoor living.

The owners built this home in 1964 for their young family which included 5 children. The couple found a floor plan they liked in a magazine and then hired a draftsman to convert it to fit adobe block construction.



Local contractor Hyrum Arrowsmith agreed to work in adobe block as long as there were no curves in the design. But as you'll see, there is a large curve in the dining room bay window wall. The 16" blocks were made at the Adobe Block Company, located in what is Kit Carson Park today. Dark woodwork throughout the home is balanced by the many large windows and glass doors which make up the majority of the east exterior wall. The lovely entry courtyard began as an asphalt driveway and carport.